

# A Study on the Role of Art Festivals on Disaster Recovery: A Case Study of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Reborn-Art Festival

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## Abstract

This study investigates how the Art Festival was planned and implemented in the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake with the aim of regional reconstruction and promotion and analyses 'Reborn-Art Festival' as a case study. This case study reveals that holding art festivals in the stricken area not only contributes to the reconstruction and regional development of area, it also provides an opportunity to disseminate the current state of the stricken area. In addition, it was found that an art festival can be held with the cooperation of an incorporated association and a private company under the initiative of the private sector.

## 1 Introduction

In 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred in the Tohoku region of Japan. As a result of this earthquake, approximately 16,000 people were killed and approximately 2,500 people were missing. About 120,000 houses were completely destroyed and about 280,000 houses were partially destroyed. It was a great human and economic damage.

Wakabayashi (2011) states that the Great East Japan Earthquake caused not only human and economic losses, but also a variety of local cultural losses that had developed over hundreds of years. Wakabayashi (2011) also mentions that restoring local cultures that were destroyed by the Great East Japan Earthquake can help the community recover mentally and emotionally.

Omori (2013) states that after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake that occurred in the Kansai region in Japan in 1995, art soothed the hearts of the victims affected by the earthquake, giving them the courage to becoming a vital force in the reconstruction process.

Hamaguchi (2013) argues that it is necessary to clarify the role that art plays in disaster recovery. Hamaguchi (2013) states that art not only soothes the hearts of the victims by connecting people, art events are bringing many people to the disaster area to see art.

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In Kobe, the main area affected by the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, a large number of support activities and charity performances were held, and a number of new cultural activities characterised by the earthquake were born. For example, 'Art Aid Kobe' was created immediately after the earthquake, based on the philosophy of protecting Kobe culture with its own hands and bringing artists together to regenerate and create a new Kobe culture. The 'Art Aid Kobe' is not only an emergency aid for disaster-affected artists and subsidies for cultural activities, it also supports and promotes artworks in Tokyo and Kushiro.

Kobe City made the 'Kobe Culture Creation City Declaration' in 2004, based on the idea of town development through the culture, 10 years after the earthquake. Since 2007, the 'Kobe Biennale' has been held once every two years. This provides Kobe with the opportunity to promote the art and culture of Kobe and to revitalise the city.

In this study, we investigate how the Art Festival was planned and implemented in the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake with the aim of regional reconstruction and promotion. We analyse 'Reborn-Art Festival' as a case study. This is an event of art, music and food with the theme of 'circulation leading to regional development and reconstruction/creating new connections in the region'.

## 2 Literature

In this section, we organise studies on the characteristics of art festivals and the role that they play in cities.

Çelik and Çetinkaya (2013) analyse the case of the International Izmir Art Festival. Çelik and Çetinkaya (2013) mention that festivals and public celebrations found in all societies are increasingly seen as unique tourist attractions and destination image-makers, along with other special events. These events play a significant role in the cultural exchange among people all over the world and contribute to the development of cities and to make them a brand city.

Montanari, Scapolan and Codeluppi (2013) analyse identity and social media in an art festival and reveal that festivals have become a prominent event in many cities throughout Europe, playing a crucial role in improving the image of the host city and enhancing its attractiveness to tourists. However, Montanari et al. (2013) insist that festivals are temporary organisations with a short-lived and intermittent nature.

Koizumi (2016) analyses the case study of the Water and Land Niigata Art Festival, and mentions that the art project's central focus was on providing an identity to the new city and to revitalise communities through civic participation and cooperation. Koizumi (2016) shows that art projects can foster new citizen-led cultural and societal engagement.

Marks, Chandler and Baldwin (2016) analyse the environment art festivals. Marks et al. (2016) argue that environmental art can be used by the government to encourage pro-environmental behaviour and a sense of place at a grassroots level. Environmental art offers an imaginative way to promote environmental engagement.

As in other literature, Zhang, Zhang and Zhu (2013) mention that urban art festivals are held periodically to display the international image, degree of civilisation and ability of a city to engage in trans-cultural and international cooperation. Zhang et al. (2013) claim that the significant sense of urban

art festivals is the opportunity of integrating global resources. Zhou (2010) analyses effects of art festivals as follows. First, art festivals affect both the urban image, which includes cultural amenity internally and international image externally, and the soft power of a city. Second, art festivals promote economic transformation and produce economic profits.

On the other hand, Quinn (2005) claims that the outcomes of cities' engagement on arts festivals remain little understood, particularly in social and cultural terms. Quinn (2005) argues that city authorities tend to disregard the social value of festivals and consider them simply as vehicles of economic generation or as quick fix solutions to the city image problems.

Wooten and Norman (2007) analyse the spending behaviour of visitors of arts festivals.

### **3 Ishinomaki City**

Ishinomaki City, the host of the Reborn-Art Festival is the second city after Sendai City under Miyagi Prefecture, with an area of 554.5 square kilometres.

