

October 2013

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**HALLOWEEN FEST**

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# Astoria Life

The key to your community



## A Cultural Fusion

**Japanese Art Gallery Mixes Past, Present and Future in LIC**



# Astoria Life

The key to your community

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Over a period of three months, RESOBOX collected over 250 circles created by residents in LIC using an ink-filled brush on white paper. All of them were exhibited in the gallery space and was showcased along with a performance and music.

Photo courtesy of Takashi Ikezawa



### You could be an Astoria Life community contributor!

Takashi Ikezawa is a native of Japan, but found his second home in LIC as the co-founder of RESOBOX. In this issue, he talks about his passion for creating Japanese art in LIC. It's easy to join the community conversation like Takashi. Email articles, photos, and ideas to the email shown below.

### Get Involved!

**astoria@hibu.com**

Want to contribute to your magazine? We need your help! If you've got a news release, a story tip, a great photo or want to write for us, send a note to the above email address and we will be in touch! Please visit [yellowbook360.com/release](http://yellowbook360.com/release) to read the terms for submissions.

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Photo courtesy of Takashi Ikezawa



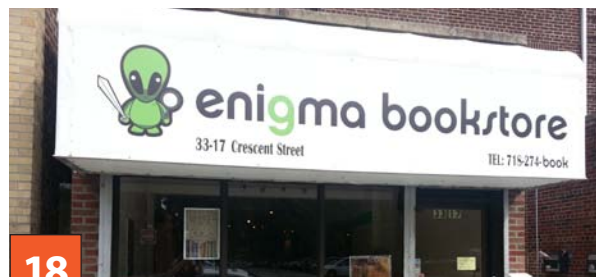
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Photo courtesy of TONE Pilates and Wellness Studio



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Photo courtesy of Socrates Sculpture Park



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Photo courtesy of Claire LaPlaca



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# Cultural Remix: Resonating With Japanese Art in NYC

*A Japanese cultural center brings history, culture, and tradition to an emerging art space in Long Island City.*

by Takashi Ikezawa  
Community contributor

**R**ESOBX is a place where people — who are conversant with, dedicated to, and influenced by Japanese arts — can gather to create innovative arts through a collaborative process and, from there, disseminate them to the world.

The name itself, RESOBX, was created from the words “resonate” and “box.” Its slogan is “art resonates with people.” It was founded by two native Japanese in June 2011. One of them is Fumio Tashiro, a composer, bassist as well as creative director, who became interested in experimental music and music as art performance. He collaborates with all kinds of artists — including dancers, painters, musicians and even chefs — to create “art” and then pulls all of it together, transforming it into performances through an improvisational process.

As the other partner, I work mainly on the business aspects for RESOBX. I have formerly worked in an international bank in Manhattan and also with a talent agency representing Japanese artists in New York city. We got to know each other casually while I was pursuing my master’s in business

administration, intent on a new career as an entrepreneur. After meeting monthly to brainstorm, we found our discussions always turned to the breadth and depth of Japanese culture and arts.

“What would be the future of Japanese culture?” That was, and still is, the most important and challenging question we had. Culture changes every single day. The current Japanese culture will be different 100 years from now. But how would it be changed?

At that time, Fumio’s primary project was to mix various kinds of art forms and create something new that never existed before. Both of us thought that this could be a solution, collaborating with Japanese and other cultures. There is Japanese fusion in food, but there seemed to be no Japanese fusion taking place in other fields.

New York City is a place where people from all over the world gather, live and work in close proximity, and influence each other. This is the place where infinite collaborations can happen. We decided to start creating a future Japanese culture and disseminating it from New York, rather than from Japan. In today’s global environment, Japanese arts might not always emanate from Japan alone but also from places like New York City, where art is highly concentrated and widely disseminated to the world at large.

However, in order for a solid collaboration to take place, we needed to have a strong foundation. Since we are both Japanese, we found the culture of our native land provided a foundation substantial enough to build upon. Brainstorming sessions yielded the idea of artists, both Japanese and non-Japanese, coming into the “box” and resonating off each

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**A pottery and paint exhibition was also held at RESOBX, which featured traditional Japanese pottery.**

Photo courtesy of Takashi Ikezawa



**Small Kabuki paper dolls were displayed for an exhibit at RESOBX.**

Photo courtesy of Takashi Ikezawa





Mayuko Okada's "Yellow Cab + Wasabi" exhibition featured koi fish throughout the RESOBOX gallery as well as real Nishikigoi (Japanese carp). Okada collaborated with Kodama Koi Farm located in Hawaii and New Jersey for the exhibit.  
Photo courtesy of Takashi Ikezawa



**Classes can be taken to learn the traditional Japanese fan dance. The women are wearing traditional Japanese kimonos.**

Photo courtesy of Takashi Ikezawa

*Continued from previous page*

other to create new works of Japanese art. Currently, people who visit RESOBOX can experience Japan — in traditional or current culture — through art exhibitions, cultural classes and events.

