

To everyone who had been a part of Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the messages of concern and support that we have received since the earthquake and tsunami which struck northern Japan on March 11 2011. This enormous natural disaster, of a power unprecedented in our modern history, has triggered a cascade of secondary destructive events, in particular numerous large aftershocks, and the ongoing crisis at the nuclear power plant in Fukushima. Echigo-Tsumari was not spared. A powerful aftershock (M6.7) struck Echigo-Tsumari in the early morning of March 12 2011. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the current situation in Japan and our plan for how to respond to this disaster.

The human toll has been severe. At time of writing, the number of confirmed dead is over 10,000, with close to 20,000 missing people still unaccounted for. Over 400,000 people are taking shelter in evacuation centres and are dependent on relief supplies. A vast swathe of the north-eastern coastline of Japan has been subject to catastrophic damage, and reconstruction is expected to take many years. The situation at the nuclear reactor in Fukushima is serious and remains precarious, and people living within a 30-kilometer radius have been advised to evacuate, while much of the agricultural produce from the area has been withdrawn from market due to health fears. Much of eastern Japan, including Tokyo, is subject to rationing of power, fuel, and some products.

This winter had already been difficult, with unusually heavy snowfalls in Echigo-Tsumari. Damage from the earthquake has brought further challenges. However, the current situation has reminded us of the importance of the core principal of our project - "human beings as part of nature" and we are undertaking the following actions in these circumstances:

1. A thorough assessment of the damage to the buildings and artworks of Echigo-Tsumari, and devising a restoration plan, in close consultation with the local government and artists.
2. Provide assistance and support to those directly affected within the local community.
3. Provide accommodation to people displaced by the disaster. In keeping with our focus as an arts organization with local roots, we are particularly focused on those who are connected to the area or through art networks.

With sincere thanks for the encouragement from all our friends around the world.
Sincerely yours,

Fram Kitagawa
General Director

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