“Traditional Crafts x Luxury Project: WAO”

Partner countries: USA and France
Fields: Traditional crafts, regional products

Growing imports of inexpensive overseas products and other factors are leading to falling production and numbers of enterprises and employees in the traditional crafts industries that have supported Japan’s communities and culture. Thus, this project will transform Japan’s traditional crafts into content and culture that can be disseminated to the world as “Cool Japan” products. And by doing so, it will reshape them into a new growth industry that revitalizes all areas of Japan.

Project outline

The project will solicit traditional crafts from all parts of Japan and curate them based on the discerning eye of top artists and cultural figures who will participate in the project. It will then seek to establish Japan’s handicrafts as a “brand” by adding value to them and disseminating information on them to the world.

Project items and description

1) "Discernment and curation" by artists and cultural figures
2) "Holding of exhibits and sales events" targeting overseas buyers
3) "Invitation of overseas media and PR" through exhibitions in New York and Paris
4) "Discovery and development of young talent" utilizing the regional products E-commerce website “47CLUB”
5) "Exhibitions to develop affluent fans of traditional crafts" using tourism as a hook

Participating enterprises

- Quaras
- Yoshiko Ikoma (Art Dynamics Inc.)
- 47CLUB
- JTB Global Marketing & Travel

Other products and exhibits will be selected through open recruitment

Main event schedule

- October: Beginning of open recruitment using the regional products E-commerce website “47CLUB,” etc.
- December: Presentation at the International Luxury Travel Market in Cannes
- February: Exhibition in New York
- March: Exhibition in Paris
"Traditional Crafts x Luxury Project: WAO"

**Crafts Renaissance Project**

Using Japan’s traditional crafts as a hook in publicizing Cool Japan to the world and promoting cultural exports

**A team of leading artists of Japan will collaborate in a “craft renaissance” to uncover and cultivate bases for traditional crafts as well as trendy and young artists, and to raise brand value for dissemination to the world.**

**Participating artists**

- Naoki Ito: Creative Director, Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Program
- Kenya Hara: President, Nippon Design Center Inc.
- Toshiyuki Inoko: President, Team Lab Inc.
- Keita Maruyama: Fashion designer
- Kyojiro Hata: Hata Brand Consulting K.K. (former president of Louis Vuitton Japan)
- Alessandra Bettari: President & CEO of Fendi Japan
- Hiroshi Ogawa: President, Baccarat Pacific (Japan)
- Philippe Terrien: President, Mikli Japon K.K.
- Futoshi Koyanagi: General Manager, Barneys Japan
- Ai Tominaga: Fashion model/kimono producer
- Kengo Kuma: Architect
- Seiichi Kamei: Editor-in-chief of Casa Brutus

**PR aimed at overseas media**

Invitations to exhibitions will be placed in various overseas media, from magazines such as *ELLE* and *VOGUE* to the *New York Times*. A “brand image” vis-à-vis traditional crafts will be developed among overseas fashion people and wealthy classes.

**Holding of overseas exhibition and sales events**

Overseas buyers will be targeted through curation by the team of leading artists in Japan, display of collaborative works, and sales events.

- *In Paris*: 1st week of March 2012

**Presentation at the International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM; held in Cannes in December)**

In addition to promoting travel goods based mainly on the “traditional crafts experience” to overseas buyers, the project will cultivate a high-quality “brand image” through display and exhibition of traditional Japanese crafts.

**Discovery and cultivation of crafts artists throughout Japan**

The project will solicit entries using the regional products E-commerce website “47CLUB,” which is led by regional newspapers in Japan’s 47 prefectures, as a portal. Excellent entries will be presented to the world at WAO/New York and Paris.

**Promoting both “outbound” and “inbound” activity by cultivating and raising the “brand” recognition of traditional Japanese crafts through “WAO”**