



花王国際こども環境絵画コンテスト

KAO International Environment Painting Contest for Children



9th Contest
(2018):
Winning Works

The Kao Group has held this contest annually since 2010, with the aim of encouraging children around the world to think seriously about conservation of the environment around them and of the earth, as well as about the earth's future, and express their thoughts in paintings, which will also hopefully encourage people around the world to take action in their daily life to preserve the environment.

For this ninth contest, we received 12,563 entries from 44 countries and areas. We will introduce 32 entries from the winning works which have been selected under strict criteria. It would be wonderful if you could feel the children's messages through their paintings.

General remarks by the judges



Mr. Fumikazu Masuda

Chair of judges
Ecodesign Consultant
Former Professor,
Tokyo Zokei University

Every year, the technical level of the entries is improving so much that it is getting harder to pick one over another. Therefore, the assessment tends to focus on the message children want to convey. For the last year or two, there seems to be some polarizing of entries; either they focus on some environmental issues, wanting to solve them, or they illustrate the ideal lifestyle they have in mind. It is a positive sign that we are seeing a decrease in the simple environmental slogans that frequently appeared in the early years of this contest, but this may also be reflecting confusion or anxiety that children are feeling about the state of our world. Adults should see this change in mood as a warning. And as adults, we have a responsibility to respond to the questions and expectations children express in their paintings.



Ms. Sumiko Okubo

Artist

This year I felt a strong sense of concern about the frequent natural disasters around the world in the messages the children expressed via their paintings. The entries were polarized. Some were saying, "Let's work hard against natural disasters," while the rest said, "I want to live peacefully in beautiful natural surroundings." Over the years I have begun to feel children's messages more acutely, as well as their strong awareness toward environmental problems and natural disasters around the world. This year I endorsed entries that presented a slightly different perspective about environmental issues and natural disasters compared to others, and those expressing their feelings spontaneously.



Mr. Kei Matsushita

Professor, Tokyo University
of the Arts

Year after year, we have been receiving more entries that are explanatory or rational. Though this may be a good thing on one hand, maybe the paintings are reflecting the mood of our times where environmental and ecological issues are becoming so complex and hard to summarize in any simple form. What I would like from you kids is not to speak in someone else's language, an adult's language with a façade, but to express through your artwork your own view of what happiness means and what you want to protect. Having been a judge many times, I find myself turning into a consciousness that resonates with such straight-forward messages from children.



Ms. Yoko Oyamada

Artist, Illustrator

We witnessed so many natural disasters this year. I served as a judge for the contest wondering how such a year would inspire children's artworks. Children from disaster-hit countries showed their tender feelings toward their countries. Meanwhile, children living happily without any constraints expressed the happiness they were feeling. I saw both qualities this year. Overall, the level of the entries was very high, and many times I could not make up my mind until the last minute. The only thing lying between the winning and non-winning entries was a slight difference in the level of passion or message. I hope all viewers enjoy the paintings. Try to imagine why some entries were chosen and what they were trying to depict.



Mr. Andreas Schneider

Designer

Reviewing the many entries I felt like facing two distinct worlds: one being the world of adults, reflected by the children in their efforts to respond to the task set forward by the competition's theme. The other, expressed in the descriptions affixed to the back of the paintings, being the world of the artists' themselves. Short accounts of life in rural areas, happenings in their villages and celebrations of local festivals. A few words, although considered secondary, imparted the depth and richness of these very personal worlds. I would like to see how we could encourage the children even more to express their experiences, thoughts, and visions enthusiastically and in pure spirit - in visualizations that can move those who have the power to impact change.



Ms. Akemi Ishiwata

Executive Officer & Senior
Vice President, Corporate
Communications, Kao
Corporation

The overall quality is better this year, meaning the final selection screening required more focus. I felt clear messages from the children and had a hard time deciding which entries to endorse. Recently we saw so much damage around the world from typhoons and earthquakes, and I am sure everyone felt worried about the future of our Earth. Despite such circumstances, many paintings capturing my attention depicted calm and happy children. I strongly sensed that children want that kind of life, and felt that we have a responsibility to create a world that will fulfill their hope for a happy and trouble-free life.



