

Japan Media Arts Festival [12th] Announcement of award-winning works!

Art, animation, visual images, games, web works, and manga – a full array of works representing this year

The Japan Media Arts Festival Executive Committee (Agency for Cultural Affairs / The National Art Center, Tokyo / CG-ARTS Society) has selected 24 award-winning works, one Special Achievement Prize winner, and 147 Recommended Works by the Jury this year. Those works were chosen from among 2,146 entries in the Art, Entertainment, Animation and Manga Divisions from 44 countries and regions in the world.

The Grand Prize winner in the Art Division is the interactive work Oups!, which allows everybody to enjoy its humorous graphics and entertaining reactions. The Grand Prize winner in the Entertainment Division is TENORI-ON, an electronic musical instrument that plays sounds and lights. It was developed and commercialized by media artist IWAI Toshio in cooperation with a company. The winner in the Animation Division is The House of Small Cubes, a story of an old man who lives on his own in a submerging town. The Grand Prize in the Manga Division went to PIANO NO MORI, in which a freewheeling talented boy grows up aspiring to be a pianist.

The Special Achievement Prize was awarded to NAKAYA Fujiko, who has been at the forefront of the times as an artist since the 1970s and has supported media arts from the ground up by organizing a video gallery and exhibitions that invite public participation.

This year, jumping the barrier between art and entertainment, many works dealing with the physical aspects of human beings, including hearing and touch as well as vision, received awards. An exhibition of these award-winning works will be held from February 4 to February 15, 2008 at The National Art Center Tokyo.

2008 [12th] Japan Media Arts Festival Exhibition Information

Time: 10:00 – 18:00, Wednesday, February 4 – Sunday, February 15
Open until 20:00 on Fridays (The Center will be closed on Tuesday,
February 10)
Venue: Special Exhibition Gallery 2E, The National Art Center, Tokyo (Tokyo)
Admission: Free
URL: <http://plaza.bunka.go.jp/>
Organizer: The Japan Media Arts Festival Executive Committee
(Agency for Cultural Affairs /The National Art Center, Tokyo
/ CG-ARTS Society)
Contact: The Japan Media Arts Festival Secretariat Office, CG-ARTS Society
Free dial: 0120-454536 <http://plaza.bunka.go.jp/q/>



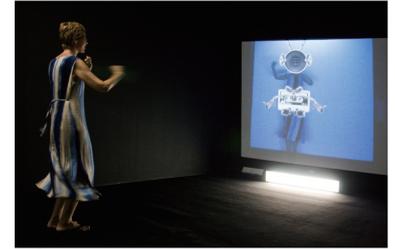
* The press preview will be held at 14:00, Tuesday, February 3, and the presentation ceremony will be held at 18:00 on the same day.

* Images of the Grand Prize-winning works are available for download at: http://www.cgarts.or.jp/outline/press/2008/081209_image.html

Reasons for award: Grand Prize and Special Achievement Prize

The Art Division Grand Prize: Oups ! Marcio AMBROSIO

What is impressive is the enjoyment the audience finds in the elements of participation, and the way the animated images appearing around them elicit creative reactions. This work is created by playfully and artistically combining the most advanced technology with classical animation, and participants get involved in stories produced by the various animated characters as they move. The characters and effects, which appear one after another, give the illusion of creating the cosmos. This is a work that gives full rein to the sparkling positive energy of Brazil, which makes life into a festival.



©Oups!

The Entertainment Division Grand Prize: TENORI-ON IWAI Toshio / NISHIBORI Yu representing the TENORI-ON development team

In music creation, sound sources have undergone a revolutionary change in last 40 years, as electronically synthesized sounds (synthesizers) and recorded original sound (samplers) have become normal resources. However, the main interface that controls these sound sources is still either the keyboard, which has changed very little since the Middle Ages, or pads that imitate traditional percussion instruments. The reason for this award was the inevitability of this innovation. More significantly, it has made the interface, i.e. the connecting surface between a human and a machine, into a piece of commercial hardware. This device can certainly be played casually without any musical knowledge, and it has an unknown number of possibilities. Other than this device, I personally am aware of no other instrument (or musical interface) that so strongly inspires the first-time player to take on a new challenge.



