

21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

PRESS RELEASE

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| Exhibition Title | Aloha Amigo! Federico Herrero x Kazuyuki Sekiguchi |
| Period | Thursday, May 3, 2012 – Sunday, March 17, 2013 (scheduled) Admission free: Thursday, May 3 - Thursday, November 22, 2012 Admission charged: Friday, November 23, 2012 – Sunday, March 17, 2013 Note: Tickets available until 30 minutes before closing Closed: Mondays (open on July 16, August 13, September 17, October 8, December 24, January 14 and February 11) July 17, September 18, December 4 - 13, December 25, December 29 - January 1, January 15 and February 12 |
| Venue | 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa Gallery 13 and Public Zone (scheduled) |
| Grants from | Japan Foundation for Regional Art-Activities |
| Organized by | 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation) |
| In Cooperation with | KIWAYA, bonnyColArt Co., Ltd. |
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Purpose

This is the second year (in fact, the sixth year of the project as a whole) of the museum's three-year plan of "the Kanazawa Youth Dream Challenge Art Programme: Museum as Mediator." (*1) This year's theme is "the existence of others,"—encounters and dialogues with others as well as one's inner self through "seeing, hearing, feeling and expressing." Musicians, who are interested in sound/music expression and relationships with the society and others, are invited to the museum to collaborate with young people, encourage them to experience the pleasure in expressing without being held back by stereotypical ideas. In order to do that, they need to use their five senses, despite the fact that museums are generally regarded as a place for visual arts. Now the museum faces the space-time axes of music expression.

Notes: (*1) On "the Kanazawa Youth Dream Challenge Art Programme: Museum as Mediator"

Based on the recent study which reports that art museum education is useful for the character formation of young people in their late teens, the project of "the Kanazawa Youth Dream Challenge Art Programme" launched by 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa in 2007 aims to create the museum's original activities to develop wide-ranging local art and culture encouraging young people, particularly those aged between 18 and 40 including "NEET" (not in education, employment or training) and "FREETER" (permanent part-timer), which are today's problematic social issues, to participate in social activities. With the keyword "Museum as Mediator," the programs are to be serialized for three years since 2011 to provide and develop "encounters/dialogues with one's self, others and society." As the project aims at phased socialization and globalization, there will be better retention rate of capable personnel and the enhancement of management methods. If we shared our local cultural activities with others internationally, we could promote further exchange of information as well as people, and have bright prospects for the 10th anniversary of this project.

Project Overview

Artist Federico HERRERO's encounter with ukulele player SEKIGUCHI Kazuyuki has made it possible to create the space-time for expressing the world of fine arts fused with the world of sound/music. With the program in which the two worlds of sound/music and fine arts are blended as a long-term project, young people of Kanazawa can experience diversity and possibilities of communication appreciating the opportunity to think and create in their contemplation over one's self/others and local area/the world. There emerges the world of sound, which is resonant with Federico Herrero's comfortable and delicate world of painting, and young participants can learn how to express their emotions and impressions with sounds. Sounds and colors construct varied relationships between young people and community.

Programs**A. Creation of Space**

As a place to accompany the world of ukulele music, which expresses good rapport between nature and humans, Federico Herrero creates a space where various human relationships are stimulated.

B. The project development of "Aloha Amigo—Life with Ukulele"**1. Project with young people**

Project participants led by young people implement various projects, which send out information to visitors as well as elementary and junior high school children together with artists and the museum. For this exhibition in particular, young people aged between 18 and 39 organized "Aloha Amigo Aina" (tentative title) playing the central role for the project. In addition, people aged 18 and above who are experienced in playing the ukulele formed "Aloha Amigo" to support young members' activities.

2. Opening Commemorative Talk Show

Date: Thursday, May 3, 2012

Venue: 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa Lecture hall

Free: Admission free (Numbered ticket is required.)

Programs: 13:00-13:30 Talk between Federico Herrero x Kazuyuki Sekiguchi

13:30-14:30 Artist talk by Federico Herrero

* The entire audience exits and the second group enters.

15:00-16:00 Talk between Kazuyuki Sekiguchi x Gen

Numbered ticket:

Ticket [1] 13:00- Talk between Federico Herrero x Kazuyuki Sekiguchi

13:30- Artist talk by Federico Herrero

Ticket [2] 15:00-16:00 Talk between Kazuyuki Sekiguchi x Gen

*The seating capacity is 50 for each of [1] and [2]. Numbered tickets are available from 10:00 on the day in front of the lecture hall.

2. "Ukulele Free Stage!—Everybody can be a ukulele player"

Everybody can enjoy playing the ukulele in this project held every day.

Date / Time: Tuesday, May 8, 2012 – Sun, March 17, 2013 14:00-15:00

Venue: 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa Gallery 13

Programs: 1. Everybody, even beginners, can enjoy playing simple chords in this course.

The capacity is 20 on a first-come-first-served basis on the day.

2. Participants playing the ukulele and singing songs are photographed, and shown on YouTube later.

Notes: A variety of projects are implemented during the exhibition period, including "Saturday Ukulele Workshop" to be held every month or every other month, "Ukulele Summit in Picnic" (tentative title) scheduled at the end of August. "Everybody can play the ukulele @ school" (tentative title) is another project in cooperation with elementary and junior high schools in Kanazawa. For details, please visit the museum website.

