

Tokyo Weekender

July-August 2023

TW?

THE VOICE OF TOKYO

MIDTOWN SUMMER

Food and fun in the
heart of Roppongi

STAY PUNK!

Herbie Yamaguchi on a
legendary life behind the lens

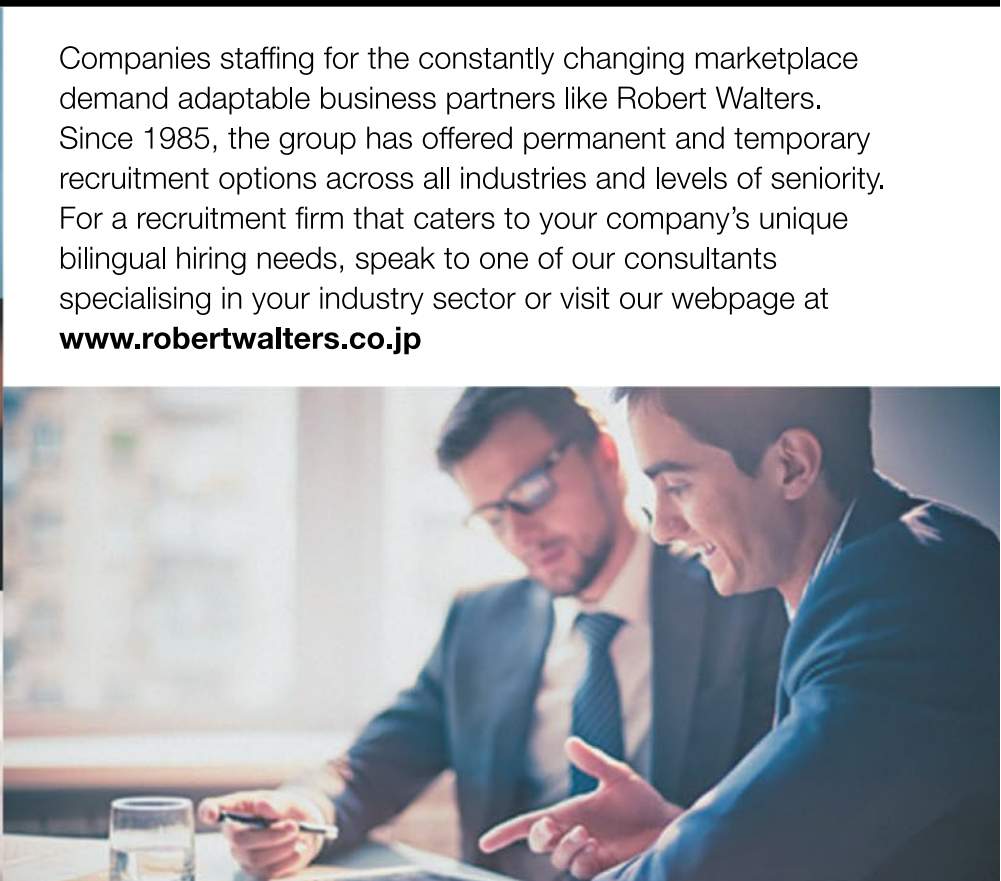
FASHION FORWARD

Shun Watanabe introduces his
upcycled clothing brand, Newsian



ROBERT WALTERS JAPAN

PERMANENT & TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT



Companies staffing for the constantly changing marketplace demand adaptable business partners like Robert Walters. Since 1985, the group has offered permanent and temporary recruitment options across all industries and levels of seniority. For a recruitment firm that caters to your company's unique bilingual hiring needs, speak to one of our consultants specialising in your industry sector or visit our webpage at www.robertwalters.co.jp

CONTENTS



RADAR

THIS MONTH'S HEAD TURNERS

8 TRENDS: IN THE NAME OF SUSTAIN

TW and the MoMA Design Store share a selection of sustainable items for a planet-friendly lifestyle.

10 STYLE: YUVI KAWANO

The Tokyo-based designer brings provocative lingerie to the metropolis.

16 WEARING YOUR ART ON YOUR SLEEVE

Tradition and innovation combine to create fascinating fashions.

IN-DEPTH

COFFEE-BREAK READS

18 INDULGE, DISCOVER, BE ENTERTAINED

Find fine food, exciting events and entertaining exhibitions at Tokyo Midtown.

24 JAPAN MEETS MEXICO

Shibuya's Rubia delivers Mexican cuisine with a Japanese flair.

26 POWERING FORWARD

Basketball player Sebastian Saiz shares his secrets for staying at the top of his game.

28 STAY PUNK!

Legendary photographer Herbie Yamaguchi tells tales and dispenses words of wisdom.

34 CHLOE CHEN: IMAGINATION AS FREEDOM

TW talks to the rising star about her art, her influences and where she's headed next.

38 ART IN AKENO

Get to know the village that came out of the pandemic with a thriving art scene.

41 TRAINSPOTTING IN ASAKUSABASHI

Auba Jaconelli's Itsuki Hozumi brings his love of British culture to Tokyo's fashion retail scene.

44 SHOOTING FOR THE MOON

Sailor Moon-inspired girl group SG5 discusses pop culture, working stateside and more.

SUSTAINABILITY

48 FASHION REFURBISHED

Shun Watanabe cleans out his closet for his upcycled brand, Newsian.

52 A SPOONFUL OF SUSTAINABILITY

Justin Mackee fills a need with sustainably produced dairy-free yogurt.

TRAVEL

56 TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAVEL

Inspiration for sustainable living abounds in Kamikatsu, Japan's first zero-waste town.

60 HARMONY BY DESIGN

Enjoy family-friendly accommodation at DoubleTree by Hilton Kyoto Higashiyama.

GUIDE

CULTURE ROUNDUP

62 ART WORLD

Our pick of the best new art exhibitions across the city. Plus: What the TW Book Club is reading next.

64 AGENDA

What's happening in Tokyo in August and September.

66 TW SOCIAL

What our TW community has been up to lately.

68 THE VOICE OF TOKYO

TW checks in with the city's trendsetters.

70 MUSIC

The members of up-and-coming band Maya Ongaku share their favorite albums.



Tokyo Weekender

July- August 2023

Publisher

ENGAWA Co., Ltd.

President

Takanobu Ushiyama

Executive Director

Liam Ramshaw

Senior Editors

Matthew Hernon

Paul McInnes

Helen Langford

**Editor in Chief of
TW Travel**

Lisa Wallin

Commissioning Editor

Zoria Petkoska

Features Writer

Kim Kahan

Creative Director

Rose Vittayaset

Designer

Anna Petek

Project Managers

Marion Aubert

Christina Nagasawa

**Digital Content
Director**

Lisa Knight

Editorial Assistant

Lyn Tsuchiya

**Website Content
Manager**

Lisandra Moor

Contributor

David Schneider

Community Strategist

Alex Shapiro

Head of Sales

Mai Shikata

Sales Executives

Shizuka Kimura

Anna Hara

Kana Fukushima

Saeko Tochikawa

EST. Corky Alexander, 1970

20F Roppongi Hills Mori Tower, 6-10-1
Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-6131
(03)-6804-6226 / (03)-6804-6374 (fax)
info@engawa.global

To subscribe to Tokyo Weekender,
please visit
www.tokyoweekender.com/subscribe



ENGAWA
Building Shared Perspectives

Published by ENGAWA Co., Ltd.
www.engawa.global

For ad sales inquiries, please call
(03)-6804-6226 or email:
info@engawa.global

広告に関するお問い合わせ先
電話: (03)-6804-6226
メール: info@engawa.global

Opinions expressed by TW contributors are
not necessarily those of the publisher

MEET THE TEAM

Introducing the team behind this month's issue

Cover photo by Lisa Knight



Liam, Executive Director: As an unashamed design nerd, I'm always fascinated to see how designers are incorporating sustainability into their work. I've been a big fan of stylist and editor Shun Watanabe [p.48] for the longest time, so I was really interested to find out about his new upcycled clothing brand, Newsian, which is attempting to make sustainability a desirable commodity in the Japanese fashion industry.



Lisa, Digital Content Director: In a broader sense, sustainability is about harmonious coexistence, using resources respectfully and supporting local communities. I love the way that Rubia [p.24] blends the flavors of Mexican cuisine with seasonal Japanese ingredients, and also supports artists and family-owned businesses in Mexico.



What does sustainability mean to you?

Lyn, Editorial Assistant: Recycling is definitely a big part of sustainability for me. I also use a water filter and carry my own water bottle among other eco-friendly actions. That's why the town of Kamikatsu [p.56], which shows us that zero waste is possible, is so inspiring. We can all learn a thing or two about circularity and sustainable practices from the people of Kamikatsu.



Zoria, Commissioning Editor: I was inspired by the Bunzaburo brand and how it makes wearable art from a century-old tie-dyeing process [p.16]. We're better together, and a sustainable world needs everyone sharing knowledge and resources, even intergenerationally and internationally.



Kim, Features Writer: Repurposing and reusing is a big thing for me. The Gasbon Metabolism complex in Yamanashi [p.38] is a fantastic way of repurposing an old factory and fostering the creative community in the countryside. "Back to nature," so to speak.



Christina, Project Manager: I see sustainability as our connection with nature, as contemplating reuse, recycling, and the philosophy behind objects, a concept explored in an exhibition at 21_21 Design Sight beginning in July [p.23].



Anna, Designer: Sustainability can be an overwhelming issue to tackle. But there are ways to make a difference even on the individual level. I love that you can start every day with a good deed, just by enjoying Cocono yogurt [p.52]. That's the kind of sustainability I'm into: simple, clean and delicious.

東京十

SUIBA
SHIBY



TKY
.10

AVAILABLE TO BUY NOW
TOKYO-TEN.STORE

EXCLUSIVE
COLLECTION FOR

TW

RADAR



8

Trends:
Sustainable Living

Outfit your life with earth-friendly items from the MoMA Design Store.

10

Style:
Lingerie Nonpareil

Yuvi Kawano pushes boundaries with bold underthings.

16

Trends:
Wearable Art

The Bunzaburo brand's fresh take on shibori is pure freedom.



Yam Pearl Sconce Earrings and Rice Pearl Choker

Yam designer Morgan Thomas set out to create new yet nostalgic jewelry, and she's delivered with stunning pieces, including pearl sconce earrings and a rice pearl choker. The Black-owned, women-operated brand crafts its products in Thomas' Queens studio using upcycled materials like vintage-sourced pearls. Each pair made is a one-of-a-kind creation and perfect for a gift or even as a treat for yourself.

IN THE NAME OF SUSTAIN

In partnership with our friends at the MoMA Design Store, we chose some of this season's most desirable and sustainable products for a responsible and eco-friendly lifestyle.

Compiled by Paul McInnes

Jasper Morrison - Wataru Kumano Hinoki Stool

A really exciting collaboration between acclaimed Japanese product designer Wataru Kumano and British designer Jasper Morrison has resulted in this beautiful hinoki (Japanese cypress) stool. The project took place to commemorate the 10th anniversary of More Trees, the Japanese forest conservation organization spearheaded by the late Ryuichi Sakamoto. The wooden stools are created using the finest craftsmanship and are extremely durable.





Guzzini Recycled Plastic Collapsible Storage Bin

Made from 70% post-consumer recycled plastic, this multiuse bin is perfect for storage and can hold an extraordinary amount due to its unique accordion design. That the storage bin is made in an ethically responsible factory in Italy and is also recyclable at the end of its lifespan should come as no surprise considering it's from the legendary Italian brand Guzzini. The bin is perfect for any home and ideal for those who care deeply about the environment.



MoMA Sky Umbrella

When it rains in Tokyo, it really rains. The weather during the summer can be changeable, so it's always a good idea to carry an umbrella — and what better umbrella to own than this dapper folding model made with environmentally friendly material. It features a double-layered canopy that uses plastic made from recycled PET bottles.



MoMA x Baggu Tote

This cute collaboration between MoMA and Baggu is one of this summer's must-haves. Tote bags are always cool, and this series' design mimics the aesthetics of New York's iconic plastic shopping bags. Durable, reusable and made from recycled ripstop nylon, this bag is an excellent eco-friendly alternative to the single-use plastic shopping bags of yesteryear.





YUJI KAWANO

The Tokyo-based designer brings provocative lingerie to the metropolis

Compiled and photographed by Solène Ballesta



—radar·Style—

*Sculpted like a corset,
the hardware elegantly
embraces the body's curves
with its white plaster texture
and a brush-shaped line
accentuating the chest.*



During her time as a university student in London, Yuvi Kawano unexpectedly met a lingerie designer at a fetish event and got greatly inspired. She was then given the opportunity to work as a fashion design assistant for three years, which ignited her love for the liberating world of lingerie.


Motivated by her desire to challenge the conservative climate surrounding showing skin in Japan, Kawano

made the bold decision to establish her own brand in Tokyo, pushing the boundaries of provocative skin exposure.

Her latest collection is created in collaboration with Hikari Ikeda, a former classmate and the mind behind the Ikedahikari brand. Perhaps due to both of them having attended art-focused schools, they are embracing painting as a prominent element in their works. By handpicking captivating aspects from body painting, Kawano meticulously crafted her latest collection.

This iconic bralette is specially crafted to fit the contours of the chest. The hardware showcases chains and other elements, creating an impression of a dripping painting.





Pearls accentuate the painted lines while the asymmetrical corset and abstract pin badges serve as unique features, abstracting the nipples.

Yuvi Kawano, Fashion Designer

My brand ...

... explores the relationship between lingerie and the human body by incorporating everyday discoveries into my artwork. The inspiration to start my own brand arose from the absence of provocative and captivating lingerie brands in Japan.

My latest collection, "Bodily Curves," seamlessly blends the chance occurrences and phenomena of body painting with lingerie and jewelry, creating a unique and immersive experience.

Tokyo fashion is ...

... made up of many people who prioritize wearing new clothes, always very tidy and maintaining a sense of cleanliness.

My top places to shop are ...

- **POST (SHIBUYA)** for books on Japanese and international art.
- **10TOW (SHIBUYA)** for interesting clothes.
- **GR8 (SHIBUYA)** for when I want to see flashy and fascinating clothing.



Created with encircling chest hardware, this look captures the essence of paint drips found in experimental painting. Ikedahikari skillfully repeated the dripping shape around the thigh area, adding an artistic touch.



Brand:
Yuvi Kawano
@_yuvikawano
yuvikawano.com

In collaboration with:
Hikari Ikeda
@_ikedahikari_
ikedahikari.theshop.jp

Photographer:
Solène Ballesta
@soleneballesta

Model:
Kily Shakley
@ kily227

Wearing Your Art on Your Sleeve

Bunzaburo brings 100 years of tradition and innovation to its wearable art

Words by Zoria Petkoska



Spiky yet soft, futuristic yet tied to century-old techniques — the captivating fashion creations of the Bunzaburo brand contain multitudes. These pieces are called wearable art not only because of their ethereal beauty but also due to their versatility and layered stories.

Like the best art, Bunzaburo fashion items open up a myriad of possibilities and meanings. They fit comfortably in early 20th-century Kyoto, 21st-century Tokyo and the distant future. They can stretch, getting bigger or smaller; a necklace becomes a headband, and the wearer becomes part of the art.

Spearheading this seamless fusion of fashion and art is Kazuo Katayama, the third-generation head of the Bunzaburo business. He has revived the Honza Kanoko shibori (tie-dyeing) technique abandoned in the Edo era, and together with his son, Kazuya Katayama, has gone beyond tie-dyeing, devising new shapes and textures.



Inspired by the strategic ties used in shibori that are usually undone after dyeing, the duo creates protruding spaces, as if their fashion items were nature's living creations. Sometimes they look like underwater creatures, other times like mercurial intergalactic lifeforms we are yet to meet. You can see nebulas in them, or organic cells under a microscope.

Bunzaburo's range of fashion items, which includes dresses, trousers, turtlenecks, scarves, hats and other accessories, comes in various colors and designs. Little round handbags resembling popcorn-stitch crochet bags expand as you fill them with more items. Other bags are covered in spikes or soft flourishes of fabric that make them look like clouds. Taking fabric art a step further, the brand also has shibori-style necklaces, bracelets and even lamps.

As with the finest artworks that are lovingly wrought by their makers' hands, every Bunzaburo item is handcrafted. Bunzaburo creations, free from rigid categories, sizes and gendered fashion, can ultimately be whatever you want them to be — and that freedom in itself is pure art.

More Info

Official website: bunzaburo.com/home-en

Online store: shop.bunzaburo.com/en

IN-DEPTH



18

Summer Fun at Midtown

The gastronomic and entertainment center delivers seasonal delights.

28

A Life Behind the Lens

Reflections and reminiscences from Herbie Yamaguchi.

