

About the Outline of "Considerations from 2015 Kobe Biennale" and STOP & CHANGE Campaign

I have been aware of strong sense of incongruity with the fact that the contents and the quality of every Kobe Biennale held in the past and the performance of their promoting body were inappropriate for the statement of the "Declaration of Kobe Culture Evolving City."

Meanwhile, in 2013 "Society for Thinking of Kobe Biennale" was set up, led by one youth, and has been working quietly with increasing number of support from artists, gallery managers, etc. Their consistent work came up with a campaign, considering the results of the 5th Kobe Biennale held last fall as well, to claim cancellation of the 6th due in 2017 or, otherwise, to claim renovation of its promoting system, adopting slogan of "STOP & CHANGE." I am one of the supporters.

The reason of my supporting the STOP & CHANGE campaign is shown below, which totally agrees with what the campaign is for. With your approval of it I would like to ask you for your signature, in either way of the following:

- Signing via internet at "<http://sck.kobeart.net/change-org>"
- Signing on paper by downloading from "http://gallery-shimada.com/?page_id=3491"
- Signing on paper prepared at Gallery Shimada

I cannot evaluate that every past five Kobe Biennale deserve to be an international art festival which is worthy of being called Biennale. "Opinion" column of the local newspaper once introduced self-praise of the person concerned with a big heading "International Art Festival Unparalleled Anywhere in the World." The ground of it is questionable.

I expressed my analysis of the real state of affairs in "*Considerations from 2015 Kobe Biennale*." Questions I pointed out there boil down to the following:

- (1) Most of the artists being active out of Hyogo Prefecture or abroad did not participate.
- (2) Most of the quality art galleries did not participate.
- (3) Balance accounts were not released, leaving doubtful financial effectiveness.
- (4) "Discussions for review and evaluation" in which outside committee members participated were not released. A diluted "Report of Review" was released instead.
- (5) Even the points for improvement remained in the diluted "Report of Review" were not materialized. The performance was still;
 - The philosophy of the event was not clear with poor contents and quality.
 - The promoting system remained fixed.
 - Releasing information was exclusive.

Under these conditions;

- We cannot expect to realize such Biennale as we citizens proudly tell about.
- We cannot expect cultural potentiality of Kobe to be made the most of and to be refined further.
- We cannot expect the precious experiences to be shared among citizens, corporations, and the authorities. No composite, creative power can be expected.

"Declaration of Kobe Culture Evolving City" stipulates:

- "city of citizens holding abundant nature and beautiful cityscape and having evolved through

historical experiences, where people are familiar with each other"

- "handing down to the following generation and showing the world such thoughtfulness as we shared each other while we suffered from the unprecedented earthquake disaster and such potentiality of art as we have learned from the experience of it"
- "such a city as exchanging cultures with the world in between regions and through daily lives, and as constantly evolving towards the future respecting diverse sense of value each other"

These stipulations do not accord almost at all with my questions mentioned ahead. I am convinced that now is the time to stop to think whether we really need Kobe Biennale or not, and what it is actually for.

For the reason mentioned above I have been supporting the STOP & CHANGE Campaign. I would appreciate it if you could cooperate with the campaign, thanking you.

January, 2016

Shimada Makoto, *Manager of Gallery SHIMADA*