JAPAN’S PERFORMING/VISUAL ARTS SECTOR:
MARKET OVERVIEW, PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICAL MARKET ENTRY

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Introduction

The principal aim of this report is to compose a practical Japan entry guide for Arts professionals in Europe who are regularly involved with international shows and event organisation. It should also appeal to those seeking insight into Japan as a new market for Arts productions, as well as those with an active professional interest in the Arts. Between 2001 to 2014, the Japanese live and entertainment market (music and stage performances) has grown from 256.2 billion JPY to 426 billion JPY (PIA Corporation, 2015). There is huge scope for developments between Europe and Japan in this regard.

Using the results of three methods – a quantitative study, depth interviews with Japan performing and visual arts experts, and secondary research sources – we have gathered insight regarding entry into the visual/performing arts market within Japan, as well as provided an overview of the industry as it stands.

The report begins by highlighting the key Arts sectors in Japan. We examine the marketing materials associated with a sample of top domestic and international exhibitions taking place between June and December 2015, delving into how the marketing strategy is likely to have impacted awareness and relatability.

Secondly, we reveal the results of our primary research conducted with the Japanese public on the topic of Arts exhibitions and productions. This has enabled a deeper understanding of the attitudes and behaviours that Japanese audiences associate with the Arts, exploring the drivers and barriers for participation, and provided a clearer perspective on the differentials in appeal between the types of shows and exhibitions, both European and domestic, throughout Japan. We have cross-tabulated the results to examine key patterns and trends amongst attendees of varying demographic factors such as age, gender, region and parental status.

Finally, we have interviewed a number of experts in the field of Performing and Visual Arts in order to unearth and define Japanese Arts industry standards and expectations.

A wealth of resources exist to help European organisations to enter into this potentially lucrative marketplace and to hold successful productions and exhibitions. With this combination of research and cultural expertise, we wish to aid European businesses as they expand into Japan with a sense of inspiration as well as practical guidance. Importantly, the mutual fascination between Japanese and European groups can work as a pivotal force in promoting each market in turn.

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Executive Summary

The results from our research are outlined below:

Marketing Case Studies

- **Television is still a key advertising medium in Japan**, and this equally applies to arts events. For Performing Arts, commercials will help to raise awareness and give a sense of what the show is like. For Visual Arts, **securing a short slot on a daytime or evening talk programme** can be a good option.
- **Twitter and Facebook** are widely used social media platforms in Japan and are comparatively cheap ways of marketing an event **once it has started**. Providing audiences with **relevant and engaging content in Japanese** can boost an event’s kudos. Posting photographs with special guests and holding competitions may also help.
- **Promotional goods and novelty items are appealing for Japanese visitors.** Often people want to take home a memento of their experience. Cute original characters designed for an event can have positive and friendly associations and help to connect with the artists or acts, if executed well. **Collaborating with local partner companies** who employ a recognisable mascot character can also have the same effect. This can demonstrate a sense of trust between local Japanese companies and international organisers.

Market Research Study

- **Musicals, photography exhibitions** and classical orchestra were among the most popular types of visual/performing arts productions. Musicals were also among the most frequently attended, as well as art exhibitions and pop concerts.
- Motivations for attending European shows were driven by **exclusivity**. Respondents attended because they represent a chance to see something not typically available in Japan (driven by those aged 35-65).
- There is an opportunity to utilise the “European-ness” of historical-influenced productions to draw in audiences. This can be done especially with classical music and fine arts shows. For example, 41% of 45-65s were interested in historical arts exhibitions (compared to 29% overall), demonstrating that this older age group is a key audience drawn to shows that have a sense of heritage.
- A good proportion of Japanese attendees preferred Japanese shows over non-Japanese shows (42%). On the other hand, a significant number (41%) were indifferent, particularly those aged 45-65. This suggests that specifically European productions have **potential to be of interest to an older age group**, whereas those which can be camouflaged to “seem” Japanese have a better chance of capturing the attention of those under 45.
- Social networking and ads online were **not** common ways to find out about shows. The most efficient means of producing awareness is by obtaining **advertising spots on TV** (for all ages), followed by newspapers/magazine ads and articles in particular for 45-65s. Finally, there should be a solid amount of articles (not ads) featured in online press – particularly if the show targets males. In addition, **poster billboards** also skewed male and were more important in the Tokyo area than in other regions.
- There was a noticeable peak in enjoyment of **photography exhibitions in the Kansai (Osaka) region**, suggesting that if possible it makes sense to host photography exhibitions in Kansai rather than in Kanto (Tokyo). **Classical music** was more of interest amongst those in the major metropolitan hubs. There was no noticeable distinction by region for **musicals**.
Expert Interviews

From our interviews with experts, it has become evident that the most important aspects event organisers and artist representatives must consider when determining whether to set up a performance or show in Japan are:

- The artist / act’s ability to provide something that represents their home nation in a way that appeals to core Japanese values and aesthetics, is genuine, is tried and tested, with demonstrable success at home or abroad, and fits with a gallery/venue’s core audience or theme.

- The ability to find good, solid, local partners to provide consultation on building rapport with Japanese audiences; interpretation; suitable and effective marketing routes; key differences between Western and Japanese Culture; and securing a spot in a variety show or at a festival.
Market Background

Thematically, given Japan’s long relationship with artistic cultures, the creative industries thrive especially well in Japan. Therefore, a strong demand for visually appealing, exciting and unique exhibitions and shows will continue in this market. This section summarises the current state of key Arts sectors in Japan, highlighting aspects of particular interest to domestic audiences in recent years.

MUSICAL THEATRE

Musicals

Musicals are immensely well received in Japan, with Shiki Theatre Group by far the most popular musical company in the country. They perform an average of three thousand shows each year which in total receive an attendance of three million people, with sales of at least ¥20 billion.

These are the performances by Shiki Theatre Group which sold the most tickets on the first day (Shiki Theatre Group, 2015):

1. Aladdin (Tokyo - 2015) 0.209 million tickets
2. Beauty and The Beast (Tokyo - 1995) 0.196 million tickets
3. Lion King (Tokyo - 1998) 0.18 million tickets
4. Cats (Tokyo - 2004) 0.17 million tickets
5. Lion King (Nagoya - 2003) 0.167 million tickets

The Lion King is the longest-running musical in Japan. The show has been performed over 10,000 times, and 10 million tickets have been sold in the past 17 years (Shiki Theatre Group, 2015).

Here are the top three musicals of all time (Shiki Theatre Group, 2015):

1. The Lion King – 10,093 performances, 10.26 million tickets sold.
2. Phantom of The Opera – 9,007 performances, 8.96 million tickets sold.
3. Cats – 6,418 performances, 6.4 million tickets sold.

With theatres in eight locations, Shiki Theatre Group have plans to expand their operations across Japan and perhaps even abroad. According to an interview in an online brochure published by the theatre, President and Representative Director Chiyoki Yoshida noted that a new theatre will be opening in Nagoya in 2016 to replace the existing one and that the new premises will “not tolerate such huge gimmicks as Aladdin.” (Shiki Theatre Group, 2015), demonstrating the group’s goal to appeal to a different kind of audience despite the success of “gimmicky” shows like Aladdin.

Although some of London’s West End shows do come to Japan, American Broadway musicals are more often performed. There are a number of musical productions arranged by Japanese theatre companies, some of which are direct re-makes of well-known European productions such as Les Misérables, Cats and Joseph and His Technicolor Dreamcoat.

Opera

The New National Theatre in Tokyo constitutes the only theatre in Japan with a purpose-built hall for opera productions. Tokyo Bunka Kaikan and Nissay Theatre are two other popular venues hosting operatic events year-round. Established
in 1952, Nikikai Opera Foundation is one of the leading cultural authorities in Japanese opera production, training and artist management. Over the course of its existence, it has overseen at least 240 operatic productions. The foundation has over 2,300 members as well as regional hubs throughout Japan (Nikikai, 2007). It is evident that Japanese culture has inspired several renowned opera greats including Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly*. However, recent events in Japan have also served as stimulus for new material, such as the 2011 Fukushima disaster which gave rise to *Stilles Meer* (Calm Sea), an opera in the German language written and directed by Oriza Hirata and with music composed by Toshio Hosokawa (Jiji, 2016).

Opera gained significant traction in Japan during the 1980s when the bubble economy was at its peak. Some opera shows are co-productions between European and Japanese singers and orchestras (Web-Japan, 2000), a theme that emerged in further research into launching classical productions in Japan.

Although many opera performances are in the source language, there have been a number of Japanese-language opera productions (Konnyakuza, c2010). One of the most prolific of these is *Yuzuru*, based on a 1949 play of the same name by Junji Kinoshita and composed by Ikuma Dan. *Yuzuru* has been performed more than 800 times around the world since 1952.

**Takarazuka Revue**

Unique to Japan, Takarazuka Revue is a strictly women-only theatre company and has an avid number of followers, established in 1913 (Robertson, 1998). Actors are split into two distinct roles: *otokoyaku* (male role) and *musumeyaku* (female role). The cast re-create acclaimed European productions or adaptations of films in addition to Japanese shows and original works. The productions are known for the safe environment they foster for female actors, as well as audiences, devoid of sexual politics (Buckton, 2013).

In 2015, Takarazuka performances were seen by 2.73 million people, which is the highest number in history (Sankei Business News, 2016).

**2.5 Dimension Musicals**

A relatively new yet growing concept in Japan, 2.5 Dimension Musicals first appeared in the public sphere in the early 1990s, rooted in previously released source material from manga, anime and the gaming world. Actors bring to life 2D characters on stage (rather than via 3D techniques or holographic imagery). The shows feature musical songs devised by creative, typically distinct from the reference material, and have fresh, re-imagined storylines, akin to a West End or Broadway musical production.

