



Nasushiobara & Linz

A City of Steel Becomes a City of Art



“Flood” ©Stadt Linz Dworschak

Linz had been famous as a steel city for a long time. Although the city’s quality of life kept improving, its reputation as a steel city remained.

In 2009 Linz was chosen as European Capital of Culture. Linz has a difficult history. Hitler had been planning to make it into his city of culture. So it was important to face and be aware of that piece of history, in order to be able to bring forth a new identity for the city and showcase it.

The year 2009 was celebrated with a wide array of art and culture, and new cultural institutions were founded. Amongst them is Atelier Salzamt. Through their Artist in Residence Program, international

artists utilize the ateliers and realize projects such as exhibitions in collaboration with local artists. The Ars Electronica Center, which lets you experience media art hands-on, was reopened in that year, too. The Linz public was invited to take an active role in the cultural events of 2009, too. In a parade that was titled „flood“ (referring to Noah), citizens of Linz steered animal-shaped puppets and formed a parade.

As a result of the art-centered city development of Linz, the citizens have developed a stronger pride in their hometown.

Now, in 2019, ten years have passed since the year of the European Capital of Culture in 2009. Linz has become a city known for its culture and art scene.

Nasushiobara is also focusing on art-centered city



Ars Electronica Center

development lately. An exchange of new ideas is sure to result in even more diverse exchange in the future!

Linz News: Linz Japan Day



“Miruhii” promoting Nasushiobara

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Japanese-Austrian Friendship in 2019, countless cultural events will be opened in both countries. On June 22nd, the “Linz Japan Day” will take place in Linz. Amongst others, Japanese culture will be introduced. The event will take place in the Palais Kaufmännischer Verein near the city center.

Nasushiobara will be present with a stall in order to promote Nasushiobara and make it more widely known amongst the citizens of

Linz. We will be distributing English and German flyers. I also would like to introduce our city’s mascot Miruhii. We will have a corner where people can learn to write their name in katakana or kanji. I am sure that through this event, even more of Linz’ citizens will come to know and love Nasushiobara!

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People: Akiko Soga



Profile

Surname: Soga

Firstname : Akiko

Born in : Tokyo

Living in : Tokyo

Work Place : Austrian
Cultural Forum, Austrian
Embassy, Tokyo

“A unique opportunity”

What kind of exchange activities do you organize?

My job is to give the people of Japan an even deeper understanding of the Austrian culture. Some of my concrete tasks are establishing cooperative relations with cultural institutions like museums or concert organizers, promoting Austria-related events that are held in Japan or supporting Austrian artists during their stay in Japan. In Japan, classical music is the most popular export from Austria, so that we often arrange concerts of young professional musicians from Austria in cooperation with Japanese cities that have Austrian sister cities. Since Austria is an EU member state, we actively take part in EU cultural events that are being held in Japan. Choosing the Austrian Films that are shown at the EU Film Festival or the Austrian writers who take part in the European Literature Festival is also part of our responsibilities. There is a lively exchange between Japan and Austria on a university level as well, and quite a few Japanese universities have Austrian partner universities. Furthermore, there is a stipend program based on an agreement between Japan and Austria. About four Japanese exchange students study in Austria and four Austrian exchange students get the chance to study in Japan.

Please share some memories of your exchange activities so far!

I have had the opportunity to visit elementary schools together with Austrian musicians many times. I am always very glad to see the children listen to the music very attentively and ask questions freely. Sometimes, we also get to join in the school lunches or observe the lessons. Since Japanese schools are so different from Austrian school environments, the Austrian musicians show a strong interest. They were especially interested in the calligraphy lessons. One time, the students formed a long line, waiting to get an autograph from the musicians. When I visited Hanamaki city with my supervisor last year, the students presented the “Ode to Joy” from Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 in German. I was surprised by their excellent German pronunciation!

What are your ideas and hopes for the future exchange between Japan and Austria ?

