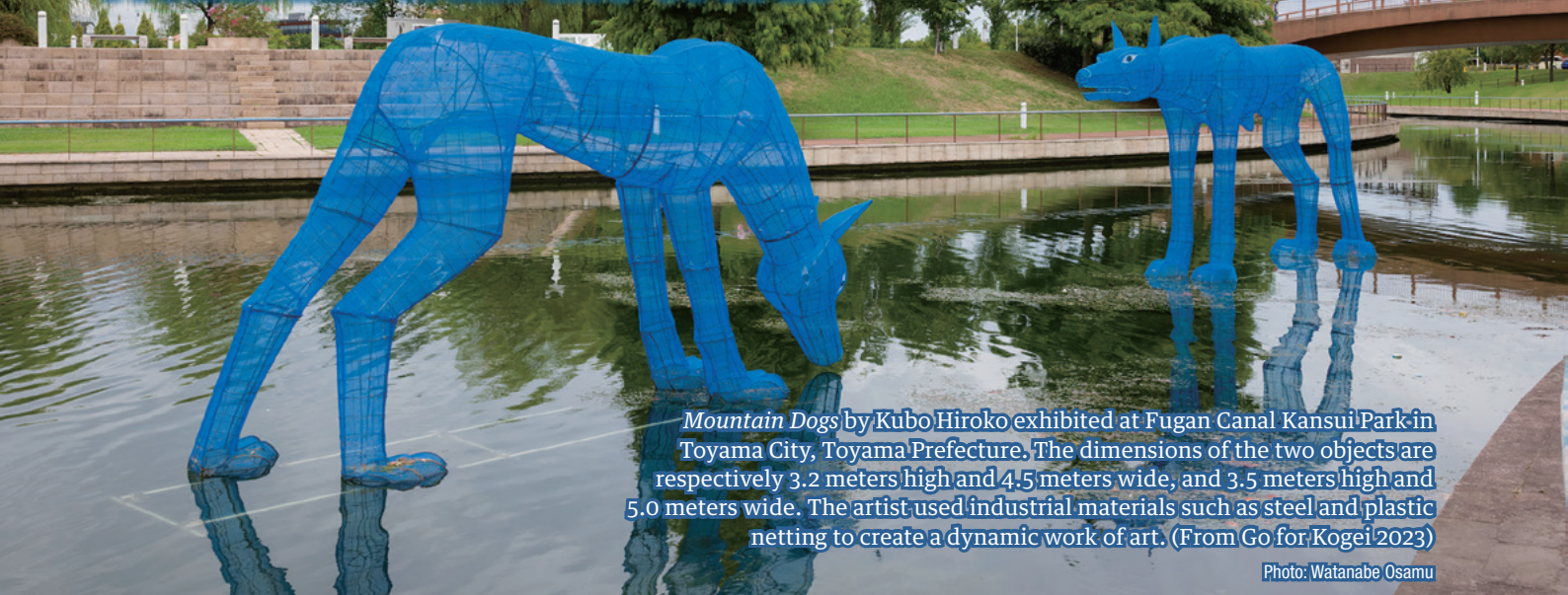


“Go for Kogei” Hokuriku Crafts Festival — Sharing the Appeal of Crafts and Art from Hokuriku with the World



Mountain Dogs by Kubo Hiroko exhibited at Fugan Canal Kansui Park in Toyama City, Toyama Prefecture. The dimensions of the two objects are respectively 3.2 meters high and 4.5 meters wide, and 3.5 meters high and 5.0 meters wide. The artist used industrial materials such as steel and plastic netting to create a dynamic work of art. (From *Go for Kogei* 2023)

Photo: Watanabe Osamu

The Japan Cultural Expo 2.0 aims to build momentum for the upcoming Expo 2025 (World Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai), to support renewed interest in inbound travel to Japan, and to encourage further demand for domestic tourism. It also features a focus on “The Beauty and The Spirit of Japan,” promoting Japanese cultural arts and spreading awareness of their diverse and universal charms within Japan and around the world. This is a large-scale project with Japanese cultural facilities, arts organizations, and many others hosting and participating in a diverse range of projects and events. In this article, from among these participants, we will focus on the “Go for Kogei” Hokuriku Crafts Festival.

Moribe Shinji

A platform for promoting crafts and art, with Hokuriku on stage

“Go for Kogei” is a festival established in 2020 to promote the appeal of crafts and art with the three Hokuriku prefectures of Toyama, Ishikawa and Fukui, and it serves as a stage for various events.