Mr. Naoto Katahira

President, Creative,
Kao Corporation

Two things have changed since last year. One was the style of expressions. Last year, we saw many entries full of detailed messages, but the expressions in this year's paintings were seemingly simpler. The other change was the subject. While the paintings were still featuring global subjects such as global warming and increasing waste, many entries focused on the regions where the children or the things they see around them. Perhaps this was because the children were wanting to first work on things close to them. It would be marvelous if this contest served as a place to share such regional perspectives with the rest of the world.

"eco together"—Planet Earth Grand Prix



The Road to the Future

Thoughts and wishes regarding the painting

The blue ocean with a range of beautiful green islands. There are beautiful birds, fish and animals on the road, full of life. It shouldn't be just adults involved in ecological activities for this beautiful earth. We as children would like to work hard on these activities, too. Let's hope that the future will mean an earth with a beautiful blue ocean.

Comment by the Judges

This image illustrates the regional character well and the local culture from a child's perspective. A sprawling landscape resembling Japan occupies the center, surrounded by the sea with a road in the middle. Perhaps the road means time. The greenery that stretches to the top and the large animals show the child's innocent and caring feeling for nature. The painting was carefully created with pure childlike inspirations and a rich sense of color, vibrantly displaying daily living that is one with nature.

"eco together" — Kao Prize



EARTH Is OUR Home

Thoughts and wishes regarding the painting

I live in a small beautiful town called Podolsk. In the spring, nightingales used to nest and sing near my house. But these days, asphalt plants foul the air. Nightingales stopped flying in. Adults fight for clean air in our town. In my picture, I wanted to say that the Earth is our home and it needs to be cared for. I want to preserve it for everybody with clean air, pure rivers and singing birds. I want all people of the Earth to care for each other and be happy!

Comment by the Judges

The color usage has a Russian touch. The composition is simple, with red and blue being key colors to keep the overall impression compact. People in natural wool clothes are purifying emissions and waste water from the plant. I felt the message, "We can purify nature using the same materials as what we wear. So, caring for the environment is the same as caring for oneself."

Light Up the Face of the Earth

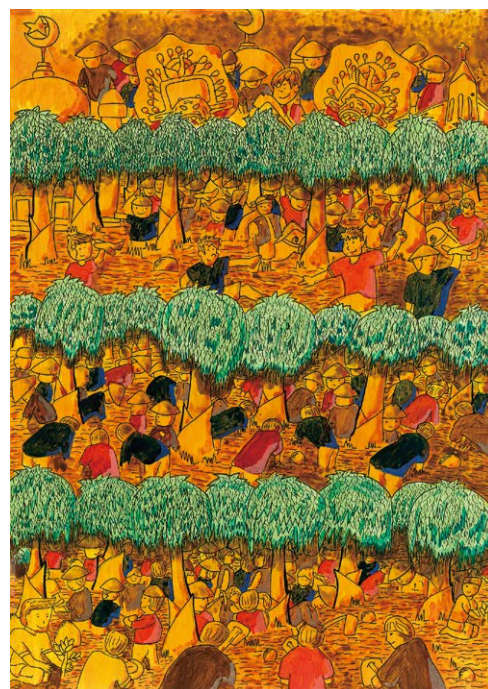
Thoughts and wishes regarding the painting

The concept that I put forth in my painting illustrates the situation in Indonesia, which has recently experienced natural disasters caused by the impact of deforested lands. I want green Indonesia to return to its nickname as an agricultural country. In the painting there are several stages, the first step is to process the soil and plant the tree seeds well and in the second stage shows that the community is happy and more diligently watering the plants. The third and fourth stages are the last stages where people are happy because the trees have grown well. Then the community held a celebration with reog art to entertain the surrounding community to increase enthusiasm and gratitude to God.

