

## **Artists in residence; six art students from Japan and Australia present artworks at the Australia House**

(Full translation from *the Tokamachi Shimbun*, 30 August 2010)

The Japan-Australia Art Musings (JAAM) Project Exhibition is being held on 23-31 August at the Australia House in Urada, Tokamachi.

The Australia House is an art project which started as part of the fourth Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennial. An abandoned rustic farmhouse was transformed into this art installation in 2009 with support from the Australian government. At the Echigo-Tsumari Art Festival this year, the Australia House provided opportunities for cultural exchanges between six art students, three from the University of Newcastle, and three from Tama Art University, through the JAAM Project. These students have been staying at the Australia House since 9 August to create their artworks, and the exhibition is an opportunity for them to present the results of their hard work.

The exchange began between the two universities when Professor Anne Graham from the University of Newcastle and Professor Hiroji Noda from Tama Art University met for the first time at the opening party of the Australia House.

Twelve works of contemporary art are currently exhibited at the Australia House, including an animation film featuring the Australia House in four seasons, and artworks made of materials from the local region, such as scrap wood, ropes, clay, bamboo and soil.

Saeko Shimojo, a fourth-year student in the Department of Oil Painting at Tama Art University, and one of the artists who participated in the project, told *the Tokamachi Shimbun* with a smile: "The art students from both countries were introduced to each other for the first time at the Australia House, and we could deepen our friendship by sharing the same environment to create our artworks. Mr Iizuka gave us construction materials and other people from the Urada community also supported us throughout the project. Our artworks are unique products of our deep exchanges with the local community, and the project gave me inspiration for my next work. I live in an urban area, and until I came to Urada, I had never worked in an environment abundant in nature where time flows so slowly. The Australian students were impressed by the abundant natural beauty that they do not have back at home. The exhibition is the least we can do to show our gratitude to the people of Urada for taking such good care of us, and we would be very happy if many visitors came to see our artworks using local materials".