In 2013 alone, seventy productions were put on and attendance of the biggest hit to date, *Musical Prince of Tennis*, passed the two million mark in the first quarter of 2015 (Furuhata, 2015). Although before the boom these musicals were focused on female-oriented series, the vast majority of recent productions have been centred around popular male-centric stories involving team sports, such as *Yowamushi Pedal*, based on a manga about cyclists. One of the most popular 2.5 actors is Yu Shirota who is known for his acting in both *Musical Prince of Tennis* as well as the adaptation of girls’ manga *Bishojo Senshi Sailor Moon*. 
STAGE

Noh / Kyogen

Noh is one of the oldest Japanese stage formats, dating back to the fourteenth century. Although Kabuki remains a more popular choice when it comes to traditional performance, Noh nevertheless still has an important cultural and artistic significance in Japanese culture. A defining characteristic of Noh is mask-wearing by the protagonist in order to signify social ranking and express emotion. As a genre, Noh typically depicts solemn narratives, and therefore Kyogen is used to contradict this by offering more comedic routines. One of the main venues to see a Noh play is at the National Noh Theatre in Tokyo. Between April 2016 and the end of March 2017, there will have been over one hundred performances staged there, inclusive of any Kyogen counterparts to the Noh plays (National Theatre Japan, 2016). The style is more minimal than other forms of theatre entertainment and costumes tend to relate to what was commonly worn during the period of the story.

Kabuki

Kabuki is one of the most popular forms of traditional Japanese stage play incorporating both drama and dance. It is an art form born out of opposition to the more stoic Noh theatre and was known for a more rebellious and daring style. Nowadays, there is a standardised way of performing Kabuki, but more modern troupes like Gekidan Shinkansen put on plays intended to shock audiences in the same way that Kabuki would have done in contrast to Noh previously.

Sales of tickets for Kabuki, Noh and Kyogen enjoyed a 10.5% year-on-year increase in 2014 which gave the industry a total valuation of ¥23.8 billion. The number of Kabuki shows was 1,877 in the same year. The popularity of Kabuki in contrast to Noh/Kyogen was demonstrated by the fact that whilst half a million people attended Noh performances in 2014, the world of Kabuki enjoyed more than double that figure at 1.75 million (PIA Corporation, 2015).

Contemporary Theatre

Notable playwright Hideki Noda has released over forty plays throughout his career and has had many hits both in Japan and internationally with English, French and Korean versions. Noda established his own theatre company, Noda Map, in 1993 and recent hits include Egg, The Bee as well as his latest offering Gekirin (Imperial Wrath) which premiered in December 2015.

One of the key thinkers of the twentieth century was Kobo Abe whose artistic style resided somewhere between the shingeki (new theatre) and the angura (underground) styles. Abe developed a style which favoured audience dissociation from the story and characters, rather than provoking an emotional response which Margaret Key (Key, 2006) suggests he considered to “dull the mind and the senses” as well as “have an effect on the ethical responsiveness of the individual.”

Also highly active on the contemporary theatre circuit is Oriza Hirata, founder of the theatre group Seinendan and the playwright who coined the term “Colloquial Contemporary Theatre”. The discovery and implementation of this type of theatre was a turning point for plays shown at small Japanese theatres during the 1990s. The stories in this genre focused more on banal, everyday situations often referred to as “quiet theatre”, away from the glitz and drama of TV or film. Making the most of this style, Hirata collaborated with Masataka Matsuda on several plays which have won critical acclaim (Japan Foundation, 2007). Of all the genres of stage performance, the number of contemporary theatre shows rose from 25,463 in 2011 to 35,546 in 2014, demonstrating an upward trend (PIA Corporation, 2015).
Ballet

The New National Theatre Tokyo is the only Japanese theatre with its own ballet company. The Royal Ballet (UK), Paris Opera Ballet (France), Bolshoi Ballet (Russia) and Mariinsky Ballet (Russia) are the most well-known European ballet companies in Japan. European companies tend to put out programmes that are classics, or already popular with Japanese audiences, such as *Swan Lake*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Don Quixote*. This is the same with Japanese companies, often choosing established European programs over ones which have had limited exposure.

There was an overall increase in the number of ballet performances in 2014, with instances of both domestic and foreign productions experiencing a rise. Domestic Japanese ballet shows however outstripped the foreign ones substantially with 1,919 shows versus 328 respectively. As an industry, ballet saw the largest boost amongst all the arts as it jumped 53.7% to be valued at ¥8.3 billion (PIA Corporation, 2015).

Contemporary Dance

Critical reception of contemporary dance has improved in recent years, with the support of organisations such as the Japan Contemporary Dance Network (JCDN), an NPO supporting and propagating news about the industry. The primary aim of JCDN is to connect society and dance together and transform Performing Arts in Japan, making it accessible for every demographic.

One contemporary Japanese dancer, Mirai Moriyama has received much praise in the media recently for his collaborative projects with Israeli dance troupe Inbal Pinto and Avshalom Pollak Dance Company (Takahashi, 2015).

MUSIC

Overview

The market value of the Japanese music industry was estimated to be worth ¥272.1 billion in 2014, which showed an increase of 10.1% when compared with the figures from 2013. The same year, 54,394 concerts were performed in a variety of genres which gained a total audience of 35.7 million people. The number of jazz shows (2,171) overtook those which represented the more traditional Japanese styles *enka* and *kayo* (1,258), and world and “other” music took a back seat with a mere 745 shows in total (PIA Corporation, 2015). This may be as much of an issue of artist supply as demand for those genres.

The appeal of live musical performances of any kind remains high in Japan, but this goes hand-in-hand with the sale of related merchandise. The physical format music market in Japan is the highest in the world, with digital music shares continuing to creep up only slowly. In 2014, at 8,094 the number of newly released pop albums was practically double the international figure of 4,801 (RIAJ, 2015). In 1989, there were a total of 8,900 live music performances taking place in Japan, but by 2014 this had more than quadrupled to 27,581 performances which mobilised 42.6 million people (Musicman-net, 2015).

Pop Music

In the top position, pop concerts accounted for 38,057 of live music productions and classical music for 12,163. Japanese pop artists performed the vast majority of the pop shows at 34,738 (91%), while foreign pop artists occupied the remaining 3,319 (9%), proving the domestic staying power of the pop music industry in Japan. The term “foreign” here does not only refer to the West, but also includes the rest of Asia. There are also a number of leading talent
agencies responsible for creating and managing the most lucrative acts in Japan. Possibly the most notorious and well known of these is an agency called "Johnny’s" specialising in promoting all-male groups. Johnny’s are credited with the management of veteran groups SMAP, V6 and Arashi – three of the consistently most popular pop groups in Japan.

On the female group spectrum, AKB48 who have been active for more than ten years are managed by AKS Co. Ltd. AKB48’s reputation is based around the ongoing rotation of its members as well as the broad appeal they possess in terms of replicating a schoolgirl vibe; a characteristic associated with freedom and innocence in Japan. The members achieve this through the pop-infused energy and sense of youthfulness that they communicate through their performances.

The top 5 non-Japanese pop concerts in 2014 were all given by South Korean artists, with the top performers being BIG BANG. Tohoshinki secured more live shows in Japan than BIG BANG did (19 as opposed to 29 respectively), but the latter accumulated a higher proportion of attendees overall by a figure of 6,000. Third-ranking in terms of attendance were Super Junior, but even after organising a total of 28 shows they only amassed 59% of the attendees that Tohoshinki did with one additional show (PIA Corporation, 2015). This is an example of the famed hanryu or “Korean wave”, where cultural proximity has helped bolster success for Korean pop culture within Japan (Hanaki et al., 2007).

Classical Music

There are many classical music shows in Japan, especially those featuring large orchestras. Many are from Germany or Eastern European countries, and they tend to perform renowned classical pieces. Japanese Orchestras such as Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony also perform regularly, and they too often choose works by famous European composers such as Beethoven or Schumann (Tokyo metropolitan symphony orchestra, c2016).

One of the most prominent classical showcase events taking place in Japan each year is the Tokyo Spring Music Festival (Tokyo Haru Ongaku-sai), a one-month long event starting in March which features an array of both Japanese and international classical and operatic acts.

Enka

Enka is a traditional style of Japanese song that is deeply entrenched in political expression and gained a strong wave of popularity during the post-war period. With it enka brings about a sense of nostalgia for many Japanese who lived through the political turmoil of the war. There is little room for originality and technical innovation in the world of enka as singers rely on copying the vocal nuances of the original artist (Yano, 2010). It experienced a loss in market share during the late 1990s, when interest among the younger Japanese population waned. By November 2008, enka’s 3% market share had risen to 12% (Martin, 2008), but this is meagre in comparison to the genre’s heyday of the 1970s and 1980s.

ART

Traditional and Contemporary Art

There remains a high degree of interest from the general public in viewing work by in-demand artists, although in terms of dealers purchasing artwork, the art market in Japan has been slow to pick up from the economic crisis of 2008. In 2014, President and Managing Director of Sotheby’s Japan, Yasuaki Ishizaka, suggested that because Japanese art buyers did not have as much of an opportunity to “encounter art”, they do not purchase it so easily (Lim, 2014).
Japanese visitors prefer to simply look at art in galleries and museums, rather than having a desire to purchase it, despite Japan’s sizeable wealthy population. This means that comparatively speaking, the number of overseas art pieces owned by Japanese galleries and dealers is low. Therefore, when there is an exhibition of works by a world-renowned artist on tour, aficionados are more likely to flock to the museums since the chance to see these works are rare.

**Photography**

A number of photography associations exist in Japan, including JPC (Japan Photo Culture Association) and JPA (Japan Photographers Association). Starting from the first of June each year, one month of photography-related events take place around the Tokyo area to celebrate Photography Day so this would be an opportune time for any budding or experienced photographer to show their works to keen viewers.

There are a number of smaller rental galleries in convenient central Tokyo locations which are accessible for artists looking to display their works. One of the more international, foreign-friendly galleries is the Taka Ishii Gallery, based in Shibuya, Tokyo, New York and Paris. The Taka Ishii Gallery is not solely dedicated to the exhibition of photography, as its shows consist of mixed media works, but the likelihood of foreign representation is higher at venues such as these.
Marketing Case Studies

In addition to having a popular exhibition or show lined up, marketing appropriately to Japanese audiences is critical to consider. Japanese audiences desire the exciting elements of a show to be communicated in an easily understandable yet detailed manner. Although it is gradually changing, Japan remains a culturally niche region, so foreign cultures are often approached with a sense of intrigue and sometimes doubt. If marketing materials can successfully reflect the outstanding features of a nation and its artists or performers, Japan can be a truly great place to attain fame. This section gives some examples of how shows have been marketed in 2015.