41

British Inspiration

Fashion with a *Trainspotting* feel at Auba Jaconelli.

Indulge, Discover, Be Entertained

Delight in the fine food, exciting events and enthralling exhibitions on offer at Tokyo Midtown

Words by Andrew Bibee

In the heart of the lively Roppongi entertainment district, gourmets and patrons of the arts will find an earthly paradise: Tokyo Midtown. The mixed-use urban development is home to restaurants helmed by renowned chefs and galleries and museums hosting outstanding exhibitions. The development also presents unique and exciting events throughout the year. Join us as we explore the gastronomic and entertainment center sure to tantalize your taste buds and tickle your fancy.

Hail to the Chef

Get to know three master chefs making gourmet magic at Tokyo Midtown.

Devoted to Cantonese Cuisine: Chef ZhuXing Tang of Silin Fuan Long Yuen

Chef ZhuXing Tang's expertise and passion for Cantonese cuisine are on fine display at Silin Fuan Long Yuen, located on the second floor of the Garden Terrace. Tang, born and raised in Yokohama Chinatown, credits his family and the Cantonese community that calls the area home with instilling in him a love of cooking.



Chef ZhuXing Tang, Silin Fuan Long Yuen

After graduating from high school, Tang pursued his passion, entering into an apprenticeship under Chef Fude Zhou of *Ryori no Tetsujin (Iron Chef)* fame. Working with Zhou, better known to the Japanese public as Tomitoku Shu, allowed Tang to learn from the renowned chef's philosophy: work meticulously, work earnestly, put your heart into each dish.

Aside from spices Tang imports from Hong Kong, ingredients are sourced from every corner of Japan. Tang stresses that this practice is essential. The restaurant's Chinese noodles are from Fukushima Prefecture, while the pesticide-free vegetables are from Yamanashi Prefecture. Tang also places a strong emphasis on seafood, sourcing the restaurant's clams and shellfish from Hokkaido.

In Tang's capable hands, this combination of ingredients from Hong Kong and Japan transforms into exquisite Cantonese dishes that while made in an orthodox manner are contemporary in their presentation and refinement.

During our visit, we are lucky to have the chance to sample Tang's cooking in the form of a fragrant stir-fry of scallops and green onions. The most popular item on the menu according to Tang, however, is a Fude Zhou original recipe that Tang learned during his years working under the Iron Chef: ebi mayo, or shrimp with mayonnaise.

We ask Tang about his plans for Silin Fuan Long Yuen. Rather than sharing grand plans for his restaurant, the chef expresses his desire to see his pupils continue the legacy of Cantonese cooking in Japan. "I've been in the industry for 30 or so years now, and it's been 20 years since I opened my first restaurant," Tang says. "I now have apprentices of my own who have graduated from here and have opened their own restaurants all over Japan. I hope to one day travel this country to visit each and every one of their restaurants, to dine at their facilities as I watch them grow into their own."

Through Tang, his restaurants and former pupils, the legacy of Cantonese cooking in Japan, as well as that of the Iron Chef, lives on.



A Taste of New York City: Chef Takayuki Masuda of Union Square Tokyo

Award-winning chef Takayuki Masuda has been executive chef of Union Square Tokyo since April 2023. The restaurant, which serves Americanized Italian cuisine on the B1 level of Tokyo Midtown's Garden Terrace, has roots in New York.

Masuda, who mastered Union Square Tokyo's dishes soon after arriving, aims to offer a one-of-a-kind dining experience. One of the ways he achieves this is by serving specialties like house-cured and smoked Japanese Shorthorn wagyu steak cooked with Japanese cherry wood.

The restaurant's seasonal menu strikes a balance between recreating New York dishes and introducing new creations. Masuda's emphasis on chisan-chisho (local production, local consumption) guides staff to source ingredients locally whenever possible. This commitment to quality is evident in the popularity of their vegetable-heavy offerings, particularly the chef's salad.

Union Square Tokyo places a strong emphasis on warm hospitality, and Masuda highlights the team's dedication, from the prepared meals to the live jazz performances. "I would like customers to feel as though they're



Executive Chef Takayuki Masuda, Union Square Tokyo

being welcomed back home whenever they enter this restaurant," he says.

Indeed, the chef has found as much success creating that welcoming atmosphere as he has adapting his extensive skills to Americanized Italian cuisine. On our visit, with faint jazz music playing in the background and the aroma of smoked steak wafting in from the kitchen, we feel truly at home, as will anyone feeling nostalgic for New York.

Special offer: One complimentary drink. See page 21 for details.

A Contemporary Take on Tempura: Chef Masanori Teraoka of Tempura Yamanoue Roppongi

Chef Masanori Teraoka has a tall order. In charge of Tempura Yamanoue's Roppongi branch on the third floor of the Garden Terrace, Teraoka has been tasked with finding a way to freshen the restaurant's namesake dish.

"Tempura is difficult to make exciting and new as it has a set-in-stone cooking method," Teraoka tells us. "If we try something radically different, we will be losing what made Tempura Yamanoue so beloved over the years; if we don't do anything new, we will be considered unexciting and old-fashioned."



But Teraoka is nothing if not resourceful. Leaving the kitchen for farm country, Teraoka teamed up with farmers to cultivate vegetables perfect for tempura. For example, maitake mushrooms are harvested before they reach their prime, while green beans are grown to be extra thin.

This contemporary twist on tempura artisanry is just another example of Tempura Yamanoue's dedication to the popular Japanese dish. The restaurant's main branch, which celebrates its 70th anniversary next year, opened alongside the Hilltop Hotel — the first hotel in Tokyo to serve tempura as its main course.

In addition to the toothsome tempura on offer, the restaurant's Roppongi branch features a sommelier charged with finding the perfect wine or sake pairing and counter seating for views of the master chef working his magic. Though currently closed for renovations, Tempura Yamanoue Roppongi will be welcoming all those keen to dine on top-notch tempura from August 11, 2023.

Special offer: One complimentary serving of seasonal vegetable tempura (lunchtime only). See page 21 for details.



Chef Masanori Teraoka, Tempura Yamanoue Roppongi



Divine Dining

Must-visit Midtown restaurants for heavenly cuisine

Maruya-Honten

Unagi, or freshwater eel, has long been a part of Japanese cuisine, and though it's strongly associated with summer due to the belief that it can alleviate hot-weather fatigue, it's delicious year-round. At Maruya-Honten, dine on savory-sweet hitsumabushi, a Nagoya specialty of grilled unagi on rice, expertly prepared by skilled unagi artisans. The dish can be enjoyed three ways: as-is, mixed with condiments and as ochazuke, which involves pouring a special soup stock over your final bites for a refreshing end to your meal. Unagi aficionados will find Maruya-Honten on the third floor of the Garden Terrace.



Philippe Mille Tokyo

This restaurant is an exciting first foray into Japan for Chef Philippe Mille, a Meilleur Ouvrier de France (“best craftsmen of France”) recipient. Mille, along with Tokyo head chef Tetsuya Nakamura, expertly recreates beloved specialties of Mille’s Michelin two-star restaurant, Le Parc Les Crayères, while also delivering an original menu exclusive to Japan that features locally sourced seasonal ingredients. In addition to the sumptuous items on offer, the restaurant, located on the fourth floor of the Garden Terrace, has a wide selection of Champagne, with over 160 houses currently available.

Special offer: Receive 5% off total bill. See page 21 for details.



Miyagawacho Suiren

If you’re longing for a calm, relaxed space that evokes the memory of Kyoto’s old geisha district, then make haste to Miyagawacho Suiren on the third floor of the Garden Terrace. The restaurant, which offers a full-course Kyo-to-inspired dining experience featuring carefully prepared seasonal dishes, stays fresh with a menu that changes monthly while also preserving the traditions of Kyo-to cuisine. Chefs at the restaurant are dedicated to the creation of well-crafted courses inspired by themes such as the transience of nature and human emotion.

Special offer: One complimentary drink. See page 21 for details.



Toshi Yoroizuka

It’s hard to find a pâtissier more accomplished than Toshi Yoroizuka. The award-winning chef has trained extensively in Europe and was the first Japanese chef pâtissier at a Michelin three-star restaurant. Yoroizuka’s heavenly creations have been available to visitors

to Tokyo Midtown since 2007 when a branch of the chef’s eponymously named dessert specialty store opened. In addition to providing a first-rate dining experience and a wide selection of sweets and baked goods to take home, the shop, on the first floor of the Plaza, also hosts live cooking demonstrations during which a pâtissier makes a one-of-a-kind seasonal dessert.





Kayanoya

At the heart of Japanese cuisine is dashi, a soup stock that provides dishes with a deep umami. One of the best-known producers of dashi is Kayanoya, whose history stretches back to 1893. Today, Kayanoya specializes in a wide range of soup stocks and seasonings that contain no artificial flavorings or preservatives, which means that the taste, quality and nutritional value remain intact. In addition to selling stocks and seasonings, the Tokyo Midtown store offers light meals that come with soups made with their signature dashi for eat-in or takeout at their restaurant, Shiruya Kayanoya, on the B1 level of the Galleria.



Nihonbashi Kaisendon Tsujihan

Nihonbashi Kaisendon Tsujihan, found on the B1 level of the Galleria, is a collaboration between Yudai Tsujita, the ramen prodigy behind the Tsujita chain of restaurants, and Shinya Kaneko, founder of Kaneko-Hannosuke, famous for its tempura-topped

rice bowl. At Nihonbashi Kaisendon Tsujihan, the duo, in partnership with Hokkaido's largest marine wholesaler, aims to provide customers with a thoroughly delicious — and incredibly large — kaisendon seafood rice bowl. The bowl, dubbed Zeitaku-don, comes topped with a veritable mountain of seafood that includes tuna sashimi, sea urchin and salmon.



Toraya

A noren curtain emblazoned with the Japanese character for “tiger” marks the entrance to Toraya, one of Japan's best-known and loved confectionery shops. Though Toraya, which boasts approximately 500 years of history, is most renowned for its yokan, a jelled sweet bean paste, it also produces various other traditional confections. At Tokyo Midtown, Toraya and the adjoining Toraya Karyo tearoom offer a variety of traditional sweets, including anmitsu, a dessert consisting of cubes of agar jelly, various seasonal toppings, sweet bean paste and syrup, and kuzukiri, a refreshing chilled dessert-like noodle dish. You'll find these tasty treats on the B1 level of the Galleria.



Billboard Live Tokyo

Tokyo Midtown isn't just an urban oasis of shopping, dining and lush green space, it's also home to an excellent restaurant with live music. Billboard Live Tokyo, named for the beloved music brand, can accommodate approximately 300 people across three floors, with seating ranging from sofas to table seating. Thrill at live performances from a diverse range of world-class musicians hailing from across Japan and the world while indulging in a wide selection of delicious meals and beverages. Billboard Live Tokyo can be accessed from the fourth floor of the Garden Terrace.

Special Offer to TW Readers

To redeem a special offer, mention TW when making a reservation at participating establishments. Offers are valid until December 31, 2023, and are limited to the first five groups to visit each establishment.

Summertime in the City

Midtown events to get you through the hottest months



Ashimizu

Cool down with Tokyo Midtown this summer at the urban development's Ashimizu event. At the event, you'll be able to soak your feet in a gently flowing stream set up in Midtown Garden. The partially covered stream area, which will also feature a cooling mist, is the perfect spot to escape the summer heat and bustling city. Enjoy the sight of sunlight filtering through the leaves of the garden's trees and glistening on the water's surface or sit back with a book or a drink for a relaxing break. In the evening, the area is illuminated with soft-colored lights, creating a mystical atmosphere where you can savor the cool evening breeze. As afternoon and evening offer completely different experiences, be sure to visit the event, which can accommodate around 70 people at a time, both during the day and after dark. Ashimizu, which is open from 3pm to 9pm, runs from July 14 to August 27. Note that the event will not run on Tuesdays and will not be held in the case of adverse weather.



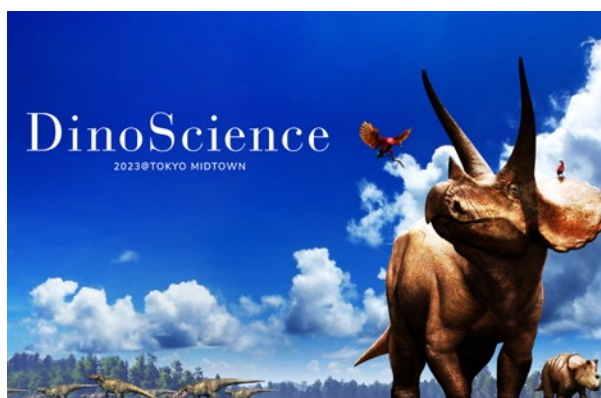
Midpark Lounge

If you're on the hunt for an upscale alfresco dining opportunity in the heart of the city, you'll want to check out Tokyo Midtown's limited-time Midpark Lounge event. Midpark Lounge sees Midtown Garden transform into an outdoor dining area beneath the trees that can seat approximately 150 guests. Relish the changing dappled light as the sun moves across the sky and the cool evening breeze as night falls. The twilight hours are softly illuminated for an enchanting atmosphere after dark. Look forward to a selection of refreshing drinks and meals made using herbs and spices perfectly suited to summer. Midpark Lounge serves dinner on weekdays from 5pm until 10pm. On weekends and holidays, including the Obon period (August 13 to 16), lunch is also served, with the event starting at noon. Midpark Lounge runs from July 14 to August 27. Note that the event will not be held in the case of adverse weather.



'DinoScience 2023@Tokyo Midtown'

Dinosaurs are back by popular demand and will roam the Tokyo Midtown Hall from July 21 to September 12 as part of the dinosaur science expo "DinoScience 2023@Tokyo Midtown." This summer's expo combines content from the 2021 event held in Yokohama with an original concept created specifically for Tokyo Midtown that incorporates exhibits based on the latest science. Dinosaur fans can look forward to seeing a complete triceratops and other life-like skeletons, many of which are posed to suggest motion. Story-based exhibitions use sound and lighting to expertly invite visitors into the world of dinosaurs while carefully produced CG videos bring scientific knowledge to life. The expo includes never-before-seen specimens as well as popular specimens from past events. After 6pm, the lights dim, and certain displays are illuminated to stunning effect. The atmosphere of the night museum is completely different from that of the daytime, adding an extra depth of interest to the experience. The well-designed expo, which also features a cafe, workshops and a gift shop, is sure to thrill dinophiles of all ages.



©Masashi Tanaka

Art and Design Unveiled

Upcoming exhibitions to make you think

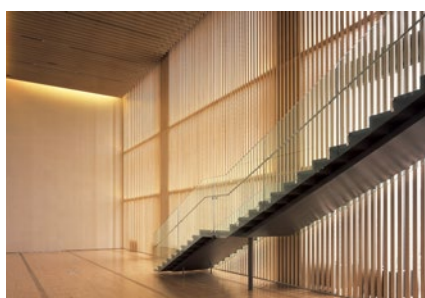
'Mushi (Insects and Other Creatures) Lovers in Japan' at Suntory Museum of Art

Anyone who's spent a summer in Tokyo knows that insects become a big part of life in the hotter months. Since time immemorial, insects have played a major role in the lives of the Japanese, and as such, have found their way into the arts. Insects have also been used as literary and artistic devices to symbolize emotional states and the changing of the seasons.

Insects take center stage in "Mushi (Insects and Other Creatures) Lovers in Japan," which runs from July 22 to September 18 at Suntory Museum of Art, one of Tokyo's leading museums of Japanese art. The exhibition provides a visual history of insects and includes works from the flower- and insect-focused *sochuzu* genre of painting. *Sochuzu*, which originated in China before taking hold in Japan, became particularly popular during the Edo period.

"Mushi (Insects and Other Creatures) Lovers in Japan" focuses mainly on this period of time and provides a comprehensive look at how Japan's love of insects was nurtured by art.

©Keizo Kioku



The Suntory Museum of Art is known for its impressive collection that includes a National Treasure and 15 Important Cultural Properties. It's sleek modern building, designed by architect Kengo Kuma, harmoniously blends traditional art with contemporary design, reflecting its guiding principles of "Art in Life" and "Art revisited, beauty revealed."

'Material, or' at 21_21 Design Sight

When you look at the objects around you, what do you see? You may identify a material, such as wood, but do you look beyond that basic recognition to consider the pre-processed raw material — the living tree, for example — that existed before? The upcoming "Material, or" exhibition, brought to life by director Satoshi Yoshiizumi of the design think-and-do tank Takt Project, encourages you to think more deeply about the objects that surround you.

