

# Promoting the Media Arts and Films

As indicated by the award for best foreign language film for *Departures*, directed by TAKITA Yojiro, and the award for best animated short film for *The House of Small Cubes*, directed by KATO Kunio, at the 81st Academy Awards, the media arts of Japan including animation, manga, and games are much appreciated not only in Japan but also overseas. In order to step

up encouragement for the media arts that are attracting a lot of attention as the soft power of Japan, the Agency for Cultural Affairs is carrying out the following projects.

## 1 Promoting the Media Arts

### 1. Japan Media Arts Festival

Japan Media Arts Festival has been organized since 1997 in order to provide an opportunity to present, appreciate, and commend outstanding works of the media arts.

In FY 2008, the festival attracted 2,146 applications including 512 from 43 countries and regions around the world. One Grand Prize, four Excellence Prizes, and one Encouragement Prize were presented for each of the four divisions of Art, Entertainment, Animation, and Manga. In addition, a Special Achievement Prize was presented to an artist who has made significant contributions to the field of the media arts.

An award-winning works exhibition is held every year

in February at the National Art Center in Roppongi, Tokyo, attended by many visitors who come to experience the latest works in the media arts.

In addition to the award-winning works exhibition, the Media Arts Festival in the Prefectures, held in cooperation with the prefectures that sponsor the National Culture Festival, and the Media Arts Festival in Foreign Countries, which aims to make Japanese media arts better known overseas, are also organized in order to disseminate outstanding works of the media arts in Japan and overseas.

#### Art Division

Grand Prize: *Oops!*  
Artist: Marcio AMBROSIO  
© Oops!



#### Animation Division

Grand Prize: *The House of Small Cubes*  
Artist: KATO Kunio  
© ROBOT



#### Entertainment Division

Grand Prize: TENORI-ON  
Artist: IWAI Toshio  
Representing the TENORI-ON development team:  
NISHIBORI Yu  
© IWAI Toshio / Yamaha Corporation



#### Manga Division

Grand Prize: *Forest of the Piano*  
Artist: ISSHIKI Makoto  
© ISSHIKI Makoto / Kodansha Ltd.

## 2. Media Arts Plaza

To introduce information about the media arts in a timely fashion, the Agency for Cultural Affairs has set up the Media Arts Plaza on its website.

At the Plaza, we introduce the award-winning works in the Media Arts Festival; post photographs from the award-winning works exhibition, information about symposia and film screenings during the festival; and post reports after the festival has closed. The setup is intended to bring the Media Arts Festival closer to its audience.



**Media Arts Plaza**

<http://plaza.bunka.go.jp/english/>

## 3. Media Arts Festival in Foreign Countries

The Agency for Cultural Affairs organizes the Media Arts Festival in Foreign Countries in order to make the media arts of Japan better known overseas. The Media Arts Festival in Foreign

Countries was held in Singapore from November to December 2008.

(For details, please see page 58.)

## 4. Panel on Preparing International Locations for the Media Arts

To investigate how to shape international locations for the media arts, the Panel on Preparing International Locations for the Media Arts composed of experts in the field has been established.

Since August 2008, the Panel has been interviewing experts in film and media in order to take the debate to a deeper level.

# 2 Promoting Film Arts

## 1. Promotion Plan of "Japanese Film and Moving Images"

Film is a composite art that includes drama, music, and fine arts, and it is firmly fixed in the everyday lives of the people of Japan as one of the most familiar forms of entertainment. Film is also an expression of the cultural situation in a country or region at a particular time, and shows the special characteristics of a

culture.