The Lion King

Location: Shiki Theatre, Tokyo

Show dates: Running since 1998 in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya and Sapporo

Total number of shows in Japan: At least 10,000 as of July 2015 (Sponnichi Annex, 2015)

About the show

*Lion King* is one of the best-loved musicals worldwide, even when it is performed by various theatrical groups in a number of different mother tongues. Shiki Theatre Group took on the musical a year after the first showing on Broadway. The costumes used in the show were originally inspired by traditional Japanese Bunraku puppet theatre. As of June 2015, attendance of all *Lion King* shows across the world was in excess of eighty million. In Japan, that figure totalled ten million in April 2015 (Sponnichi Annex, 2015).

Marketing materials

Since *Lion King* may be one of the most popular musicals adapted by the only official musical theatre group in Japan, it advertises itself purely on reputation. Shiki have been building up their repertoire in a number of theatrical areas for over sixty years. It is useful to analyse the various touchpoints that the Japanese public come into contact with relating to a large-scale show.

Media

Shiki Theatre Group have a dedicated YouTube channel showcasing their television commercials as well as original web content. For instance, in 2010, to celebrate the twelfth anniversary of Shiki production of *Lion King*, a series of short videos were released online. The team dramatised situations wherein actors from the musical were shown interacting in everyday Japanese settings; Simba is accused by his homeroom teacher of eating one of his classmates, and Scar is seen boasting to the owner of a food stall that he will one day become king. By taking the characters out of context and putting them into a new space, an ironic sense of familiarity is created for viewers. These videos have garnered 300,000 or more views when compared with other types of marketing content on “Shikichannel”, with the first story having been viewed more than 900,000 times (Shikichannel, 2010).

Unlike stand-alone shows, because this musical has been running in Japan for 17 years, television exposure is now restricted to short bursts of advertisement, more to remind the general public that the show is on than to tell them about the story, which many already know. It is clear that there is no set target audience for *Lion King* as it is something that anyone can gain inspiration from. Along with the *Lion King* video series, the Japanese television advertisements
also emphasise the universal appeal by presenting audience members of all ages and life stages. Interestingly, none of these commercials show an entire family attending together, only single attendees or couples.

**Out-of-home Promotion**

The train station posters are very simple yet effective, with single, neatly presented taglines. They read: “Because there’s something I need to protect – I can keep living” / “What is a father?” / “You exist, what am I?” Each of these posters convey deep and meaningful human questions, which would resonate with most Japanese – in the vein of what audiences later tell us they want to see in Arts performances (see Market Study: Desirable Themes at Art Events on page 38). Disney is a perennially popular brand name, so the combination of these distinct promotional elements can be highly effective. This is especially the case in Japan where consumer behaviour is often swayed by positive emotional association.

![Figure 1. Posters for Lion King adorn the escalators at a train station (Shiki Theatre Group, 2015)](image-url)
Figure 2. “This Winter, Love and Courage and Lion King.” (Photozou)
Classical Concert — *Shigatsu wa Kimi no Uso* Live Finale Event

**Location:** Kawaguchi Lilia Hall, Saitama

**Show dates:** 5th April 2015

**Total number of shows in Japan:** One-off event

![Image](https://www.EUbusinessinJapan.eu)

**Figure 3. Shigatsu wa Kimi no Uso concert promotional poster (PR Times)**

**About the show**

This is a good example of how interest in classical music can be backed up by a successful external source of entertainment. *Shigatsu wa Kimi no Uso* takes familiar classical pieces and reframes them in a local, Japanese context. In this case, the television adaptation of manga series *Shigatsu wa Kimi no Uso* (*Your Lie in April*) was the propagator for the concert and this event served as a special live finale. The original story revolves around a teenage pianist who returns to performing post-hiatus and joins forces with a female violinist to become a renowned classical duo. The television series was an adaptation of a comic serialised in a monthly magazine for four years between 2011 and 2015.

**Notable points**

In September 2014, there was a pre-broadcast event which introduced the voice acting cast, animation director and musicians involved with the production. Animation is such big business in Japan that these kinds of PR events are expected to take place as a way of connecting on a deeper level with fans of the original material. They also help in general marketing terms to ramp up the level of hype surrounding a show. During the 2015 concert, in addition to featuring popular music from Goose House, the group who provided the opening and ending themes, the show also included well-respected Japanese classical musicians Tomoki Sakata (piano) and Yuna Shinohara (violin) performing the music from the show.

As an interlude between song performances, the voice actors also re-enacted scenes from the show in time with excerpts on a large screen. This typical style of mixed media anime event format helps to provides a sense of unity between the performers and the audience. In particular, during the talking segments, staff and cast members were able to recant funny or interesting stories that had never been disclosed. Tickets for this event cost 6,900 yen each. The famous classical pieces performed were: Beethoven’s Violin Sonata no. 9 “Kreutzer” First Movement (Yuna
Shinohara), Saint-Saens: Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso (Yuna Shinohara and Tomoki Sakata), and Chrysler/Rachmaninov “Sadness of Love” piano version (Tomoki Sakata).

Social Media / Online

As of March 2016, the official Twitter account for *Shigatsu wa Kimi no Uso* has over 78,000 followers. As might be expected, there was a lot more activity surrounding the releases of the CDs, DVDs and Blu-rays, but the remainder of the posted content is largely focused events and out-of-home promotional campaigns, including character appearances on ice-cream and drink vending machines. The official website, in keeping with the theme of classical music, was also a key source for updates on all facets of the series, including the concert.

Promotional Goods

A range of DVDs and Blu-rays of this finale event were available to purchase in December 2015. At the show itself, various memorabilia from the show and musicians involved could be bought. These included regular and limited edition CDs (whole albums only); character tote bags; character badges; figurines; and special framed artwork from Aniplex, who oversaw the release of related merchandise.

The official soundtrack to the show reached first place in the annual classical music CD sales chart, overtaking Andrea Bocelli and a release focusing on classical music for baby development by famous sports psychologist Mitsuo Kodama (Yahoo, 2015).

Figure 4. A crowd gather at Kawaguchi Lilia Hall (Animation-nerima, 2015)
Louvre Art Gallery Exhibition

Location: The National Art Centre, Tokyo / Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art, Kyoto

Dates: Tokyo: 21 February – 1 June (89 days) / Kyoto: 16 June – 27 September (97 days)

Total attendees: 1,112,516 (Art-annual, 2016)

Average number of attendees per day: Tokyo: 7,444 / Kyoto: 4,892 (Art-annual, 2016)

About the exhibition

This is an exhibition showing popular works from the Louvre gallery in Paris. It is similar to a Monet Exhibition done the same year – Japanese audiences seem to have an affinity with French works of art, or works originally shown in France. The exhibition was held for 8 days longer in Kyoto than in Tokyo and yet attendance was much higher in Tokyo overall.

Social Media

This exhibition also had a Twitter and Facebook page, but it is doubtful that this drove the majority of the interest from participants considering the vast quantity of attendees. Unlike the Monet exhibition, the Louvre Exhibition Twitter account does not feature any cute characters or any stylised form of writing. Instead, the profile picture is of Johannes Vermeer’s 1668 painting “The Astronomer” and looks very mature.

Promotional Goods

The primary propagators for the physical aspect of event promotion were Tokyo Midtown. Several of the shops in the vicinity offered various types of confectionery, pastries and cakes to commemorate the exhibition, all of which sold for between ¥450 and ¥1,500 at Ritz Carlton, Toraya and JEAN-PAUL HÉVIN to name a few. Some iconic shapes were used in the making of these culinary treats, and a particular favourite appeared to be the Louvre pyramids. Restaurants in Roppongi Hills also dedicated special dishes to resemble the most famous works of art on show. Besides this, a replica of the famous Nike of Samothrace was displayed in Tokyo Midtown for the duration of the exhibition. Louvre-themed gift bags were also available to winners of a crossword competition, also prepared by Tokyo Midtown.
L’Auberge De L’ill was involved in promoting this exhibition through the creation of another limited menu inspired both by Vermeer’s home country of The Netherlands as well as by France. Four other cafes served their own renditions of Louvre-inspired edibles throughout this period to attract more visitors. This included the café at the National Art Centre Tokyo, which would enhance the sensual experience for those already flocking to the exhibition.

**Television**

Nippon TV stepped in to advertise the exhibition through a 10-episode short film series shown during their ZIP! programme. Because both the Monet and the Louvre events were in cooperation with Nippon TV this was the main channel for promotion. It should be noted that these films were not only broadcast during the morning show, but could subsequently be watched again online. As a wide array of artists were represented during the Louvre show, there were other special programming slots which honed in on specific aspects such as the life of Vermeer and his paintings.

As a duo, Vermeer and Rembrandt also had their very own exhibition at Mori Art Centre Gallery from January until March 2016 entitled *Vermeer and Rembrandt: Masters of the 17th Century Dutch Golden Age* supported by TBS (TBS, 2016).
Market Research Study

Please see below for an overview of an online panel study done amongst 528 Arts show attendees, including a cross-tabulated look at various demographics as well as the potential ‘hotspots’ for European productions. The study was done in January 2016 amongst those aged 18-65, with the prerequisite that respondents had attended at least one show in the previous six months.

Key Motivations and Barriers to Entering the Japan Market

- The most popular forms of visual/performing arts productions were **musicals**, followed by **photography exhibitions** and **classical orchestra**. Among forms of arts productions that Japanese attendees had visited in the last six months, the most common type was **fine art**, followed by **pop concerts, modern art** and **musicals**.

- Motivations for attending European shows were driven by **exclusivity**. Respondents attended because they represent a chance to see something not typically available in Japan (driven by those aged 35-65). For Japanese shows however the key motivator was that they enjoy shows featuring their own culture.

- **TV ads** are the most common means of becoming aware of visual/performing arts shows amongst all age groups, at one in four. **Online news** was the second most common source (15%). 45-65s in particular also commonly use **newspaper/magazine articles and ads** to gain awareness.

- The **45+ age group** emerged as key amongst attendees of performing/visual arts shows. 45-65s were also most likely to be indifferent to whether a show was Japanese or not (compared to the younger age groups, who tended to prefer Japanese shows).

- **Females are also a key demographic**, as they demonstrate the most overall enjoyment of nearly all of the top ten arts productions, as well as the most awareness of the top shows. They were also more likely than males to **have attended at least one fine arts exhibition, musical or play** in the previous six months. In additions, females were more likely to **not care if a show was Japanese or not** (whereas males were more Japan-leaning).