Interwoven with themes of natural and social sustainability, "Material, or," in collaboration with art anthropologist Toshia-ki Ishikura and biomimetics designer Jun Kamei, explores and unravels the divergent ways in which humanity has exploited nature through a cultural-anthropological lens. Taking a broad perspective, the exhibition tracks the relationship between humans and raw materials across time and place.

"Material, or" runs from July 14 to November 5 at 21_21 Design Sight, a fascinating space

21_21 Design Sight. Photo by Masaya Yoshimura



focused on bringing quotidian objects and events to our attention through design-themed exhibitions. This gallery is the perfect venue for an exhibition that suggests the meaning behind objects designed for human use should involve an open dialogue with those materials.

21_21 Design Sight stands out with its distinctive roof shaped like a folded steel sheet, a construction inspired by Issey Miyake's "A Piece of Cloth." The facility consists of two buildings, Gallery 1 & 2 and Gallery 3, and features a souvenir shop offering original goods by renowned architect Tadao Ando and graphic designer Taku Satoh.

More Info

Tokyo Midtown 9-7-1
Akasaka, Minato-ku

Access: Roppongi Station
(Toei Oedo Line and Tokyo
Metro Hibiya Line)



Tale of Crickets (previously known as Katydid), Sumiyoshi Jokei, Edo period, 17th century, Hosomi Museum (on display through the entire exhibition)

"Untitled (Our Materials #63-126)", 2023 ©Coltingham
Image courtesy of Nippon Design Center and Studio Xxnggham

SUMMER EXHIBITIONS

Mexico Meets Japan

Rubia offers tantalizingly tasty Mexican cuisine with Japanese flair

Words by Ben Cooke



When on the hunt for dinner in Tokyo, there is no shortage of international options. Tastes from across the globe can be found around almost every corner, giving visitors and locals alike plenty of choices. While this wealth of options makes standing out from the culinary crowd difficult, the understated Rubia shows us that it's still possible to create something unique.

A contemporary fusion of Mexican and Japanese cuisine, the menu reflects not only a genuine affinity for Mexico but also a creativity that makes the experience of dining at Rubia unlike anything else found in Tokyo's culinary scene. Combine that with Tahona, the mood-lit mezcal and tequila café and bar on the second floor, and you've got a setup sure to leave diners with lasting memories of great food and great times.

A Labor of Love

Owned and operated by Japanese artist DJ Sarasa, Rubia is not just a restaurant but an extension of Sarasa and her experiences while traveling. Although she'd seen much of the world through her work as a professional DJ, it wasn't until she visited Mexico while on tour that she tried her first taco. "As soon as I tried it, I knew I wanted everyone else to try it too," she says, smiling.

It was this love at first bite that resulted in Sarasa's debut restaurant, Casa de Sarasa, which still operates in Shibuya and offers a quintessential Mexican menu centered around the tacos that started it all. Despite the success of her first restaurant, Sarasa still felt as though she had more to offer. "I wanted to do something that came from me, as a Japanese who has a special bond with Mexican people," she explains.



Through repeated trips to Mexico, a country she still visits on a regular basis, Sarasa took it upon herself to become immersed in the world of Mexican cuisine. With the help of her business partner, restaurateur Edo Kobayashi, this mission soon saw her sharpening her skills in the kitchen of Mexican chef Enrique Olvera's Michelin three-star restaurant, Pujol, in Mexico City.

Combining her deep understanding of fine Mexican dining with an equally potent knowledge of traditional Mexican art and liquor, Sarasa set about making her vision a reality. The restaurant's name, Rubia, is the Spanish word for blonde and was chosen as a subtle nod to the hair color Sarasa became famous for while on tour as a DJ. The final task was finding a location.



Sarasa saw potential in an unoccupied building tucked away in a quiet corner of Shibuya not far from the station. Once in possession of the keys, she set about making the two-story structure her own. "I had a hammer and a chainsaw in my hand every day," she says with a laugh.

Now in its third year of operation, Rubia is a reflection of Sarasa's efforts and interests, with every aspect of the restaurant's interior design and atmosphere, from the



flooring, furniture and art to the playlist of chill beats, directly influenced by the DJ. The result is an all-encompassing cohesion that makes it feel as though you've stepped off the street in Tokyo straight into an up-market neighbourhood in Mexico City.

Collaborative Cuisine

While Rubia's atmosphere alone gives diners a reason to visit, the menu also shines. Crafted in a kitchen with both Mexican and Japanese chefs — including head chef Cesar Ávila Flores, previously of Pujol — the food at Rubia tells a vibrant story of traditional Mexican and Japanese cuisine through a carefully curated and regularly updated course menu.

Across the courses, for which sake and wine pairings are available, diners are met with a variety of colorful ingredients that come together to create some genuinely unique tastes. For example, the bamboo chintextle tostada, a toasted tortilla topped with bamboo and an exceptionally rare and increasingly hard-to-come-by grasshopper paste, manages to deliver an authentic Mexican taste while maintaining a Japanese sensibility.

Perhaps one of the most delicious and symbolic examples of the Japanese-Mexican fusion is Rubia's mole miso. Combining mole, a sauce used in a variety of traditional Mexican dishes, and miso, a staple of Japanese cuisine, mole miso boasts a richness and flavor that pair incredibly well with the seasonal vegetables that accompany it.

Rounding out the course menu is the yuzu cream bunuelo, a Mexican fritter

not to feel as though you've had a one-of-a-kind meal — and this is exactly the reaction Sarasa has in mind for diners. "My goal is for people to have a new experience or make a new discovery," she says.

Further highlighting this commitment to providing diners with a culinary encounter that can be enjoyed by all is the restaurant's ability to accommodate the dietary requirements of diners. Dishes can be adjusted to suit the needs of vegetarians, vegans and those with gluten intolerance. Advance notice is not required for these requests.

Moving to the Bar

Just because you've finished your meal at Rubia doesn't mean it's time to head home — quite the opposite, in fact. Upstairs, fine Mexican beverages await your arrival at Tahona.

Named after the large volcanic stone traditionally used in the process of making



topped with crystals of sugar and paired with cream and a yuzu soup. With this delectable finishing touch, it's impossible

and are keen to keep the tastes of Mexico coming or you find yourself in the neighborhood in search of a bite to eat and a nightcap, a stop at Tahona is a great way to round out your evening.

More Info

Browse menus and make reservations at Rubia and Tahona online at www.rubia.co.jp.



POWERING FORWARD



© NNN Never Say Never

Basketball player Sebastian Saiz lets TW in on his secret to staying in top form

— Words by Sean King

Eat healthily. Exercise. Get adequate rest. These are the basics when it comes to protecting your overall well-being. But a recent survey conducted by TW revealed that a majority of respondents go beyond these three tenets of a healthy lifestyle by adding supplements to their daily routine.

As we learned when we sat down to chat with basketball star Sebastian Saiz, the power forward and center is also a big believer in incorporating supplements into his healthy-living arsenal. Read on to find

out how he trains, eats and stays in peak condition with the help of supplements — you might just learn a thing or two that you can add to your own arsenal.

Training Game

No player embodies the global basketball scene quite like Saiz. From his coming up in Spain with famous sports franchise Real Madrid to balling in the U.S. to now living in Japan and playing for the Japanese B. League, Saiz is a shining example of what it means to be an international athlete.

Training is a part of everyday life, and Saiz believes in a simple principle: Go all out. If you're going to work, go all out. If you're going to rest, go all out. If you're going to eat, go all out. He emphasizes the importance of not neglecting any part of the process, and his adherence to his philosophy is obvious in his game prep.

An all-day affair, training begins with weights in the morning to build overall strength and moves on to on-the-court practice in the afternoons. Even time not spent training is dedicated to the game, with Saiz strategizing plays, studying opponents and optimizing rest and recovery. After all, an injured athlete can't perform, and performance is everything. Getting enough sleep, decompressing and stretching are a must for Saiz to stay sharp on and off the court.

“

Living in Japan made me realize how much people can appreciate things, even the little things.

”

Fueling Up

Of course, the path to success includes food and nutrition as well, with food playing a bigger role in performance than most people realize. While you won't literally become what you eat, what you put into your body determines what you get out of it.



©Sebastian Saiz

Saiz works closely with professional nutritionists to make sure he stays on track, but a scientifically controlled diet doesn't have to be boring and bland. While a study of gut health and microbiomes determines the nitty-gritty details of his food choices, he largely sticks to foods that satisfy his nutritional needs as well as his cravings. This is important as consistency is key — and it's hard to be consistent when feeling miserable about meals.

This approach also allows Saiz to enjoy his meals while living abroad. "Living in Japan made me realize how much people can appreciate things — even the little things — and have respect for others and the whole world," says Saiz.

A mindset of appreciation is something that Saiz and his teammates apply to training, eating and life. By respecting his body, the food he puts into it and the people supporting him, Saiz has improved his performance while connecting to a broader international community.

energy and feeling refreshed upon waking. All it takes is a bit of help in the form of supplements.

These days, supplements are mainstream. In fact, the TW survey, conducted with Nomon, a brand of supplements produced by Teijin, showed that 87% of respondents — 66.7% of whom were women and 31% of whom were between 25 and 34 years of age — already took some kind of supplement for their health. It's clear from the results that interest in fortifying one's diet is already commonplace across age groups for both men and women.

Saiz tells us that one product he uses to settle down and manage his performance as he gets older is Nomon's Nadaltus (stylized as NADaltus). Nadaltus contains NMN (nicotinamide mononucleotide), a precursor to an essential molecule and an



©Sebastian Saiz

wasabi's unique benefits in exchange for a cheaper condiment.

Saiz was surprised when he first heard about wasabi, not only because of its usefulness but also because it was different from what he had seen in Spain and the U.S. While over 90% of people surveyed were aware of the benefits of wasabi, the advantageous qualities of this Japanese superfood have yet to be fully realized internationally.

Though wasabi can bolster the well-being of even elite athletes, it is difficult and even dangerous to consume large amounts of the plant in its common condiment form. Luckily for Saiz and anyone else interested in harnessing the power of wasabi, supplements such as Nomon's Wasabis (stylized as WASAbis) are not only safe to consume but are becoming more common.

Saiz is serious about staying on top of his game, and while training and nutrition play a huge role, they're not the full story. Saiz counts on supplements, too, including Nomon's Nadaltus and Wasabis. After all, being the best you can be requires protecting your overall well-being.



Outside Assistance

Professionals are held to high standards, and supplemental help is sometimes necessary to improve recovery and health. Saiz supports his training and well-being with a variety of products, including being for enhancement, branched-chain amino acids for performance, vitamins, minerals and wellness products like wasabi supplements. Through his dedication to maximizing his health, Saiz has seen tangible benefits: Despite playing long seasons with minimal recovery time, he has been able to show up to the court feeling great.

As Saiz is a top-tier professional athlete who needs to consistently perform at a high level, he has a team of trained specialists supporting him. Over the years, he's learned a thing or two about what works for him, and some of what he's picked up could prove useful to non-athletes as well. After all, everyone can benefit from extra

important building block. Though 82.5% of survey respondents were unfamiliar with the benefits of NMN, Saiz, who takes the supplement to help maintain his condition, attests to its usefulness.

Spice Power

A problem Saiz has faced over the course of his career is something many people can relate to: joint pain. While common in people as they get older, joint pain can affect young athletes who regularly participate in high-impact activities. For Saiz, something that has helped relieve inflammation and which he's only discovered since coming to Japan is the country's selection of supplements, some of which contain wasabi.

While wasabi is now eaten worldwide, many people beyond Japan's borders have only a fleeting knowledge of the spicy green paste. Many countries even use dyed replacement products, completely cutting out



More Info

Visit the Nomon website at nomon.jp to learn more about Nadaltus and Wasabis. To purchase supplements, visit Nomon's online shop at nomonshop.jp.



STAY PUNK!

Herbie Yamaguchi talks a life of photography, punk philosophy and chasing dreams with stars-to-be in '70s and '80s London

Words by Zoria Petkoska

We suspect we've found the Japanese god of photography in an impossibly cool 73-year-old strolling through Tokyo in his lim-

ited-edition Doc Martens, Leica in hand. Of course, Herbie Yamaguchi, an inspiring, giving, open-hearted photographer with an illustrious career, humbly maintains that he's not divine. "Maybe the god of photography gave me a special power to become a photographer," he muses, flipping through his photobooks with us and showing us photos he took of Boy George, Princess Diana and others.

What we can say with certainty is that Yamaguchi is an award-winning photographer, and among the prestigious awards he's received is a 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Photographic Society of Japan. He's also been part of competition juries

for awards presented by camera giants such as Nikon, Canon and Fujifilm.

In addition to his photography work, he's a radio and television personality and essayist and has been a visiting professor at several universities.

Above all, he is a man of the people. Indeed, Yamaguchi is fascinated by people, the subject of most of his black-and-white photographs. People are not only the center of his attention but are intrinsic to his identity as a photographer. "I believe that the day you become a photographer is not the day you buy a camera," he tells us, "but the day you meet the subject you want to photograph."

Yamaguchi is specific about his photography, sharing that he likes to take photos that "make people fall in love with people." He's been doing just that for half a century. We sat down with him to sift through the past, survey the present and talk about the future.

“
If we reject
all cameras,
we might miss
a chance in
our life.
”



“

If I could put in a photograph the kind emotion in her eyes, the picture would make everybody on this planet peaceful.

”

Snapshots of Hope

“I want to capture human hope.” This has been Yamaguchi’s motto since junior high school when he picked photography as an after-school activity. Suffering from poor health as a child after contracting tuberculosis as a baby, he had been unable to take part in most school sports activities. Photography was his only hope during a dark childhood marked by bullying.

He still remembers the exact moment he realized what kind of photos he wanted to take — those of people full of emotion and care. The memory is rooted in the simple, mundane scene of girls playing with a ball at a local park.

“As I was taking photos, the ball flew toward me, almost hitting me. One of the girls looked at me, her eyes so tender and caring. But I couldn’t take that photo. I had to avoid the ball. Once I was safe, the emotion in her eyes disappeared,” Yamaguchi

Diana Spencer, London 1980



reminisces. “Those were the first nice, warm eyes directed at me from people in society.” Aside from his parents, he explains, no one had looked at him kindly until that day when he was 20 years old.

“If I could put in a photograph the kind emotion in her eyes, the picture would make everybody on this planet

peaceful,” he says. To this day, he chases tender moments like these in his photography.

A few years later, he would photograph another pair of kind eyes — this time on the London Underground — and the experience would change his life as a photographer. The photo was of Joe Strummer, lead singer of The Clash.

“I was hesitant to approach him because it was a private situation,” Yamaguchi tells us. But he gathered the courage to ask for a photo, and Strummer agreed. “I was a stranger, but he looked at me with such tender eyes. He was not his stage persona.”

It’s a photo that was — and still is — highly appreciated. If you search through The Clash photos online, you won’t find another photo of Strummer that radiates such softness. Before he exited the train, Strummer left Yamaguchi with the words that guide him to this day: “Take all the photos you want to take. That’s punk.”

Yamaguchi took it to mean that you should live your life without compromise while avoiding making trouble. He feels

that the punk movement was misunderstood and that it was actually about human dignity and being true to yourself.

Chasing the Dream

Yamaguchi moved to London in 1973. He had no plan and no English ability but was buoyed by a love of British music and a dream of becoming a professional photographer. As fate favors the brave, Yamaguchi managed to get an acting job despite never having stepped on a stage. He joined a Japanese theater company in London by the name of Red Buddha to support himself and took photos whenever he could. In hindsight, being poor was the catalyst for meeting people, as he had no choice but to share an apartment.

Photo by Lisa Knight



“
Take all the photos
you want to take.
That’s punk.
”

“This guy here, I was sharing a floor with him and maybe five or six people,” Yamaguchi says, showing us one of his photos. “Six months later, he became Boy George of Culture Club.”

Although he shot many recognizable names, he wasn’t actively chasing famous people. Rather, he was just chasing his dream of becoming a photographer, sharing a life, an apartment and a city with people his age who were reaching for their own dreams. Yamaguchi’s photos of these ascending stars, in contrast to photos taken by paparazzi, are full of carefree authenticity, friendship and freedom.

His photo of Princess Diana, too, was taken before she was famous. In fact, Yamaguchi had no idea who she was. His friend said she was someone who seemed important and encouraged Yamaguchi to snap a photo, just in case. At the time, Diana Spencer wasn’t even engaged to Prince Charles. “Just months later, the engagement was announced, and then it was impossible to get near her,” Yamaguchi says. The photo he took is a frozen moment before her life changed.



Boy George, London, 1982



We can't be sure that Yamaguchi has superpowers, but the subjects of his photographs have an uncanny way of finding fame not long after being snapped by the photographer — a phenomenon that isn't limited to his London days when he mingled with talented, driven people in a golden age of sorts. He shares two fairly recent stories with us, both of them taking place in Tokyo and involving complete strangers.

