



Presenting Japan's Traditional Culture As World Pop Culture "Shochiku Kabuki X Uniqlo Project" Starting March 20

Shochiku Co. announced Feb. 16 that it is collaborating with Uniqlo Co. to launch the "Shochiku Kabuki X Uniqlo Project" for presenting to the world Japan's traditional culture in the form of modern pop culture through Kabuki and clothes. Kabuki actor Ichikawa Ennosuke IV will assume the post of Project Ambassador to transmit information to people around the world.



【T-shirt graphics based on Kabuki stage makeup】 Courtesy of UNIQLO

In this project, we place respect on the framework of aesthetic consciousness that pursues "Makoto ni yoki mono, utsukushiki mono" (truly good and beautiful things) while presenting to the world Japan's traditional culture anew as modern Japanese pop culture. To this end, Shochiku, which produces and promotes Kabuki performances and which operates Kabukiza Theatre, the sanctuary of Kabuki, and Kabuki actor Ichikawa Ennosuke IV, who serves as the Project Ambassador, are in charge of overseeing the project. Uniqlo's UT (UNIQLO T-shirts) Creative Director NIGO has thought out the appropriate design, shape and fabrics.

-About the Products -

--Design

Kabuki's iconic motifs make up the base design, such as crests and patterns related to "Omodakaya," the "yago," or acting house name, of Project Ambassador Ichikawa Ennosuke IV; unique costume designs drawn from various performances; and "kumadori" -- the stage makeup characteristic of Kabuki.

--Line-up

From UT and STETECO & RELACO to bandanas and tote bags, items geared to both men and women will be offered.

--Sales period: Sales will start in France on March 20 and elsewhere around the world at later dates. The Japan launch will take place on March 26.

--Sales locations: 14 markets including Europe, United States and Asia

"I believe Japan can rightfully take pride in the artistic traditions and beauty of Kabuki, which we have been promoting ever since our foundation in 1895. Working together with UNIQLO has given us the opportunity to express Kabuki's bold, yet delicate, aesthetics on clothing in a way never seen before to millions of UNIQLO fans around the world," said Jay Sakomoto, Shochiku President and CEO.

"I am pleased that this collaboration has come to fruition and that today UNIQLO begins a new partnership with Kabuki. With traditions dating back to several hundred years ago, Kabuki is a very important aspect of Japanese culture that is recognized worldwide. By combining sophisticated UNIQLO pop culture with Kabuki's traditions, which were considered sophisticated pop culture in the Edo Period, we could together achieve a new and sophisticated pop culture from Japan to the world through our clothing," said Tadashi Yanai, UNIQLO Chairman, President and CEO.

"I am honored to serve as the worldwide ambassador for this new project, and I have enjoyed contributing ideas. I believe that by combining the traditional colors and patterns of Kabuki with the contemporary styles of UNIQLO, we have created something that is innovative and totally new. I wish for everyone to experience and enjoy the clothing first hand by seeing and touching the pieces, and I hope the new collection will become very popular," said Ichikawa Ennosuke IV.



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【Profile of Ichikawa Ennosuke IV】

Ichikawa Ennosuke IV is one of Kabuki's most popular stars. He made his debut in 1983, taking the name Ichikawa Kamejiro II. Succeeding to a more high-ranking Kabuki name is not automatic, but in 2012 he was judged worthy to take the highly prestigious name of Ennosuke, with the yagō, or acting house name, of Omodaka-ya. Ennosuke performs not only traditional Kabuki, but he also introduced a new category of Kabuki known as "Super Kabuki II", that has broad and diverse audience. As well as Kabuki, Ichikawa Ennosuke IV performs in both films and television.

About Kabuki:

Kabuki, for which Shochiku is in charge of producing performances and promoting them, came into existence during the Edo period. One of the traditional performing arts that Japan boasts, it was declared UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2005 and continues to fascinate people today even after more than 400 years have passed since its inception. Kabuki continues to capture audiences after the fifth-generation Kabukiza Theatre reopened in April 2013 after three years of reconstruction work.

About Shochiku Co., Ltd.

Based in Chuo-ku, Tokyo, President and CEO Jay Sakomoto.

About Uniglo Co., Ltd. Based in Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, Chairman, President /CEO, Tadashi Yanai.