- The overwhelming majority tended to **go on the weekend**. In addition, the majority of respondents **attended productions alone** at nearly a third (followed by with partners/family at 24-25%).
Show Type Preferences

When it comes to expressed interest in various types of shows, attendees most commonly stated that they liked musicals (40%). Second most popular was photography, at 36%. Third was orchestra (classical) (33%) – Japan is known as a very strong market globally for this genre of music. Please see the below chart split up into demographics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Of the following types of visual/performing arts productions, which ones do you enjoy?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musicals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestra (classical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre (plays)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine art (painting, drawing, sculpture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magic shows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary music (pop singers, rock bands, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kabuki</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Millenials (those aged 18-34) shared in common a love for design, photography, theatre and musicals. Circus was particularly popular amongst 25-34s. Interestingly, amongst 25-34s contemporary music/art were not particularly popular.

Age

As can be seen above, there is some variation amongst the key 45-64 group. This segment of older respondents, in a time when Japan is particularly known for its aging population, demonstrates that it is important to pay attention to the difference in preferences amongst the older demographic. Noticeably, 55-65s prefer historical/fine art more than the other age groups, with 41% stating they like this type of show (their most commonly liked genre of art). Amongst 45-54s, this was also their most commonly liked form of art, at 39%. This is compared to 29% overall – fine art is by no means the top choice amongst ages 18-44. Unpopular amongst 55-65s was design and contemporary dance. For European organisations this means there is a chance to tap into this appeal amongst the older segment and highlight the historical nature of their work, even if it is contemporary (for example, it can be rooted in tradition/ancient style).
Gender

Out of all of the top ten types of shows, only photography saw an equal distribution of interest between genders, at 36%. In fact, males only showed more interest in a single category, and that was by just one point – the circus (25% vs. 24%).

Predictably, females were far more interested in fashion (38% vs. 21%), and also to an extent design (33% vs. 25%). They also were far more interested in musicals, at nearly half (49%) vs. males at just 32%, as well as opera and ballet. The takeaway from this is that for most art shows, the target audience will be female.

Location

By location, the following can be observed:

Of the following types of visual/performing arts productions, which ones do you enjoy?
While there is no noticeable difference in interest in musicals/orchestra in the two main metropolitan hubs of Japan (Kanto and Kansai), there was a pronounced increase in interest in photography amongst those in Kansai – 41% vs. 33-34% the remainder of Japan. This suggests that photography exhibitions would play well in Osaka first, not Tokyo (and also points out that Tokyo is not always the most ideal place to stage a first-time exhibition).

Other noticeable differences were an increased interest in fashion and magic shows outside the main metropolitan regions (37% and 34% respectively).

In Kanto, there was noticeable traditional interest in kabuki (32%).

Parents/non-parents

Both parents and non-parents had marked interest in musicals (43% and 39% respectively) and orchestra (32-33%). However, amongst non-parents the second most popular type of show was photography, with less interest shown amongst parents (39% vs. 32%). Magic shows were also particularly of interest amongst non-parents (32% vs. 24%).
Attitudes towards Arts Productions (European vs. Japanese)

Delving into European vs. Japanese exhibitions, most respondents actually stated that they preferred Japanese shows (42%). This attitude suggests that it may be best to market a performance as something that could be thought to be Japanese – but only if this is readily done. Productions that are obviously foreign in nature will have to be geared towards the 41% who stated that they had no specific preference, suggesting that a high number of Japanese attendees are open to the idea of attending foreign exhibitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you more often visit Japanese or non-Japanese shows/exhibitions?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No preference</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Age

By age, younger respondents were noticeably more Japan-leaning in their preferences for productions they attended, with 44% of 18-24s and 47% of 25-44s stating that they preferred Japanese productions. 45-64s, however, were noticeably less so, at 35% - in fact, the majority stated that they did not care either way (48-49%).

Interest in European productions was highest amongst 55-65s, at 15%.

Gender

Males were more likely than females to specifically prefer Japanese productions (45% vs. 39%), whereas females were more likely to not have any specific preference (46% vs. 36%). Preferences for European productions, however, had a slight male skew, at 13% vs. 11% female.

Since females display more interest in a variety of productions (and are thus perhaps the key target audience for arts productions), this is a good sign that marketing campaigns do not need to appear particularly foreign or Japanese to capture their attention.

Location

By region, obviously foreign shows may do best in Tokyo. There was much less preference for whether a production was Japanese or not amongst those in the Kanto area – with nearly half (48%) stating they did not care either way, compared to 39% in Kansai and 33% in other regions. Only 36% of Kanto attendees stated that they tended to prefer Japanese shows, vs. 46-47% elsewhere.

Interest in European shows saw no distinction by region (12-13%).
Parents/non-parents

Parents were more open to a production being non-Japanese compared to non-parents. Interestingly, 41% of both parents and non-parents stated they had no particular preference, but the majority of non-parents tended to view Japanese productions (44% vs. 38% amongst parents).

Parents were also more likely than non-parents to have a preference for European shows, at 16% vs. 10% amongst non-parents.

Attitudes towards European Productions

Why do you usually go see a European production/exhibition?

- Chance to see something not usually found in Japan 39%
- They are of a high quality/standard 24%
- They are often only on for a limited time 17%
- Art which feels exotic/Western 15%
- The positive reviews 15%

Reasons for attending European productions in particular were dominated by the idea that they were a good chance to view something not normally available within Japan (39%). Additionally, there was a perception amongst nearly a quarter of respondents that the quality was particularly good (24%). Third, 17% also stated that they saw European productions because they were only available for a limited time. In other words, a production which plays up the idea that it is something that cannot be viewed elsewhere (available in limited quantities) and is also good quality will have the most chance to garner interest.

Whereas the most common reason to view European productions in general was that they are not typically available within Japan, amongst 18-24s this was at only 27% (vs. 39% overall). Amongst those aged 35-65, however, this reason peaks to 48% - demonstrating that it is more important to emphasise the “exclusive” nature of a show if it is targeted towards an older demographic. Amongst 18-24s it was more important that the European productions are perceived as being sophisticated (21% vs. 12% overall).
Fanship of European culture

A core 11% of attendees typed themselves as big fans of European culture, compared to 30% stating they were somewhat of a fan. Most were indifferent (45%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am a fan of European culture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Attitudes towards Japanese Productions

Why do you usually go see a Japanese production/exhibition?

- I like productions/exhibitions featuring my own culture: 32%
- They are traditional: 25%
- They are of a high quality/standard: 22%
- They are in the native Japanese language: 21%
- The positive reviews: 20%

What attendees were looking for from Japanese productions was markedly different from European productions. The top answer for why they attended Japanese shows was because they enjoy shows featuring their own culture (32%), followed by because the shows are traditional (25%). Other key reasons were that the quality is good (22%), and they are in Japanese (21%). All of these answers are because of their Japanese-ness in some sense (with the implication that something that is Japanese is good quality).
However, one must keep in mind that the key motivation to view will not actually be ‘it is Japanese’, but rather that ‘it does not seem foreign/strange’. The takeaway then is that it may be a barrier if the performance or exhibition is obviously non-Japanese. For those productions featuring foreign actors or wherein the language cannot be altered, there will be no limited marketing that can make them seem Japanese. They may appear foreign to Japanese attendees regardless of strategy. On the other hand, photography/design/art exhibitions or fashion shows have an opportunity to “camouflage” themselves more as a domestic (Japanese) production – without being overtly misleading.

Means of Gaining Awareness

We also polled respondents on their means of gaining awareness of shows:

In general, most attendees found out about upcoming and current exhibitions from TV ads, at a very high one in four (25%). Ten points lower, online news is at 15%, and magazine/news ads and arts-related programmes on TV are each 9-10%.

**Age**

Across the age groups, TV ads were by far the highest means of producing awareness for an exhibition except amongst 45-54s, where news/magazine ads tie at 18%. 45+s were also much more likely to learn about productions from newspapers in general, both ads and articles.

Amongst 18-24s, poster billboards were also particularly key (12% vs. 7% overall).

25-34s were slightly more likely to become aware of something via word-of-mouth, both on- and offline. Surprisingly, friends/family were not a key way to generate awareness, at 5% offline and 3% online.

35-44s drove news online, at 20%, five points higher than the overall.
Gender

Typically, how do you first find out about an arts show/exhibition?

The rate of males finding out about productions via news online was nearly twice as high as compared to females (19% vs. 10%). Males were also more likely to be exposed through poster billboards (10% vs. 5%).

Females, on the other hand, became aware of productions through arts programmes on TV much more commonly, at 11% vs. 6%. They also drove online word-of-mouth (5% vs. 1%).

TV ads were much stronger than all other sources, although the high production of awareness through news online for males suggests that male-targeted productions would advertise most effectively by focusing on both online news and TV ads.
Regionally there was much greater generation of awareness for productions due to TV ads in places outside the metropolitan hubs of Kanto/Kansai, at 33% vs. 22% for Kanto and 25% for Kansai.

Kanto held back awareness via news online, at 11% vs. 17% elsewhere. It drove production of awareness through poster billboards however at 10%.

**Parents/non-parents**

Among parents, awareness was more often garnered via TV commercials at 29% compared to 23% amongst non-parents. Parents also drove news/magazine ads at 14% vs. 7%.

However non-parents led generation of awareness through offline word-of-mouth, at a strong 7% compared to 2% amongst parents (5% overall).

Otherwise, there was little distinction between parents/non-parents.
Top Arts Shows/Exhibitions for Awareness

The recent productions respondents were most commonly aware of are below:

The most famous two productions were musical *West Side Story* by the Shiki Theatre Group (38%), as well as an arts exhibition at the Kyoto City Art Museum on Vermeer and Rembrandt (37%) which was also held in Tokyo (30%). Females demonstrated more awareness of all top ten productions except for the Leonardo Da Vinci exhibition at the Edo Tokyo Museum.

In-depth look at awareness of top 3 productions

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
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</table>
It can be seen that the older age group (55-65s) are the dominating segment in driving awareness for all productions. The suggestion is therefore that this group is the group most likely to recall a production that has been advertised sufficiently. What’s more, as we have seen previously, in addition to TV ads (which topped all age groups), 55-65s most often gain their awareness of shows through newspapers/magazines – both ads and articles. In order to mimic the successful elements of top shows’ advertising campaigns, it may be most beneficial to target the group that is most aware of these productions to begin with – 55-65s.