In the first, Yamaguchi was riding on the same train as a pianist. She had no idea who Yamaguchi was, but after some hesitation, she agreed to a photo. After posting the photo on Twitter, she not only went viral but within a year had placed third in an international piano

competition in Switzerland.

The second story revolves around a middle-aged taxi driver with a peculiar tuft of forehead hair on a mostly shaved head. A passenger in the back, Yamaguchi couldn't help but be curious about his driver. He soon discovered that the man had been in a punk band for the last 30 years and had nursed a dream — an impossible one, he thought — to play at the Budokan, a large multi-purpose venue.

Yamaguchi took his portrait, then spoke about his encounter with the punk taxi driver on the radio, driving attention to the band. "They played at the Budokan six months later," he tells us. Perhaps his magic is simply helping people, supporting them and dreaming big together.



Fukushima, 2012



Nakameguro, 2020

The Heart Behind the Lens

Yamaguchi creates a special connection with his subjects, though he cannot explain how. He only feels his heart overcome with excitement when he sees a person in a moment he wants to photograph. "And if they are sensitive enough, they can feel my emotion and accept my camera," he says. "I think sometimes people look at me through my camera," he adds. He appreciates their kindness and believes people feel that.

He tells a poignant story about the last photo he took of musician Ryuichi Sakamoto at what was to be his last public appearance before he passed away. Yamaguchi had taken Sakamoto's photo many times before, but on this occasion, he felt compelled to follow Sakamoto behind the stage and out toward a waiting taxi. The last photo is just Sakamoto's fingers grazing the door frame as he leaves the building.

"His hand was there for just two seconds. He knew he had cancer, and I felt he



was telling me to take a picture. I felt a voice saying, ‘This is the last moment of myself — tell people in the future what kind of person I was.’”

Yamaguchi remembers a similar photo capturing hands that he took of a family reunited after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Showing further still that his heart and camera can truly catch emotion anywhere, during the pandemic, he published a photobook solely of masked people to show how humans can express themselves through their eyes and gestures.

We Will Be Alright

Yamaguchi has never stopped taking photos. “I take photos every day, and I take my camera everywhere,” he says, then pauses before adding, “Except when taking a bath!” He compares having his Leica in his hand to holding the hand of a loved one.

Fifty years of taking photos inspired his recent “We Will Be Alright” exhibition, which included photos of people separated by decades and continents. In it, he looks at the universal language of love — how people kiss, hug, hold hands, take care of children and talk to friends in the same way, whether it’s 1970s London or 2010s Tokyo.

“Human beings are doing the same thing — loving each other. So let’s be frank, and we’ll be all right,” Yamaguchi says. “And smile a lot. I think especially Japanese people should smile more. Good sleep, good food, exercise and smiling are the most important things.”

“

I believe that the day you become a photographer is not the day you buy a camera, but the day you meet the subject you want to photograph.

”



Tokyo, 2014



Scotland, 1978



Finland, 1974



Tokyo, 2004

Harnessing the negative into a positive is what he recommends to everyone. He muses that if he hadn’t been sick during his childhood, he wouldn’t have taken the photos he has. Similarly, if he hadn’t spent his early adulthood poor and sharing an apartment in London, he wouldn’t have had the opportunity to meet the people he photographed.

He acknowledges that street photography has become more difficult and that people are more reluctant to agree to a photo by a stranger. However, Yamaguchi believes a smile and a pure heart can still go a long way. “And also, if we reject all cameras, we might miss a chance in our life,” he says, hinting at his power to change the lives of those he photographs.

Maybe it’s divine power, a blessing from the god of photography. Or maybe — and, perhaps, more likely — it’s just Yamaguchi’s kind heart clicking happily when meeting other humans.

CHLOE CHEN

A portrait of a young woman with long dark hair and bangs, wearing a sleeveless denim vest over a white t-shirt and light blue jeans. She is holding a large, white, fluffy stuffed rabbit. The room is dimly lit with a strong blue light source, creating a moody atmosphere. In the background, there is a desk with various items, a birdcage, and shelves filled with books and toys.

IMAGINATION AS FREEDOM

The precocious 17-year-old Chinese artist discusses her dazzling artwork and label as one of the most exciting global art talents

— Words by Paul McInnes

Some artists take time to develop. Others hit the right time at whatever period that may be. Others still explode onto the art scene at a young age. Beijing native Chloe Chen could well fit into the latter category. At just 17 years old, she has emerged as one of the biggest and brightest stars of the international art world, producing art that is a sublime fusion of illustrations centered on being young, restrained, constrained and isolated.

Well traveled and well versed in global art, the phenom has just exhibited her first main solo show at Tokyo's Somsoc Gallery in Harajuku with a selection of illustrations formed and created during the COVID-19 lockdown. When we meet at the exhibition, our discussion centers around the soft-spoken artist's background, her illustrations and her plans for the future.



“Because I spent a lot of time in my room and my home, I felt that imagination is more powerful than freedom.”

”

Artful Connections

Illustrations and several doll models created by a friend from Chen's drawings make up the bulk of the exhibition, titled "Nowhere." Obviously extremely talented, Chen has been called "one of the leading artists of the new era in China," which is a hard label to live up to. She is, however, humble and was genuinely excited to be in Tokyo, a city she has visited before and expressed her love for due to the freedom and experiments in fashion, especially in Harajuku and surrounding areas.

I ask Chen, who has approximately 150,000 Instagram followers across her two accounts, if social media is important to her as an artist. "It's very important to me as I can answer questions about my art for my followers and fans," she says. "They ask me things about myself and my work, and I can connect with them."

It's unsurprising her work has connected so solidly with other teens and 20-somethings. The themes of teenage alienation and solitude have been utilized and mined extensively throughout the ages, from Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* and Martin Amis' *The Rachel Papers* to the songs of Taylor Swift and the TV work and films of Lena Dunham. There's something ever universal and ever appealing about teenage and early adulthood angst and loneliness.

Diverse Influences

Chen's work, featuring titles such as "Loneliness," "Naked," and "Morning Dreams Are Never Ending," details her life and emotional state during the pandemic. With large heads and huge eyes, her work could be said to be reminiscent of Yoshitomo Nara or American artist Margaret Keane. Chen's work, however, is singular, and she puts her own idiosyncratic spin on her oeuvre.

When we talk about her feelings during the lockdown, she says, "During the pandemic, because I spent a lot of time in my room and my home, I felt that imagination is more powerful than freedom."



These are compelling words from someone so young. When humans — and artists in particular — are placed under harsh conditions, they often retreat inside of themselves and create pieces and series of work that transcend physical and rational realms. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Frida Kahlo and many others created seminal work under harsh conditions, including imprisonment and physical impairment.

The amount of work being released in the wake of the pandemic and influenced by the pandemic is huge, and Chen's illustrations of herself lying in bed in a series of surreal and often nightmarish situations are symptomatic of this period of time. Chen, a self-professed fan of Japanese horror manga, often cites the work of Kazuo Umezu, Shintaro Kago and Suehiro Maruo as massive influences on her work. Although, in pieces such as "Sublime Separation," viewers can easily identify Studio Ghibli aesthetics as a young girl peers into the soul of a nightmarish tree.

Metaphors, Manga and Teen Angst

Machines and memory boxes also appear in Chen's work and could be seen in the models on display at the exhibition at Som-soc Gallery. In one, a semi-nude young girl stands on a disk with her midriff exposed, revealing a machine. In another, a naked girl stands poised to dive off the side of a memory box. There's a sublime use of metaphor here, with the reality that we can be considered machines or that our emotions

and reality and free will may not be as they first seem.

Chen also peppers her work with text and speech bubbles, reflecting her interest in manga and comic culture. "We have to get through this year as soon as possible," "I have nothing to wear" and "Anywhere I go, I can only feel sad and lonely" are perfect glimpses into adolescence — particularly adolescence under restraint and created during unprecedented times. Although Chen is already an accomplished artist, with interviews in *Harper's Bazaar* and other publications, she is also a teen and shares the same anxieties and yearnings as other youth in similar situations.

Though she has already collaborated with brands including Moleskin (on a series of notebooks) and Balenciaga, when I ask her which other brands she would like to



work with, she points to the streets of Harajuku behind us. "These stores and brands are more my kind of thing," she says.

More To Come

So what does the future hold for Chloe Chen? Well, for a start, she is due to begin her higher education at the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design this fall and is looking forward to learning and studying there and honing her already impressive array of talents and skills. When speaking with Chen, especially after learning that she started drawing seriously from the age of 3, you can feel that she is utterly consumed by art.

When the interview finishes, she heads back into the gallery where there are fans and visitors waiting to see her and hear her speak about her work. Unassuming, quiet but confident in her own ability, she is definitely an artist to watch in the coming years.

It's the naiveté, the youthfulness and the window into adolescence that make Chen's work so universal; the nightmarish visions, the realization that humans are essentially machines and the teenage ennui that make her illustrations exciting and fresh. It's intriguing to think about what Chen's work will look like when she graduates four years from now. With freedom comes more creativity, and that is the integral beauty instilled in her artwork.

More Info

Follow Chloe Chen on Instagram at [@yanran_chen_](#) and [@iam_chloec.](#)



Art in Akeno

Get to know the village that came out of the pandemic with a thriving art scene formed serendipitously by artists from Japan and abroad

Words by Erik Augustin Palm

Art grows in unexpected places. Take the Yamanashi Prefecture village of Akeno. Here, two hours away from Tokyo's extensive network of galleries and museums, a large stand-alone building, once part of a Velbon tripod factory, is enjoying a new life as an art complex called Gasbon Metabolism.

It's a lazy day after the opening night of the group exhibition "Diffusion of Nature," but at the Mangosteen craft beer brewery and bar next door to the complex, the party atmosphere lingers, with several of the exhibiting artists taking turns walking up and down an imaginary catwalk, facetiously sashaying to the applause of their audience.

Among the crowd cheering on the shenanigans are Dan and Kozue Kitchens, the American and Japanese husband-wife illustration and fine art duo known as Kozyndan. Together, they are



Yuichi Yonebayashi, "微空音-II / Bi-ku-on II," (1987-1992), photo by Tātsumi Okaguchi

arguably one of the most important forces in California's lowbrow scene. Next to them sits David Yuto, a young sculptor previously based in Tokyo who has resided at Gasbon Metabolism since its inception.

"The environment is so relaxed. It makes me feel like nothing stifles my creativity," says Yuto. "I've been experimenting and challenging myself. Initially, I focused on creating large plaster sculptures, but now I'm exploring wood and ceramics." Though Yuto occasionally returns to Tokyo to see friends and for events like the solo exhibition he recently held featuring sculptures made in his studio space at Gasbon Metabolism, he prefers life in Akeno. "I don't have to overthink things here," he says.

While Gasbon Metabolism and the surrounding countryside provide ample space for reflection, a distinctive meditative stillness permeates the massive exhibition halls that host the towering spherical sculptures of Takahiro Miyahara, the geometrical figures of Yuichi Yonebayashi and the enormous inflatable balloon girl — as adorable as it is provocative — of Auto Moai. Behind them are the studio spaces where Yuto and other resident artists attend to their craft, as well as an indoor hydroponic greenhouse where produce is grown.

From Factory to Gallery

The man behind it all is veteran gallerist Shinjiro Nishino, founder of the art book publishing house Gasbook and the contemporary art gallery Calm & Punk in Nishi-Azabu. These are but a few of the en-

Auto Moai's inflatable balloon girl, photo by Tātsumi Okaguchi



deavors he's led under the umbrella of his company, Gas As Interface.

Nishino's journey to Akeno began in 2013 when a Gas As Interface director relocated to Hokuto, the wider city of which Akeno is a part. Following the director's move, Nishino began visiting the area, and during a lull in new business opportunities in 2020, he came across the old Velbon factory on a property website. Recognizing its potential to become something like the framework that existed in his art school days in the 1980s, he seized the opportunity to acquire it.

"The fine art department wasn't as regulated back then," Nishino explains. "We had 24-hour access and were exposed to a variety of materials and techniques, including painting, sculpture, printmaking and photography. Communication between friends and faculty transcended age boundaries. Perhaps that's what we're trying to replicate here."

But back to the sashaying. Mangosteens's local brewmaster, Minoru Kurihara, stands behind the bar, amused by the scene. Akeno, with just 4,500 residents, had likely never seen anything like it before the pandemic. These days, however, the village sees plenty, both at Gasbon Metabolism and at Mangosteens, the latter of which opened its Hokuto branch in the old factory complex in November 2022.

"At first, we thought we met (the people of Gasbon Metabolism) by chance, but the more we talked, the more we realized that we have similar mindsets," says Kurihara, explaining that even though the brewery isn't directly involved with the art complex, many of its artists in residence, as well as



David Yuto, photo by Erik Augustin Palm

those visiting for exhibitions, eat and drink at Mangosteens. "I guess we're a spontaneous collaborator," he muses and tells us of potential beer can designs created by Gasbon Metabolism artists.

Finding a Community

The aforementioned Kitchens of art duo Kozyndan are some of Mangosteens's most regular patrons. The pair relocated to Yamanashi, Kozue's home prefecture, from Los Angeles at the start of the pandemic with plans to restore the 130-year-old kominka — an old Japanese-style house built using traditional techniques — Kozue had purchased in 2018. Around the same





Kozzyndan, "Making Themselves at Home," photo by Dan Kitchens

time, and without the Kitchens' knowledge, other artistic ventures were brewing in the area.

"Since we arrived at the start of COVID, we hadn't interacted much with the community until things began to calm down last year, which coincided with Gasbon gearing up," says Dan.

"While we still primarily create work for our international galleries, shops and clients, we also have a desire to connect with people and contribute to the local community," he continues. "Many of our artist friends have started visiting, and they seem genuinely enthusiastic about our life here and the fusion of traditional inaka (countryside) farming culture and art. Like us, people recognize the potential for something beautiful if these two realms not only coexist but also collaborate."

This has already begun. Kozue regularly works with local ceramic artists and has embedded her own ceramic practice into the local studio scene, firing her creations in local kilns and immersing herself in the traditional culture. Attending to their vast backyard — home to a bamboo forest, a gently flowing river and a plethora of homegrown

produce, some of which they pass along to Mangosteen — is another ongoing project.

Making Art, Together

Since opening in August 2022, Gasbon Metabolism has hosted both solo shows and group shows for a total of around 10 events. The recent "Diffusion of Nature" exhibition featured creators from the artist-in-resi-

Kozzyndan, "Rapid Hybridization," for the card game Magic the Gathering, photo by Dan Kitchens



dence program at Kumonodaira Mountain Hut in Japan's Northern Alps. Thus far, Nishino's vision for the space seems to be materializing.

Yuto, Kurihara, the Kitchens and the other contributors to the village's flourishing cultural scene are all very much part of its organic growth. Nishino explains that the creative metabolism that characterizes the community extends across various domains, saying that the intention is to "promote culturally high-quality metabolism."

He continues, "This means utilizing the facility in a way that serves the community with unique activities, even if the nature of its business changes. It involves respecting the wisdom of our predecessors in art and other cultural activities while embracing the inspiration and ideas that come from younger generations."

Kozue is more concrete when she describes what's happening in Akeno, saying, "Some artists have been here for decades, having moved from bigger cities to find more space. Gasbon Metabolism brings these artists together and introduces them to the local community. Without it, we wouldn't have been aware of the existence of this creative community."

She gives Mangosteen credit, too, for its part in nurturing growth by providing locals with a place to dine and gather. "When we first moved here, we had to drive to other towns to go to bars or eat out," she says. "Finally, people have a place to casually drink and eat within walking distance. It's been wonderful."

More Info

Find Gasbook Projects Studio and Gasbon Metabolism at studio.gasbook.net and on Instagram at [@gasbon_gasbook](https://www.instagram.com/gasbon_gasbook).

Trainspotting in Asakusabashi



We shine a spotlight on Auba Jaconelli, a space that brings an obsession with British culture and fashion to the retail landscape

Words by Paul McInnes, photos by Kosuke Shimasaki

Irvine Welsh's seminal 1993 novel, *Trainspotting*, ostensibly changed British culture forever. From the incendiary first page, Scotland and being Scottish finally became cool, and the nation came out into cultural consciousness after decades in the cold.

Adapted for film by Danny Boyle in 1996, *Trainspotting* became probably the defining movie and film soundtrack of the 1990s and changed the narrative of art, visuals, fashion and music for a generation.

In the backstreets of Asakusabashi, the style and vibrant youth culture inherent in *Trainspotting* is still alive and well and is being used as the main aesthetic influence for a new retail brand: Auba Jaconelli. Headed by 26-year-old Itsuki Hozumi, the store has become a hub for those interested in combining British casualwear with tailoring.

