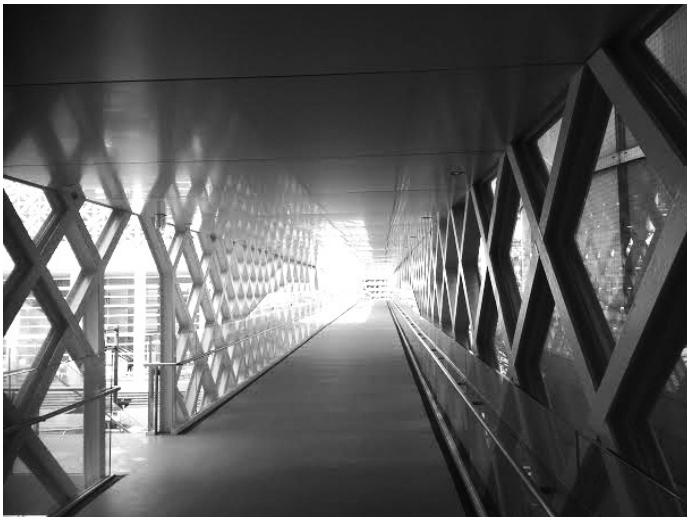


## Oita: An Art-Lover's Paradise

*Oita is the perfect place for art-lovers. In this issue, we take a look at Oita City's new upcoming art museum, as well as last autumn's Kunisaki Art Festival.*

### A Preview of the New Oita Prefectural Art Museum

On November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014, I was lucky enough to be able to participate in a preview tour of OPAM, the Oita Prefectural Art Museum. The museum is due to open next spring, but members of the public were able to take a sneak-peak inside the art gallery. Being a fan of art, I naturally jumped at the chance!



The pedestrian bridge leading to the museum (left). A bamboo ceiling on the second floor (right).

The OPAM building was designed by the world-famous Pritzker Prize-winning architect Shigeru Ban, with the bamboo architectural motif inspired by traditional Oita crafts. I'd seen the building countless times on my way to and from Oasis Tower and I was eager to explore the inside. I wasn't disappointed.

I met up with my guides and a number of international students who had taken the bus in from Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. There are numerous entranceways into OPAM, and our guides wanted to show us the pedestrian walkway that links the building to Oasis Tower. Crossing the bridge with its criss-crossed geometric windows, I felt as if I'd stepped into some sort of futuristic space film.

To be entirely honest, before entering the museum I felt like I

already "knew" it. As part of my work at the Oita Prefectural Office, I had been able to read guides to the museum's architecture and artworks, and I felt reasonably familiar with OPAM. However, I was taken aback when I entered the museum itself: it was, to put it simply, beautiful. Looking over the architectural plans in my office hadn't prepared me for the bright, airy space of the museum, with its clean, geometric lines and huge glass windows. It was a pity the day was so overcast because on a bright winter morning the light streaming through the windows must be even more stunning. The museum felt modern and bold, but the building itself wasn't overbearing or imposing. Although many of the proposed exhibitions have yet to be installed, I never got the sense that the impressive building would overwhelm the artwork. It felt like the perfect architectural design for an art museum.

As I stood with my small group, eagerly taking photos, we were informed that one of the huge glass walls to the lower floor of the museum was actually a horizontal opening door. “It will open OPAM out onto the street,” explained our guide, “giving pedestrians an interactive experience with the museum and the art inside.”



The OPAM building isn't just modern. The distinctive bamboo pattern that can be seen on both the building's interior and exterior represents old Oita bamboo craftwork and gives the building a sense of tradition. On the second floor of the gallery is an enclosed outdoor area surrounded by a beautiful

bamboo ceiling. This merging of traditional bamboo design with modern architecture seemed particularly appropriate for a museum that will display both traditional and modern works side by side.

The exhibition rooms were easy to navigate and spacious. Although the gallery has yet to finish installing all of its exhibitions, there were a number of fascinating sculptures and photographs on display. My favourite were the displays of artwork by local students in Oita. Using artwork by young people living in Oita to help celebrate Oita City's new art gallery was a lovely idea. It reinforces the role that OPAM will play as a space for people in Oita to gather and celebrate art, as well as OPAM's role as a central hub for art in Oita Prefecture. The museum will also feature a shop, a café, and an area of study and research.



