

February 19, 2024

# N/KOSMOS

Written and Directed by Hiroshi Koike

Music by Waclaw Zimpel

Artwork by Wataru Yamakami

Japanese and Polish Co-production of Hiroshi Koike Bridge Project and Grotowski Institute  
March 21 (Thu) - 24 (Sun) 2024 at Tokyo Metropolitan Theater



I was immersed. The director's intentions and sound of the drums captivated my attention, **I sincerely recommend this project to people all over the world**

– Katarzyna Nowak, Director of Manggha Museum in Krakow

On stage, **human being's distortions are starkly portrayed, shedding any futility** and showcasing razor-sharp clarity!

– Beata Górska, Writer and Critic

Words don't reign supreme; instead, **fantastic projections and scenography seamlessly move as a living organism**, crafting a genuine interdisciplinary masterpiece.

– Dagmara Chojnacka, Journalist

- The Grotowski Institute in Poland has co-produced works with **master directors worldwide, including Peter Brook**. However, **KOSMOS marks first international co-production where the Institute entrusted a director, Hiroshi Koike, to collaborate in creating new work**.
- KOSMOS premiered in February 2023 in Wroclaw, a European Capital of Culture. It was **awarded the 2023 Annual BEST Contemporary Theater Production** announced by the media.
- **Wataru Yamakami**, recipient of the **Taro Okamoto Award for Contemporary Art**, will showcase his latest creation, **a giant wooden map**, on stage at the Tokyo Metropolitan Theater.
- **Waclaw Zimpel**, a leading figure in the contemporary Polish music scene, created KOSMOS's music score, **will come to Tokyo. The entire musical experience will be presented live!**

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## ■Cross Cultural Art Project of Japan x Europe x Asia x South America

Hiroshi Koike has directed 86 theatrical productions in 18 countries and toured in 42 countries. He collaborates with performers, musicians and artists from different genres to create multidisciplinary performances. His productions emphasize performer's movements, sounds and music and technology and do not rely heavily on text and dialogue.

In 2022 he launched the *Hinotori (Firebird) Project*, a cross-cultural project connecting Japan, Poland, Malaysia, and Brazil. The project is a series of international co-productions (residency and performance in each country) where three independent works exploring Chaos, War and Rebirth will be created. The plan is to combine these works into a single production to be performed in Japan in 2025 in conjunction with the Expo 2025 Osaka. Koike's creative process was featured in an NHK World TV program broadcast in December 2023.



Making Cultural Connections on the Stage: Koike Hiroshi / Director

NHK World program viewing URL: <https://bit.ly/3GESMwi>

The Hinotori Project Phase 1 is an international co-production between the Grotowski Institute, a cultural and arts organization in Wroclaw, Poland and the Hiroshi Koike Bridge Project in Tokyo, Japan. Polish and Japanese actors, dancers, musicians, visual artists, and artists co-create an original multidisciplinary production for the stage directed by Hiroshi Koike. The production is a theatrical adaptation of *Kosmos*, the last novel by Witold Gombrowicz, master of contemporary Polish literature and winner of the International Prize for Literature in 1967 as well as a nomination for the Nobel Prize.

KOSMOS was created in 2023 January and February in residency at the Grotowski Institute.

It premiered in February in Wroclaw and was awarded the **2023 Annual BEST Contemporary Theater Production** announced by the media.

In March 2024, KOSMOS will be restaged as N/KOSMOS in Tokyo, Japan at the Tokyo Metropolitan Theater on the 120th anniversary year of W. Gombrowicz's birth. This performance has been selected as a participating program in the Contemporary Theatre Division of the 2024 Tokyo Metropolitan Performing Arts Festival.

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## **Why Gombrowicz's Kosmos?**

Poland has produced **world-class performing arts**, literature and film artists, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Witold Gombrowicz's work is timeless. The word cosmos means a complete, orderly, harmonious system. However, in Kosmos a world of chaos unfolds in the mind of a young man. Hiroshi Koike takes the chaos and obsession narrated in Kosmos to question the society we live in today. A society that is directed towards confusion in a flood of information that narrows our minds. People seek arrows and direction in various phenomena, objects, and coincidences, that lead to obsessive inquisitiveness toward them. Obsession leads to narrow tunnels, the luridness spreads, and violence ensues, creating a situation with no justice.

