

Check against delivery

The Exhibition “超日本～J Blow～2014”
Opening Remarks by Ambassador Keiichi Hayashi
at Embassy of Japan
on Tuesday 11 February 2014

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to our exhibition “超日本 ～J Blow～2014”!

Today I have the honour of introducing seven talented young designers. They are **Six Japanese designers** who trained in London at Central Saint Martins and in Japan at the Vantan Design Institute and the cream of the crop handpicked by Japanese superstar designer and producer **KANSAI YAMAMOTO** for this occasion. In addition, exhibition creator and designer **YOSHIKAZU YAMAGATA** has been also selected by Kansai-san for the creation of the exhibition space.

Many of you may remember David Bowie wearing a costume designed by Kansai-san in the '70s, as I do. However, even if you do not, you may remember the exhibition “David Bowie is” and the “Fashion in Motion” show produced by Kansai-san, both at the V&A Museum last year, which featured that costume. For over 40 years, he has been incredibly active as a designer and as a producer of big fashion shows.

Through several meetings with him last year in London, it was clear to me that his dreams would never end. He is now focusing his enthusiasm on the production of a succession of major events: one mammoth show each year around the world, towards the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games and beyond, to introduce the people of the world to aspects of Japanese culture and arts which they have not yet encountered. Another idea is to promote the exchange of young fashion designers between Japan and other countries.

During our conversations I was struck by his passionate ideas. I thoroughly shared his earnest desire and I wanted to help him make them happen. Very fortunately, thanks to the magnificent initiative of the British Council and the British Fashion Council,

“International Fashion Showcase 2014” was to be held featuring talented young designers from around the world in parallel with London Fashion Week, and the Embassies in London are qualified to take part. At the same time, I noticed that the UK offers valuable educational opportunities to young talent in the domain of fashion and attracts people from all over the world, including Japan. One of these institutions, Central Saint Martins, has kindly offered to collaborate with the Embassy on this occasion.

I felt privileged to inform Kansai-san that there was such a marvellous stage here in London. He responded by selecting the six designers who are with us today and convinced Mr **Yamagata**, a Central Saint Martins’ graduate and a genius that personifies current Japan’s fashion and art scenes, to create a wonderful exhibition space that features cutting-edge creations infused with his original taste.

Today, **Sakurai-san, Sei-san, Takahashi-san and Usami-san**, four of the six young talents who have their garments displayed at the Exhibition, have come here to personally explain their work. I am sure you will enjoy their creativity and artistry at the Exhibition and also through the Q&A session. Their participation has been made possible thanks to the generous support of All Nippon Airways (ANA) for this initiative. They will also exchange views with young designers from the UK and other countries throughout London Fashion Week and will no doubt be exposed to new sources of inspiration themselves. I am also grateful to Toshiba Europe, the Sake Samurai Association and Asahi Beer for their generous help in enabling all the related events to take place.

This event is a wonderful occasion to celebrate the achievements of young Japanese talent. I hope it will give all of you, young and not so young alike, a sense of the vitality and energy of Japan’s cutting-edge fashion industry. Enjoy the exhibition!

Thank you.