Comment by the Judges

The composition is simple, but if you look closely, there are meticulously painted people ploughing the soil. It clearly shows the cycle where everyone fertilizes the soil, sows plants and gradually turns the land green.

If you concentrate, you will see a temple and a church in the background. Perhaps the child is concerned about the current conflict between religions? The painting expresses the importance of a community working together and people living together in town. Also eye-catching is the use of colors, such as the ultramarine patches in the black.





I Have a Dream

Thoughts and wishes regarding the painting

A lot of mountain fires have been happening due to climate change and careless from human activities. This leads to serious damage to forest and homes of different animals.

I have a dream; we join together, ride on Bird of peace and fly to different places to sow the magical seeds, restoring the beauty of original forest in our earth.

So, all human beings and different kinds of animals can live healthily and happily in a green and cosy environment.

Comment
by the
Judges

A straight-forward piece of work full of childlike qualities, communicating the pain the child feels about the wildfires, desperately thinking something has to be done to restore nature with magic seeds. The two-plane composition is quite bold. Children are seen on the back of a dove, obviously a symbol of peace, as well as rich greenery on the right, together with blossoming buds and flowers. The yellow sun is very cleverly positioned. The colors are beautiful. It reveals a child of a sensitive mind and unlimited imagination.

Thoughts and wishes regarding the painting

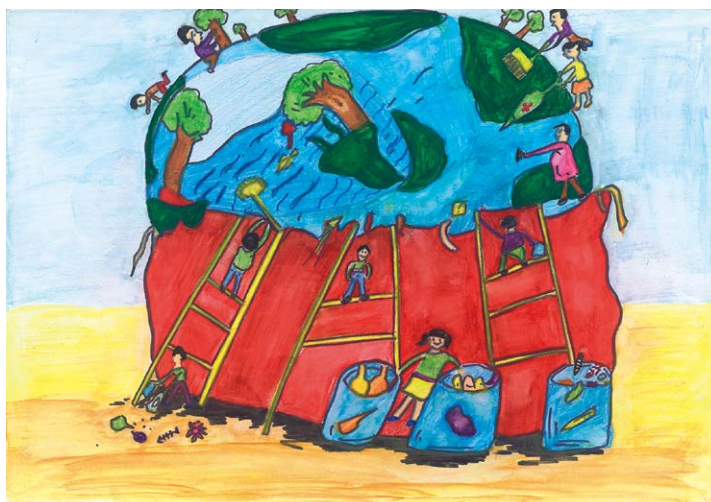
Recycling plastic feels fantastic. That's the need of the hour.

We all along with our posterity deserve to share the cleaner air. So, let's spill the beans.

Let's have a cleaner planet in order to have an exceptional ethos around us.

Comment
by the
Judges

Every year I see plenty of entries featuring the Earth. Many children who painted the Earth remember it as an important theme, and this is something I would like to bear that in mind when looking at the entries. In this painting, everyone is cleaning the Earth together. Right now, there is scaffolding around it, but one day when the Earth is clean the sheets will be removed. I appreciated this entry because it conveys a strong message to get involved with changing the environment, whereas many other entries simply feature the Earth to express eco-friendliness.



The Solution Is Less Pollution





We Are Environmental Lovers

Thoughts and wishes regarding the painting

My city is very small, but it's very beautiful. There are so many nice places as mountains, river, forest and so on that I love them. In fact, my painting is an image of my friends and me in side of river. I love there. I would like all of this beautiful places remain for a long time for my kids in the future. Therefore I think it's our duty to protect our environment.

Comment by the Judges

The girls are looking relaxed, soaking their feet in the water. All three of them look very happy and calm. Instead of yelling about the environment or proposing solutions, this painting illustrates that "What we are aiming for is in our daily lives." The painting conveys the joy of living in harmony with nature. Through this artwork, we can feel a happiness and regionality that is slightly different from those we are familiar with.