I left the museum eagerly anticipating its grand opening next spring. It seems very likely that OPAM will become the pride of Oita City and a must-see for art-lovers throughout Japan. --- Miriam

For more information on OPAM, please refer to the July-August 2014 issue of the TOMBO, available on the Oita International Plaza website: <http://www.oitaplaza.jp/english/>

## Art Meets Nature: the 2014 Kunisaki Art Festival

Oita City is not Oita's only art hub – Oita Prefecture boasts opportunities to experience art throughout its many regions. The Kunisaki region held an art festival from October to late November 2014 with exhibitions in various locations around the area. Kunisaki is rightly known for its beautiful nature, and the festival's works of art made use of Kunisaki's breathtaking natural beauty. The sculptures, photos, paintings, and art installations were scattered throughout Kunisaki, attached to outdoor rock-faces or displayed in disused public buildings and works of many notable artists, such as Antony Gormley, were featured as part of the festival.

As a city-born girl, who grew up going to large gallery buildings, experiencing the Kunisaki Art Festival was like discovering a completely new way to view art. The artworks were not just displayed in Kunisaki: the landscape of Kunisaki itself had become part of the art. Dotted around Kunisaki prefecture were various art installations, some outside and some inside, all in vastly different locations. We were led into old city hall buildings, where mysterious staircases led to rooms with light installations and photographic works, we wandered up forest hillside trails to see a series of lights, twinkling like stars, on a high rock face and we hung up paper wishes on trees overlooking Kunisaki's beautiful coast with its gorgeous views of Himeshima island. The art centred on a number of themes, such as the history and culture of the Kunisaki region, mankind's relationship with nature, and the importance of our natural resources.

The Kunisaki Art Festival was also an opportunity for me to experience the hospitality of the people of Kunisaki. As we left our first exhibition, we discovered a series of roadside stalls where volunteers handed out free tea, snacks, oranges and delicious grilled spicy mochi – all for free! (*continued on page 3*)

## EXHIBITIONS &amp; SCREENINGS

Date	Description	Place	Admission	Contact #
Dec. 12 <sup>th</sup> – Jan. 18 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Buddha of the Homeland</b> – an exhibition about the religious belief, Amida Butsu, in Buzenkoku (part of Oita Prefecture).	Oita Prefectural Museum of History	¥310	☎ 0978-37-2100

Oita Art Museum= Oita-Shi Bijutsukan 大分市美術館 Oita Prefectural Museum of History= 大分県立歴史博物館

\*\*\*Most Museums and Centers are closed on Monday, or Tuesday if Monday is a public holiday. Student admissions vary, highest cost shown.\*\*\*



## STAGE &amp; MUSIC EVENTS



Date	Time	Artist/Event	Venue	Cost	Contact #
Jan. 4 <sup>th</sup>	16:30	<b>Young Blood</b> – Youth! New Year's Scramble	T.O.P.S BittsHall	¥1000 (advance) ¥1500 (on-the-door)	☎ 097-533-0467
Jan. 6 <sup>th</sup>	19:00	<b>Hollywood Festival Orchestra</b>	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary (book in advance)	☎ 097-553-2509
Jan 9 <sup>th</sup>	18:30	<b>Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro</b>	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary (book in advance)	☎ 097-545-0542
Jan 10 <sup>th</sup>	13:30	<b>Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro</b>	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary (book in advance)	☎ 097-545-0542
Jan. 19 <sup>th</sup>	12:30	<b>General Performance</b>	Kagura Kaikan	¥1000	☎ 0974-35-2372
Jan. 24 <sup>th</sup>	14:00	<b>Touch the Japanese Culture</b> - Naniwabushi	iichiko Grand Theatre	¥1000	☎ 097-533-4004
Jan. 25 <sup>th</sup>	14:00	<b>Patria Music Festa</b>	Patria Hita	¥700 w/drink	☎ 0973-35-2372
Jan. 30 <sup>th</sup>	19:00	<b>Dramatic Tango "Electric Rhythm"</b>	iichiko Grand Theatre	Prices vary (book in advance)	☎ 087-553-5990
Feb. 13 <sup>th</sup>	19:30	<b>Nishida "Marcy" Masafumi (Earthshaker) Acoustic Live</b>	Cantalloop II	¥3800 +drink	☎ 097-548-5363
Feb. 16 <sup>th</sup>	12:00	<b>General Performance</b>	Kagura Kaikan	¥1000	☎ 0974-35-2372
Feb. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	16:00	<b>Moonstruck Live in OITA</b>	Cantalloop II	¥2500 +drink	☎ 097-548-5363