Art exhibitions change every three weeks. Artists interested in exhibiting at RESOBOX submit their work and the portfolio is screened to see if there is potential. The only condition that artists need to meet before showing their work is to incorporate Japan in some way. It could be through a philosophy, an idea,

or a theme, but the artwork needs to be inspired or influenced by Japan. Once approved, someone from RESOBOX will visit the artist's studio to exchange ideas. Exhibitions are open to artists of any age, race or nationality.

Artists can incorporate Japanese culture into their work through the creation of something new that didn't exist before. For this purpose, RESOBOX sometimes introduces non-Japanese artists to those who do have a Japanese background so they can interact and learn from each other. In this way, it may be possible for the artists to produce new, Japanese-influenced creations.

In the future, RESOBOX would like to do group exhibitions where participating artists make art together. In this group setting, they can generate a synergy, allowing them to create things that might not emerge when creating art as individuals. Next year RESOBOX is hoping to accelerate these collaborations, especially with more diverse cultures, such as a mix of Mexican and Japanese cultures or a mix of Croatian and Japanese cultures. This month, RESOBOX will have an exhibition by Miho Morita who is a New York-based visual artist.

Over a period of three months, RESOBOX collected over 250 circles created by local residents using an ink-filled brush on white paper. All of them were exhibited in the gallery space, and an event was created by combining the exhibit with a butoh dance, shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute), a painter and a bassist. Butoh is a form of Japanese contemporary dance, typically involving playful and grotesque imagery, taboo topics,

***LIC Japanese cultural center opens.***

# 2011

*RESOBOX opened its doors  
to the public in June 2011 by  
Takashi Ikezawa and Fumio Tashiro.*



# Learn About The Culture

*Find out more about the Japanese traditional and contemporary culture. Read below for a list of classes offered.*

**RESOBOX currently offers the** following classes:

Japanese Classical Dance (Nihon buyo), Ki Development, Japanese Anime Character Drawing, Samurai Swordsmanship (Iaido), Stick Fighting Technique (Jodo), Japanese Traditional Karate, Ink-Painting (Sumi-e), Japanese Language, and Cosplay and Prop-Making Class. All classes are held once a week in their gallery space at 41-26 27th Street, Long Island City.

**All classes are open** to the public and everyone is welcome — from children to adults — regardless of skill level. Most participants who join classes start at the beginning level. Costs for classes range from \$20-\$25 for a 60-75 minute class with possible discounts offered for multiple purchases.

**RESOBOX also hosts unique** events. From Japanese cooking classes to Kabuki performances, there are a wide variety of events going on every month at the gallery space, and RESOBOX encourages artists to collaborate and create new events as well. A recent successful event was a lecture about tea from China and Japan. Tea masters demonstrated each country's tea ceremony and then discussed the differences and similarities between the two. A butoh dance performance by Michiru Inoue was also a success.



**Anime art drawing classes are offered at RESOBOX. Anime is a popular cartoon art form in Japan.**

Photo courtesy of Takashi Ikezawa



**RESOBOX offers a variety of programs and courses, including a sushi-making class.**

Photo courtesy of Takashi Ikezawa

extreme or absurd environments. Traditionally, it is performed in white body makeup with slow, hyper-controlled motion, with or without an audience. There is no set style and it may be purely conceptual with no movement at all.

RESOBOX has a diverse audience and we hope to keep it that way for the purpose of disseminating the art. This is one of the biggest reasons why Queens was chosen as the location for RESOBOX, as it is the most diverse part of New York City and, quite, possibly the world.

I always repeat a mantra for RESOBOX, which is to be first and foremost part of and for the local community. As long as it is located in Long Island City, RESOBOX is determined to contribute to its local environment. Sometimes we invite local artists and talk to the neighborhood rather than just pushing Japanese culture for people to understand. We like to first invite people into our place and if they like us, then we can talk about Japan.

We're always looking for new ways to vitalize Long Island City with uniquely Japanese-inspired (and fun) cultural activities.

*Visit [resobox.com](http://resobox.com) for more information.*

Tell us  
what you

**THINK**

[hibumagazine.com/survey](http://hibumagazine.com/survey)