IWAI Toshio / Yamaha Corporation

The Manga Division Grand Prize: PIANO NO MORI ISSHIKI Makoto

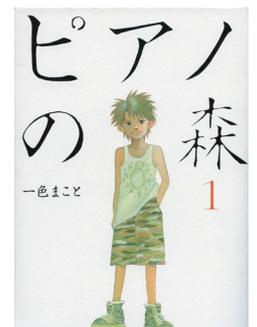
There is a piano in a forest. It is abandoned and weather-beaten. However, it is also a grand piano set in almost temple-like surroundings, shining under the moon light. It is a piano in a forest, and it reveals its true sound to only one boy... The images conveyed in the first scenes are especially wonderful. The sound of the forest piano touches the hearts of many people, changing them. The piano can only be played by a boy called Kai, who has been brought up in a rough area called MORI NO HATA (the edge of the forest). There is another boy, called AMAMIYA. He has been greatly moved, and somewhat shocked, by Kai's uninhibited piano playing, but still aims to find the perfect style for himself. There is also a girl, called Takako, but nicknamed BENJO HIME (toilet princess). She is trying very hard to overcome severe anxiety and nervousness. All the children in the story have their own particular appeal, and as the story progresses they become ever more attractive.



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Animation Division Grand Prize: The House of Small Cubes KATO Kunio

This work has already received awards in several animation festivals both in Japan and other countries. What is the reason for this? I can think of a lot of reasons, such as the delicate and nostalgic visual world and a story that conveys directly what it wants to say without dialog or explanations, in a global environmental setting. However, the presentation itself is not original or radical. The work is in no way flamboyant. But the warmth of the artist's regard for human beings and his thoughts touch the audience. With animation presentations having recently become diversified, it is the aspirations and aims of the creator that have become the focal points. Parameters such as artistic quality, experimental aspects, ability to entertain, and popular appeal will differ from one creator to another, but this work has a universality and a richness that will fascinate a viewer regardless of age or nationality. This universality gives a precise indication of the new possibilities of short animation, a genre that is not yet popular in Japan and, the choice of the short animation form is one significant form of expression. It was a narrow victory over Maestro, another classical music themed story. This current crop of musically themed manga is a good harvest from recent years.



Isshiki Makoto / Kodansha

Special Achievement Prize NAKAYA Fujiko (Artist)

The artist NAKAYA Fujiko has created a variety of works from the 1960s to the present day. Her major works include the fog sculpture series and JOHO CHOKOKU Utopia Q&A 1981. As for film works, the range of her activities is varied: in 1972, in collaboration with KOBAYASHI Hakudo, she created MINAMATA WO KOKUHATSUSURU KAI – TENTO MURA VIDEO NIKKI and ROJIN NO CHIE – BUNKA NO DNA. We should also not forget what she did at the video gallery SCAN, which opened in Harajuku in 1980. As Japan's only video art gallery, it introduces works of Japanese and foreign artists, and from 1981, it has sponsored an open recruitment exhibition and other projects, and many film artists have launched their careers from here. Her activities in support of video arts from the ground up are admirable.

The 2008 [12th] Japan Media Arts Festival Contents

The Japan Media Arts Festival has been held annually since 1997 in order to reward creative media art works produced by developing new presentation techniques and broadly introduce artists and their works.

■ The Exhibition of Award-winning Works

The Exhibition introduces in total 172 award-winning works and recommended works by the Jury in the Art, Entertainment, Animation, and Manga Divisions from among 2,146 entries from 44 countries and regions in the world.

<<Art Division>>

55 works (interactive art / installations / visual images / still images / web works / others)

<<Entertainment Division>>

43 works (games / electric play equipment / characters / visual images / web works / others)

<<Animation Division>>

38 works (theatrical animations / TV animations / OVA / short animations / others)

<<Manga Division>>

35 works (story manga / frame manga / independent manga / online manga / others)

<<Special Achievement Prize>> 1 person (activities and works of the award-winner will be introduced)

■ Screening

Various visual works selected from each division such as animations, art images, music videos, or CMs will be screened. Full-length theatrical animations also will be screened.

■ Symposia

Award-winners' symposium: symposia attended by this year's award-winners in each division and jury members.
Theme symposium: symposia attended by artists, educators, and researchers related to media arts.

■ Events held alongside the award-winning works exhibition

Exhibition of Computer Graphics Contest for Students (sponsored by CG-ARTS Society)

This contest aims to discover young talents who will carry the future. It will exhibit outstanding works chosen from 1,017 entries in the Still Image, Animation, and Interactive Divisions.

Please contact the numbers or URL below if you would like to publish images of other prize-winning works in your media:
Public Relations, CG-ARTS Society: TEL: +81-3-3535-3501 / FAX: +81-3-3562-4840 / <http://plaza.bunka.go.jp/english/q/>

CG-ARTS Society (Computer Graphic Arts Society)

CG-ARTS Society is an incorporated foundation established in 1992 and approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. The main role of this society is the nurturing of human resources and cultural development in the field of computer graphics. www.cgarts.or.jp