\*\*Ticket prices range from student to most expensive general admission. Prices shown otherwise indicate price for purchase on the day of the event, they may be cheaper if purchased in advance. "w/ drink" prices include a drink, "+drink" prices require the additional purchase of a drink. Times shown indicate start times, doors usually open 30 minutes beforehand.

## VENUES

*Cantalloop II=3-2-30 Miyako-Machi  
Nakayama Dai 5 Building 6F Oita City*

*iichiko Grand Theatre= Oasis Tower 1F Oita City*

*Kagura Kaikan= 810 Kiyokawa, Bungo Ono City*

*iichiko Otonozumi=Oasis Tower 4F Oita City*

*T.O.P.S BittsHall.= Ikushi 5-783, Oita City*

*Patria Hita= 1-8-11 Sanbonmatsu, Hita City*

(continued from page 2)

The volunteers would wait until they encountered groups of art-lovers and offer them a chance to have a quick break and a chat in between the art. I'd certainly never experienced that at any of the London art galleries I grew up with back in the UK! My experience in Kunisaki got me thinking about art in Oita - both the upcoming OPAM art gallery in Oita City, and the art I had just experienced in Kunisaki. The OPAM art gallery building couples Oita's bamboo-making craft tradition with modern architectural design in order to create a beautiful, tranquil space to view art, whilst the Kunisaki Art Festival used Oita's stunning natural beauty as a setting for its unique and nature-based art exhibitions. Visiting the OPAM building and attending the Kunisaki Art Festival made me so happy that I live in a prefecture that offers two complementary and yet contrasting experiences of viewing art. Many of Japan's large, metropolitan cities such as Tokyo and Kyoto have stunning art galleries showcasing wonderful modern and traditional art, but I hope that people do not overlook the wonderful art that can be found in Oita Prefecture. --- Miriam