Bringing a Touch of Britain to Japan

I meet with Hozumi on a humid June afternoon at his charming space in Taito, a ward often overlooked and underrated, and we discuss the store, his background and his love for — and perhaps obsession with — British popular culture and fashion.

“
I love Sean Connery's style; he's masculine but has a very beautiful elegance.”
”



We kick off our chat with a question about nomenclature. I am honestly expecting a verbose and ambiguous answer, but the response is, instead, very simple and direct: "Auba" means "meeting place" in Japanese, and "Jaconelli" comes from the iconic Glaswegian eatery, Café D'Jaconelli, used as the setting for the scene in *Trainspotting* in which protagonists Renton and Spud discuss the latter's upcoming job interview while slurping milkshakes and dabbing speed. He also adds that the name sounds like an imaginary soccer player. Hozumi explains that he liked the aesthetics and visuals of the café and believed it was an apt name for his store and brand.

Designers become involved in fashion in different ways. Some through fashion college (the majority in Japan through the prestigious Bunka Fashion College), others through music, sport or various subcultures. Hozumi, however, took a more unusual route, entering the world of fashion via a love of fashion magazines, a job in a clothing store and

an interest in British culture.

"Actually, I didn't go to fashion school," says Hozumi. "I studied oceans at university! But I started to become interested in fashion when I was a student and admired various characters in films and magazines." Hozumi goes on to explain that this interest took a serious turn only when he started working with a fashion brand and began researching men's and women's clothing.

"I read magazines like *Uomo*, *Pop-eye*, *Brutus* and *Ginza*," he shares. "For films, *Trainspotting*, of course, and James Bond movies. I love Sean Connery's style; he's masculine but has a very beautiful elegance. And more recently, I really like the film *Kingsman*."

Acing the Aesthetics

A peek around the Auba Jaconelli store makes it clear that this is a shrine and a cultural smorgasbord of Hozumi's obsessions and a deep dive into his personality. Tracksuit tops, rows of tailored suits, books about British football hooligans

and casuals, film posters of James Bond, *Trainspotting* and *Paris, Texas* adorn the interior. The Tokyo fashion retail scene can be brutal and competitive, but Hozumi seems comfortable and confident and is forging his own way in the industry.

Even the location is unorthodox and, for some perhaps, a major risk. "This is a nice area with old buildings and new restaurants and shops," he says confidently. "So our store matches this concept. Mixed cultures and old and new. There are many kind people around here, and they are friendly. We wanted to get involved with the surrounding area and hold various events in the store with people from different backgrounds, such as illustrators and photographers. It's really a meeting place, hence the name Auba."

Auba Jaconelli, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, also stocks a very fine collection of womenswear. When I ask about a possible link or connection with *Trainspotting*, Hozumi shakes his head and points to the poster of *Paris, Texas*. "The inspiration, image and coloring for the collection of womenswear available comes from other films," he says. "One of my favorite films is *Paris, Texas* — the coloring and styling are perfect. It also comes from British culture, especially Princess Diana and photos and articles about her."



The Legacy of *Trainspotting*

Our discussion veers back, perhaps predictably, to *Trainspotting* and its cultural legacy. It's no exaggeration to say that both the novel and film have had an overarching and hugely influential effect on a series of generations. Youngsters today are still finding *Trainspotting* and are drawn to its dark humor, its retro chic, its fusion of eras (the late '70s, '80s and '90s), its visual and linguistic mastery, and for Hozumi, at least, its balanced and subversive styling and aesthetics.

"*Trainspotting*'s styling, the fashion, the use of color and the use of size fittings, music and atmosphere — it's a little dark but also a nice mix of pop and punk. The way fashion is mixed with tailoring and sportswear, especially seen in the character Spud. He wears a track jacket under a tailored jacket. The combination of each character and styling. For example, Begbie — he's the coolest character, and I love his style."

He continues, "Hibs is a collection I created of knitted V-neck sweaters that were made in Scotland. I was inspired by Begbie wearing a V-neck sweater in *Trainspotting*. They're made from Shetland lambswool. It's very classical. I love the silhouette and style, and the V-neck matches shirts very well, like Begbie." The collection's name is also inspired by *Trainspotting* and the fictional character, "Hibs" being a nickname for Hibernian F.C., a popular Edinburgh soccer team that counts Begbie among its fans.

Hozumi's made-to-order suits, T-shirts, trousers and a very carefully curated selection of other domestic brands have seen him amass a loyal and growing fanbase. It's not Aoyama or Omotesando, but Asakusabashi has its own charms and appeal. Hozumi's ambition and infectious personality, as well as his role as fashion curator and businessman, will surely gain him even more fans and admiration.



As for the cult of *Trainspotting*? In a 2016 article for *Dazed Digital*, Tom Rasmussen writes, "The film has also maintained a strong sartorial legacy: who could forget the widespread moral panic surrounding the film's popularization of the 'heroin chic' archetype? More specifically, several designers still make aesthetic choices informed (consciously or subconsciously) by the film and its resulting impact: see Vetements, Gosha, Liam Hodges, and even Wang for Balenciaga menswear. Twenty years on, there's an undeniable authenticity to *Trainspotting* that will continue to resonate with outsiders in generations to come."

More Info

Auba Jaconelli

3-4-8 Asakusabashi, Taito ward, 111-0053

Find the shop online at au-ba.com and on Instagram at [@auba_jaconelli](https://www.instagram.com/auba_jaconelli).



Shooting for the MOON

New girl group SG5 discusses '90s nostalgia, going international
and their dreams of reaching the moon and the stars

Interview by Lyn Tsuchiya

SG5, a recently debuted girl group inspired by *Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon*, brings the iconic '90s manga and anime series by Naoko Takeuchi to the world of J-pop. The group, which performs with Takeuchi's blessing, is managed by Three Six Zero and LDH and produced by Grammy-winning producer BloodPop. SG5 burst onto the scene on March 1 of this year with its first digital single, "Firetruck." TW caught up with the group's five members — Kaede, Sayaka, Ruri, Miyuu and Rui — and chatted about their aspirations.

What went into creating this band and your debut?

KAEDE: Four of us — Sayaka, Ruri, Miyuu and I — are from Happiness, and Rui is from iScream, and we were called to join a new concept group inspired by *Sailor Moon*.

MIYUU: There were a lot of lessons and training sessions, and our performances were checked by Takeuchi on a regular basis, as she took a deep interest in the group. We also frequently met with the producer BloodPop and his team.

RUI: We also had to practice our English before our debut. We're still studying every day, and it's a learning process.

What's it like working with Naoko Takeuchi?

MIYUU: She watches our performance videos frequently and gives us advice. She encouraged us to be more ourselves and be different from *Sailor Moon*. I thought she would ask us to be more like *Sailor Moon*, but she values our individuality.

How is SG5 different from other projects, like Happiness and iScream?

KAEDE: In Happiness, we were performers but never held the mic. In SG5, we were given the chance to sing.

SAYAKA: Also, in our other groups, the main point of production was Japan. With SG5, recordings and music video shoots were all in the United States. We've been in touch with new ideas that would have never come from Japan and tried new singing techniques.

How has it been working with both Japanese management and American producers? Do you have any anecdotes to share?

MIYUU: Working in the United States has been meaningful and fun at the same time. SG5 is produced by an American team, and the mindset is more relaxed and passionate. When we're creating songs, we write the lyrics we want.

SAYAKA: In Japan, usually a song is already made three days before recording. But working with BloodPop, we received the lyrics on the day of recording, and we were singing within the same day. Plus, it was the first time for us

to do an entire song in English, so we were practicing as we were recording.

RUI: During the filming of our music video, we were given a lot of straightforward feedback in between takes. A lot of compliments, too, which definitely helped bring the mood up and motivated us. Filming in Japan is pretty rigid and strict. We definitely learned to be comfortable and have fun while working with our team in the U.S.

“Through SG5,
we're able to
showcase the
best parts of
Japanese culture
to the world.”

”

SG5 debuted at the Anime Expo in Los Angeles. What was the experience like?

RUI: Anime Expo was our first live performance as SG5, and we were pretty nervous — especially because we had to emcee in English, which was a new challenge for us. Thankfully, the response was much better than we anticipated. Everyone was grooving along to a song they'd never heard before!

I had never really traveled outside of Japan, and I never really thought about how Japan looked from other people's eyes. But at Anime Expo, I saw how much Japanese culture is celebrated and accepted abroad. And looking at Japan from the outside, Japan actually has a lot of amazing things. I think it's great that through SG5, we're able to showcase the best parts of Japanese culture to the world.

Why do you think people love Japanese pop culture?

RURI: For Japanese music, I think the lyrics are really honest, and you can't help but relate to them. All these songs have thoughts and ideas that you wouldn't have the courage to say out loud, but when it's turned into a song, you can communicate how you feel.

KAEDE: The charm of manga would be that the story, characters and lore are really deep. You can relate to the characters because they're deep and set up with so much detail.

MIYUU: I think that all Japan-made products, be they songs or manga, are made with care and the utmost attention to detail.

SAYAKA: Personally, I think Japan is very good at creating fashion that crosses foreign trends with Japanese tastes. Some things

that are trendy overseas don't always fit Japanese preferences, but Japanese designers are able to make them work, making something new and innovative while keeping the integrity of the original trend.

What kind of anime or manga do you like?

KAEDE: I've always loved reading manga and collecting physical copies of it. As a kid, I loved shoujo manga, but now I like reading shounen manga too. Now I also like underground manga like *Yamikin Ushijima-kun* (*Ushijima the Loan Shark*).

SAYAKA: I love watching anime on Netflix, especially sports shounen anime because it's relatable and helps me push myself to work hard.

RUI: I loved watching the *Kakegurui* (*Compulsive Gambler*) anime. I also love Sanrio characters. After going to the States and seeing how popular they were there, my love for the characters was boosted and I've been collecting Sanrio character stickers.

MIYUU: I love Heisei-era things. I loved *Ciao* monthly comics and playing the Love and Berry: Dress Up and Dance! arcade game. I also love *Crayon Shin-chan*. I hope I can get our Western fans hooked on *Shin-chan* too.

RURI: I loved playing Love and Berry at the arcade too.

What kind of cultural phenomena do you like from the '90s, the era of *Sailor Moon's* original run?

MIYUU: Japanese TV youth dramas. I loved watching *Hana Yori Dango* (*Boys Over Flowers*, a 2005 drama based on a '90s manga). The original soundtracks of the dramas were great too.



KAEDE: I loved loose socks. When I was in fifth grade, they were a big trend. Now that they're back in style, I've bought them again.

RUI: I was really bad at communication, so I used a profile book where you ask your friends to fill out a profile sheet. I asked people who I wasn't friends with so I could get to know them more.

RURI: Collecting and trading stickers was definitely a big thing. And the kids with the puffy 3D stickers were so popular.

SAYAKA: I don't wear it now but when I was young, I put a cat-print tail strap on my waist or backpack. I loved Namie Amuro's music too.

What artists do you look up to and/or want to collaborate with?

KAEDE: Dua Lipa. She's the epitome of a powerful, confident woman who doesn't care about boys. She's like a hero for women and fits our concept so well.

RURI: Olivia Rodrigo. She's the same age as me, and she's loved by everyone internationally. Her genre is a bit different from SG5, but a collaboration would be awesome.

SAYAKA: Ariana Grande. I love her so much that I practice singing with her songs. What's amazing about her is that she changes her look and sound according to what she puts out — she transforms like Sailor Moon.

RURI: I love Ed Sheeran. I'd also like to work with male rappers such as Travis Scott.

MIYUU: I love Camila Cabello.

More Info

Keep up to date on everything SG5 by following them on Instagram at [@sg5official](https://www.instagram.com/sg5official).



SUSTAINABILITY



Photo by Kei Yamada

48

Fresh Fashion

Shun Watanabe upcycles the contents of his closet.

52

Eco-Friendly Eating

Justin Mackee on his latest venture, Cocono dairy-free yogurt.



FASHION REFURBISHED



Shun Watanabe talks about his entry into the world of fashion, how it's changed over the years and his new upcycling project

— Words by Kim Kahan

The first time Shun Watanabe and I meet for an interview, the stylist and editor spends two hours telling me tales from his 20-plus years as one of the top shakers in the Tokyo fashion scene. Thanks to his long career working both in Japan and abroad — often in Europe and the U.S. — he is full of anecdotes, many of which involve the biggest names of the 2000s. It's clear that he loves to relive the good old days.



In the end, we cover none of the topics we'd planned to discuss, instead getting lost in hilarious but mainly off-the-record stories. We end up doing a second interview several days later, this time managing to cover the biggest topics, including the changing fashion scene and Watanabe's brand, Newsian.

From Music to Fashion

Watanabe tells me that he discovered fashion through music. From the age of 15, he regularly sneaked out of his house to hang out and DJ with his older friends. He worked several part-time jobs to earn money for records and DJ'd around Shibuya on weekends. "That was my 'hood, you know?" he tells me in an American-leaning accent. He headed to Bunka Fashion College — Tokyo's top fashion school — simply to copy his friends. "I had no idea what I wanted to do," he admits.

Ultimately, he ended up interning at *Vogue Nippon*, having a eureka moment when he saw the glamorous Ako Tanaka, a *Vogue Nippon* editor at the time. "She was it," he says, emphasizing the last word. Luckily, she was after an assistant, and Watanabe stepped up. What followed was a period of working hard and playing hard.



Photo by Kei Yamada

"I'd start at 9am and get back around 4am each day," he tells me. "I was out in Nishichome (Tokyo's gay neighborhood) all the time."

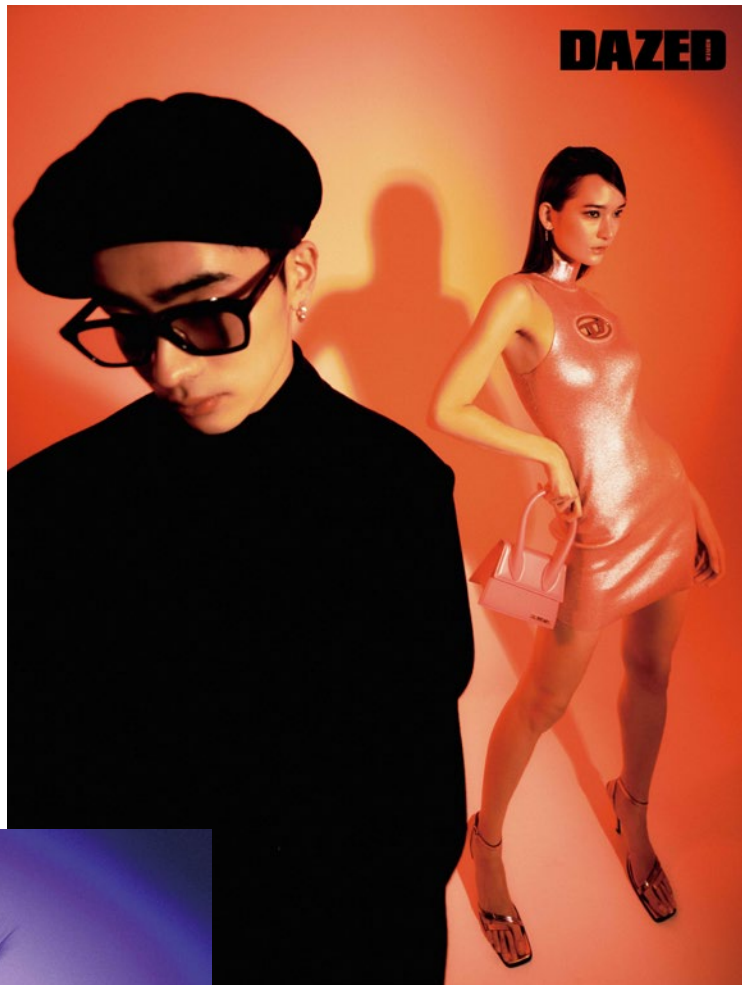
It was around then that he met Nicola Formichetti, who at the time was Lady Gaga's stylist. The pair became fast friends and collaborators. They'd hit up gay bars with friends, including designers Kim Jones and Koji Maruyama, the group sharing their love of music, fashion and wild nights out. He credits his friendship with Formichetti for jobs, both editorial and styling, that saw him regularly switch between Europe, the U.S. and Asia.

Bubble-Era Influences

Speaking to Watanabe, it's clear just how much he is influenced by music, even now. He sees his early days in Shibuya as parallel to his fashion career and enthuses about music-related editorial work. Growing up in Tokyo at the end of the bubble era meant there was a substantial budget for creative outlets, including music. For Watanabe, this background is his unique selling point. "A big part of my styling and editorial work is informed by my experiences of Japanese culture from the '80s to the 2000s."