In 2005, Ishinomaki City, Kahokui Town, Ogatsu Town, Kanan Town, Monou Town, Kitakami Town and Oshika Town merged into one city to form the current Ishinomaki City. On the south side of the city is Ishinomaki Bay, the Pacific Ocean and the Rias coast from the east side of city to the Oshika Peninsula.

In the Edo period, Ishinomaki became 'one of the largest cluster of Edo-round riceship' and emerged as a nationwide trading city, the 'city of river port'. This is the current city area that flourished as a port town, the plain part of the rich ricegrowing area by large-scale Nitta development and the coastal part that has also engaged in fishing and remote trade. This is the basis of the current Ishinomaki City. Ishinomaki has a thriving fishery, and off Sanriku and Kinkazan are one of the world's three largest fishing grounds. In addition, as a place related to Shotaro Ishinomori, a manga artist from Miyagi Prefecture, town development was made utilizing cartoon characters.

During Great East Japan Earthquake, earthquakes and tsunamis with a maximum seismic intensity of 6+ and a tsunami maximum wave of 8.6M or more struck. Approximately 3,200 died and 700 were missing, and about 41,000 buildings were completely destroyed or destroyed in large part.

The severity of the damage was in the area of Ishinomaki City. Before the disaster, the number of general staff at the city hall was about 1.5 to 3% in the three major disaster-affected prefectures, while the number of dead, missing people and the estimated amount of treatment for disaster debris was about 20% of the three major disaster-affected prefectures.

Based on Ishinomaki Earthquake Reconstruction Basic Plan, the 'Restoration Period (2011–2013)' is the period during which housing, production bases and infrastructure are indispensable for the revitalisation of life and industry. The 'Regeneration Period (2014–2017)' is the period to restore the vitality that existed before the earthquake and increase the value of the region. The 'Development Period (2018–2020)' is the period of renewal and development as a new attractive and vital area.

### **4 Reborn-Art Festival**

This section explains the Reborn-Art Festival and summarises the Reborn-Art Festival's efforts from the perspectives of art, music and food.

#### 4.1 Circumstances of holding Reborn-Art Festival

The Reborn-Art Festival is co-sponsored by the Reborn-Art Festival executive committee and the AP Bank, under the theme of 'circulation leading to regional development and reconstruction/creating new connections in the region'. The festival runs from July 22 to 10 September 2017. This art festival aimed at creating opportunities for new value by revitalising the area in Miyagi Prefecture and Ishinomaki, which was affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. 'Reborn-Art' here is named not only for the Tohoku rebuilding but also because the purpose of the event that is for each participant to feel 'Reborn'. Art, music and food events were also planned for the Ishinomaki and Oshika Peninsula and their surrounding areas, Shiogama, Matsushima, Higashimatsushima and Onagawa. Ishinomaki was chosen as the venue because it still has a magnificent and beautiful nature such as the Oshika Peninsula and Mt. Kinka. In addition, tourism is important for the local art festival, and Ishinomaki can meet that need.

Takeshi Kobayashi is the Reborn-Art Festival executive committee chairman and production committee chairman. Kobayashi is the music producer who worked on popular bands such as Mr. Children and Southern All Stars. He established the AP Bank in 2003 and has been trying to recycle natural energy and food, and has supported the reconstruction of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Volunteer activities by the AP Bank in the affected areas of the Great East Japan Earthquake triggered this art festival as a part of the regional revitalisation. Until then, AP Bank had been holding outdoor music events 'ap bank fes', but it is not an art festival. The reason the Reborn-Art Festival was established is that art festivals can be held in the community for a long period, therefore, more people can participate. In addition, by combining contemporary art with music festivals, it is possible to target people with various tastes. The event runs for 51 days, so food is needed. It became a comprehensive art, music and food festival.

#### 4.2 Art

There are no museums in the Ishinomaki, central Oshika Peninsula and Ayukawa areas, and about 80% of the works were set outdoors. A total of 38 artists from Japan and abroad participated and developed works with the theme of 'Mourning' and 'Dialogue with Nature'. In addition, many artists visited the area and produced works while interacting with the local people.

The Nikkatsu Pearl Theatre, formerly Kabukiza, which became a movie theatre in the Taisho period, has become one of the places of local underground culture. This place has been operating since the 1980s as a theatre dedicated to romantic pornography and as a place of relaxation for sexual minorities. Artist Chaos \* Lounge exhibited the work 'I want to stop the earth and watch movies slowly', which is a huge installation in the theatre.

In Tosenji, the central area of the Oshika Peninsula, there was an exhibition of a piece of human tears made by the artist Chim ↑ Pom. Chim ↑ Pom talked to local people, collected the tears they shed and frozen them in a freezing container buried underground.

Many areas in Oshika Peninsula tip and Ayukawa area have been designated as Sanriku Reconstruction National Park, so it was not possible to install any artefacts and use heavy machinery. Therefore, in the work 'Stand Up' by Michihiro Shimabukuro, the artist changed drifts and fallen trees on the sandy beach to transform nature into a work. It is a work involving the reconstruction of a fallen

tree that is reborn, trying to stand in the original direction. In addition, it is an audience-participation installation that allows visitors to the art festival to stand up freely.

