

E-Mail Newsletter from Mayor of Okayama City “Challenge of Legendary Okayama” (26)  
August 12th Issue

**【Contemporary Art】**

Hello, I'm Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

Something very fascinating will happen in Okayama City this fall.

A lot of worldwide contemporary art works will be exhibited in various places in central Okayama City including Okayama Castle in November and December. These art works are owned by Ishikawa Cultural Promotion Foundation whose representative is Mr. Ishikawa, President of Cross Company, Inc.

Some of you may have the impression, "contemporary art is difficult to understand."

It was Naoshima Island that I saw contemporary art for the first time about a dozen years ago. Let me explain one of the artworks: I entered a completely-dark room and stayed there for a while. I could not see anything first but could see an image dimly soon as my eyes were gradually getting accustomed to the darkness.

I could not understand what it was first (To the end? Still now??) but had a strong impression to it even after I returned from Naoshima Island. I think contemporary art is like this.

I think that we do not have to understand contemporary art logically so much.

For example, in one of the art projects, 14 mirror-finish table-tennis tables will be exhibited in the Hondan (castle keep) of Okayama Castle. The explanation of the art work says, "Viewers can actually play table tennis using the table-tennis tables. The viewers will be part of the art work when they play it. The artwork makes the boundary of 'something to see' and 'something to be seen' ambiguous and questions about what the art is like." I don't actually understand it well. But I think we will feel something unforgettable while watching and touching it.

There are many art museums and museums in the historic and cultural zone in Okayama City. It must be interesting to rediscover the value of the existing cultural assets, recognize the history and show it by contrasting with contemporary art.

This fall, many people will visit Okayama from Japan and overseas for the coming UNESCO world conference on ESD or AEON Mall Okayama.

I hope both citizens and visitors will enjoy this contemporary art.