

Check against delivery

***Fashion Exhibition Crash Pop***  
**Opening Remarks by Ambassador Keiichi Hayashi**  
**at the Embassy of Japan**  
**on Wednesday 18 February 2015**

Welcome to our fashion exhibition “Crash Pop” today!

By now many of you may be perplexed. All of you must be here expecting to see a fashion exhibition, but you have seen only a smattering of what has been prepared for you downstairs and you can see nothing here, either. Worse still, you are now being subjected to what you may fear will be a boring, lengthy speech by an aged diplomat. But be patient! I promise that my speech will be short — unusually short — and that you will definitely be able to see what you are here for, although I must confess that I haven’t seen anything yet, either!

In fact I am really looking forward to feasting my eyes on this year’s exhibition as it is surely going to be something special. It has been created by Mr Yoshikazu Yamagata, an up-and-coming designer whose inspired ideas have been the driving force behind some of the most influential trends in the fashion arena. Last year he brought us a controversial yet highly stimulating exhibition with a mythological theme, which featured the stunning creativity of six promising young designers. And it got the ‘curator’s prize’ in last year’s International Fashion Showcase to boot!

Frankly we did not expect him to come to London for two consecutive years because he is so busy. Since the last visit he has been on the go throughout the year, being a judge in the kimono design competition at Tokyo Designers Week, creating his new brand to give expression to his native region’s taste in fashion, giving lectures at universities and at his own school, taking part in dialogues at art museums, and receiving prizes himself! That is to say, he is an essential presence at every fashion or art event in Japan.

This year, thanks to the impressive initiative of the British Council and the British Fashion Council, we have been allowed to take part once again in this superb forum to be held in parallel with London Fashion Week. In Japan the press and fashion people have dubbed this Fashion Showcase in London “the Olympic Games of the fashion world”. For this year’s prestigious occasion, the manager of the Japan Team, Yamagata-san, has selected the most distinctive, unique and energetic young fashion talents. Today Ryota Murakami (村上亮太), Noriko Nakazato (中里周子), Soshi Otsuki (大月壮士), Yuki Shimane (島根由祈), Wataru Tominaga (富永航) and Kotoha Yokozawa (横澤琴葉), six of the seven designers whose garments and jewellery will be displayed downstairs, will now explain their work to us.

Before concluding, let me express our deep gratitude to All Nippon Airways (ANA) and

the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation for their generous support of this initiative. I am also grateful to Ms Maria Nishio (西尾まりあ) of Central St Martins, who worked as assistant curator, as well as the hairdressers and make-up designers, the Sake Samurai Association and all those other individuals and organisations who have kindly collaborated with us on this occasion.

Thank you for your patience. As promised, this is not the end of this evening's event. Please enjoy the exhibition, which will be ready for you to see very soon!