

Artist Fukami shows works at birthday bash

The 25th Toshu Fukami Exhibition was held from March 18 to 24 at the Hilton Tokyo Bay in Urayasu, Chiba Prefecture, and featured paintings and Japanese calligraphy by Toshu Fukami, the artist, entrepreneur and philanthropist also known by the name Haruhisa Handa.

Held every year to celebrate Fukami's birthday, the exhibition showcases works created over the past year, as well as a selection of older pieces popular with his fans. This year, 249 pieces, including 51 new ones, were shown, filling the exhibition rooms with vibrant colors and expressions based on Fukami's spirit of freedom and humor. Overall, he has 3,723 works under his belt.

The weeklong event, which attracted more than 17,000 visitors, featured talks, lectures, musical performances and cooking demonstrations. A multitasking artist and performer who engages in painting, calligraphy, singing, opera and noh, Fukami himself took to the stage every day to perform.

On March 18, the opening ceremony was attended by close friend Peter Phillips, the eldest grandson of the late Queen Elizabeth II and only son of Princess Anne, and Maye Musk, the Canadian model and nutritionist who is Elon Musk's mother, among other distinguished guests.

Hundreds of visitors attended the opening ceremony, and for those who could not fit into the Grand Ballroom the ceremony was broadcast live on several monitors set up outside, in one of the lounges and in the art exhibition area.

In his congratulatory speech, Phillips celebrated Fukami's contributions to society



Artist Toshu Fukami poses with Canadian model and nutritionist Maye Musk during a birthday event on March 18 in Chiba Prefecture.

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Above: Fukami (10th from left) cuts the ribbon at the opening ceremony. Left: Fukami speaks with attendees on the first day of the event.

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in his capacity as leader of several charitable organizations. This includes his support for The King's Foundation, the global educational charity established by King Charles III.

Fukami has also supported King's Trust Australia as chairman of Worldwide Support for Development, and Opera Australia as founder and chairman of the International Foundation for Arts and Culture, in addition to promoting blind and disabled golf as founder and chairman of the International Sports Promotion Society.

Starting with Prince Harry's message, many congratulatory videos were also shared on the screens. The messages came from athletes, artists and celebrities from around the world, as well as former prime ministers from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and Canada, the secretary-general of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a former archbishop of Canterbury, as well as leaders of religious, medical, sports and educational organizations, many of whom spoke of Fukami's great contributions to humanity.

In his speech, Fukami touched on some of his philanthropic work, including his efforts to help blind people and people with disabilities and to promote education and health care in Cambodia, where he has been involved for more than 30 years.

Fukami said that the most important thing in philanthropy is to "continue what you have started." He went on to say that the key to perseverance is to have a spirit of integrity.

"You may say that you do what you do because you like what you do, or because

you find it interesting or meaningful. But then you would stop doing it as soon as you lost your love, interest or meaning in doing it. That is why integrity has to be at the heart of philanthropy as a driver," he said. "It is like going to the funerals of people you know. You go not because you like it or find it interesting or meaningful, but because your integrity tells you that you should be there," he said.

On the evening of the first day of the exhibition, a special talk by Fukami and Musk was held. Musk's book, "A Woman

Makes a Plan: Advice for a Lifetime of Adventure, Beauty, and Success," (2019) has been translated into 30 languages and printed in more than 100 countries. Musk said that although it was not originally her plan to write about past hardships, her family said it would be the right thing to do.

"My children encouraged me to talk about my struggles in the book, and it turned out that many people around the world could relate to the story because of that," she said.

Musk said the key to living life to the fullest is to keep educating oneself while having fun along the way, and to be aware of warning signs before trouble strikes, and to make a plan and gather strength to get out of miserable situations and make yourself happy.

This idea resonates with Fukami's belief that human value lies in the strength to rise above adversity. The two speakers, both in their 70s, encouraged the audience to be proactive in achieving their own happiness and not to be afraid to face challenges.