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## Japan Screen Topics

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### SAPPORO SNOW FESTIVAL

80feet 2min. 13sec.

1. (ROAD) This winter, areas of northern Japan have suffered their worst falls of snow for 18 years, with record depths of 3 or 4 metres in mountain regions. Road transport was often slowed to a minimum, and rail and air services were badly disrupted on many occasions.

Worst to suffer though were local residents. Remote areas had electricity and supplies cut off, and some homes were completely buried in snow. It was a continuing battle against the elements, as snow just kept falling day after day.

2. (SKI SLOPE) But at least the snow had its good points, for some people. As well as ski enthusiasts who enjoyed a bumper season, the snow was put to good use in the northern city of Sapporo, where a spectacular snow festival is held every year.

3. (PREPARATION) In the weeks leading up to the festival, workers were seen busily constructing statues from massive blocks of snow. In all, some 4,000 truckloads of snow were brought to the festival site in Sapporo's Odori Park, a broad promenade in the city centre.

4. (CROWDS) On February 4th the festival was at last opened. A total of 190 exhibits, including snow temples, giants, heroes from fairy tales, and characters from popular cartoons, entertained nearly two million visitors from Japan and abroad. The highest exhibit was a startling 15 metres high.

5. (SLIDE) But the Snow Festival isn't only for looking at. There are also things to do. This icy slide is always a favourite with the children, who line up again and again for another head-spinning run.

6. (NIGHT) At night, illuminations turn the festival into a dreamy world of fantasy. The whole scene comes alive in spectacular colour which goes on for 5 consecutive nights until the end of the festival.

### EMPTY CAN ART

83feet 2min. 18sec.

1. (ROAD) Empty cans are getting to be something of a nuisance in Japan these days. What's to be done with them?? This man, Nandaimon Higashioji of Yokohama, thinks he has found the answer.

Early in the morning he can be seen prowling through deserted streets, in search of objects which other people have flung away without a care in the world. But for Mr. Higashioji these objects still have life in them. Some modern artists have painted pictures of tin cans; this man makes pictures with tin cans.

2. (OPENING CAN, CLOSE-UP) He processes the cans in three simple stages. First, he opens up the ends. Next, he splits the sides open with household pincers; and finally he folds the ends over so that the straightened squares can be linked together to make pictures, abstract murals, or sculptures. His idea apparently came from the example of Japanese origami, where simple squares of coloured paper are folded to make tiny statuettes or pictures. Mr. Higashioji, who at various times has worked as a stage technician and a carpenter, is well qualified in applying constructive skills. And, believe it or not, his curious works of art have even found buyers as far away as Brazil.



3. (PORTRAIT) And here in his gallery he displays his range of artistic achievement. Portraits and relief-work sculptures reflect styles of twentieth-century pop art as well as much older ones - always as humorous and carefree as the man who made them. This horseman with spear was made from three oil cans; the frailty of a rose, too, has been captured in such a harsh medium.

In the gallery, visitors can react as they like at the brashness of modern art; but one thing is certain - they can thank this man for helping to keep their streets clean.

### PORTOPIA '81

72feet 2min. 0sec.

1. (AERIAL VIEW) After 15 years of construction work, at last the man-made Port Island in Kobe is almost complete. The island, which covers an area of more than 400 hectares, is billed as the marine city of the future.

2. (TRAIN) Already carrying passengers from the centre of Kobe city to the island six kilometres away, is the computerised Portliner transport system. The Portliner is operated by remote control through a central computer. This means that it needs no driver or conductor.

3. (FLAGS) The opening of the island will be commemorated by a massive international exposition called Portopia '81. Last minute work is now going on in preparation for exhibitions and shows which will run for 6 months from March to September. An estimated 13 million visitors from all over the world will be able to see for themselves the many facilities which the island offers - including an international conference hall, a hospital, parks, schools and housing complexes as well as port facilities. The themes of the exposition will stress the important role that the oceans will play in the world of the 21st century. Japan, as a nation which relies heavily on its ports for foreign trade, should have a message for us all to learn from.

4. (WOMEN INSIDE) Training programmes are already under way for 'companions' who will guide visitors around the massive exposition complex. Great efforts are being devoted to promote international interest in the island. For it is hoped that the island, as a city of the future, will continue to be centre of commercial attraction long after the exposition ends in September.

HIDEO KANABAYASHI, MASTER DOLL-MAKER

134feet 3min. 43sec.

1. (DOLL) Japanese dolls. Of course, not just ordinary dolls. These delicate figurines faithfully reproduce styles and costumes which flourished as far back as a thousand years ago.

The dolls were first made in Kyoto in the 18th century. Now, in Asakusa, an old quarter of Tokyo, Hideo Kanabayashi continues the tradition using methods which are quite distinctive.

2. (BODY) Firstly, the body of the doll, which was originally wooden, is now made of a kind of clay. The style and shape of the body is of vital importance, and the craftsman must keep the desired pattern in mind while sculpting lines for the costume.

3. (CAST) The shape of the body is refined in a wooden cast with a standard aluminium mould. When the clay has dried, the body can be taken out and is ready for further work.

4. (PAINT) The next step is to paint the body with a white chalky liquid. The head, too, which is made elsewhere, is coated with this chalk paint, leaving the surface with a smooth matt finish.



5. (KNIVES) Now we arrive at the most crucial stage: the costume. The method of fixing the costume to the body is the doll's most distinctive feature. With a strong knife, lines are scored over the surface of the body. Eventually, the cloth of the costume will be wedged into these lines and secured there.

6. (CLOTH) The costume is made up of various layers of colourful cloth. The craftsman has any number of combinations to choose from, but he must be careful to reproduce exactly styles which were actually in use in former times.

7. (WEDGING CLOTH) The edges of the cloth are wedged firmly into the score-lines on the body, which have been filled with a sort of glue. One doll can be clothed in as many as ten layers of material - just as court ladies of many centuries ago would have been. Needless to say, the craftsman must spend hours examining records of these ancient fashions before attempting to recreate them in miniature.

8. (HEAD) Now our doll finds a head. Although the heads may all look the same, each takes on a subtly distinct expression when the features are painted in with inks made of vegetable dyes. The eyes, painted in one breathless stroke, must be fine at the edges but full at the centre; the mouth, small but expressive. Such features were thought at one time to be the epitome of true beauty. The face must fit the tradition exactly, and a tremendous amount of practice is needed before it can be painted to perfection. And so, after attaching hair made of fine silk strands, the craftsman has brought to life a true beauty from olden times.

9. (DOLLS) The same technique is used to make a variety of dolls, including figures from Japanese drama and popular folk dances. Far from being mere toys, these dolls can be treasured as precious objects, especially this group which traditionally decorates a Japanese home for the Girls' Doll Festival on March the 3rd.