

【IF THE SNAKE – Okayama will Bloom with Modern Art Again】

Hello, I'm Masao Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

This fall, the 2nd “Okayama Art Summit 2019”, the international modern art exhibition will be held in three years.

When the 1st Art Summit was held, I was worried about how citizens would react on the sudden appearance of brand new modern art exhibition in the city center, but at the same time, I was also curious about their reaction.

In the beginning of the summit, people are not very friendly to the art works. However, the visitors' words of mouth and some good rumor from other sources attracted more and more people. The number of visitors marked 234,000 people in the end.

Some art works are still exhibited in the city center reflecting unexpectedly good public favor from the citizens. Besides, the number of visitors at the museums which the exhibition was held has grown. The one at Okayama Orient Museum rose 157% and that of Okayama Castle rose 127% on the previous year. Moreover, it was a great achievement that the visitors were satisfied with the local historical and cultural attractions.

The 2nd Art Summit, more expectations and pressure on us.

Mr. Pierre Huyghe, who has been famous for a sculpture with a large honey comb on the nude's head, is the artistic director of this summit. The other day, I introduced the title of his latest work, “IF THE SNAKE”.

How do you think about the title?

I don't really understand. However, it trully stimulates my imagination. I guess, one of the wonderful aspects of modern art is that makes us aware of various perspectives of different people.

"Islands of Setouchi" was ranked 7th out of "52 Places to Go in 2019" published by New York Times. The place is the only one chosen in Japan.

The beautiful islands and attractive sights among Seto Inland Sea, which we have been introduced at Setouchi Triennale Festival over times, did contribute to the commemorative result. We will continue giving effort for growing modern art culture in Okayama, and the festival as well as Okayama Art Summit can be two largest art festivals in the city. The city will invite more and more people with the cultural attractions.