The Effect

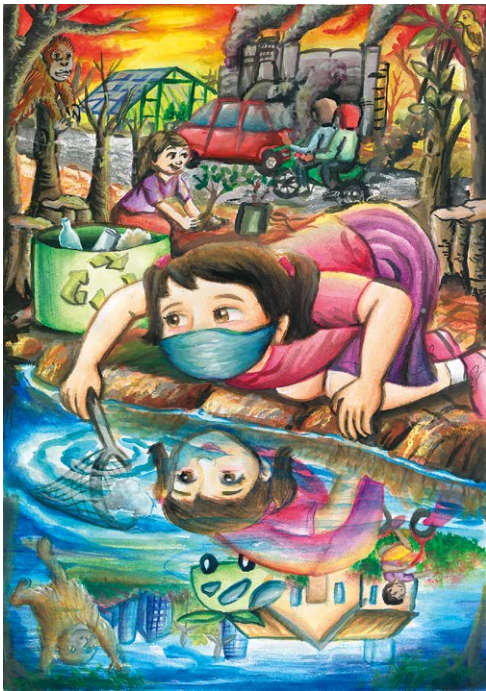
Thoughts and wishes regarding the painting

I drew a picture of boxes piled on top of each other, while someone is pulling the boxes in the bottom row, causing the entire pile to collapse. The box in the top row (row 5) represents Earth, row 4 represents humans, row 3 represents wildlife, row 2 represents water, and the bottom row represents trees. I want to express that if we pull the boxes in the bottom row, all the other rows will collapse. The meaning is that if we destroy forests by cutting trees, it will affect every living thing on Earth.

Comment by the Judges

At first glance this piece looks simple. Yet there is more depth than first meets the eye, as you first see supporting hands but realize they may actually be taking away what they are grabbing. The units are wanting to be together but if they are misaligned or stacked incorrectly, they will collapse. This is probably how the child assesses and sees the environment. It is almost like a well-considered educational toy. This instability is a very apt expression of the world we live in. The painting communicates both anxiety and hope.





REFLECTION OF EARTH'S BETTER FUTURE

Thoughts and wishes regarding the painting

From now on, let's do eco-friendly activities together.

At present, our Earth is threatened by various forms of pollution such as air pollution from vehicle emissions and factory fumes. In addition, there is also water pollution caused by garbage and sewage... There are also droughts, forest burning for clearing new land, and illegal logging which without doubt disrupts and damages the habitats of forest wildlife. Therefore, we must begin to participate in overcoming global warming. One method is to plant trees, dispose of garbage in the right place and turn non-biodegradable waste into something useful. We can start campaigning for the use of renewable energy, alternative technology, and love the environment. All we do is for a future that is better, greener, cooler and more comfortable for all living things on the Earth.

Comment
by the
Judges

Many entries compare reality with future, but this one is different. It talks about the harsh reality but is also appealing that we should do what we can now. The world of hope, reflected in the water, elaborately expresses that picking up garbage will make the world a better place. In Western mythology, looking at the reflection of oneself in a mirror or water could mean self-discovery or understanding oneself. This entry also shows two different faces of the girl, one of her in real life and another in the reflection. It is probably depicting the importance of understanding oneself.



Litter-Eating Whale

Thoughts and wishes regarding the painting

The rapid increase in global litter that enters the ocean every year poses a serious threat to the beautiful marine environment as well as the marine life that depends on it. My dream is to become a scientist and invent a litter disposal station like this. It swims like a real whale in the ocean, actively searches for marine litter, swallows it like food and processes it immediately. In this way, it gradually converts marine litter into fuel for itself as well as recyclable resources.

Comment
by the
Judges

Although it is difficult to discern the details from a distance, the composition is so rich that even without seeing the detail, the painting's message is clear. The whale in the ocean is swallowing all kinds of meticulously painted garbage. This whale is a robot called Eco 8, conveying an incredible optimism that technology will be the answer to everything. The crabs and fish also look unique and interesting.





