



Press Release

Canon Europe sponsors leading Japanese photographer to help protect global cultural heritage

- *Canon Europe lends support to UNESCO-endorsed photography project to protect 'intangible' cultural and oral heritage*

LONDON, March, 2008 – Canon Europe, world-leader in imaging solutions, has strengthened its arts and culture sponsorship portfolio by supporting a pioneering photography project from Japanese photographer, Yoshi Shimizu, to capture and protect some of the world's most colourful cultural practices.

Using photographic equipment supplied by Canon, Shimizu will travel to some of the world's most remote locations to observe and record gradually fading elements of cultural heritage, starting with the Indonesian *Wayang* shadow puppet theatre, an ancient form of story-telling renowned for its elaborate hand-carved puppets and complex musical styles.

Intangible cultural heritage, which includes historic practices which are not visible such as oral traditions, is the subject of a recent UNESCO convention which officially recognises and protects 90 'Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity'. The undertaking by Yoshi Shimizu to photograph all 90 masterpieces has been officially sanctioned by UNESCO to help raise awareness of the value of intangible heritage and the need to safeguard its future.

Commenting on the project, Yoshi Shimizu said: "It has been my life's passion to travel the world to document the traditional knowledge of indigenous cultures. Studying and understanding cultures not only strengthens our communication skills but it also widens our personal visions of humanity. With support from Canon and the generous donations provided by my private sponsors, I hope to be able to test the boundaries of artistic expression by visually capturing the intangible and bringing it to life so that we can help protect our cultural heritage for generations to come."



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He continued: “I have been using Canon cameras for several years and recently decided to experiment with digital EOS equipment because of its reputation for combining lightweight design and precision technology – crucial factors that will enable me to produce stunning shots on the first take. Despite having little experience with the digital format, I have complete trust in the creative power of Canon’s technology to help me to visually represent the vibrancy and colour of some of the world’s most fascinating traditions”.

James Leipnik, Chief of Communication and Corporate Relations at Canon Europe said: “We are honoured to be participating in such a worthwhile project. As an established global company, we are a strong supporter of cultural diversity and the vital role it plays in bringing people together and fostering exchange and mutual understanding. Our participation in this project is a tangible reflection of our corporate philosophy of Kyosei – which means living and working together for the common good. Canon is committed to protecting, preserving and celebrating culture, and we strongly support the use of our products to harness the power of the image for such a worthwhile cause.”

Mr Masamichi Kamei of Tokyo, Japan a private sponsor of the Wayang Puppet theatre project commented: “The concept of cultural heritage is well known and widely supported by the public in Japan. However, given the intangible nature of cultural heritage, its preservation and survival depends on raising public awareness. I hope that my contribution to this important image-based project enables people elsewhere in the world to achieve a better understanding of cultural heritage in all its varied forms.”

The images from the first phase of the project will be exhibited at international conferences and exhibitions in partnership with UNESCO throughout 2008, including an exhibition at the UN headquarters in Geneva from 1st – 24th April 2008 and documented in a number of photo essays and academic journals.

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Notes to Editors

About Yoshi Shimizu

Yoshi Shimizu is a Japanese photographer based in France who documents humanitarian aid activities, commercial and editorial projects throughout the world.

Over the course of his career which spans almost two decades, he has undertaken a number of assignments for a wide range of organisations including the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, United Nations Children's Fund, International Red Cross, World Wide Fund for Nature International, the World Health Organisation and The Global Fund.

Over the last 10 years, a key focus for Yoshi's photographs has been on human suffering. Whilst acknowledging and accepting that suffering constitutes the stern reality of humanity, it has been his long-time desire to apply photography to convey the more positive, elements of humanity. According to Yoshi, in the absence of a witness, fact does not exist and his overarching aim is to capture rarely seen human dramas and livelihoods in order to bring them to life and safeguard their future.

Further information about Yoshi Shimizu is available at: <http://www.yoshi-shimizu.com>

About Canon Europe

Canon Europe is a subsidiary of Canon Inc. of Japan, a world-leading innovator and provider of imaging and information technology solutions for individuals and businesses.

The main business focus for Canon Europe is in two clearly defined markets: Business Solutions (developing IT products, solutions and services for the office and professional print environments) and Consumer Imaging (photo, video, Bubble Jet printers, scanners, fax machines and multifunction devices).

Canon Europe also provides Industrial Products including broadcast lenses, semiconductor and medical equipment.

Canon Europe employs in the region of 11,000 people across Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA).

Further information about Canon Europe is available at: www.canon-europe.com

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