### **4.3 Music**

During the period of the art festival, the music events were held every day for 51 days in various places including Ishinomaki City, Oshika Peninsula area and partner venues such as Shiogama City and Matsushima Town.

The venue was a street corner in Ishinomaki City, such as Ishinomaki Municipal Oginohama Elementary School, the hill overlooking Mt. Kinka and the area around the artwork. Participating musicians from veterans to young people appeared widely. The live format includes live ticket sales in advance, guerrilla live and live distribution over the Internet. For example, artist Yotta's 'izaguruma' is a mobile stage with a whale model on the track. It appeared everywhere during the exhibition, travelling around whalers' towns such as Yodogawa and Ishinomaki. In addition, a music event 'Reborn-Art Festival 2017 × ap bank fes by ap bank' led by Kobayashi and Mr. Children's vocalist Kazutoshi Sakurai was held at the same time, and more than 30 artists appeared. Ap bank fes is a music festival that the AP Bank held at Tsumagoi in Kakegawa City for eight years from 2005 to 2012. At the music festival, there are discussion events and booths to disseminate knowledge about natural energy. In addition, reused dishes were used during the event and a system was put in place to recycle the garbage from the venue, as a way to raise environmental awareness. After a five-year preparation period from the end of the 2012 music festival, 'Reborn-Art Festival 2017 × ap bank fes' was held simultaneously.

### **4.4 Food**

In this art festival, food professionals from all over the country, including chefs from Tohoku, offer a special menu to this art festival using local ingredients.

In addition, as part of this art festival, a facility was constructed in Kozumihama, Ishinomaki City, to disassemble deers and process as meat. In the restaurant Reborn-Art Dining in the Oshika Peninsula, venison is actually used as an ingredient. In the same area, a restaurant called Hamasaisai was opened, where visitors can feel cheerful mothers in the Oshika Peninsula. The menu includes local and homemade dishes using local ingredients. Management support comes from a young fisherman group called Fisherman Japan in Tohoku, established with the purpose of vitalising the fishery.

### **4.5 Features of Reborn-Art Festival**

This art festival aimed at the regional reconstruction and promotion of the stricken area. Therefore, it is very different from other art festivals. For example, by using Ishinomaki in the midst of the reconstruction work, it is possible to show the visitors that there is still damage six years after the earthquake. When people outside the disaster-stricken area visit the festival, they will actually see the reconstruction work such as the development of seawalls and embankments right next to the festival venue. It can prevent memory from weathering. The next festival is scheduled for 2019, and it is planned to continue for a long span of 10 years.

Another characteristic of this art festival is that it was started not by the government, but by the

private sector. While other art festivals are often held at the request of the city, this art festival started with the idea of Kobayashi, the executive committee chairman and the production chairman. The AP Bank, one of the founders of Kobayashi, invested half of the project cost (about 300 million yen). In addition, Kirin provided drinks, supported restaurants and restaurant operations, Sumitomo Forestry was responsible for the maintenance of Ohika Village, and Toyota supported the rest of the area. In addition, volunteer supporters 'Kojika Corps' were involved, and since the participation of elementary school age and above was possible, a wide range of age groups and nationalities participated.

## 5 Summary

In this study, we investigated how the Art Festival was planned and implemented in the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake with the aim of regional reconstruction and promotion. The Reborn-Art Festival was held with the purpose of creating new connections and various cycles that led to regional reconstruction and promotion. In this art festival, works created by contemporary artists in Japan and abroad were exhibited with local cooperation, and various styles of music events were held. In addition, a menu using local ingredients was provided by famous chefs in Japan and overseas.

The number of visitors to this art festival was 260,000, exceeding the initial target of 200,000. Yoshihiro Murai, the governor of Miyagi Prefecture, said that many people from all over the country visited Miyagi Prefecture and the Ishinomaki area. He also stated that the power of art and music greatly contributed to the 'reconstruction of the heart', which led to people's vitalities and future dreams. The art festival brought many customers to Ishinomaki, created new connections through planning and management, and contributed to regional reconstruction.

This art festival not only aimed at earthquake disaster recovery and regional promotion, it also call attention to the problems of the affected areas. For example, by holding an art festival on the side of reconstruction work, the art festival wants to show that even after six years since the earthquake, the damage remains. In addition, the art festival provides the opportunity to think about coexistence with nature.

Another characteristic of this art festival is that it was held by the private sector. The AP Bank, a general incorporated association, invested half of the project cost and received operational support from private companies. Volunteer supporters were also used.

This case study reveals that holding art festivals in the stricken area not only contributes to the reconstruction and regional development of area; it also provides an opportunity to disseminate the current state of the stricken area. In addition, it was found that an art festival can be held with the cooperation of an incorporated association and a private company under the initiative of the private sector.

This is the first time for this art festival, and it is planned to continue for a span of 10 years. Therefore, future research should focus on how the role of this art festival will change in the process of reconstruction from the regeneration period to the development period as defined in the Ishinomaki Earthquake Reconstruction Basic Plan.

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