Eco Friend Prize



Let's Plant a Tree

Comment on work

This entry shows the simple subject of planting a tree, but the two look very happy and appear to be going through some ritual. A dramatic expression of planting trees leading to happiness. Beautiful use of colors.



The Environment

Comment on work

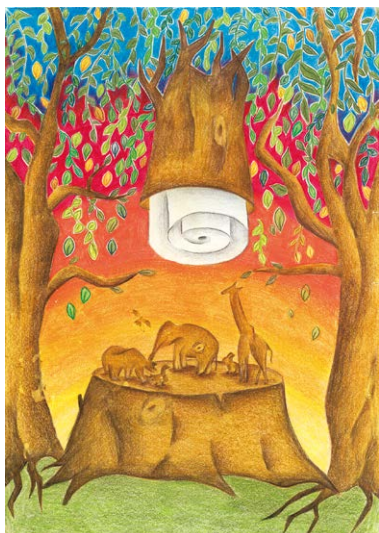
Eyes of a bird and seemingly a fish. A face full of actions about natural scenery and the environment. This one is a very creative entry; I see this face as my own, and the world in the painting is a message for the environment.



FLOODED HOUSING ESTATE

Comment on work

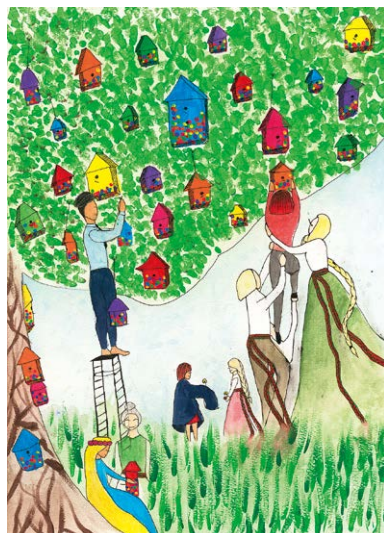
This painting is themed on a great flood from the past. All the people on the submerged floors are swimming around in swimsuits, but that cannot be real. There is audacity in this painting that depicts a natural disaster with a pinch of irony, instead of looking at it simply in sorrow.



Paper Tree

Comment on work

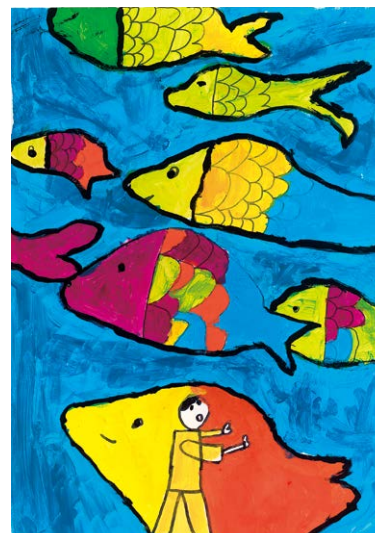
Trees are cut down to make paper, a symbol of civilization, and animals in the forest are losing a place to live. Perhaps this child wants to communicate this warning. The crumpled paper may also be an image of a spotlight on the animals. A strong entry with a carefully planned background and colors.



BIRDHOUSES

Comment on work

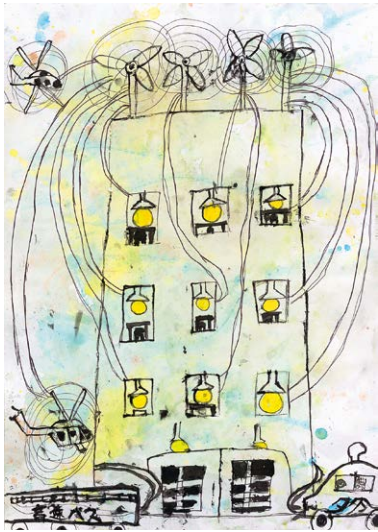
Creating a bird house is part of Lithuanian tradition, and closely linked to environmental conservation. This painting portrays the child's view of tradition and community life, where everyone decorates together, the European way.



