

# Anime Tourist

Silly Name, Serious Coverage



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December 6, 2005

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### Reviews: Tokyo International Anime Fair 2004

Posted on Tuesday, April 13 @ 03:20:56 2004 by [Staff](#)

[bckat](#) writes "Held on March 25-28 at Tokyo Big Sight was the 3rd annual Tokyo International Anime Fair (TAF). This is a major event for the promotion of anime, toys, and character goods as well as the tools to create these items. In association with TAF, there were TAF-related events in Sugunami Ward, Musashino City, Nerima Ward, and Mitaka City. For those of you who are interested, here is a brief review of TAF and one of the related shows.

The related event that I was able to attend was the 3rd annual Nerima Anime Festival, located in Ohizumi and held on March 5-7. One of the event's highlights was a late night showing of anime classics at the nine-theater T-Joy entertainment complex, across the street from Toei Animation. In one of the theaters, there was a two-hour stage production featuring Toei voiceover talent which had the audience doing para-para and a crossword puzzle competition. Over the weekend, Toei Animation opened up its facility to the public (normally only the gallery is accessible). As part of the city's festivities, there one of five stamp impressions could be secured for a city-wide stamp rally to win small festival prizes.

At TAF, the first two days were industry days while the last two were open to the public. What I saw occupied two humongous exhibition halls of Tokyo Big Sight, reminding me somewhat of the exhibit floor at Comic-Con International, the U.S.'s largest comics and pop culture convention. Not surprising given the fair's focus on "encouraging firms from diverse areas to exhibit this year, including animation production companies, television and movie companies, publishers (comic book and other), toy makers... The Fair will incorporate the theme of the "possibilities of animation in an era of diversified media mix." " About 150 companies were represented in the trade fair, with the biggest overseas contingent from South Korea.

It was while I was checking out the "diversified media mix" tools that I found the CELSYS, Inc. booth. There I learned more about their RETAS! Pro software (had seen it used at AIC and Toei's studios) and RETAS! Lite (for the general public), Comic Studio software for creating paper comics, and Clay Town frame-capture animation software (saw a demonstration at the "NIPPON Style" exhibit in the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography). With their Comic Surfing software you can view comics using your PC, mobile phone, or Gameboy Advance SP. Unfortunately, only RETAS! Pro is available in English. I really enjoyed my visit with CELSYS, Inc.



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Volume 2 continues the adventures of Piro and Largo as they make new friends and blow things up while living in Japan.

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Besides the trade fair, TAF has an animation competition for nominated entries drawn from titles shown or distributed the previous year in Japan and open entries which were emerging domestic and overseas talent. Animation of the Year was "Mobile Suit Gundam Seed" from the nominated entries, and the Grand Prize winner from the open entries was Korean entry "Africa a.F.r.I.c.A." The Overseas Feature Film award went to Disney's "Lilo & Stitch." In the open entries division, submissions jumped from 100 for the 2003 competition to 182 this year, 66 entries coming from outside Japan. Open entry award winners were screened at the fair.



Significant features at TAF were a special multi-media exhibition of mostly Japanese animation classics and Creator's World. The exhibition consisted of a video monitor, poster(s), merchandise display case, and history for each title. International titles included "The Simpsons," "Tom and Jerry," "The Powerpuff Girls," "Pingu," Disney, and "Wallace & Gromit." Adding to the festive feel were giant character balloons of Naruto, Pokemon, Conan the Detective, and Totoro hung from the ceiling.

Creator's World supports "young experienced creators who are leading in the animation industry, recipients of awards from the previous fair, and talented young creators who have won awards at competitions both domestically and abroad." Each of the 13 exhibitors had a booth with a video monitor, visual displays, and printed profile sheets in Japanese and English. An adjacent theater space also put their animations on a giant screen.

Supportive spaces such as Creator's World are important to the development of the Japanese animation industry, especially as it increasingly faces awesome competition in quality, creativity, character development, and storytelling from its neighbor South Korea. This is occurring not just in animation but in the comics industry as well.

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- [Tokyo International Anime Fair](#) - Home for the fair, in English.
- [RETAS Pro](#) - Learn more about RETAS at CELSYS's homepage.

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