## **Why Poland and Japan?**

The idea to create a Polish and Japanese bilingual production was presented to Japanese director Hiroshi Koike and the Grotowski Institute in 2019, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and Japan. In 2022 the project was launched in Wroclaw. Auditions were organized by the Grotowski Institute. More than 100 people applied for the audition from around Poland and abroad and 5 finalists were selected. Five performers from Japan were selected by Koike.

The performers were selected specifically on the criteria that they have an open mind and are willing to push the boundaries of what they already know as performers. The language used for dialogue is the native language of each performer. In this performance the performers will speak in Polish, Armenian, and Japanese. The music is composed, created, and performed by Wacław Zimpel, an alto clarinetist who is a leading figure in Poland's contemporary jazz scene and a force in the electronic music scene.



### **Wacław Zimpel (Composer, Musician)**

Clarinetist, composer and music producer, Zimpel made a name for himself playing free jazz with the international leaders of the scene. His versatility and compositional creativity quickly led Zimpel to explore other styles and musical traditions like: minimalism, Indian classical music or Moroccan gnawa.

His solo album "Lines", released in 2016, proved to be a landmark in his career due to his use of analogue electronic instruments, which became his new fascination. Unsurprisingly, Zimpel has swapped jazz clubs for the world's most important electronic music festivals and collaborations with artists such as James Holden, Shackleton and Forest Swords.

<https://wacławzimpel.pl/>

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**How do we adapt Kosmos, a novel so rich in text, for the theater?**

Kosmos utilizes various forms of expression found in traditional **Japanese Noh Theater and contemporary forms of choreography and improvisational dance**. The music is a combination of modern jazz, electronic beats, and utilization of various instruments from Asia and Europe. This performance **features live music performed by Wacław Zimpel (Poland) and Noh Theater Actor and Musician Jinya Imai (Japan)**.



**Award winning contemporary artist Wataru Yamakami’s** largescale new work transforms the space into a giant wooden map-like world, with images representing world chaos, ghosts and spirits. Six wooden pillars are moved around by the performers to create various shapes and formations. After the performance, the set design will be exhibited at **Wataru Yamakami's solo exhibition at EARTH+GALLERY in Koto-ku, Tokyo from April 4 (Thu) to 12 (Sun)**.



**Wataru Yamakami (Scenic Design)**

Yamakami began painting graffiti on the streets of Tokyo from the age of 16. At the age of 18, he embarked on a hitchhiking trip and traveled around Japan, Thailand, India and South American countries for about four years while creating art works. For Yamakami, the act of painting and creation is an attempt to connect this world full of questions with Yamakami himself. He won Special Award, The 12th Taro Okamoto Award for Contemporary Art in 2009 and Runner-up Prize and Audience Award, Tokyo Midtown Award in 2013.

<https://wataruyamakami.com/>

**Synopsis of Kosmos**

Witold, a young man escapes the city of Warsaw to find solace in the country. On his way he meets Fuks, another bothered young man. They set off together for a family-run pension in the mountains. On the way they discover a dead sparrow hanging from a string. Is it a meaningless coincidence or the beginning of a string of bizarre events? The young susceptible mind searches for patterns and meaning. His quest grows into obsession with the lips of the maid and innkeeper’s daughter. Then spirals into confusion and explodes into chaos.

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**N/KOSMOS Presented by Hiroshi Koike Bridge Project and The Grotowski Institute**

March 21 - March 24, 2024

March 21 (THU) 19:00

March 22 (FRI) 19:00★

March 23 (SAT) 13:30 & 18:30★

March 24 (SUN) 14:00

(Doors open 30 minutes before the show)

Post-show Talk ★

3/22 (Fri):

Hiroshi Koike (Director) and Masahiko Nishi  
(Scholar of Comparative Literature)

3/23 (Sat) 18:30:

Hiroshi Koike (Director) and Chikako  
Yamashiro (Filmmaker, Artist)

Tokyo Metropolitan Theater, Theater East  
(1-8-1 Nishi-Ikebukuro, Toshima City, Tokyo  
171-0021)

**Admission fee**

**Advance tickets:** General 5,500 yen

U25 3,300 yen / High school student and under  
2,800 yen

**Same-day ticket:** General 6,000 yen

U25 3,800 yen/ High school student and under  
3,300 yen

\*You may be asked to show proof of age on the day  
of the event.

\*Children under 3 years old are not allowed to enter.