**Kazuyuki Sekiguchi's
message**
What is ukulele, our beloved musical instrument?

"I've never seen any ukulele player or anyone involved in ukulele who is unhappy." This is what George Harrison of The Beatles said. When it comes to a ukulele, "HAPPY" might be the most important keyword. A ukulele is a small instrument, but it brings us happiness. Let's study some features of this instrument.

Features of Ukulele
1. Ukulele is the easiest-to-learn

Once you learn how to play two or three chords, there are many songs that you can play and sing. How to play chords is also easy, so even beginners can master the skills to play one song on their first day. As the instrument is exactly the right size for children, one might say that a ukulele is the most suitable first instrument for children to learn how to play. In fact, there are successful examples of music education using the ukulele in Canada. Ukulele player Bill Tapia who died at 103 some time ago has proved that the ukulele is an instrument that you can play even at the age of 100.

2. Ukulele is an instrument like a pet or a toy

A ukulele is not as massive as a piano, and it gives us the toy-like delight of playing. Holding a ukulele in our hands, we feel as if we were holding a cat or puppy. With its soft feel unique to wood products, we find our minds at peace. Even if you were carrying a ukulele in a crowd, no one would get cautious. It soothes people's hearts like a pet or a baby.

3. Ukulele as a communication tool

Playing the ukulele, we become acquainted easily and make friends with many people. This is unique to the ukulele, the feature that we don't find in any other instrument. It is wonderful that we are connected beyond borders and races only because we are fond of the ukulele. In our closer circles, we can enjoy better communication playing the ukulele with friends, or teaching how to play between parents and children. Playing the ukulele, we can fill in the gaps between conversations to enhance peaceful communication.

4. Ukulele as a tranquilizer

The effects of ukulele tones on one's mind have not been fully studied yet, but it is generally believed that ukulele tones produce alpha waves and cause sedative effects. In a cold season, ukulele tones give us warmth, while in a hot season, we feel cool hearing it. It might have the power to keep our minds back to a neutral mode. In any case, everyone involved in the ukulele shares the idea that "the ukulele tone has the power to heal us."

5. Ukulele with a tropical ambience

Ukulele has given a strong impression as an accompaniment for hula dance. Most Japanese associate ukulele music with Hawaii, probably because it has a tropical atmosphere. Its happy tone reminds us of swaying coconut trees, the azure blue sky and ocean, and a resort in the South Seas which many Japanese long to visit. Though we feel Hawaii close to us, it is difficult for us to go there frequently when we come to think of the cost. Through ukulele tones, however, we can virtually experience visiting the resort.

6. Ukulele as our friend

No matter what your posture and appearance in playing the ukulele, the instrument would not complain. Suppose it were human, it would be a tolerant person. You can take it everywhere and on your travels, and it sings with you in its lovely voice.

7. Ukulele as the interior

The form of a ukulele is soft and cute. Only looking at a ukulele on the wall, you can relax and feel comfortable. In fact, you can paint a picture on the body of the instrument as a canvas. There is even a genre of interior-ukulele in art form for interior decoration.

8. Ukulele as an instrument with depth and potential

The ukulele is an easy-to-learn instrument, but at the same time, the rhythm and beautiful arrangement of its music, as Herb Ohta and Jake Shimabukuro are doing, can move people. The range of using this instrument is wide from comic monologue to classical music. There are many ukulele players of different types now, and new players are appearing. As the ukulele has only a short history, there is yet room for various improvements as a future instrument, such as its structure and performing method.

Introduction of Artists

Federico Herrero (artist)

Born in San Jose, Costa Rica in 1978 and currently lives there. Studied education at Universidad Hispanoamericana, painting at Pratt Institute (New York), and architecture at Veritas Academy (San Jose). He has been working to produce project-type paintings on the theme of the relationship between a place and human beings. The striking feature of his paintings is to paint various patterns by using different materials such as magic markers and spray paint on varicolored surface with camouflage uniform-like pattern. Canvas is not always used for his painting. He paints on walls, floors, and the bodies of public transportation vehicles such as buses. Iconographic images unfolded are, for example, people surrounding the artist, familiar happenings in our everyday life, and images emerging momentarily. They are integrated in a picture which is more two-dimensional than 3D. 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa's collection includes three pieces of his painting, and Herrero painted a picture on the shuttle "art bus" connecting the museum and Kanazawa city. For this project, Federico Herrero creates an art space collaborating with ukulele music of Kazuyuki Sekiguchi, emphasizing the exchange with young people of Kanazawa.



1.
Federico HERRERO, *Some Aspects of the Funeral March for Mr. Climent*, 2002. Collection: 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa
© Federico HERRERO Photo: SUEMASA Mareo

Kazuyuki Sekiguchi ("ukulelian")

Born in Niigata Prefecture in 1955 and currently lives in Tokyo. While working as a bassist of Southern All Stars, he has been actively playing his own role as a ukulele player. He is a musician who can produce harmony among people through his music. In addition to releasing many songs featuring ukulele music, he has annually participated since 2000 in "UKULELE PICNIC" held in August every year. He is also engaged in activities to promote the hula dancing and amateur ukulele performance. In 2000, he coproduced and released "Whistle and Ukulele" with Naoto Takenaka, and in 2002, he released "MY BLUE HEAVEN~" in the name of "Kazuyuki Sekiguchi featuring KONISHIKI." He is also active as a novelist and illustrator.



2.
Kazuyuki Sekiguchi portrait

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