

お名前 (Mel Cheong)

習った芸能(津軽石さんさ - second part only- 金津流浦浜獅子躍、田東鎧念仏剣舞、赤保内駒踊り、十一日町えんぶり組)

1) 三陸の芸能を習ってみていかがでしたか？

I applied the 2019 Sanfest AIR last year, of course, I also sent my proposal, but after these courses, I get to know more about the cultures and dances, I think I would not just focus on graphics, I have a strong feeling to record them down properly, for the world to understand them and study them. Not only physically, but more about the meaning of each act or the props that having a deeper meaning inside.

The name “Festival” describes the art form in a very good way, they are not just dances; they are combinations of history, myths, rhythm, dance, costumes... etc. As the practices have been laid down from many generations, it has developed in a simplified way to translate for next generation, but if we do not carefully write down the meaning at some points, it will soon go to the dilemma “Lost in Translation”.

So if I am going to write my proposal again, I will focus very much in writing a booklet to talk about one dance in specific. I believe with the cultural differences, it will also help me in questioning much more and dig into the core of the ideas.

At the same time, thank you very much in accepting me for this program this year, I saw a great effort and devotion on it.

2) 今回はオンラインでの芸術体験でしたが、率直にいかがでしたか？良かった点、困った点をお聞かせください。(応募、事前準備、受講のことなど)

This is not my first time to have online courses. I have studies Leadership from Michigan University or Social Psychology with Washington University online. However, this is the most challenging online course for me.

1. Online one cannot see 360 degrees and thus I always have my problem with left and right, in which some groups are really helpful when they can show me both left and right with two screen shots at the same time.
2. The depth of the steps: for instance, I do not really know the spacing as we couldn't measure it with the screen. However, for the 浦浜獅子躍, they gave you a reference in using the 4 squares carpet, it helps really a lot!
3. Actually, I have difficulties when listening with accents... even without accents, I was checking with my phone's dictionary all the time, I am better in reading, so for example, with 赤保内駒踊り, their powerpoint slides are with some Japanese on top of the pictures, giving me more time to read and understand! (of course, that may be because they also have experience in teaching in schools, so they prepared ahead.
4. For preparing the props, I think it is okay, it is just that the picture itself doesn't say anything about how to make it. For instance, the hat of 十一日町えんぶり組, I have the pictures, and it is said that we can make it with newspaper, but then I only realise it when everyone show me just before the class starts.
5. Only the last thing that I think it is totally difference from a real AIR because I can only "receive" information from the performance group. My usual idea of AIR is that it is mutual, AIR is always a time when they think of what they want to teach me, and at the same time they can get some interesting points from me. It is important because we communicate, through living together, solving problems together, or learning together, and achieve something together, then we understand each other better, thus making the world a friendlier place to live. This is also in my artist statement. But through a three hours course, what we can do, or what we can focus now is to make sure we, as a student, get to know something, which is also important... but we are looking for something more.

So I guess if we think more about how the audience "see" from the screen and give more references, the problems could be solved. Then below I would like to talk about the good things of having the course online:

1. I do not really understand each dance or the stories before, even when I sent my AIR application, I just read it through website, and visually imagine what I want to do. However, these virtual courses help me quickly understand more about each dance (which even if I applied my AIR successfully, I can only go to one group), and the characteristic of each dance, which can help me to develop what I want to do later on, or where would I want to go for my research. It is definitely a good TOUR!

2. I do not need to travel, is it a good thing for now. During Covid-19, through the courses,

we can still enjoy eyes travelling, or getting to know friends.

3. It is now really an ultimate chance to learn the whole package. For instance, if the real AIR happens, actually, I think they will allow me just to sit down at the side, taking photos or doing some record, or do some sketching. However, since it is a virtual course designed, I have the introduction of each dance, including the stories or the background of the city; then the dance itself, and everyone has to learn how to do it, that also includes the music or the song itself; the third is the conclusion that we sit down together and give comments. In reality, it does not always happen like this. However, I would highly recommend also this structure of getting to know about each dance when the real AIR starts again.