Austria is a country that is popular in Japan and well-known as a country of culture and music. However, I feel that still, but a small fraction of Austria’s culture is known. I too, have only gotten to know the diversity of the Austrian culture since starting my current job. Even if you look solely at music, there isn’t only classical music; there are all kinds of musical genres like jazz, techno, pop or world music, and a very active music scene with artists hailing from many different countries who have made Austria their base. In visual arts there are many Austrian artists who draw attention internationally and are often invited to Japanese art festivals. Also in the film business many unique movies are being produced as well. I want to promote the aspects of Austrian culture that are not yet widely known in Japan.

I think it would be great if we could have more events related to Austria in places outside of Tokyo as well.

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Occasions such as this year's 150th anniversary of the Japanese-Austrian friendship and next year's Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics are a golden opportunity for the many Japanese municipalities who would like to deepen the exchange with their Austrian sister city.

I really hope that the citizens of Nasushiobara will be able to get to know the many different aspects of Austrian culture. Let's work together towards a lively exchange in the future!

Lively Sister City Exchange

February 2nd 2019: "Closer to Austria"

Mr. Ishihara from the Public Relations Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Minister's Secretariat held a lecture about Austria in the Nasunogahara Museum. The event was planned by the Nasushiobara International Association's Linz Project Committee. More than 70 people participated. Mr. Ishihara talked about his experiences during his time working in the Japanese Embassy in Austria as well as Austrian music and food. After the lecture the participants split up in groups and discussed Austrian culture. We even practiced the Austrian handshake!



Let's Go! ☆ Austria-Related Culture Events

April 4 – August 5: Exhibition: *Vienna on the Path to Modernism (Klimt and Schiele)*

The National Art Center, Tokyo; Tokyo/Roppongi; Entry: ¥ 1,600 (student and group discounts available)

For details see the official homepage: <https://artexhibition.jp/wienmodern2019/>

April 17 & June 14: Higashinasuno Kominkan / Ladies' Course: *Enjoy Austria with Florin*

In April we will be making Easter decorations. In June we will make Viennese desserts and learn about the Austrian lifestyle. For details please contact Higashinasuno Kominkan.

Culture Corner: Easter Symbols and Origin



Austria being a country strongly shaped by Catholicism, most of the public holidays have religious origins. On Easter, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, who had died on the cross. As decorations, you don't only see the egg which is a symbol for resurrection, but also general symbols of spring such as lambs or bunnies. This custom is said to date back to spring festivities of a time before Christianity came to Austria. When Christianity was introduced, the spring symbols were mixed in with Easter. In the week leading up to Easter, there are customs pertaining to certain days. One week before Easter Sunday, "Palm Sunday" is celebrated. It marks the day that Jesus arrived in Jerusalem and was greeted by laying palm leaves on the road. There are customs mirroring this story. However, since Austria does not have palm trees, we make a bouquet of pussy willow and other plants, which is blessed in church and then decorated at home.

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Handmade ☆Maundy Thursday Meal

The German word for Maundy Thursday, “*Gründonnerstag*” means *Green Thursday*. It is a tradition to eat green foods on this day. The combination spinach-potato-egg is a classic. Boil the potatoes, peel them and cut them in bite-sized pieces. Fry them with a little oil, salt and pepper. Peel and cut the onions and fry them. Add the spinach and some soup stock. Add finely chopped garlic and nutmeg. Close the lid and steam for about 10 minutes. Mix in the finely chopped Tomatoes and cream. Fry an egg sunny side up and arrange it on a plate with the potatoes and spinach.



Answer below



Q

Which Symbol is not related to Easter?

A: Bunny

B: Peony

C: Pussy Willow

D: Egg

German Corner: *Through the Flower*



In German language we have the expression “*etwas durch die Blume sagen*” (to say something through the flower). Japan also has a *language of flowers*. In the European middle ages, flowers were assigned meanings such as innocence for the lily or love for the rose. In the 18th century, “*selam*”, the Turkish custom of sending a beloved person a message utilizing flowers, was introduced to Europe. The kind of flower, its color or position within the bouquet each had certain meaning. In a society in which the young ladies of the aristocracy were not allowed to directly communicate with their lover, they communicated through flowers. Today’s expression of saying something “through the flower” means to say something in a roundabout way instead of directly. It is especially used if one expresses a critique or negative content mildly through kind words.

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Answer : B. Peonies are not connected to Easter!