His Instagram is filled with images from music-themed fashion shoots, including shots from a recent piece in *GQ Japan* that recreated famous covers from the city pop genre of music popular in the '80s. Other images — grainy photos with bulbous Y2K distortion and bright neon colors à la bubble-era Japan — are from a shoot for *Dazed Korea* earlier this year for which he was the art director.

Watanabe's DJ'ing experiences inspire him in another way too. "I like to mix clothes just like I mix records," he says. "In the past, when I styled for *Vogue*, I only used high-end brands. But since the 2010s, I've gotten into streetwear, so a lot of my styling mixes both." It's worth noting that he has a long-standing creative partnership with Uniqlo.



“
A big part of my
styling and editorial
work is informed by
my experiences of
Japanese culture from
the '80s to the 2000s.
”

Industry Observations

Watanabe has seen a lot of change over the years. He mentions the boom in non-white models, highlighting how the fashion world has become more diverse in its casting. He's also noticed differences between the West and Asia, saying, "I think people in the West are a lot more body positive and open about their sexuality than in Japan and Asia." He illustrates this point by recounting an episode from his time as fashion editor of *Vogue Hommes Japan* alongside Nicola Formichetti when the pair did a bondage-inspired shoot with Lady Gaga. The 2009 shoot raised eyebrows in the Japanese publishing industry but was met with applause abroad.

“

I think people in the West are a lot more body positive and open about their sexuality than in Japan and Asia.

”

Due to his wide-ranging global experience and increased work with Korean creatives in the last 10 years, Watanabe is well placed to note the differences between Japan and Korea too. He raves about K-pop band NewJeans and insists that the recent K-pop boom is not coincidental. “The Korean government gets it,” he tells me. “They’re putting a lot of money into entertainment in Korea, and I think that’s a big reason why the industry is as viable as it is today. The Japanese government, on the other hand, doesn’t seem to get this.”

Building His Brand

In 2019, concerned with the lack of awareness around sustainability in the Japanese fashion industry, Watanabe launched his own clothing brand, Newsian. The name is a portmanteau of “new” and “Asian” and is meant to illustrate the brand’s concept, which revolves around pride in Asian culture and keeping up with the times.

Watanabe originally intended Newsian to be a lifestyle brand but switched focus to just clothing because of the pandemic. “Being at home thanks to the coronavirus, I realized just how many clothes I had,” he says.



Kodansha with Jan, 2023, photo by Stefan Doffer

Newsian became an outlet for his creativity, with Watanabe remaking clothing items, hand-embroidering vintage pieces and tie-dyeing articles to upcycle. “Over the course of the pandemic,” he says, “the process became a kind of meditation for me.” Even now, he relishes time spent in his atelier.

In contrast to traditional upcycled brands, Newsian makes sustainability a desirable commodity, with each piece hand finished by Watanabe himself. It’s clear as I peruse the brand’s looks that Newsian is different. Those involved, from models to photographers, are major players in the Tokyo fashion scene — and, of course, Watanabe styles each shoot. It’s not just his own clothing getting the Newsian treatment, either. “I get my clothes from friends as well,” he tells me. Upon hearing this, I flash back to his many celebrity anecdotes and think it is a statement sure to excite anyone with an interest in Japanese fashion.

At present, Watanabe works on remaking clothes by hand at his atelier in Jindaiji, where he is currently based. He has his sights set beyond Japan’s borders, however, and plans to relocate to Los Angeles later this year and move between North America and Asia. “Jindaiji is like LA vibes,” he says before sharing his ultimate goal: “I want to bring Asia to the U.S.”



Kodansha with Jan, 2023, photo by Stefan Doffer

A Spoonful of Sustainability

Words by Samantha Low, photos by Anna Petek



With
Cocono,
Justin Mackee
brings eco-
friendly coconut
yogurt to Tokyoites
with an appetite
for plant-based dairy
alternatives

Photo by Justin Mackee



Justin Mackee with Cocono's unofficial mascot, Hazy

Tokyoite Justin Mackee recalls fondly the Japanese catering business he co-founded in London with a former partner while in his 20s. “It was the hardest I’ve ever worked in my life, for the least amount of money. But I enjoyed it so much. I would think back to that time often, even today.” Food has always been a passion for Mackee, and throughout his life, he has flirted with ideas for food businesses while working a corporate job.

In 2020, he sought comfort in food once again and started Let Tokyo Eat Cake, a solo charitable delivery service of banana carrot cake. All proceeds were donated to charities like Second Harvest Japan and local children’s cafés. At a time when social distancing was the norm and human contact

was minimal, Mackee delivered hope alongside homemade goods.

Let Tokyo Eat Cake was the springboard for Cocono, now one of Tokyo’s most celebrated dairy-free yogurt brands. Thanks to the encouraging words of friends and a loyal customer base, Mackee dared to revisit one of his earlier business ideas, but this time, he had an additional self-imposed challenge: This new product had to have as minimal a carbon footprint as possible, and, consequently, be as local as possible.

Mackee wanted the name of this new product to reflect his philosophy. “I wanted a brand that could go beyond coconut yogurt. A name that is nice to say and also easy for Japanese people to pronounce,” he says. It started with the phrase “koko no mono,” which loosely translates to “this

“
My vision for
our yogurt and
for any future
products is food
that’s delicious
that just
happens to be
plant-based.
”

thing from here” and, of course, hints at his product being made locally. The phrase then developed into “koko no Tokyo” before finally becoming, simply, Cocono.

Daily Dairy Without Consequences

The lactose-free dairy products industry is a growing one, especially in Asia where a surprisingly large portion of the population is lactose intolerant. DSM, a global science-based company focused on nutrition, health and bioscience, reported that there are estimated to be “at least forty times more people suffering from lactose intolerance in an Asian country like Vietnam than in a north European country like Denmark.”

In Japan, an estimated average of 73% of the population is lactose intolerant. This doesn’t mean the average Japanese can’t consume dairy; instead, it means that people need to moderate their intake of dairy products to avoid gut issues.

“A lot of people eat yogurt in Japan, probably more than you think,” says Mackee. His Japanese grandmother, he shares, had yogurt for breakfast every day, even with an undiagnosed but apparent dairy intolerance.

“I didn’t realize I, too, have a dairy intolerance because I got used to feeling terrible after drinking milk or eating cheese,” Mackee says, explaining that typical meals in the U.K. include a substantial amount of dairy. “The first time I had coconut yogurt was in Australia, and it blew my mind that I felt completely fine afterward.”

At the moment, Cocono offers a single product: natural yogurt handmade with only four ingredients (coconut milk, probiotics, agar and konjac flour). This yogurt is thick — perhaps much thicker than the commercially available yogurt you’re familiar with — yet the flavor is bright and tart. You can have it on its own, but Cocono customers swear it’s better served alongside crunchy granola and fresh fruit.

“The goal of Cocono is to be a delicious Japanese plant-based brand,” says Mackee. “We’re also not trying to emulate the taste of non-vegan food. My vision for our yogurt and for any future products is food that’s delicious that just happens to be plant-based.”

Keeping a Clean Conscience

Cocono’s sustainability approach is imperative, and this extends to packaging. At first, Mackee wasn’t entirely sure what he was after, but he did know one thing: He didn’t want single-use plastics anywhere near his product.

“Glass jars are what we use right now, and I think it’s a better option,” he says. “The disadvantages are that they are expensive, heavy and our factories are unable to reuse



them. I do collect them and donate them to farm shops and children's cafés where they can be used, but we are constantly working on improving the packaging."

Mackee believes paper is the key to reducing costs and making the product more accessible so more people can enjoy Cocono. The biggest challenge has been convincing Japanese manufacturers that their paper containers and lids — the same packaging often used for ice cream — can be used for yogurt.

"I could easily work with a manufacturer in China, but that's not keeping it local," says Mackee, who explains that many advised him to introduce environmentally sustainable initiatives only after getting Cocono off the ground. "In my experience, if you start with the easier and more profitable option, it will be hard to change down the line."

He admits that paper packaging, which uses plastic film, isn't a perfect solution. But, he says, it's a start, and Cocono could be a paper-packaged yogurt pioneer. "I'm still at the point in this business life cycle where I have control over these decisions. The least you can do, I think, is to adhere to your own principles."

Too Good To Keep to Yourself

Cocono's happy customers do not hesitate to feature the yogurt online. Through social media, Mackee has seen his beloved coconut yogurt in the hands of everyone from high-end restaurants and Michelin-starred chefs to food influencers and average folks in Tokyo. Mackee never asks people to share Cocono and has never paid anyone to do so.

"I think consumers are astute enough nowadays to see through whether someone is promoting something because they were paid to or because they genuinely like it. And I believe if they like it, they'll share it. If they don't, it's not a problem."

Pop-up shops and stands have also played a big role in establishing the brand's name in the consumer space. You can find Cocono at the weekly Aoyama Farmers Market alongside friends of the brand and other thoughtfully produced food products. Independent grocery stores like Alishan Park in Yoyogi and National Azabu in Minami-Azabu also stock Cocono. If you're traveling to Tokyo and staying at Andaz Tokyo in Toranomon, you'll see Cocono among

“
The least you can do,
I think, is to adhere to
your own principles.

”

the hotels' breakfast buffet offerings.

Mackee hopes to introduce different types of yogurt into his product lineup. He envisions a vanilla coconut yogurt sold in smaller formats for children to enjoy and is toying with the idea of a functional drink that tastes good and also provides plenty of nutritional benefits. In addition to thinking up new products, he continues to push the boundaries of environmentally friendly packaging, staying local and providing Tokyoites with more eco-friendly options.

"I'm still learning as I go — about producing food and about sustainability. But my idea has always been that, if this is going to be a new brand, it needs to be better for the future."

More Info

Learn more about Cocono and purchase a jar at coconotokyo.com or follow the brand on Instagram at [@coconotokyo](https://www.instagram.com/coconotokyo).

TRAVEL



56

Zero-Waste Wonder

Vacation with a clean conscience
in Kamikatsu.

60

Kid-Friendly in Kyoto

DoubleTree by Hilton Kyoto Higashiyama
caters to your needs.

TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAVEL

Photo ©INOW



Visit Kamikatsu, Japan's first zero-waste town,
and get inspired to do better

Words by Linda Ding



Reaching Kamikatsu requires venturing deep into Shikoku, Japan's smallest main island, and then deeper still into Tokushima Prefecture. The town, a one-hour drive from the nearest city, is home to roughly 1,400 residents — and zero garbage trucks. This is because Kamikatsu does not accept any garbage from anybody. Instead, the town sorts its waste into a whopping 45 categories for recycling. Only a small amount of unrecyclable waste ends up incinerated or in landfills. This impressive system of waste management has garnered the small town a lot of serious attention, and in the years since the system was implemented over 20 years ago, Kamikatsu has gained the international reputation of being Japan's first zero-waste town.

As interesting as waste and recycling can be, however, you may wonder if it's worth the effort to travel all that way to admire a system not available to you upon returning home. After all, even if you wish to recycle as thoroughly as the residents of Kamikatsu, you won't have the opportunity to do so without the support of your local government.

Photo ©INOW



There is great value in a visit to Kamikatsu, however, to learn about circularity and sustainable practices. Make the trip, immerse yourself in the town's model of sustainability, several aspects of which are introduced below, and let the town and its residents inspire you to do great and sustainable things. The trip may prove itself positively transformative.

Learning from Locals

One of the best ways to experience Kamikatsu, or life in the Japanese countryside in general, is through the Inow program. Inow, pronounced “eno,” focuses on raising sustainability consciousness through direct experiences and provides customizable itineraries to match each participant's interests. Guests from various backgrounds — from professionals like chefs, designers and architects to educational institutions like universities and high schools to individual travelers and families with kids — participate in the Inow program to rekindle a lost connection with nature, or perhaps even a lost connection with themselves and with one another. In fact, the Inow program's name comes from the word “inow,” which means “to return home” in the local dialect.

Photo ©INOW



Taking part in one of Inow's offerings will see you engage in an aspect of daily life alongside local residents, allowing you the chance to fully immerse yourself in a lifestyle where self-reliance and a slower pace are the norm. Programs can last for a few days or a few hours depending on how much time you have, and the activities provided will vary based on the season. For example, you can learn about organic farming and food production, cooking using seasonal ingredients and traditional recipes or composting and permaculture.

As nature is an intrinsic part of the program, you'll find yourself immersed in Kamikatsu's great outdoors, and the mountains ubiquitous in the region will be your playground. Hiking can be enjoyed year-round, while in summer, you can swim and fish in the rivers that snake through the valleys. You can also try your hand at indigo dyeing, a traditional craft of Tokushima. Anyone who believes the countryside has nothing to offer will surely be singing a different tune after spending time in Kamikatsu with Inow.

More info: inowkamikatsu.com

A Different Kind of Responsible Drinking

A common misconception about the countryside is that it lacks the cool bars and trendy restaurants that are easily found in cities. It often comes as a surprise to visitors, then, that the Rise & Win Brewing Company, a craft beer brewery that doubles as a restaurant and a general store, calls Kamikatsu home and makes delicious beer using ingredients sourced right in town.

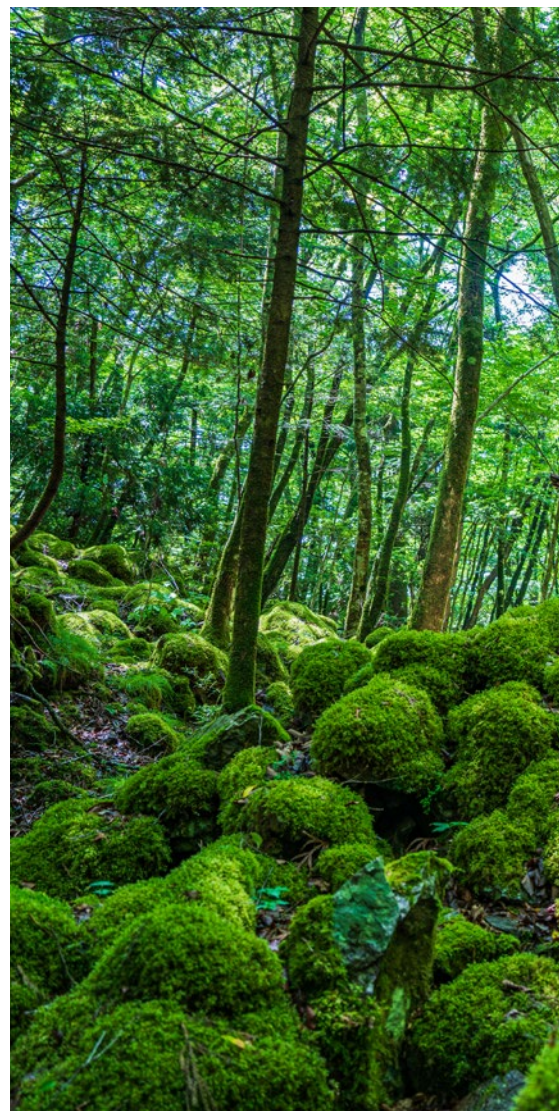
Open since 2015, Rise & Win, whose name is a direct translation of the two kanji used to write Kamikatsu in Japanese, works hard to live up to the town's zero-waste ethos. By making beer using hyper-local ingredients, including yukou, a hybrid citrus fruit said to originate in Kamikatsu, and Awa bancha, the local post-fermented tea that's existed in the region for over 800 years, the brewery shows it knows how to get creative with nearby resources.

To further boost its sustainability credentials, Rise & Win has gone circular with its reRise project, which sees the brewery turn waste products from beer production — for example, malt residue and high-concentration waste liquids from yeast and



hop residue — into a liquid fertilizer that is then used in barley fields to increase crop sweetness and prevent pests from infesting the barley. The barley grown is then used to make more beer, creating a circular economy where before there was only waste. With reRise and its other initiatives, Rise & Win is showing that conscious consumption is possible when we care about every step of the production process, rather than just focusing on the end product.

The brewery's dedication to circularity is visible in its approach to decor as well, something that you'll notice at the Rise & Win Taproom, which boasts chandeliers



made of bottles and shelves made of reclaimed wood. Beyond allowing you a look at the sustainable interior design, a visit will give you the chance to sample the brewery's delicious beer. One sip and you'll know for certain that a focus on sustainability can go hand in hand with producing a quality beer.

More info: kamikatz.jp

Spinning a Burden into Beauty

Looking at Kamikatsu's lush mountainous landscape, you'd be hard-pressed to detect the dark secret lurking within the forests carpeting the mountainsides. Japanese cedar (sugi) has caused enormous ecological damage across Japan since being planted in dense forests in a bid to boost Japan's economy by creating a marketable resource.