In addition, TV ads are the leading source of awareness for all respondents, so this should be a critical aspect of any campaign, budget permitting.

Moreover, because 55-65s are also commonly exposed to productions via newspaper editorials as well as newspaper/magazine ads, it would be beneficial to focus on getting productions into the press and/or paying for print advertising if a production is something that would be suited towards this older audience.
Attendee Behaviour

Recent shows

We can dig deeper into the actual behaviour of attendees in terms of when, how and with whom they attend various performances/exhibitions.

The overwhelming majority of respondents had visited just one visual/performing arts event in the previous six months, demonstrating that frequent attendance is not typical amongst Japanese audiences.

The below chart represents the most frequently attended types of shows across both performing and visual arts:

Visual arts shows were more commonly attended than performing arts.

Amongst those who had seen visual arts shows, over half of attendees had been to some type of art exhibition in the last six months – particularly fine art (35%). Modern art exhibitions were viewed by 23% of attendees. Modern art had a slight skew towards males (25% vs. 21%), whilst fine art (historical) skewed very strongly towards females (40% vs. 29%). It is a good idea therefore to target fine arts shows towards the female demographic, compared to modern art which is more likely to appeal to both genders.

The most commonly viewed performing arts show was pop concerts, which precisely a quarter (25%) of attendees had seen in the last six months. This was followed by musicals at 18%. The next most commonly viewed show was the theatre (16%), driven by 25-34s at 21%, with some holdback amongst those over 45.

Frequent attendees

Amongst those attending more than one production recently, the most commonly visited productions were fine arts exhibitions (48%), followed by modern arts exhibitions (37%) and pop concerts (29%). This suggests that frequent attendees are more interested in visual arts productions rather than the performing arts, compared to the overall audience.
Location

By region, the standouts in attendance of performing arts shows tended to be dominated by the traditional Japanese arts. For example, Takarazuka was nearly twice as likely to have been viewed recently in Kansai (10%) compared to the other regions (6%) and was predictably driven by females. Rakugo on the other hand was more of a mainstay in the Tokyo area (13% vs. 9% overall). It also skewed male.

Among key visual arts shows, fine arts exhibitions were most commonly attended in Kanto/Kansai (37% and 35% respectively vs. 30% elsewhere). There was no distinction for modern arts exhibitions.

Attendance Times

Japanese attendees tended to make time for entertainment on weekends, not after work. The vast majority of Japanese attendees visited performing/visual arts shows on the weekend, at 62%. Very few tended to go in the evenings during the week (just 9%).

Age

Across the ages, 35-44s were by far the most likely to attend shows mainly on the weekends (72%). 55-65s were least likely (just 54%, followed closely by 45-54s at 55%), with 38% of 55-65s stating they tended to go during the week.

Most likely to go on weekday evenings was the youngest group of 18-24s, at 11%.

Gender

Females were far more likely than males to go during the day in the week, at a third (33%). At two thirds, males tended to go on weekends (66% vs. 58% amongst females).

Location

By region, there was more weekend attendance of shows amongst those in Kansai than elsewhere, at 68% vs. 60% in Kanto and 56% in other regions.

Elsewhere as well there was more attendance on weekdays (36% vs. 30% Kanto and 24% Kansai).
Parents/non-parents

There was no great distinction between parents/non-parents and overall times for attending arts shows. Parents were slightly more likely to attend on weekdays, probably driven by stay-at-home mums (32% vs. 27% non-parents).

Attendance Partners

A somewhat surprising result was that the majority of attendees attend shows alone, at nearly one in three (32%).

Age

Amongst those aged 35+, the habit of attending shows/exhibitions alone was most prominent, peaking to 35% amongst 55-65s. 25-34s were least likely to exhibit this behaviour (precisely a quarter, 25%).

18-24s were very unlikely to attend shows with partners, and were the only age group to mostly attend shows with family, at one in three (33%).

35-44s were by far the least likely to go to shows with friends (only 8%).

Gender

By gender, females were more likely to go to shows with their family (27% female vs. 21% male), whereas males were more likely to attend mainly with their partners (28% male vs. 22% female). There was little difference between genders regarding attending alone, with friends or with colleagues.

Attending alone remains the most popular way to view a show by gender (33% male; 31% female).

Location

Outside the Tokyo area, respondents tended to go to shows/exhibitions more with their family (25-26% outside Tokyo vs. 21% Tokyo). Those in Tokyo however were more likely to mostly attend shows with their partners (29%).

Outside Kansai/Kanto, there was slightly more attendance of shows alone (35% vs. 31%).

Parents/Non-parents
As could be predicted, parents were more likely to base their outings around the family (28%) and their partners (35%). There was a big gap between those without kids and those with kids in terms of attending shows alone (36% non-parents vs. 25% parents).

Non-parents were more likely to go with friends, at 23% compared to just 11% amongst parents.

**Desirable traits in productions**

Finally, we asked respondents for their input on what constitutes a desirable production and about their recent experiences.

The majority had attended art shows or museum exhibitions. It seems that most smaller-scale shows were showing work by Japanese artists. Some respondents also gave their opinions about how the show or production made them feel. It should be noted that a lot of the words that were used for describing experience were largely based on their emotional state at the time of their visit and not so much on the practical points. This strongly suggests that for Japanese audiences, the experiential is regularly more important. Having said that, if the actual content is not interesting, fun or engaging, this can equally have a significant effect on reception of a production.

There is something to be said about wanting to let go of the everyday, de-stress and relax as many people answered in this way, noting that small things such as noise disturbance during a performance from other audience members could be especially off-putting; for example, one person mentioned the noise of convenience store bags rustling during a musical. Equally distressing for many is the volume of people at an event; if it is too crowded it can also be a negative point. This ties in with a desire for originality and uniqueness, with mass appeal.

**Desired Respondent Themes at Arts Events**

When asked what they thought a visual/performing arts production should have, the most popular answers were “Surprise” and “Impact”. So generally speaking, members of an audience like to get a brand new, exciting and hard-hitting positive experience when they attend an event. The interesting aspect is that most respondents actually listed a specific attribute or set of attributes, whereas only a handful replied with a noncommittal “I don’t know” or “nothing in particular”.

Also a common response to this section was that participants want to see shows and exhibitions that are rarely accessible in Japan, echoing their reasons for attending European shows. This reflects a notion of desired exclusivity – being given the opportunity to view something that they already know exists, but had never had the opportunity to see before.
Expert Interviews

We conducted one-to-one interviews with seven experts with many years of cumulative experience working in fields relating to the Arts in Japan and Europe, for the purpose of unearthing the finer details of Japanese audience expectations in regards to European productions, as well as what European artists can expect to encounter during a trip to Japan to promote their work.

The interviews featured the following experts. Some of them wished to be kept anonymous, while others were happy to have their names included:

- Astrid Nishimaki - Independent Public Relations Professional specialising in Art
- Mika Shirasawa - Music Director in Japan
- Shunichi Takahashi - Actor/Performer in Japan
- Marie Takimoto - Freelance performing arts event producer in Japan
- A Scottish visual artist living in London (Interviewee A)
- Director of a foreign art gallery in Tokyo (Interviewee B)
- Deputy Head of Tours at a global artist management agency (Interviewee C)

General Arts Scene in Japan

From our interviews, we gathered that there is a popular visual arts scene in Japan, with some styles more favoured than others. We asked one respondent about the contemporary art scene that she works in and what marketing is like:

In the contemporary art sector, we don’t get many [gimmicky] marketing ploy[s] except, for instance, at a Takashi Murakami show; the guy who did the audio guide is an actor who was in [Murakami’s] *Jellyfish Eyes* movie, he’s an up-and-coming hot young actor – so there’s a little ploy there to get a young audience and young girls into the museum. Maybe some [galleries] try to get famous people to come to openings or something like that but it’s not really done. (Interviewee B)

Traditional art styles like Impressionism and European artists are always a safe bet in Japan. Last year, organisers of the Monet Exhibition used well-known actor Seiichi Tanabe as a type of PR representative. Interviewee B noted that “Monet and the Impressionists are very popular here because Japanese people like to take credit for the Impressionist style (laughs)... I think it’s easier to convince the talent agencies to come in and work as a marketing tool [in those cases].”

On the other hand, Marie Takimoto spoke about how more unconventional acts can succeed in the Japanese performing arts scene, stating, “Several years ago, media art was a big instrument to get attention and it was frequently used in performing arts, but I think the trend has gone now.” That format may not be so popular anymore, but it is worth exploring ways of showing new and original ideas, at least when it comes to theatre.

Generally, audiences want to see something unknown in the theatre. If the performance has an unexpected message or cultural theme... it might get attention from the audience. Last year, a small dance company came from Israel. Regardless of their obscurity, their performance was a big hit due to their unconventional message against Eurocentric society. (Marie Takimoto)

So being different is not necessarily a negative thing. This appears to be more the case when it comes to performing arts because it is about the experience (as we have seen via Japanese attendees’ input in our quantitative study).
In some respects, there are similarities among art galleries all over the world, but curators at Japanese galleries have a specific mindset that they adopt when considering their audience. Interviewee B says, “It’s a fairly secluded, isolated industry, so the main audience would be the local audience – meaning the people that usually go to the galleries.” Owners already know what kind of people will be interested in the art they exhibit.

Most foreign galleries art galleries in the States or in the UK would tend to think about curators or other artists or other galleries – they would think about other art world contexts. But in Japan they would think more about the general Japanese audience. (Interviewee B)

In this way, foreign exhibitions become not only accessible, but fully localised for a Japanese visitor base. When it comes to content for potential buyers at exhibitions, Interviewee B cites “craftsmanship, quality and size” as being integral factors to bear in mind:

If it’s too big, people get kind of scared and they can’t install it in their homes. Craftsmanship is definitely important, not so much the concept behind the works. That’s what I find to be the main difference between Japanese artists and non-Japanese artists, especially American artists because they get a bit too cerebral.

Complex, philosophical artwork is not so popular for buyers, then, but works that have an intrinsic and aesthetic appeal to them, and that are well made using solid techniques.

From our research, it is also evident that there is a mutual fascination regarding Europe in Japan and vice versa. This manifests itself in a myriad of ways, and not least through the Arts. Interviewee C talks about how an obsession with the European image displays itself in the world of classical music:

In Japan there’s a big fascination with Western art forms and Western artists. In terms of classical music there is a very strong and established market [in Japan], probably one of the strongest in the world. There are between ten and fifteen symphony orchestras that go there every year. Ticket prices are very expensive, and there is a very interested and knowledgeable audience there.