Funny Flying Fish

Comment on work

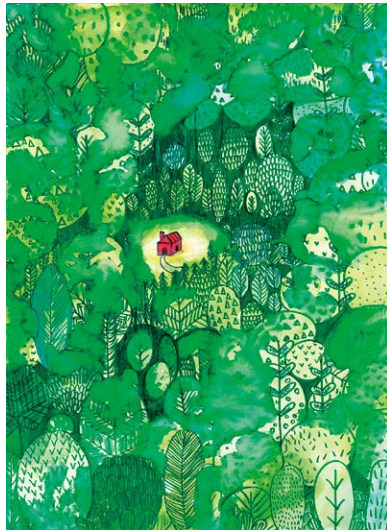
Lots of big fish, and a person looking a little isolated. An interesting message that it is not humans who are controlling the environment, rather, humans are in the environment. No hesitation about colors or composition. A powerful entry.



A Manufacturing Plant That Makes Electricity

Comment on work

An entry that urges everyone to generate and use wind power. A very simple and clear message that features many power cables. It is wonderful that such an appealing painting can be created just with a simple subject and use of colors.



Home

Comment on work

The red binds the lush greenery together with a beautiful contrast. The painting seems to be telling us the importance of simple living, saying "We can be happy enough living alone in the forest."



Don't Be Trashy

Comment on work

At first glance the painting has a dark impression but the two in the middle look very happy. Even in that dark world they are working hard with resolve and confidence. An illustration of hard work at its best.



We Are All Friends of the Environment

Comment on work

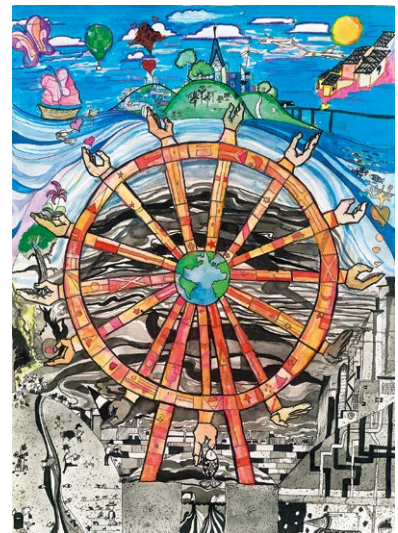
At first glance it looks eerie, but the person looks very happy. Green trees springing forth from the person's heart, as well as clear water with many fish swimming in it. It is as if to say that the heart is what you need first and foremost to tackle environmental problems.



SAVE THE BEES

Comment on work

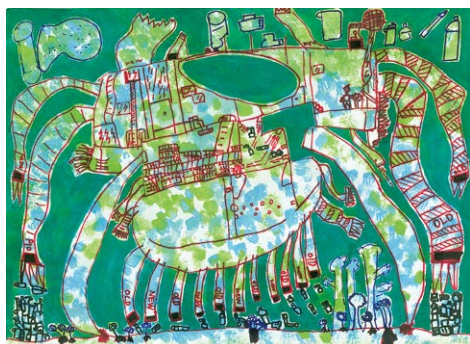
There is a lot of energy in this painting with happily buzzing bees. Maybe the child had heard the story of the declining bee population. The position of the flowers and the use of colors are also excellent. The extreme contrast of colors and the portrayal of creatures are wonderful.



Together We Give

Comment on work

There are good things and bad things written around the Ferris wheel. Bad things are dubbed "NO" and good things, "Bring it on!" I admire its wonderful simplicity. The contrast between black, white and many colors is also very skillful and marvelous.



Automatic Cleaning Machine

Comment on work

An entry themed on a garbage-separating machine, conveying the child's environmental message, "We have to get started with separating garbage." Very likeable details showing the child's intense focus.



A Green Park

Comment on work

The road stretching through the middle as if to block the advance of nature may be an expression of the child's opposition to their town turning into concrete. Two birds, perhaps a pair, are flapping their wings from the right, singing to nature. A spontaneous and beautiful entry, with well-planned colors and composition.