When prices spiraled, the tree farms were neglected, and vast swathes of land were left covered in trees with shallow roots that hold less water in the earth and that are easily felled by stormy weather and landslides. The trees also block sunlight, preventing undergrowth from flourishing, and produce heaping amounts of pollen that cause hay fever.

One company in Kamikatsu, however, is turning lemons into lemonade, or at least problematic trees into textiles. By transforming the fragrant trees into thread and creating fabric from it, Sugitoyama, started by Kumi Sugiyama, has found a creative solution to a hard problem — and made something beautiful in the process. In fact, Sugitoyama products harness Japanese cedar's beneficial characteristics, such as its



Top and bottom photo ©Shumpei Ohsugi.



antibacterial properties and its ability to dry quickly. Both of these qualities lend themselves well to the very comfortable socks produced by the company.

In addition to its foot-friendly signature product, Sugitoyama also makes handkerchiefs and face towels. It even sells cedar thread in a variety of naturally dyed colors so you, too, can get creative and make your own treasures. If that's not enough, you can join a workshop at Sugitoyama Kanda Atelier, a new space that opened just this year that offers visitors the chance to learn how to make tassels and other items or experiment with natural dyeing.

More info: www.sugitoyama.jp

Harmony by Design

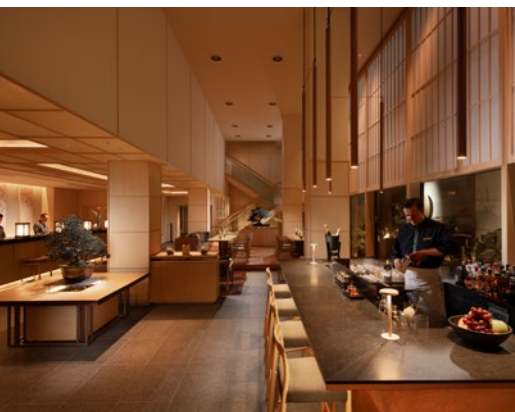


DoubleTree by Hilton Kyoto Higashiyama is a haven of comfort for travelers — families included

Kyoto, the beautiful ancient capital of Japan, is a crown jewel of a destination. Rich with historical and cultural importance and boasting a truly majestic setting, the city attracts a huge number of tourists both domestic and international. Hosting them is a wide range of lodging facilities, the newest of which is DoubleTree by Hilton Kyoto Higashiyama in the city's stunning Higashiyama district.

First-Rate Facilities and a Family-Friendly Environment

DoubleTree by Hilton Kyoto Higashiyama, set to open on August 8, is sure to make serious waves in Kyoto's competitive hotel landscape. Guests staying at the 158-room hotel, which features a Kyoto-inspired



interior accented with wood and shoji, will have access to all-day dining, a lounge bar, public baths and a 24-hour fitness center. In addition, those spending the night in the hotel's suites will find their rooms adorned with artwork and equipped with private saunas for a truly relaxing stay.

Minutes away from Kyoto's tranquil Kamo River and within walking distance of some of the city's biggest attractions, including Kiyomizu-dera Temple, the hotel is perfectly placed for Japanese and international visitors seeking to make the most of their trip to the city. Families, too, will find much to appreciate, as the hotel expertly caters to travelers with children.

Ann Kang, general manager of DoubleTree by Hilton Kyoto Higashiyama, brings her experiences as a parent to the facilities available at the hotel. "Family travelers are one of our main targets," she tells us. "With me being a mom, I'm

very particular about the kind of amenities we prepare for our family travelers. For example, I picked the highchair that we want to use in the restaurant and the plates and forks (for kids) that can actually pierce an apple but aren't dangerous. We also have baby bottle warmers, step stools for kids in the rooms, baby bathtubs and two different types of cribs among other items."

Masterfully Meeting Guests' Needs

Kang speaks very openly about seasonality and how it plays an important role at the hotel. With the changing of the seasons come differences in the number as well as in the demographics of domestic and international guests. The ability to adapt quickly to these changes is essential.

Guests will find multilingual staff on hand to answer queries and provide advice on the best spots to visit in the magnetic city. In the dining area, specially curated menus featuring international dishes made with a variety of locally sourced ingredients are on offer. Meanwhile, a beautifully nuanced balance between Japanese aesthetics and global and contemporary lifestyle needs permeates the hotel, extending into the rooms where guests will find comfortable yukata-style pajamas.

Under Kang's leadership, DoubleTree by Hilton Kyoto Higashiyama is set to launch as a real destination hotel where East and West fuse gracefully and where visitors are sure to experience a warm welcome to this eternally fascinating city.



More Info

DoubleTree by Hilton Kyoto Higashiyama
1-45 Honmachi, Higashiyama Ward,
Kyoto, 605-0981

Web: doubletree.com/kyotohigashiyama

DoubleTree by Hilton Kyoto Higashiyama is accepting reservations for August 8 and onwards.

GUIDE



Babel 2005 City Portm, 2005, acrylic paint, canvas, 226.5 × 162.0cm, Collection of Tokyo Open City Art Gallery, photo by Kenji Tsubushita

62

Art World

Postwar turmoil, brilliant colors and provocative paintings.

64

Agenda

Impossibly cute confections and exquisite illumination events.

68

Voice of Tokyo

Tokyo trendsetters share their thoughts on the megalopolis.



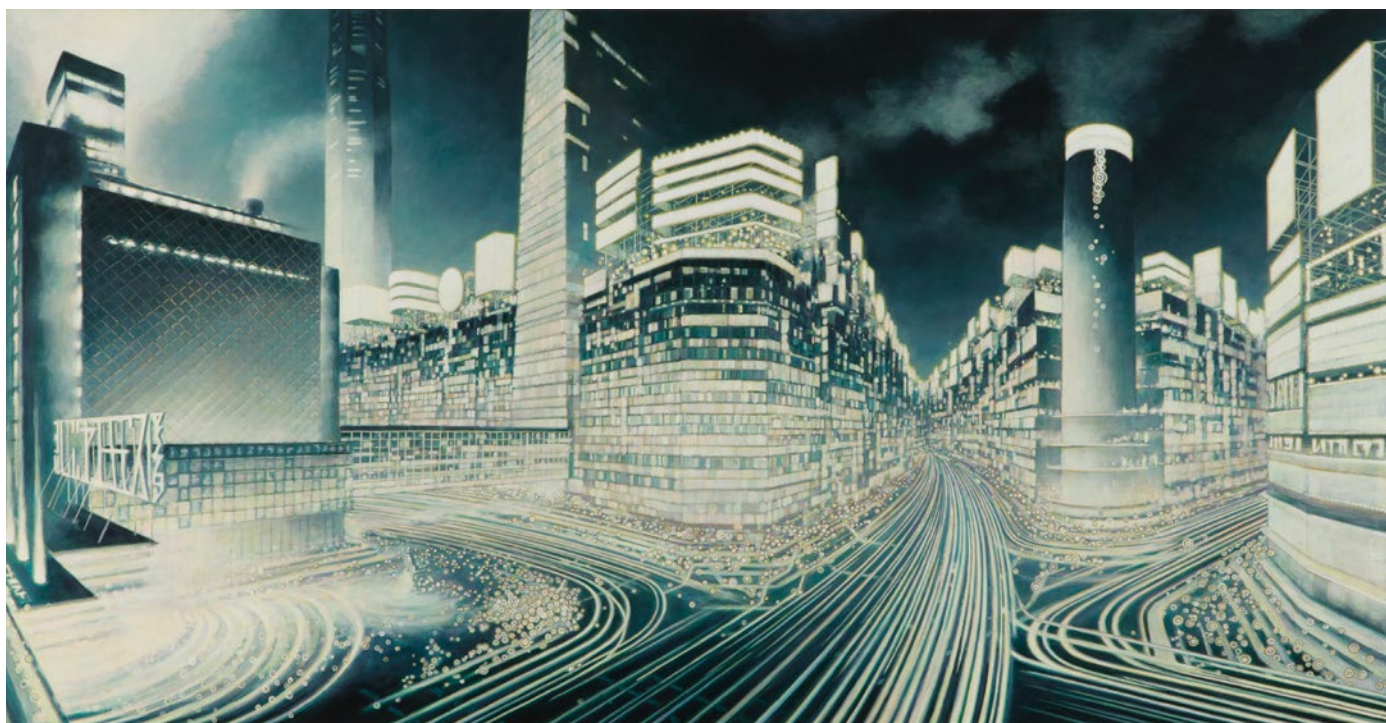
‘Motohashi Seiichi & Robert Doisneau: Chemins Croisés’ at the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum

This exhibit highlights the expertise of each photographer in their own right while exploring parallels between their paths. Their love and fascination for their subjects seep through the 241 photos in the exhibit that illustrate the remarkably similar themes of postwar turmoil and the underlying sense of humor apparent in their work. Alternating from the streets of Tokyo to the suburbs of Paris, from markets and circuses to coal mines, the exhibit showcases Motohashi and Doisneau’s kind-hearted curiosity toward humanity. **Tokyo Photographic Art Museum** Until September 24 Topmuseum.jp

THE ART WORLD

Our pick of the city’s best exhibitions

Compiled by Paul McInnes and Alina Ito



Bubble Flowers, 2013, acrylic paint, canvas, 97.5 x 194.4 x 3.5cm, from the collection of the artist, photo by Keizo Kioku

Minoru Nomata ‘Continuum’ at the Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery

By creating a huge series of spellbinding and provocative paintings, Japanese painter Minoru Nomata has gained a huge cult following over the years. The work shown in “Continuum” is from the collection of Kotaro Terada, who owned the largest collection of Nomata’s work in the world. Nomata’s mysterious and nostalgic imagined scenes and structures are a perfect fit for the large spaces available at this gallery. **Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery** Until September 24 www.operacity.jp/en/ag/

Left: Saul Leiter (Untitled) Undated © Saul Leiter Foundation. Right: Shoot cut for the February 1963 issue of Harper's Bazaar by Saul Leiter © Saul Leiter Foundation

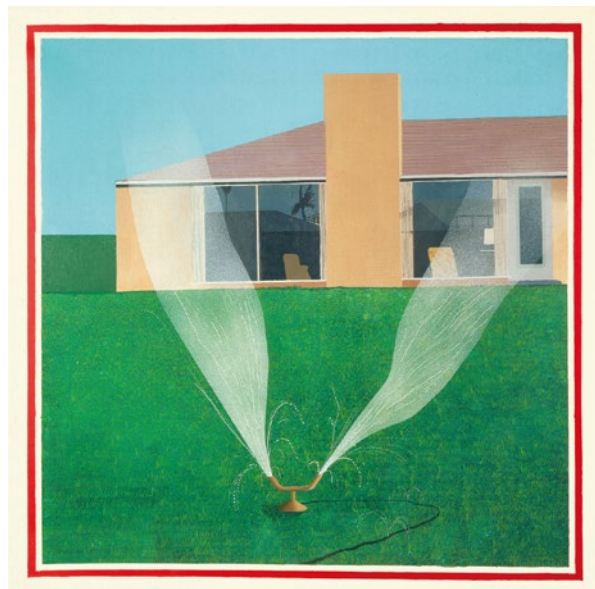


‘Saul Leiter: Origins in Color’ at Shibuya Hikarie Hall (Hall A)

The great American photographer Saul Leiter is revered in Japan, and this is the latest of several recent blockbuster exhibitions of his work here. Celebrating the 100th anniversary of his birth with over 400 photographs on display, “Saul Leiter: Origins in Color” aims to dazzle guests with Leiter's famed use of color. Indeed, the lauded artist earned himself the title “a pioneer in the art of color photography.” A must-see for fans of 20th-century American photography. **Shibuya Hikarie Hall (Hall A)** Until August 23 www.bunkamura.co.jp

‘David Hockney’ at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

Another summer art blockbuster comes in the shape of the “David Hockney” exhibition, the first large-scale study of Hockney’s work to be held in Tokyo since 1996. The cheery and colorful British artist, who decamped to California in the 1960s, has been one of the world's most revered and celebrated postwar painters. At the ripe old age of 86, Hockney is still painting and continues to wow fans around the world. **Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo** Until November 5 www.mot-art-museum.jp/en/



David Hockney, A Lawn Sprinkler, 1967, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo
© David Hockney



Haven't joined our online book club yet? Here's what we're reading next and where to find us

Join us as we dive into contemporary books that are either written by Japanese authors, are set in Japan or have some sort of connection with Japan.

WHAT WE'RE READING NOW

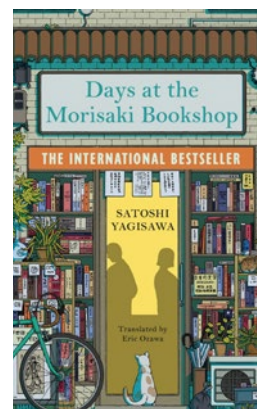
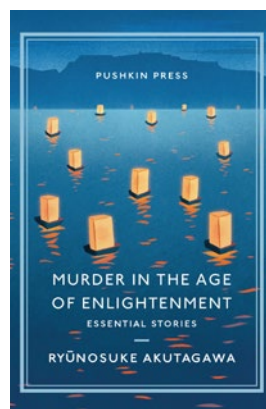
This July, we're reading a collection of short stories by one of Japan's greatest writers, Ryunosuke Akutagawa. *Murder in the Age of Enlightenment: Essential Stories* features modern translations of Akutagawa's classic fables, making them accessible to a new generation of readers. In August, we turn it down a notch with Satoshi Yagisawa's delightful bookstore tale, *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop*.

July

Featuring seven newly translated stories from one of Japan's most notable writers, *Murder in the Age of Enlightenment: Essential Stories* is the perfect summer read. Readers can expect the usual fantastical depictions of human depravity and moral conundrums typical of Ryunosuke Akutagawa, but this time neatly re-told through elegant translations by Bryan Karetnyk.

August

Satoshi Yagisawa's story *Days at the Morisaki Bookshop* transports us straight into the center of Tokyo's paradise for bookworms: Jimbocho. After a devastating breakup, protagonist Takako moves into a small room above a secondhand bookstore owned by her uncle. While she mends her heart, she discovers a world of new experiences lining the shelves of the shop. Translated by Eric Ozawa.



Don't forget to share your thoughts with us by tagging us at **@twbookclub** on Instagram and **@twbookclubjp** on Twitter.

You'll also find us on Facebook at facebook.com/TWBookClub and on Goodreads.

AGENDA

For more events go to www.tokyoweekender.com/events-calendar

Compiled by Lyn Tsuchiya

Hilton Tokyo Hello Kitty Sweets Gallery

This is Hilton Tokyo's first sweets buffet collaboration with the cartoon icon. The menu includes 25 different Hello Kitty-inspired sweets made using seasonal fruit like melon, peach and mango and nine main dishes such as roast pork with apple sauce and lemon zucchini pasta.



Hilton Tokyo
 ¥5,500-¥5,900
 Until Aug 31
 contain,fully,burn

Strings Hotel Summer Parfait Collaboration with Adelia Retro



Six cute and colorful glasses of elegant fragrant tea and two types of summer fruit parfaits will be on offer. Both nostalgic and novel, the parfaits are served in a Showa-era

Adelia Retro glass. Pair one with a mocktail for a full experience.

Strings Hotel
 ¥4,180-¥7,700
 Until Aug 31
 uptown.lizard.risen



Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo × Grand Prince Hotel Takanawa Bamboo Illumination

Two hotels are hosting the Bamboo Illumination event in their historic gardens, showcasing the beauty of nature while celebrating their 70th anniversaries. Visitors are invited to enjoy enchanting garden strolls illuminated by bamboo lamps that create a captivating experience.

Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo and Grand Prince Takanawa
 wires.packing.dragon
 Until Sep 18
 Free

Hotel Gajoen Tokyo 'Hyakki Yagyo' Illumination



Under the theme of "Colorful Night Parade of a Hundred Demons," Hotel Gajoen Tokyo presents a space filled with light art that creates a story-like atmosphere. In this luxurious cultural heritage site, the combination of light, original music and fragrance created specifically for this exhibition transports visitors from the real world to a fantastical realm.

Hotel Gajoen Tokyo
 ¥1,500
 request.terribly.hired
 Until Sep 24

ANA InterContinental Tokyo The Steakhouse Forest Boost

Forest Boost is an afternoon tea-style menu that consists of a variety of savory dishes with colorful ingredients. There are specialty meat dishes unique to The Steakhouse and adorable petits gateaux inspired by summer and served in an original wooden box.

