

## Tokamachi Displays Snow Culture, Contemporary Art to Foreign Media Members

TOKAMACHI, Japan, Mar. 17, 2017 /Kyodo JBN/ --

Tokamachi City, one of the heaviest snowfall areas in Japan, held a press tour for foreign correspondents stationed in the Tokyo area on February 27 and 28 to introduce snow culture and art to lure more visitors from abroad to the area in Niigata Prefecture, central Japan.

Correspondents of overseas media took part in the two-day event showcasing its culture and history heavily influenced by snow, as well as artworks.

In addition to snow, contemporary art is a major tourist attraction of the area, as Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale, a major art festival, is held every three years in the Echigo-Tsumari region in the prefecture since 2000 to revitalize the local communities.

The latest art festival in 2015 drew some 510,000 people to the area and brought the economic ripple effect of over 5 billion yen in the prefecture, according to the executive committee of the festival.

The press tour started at Tokamachi City Museum where participants saw an exhibition of flame-patterned earthenware, Japan's oldest national



Visiting the Tokamachi City Museum



Visiting House of Birds



Inside Kamakura snow dome



Watching modern art on Snowart trail

treasure created some 5,000 years ago, and the development of the textile industry largely influenced by snow as well as traditional snow-removing tools.

“The flame-pattern vessel is a symbol of peace and origin of Japanese art and craftsmanship,” said Seiichi Sano, director of the museum, adding the era in which the earthenware was created was a relatively peaceful period.

Participants, some of whom were from countries with no snow, experienced making a “Kamakura” snow dome at Setoguchi, a Japanese-style inn located in the Kiyotsukyo hot spring resort, after visiting the city museum and Echigo-Tsumari Satoyama Museum of Contemporary Art KINARE.

“It is the first time for me to experience snow activities and it was a very memorable moment of my life,” said one of the participants who hailed from Southeast Asia.

Participating media members also experienced wearing traditional snowshoes as they hiked in the snow, as well as seeing artworks in the snow along the “SNOWART TRAIL” outside the Matsudai Nohbutai cultural facility.

After the press tour, some participants expressed their desire to further explore the city’s relations with other countries and regions including their own.

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