FAIRY TALE

Comment on work

If you want to rescue a princess from a crocodile or protect the environment, you need a hero. "I need to be that hero!" this entry declares passionately. A very different perception of the environment from past entries, very impressive.



Who Is Stronger?

Comment on work

This entry is saying that humans think they are the strongest creature on Earth but that such an idea is false. The painting, including the texture of the fish that makes them look like currently controversial plastic, makes the viewer feel a bit uneasy, reflecting the way the world is now.



Bathing with Family

Comment on work

An entry that portrays nondescript daily happiness that rings a bell for Japanese people, where the family have a bath together. It both makes them happy and saves energy. This painting shows that there is wisdom in regional customs that outsiders fail to see.



Healing Earth's Wounds

Comment on work

A very eye-catching entry because of its painting style and subject, which have been thought out well. The child's sense of irony toward adults' knowledge and technology is seen through the scene of people seriously trying to heal the Earth.



Me and My Dream ECO System

Comment on work

Intuitively painted, with a great sense of colors. Each motif is painted without reservation. The entire canvas is filled with a warm, childlike spontaneity. A very eye-catching entry.



The Creation of Beautiful Nature

Comment on work

Everything about nature and the lives of animals and humans densely packs the canvas, fitting each other perfectly like pieces of a puzzle, creating a perfect balance. The world view is much like a mandala. The elephant and the color usage reflect regionality.



Recycling Materials (Environment)

Comment on work

An entry with a warm and idyllic atmosphere, and the bottles are beautifully colored. In reality we see houses made of used tires and bottles, but the child actually picked this subject, demonstrating a high level of interest in the environment.



Beach Cleanup

Comment on work

I see this often in entries from Taiwan. Perhaps in Taiwan, picking up garbage is an important responsibility. It looks like they are having fun doing it. It is very pleasing to see this simple and positive message, "If we pick up garbage, the ocean will become clean."



Spread the Message of Environment Conservation through Wayang

Comment on work

I have seen entries themed on Indonesia's traditional shadow theater before, but this painting skillfully portrays how children who understand their own culture well are performing themselves and enjoying learning about ecological issues.



Awards Ceremony for 9th Painting Contest

Kao exhibited the award-winning entries at Kao's booth at EcoPro 2018 (Tokyo Big Sight) held between Thursday, Dec. 6 and Saturday, Dec. 8. The awards ceremony took place on Dec. 8, the final day of the event.

Of the 12,563 entries from 44 countries and areas (848 entries from Japan and 11,715 entries from overseas), the nine children from eight countries who painted the entries that won the top prizes "eco together" - Planet Earth Grand Prix and "eco together" - Kao Prize received the awards.

Fumikazu Masuda, Chair of Judges, commented "It is very reassuring to know that there are over 10,000 children in the world who are painting with the same feelings as everybody here. I would like you to influence and respect each other and communicate to the rest of the world how important the environment is."

After Kao President and CEO Michitaka Sawada awarded commemorative plaques and gifts to the winners, Miho Takemi, winner of the "eco together" - Planet Earth Grand Prix award, gave a speech. Speaking of her own entry, she said "On this beautiful earth, children also need to work on ecological activities." She also added "If everyone works together, the earth will be cleaner even more quickly", emphasizing the importance of everyone working together.

In the interviews following the awards ceremony, each winner spoke of the environment of their countries and areas, and of the messages they expressed in their paintings.



Interview session with all the top award winners



Grand Prix winner Miho Takemi
delivering her speech



"eco together" - Kao Prize winner
Farhan Wibisono Widodo receiving his award
plaque from President Sawada



Prizewinners group commemorative photo with Chair of Judges Masuda
(third from left) and President Sawada (right) and Senior Vice President,
ESG Dave Muenz (left)

Information about
the 10th Kao International
Environment Painting Contest
for Children



For more information please visit the
"Kao International Environment Painting Contest for Children" website

English <https://www.kao.com/global/en/sustainability/environment/painting-contest.html>

Kao Painting Contest

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