

Tokyo International Anime Fair 2006

by [Kat Avila](#)

To reach Tokyo Big Sight where the fifth annual **Tokyo International Anime Fair (TIAF)** is taking place, I get off at Shimbashi Station on the JR Yamanote Line to transfer to the Yurikamome monorail (via the Karasumori exit) to Kokusai-Tenjijo Seimon Station. **TIAF** runs from March 23-26, 2006, but is open to the public only during the weekend. The first two days are business days, so I am there on a Saturday and will return on Sunday just before closing.

The main **TIAF** floor in East Exhibition Halls 1, 2, and 3 reminds me of the exhibit hall at **Comic-Con International** in San Diego, but without Artists' Alley and the stores. **TIAF** is Japan's largest animation trade show and "the world's largest exhibition of anime works" (source: Chairman Shintaro Ishihara [Governor of Tokyo], official guidebook). It is sponsored by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government working with local animation businesses and related organizations. In 2006, there is a 30 percent increase of exhibitors from 197 to 256, with a 74 percent increase of companies from abroad, from 42 to 73 (source: **TIAF** press release).

Last year, about 84,000 people attended **TIAF**. Compare this with the 94,000 that attended **Comic-Con International 2004** (source: **CCI** 2005 fact sheet). This year's **TIAF** attendance is predicted to reach 100,000, which **Comic-Con 2005** — North America's largest popular culture and comics convention — almost cleared (source: **CCI 2006** Update, No. 1).

TIAF is not as fan-oriented as other conventions I've been to (no photography or cosplay allowed). However, events are scheduled on two large stages, including a charity auction, on

the general admission days. A supplemental Anime Bazaar was added this year to accommodate fans who want to purchase merchandise. The primary focus of **TIAF** is to support up-and-coming creators and the domestic anime industry.

TIAF's 2006 theme is "Anime and Sound," covering voice acting, theme songs, background music, and sound effects. The Tokyo Ani-Song Festival, sponsored by **Columbia Music Entertainment**, features live performances of popular anime songs. A prominent **TIAF** exhibit is the interactive Anime Sound Experience Museum with listening stations; in one area, fans can download any one of 100 anime song ringing-melodies to their mobile phones. Voice actors' talk shows take place on stage and at booths.

At the invitation-only Tokyo Anime Award ceremony, 16 prizes are awarded. Nominations are from TV and movie animation works on screen or in stores from December 2004 to November 2005. "Animation of the Year" is awarded to the movie ***Fullmetal Alchemist: The Conqueror of Shambala*** (source: **Anime News Network**, citing **Gunota Headlines**), directed by Seiji Mizushima (whom I met when he was a guest of honor at **Pacific Media Expo** 2005 in Long Beach, California).

The Incredibles wins the award for "Overseas Feature Film" (source: **ANN**).

A number of anniversaries are being celebrated: 60th anniversary of Osamu Tezuka's start as a cartoonist, **Toei Animation's** 50th anniversary, 10th anniversary of TV and movie animation for Gosho Aoyama's manga ***Case Closed: Detective Conan***.

The Award of Merit exhibit spotlights a number of contributors to the growth of the anime industry. They are the KAMITAKADA Junior Chorus (a children's chorus linked with 40 anime theme songs); Seiichiro Uno, Morihisa



**Astro Boy and creator
Osamu Tezuka**
Photo by Kat Avila

Yamamoto, and Hisashi Inoue (associated with the popular 1960s NHK puppet show *Hyokkori Hyotanjima*); Mari Shimizu (woman who was the original voice of Tetsuwan Atom, or Astro Boy); Taiji Yabushita (Japan's first color animation film, the award-winning *Hakujuaden*); and five other contributors.

Yet, it is among the booths and in the adjacent screening theater making up Creator's World that I find the heart of **TIAF**. All those wonderfully different moods, textures, designs, and color combos of visual thinking. These "Leading Creators of the Next Generation" may not all end up in animation, but make substantial contributions in other fields such as advertising and commercial product design.