## Festivals and Events

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
Jan. 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>First sunrise of the new year</b> - the Beppu ropeway to Tsurumi-dake will open at 4:00AM giving visitors the chance to make their first sunrise of the year a memorable one. Come along and enjoy the beautiful view.	Beppu City Tsurumi-dake	☎ 0977-22-2277
Jan 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Sunrise walk</b> - a yearly event where visitors walk along the 4km Bungo Kuroshio Line. Paper balloons are released simultaneously into the sky at sunrise.	Saiki City Yonouzu Bungo Kuroshio Line	☎ 0972-35-6111
Jan. 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Usa Shrine New Year visit</b> - every year around half a million people visit Usa Shrine on this day to pray for good fortune and thing such as the health of their family, business prosperity, road safety and success in their studies.	Usa City Usa Shrine	☎ 0978-37-0001
Jan. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>New Year Shonai Kagura</b> - this will be the first Shonai Kagura performance of the New Year	Yufu City Shonai-Machi	☎ 097-582-1111
Jan. 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Houran-Enya Boat Festival</b> - Vibrantly decorated boats float down Katsura River accompanied by traditional flute and drum music, dancing and more! This is a very colourful, lively event	Bungotakada City Ebisu Bridge	☎ 0978-22-3100
Jan. 10 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Housenji Fireworks</b> - a fireworks festival where around 2000 fireworks are released into the clear winter sky. There will also be a burning of New Years decorations.	Kokonoe-Machi Housenji Onsen	☎ 0973-73-5510
Jan. 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Kimono Appreciation Day</b> - A monthly event where visitors can try on rental kimonos, have their photos taken, and receive discounts at nearby facilities if they are wearing kimono.	Kitsuki City Jouka-machi	☎ 0978-63-0100
Jan. 24 <sup>th</sup> ~ Feb. 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Oita Fugu Festa</b> - selected famous fugu (blowfish) restaurants throughout Oita City will be offering discounts on fugu cuisine so that everyone can taste the deliciousness of fugu.	Oita City Participating restaurants	☎ 097-537-5764
Jan. 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>The 34<sup>th</sup> Hiji New Year Health Marathon</b> - features 1.5km, 3km, 5km, 10km courses and participation is free. A great opportunity to start the year with exercise.	Hiji-Machi Oga Fishing Port	☎ 0977-73-3156
Feb. 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>The 64<sup>th</sup> Beppu Oita Mainichi Marathon</b> - well known as a stepping stone for marathon newcomers. Held alongside the Beppu coast, come along to cheer on the runners (if you're not already competing!).	Oita City Umitamago Aquarium ~ Oita Athletic Stadium	☎ 097-558-1999
Feb. 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Setsubun Onie</b> - held at the Hibarusan Shouheiji temple, this tradition is around 350 years old.	Nakatsu City Yabakei-Machi	☎ 0979-54-3111
Feb. 15 <sup>th</sup> ~ Mar. 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Hita Ōyama Japanese Plum Blossom Festival</b> - The Ōkubo and Furuya plum blossom parks will hold events such as outdoor tea ceremonies, poem-reading meetings and blossom viewing walks.	Hita City Ōyama-machi	☎ 0973-52-3101
Feb. 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Kimono Appreciation Day</b> - A monthly event where visitors can try on rental kimonos, have their photos taken, and receive discounts at nearby facilities if they are wearing kimono.	Kitsuki City Jouka-machi	☎ 0978-63-0100

## Hina Doll Exhibitions

The Hina doll festival is a yearly tradition beginning in mid-February and continuing until mid-March. Families display Hina dolls to celebrate Girl's Day on March 3rd. Displays feature a number of tiers, and each doll represents a different figure from the Emperor and Empress, to court ladies and samurai.

Date	Event Description	Location	Contact #
Feb. 5 <sup>th</sup> ~ Mar. 22 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Usuki Hina-meguri- hinadolls will be displayed at various locations throughout the city.</b>	Usuki City Various locations	☎ 0972-64-7130
Feb. 14 <sup>th</sup> ~ Mar. 15 <sup>th</sup>	Kitsuki Hina-meguri- hinadolls will be displayed at various locations throughout the city. And the hinadolls that were owned by feudal lord will be displayed at Historical Museum.	Kitsuki City Various locations	☎ 0978-63-0100
Feb. 15 <sup>th</sup> ~ Mar. 31 <sup>st</sup>	Hita Hina Doll festival- families in Mameda-Machi and Kuma-Machi will display their hina dolls to the public.	Hita City Mameda, Kuma	☎ 0973-23-3111
Feb. 22 <sup>nd</sup> ~ Mar. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Castle town Nakatsu Hina Doll festival- various events will be held to coincide with the local hina doll displays.	Nakatsu City Various locations	☎ 0979-22-3060

## What's Going On?

### From the Plaza

#### Free Legal Consultations

The Oita International Plaza is holding free legal consultations on **Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> & Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>** from **13:00-16:00**.

The Oita Emigration/Immigration Affairs Council also organizes free consultations where emigration/immigration specialists are available to offer advice on a variety of topics from Immigration Bureau paperwork and procedures, to daily life matters. English interpretation available, other languages may be available with reservation two days in advance.

Date/Time: **Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> / 13:00 - 16:00**

Venue: the Oita International Plaza

For more information contact the Oita International Plaza.

TEL: 097-533-4021

#### Free Tagalog Consultations

Date: Saturday **Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>** & Tuesday **Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>**

Saturday **Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>** & Tuesday **Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>**

Time: **13:00-16:00**

Venue: Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)

Consultant: Rhodora Yoshitake

#### Free Chinese Consultations

Date/Time: **Every Thursday 10:00-13:00**. Place: Oita International Plaza. Consultant: Kodama Wenyu (\*Dates and times are subject to change. Please contact the Oita International Plaza before coming.) TEL: 097-533-4021

Venue: Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)

#### Free Health Consultations

The Saiseikai Hita Hospital offers free health consultations and medical examinations at the Oita International Plaza to foreign nationals living in Oita Prefecture.