Therefore, a Western production being brought into Japan already has one big advantage – it has caught the fascination of the Japanese audience just based on where it is from. At the same time however, because they play so well in Japan, the audience will already have been exposed to many similar performances in the past. Other interviewees agreed about the level of knowledge audiences had for classical music:

Generally, many Japanese audience members are very knowledgeable and have good ears for recognizing the quality of the performance. However, they tend to focus on the accuracy or propriety... This might show that most classical music fans in Japan are likely fond of conventional playing style rather than contemporary style. Therefore, it might be difficult to create a sense of appeal for Japanese fans when it comes to new renditions of well-known tunes compared with other countries.

In other music genres, such as pop or jazz, originality and improvisation may be more widely accepted but this is not the case when it comes to classical music. Technical brilliance and accuracy is perhaps more of a prerequisite to how well a concert is received by the Japanese public than other elements, such as originality.

It is not only the “European” label that enables an act to be attractive. In line with the importance of a show being Western, Interviewee C also highlighted the importance of place and status in bringing a European orchestra or classical musician to Japan. The association that certain countries and cities have in the minds of Japanese audiences
is also crucial to understand. As Interviewee C states, “If you bring an orchestra from Berlin or Vienna or London – that’s what matters, because people know about key cities more than others.”

Hence a key aspect is the need to generate awareness for the artists. To do this, it is always beneficial to make connections with big galleries and museums:

Mori Art Museum are one of the best in the world. They collaborate a lot with international exhibitions and international art museums and they have many local artists that have become very famous around the world. (Interviewee C)

There is a wealth of opportunities for international artists to gain exposure through cooperation with certain Japanese galleries and the appropriate corporate sponsors. On the other hand, it seems that there are certain trends when Japanese attendees simply view art at an exhibition, as opposed to buying it. Astrid Nishimaki asserts that overall there remains mainly a larger buyer’s market for domestic artwork rather than European:

The Japanese prefer established Japanese names for art or brands or even for anything. Those who like art are already only a small slice of the pie and can afford to buy it. I’m not talking about the collectors; I’m talking about quite wealthy people with professions where they make good money like being a dentist or a wholesaler. Those people basically prefer Japanese art, that’s for sure, but some eccentrics will go for the European art.

The implication therefore is that it may behove artists more to focus on galleries and museums as a means of generating awareness amongst audiences, rather than expecting them to generate profit. It seems that there are certain trends when Japanese attendees simply view art at an exhibition, as opposed to buying it.

What do artists need to do to be successful in Japan?

Certainly, art is subjective, but nevertheless there are some basic rules to consider before moving forward with plans to exhibit or perform in Japan. Marie Takimoto offered one suggestion for those on a more limited budget: “I recommend that performers register to participate in an Arts Festival such as Dance New Air in Tokyo as they will have many chances to be noticed by a large number of people without investing much money. It also reduces miscellaneous costs including transportation and accommodation.” Something that all of the interviewees brought up was the necessity of finding a good, solid local partner based in Japan to provide support. This is especially vital because face-to-face meetings legitimise professional relationships in Japanese business and reinforce a sense of loyalty and trust. Interviewee B said:

It’s just easier for artists who have an agent to help them come here. It may be another gallery or it may be another artist rep who is familiar with the program at the Japanese gallery and can bring something that’s comparable to what they do.

Although it is certainly preferable for the artist to attend their own exhibitions in Japan, it is not always possible due to timing or cost restraints. This can have its disadvantages as Interviewee A discovered when he was attempting to understand how his work was received by visitors. His solo exhibition was displayed at a rental gallery in Kyoto and was overseen by a curator whom the artist found disappointing:

There was no critical analysis or feedback, which led me to doubt his ability to be a curator… The curator was meant to be the person in charge of what was going on, and the artist should be on the same level. But it’s kind of like he took a [backseat] and was waiting for me to make decisions.
In Japanese culture there is a tendency towards avoiding criticism, often preferring to say nothing. From the Western point-of-view, this can ironically lead to confusion and confrontation, only reinforcing the point that it is necessary to have contacts who deeply understand both Japanese and Western perspectives.

The artist had spent some time with the curator in London beforehand, but even then he was not happy with the way that communication was managed when it came to it. In response to this, Interviewee B says she would offer a workaround if an artist could not physically be in Japan:

[In that case], we would definitely work closely with that artist, send video walkthroughs to make sure it’s been installed to the right millimetre in height, you know the little things. That’s what we’re meant to do. We consider that our main clients are the artists not the collectors so if they have that similar mindset I think it’s really that gallery’s responsibility to realise the artist’s exhibition.

She also adds, “in a way, galleries are supposed to be your agents so if the gallery can’t [help you] then it’s a big problem I think. Galleries need to be equipped with the skills to help artists whether they’re Japanese or non-Japanese.” There are differences in management between main galleries and rental galleries. For the latter, artists and their managers will be expected to do much more of the promotion themselves.

However, “The devil is in the detail,” notes Interviewee C, “so be very careful when making any arrangements. Be very respectful, because you know the Japanese people are extremely respectful, be kind and understanding and be honest. They value those things.” If artists can do their research and independently approach galleries and venues which regularly show similar work, it will help to show that they are serious about bringing their art to Japan. Also, it will avoid mismatching values. Interviewee B adds:

It really helps for [artists] to have representation already in their home country, to already have a proper context in say, London or France or wherever they’re from and to be able to say “Hey, I represent the UK” or “I represent this in France” to be able to bring it to Japan, because you need some kind of weight or value already to your work.

Therefore, being well established first and foremost is very important – to have a reputation in one’s industry. This was also echoed by Interviewee C.

Whilst it is preferable to have a translator on an events team, language barriers need not be an issue during the actual performance. Shunichi Takahashi noted that language ability “does not matter, as long as you can display a friendly attitude towards Japanese audiences” and that it helps immensely if the structure of the performance is well thought-out beforehand. Using a Japanese host at some performances can also significantly boost the atmosphere, since Japanese audiences are not always as visibly receptive to the stimulus on stage when compared with Western audiences. Having a Japanese-speaking reference point throughout creates a much-needed sense of unity and closeness between the performer and the audience.

**Success Stories**

Interviewee C’s company organised a particularly successful event which saw the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra from the UK touring in Japan alongside sensational blind pianist Nobuyuki Tsujii. This was a sell-out event which our interviewee notes had “a real communication between the Japanese artist and the British orchestra.” This is where cooperation can work ingeniously to enhance a cultural bond between countries and show harmony.
Placing foreign performers alongside notable Japanese ones will likely be beneficial so long as they are a creative match. In Japan, companies often sponsor such events, so essentially the same thing happens when artists are selected to collaborate on a show. In the classical music world, Interviewee C says, “it’s about first of all finding the capital to [create a new market], to be brave about it and do it. There’s a very traditionalist view especially in classical music that has to be broken. But it’s going very well at the same time.”

Similar success has been found by combining the contents of an event with Japanese pop music or well-known idol groups such as all-female group Momoiro Clover Z, who released a single with KISS in March 2015. If organisers have the budget to scale an event up to that level, it can be highly effective.

When it comes to breaking down pre-existing genre barriers, many passionate artists and curators can find great success and an energetic reception from Japanese audiences. The only key barrier to break down is that of the lack of awareness of foreign artists. Interviewee C told us that artist awareness is so important that if Japanese audiences do not know about them, they are very unlikely to buy tickets. Appropriate marketing campaigns, therefore, can significantly help to propel unknown artists in this market. Astrid Nishimaki in particular described how she worked tirelessly to get relatively unknown foreign artists more exposure by subverting the norms. Not only did she aim to display these artists’ works, but the exhibition was held in a Seibu department store, to challenge deeper ideas about consumerism.

The exhibition was trying to rebel against the idea that everyone has to be famous. If they bring somebody over from abroad, they think he or she has to have a name, or they have to already be dead. Nobody had acknowledged the phenomenon that there were so many foreign artists of so many different nationalities living in Japan. I was also tired of how this ‘Paris, London, New York’ trilogy was being venerated, as if there weren’t artists anywhere else. (Astrid Nishimaki)

From what our experts have told us, we can conclude that it is clearly beneficial to maintain a strong sense of national identity if a production is going to appear exotic or foreign to Japanese audiences. Japanese audiences want to truly
be able to capture the essence of a country and its people without necessarily having to leave Japan. However, they want all of this to be offered in an accessible and relatable way, as a complete ‘other’ in contrast to Japanese culture or in harmony with Japanese culture.
Recommendations for Market Entry

As we have seen, there is no doubt that Japan represents a lucrative marketplace for creative individuals and groups, but extreme care and precision should go into the planning stages as small details can make all the difference. Thinking ahead and spending time figuring out which contacts will be key to one’s industry can truly pay off, as well as remembering that one’s audience at home may not necessarily be the same in Japan. It is important to do thorough research and, wherever possible, go to Japan in order to oversee and build relationships with partners.

Co-producing a show can add an extra layer of both trust and familiarity for audiences – often Japanese and European opera artists are seen performing together on stage. Even if an artist is well known across Europe, for a first venture into Japan it may be a good idea to arrange for them to perform alongside notable local singers rather than to do a solo show straight away.

Despite the dominance of popular music in Japan, there are only a handful of major players responsible for many of the most lucrative acts. In an entertainment business that is rigorously managed and controlled, agencies like the infamous Johnny’s can often make it difficult for other acts to move up the ranks. Since many musicians in Japan represent carefully curated brands, their managers must be very flexible yet selective about the kinds of contracts they sign acts to. The Japanese music industry is heavily involved in networking and collaboration, so it is important to understand where a new debut act may be a good cultural fit within a growing trend or niche.

In Japan, art pieces are often categorised under the same umbrella as historical artefacts at museums. On the whole, many Japanese visitors to exhibitions are looking to experience the magnitude and history behind the paintings and the artistry to get a deeper sense about the country of origin. There tends to be a cultural draw towards the beauty of traditional artworks, and a sense of curiosity and fascination about them. Galleries which regularly host European art exhibitions include Bunkamura The Museum and Panasonic Shiodome Museum. Art Fair Tokyo is the biggest national art show covering all styles and formats, taking place annually in May, so this is certainly worth considering.