4. The registration progress is easy and great! I have to thank Kuzuya San in translating it to me every time.

5. I also want to special thanks Anna in helping me with some translation throughout the course, my Japanese is really so simple (especially I didn't have chance to practice it this whole year), I think usually people won't understand... that is also the time when I use kanji.

3) 受講をされて、ご自身のアーティスト活動において、どのような影響、意味があると思われましたか？

1. I think the first is the importance in preserving these performance arts. If I have a chance, I still want to record it down so much so other foreigners, even when they come to see the performance, they can get to know how to do it, or how it happens and the stories behind.

2. During the Edo period, we have a lot of prints with wild poses for Kabuki or soldiers with swords, or even in ghosts or demons. I think the poses that I have learnt in the courses can help me understand the poses for my woodblocks.

3. The making of the props and the design of the kimono or the hat design with myths will also allow me to do better for my woodblocks. (in which, among all the dances, I really like the costume in 金津流浦浜獅子躍., and I like the use of different weapons at 田束鎧念仏剣舞, but the smooth of Ebisu Sama at 十一日町えんぶり組 is also one of my favorites, but

4. then the colors from 赤保内駒踊り actually resonance with my Mt. Fuji series, in which I was planning to find a place for sea and sky colors...)

5. I was also curious to start the "dance choreography" as a project, because actually, during 赤保内駒踊り performance, I heard them dancing while calling the horse (or giving orders), I think they

may not aware it, but actually it is also part of the 口唄歌, which means it was added with some ideas, that was why at that time I was so curious in writing it down, but then I do not know how.

3. 今後も三陸の郷土芸能を習いたい、通いたいと思われたときに、AIR以外にどのような方法や制度があると良いと思われますか？

If you want to continue learning Sanriku's folk performing arts or want to attend, what kind of methods and systems would you like to have other than AIR?

Actually after the Mt. Fuji project, I applied for Sanfest and Shizuoka AIR as I want to develop a project about the sea, and these two places are located by the sea. Then I just wait for the chances to come. It is difficult for me as a foreigner, but at the same time, usually my prints (and my artist statement) focuses very much on the "time" that we stay together to experience something, for instance, the AKA Fuji that was at my home during the last two courses, I made it because it was March, but we experienced a very hot day at Kofu, Yamanashi. My sweden roommate artist and I were searching for a place to have icecream, (as we are both new to town), and I was just looking at the Mt. Fuji outside, imagining pouring the maple syrup on top.

Art is always about my living and what surrounds me, and if I feed myself with folk arts, I will develop stories about folk arts. If I just go as a tourist to watch it, I may not understand the stories behind and couldn't be able to develop my art piece. It would be similar to just go online and do the research or reading a book... Folk arts, or any other arts are not just about a tradition, it is something related to the culture laid down from the history (the past), it is related to the (current) people who are doing it and willing to do it, and my art will transcend the spirit and communicate to the people (in the future).

That is why AIR is important for developing my art.

But if you ask me what if I am not accepted next year or next next year, I may:

1. Ask Kuzuya San for recommendation
2. I usually keep a good friendship with my AIR host, and they are so friendly to help in introducing me friends in other places too

Then I asked if I can stay there with them for a while. I hope this answer your question.

4. 上記以外にご意見やご感想がございましたら、自由にお書きください。

I think this course can continue to develop like a regularly section each year for "more" people to have an idea of Sanriku's folk performing arts. And I think you will then receive even better proposals than before.

I understand organizing and judging the proposals for AIR is difficult and the quality of results can vary a lot. However, by attending the course and giving out a general idea of how it looks like, people can imagine more develop something more to what you aim for.

Last but not least, thank you very much for all the arrangement, it is really an enjoyable course. During my AIR travel, I usually bring my specialty food (usually some sauces) from my home town and share with everyone while I am staying. If I have chances, may be we try persimmon curry pasta. (I made Peach curry before in Kofu). My curry is a Portuguese mixed one. Macau has a mixed Portuguese and Chinese Culture.

ぜひ、三陸の郷土芸能に会いに来てください。ご協力ありがとうございました。

三陸国際芸術推進委員会事務局