At the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Informal Council on Promoting Japanese Cinema compiled a report entitled "Promoting Japanese Cinema in the Future: Regenerating Japanese Film (Proposal)." On receipt of the report, we have

### ◆ Promotion Plan of "Japanese Films and Moving Images"

#### Creating attractive Japanese films

- a) Special promotion of creative arts activities (support film production)
- b) Support for activities of film commissions
- c) Operating a database for film locations
- d) Film Award of the Agency for Cultural Affairs

#### Promoting the distribution of Japanese films and moving images

- a) Support for participating in overseas film festivals
- b) Japan Film Festival Conference
- c) Special screenings of Japanese films in Asia
- d) Maintaining the Japan Film Information System

#### Training and fostering people involved in films and moving images

- a) Training young filmmakers by supporting short film productions
- b) Supporting personnel training at film-related organizations
- c) Making Japanese films popular among children

#### Collecting, preserving and restoring Japanese films

Full-fledged functions of a Film Center

#### Integrated Program for Promoting the Media Arts

- a) Comprehensive diffusion of the media arts
- b) Training creative personnel
- c) Forming promotional locations and networks

## ◆ Supported films that have won awards at overseas film festivals

- ***The Mourning Forest* directed by KAWASE Naomi** (Supported in 2006)  
Awarded the Grand Prix at the 60th Festival de Cannes (May 2007)
- ***The Rebirth* directed by KOBAYASHI Masahiro** (Supported in 2006)  
Awarded the Golden Leopard Award at the 60th Locarno Film Festival (August 2007)
- ***A Long Walk* directed by OKUDA Eiji** (Supported in 2005)  
Awarded the Grand Prix of the Americas at the 30th Montreal World Film Festival  
(Also awarded the International Film Critics' Prize and the Ecumenical Prize) (September 2006)

Seventeen years since a Japanese film won the Grand Prix in 1990, for *The Sting of Death* (directed by OGURI Kohei)

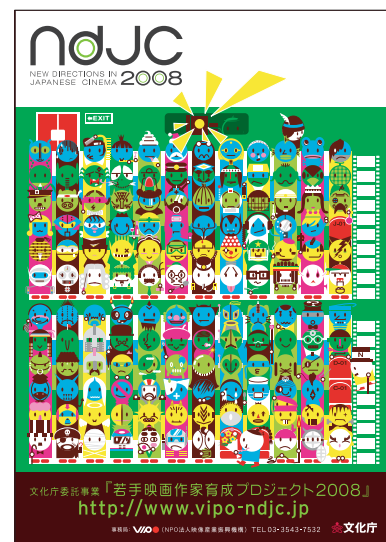
Thirty-seven years since a Japanese director won the Grand Prix in 1970, for *The Transient Life* (directed by JISSOJI Akio)

Twenty-five years since a Japanese director won the Grand Prix in 1982 for *The Go Masters* (directed by SATO Junya)

implemented the Promotion Plan of Japanese Films and Moving Images based on (1) creating attractive Japanese films, (2) promoting the distribution of Japanese films, (3) training and fostering people involved in film and the moving image, (4) collecting, preserving and restoring Japanese films, as well as (5) adding an Integrated Program for Promoting the Media Arts.

Specifically, in addition to organizing Japan Media Arts Festival, we nurture the people who will drive the world of film in the future by supporting the production of films and moving images in Japan, running the Film Award of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and providing training for young filmmakers by producing short films.

In addition, film is an extremely effective medium for disseminating Japanese culture to audiences overseas. At the Agency for Cultural Affairs, we are developing the following databases as a way of providing information about Japanese films.



## ◆ Training for Young Filmmakers by Producing Short Films (New Directions in Japanese Cinema)

<http://www.vipo-ndjc.jp/> (Japanese only)

### Japan Location Database (JLDB)

<http://www.jldb.bunka.go.jp/indexE.php>



### Japanese Cinema Database (JCDB)

<http://www.japanese-cinema-db.jp>  
(Japanese only)



## 2. Support for Participating in Overseas Film Festivals

We provide support for participation in overseas film festivals in order to introduce the outstanding films of Japan to the world.

(For details, please see page 59.)

## 3. Special Screenings of Japanese Films In Asia

We organize special screenings of Japanese films in Asia with the aim of increasing opportunities to screen Japanese films in

Asian countries.

(For details, please see page 58.)