

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21 August 2015



Fudo mask. Photograph by Sohta Kitazawa.

Shadow & Light

The Craft of Noh Mask Carving

The Japan Foundation, Sydney is proud to present an exhibition of **Japanese Noh masks** by second-generation master craftsman **Hideta Kitazawa**, at The Japan Foundation Gallery, September 16 – 30. Related events will run alongside the exhibition.

Titled *Shadow & Light—The Craft of Noh Mask Carving*, the exhibition is co-curated by Kitazawa and **Professor Richard Emmert**, Noh performer and researcher. The exhibition will showcase a selection of Noh masks, carved from Japanese cypress. The exhibition will also include photographs of Noh performances, showing the masks in active use, and a variety of Kitazawa's carving tools used to create his masterpieces. Kitazawa will conduct a special **mask-carving demonstration** on September 17.

The mask is one of the most striking elements of Noh theatre, Japan's oldest living theatrical art form. Onstage through Noh performers' practised movements these static works come alive, allowing a single mask to convey a range of emotions.

Hideta Kitazawa is one of a small number of professional Noh mask-artisans in Tokyo whose pieces are widely used among performers. Kitazawa says, "Noh masks are very

different to other wooden crafts. As known by anyone who has seen masks used for performances, they capture the audience's imagination and transport us into the alluring world of storyteller."

In conjunction to the exhibition, The Japan Foundation, Sydney is supporting the production of a new Noh play in English, written by **Allan Marett**, local writer and Emeritus Professor of Musicology at the University of Sydney, and composed by Emmert. Titled *Oppenheimer*, the play commemorates the **70th anniversary of the atomic bombings in Japan** at the end of World War II and premieres at the **Sydney Conservatorium of Music** on September 30 & October 1.

The Japan Foundation, Sydney Director, **Nao Endo**, says, "Together, these events offer a rare opportunity for Australian audiences to admire the beauty of Noh masks from their creation and completion to witnessing the magic actors wearing masks weave on stage."

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Gallery hours

Monday – Thursday: 10am – 8pm
Friday: 10am – 6pm
Saturday (Sept 26 only): 10am – 3pm
Closed Sundays & Public Holidays.

Admission is free.

Special events

September 17

@ 6:30 – 8pm

Noh Mask Carving Demonstration

By Hideta Kitazawa

Held at The Japan Foundation, Sydney

Admission is free. Bookings essential.

September 30 &

October 1

@ 6pm

Oppenheimer: A Japanese Noh Play in English

Held at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Tickets available [online](#).

Exhibition

The Japan Foundation, Sydney

Level 4, Central Park

28 Broadway

Chippendale NSW 2008

Enquiries: reception@jpf.org.au / 02 8239 0055

Website: www.jpf.org.au

ABOUT NOH THEATRE

Noh theatre is Japan's oldest continuing theatre tradition, and is listed by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage. Sometimes described as Japanese opera, it is known for its rich symbolism, slow movement and highly stylised expression. Noh developed in Japan in the Middle Ages and arrived at its present form in the 14th century; Noh costume reflects the kind of dress worn by the nobility in Japan around this time. Arguably one of the most recognisable elements of Noh is its many masks, which are changed over the course of a performance to signify changes in a character's emotional or psychological state. This exhibition builds a local interest in Noh, exemplified by the Art Gallery of New South Wales' *Theatre of dreams, theatre of play* exhibition 2014, and the inclusion of Noh theatre in the 2015—2017 HSC drama curriculum.

ABOUT HIDETA KITAZAWA

Hideta Kitazawa is a second-generation woodcarving artist who has made a living carving masks for over twenty years. His foray into woodcarving began in 1991 with intensive studies under his father Ikkyou Kitazawa and he has received several awards, including the Outstanding Youth Artisan Award for Tokyo in 1997 and the Yokohama Noh Drama Hall Director's Prize in 2003. Kitazawa has exhibited his works internationally, and his hand-carved Shinto floats and portable shrines are currently used in festivals throughout Japan's Kanto area. His masks are also used extensively by a number of professional Noh and Kyogen performers.

ABOUT RICHARD EMMERT

Professor Richard Emmert has been studying, teaching and performing classical Noh drama in Japan since 1973. He is a certified Noh instructor of the Kita School and has studied all aspects of Noh performance with a focus in movement and music. He has led extended Noh performance projects internationally, including two previous projects at the University of Sydney. In 2014, he led a week-long workshop at Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art and also conducted a lecture and demonstration at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. A professor of Asian and Japanese performance at Musashino University in Tokyo, he is the founder and artistic director of Theatre Nohgaku, a company dedicated to performing Noh in English, and has led performance tours in several countries.

ABOUT ALLAN MARETT

Emeritus Professor Allan Marett is an academic, writer and teacher. He formerly taught Japanese music and Indigenous Australian music at the University of Sydney as Professor of Musicology and has published several books and many articles on Japanese imperial court music. He has held the positions of Professor of Music at the University of Hong Kong, Vice President of the International Council for Traditional Music and President of the Australian Musicological Music Society. *Oppenheimer* is Marett's first collaboration with Richard Emmert and Akira Matsui, master Noh actor-teacher, following their production of *Eliza* which premiered in 1989.

ABOUT OPPENHEIMER

On the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, *Oppenheimer* tells the story of Robert J Oppenheimer, the 'father' of the atomic bomb, using the conventions of a traditional Japanese Noh play. It is an allegory about the tragedy of Hiroshima and how it affects us all. Oppenheimer appears first as a ghost, tormented by the consequences of his actions and then later as an agent of liberation. Following an encounter with Buddhist Wisdom King, Fudo Myo-o within the fires of Hiroshima, Oppenheimer vows to dance forever amidst the flames to free all beings from suffering. The production will feature masks made by Hideta Kitazawa, including a new 'Oppenheimer' mask made especially for this production. *Oppenheimer* is presented by The Oppenheimer Project, an international theatre company that includes professional Japanese Noh actors and musicians, members of Theatre Nohgaku, and local musicians and dancers.

ABOUT THE JAPAN FOUNDATION, SYDNEY

The Japan Foundation, Sydney is the Australian arm of the Japan Foundation, which was established by the Japanese government to promote cultural and intellectual exchange between Japan and other nations. It runs a diverse range of programs and events, including exhibitions, talk events, grant programs and Japanese language courses for all levels from beginner to advanced. The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 with a global network of 22 offices in 21 countries. The Australian office was founded in 1978.



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