It is clear that the primary reason Japanese audiences attend European events is that they represent a rare viewing opportunity. Also note that many Japanese who work full-time will have limited holiday time. Performing and visual arts productions/shows represent an opportunity to recreate the experience of a different country in Japan.

What we have learnt from the research conducted is that in order to succeed in bringing a production or exhibition to Japan, first and foremost, it is necessary consider whether one’s offering is attractive enough to Japanese audiences to make what can be a significant financial and timely commitment. Considering the core characteristics of one’s audience, and how they perceive one’s home culture, will help an exhibition or show meet (or better yet, exceed) expectations. With a solid combination of careful planning, consideration for the target Japanese audience and a network of reliable industry contacts, opportunities to thrive in Japan and garner a loyal following are many.
Appendices

Questionnaire Methodology

Gender: 50% males/50% females, interlocking with Age:

18-24: 25%
25-34: 30%
35-44: 20%
45-54: 15%
55-65: 10%

Region:

40% Kanto region
40% Kansai region
20% Remaining regions

--Must have seen at least 1 production/exhibition in the past 6 months
--Must not work in sensitive industries

SCREENER

S1. What is your gender?

Male
Female

S2. What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18-20
- 21-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-65
- Over 65

S3. In which area do you live?

(List of all regions in Japan)

S4. Do you, anyone in your family or any of your close friends work in any of the following industries?

- Advertising, PR or promotion
- Marketing research
- The production, distribution, marketing or retailing of movies, video games, DVD’s, or music CD’s
- Mass communication such as TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, or websites
- PR or marketing
- Banking
- Automotive
S5. Which of the following best describes you?

- Single, no children
- Single, with children
- Married, no children
- Married, with children

S6. How many hours per week do you usually work?

- 5-24
- 25-37.5
- 38-44
- 45+
- I don’t work

S7. How many times have you been to a visual and performing arts productions/exhibition in the last 6 months? If you are unsure, please make your best guess.

S8. Please indicate how many times you have been to visual and performing arts shows in the past 6 months:

Visual Arts (0 – “more than 10 times”)
Performing Arts (0 – “more than 10 times”)

MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

“The following questions are about visual/performing arts productions and exhibitions. Thank you in advance for filling out the survey. Your honest and true opinions are very important”

A10: In the past 6 months, what kinds of performing arts shows have you attended?

- Musical
- Ballet
- Classical music concert
- Opera
- Theatre play
- Dance
- Jazz concert
- Pop concert
- Takarazuka
- Rakugo
- Bunraku
- Kabuki
- Noh / Kyogen
- Magic shows
- Ventriloquism
- Circus
- “None of the above”

A11. In the past 6 months, what kinds of visual arts shows have you attended?

- Fine art (traditional)
- Contemporary art
- Craft / Jewellery
- Photography
- Illustration
- Graphic Design
- Ceramics
- Fashion Design
- Independent Film
- Architecture
A12. Which of the following performing arts shows from 2015 have you heard of?

- Musical: “Top Hat” – Tokyo Theatre Orb
- Musical: “Let it be” – Tokyo International Forum
- Classical Music: “Tomin gekijou no. 628” – Tokyo Bunka Kaikan
- Opera: “Hungarian National Opera – Barber of Serbia” – Tokyo Bunka Kaikan
- Opera: “Poland Warsaw Opera – The Magic Flute” – Tokyo Bunka Kaikan
- Jazz: “Blue Note Jazz Festival” – Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse
- Dance: “Deborah Kolga Company – Bell” – Kanagawa Arts Theatre
- Kabuki: “Roppongi Kabuki - 地球投五郎宇宙荒事” – Orix Theatre
- Noh / Kyogen: “Suhootoshi / Kiyotsune” – National Bunraku Theatre
- Bunraku: “Nishiki Aki Bunraku Performance” – National Bunraku Theatre
- Kabuki: “Yoshitsune Senbonzakura” – National Theatre
- Classical music: “London Symphony Orchestra” – Suntory Hall
- Ballet: “Tokyo Ballet – La Bayadere” – Tokyo Bunka Kaikan
- Ballet: “Spain International Ballet Group Tour” – Tokyo Bunka Kaikan
- Takarazuka: “Guys & Dolls” – Takarazuka main hall / Tokyo Takarazuka Theatre
- “I haven’t heard of any of these”

A12b. Which of the following visual arts events from 2015 have you heard of?

- Contemporary art: “Niki de Saint Phalle Exhibition” – New National Art Gallery
- Contemporary art: “Tokyo Experimental Art Festival 2015” – Tokyo Wonder Sight
- Photography: “Time – Present” – Hara Art Gallery
- Sculpture: “Julio Gonzalez Exhibition” – Setagaya Art Gallery
- Art: “Prado – Passion for the beauty of the Spanish court” – Mitsubishi Ichigokan
- Contemporary Art: “Yoko Ono: From my Window” – Tokyo Contemporary Art Gallery
- Art: “Vermeer and Rembrandt” – Kyoto City Art Museum
- Art: “Europe and the world of Marchen – Grimm Fairytales” – Enryo Inoue Memorial Museum
- Illustration: “International KOBE Comics and Illustration Festival” – Kobe Bienale
- Illustration: “Hisashi Eguchi: KING OF POP” – Kawasaki City Museum
- Ceramics: “Ceramics and Glass Techniques Show 2015” – Tokyo Big Sight, West Hall
- Fashion: “Digital x Fashion” – Kobe Fashion Art Gallery
- “I have never heard of any of them”

A13. Below is a list of performing arts shows that will be on in 2016. Please select the ones you have heard about

- Ballet: “Tokyo Ballet – Swan Lake”
- Ballet: “Hamburg Ballet – Lilium”
- Dance: “Burn the Floor – NEW HORIZON”
- Musical: “Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat” Tokyo Theatre Orb
- Opera: “Yuzuru” New National Theatre
- Opera: “Salome” New National Theatre
- Musical: “West Side Story” (Four Seasons Theatre Group)
- Takarazuka: “Shakespeare”
- Music: “Kyoto/Frame Music Academy: Ensemble Special Concert 2016”
- Kabuki: “Osaka Shochiku Seat – Super Kabuki 2 (One Piece)"
- Noh / Kyougen: State Opera – “Okina / Suehirogari – Ryujin Kasuga”
- Bunraku: “DISCOVER Bunraku” – National Bunraku Theatre
- “I have not heard about any of them”

A14. Below is a list of visual arts shows that will be on in 2016. Please select the ones you have heard about

- Art: “Leonardo Da Vinci and the dream of playing in the sky” – Edo Tokyo Museum
- Art: “Vermeer and Rembrandt” – Mori Art Centre Gallery
- Exhibition: “Kew Garden – English Garden” – Panasonic Shiodome Museum
- Contemporary art: “Pompidou Centre Exhibition” – Tokyo City Art Gallery
- Contemporary art: Giorgio Morandi “Endless Variations” – Tokyo Station Gallery
- Fashion Design: “PARIS Haute Couture – Only one clothing in the world” – Mitsubishi Ichigokan
- Fashion Design: “MIYAKE ISSEY exhibition” – National New Art Gallery
- Illustration: “Victoria Potter – 150 year anniversary exhibition” – Bunkamura, the Museum
- Illustration: “30 year anniversary of the founding of Pixar” – Tokyo Museum of Modern Art
- Design: “Good Exhibition” – 21_21 Design Sight
- Art: “Galle’s Garden” – Tokyo City Garden Art Museum
- Photography: “8th Ebisu Photography Festival” – Tokyo City Photographic Art Museum
- “I have not heard of any of them”

A15. Of the ones you didn’t know about, how interested would you be in going to see the following shows based on the title?

- Definitely interested
- Probably interested
- Might / might not be interested
- Probably not interested
- Definitely not interested

A16. Of the ones you didn’t know about, how interested would you be in going to see the following exhibitions based on the title?

- Definitely interested
- Probably interested
- Might / might not be interested
- Probably not interested
- Definitely not interested

A17. In general, how do you first find out about visual/performing arts productions/exhibitions?

- Commercials on TV
- Arts-related programmes or reports on TV
- Radio
- Advertisements in newspapers/magazines
- News in newspapers/magazines
- News online
- Advertising online (banners, flash ads or videos)
- Poster Billboards (including train station, subway and on-the-ground poster/billboards)
- Digital Billboards (including train station, subway and on-the-ground TV displays)
- Posters in residential or office buildings
- TV in residential or office buildings
- Museum/theatre displays (including posters, standees, banners and special displays)
- In-venue/museum magazine and flyers
- Friends/family offline
- Friends/family online, using LINE, Facebook, forums or other social media
- Advertising in a game you play on handheld or mobile device

A18. Thinking about the productions you said you have heard of, how did you first find out about them?

- Commercials on TV
- Arts-related programmes or reports on TV
- Radio
- Advertisements in newspapers/magazines
- News in newspapers/magazines
- News online
- Advertising online (banners, flash ads or videos)
- Poster Billboards (including train station, subway and on-the-ground poster/billboards)
- Digital Billboards (including train station, subway and on-the-ground TV displays)
- Posters in residential or office buildings
- TV in residential or office buildings
- Museum/theatre displays (including posters, standees, banners and special displays)
- In-venue/museum magazine and flyers
- Friends/family offline
- Friends/family online, using LINE, Facebook, forums or other social media
- Advertising in a game you play on handheld or mobile device

A19. Thinking about the exhibitions you said you have heard of, how did you first find out about them?

- Commercials on TV
- Arts-related programmes or reports on TV
- Radio
- Advertisements in newspapers/magazines
- News in newspapers/magazines
- News online
- Advertising online (banners, flash ads or videos)
- Poster Billboards (including train station, subway and on-the-ground poster/billboards)
- Digital Billboards (including train station, subway and on-the-ground TV displays)
- Posters in residential or office buildings
- TV in residential or office buildings
- Museum/theatre displays (including posters, standees, banners and special displays)
- In-venue/museum magazine and flyers
- Friends/family offline
- Friends/family online, using LINE, Facebook, forums or other social media
- Advertising in a game you play on handheld or mobile device
B1. Of the following types of visual/performing arts productions, which ones do you enjoy?

Please select as many as apply.

