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## Foreign Minister's Commendation for Mr. Jun Kaneko

[July 17, 2018] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan announced today that **Mr. Jun Kaneko**, an influential visual artist and resident of Omaha, will receive a Commendation for the promotion of cultural exchange through art between Japan and the United States, from Mr. Taro Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. The Foreign Minister's Commendations are awarded to individuals and groups with outstanding achievements in international fields, and they acknowledge the recipients' contributions to the promotion of friendship between Japan and other countries. Jun has brought to the City of Omaha The Garden on Tanukis at the Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium as well as the eighty foot tall Glass Tower at the Buffet Cancer Center. Now the Old Market District of Omaha is the home to KANEKO, a three warehouse space that provides a free public space to celebrate and promote creativity through the themes of Design, Ideas, Performance, and Innovation.

### About Jun Kaneko

Jun, born in Nagoya, Japan in 1942, started painting in his teens with instructor Satoshi Ogawa. This passion led him to California in 1963 to continue his studies when he encountered contemporary sculptural ceramics and proceeded to study with the pioneers of the movement.

Jun's discerning visual vocabulary seamlessly navigates many mediums including painting, drawing, printing, textiles, ceramics, bronze and glass and he has designed three opera productions. His distinctive artworks appear in numerous solo and group exhibitions annually and are prominently included in more than seventy museum collections around the world. Kaneko's curiosity about art, architecture and civic interaction inspired him to realize over sixty public art commissions.

In 1998, he and his wife Ree Kaneko founded a non-profit scholarly and presenting organization, KANEKO, dedicated to exploring creativity in the arts, sciences and philosophy.

He felt his experiences in America should be shared with the next generation in Japan, and returned to his home country and proactively held workshops, lectures, and judged ceramics competitions. In addition, he has public art installations at the Aichi Prefecture Government building, in Nagoya, at Otemachi Springs, in Tokyo and in Shizuoka City to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Omaha-Shizuoka sister city relationship. These and his many other endeavors exhibit his contribution to promoting friendship and mutual understanding between Japan and the United States.

A more extensive biography and list of Jun's creations can be found on <http://www.junkaneko.com/>.

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