

Natsubasho Memories

'Natsubasho Memories' captures the vivid portrayal of the uncontrollable happiness that envelops the Japanese summer festival. This artwork is painted with acrylics, a touch of glitter in the sky and water, and detailed strokes with different coloured pens to add intricate details. In 'Natsubasho Memories' two elegant girls dressed in kimonos take up the challenge of the traditional Japanese game, Goldfish Scooping. Above them, the pitch-black sky was set ablaze with colourful fireworks and a bustling crowd flooded with people and children wandering around the Japanese festival.

In the year 2020, I visited Japan with my family. Since then, I fell in love with its rich culture and traditions. The experiences from loitering through its bustling streets with tall buildings to quieter parts of town, admiring its detailed and beautiful traditional Japanese temples, I saw people dressed in beautifully patterned kimonos. 'Natsubasho Memories' is a painted representation of my deep appreciation for the beauty which I saw in Japan.

This artwork is called 'Natsubasho Memories' because it would translate to "Summer Festival Memories" in English. The title captures the essence of the art piece, emphasising the summer festival atmosphere and the nostalgic, memorable moments depicted in the scene.

Throughout this artwork I used bright colours to represent happiness, whilst using dark colours like black and grey for the floor and sky to allow the brightly painted areas to stand out. The audience can see that in the foreground there are two girls standing in beautifully patterned kimonos, one in pink and one in orange. The girl wearing the orange kimono is holding the equipment to play the traditional Japanese game. This is where a person attempts to scoop a goldfish from the tank using a paper scooper. The reason why they are in kimonos is because after seeing the exquisitely crafted kinomons in Japan, I wanted to capture not only their delight as they played the goldfish scooping game, but also the beauty of the kimonos that reflect Japan's rich cultural heritage.

Furthermore, throughout the painting I added as many different types of Japanese symbolism as possible. Starting with the most obvious, the kimonos and the traditional Japanese game. Other types of symbolism I added to the painting was the 3 traditional masks at the side, a kitsune mask, hagezuka mask and a demon mask. In the background of the painting where the rest of the festival shops are, you can see two cats running on the path. These two cats are based on the same colours and spots of a Japanese maneki neko also known to be a lucky cat. Additionally in the background the purple stand is selling strawberries on a stick covered in sugar syrup called tanghulu although it originates from China it was quite popular in Japan as I saw it in some places we visited. It would make sense as Japanese people have one of the highest consumption ratios of strawberries all over the globe.

This artwork is my attempt to share with you the happiness I felt during my time in Japan. Through 'Natsubasho Memories,' I hope to convey the warmth, tradition, and richness of Japanese culture that I have always generously admired.