- Ceramics
- Sculpture
- Printmaking
- Design
- Crafts
- Photography
- Video
- Filmmaking
- Architecture
- Fashion
- Interior Design
- Theatre (plays)
- Musicals
- Contemporary dance
- Ballet
- Opera
- Bunraku
- Noh / Kyogen
- Kabuki
- Takarazuka
- Rakugo
- Calligraphy
- Flower arrangement
- Tea ceremony
- Orchestra (classical)
- Contemporary music (pop singers, rock bands, etc.)
- Ancient art (painting, drawing, sculpture)
- Contemporary art (painting, drawing, sculpture)
- Magic Show
- Circus

B2. With whom do you most often tend to go to visual and performing arts productions/exhibitions?

- Family
- Spouse/partner
- Friends
- Alone

B4. When do you most often tend to go to visual and performing arts productions/exhibitions?

- On weekends
- On weekdays during the day
- On weekdays in the evening

B5. Do you more often tend to visit Japanese or non-Japanese productions/exhibitions?

- I prefer to attend Japanese productions/exhibitions
- I prefer to attend European productions/exhibitions
- I prefer to attend American productions/exhibitions
- I have no preference

B6. Why do you usually go see a European production/exhibition?

- Strong European elements
- They are of a high quality/standard
- They are sophisticated
- Good Japanese translations
- Art which feels exotic/Western
- I like productions/exhibitions featuring foreign cultures
- It is a chance to see something which usually can’t be found in Japan
They are often only on for a limited time
- They feel like Japanese productions
- There is nothing else I am interested in seeing
- My friends want to go
- It seems like a big event
- The advertising is good
- The positive reviews
- I read about them online
- It was recommended to me
- There was nothing else I wanted to do/see that day
- I don’t go and see European productions/exhibitions

B7. Why do you usually go see a Japanese production/exhibition?

- They are traditional
- I like productions/exhibitions featuring my own culture
- They are of a high quality/standard
- They are sophisticated
- They are in the native Japanese language
- The advertising looks good
- There is nothing else I am interested in seeing
- My friends want to go
- It seems like a big event
- The positive reviews
- I read about them online
- It was recommended to me
- There was nothing else I wanted to do/see that day
- I don’t go and see Japanese productions/exhibitions

B8. How does the following affect your likelihood to attend a production/exhibition?

- Very unlikely
- Unlikely
- Neither unlikely nor likely
- Likely
- Very Likely
- Does not apply

- If the tickets are cheap but I hadn’t wanted to see the production/exhibition
- If the tickets were expensive but I really wanted to see the production/exhibition
- If I had already bought more than one ticket, but someone cancelled at the last minute
- If it was recommended to me by a friend
- If it was recommended to me by a work colleague
- If it was recommended to me by a family member
- If I read a good review, but no-one recommended it directly to me
- If no-one I know is interested in accompanying me

B9. Please tell us about the last production/exhibition you saw. What was it and what did you think of it?

B10. Please tell us what your ideal production/exhibition would involve.

B11. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements?
• 1: Strongly agree
• 2: Slightly agree
• 3: Neither agree nor disagree
• 4: Slightly disagree
• 5: Strongly disagree

• I have never been to Europe
• My friends will often ask me for my opinion on arts and culture before attending events related to it
• On the whole, I prefer Japanese pop culture over Western pop culture
• I like to plan which production/exhibition I am going to see well in advance
• Critics’ reviews are very important in the choice of productions/exhibitions I see
• I’m planning to go to an exhibition/production this week
• I am a fan of European culture
• I am a fan of American culture

[END OF QUESTIONNAIRE]
Sample Transcript: Interviewee C

So classical music is big in Japan?

Yes, it’s massive.

How does that work when you’re taking modern musicians versus classical musicians? How does that inform your decision on who to bring?

Well, when you say “modern” what do you mean?

So, contemporary music. Pop singers, maybe even Jazz.

Well to start with in Japan there’s a big fascination with Western art forms and Western artists, so of course our company deals with classical music so that’s our expertise and that’s all we deal with in Japan. There are major companies in Japan like Avex that have done a lot of pop presentations. The pop world started with combining Western artists and then they created their own – J-pop which is now one of the biggest selling things in Japan. In terms of classical music there is a very strong and established market, probably one of the strongest in the world. There are about 10 to 15 symphony orchestras that go every year to Japan. Ticket prices are very expensive and there is a very interested and knowledgeable audience there.

So, what about the European brand versus the UK brand. Do you think there’s a distinction between these?

Well, pop art is pop art and the artists come from … of course many people know British and American artists and there are of course many European artists that have become well known. In terms of classical music, because of Beethoven – German, Mozart – Austrian there is a real fascination for German and Austrian orchestras and especially what works well are Royal names or the names of the city. For example, if you bring an orchestra from Berlin or Vienna or London – that’s what matters, because people know about key cities more than others. So there is … of course London has a very different feel to it, rather than the “UK”.

What kind of feel?

There is a different sense in terms of it being grander, in terms of reputation and dynamism I suppose.

So does this affect what you bring into Japan? You have this knowledge about what their impression is ...

Yes of course, that does affect it because it has to be known to a Japanese audience. If they don’t know about it, they won’t buy tickets.

How do you know if it’s known to Japanese people?

Well, we have people that we trust, we ask around, we look at record sales for example, we look at a lot of different social media and seeing how they’re doing. Of course for Japan you need to have a local promoter who takes a risk in the end, so that’s the most important thing. So we, as an agency propose a list of artists and the local promoters can choose from them.
So how do you make those local connections? I know your company is quite established...

Well, I mean it’s like anywhere really. You research and find who promotes, who’s interested, and in some countries – not necessarily in Japan – but in some countries you also create the market. Sometimes it’s top-down, sometimes it’s bottom-up. For top-down I can give you the example of China where they are building so many symphony halls and concert halls to bring in more art.

In Japan you’re saying you’re dealing with a more established market?

Well in Japan it’s more established, especially in my field. You don’t necessarily have to create it right now but I think Japan and the audiences would benefit more in the long-term if they were to create it.

Are Japanese people amenable to that?

I think there’s always people who may be able to do that. It’s about first of all finding the capital to do it, to be brave about it and do it. As I was saying before, there’s a very traditionalist view especially in classical music that has to be broken. But it’s going very well at the same time. I have tremendous respect for and fascination with Japan and its audiences.

Overall, do you think in general Japan is a good place to bring European productions?

It’s one of the best places.

Why?

Well, especially in Asia – if you’re working in Asia.

What makes you say that – the foothold of Asia?

It’s not necessarily the foothold of Asia. It’s more about Tokyo, the metropolitan areas of Tokyo that are the most important centres in the world. There’s art and music from A-Z. There is a local underground scene, there are very much established scenes. So it’s a very fascinating place. And of course if you are arranging a tour, say in Asia, it’s one of the must-go places.

What would you say people need to be careful about when bringing a production into Japan?

The devil is in the detail, so to really be very careful when making any arrangements, be very respectful, because you know the Japanese people are extremely respectful, to be kind and understanding and to be honest. They value those things.

For example, last year what would you say the most successful thing was that you did there?

Well, we brought an orchestra from Britain, the UK – the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and we did a tour together with this orchestra and a Japanese soloist – who is one of the sensations in Japan, a blind pianist of the highest calibre and we did an 8-concert tour in Japan, 2 were in Suntory Hall and it was a major success, sold out everywhere and there was a real communication between the Japanese artist and the British orchestra.

So, through a collaboration you had something very successful?

Yeah especially in classical music it is something that someone could do ... I saw many successful productions like this.
And outside of classical music, what’s your feel for it?

I mean there are lots of things that can do well in Japan. In the music world or the art world or...? Anything really

I can give you one example that we are doing ... It can be anything really. It’s a major market, once you get that. For example, when you were talking about visual arts there is a lot of communication. Mori Art Museum are one of the best in the world. They collaborate a lot with international exhibitions and international art museums and they have of course many local artists that have become very famous around the world – when I was saying that Japanese are fascinated by the west, the west is also fascinated by Japan. Especially France – there’s a huge Japanese-French connection but it’s everywhere actually.

So, back to this fascination between Japan and Europe, are you saying that there’s aspects of this that people can utilise? Is that your top tip to get something to sell in Japan?

No, no no .. the artist needs to be very well known in the west first, and then Japan. You don’t create something especially for Japan – especially in the Arts. Because audiences are very savvy, they’ve studied and they know what’s happening in the west. Once they are aware of it, then they can come to Japan.

Do you have any advice for anyone who doesn’t have that level of cache but still wants to release in Japan?

To slowly, slowly build it up there. I mean for example, to go there not under the financial circumstances that they would wish for first of all but to build a solid career.
Key Organisations

Japanese Society of Contemporary Music
http://www.jscm.net/

Japan Popular Music Association
http://www.jpma-jazz.or.jp/

JASRAC
http://www.jasrac.or.jp/

Japan-Finland Contemporary Music Society
http://www.jfcms.org/

Genten Society
http://art-genten.com/newstopics.html

Salon Blanc Fine Arts Association
http://www.salonblanc.jp/

Free Arts Society
http://jiyubijutsu.org/

Design Hub
http://designhub.jp/exhibitions/1571/

JAGDA
http://www.jagda.or.jp/

Japan Illustrator’s Association
http://jilla.or.jp/

Tokyo Illustrator’s Society
http://en.tis-home.com/about

Textile Design Association of Japan
Council Fashion Designers
http://www.cfd.or.jp/

Japan Architects
http://www.japan-architects.com/ja/agendas/index

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https://kenchiku.co.jp/event.html

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http://geidankyo.or.jp/12kaden/net/theater.html

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http://www.kabuki-bito.jp/theaters/kabukiza/

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https://www.shiki.jp/tickets/

National Noh Theatre
http://www.ntj.jac.go.jp/nou.html

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http://www.j25musical.jp/

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http://aiia-theater.com/

European Expert Network on Culture –
http://www.eenc.info/

Japan Arts Council
http://www.ntj.jac.go.jp

Performing Arts Network Japan (Japan Foundation)
http://www.performingarts.jp/indexj.html
NBS Japan Performing Arts Foundation  
http://www.nbs.or.jp/english/index.html

Tokyo Bunka Kaikan (venue)  
http://www.t-bunka.jp/index.html

European Network of Information Centres for Performing Arts  
http://enicpa.info/

Advanced Performing Art Project  
http://www.apapnet.eu

Pearle Live Performance Europe (representing over 7000 organisations)  
http://www.pearle.ws/
Sources


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