I visit the **Anti-Counterfeiting Association (ACA)** booth. **ACA** was established in 1986 and represents a number of different industries, such as movies, music, and consumer goods. They try to educate the public to not buy counterfeit goods. The biggest problem is mainland China, says the booth representative, but not Taiwan or Hong Kong because those countries have local laws against piracy.

The **Namco** booth is impressive with its video game tunnel, but they only serve a domestic market at the moment with their software. Generally, video games is not what I associate with **Namco** but their food theme parks. I will eat later at their Yokohama Curry Museum with over 10 curry restaurants in one location. In the past, I sampled ice cream from different parts of Japan in a corner of **Namco** NamjaTown in Ikebukuro.

The **Studio Ghibli** booth features a huge dragon head to advertise the anime *Tales from Earthsea* adapted from Ursula K. Le Guin's book series. The anime will come out at the end of July in Japan, about six months later in the U.S.A. The director is Gorou Miyasaki, Hayao Miyasaki's son.

Among the foreign exhibitors is the government-sponsored **Korea**

Culture & Content Agency (KOCCA), a booth I've visited at **Comic-Con** the past two years. At their **TIAF** booth, I pick up a flyer from the animation studio **Animal** regarding **Medical Island**. "The very first animation series to make its debut on a mobile medium was about a bunch of creatively designed hospital characters doing crazy biological experiments on unwitting patients," explains the flyer.



**Etona from the RPG
Disgaea**
Photo by Kat Avila

Moving on to a cluster of 12 companies from Taiwan, I am helped by Yuan Teng Hsu of the **Taipei Hsien Computer Association**.

I am surprised to see a **TOKYOPOP** booth. I am told by a booth representative that **TOKYOPOP** has an office in Japan, and she gifts me with a cine-manga of **Madagascar** in Japanese. They have a small cine-manga display of other highly recognizable properties, like **Star Wars**, as well as a display of some English-language manga.

Glenn Kardy of **Japanime** updates me about a how-to-draw-manga book by a manga artist assistant they will be releasing soon. Bookstore shelf space for these how-to books is pretty competitive, and I wonder aloud as a part-time bookseller how this title will stand out.

Masumi Homma O'Donnell of **Be Beautiful** makes time in her busy schedule listening to sales pitches to sit and chat with me. We discuss **Be Beautiful's** dubbed version of the anime based on Kazuma Kodaka's yaoi manga **Kizuna** and what reviewers including myself think of the dub. Masumi-san will go cherry blossom viewing after **TIAF** is over.

There were two tours from the U.S. coming to **TIAF**, so I walk around searching for people from those tours to talk to. I never did run into anyone, but I do meet a number of other foreigners. Looking at the outfit of one of two New Yorkers, I ask the redhead if she is doing cosplay (which is prohibited at

TIAF). She says no, that she is doing Lolita, and points to some similarly dressed Japanese girls. She came over with her friend, who is visiting her grandparents. This is their first time at **TIAF**, and they are attending **Anime Expo** in Anaheim, California, this summer.



The main floor at TIAF 2006
Photo by Kat Avila

I talk to a trio; two of them are college exchange students who will be in Japan for the year. Then there are a couple of German tourists who have been in Japan since January. A salt and pepper set of Americans, one from Ohio and the other from Washington, D.C., have been teaching English in Japan for two years, and we take a picture together. Shaddow is stationed at Zama, going to Korea soon, but he's also a recording artist with his own business.

Tokyo International Anime Fair 2006 ended too quickly for me, since I didn't spend as much time there as I wanted to or watch as much anime. (Tokyo has so many distractions!) If luck is with me, I'll get another opportunity to visit in the future.

LINKS TO VISIT

[Tokyo International Anime Fair](#) — Official web site



[Join the discussion at the Tartsville Message Boards](#)

[Send us your thoughts!](#)

[Home](#) | [Features](#) | [Columns](#) | [Culture Vultures](#) | [Report Card](#)
[Tart Store](#) | [Indicia](#) | [Contact](#) | [Archives](#)

© [Sequential Tart](#), 1998 - 2005