The three prefectures of Hokuriku are home to numerous workshops for traditional crafts such as ceramics, lacquerware, *yuzen* dyeing,¹ glass art, casting,² and *washi* Japanese paper, as well as arts and crafts universities and research institutes that refine traditional skills and nurture the next generation of creators. There are also many outstanding art museums with

extensive collections and exhibitions of fine works of art. This environment has given rise to initiatives to create and promote new types of art and crafts that are not bound by the concept of traditional crafts.

One specific entity that promotes such initiatives is the nonprofit Organization Syuto Kanazawa, which brings together artists, designers, cultural figures, business people, citizens, and others. Every year, it organizes the KOGEI Art Fair Kanazawa, the rare art fair even in Japan specializing in contemporary crafts, in Kanazawa City, Ishikawa Prefecture, and engages in activities to create new craft markets. In addition, the organization has expanded the scope of these activities

to the three prefectures of Hokuriku, advancing efforts to promote Japanese art and crafts to the world at distinctive venues in Hokuriku, and providing new opportunities to refresh the appeal of this region and reinvent crafts. One of its main programs is “Go for Kogei”, which was planned as part of the Japan Cultural Expo in fiscal year 2020.

“Go for Kogei” attracted about 110,000 visitors in 2023

With Akimoto Yuji³ as Executive Director and Exhibition Curator, in 2021 and 2022 “Go for Kogei” hosted special exhibitions introducing artists in the fields



Ogi no mai, a fabric installation by textile designer Sudo Reiko. The passages of Shokoji, a temple in Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture, whose Main Hall and other buildings have been designated a National Treasure, were transformed into corridors of colorful Japanese fans. (From Go for Kogei 2021)

Photo: Masahiro Katano



Ssanyong, a work by Hayama Yuki, decorates the doors of the Masuda Sake Brewery in Toyama City, Toyama Prefecture. The work is based on patterns he drew on porcelain as a ceramic artist. (From Go for Kogei 2023)

Photo: Watanabe Osamu



Nakajima Lock Area, one of the venues for Go for Kogei 2023

Photo: Watanabe Osamu

of crafts, contemporary art, and Art Brut.⁴ Shokoji Temple (Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture), Natadera Temple (Komatsu City, Ishikawa Prefecture), and Otaki Shrine and Okamoto Shrine (Echizen City, Fukui Prefecture) served as exhibition venues.

In fiscal year 2023, “Go for Kogei” participated in the one of the Japan Cultural Expo 2.0 projects with the exhibition *Material Imagination and Etiological Narrative – Material, Data, Fantasy*. The exhibition was held in the Fugan Canal area of Toyama City, Toyama Prefecture, from September 15 to October 29, 2023. The organizers provided bilingual Japanese-English guidebooks to visitors and held tours for visitors from overseas as well as an international symposium. The diverse program attracted about 110,000

visitors.

Although the actual exhibition of the Go for Kogei 2023 already ended, details are presented and explained in both Japanese and English on the event’s official website, and the exhibits can also be enjoyed online (see URL in the column). Some artworks can be viewed year-round and the 2024 edition is planned to be held in Autumn. Interested parties are invited to browse the online content.

Impact of the Noto Earthquake

On January 1, 2024, a magnitude 7.6 earthquake struck the Hokuriku region (the 2024 Noto Peninsula Earthquake). Many artists had their workshops and galleries damaged by the earthquake. Future reconstruction

efforts are expected to ensure the continued development of crafts and art in Hokuriku.

“Go for Kogei” website

<https://goforkogei.com/en>



An installation of imaginary wooden dragons created by sculptor Komuro Takahiro. From left to right: *Dog Dragon, Savage Dragon, Bat Dragon, and Demonic Dragon*. All of the sculptures are approximately 149-150 cm tall. (From Go for Kogei 2023)

Photo: Watanabe Osamu

1. A traditional Japanese pattern dyeing technique. Delicate patterns are drawn by first applying paste to the outline of the pattern (because of the outline doesn’t get colored) and then dyeing the fabric. Well-known varieties of this technique are Kyo Yuzen in Kyoto and Kaga Yuzen in Ishikawa Prefecture.
2. A craft in which objects are created by pouring molten metals such as iron and copper into molds. Casting has become a local industry in Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture.
3. Professor Emeritus of Tokyo University of the Arts, Special Director of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa. Worked on Triennale of *Kogei* in Kanazawa, and has served as Executive Director of Go for Kogei since 2021.
4. A French term that translates as “raw art.” It is often used to describe artistic forms of expression that are not influenced by existing trends.