Date/Time: **Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> / 14:30 - 15:30**

Venue: Oita International Plaza (iichiko Culture Center, B1F)

For more information contact: Saiseikai Hita Hospital (\*Dates and times are subject to change. Please call in advance to confirm times)

TEL: 0973-24-1100

### Japanese Lessons

#### Himawari Japanese Volunteers

Support for people learning Japanese in order to help them enjoy their lives in Oita, now at three different locations.

Wasada Public Hall Wed. 10:00-11:30

Meiji Akeno Public Hall Wed. 14:00-15:30

Tsurusaki Public Hall Sat. 10:00-11:30

For more information contact Ms. Fukata TEL: 097-527-2614

E-MAIL: [nihongo\\_himawari\\_oita@yahoo.co.jp](mailto:nihongo_himawari_oita@yahoo.co.jp)

#### Nihongo Rakuraku-talk

Beppu City Hall offers free Japanese lessons every Monday from 14:00-15:30. For more information contact Mr. Kii in the Beppu International Affairs Division

TEL: 0977-21-6133 E-MAIL: [int-ma@city.beppu.oita.jp](mailto:int-ma@city.beppu.oita.jp)

#### Sakura Japanese Class

Come study Japanese with friendly volunteers and teachers in a pleasant atmosphere. Sakura Japanese Class is held every Monday from 10:15-12:00 at the Oita University International House in Nishiki-Machi, Oita City. Classes are free of charge. For more information call Ms. Ohashi

CELL: 090-7866-2486

#### AIUEO Japanese Lessons

Volunteers offer free Japanese lessons on Tuesday and Friday from 10:20-11:50 at I-NESS near Oasis Tower as well as Thursday nights at Compal Hall from 18:30-20:30. Lessons are also offered in Beppu at the Beppu Foreign Tourist Information Office on Tuesday mornings from 10:00-12:00.

For more information contact:

Ms. Miyase CELL: 090-8353-2485 (day lessons)

Ms. Kato TEL: 097-532-5940 (night lessons)

### Community Classes and Events

#### Happy Talk

Come practice speaking Japanese with other learners and native speakers. Reservations not required, just show up on the day.

**Information on January and February's Happy Talk dates was not available when this issue of the TOMBO was produced. Please contact the Plaza or the Happy Talk organisers for information.**

Please bring your own drink if you like. Participation is FREE.

For more details visit the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/HappyTalkOita>

## Happy New Year from the TOMBO!



Photograph of the mini art exhibition, recently held near the Oita International Plaza offices.

**Message from the editor:** Happy New Year to all readers of the TOMBO! Thank you for having stuck with us while we have been going through the process of changing editors. I would also like to thank you for your patience and support as I learn the ropes. I have some plans for the TOMBO in the New Year, such as a possible TOMBO mascot and the addition of a regular TOMBO cartoon/comic strip, but as always, any suggestions and comments from readers are always welcome.

2015 is set to be a great year for Oita; with exciting developments including a new art gallery and a revamped Oita City station. In other words, it's a great time to be editor of Oita's English language newsletter! I look forward to editing the TOMBO through 2015, and I hope that you all look forward to reading it.

I hope that all readers of the TOMBO enjoy a safe and peaceful holiday season, and are looking forward to having a wonderful 2015.

- With best wishes from the editor.



The new Oita Station.

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大分市高砂町2-33 OASISひろば21 (B1F)  
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### THANK YOU !!

A special thanks to all those who co-operated with us for this issue. Your help was very much appreciated.

THE TOMBO is produced by:

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HOURS: Monday-Friday 9:30am-7:00pm

(closed weekends and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of each month. We are open on the Saturdays before these Mondays)

Closed national holidays & Dec 29<sup>th</sup> - Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>

The International Plaza is located on the basement floor of OASIS Hiroba 21 (iichiko Culture Center).