ANA InterContinental Tokyo
 ¥6,464
 purely.torches.steers
 Until Sep 30



FROM NARITA AIRPORT TO TOKYO 23 WARDS **22,700JPY**

- ✓ All Vehicles are of the Van Type.
- ✓ No Problem Even with Large Suitcases
- ✓ Multilingual Customer Support Available Everyday

Need more detail information? **Contact us!**

☎ **+81-(0)3-6240-3591**

🌐 **www.airport-taxi.tokyo**



SCAN ME

Need Internet Now?

Pocket WiFi



- ✓ Unlimited Internet
- ✓ VoIP Call Available
- ✓ No Contract Bundle

577 JPY
/day~

Scan to Order



SIM Card



- ✓ Max 25GB/month
- ✓ Japanese Phone Number
- ✓ No Contract Bundle

3,278 JPY
/month~

Scan to Order



eSIM



- ✓ Instant Delivery
- ✓ Easy Activation
- ✓ No Contract Bundle

358 JPY
/day~

Scan to Order



More Information at <https://www.japan-wireless.com/>

TV Social

This month, we check in on the community to see what's going on in Tokyo's vibrant social scene

By David Schneider

Leslie Kee and Steven Haynes at Kee's LGBTQ+ coming-out photo project exhibition "Out In Japan" held at X8 Gallery in Jingumae.



Celebrating "Russia Day" at the Russian Embassy in Tokyo. From left to right: Mr. Gennady A. Ovechko, Chargés d'affaires ad interim of the Russian Embassy in Japan with spouse Mrs. Ovechko, and South-African Ambassador to Japan Lulama Smuts Ngonyama.



Ceremony President Tsukasa Shiga with representatives of Penske Media Corporation and regional managers of Robb Report for the launch of Robb Report Hong Kong.

U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel and Coca-Cola Bottlers of Japan Chief Commercial Officer Costin Mandrea presenting the signed Memorandum of Intent of U.S. Expo Participation for the Expo Osaka 2025 at the US Ambassador's residence in Tokyo.



Celebrating Georgian Independence Day at the Meiji Kinenkan. From left to right: Keisuke Suzuki, Member of the House of Representatives and Georgian Ambassador to Japan Teimuraz Lezhava.



Queen Rania Al Abdullah of Jordan at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. An exclusive viewing was arranged for the queen on her visit to Japan, as part of the museum's "70th Anniversary Exhibition Secrets of Important Cultural Properties" exhibition. From left to right: Mrs. Yayoi Komatsu, Director, MOMAT, Queen Rania of Jordan and Shogo Otani, Deputy Director, MOMAT

Inspiring the next generation of content creators and filmmakers, Palme d'Or winner Hirokazu Koreeda (right) in an exclusive interview with Japanese TikTok sensation Hina Kagei hosted by TikTok Japan.



Attending the 18th Arab Charity Bazaar hosted by The Society of Wives of Arab Ambassadors in Japan (SWAAJ) at Roppongi Izumi Garden Gallery. From left to right: Yuko Hayashi, spouse of Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and Tunisian Ambassador to Japan Mohamed Elloumi.

Celebrating Italian Republic Day at the Italian Ambassador's residence in Tokyo. From left to right: Akira Amari, Former Secretary-General of the Liberal Democratic Party, and Italian Ambassador Gianluigi Benedetti flanked by two Italian soldiers wearing traditional uniforms.



Celebrating Japanese culture event hosted by Joan Mitchell van der Vliet, wife of the Dutch Ambassador Peter van der Vliet at the Ambassador's residence in Tokyo. Guests included several spouses of Ambassadors stationed in Japan, among the spouses of the US Ambassador, Egypt, Indonesia, and several EU countries. Special guests included Takarazuka star, Ryoko Ikeda, and Baritone Yasutaka Murata.



Celebrating Denmark's Constitution Day at the Danish Embassy in Tokyo. From left to right: Michael Ebbesen, Lego Japan Ltd. Representative Director & General Manager and the Danish Ambassador to Japan Peter Taksoe-Jensen presenting a Lego gift to a young guest.

Celebrating Georgian Independence Day at the Meiji Kinenkan. From left to right: Bulgarian Ambassador Marieta Arabadjeva, Lithuanian Ambassador Dr. Aurelijus Zykas and his spouse, and EU Ambassador-Designate Jean-Eric Paquet.



Celebrating the 18th Arab Charity Bazaar hosted by The Society of Wives of Arab Ambassadors in Japan (SWAAJ) at Roppongi Izumi Garden Gallery. From left to right: Mrs. Maali Siam, spouse of Palestine ambassador, Mrs. Momoe Fritz, spouse of Micronesian ambassador, Mrs. Fahima Kati, spouse of Algerian ambassador, Mrs. Nancy Nameh, spouse of Lebanon ambassador and her son.

Celebrating the National Day of Sweden at the Swedish embassy. From left to right: Pererik Högberg, Ambassador of Sweden and architect Ryo Oguri.



Attending a special tea gathering at the Angolan Ambassador's residence. From left, Hersey Shiga senior correspondence Hiroko M. Ohiwa, Angolan Ambassador to Japan Rui Orlando Ferreira de Ceita da Silva Xavier, and spouse Fatima Ferreira Lima Xavier.



Celebrating Japanese culture event hosted by Dutch Ambassador's spouse Joan Mitchell van der Vliet at the Ambassador's residence in Tokyo. From left top: Dutch Ambassador Peter van der Vliet, spouse Joan Mitchell van der Vliet, baritone Yasutaka Murata, and soprano Riyoko Ikeda.

Bill Hersey's Partyline • Connecting Communities Since 1970 •

Sponsored by

Ceremony
TV



These pages are dedicated to the late Bill Hersey, Tokyo Weekender's original society columnist who wrote for the magazine from 1970 to 2018. Originally called "Bill's Party Line," the column featured visiting celebrities and local VIPs, and helped to connect expat communities within Tokyo, with Bill achieving legendary status amongst his peer group and our readers.





Yuki Kumiko, Politician and Minato Ward Chairperson

The first woman chairperson in Minato ward and a single mother of two who gave birth as a member of the ward's assembly, Kumiko is truly an inspirational figure. She champions not only female empowerment but also internationalization, sustainability, environmental education and intergenerational exchange.

What's your current obsession?
I am passionate about building projects focused on maintaining physical and mental well-being, such as providing real-life experiential activities. This includes interactive programs involving professional athletes in sports, as well as therapies that provide relaxation and nature experiences not easily accessible in urban areas.

What's one of your favorite spots in Minato ward, where you were born and raised and where you now serve as a chairperson?
Tokyo Tower is the symbol of Minato ward. One of my

favorite views is the sight of Zojoji Temple and Tokyo Tower as seen from Shiba Park.

What would you say is the best thing about Tokyo?
I have visited many countries, but when it comes to food, I believe Tokyo's restaurants have a remarkably high level of quality, ranging from humble establishments to upscale dining experiences.

What's your favorite season in Tokyo?
Without a doubt, it's spring. The gentle breeze feels pleasant, and the cherry blossoms are incredibly beautiful.

TOKYO

THE VOICE OF

The humans of Tokyo make this metropolis pulsate with energy. TW checks in with four of the many voices that make the cacophony a symphony

Interviewed by Zoria Petkoska

Dr. Jackie F. Steele, Political Scientist, Entrepreneur and Not-For-Profit Leader

In addition to her professional activities, Steele is the representative director and president of FEW Japan, a not-for-profit association for globally minded English-speaking women who want to learn and grow with each other. She is also the proud mother of two children.

What's your current obsession?
My daughter and I enjoy watching *Never Have I Ever* together.

Who are some women in Japan right now that you admire?
I admire every woman who

gives her time and expertise to support women-serving organizations in Japan. Our not-for-profit board is the reason this organization has had such a lasting impact, and we are currently raising the bar for our 22nd Career Strategies Seminar. Collectively, we are creating a brave community and innovative networking opportunities for all the diverse women who call Japan home.

Tell us a recent example of a positive change in terms of FEW Japan.
Since the pandemic, we have pivoted to go all digital and



have started building a national outreach strategy to engage and include women outside of Greater Tokyo. This has led to a huge membership increase, and many more women benefit from the dynamic activities of FEW Japan.

What's your favorite thing about Tokyo that makes it unique?
I love the diversity of architecture, art, lifestyles, cultures and the creative people who make this vibrant megalopolis so dynamic.



Marina González, Designer and Illustrator

Better known as breathing.tokyo to her Instagram followers, González creates pastel illustrations with influences from the '90s, anime, pixel art and Japan. She also takes photos, has a podcast and chases endless inspiration in this city.

What's your current obsession?

Creating video teasers for my sticker collections! I'm so obsessed that I'm working on

the video for my upcoming collection before I have the actual stickers ready.

Your most recent collection, "Midnight Heartbreak," imagines a breakup on Shibuya Crossing. Conversely, what's a good place in Tokyo to fall in love?

I was tempted to say something related to cherry blossoms, but the first place that popped into my mind

is Odaiba. Despite being a man-made island dominated by steel and concrete, it possesses a certain charm.

You explored the colors of Japan through your "Pantone Pixel Japan" collection. If you could assign only one color to Tokyo, what would it be?

Vibrant red, reminiscent of Tokyo Tower at night. This landmark is a significant presence in many of the anime from my childhood, such as *Card Captor Sakura* and *Sailor Moon*.

When does Tokyo feel like home?

I see Tokyo as a transient city, forever in motion, and it's the people around me who truly make it feel like home. It merely serves as a backdrop for these connections, and its significance becomes somewhat irrelevant to the sense of belonging. It's almost contradictory, but it's true!



Photo by Hiroki Nishioka

Koki Takahashi, Music Manager

Takahashi is the manager of Moon Romantic, an iconic livehouse in Aoyama that has attracted attention for its unique events and live performances that span all music genres and even extend to Noh theater shows. He is also involved in booking artists for various festivals.

What is your current obsession?

In addition to always thinking of the next international music act I want to bring to Japan, I'm really into learning Chinese at the moment.

How would you describe the current Tokyo music scene to those who don't know it, using only one sentence?

Tokyo has everything from jazz to pop idols, and there are many high-quality artists, especially young and up-and-coming ones. (The bigger issue is getting the information ...)

What is the best place in Tokyo for moon-gazing — aside from the giant indoor moon at Moon Romantic?

Yes, aside from Moon Romantic, I like looking at the moon from Aoyama Cemetery, which is near our venue.

If you could only choose one sound to represent Tokyo, what would it be?

Oh, this is difficult! I think it's not a sound that you try to hear, but it's one that you hear unconsciously in your ears — the overlapping voices of people passing by. That's Tokyo.





The members of Maya Ongaku, an up-and-coming band known for its earthy brand of psychedelia, share their favorite albums

Words by Kim Kahan

Maya Ongaku is comprised of three childhood friends from Enoshima with impeccable taste in music. The band has been rapidly rising in the Tokyo scene since forming in late 2020. Though new to the gigging scene, Maya Ongaku already counts some of Japan's biggest milestones under its belt: a radio appearance opposite Haruomi Hosono of Yellow Magic Orchestra fame, a spot at Fuji Rock and a debut album on the independent music label Guruguru Brain. Incredibly, these achievements have all come in the past year — and it's easy to see why.

The trio, which counts the Beatles, seminal krautrock band Can and John Lurie as influences, creates the sort of music that's impossible not to like. Their musical output consists of meandering basslines and washy guitar with just the right amount of

woodwind and ambiance to take their tunes up a level in terms of sophistication while keeping them out of chin-stroking realms. They opened for Kikagaku Moyo's final show, effectively taking up the torch from the beloved quintet that counts among its members the label bosses of Guruguru Brain.

Just like Kikagaku Moyo, Maya Ongaku has slack chords and a psychedelic label, yet they bring with them a refreshingly deep ambient sensibility previously referred to as "new generation ambient-folk." The lack of a formal percussionist leads songs to meander for days, gently washing along, transporting listeners to the nearest beach. With a European tour in the works and a headline show at Shibuya's WWW in August, the band is sure to continue its upward trajectory.

Maya Ongaku's debut album, Approach to Anima, is out now.

Five Albums To Add to Your Playlist

Septet by John Carroll Kirby

The sixth studio album from American keyboardist John Carroll Kirby. His kinetic way of fluidly crossing between jazz, minimal ambient and experimental has greatly influenced us, and we are looking forward to his future output and collaborations.



Temporary Music by Asa Tone

Out on American label Leaving Records, this is the first album from the Jakarta- and New York-based trio, made in a temporary studio in the Indonesian jungle. A masterpiece of electronica, it sees minimal percussion rhythms overlaid with tribal scales to create an experience that leads you to an unreal world.

Masana Temples by Kikagaku Moyo

The fourth album by our label bosses, Kikagaku Moyo. With minimal krautrock beats and dreamy jam session vibes cultivated through an intense tour life, the work provides an alien's-eye view of Japan's psychedelia. I think we have to continue this legacy, following Kikagaku Moyo's love of freedom, travel and music.

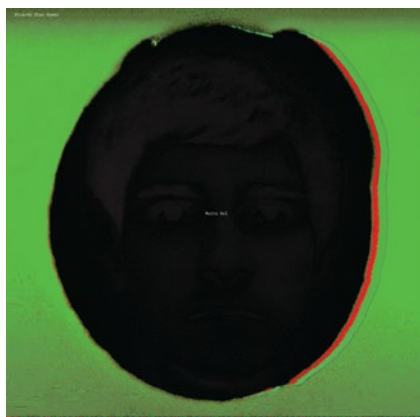


Marshmallow by The Sweet Enoughs

Exotica from Hiatus Kaiyote's keyboardist, Paul Bender. The sound of vintage white noise is paired with old-school rhythm machines, inviting you to tropical southern lands. If you listen to this on loop in your room, it feels like the sunlight and breeze drifting in through the window come in with spirits.

Muito Sol by Ricardo Dias Gomes

The third album by the talented Ricardo Dias Gomes from Rio de Janeiro. He retains the essence of bossa nova and vocal performance while incorporating a 21st-century approach to sound, using layers of drone and experimenting to create his unique vision. *Muito Sol* embodies the coolest values of contemporary Brazilian music.



Events

Festival season continues with events galore

Fuji Rock Festival

Japan's answer to Glastonbury sees a bumper lineup that includes overseas acts Caroline Polachek, Foo Fighters and Lizzo and homegrown performers like Gezan and Ayano Kaneko.

DATE: July 28–30

PRICE: ¥55,000

VENUE: Naeba Ski Resort, Niigata

INFO: en.fujirockfestival.com/

Rising Sun Rock Festival

The legendary Rising Sun Rock Festival kicks off in Ishikari for the 23rd time with a wide variety of artists ranging from rocksters Odotte Bakari No Kuni to electronic act Donguri-zu to genre-defying band Chai.

DATE: August 11–12

PRICE: ¥35,000

VENUE: Ishikari, Hokkaido

INFO: rsr.wess.co.jp/2023/

Summer Sonic

Summer Sonic, the major urban festival held simultaneously in Tokyo and Osaka, returns with an extensive lineup. The Tokyo edition includes Brit-poppers Blur, prodigy Jacob Collier and Gen Hoshino. Night owls need not worry: Sonic Mania, the night version set for August 18 at Makuhari Messe, also boasts an excellent selection of artists.

DATE: August 19–20

PRICE: ¥34,000

VENUE: Zozo Marine Stadium and

Makuhari Messe

INFO: summersonic.com

Ishinoko

The annual festival from the team at Takigahara Farm brings together an eclectic mix of artists from Sapphire Slows to Chee Shimizu for three days in the Ishikawa countryside. The festival sees village locals hanging with visitors from afar.

DATE: July 28–30

PRICE: ¥10,500~



VENUE: Takigahara Farm, Ishikawa

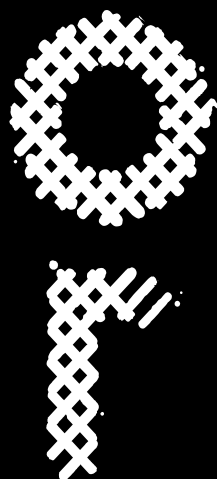
INFO: ishinoko.jp



MUSIC BAR NIGHT CLUB POP-UP CAFE GALLERY

6-20-10 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo
MIYASHITA PARK North 1F 11000

 @ortokyoofficial
 ortokyo.com



Encompassing three floors, this chic, versatile entertainment space plays host to a café, bar, nightclub, event venue and pop-up space. Or is a must-visit destination that channels the innate coolness of Shibuya – with street art, fashion, music and design playing a major role. On the first floor, you can relax with drinks and food while listening to great music. On the second floor, you can enjoy the music bar surrounded by the captivating art of Shohei Otomo. The third floor is a nightclub space with windows overlooking the incandescent streets of Shibuya with the metropolis rushing past.