**Ticket Order**

Ticket inquiries: [hkbpoyoyaku@gmail.com](mailto:hkbpoyoyaku@gmail.com)

Phone **03-3385-2066**

Peatix

<https://n-kosmos.peatix.com>

Ticket Pia (P code 522-824)

<https://bit.ly/pia-n-kosmos>

Tokyo Metropolitan Theater Box Office

<https://tmt.pia.jp/>

Phone 0570-010-296

<Hours> 10:00-19:00 (except holidays)

Written and Directed by Hiroshi Koike

Choreography by Hiroshi Koike

Music by Waclaw Zimpel

Cast: Makoto Matsushima, Jinya Imai,  
Ayako Araki, Tara Nakashima,  
Yosuke Nomura, Sylwia H. Lewandowska,  
Marek Gluziński, Kaśka Dudek,  
Davit Baroyan, Alicja Czerniewicz

Art: Wataru Yamakami, Hiroshi Koike

Video: Adrian Jackowski, Tomoya Kishimoto

Lighting: Noriyuki Mori, Jarosław Fret,  
Daniel Kuźma

Sound: Shuichi Fukazawa

Costume Design: Edyta Krysińska

Puppets and props: Małgorzata Braszka,  
Seiichiro Mori

Translation: Przemysław Sztafiej

Coordinator: Jarosław Siejkowski

Production: Hiromi Hosaka, Marie Kuroda,  
Rika Yanagisawa, Megumi Nakatani

Organizer: SAI Inc.

Co-organizer: Grotowski Institute (Poland)

Sponsors: Shusaku Minoda,  
Polish Institute in Tokyo

EU-Japan Fest Japan Committee  
Support: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan,  
Toshima City

Cooperation: Haseman Co., Ltd  
Kuroyama Syacyu, Inc., EARTH+GALLERY,  
Wakabacho Wharf, Silk Road Nohgaku Kai,  
PAPADO, Inc., TMO (Sanctuary),  
Bridges Foundation, The Saison Foundation,  
Steep Slope Studio

Sponsored by the Tokyo Performing Arts  
Festival: Tokyo Metropolitan Government/Tokyo  
Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture  
Adam Mickiewicz Institute, Ministry of Culture and  
National Heritage Republic of Poland,  
Co-financed by the Minister of Culture and  
National Heritage of the Republic of Poland



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Press and Media Opportunities:

Open Rehearsals from March 4 – 6 and March 11 - 16

Press Seats

Interviews with Director, Musician, Artists and Performers

Please contact Marie Kuroda (03-3385-2066 / [sai@kikh.com](mailto:sai@kikh.com) )



### **Hiroshi Koike**

**Director, Playwright, Choreographer, Film director**

Founded Pappa TARAHUMARA in 1982.

In 2012, he launched the Hiroshi Koike Bridge Project (HKBP). He has directed 85 productions in 18 countries. His productions have toured in 42 countries. His works have been invited to the Volksbuhne, Music Theater in Amsterdam, the Venice Biennale and Next Wave Festival in Brooklyn Academy of Music.

He served as the Artistic Director at Tsukuba Cultural Foundation, Chairman of Asian Performing Arts Forum, Committee Member of Japan Foundation (2005 - 2011). He is the principal and founder of Performing Arts Institute (P.A.I.), an educational institution for developing artists. He is the author of two books, a collection of essays on the intersection of art and society entitled Listen to the Voice of the Body and his theory of direction entitled Performing Arts Theory - Fushi Kaden for the 21st Century. His first anthology of plays entitled Journey to Night and the End of the World was published in 2018.

### **Hiroshi Koike Bridge Project / SAI Inc.**

Established in June, 2012 by theater director Hiroshi Koike.

Koike was the founder and director of Japan's leading performing arts company Pappa TARAHUMARA (Founded in 1982, Dissolved in 2012). Hiroshi Koike Bridge Project focuses on the word "Creation". Its mission is to build a bridge through three activities: Creation, Education and Communication. It produces stages that connect people to people, region and region, culture and society, past to present and then to the future, to overcome the current raging waves and build a new era.



### **Grotowski Institute**

The Grotowski Institute in Wrocław is a municipal arts institution committed to documenting and disseminating knowledge about Jerzy Grotowski and his Laboratory Theatre as well as hosting events corresponding to the ideas laid down by Grotowski's creative practice. The primary venue of the Grotowski Institute is the historical home of the Laboratory Theatre in Przejście Żelaznicze in Wrocław's Market Square (Rynek).