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Cover photo: House-shaped stone of Mr. Sami Amdouni from France, EBA & ESA Convention 2023 , Olomouc, Czech Republic

European Bonsai and Suiseki Convention 2023

ESA and ČBA Suiseki Exhibition

by Gudrun Benz

It was with great relief when it was known at the end of last year that the Czech Bonsai Association (ČBA) under the leadership of its president Ian Macháček succeeded to find a host for the EBA ESA Convention 2023. The Flora Parc of Kroměříž had withdrawn its application for 2023 after the European convention had to be withdrawn twice, in 2021 and 2022 because of the corona pandemic. The convention in Olomouc became a great success. It was integrated into a regional garden market with several ten thousands visitors. Exhibitors couldn't only enjoy the wonderful large Flora garden but also the outstanding historical city of Olomouc which is located about 200 km southeast of Prague, the capital of Czech Republic. Mainly the Town Hall with a medieval astronomical clock in the façade and a thirty-two meter high column of the Holy Trinity, a UNESCO monument are most spectacular. The high spires of Saint Wenceslas' Cathedral, the Olomouc castle, a group of six Baroque fountains, the archbishop's Palace and other unique monuments a worth to see.

The European convention took place on four days from April 20 to 23. Whereas the bonsai exhibitions of EBA and ČBA were hosted in two big halls the suiseki exhibition of ESA members and suiseki lovers of ČBA had the relatively small hall of the orangery (20 x 7 m) at their disposal. ESA had a row of about 20 m along one side wall for exhibiting 23 suiseki whereas ČBA members had in addition two tables in the middle for 25 stones. The suiseki were lined up in a row on display tables, rarely accompanied by accent plant and without scrolls. Nevertheless, it was an attractive exhibition. At the front side vis-à-vis the entrance a tokonoma like display of Igor Bárta showed an example how a suiseki display can be nicely arranged. The visitors were curious and carefully regarded the suiseki, an art form nearly unknown in Europe. Numerous awards were presented. ESA members were awarded with one nomination, the ESA President's Award , the "ESA Award for the most Beautiful Stone of the

Annual Exhibition” and a WBFF Award presented by Mr. Sea Won Kim from Korea. Five nominations and one “Suiseki of the Year” were given to ČBA members. Most stones of Czech collectors came from Czech Republic, very few were from other European countries and one was from China. It means that Czech members collected their stones themselves mainly in the own country. Landscape stones dominated.

Even if not many ESA members from different European countries didn't come to Olomouc, it was a great event where one could see not only excellent bonsai and suiseki but also beautiful historical monuments at the old but well preserved city centre of Olomouc where a lot of cafés and restaurants invited people for an enjoyable stay.



Beautiful slope stone, “ Vento fresco di primavera sul villaggio nation” of Mr. Nicola Crivelli from Switzerland was awarded with a ESA President’s Award at the EBA & ESA Convention 2023 , Olomouc, Czech Republic



Human-shaped stone ,“ Angel” of Mr. Luboš Šebek from Czech Republic won the top prize at the EBA & ESA Convention 2023 , Olomouc, Czech Republic



Very nice landscape stone of Mr. Jürgen Carocci from Germany was awarded with a ČBA Award. EBA & ESA Convention 2023 , Olomouc, Czech Republic



Exposeki Valladolid 2023: 'Echoes' Section



Toko display: 'Respect', Exposeki, Spain

EXPOSEKI VALLADOLID 2023 (4-5 March, 2023)

by Jesús Quintas , “qseki”

On 4th and 5th March, 2023, just a month before entering the celebration of Easter week, Valladolid held an *Exposeki* (Suisseki Exhibition) within the frame of FIMASCOTA, an International Fair and Contest of dogs and other pets, but that is also open to other manifestations related to the contact of human beings with nature environments. The motto of this Exposeki was ‘Suisseki: Art of Nature’. I may anticipate that it has been a great success.

Valladolid is a Spanish old city, founded in 1072 on Roman remains, that was the seat of the kingdom of Castilla and afterwards, in century XVI, under the emperor Carlos V, it was the political seat of the Kingdom of Spain and from 1601 to 1606 of the whole Spanish Empire. On 1606, Felipe II set the capital of the Kingdom of Spain in Madrid. The University of Valladolid is dated back to 1241 and is now one of the most important Spanish universities. The current population of the city is about 300.000 inhabitants and has a rich and varied economic and cultural activity, with an historic downtown rich in architectural monuments, shopping and gastronomic experiences.

FIMASCOTA is one of the most renowned events connected to a wide range of pets (dogs, cats, fishes, birds, reptiles, and so on). The international dog contests received participants not only from Spain, but from other European countries as well, for example Portugal, France, United Kingdom, Germany (to name only a few) as well. Suffice to say, there were more than 5.000 dogs in contest.

According to the comments received from organizers and visitors, our Exposeki created great expectation and has been very positively received and valued. During the two days, Exposeki has welcomed more than 4.000 visitors of all ages. But it is time to

comment the exhibition.

The exhibition has been coordinated in all aspects by three suiseki practitioners, José Antonio de Frutos, Antonio Rojo and myself. We must thank for the support given by FIMASCOTA and Feria de Valladolid that prepared a space of about 1.000 square meters, counters, carpets and even prepared 4 tokonoma-like installations. We must also thank the cooperation of Asociación Española de Suiseki and Club de Bonsai de Parla to inform of the event to their members and other suiseki practitioners. The displays were arranged along more than 100 lineal meters and were of three types: toko-kazari (4 displays), tana-kazari (86 displays) and 'echo-kazari' (10 displays). Thus, 100 stones in exhibitions, provided by 20 exhibitors.

I think this last type, echo-kazari, merits a particular explanation. According to my personal experience, many non-practitioner viewer or newcomers to our art, often ask how we are able to recognize the peculiar shapes of our stones and their resemblance to the scenes or subjects of actual world. I use to say that the suiseki is not outside but inside our mind, that keeps a huge database of images we gather at every instant of our life. In a strange way (pareidolia) our mind is able to perceive that the stone we are looking at is an 'echo' of one or more images of our stored database. The 'echo' section of this Exposeki Valladolid has tried to show examples of such echoes displaying not only the stone but the echoed image according to her exhibitor's mind. Furthermore, in 8 of the 10 echoes displayed, the echo has been displayed using a kakejiku as support, so the suggested image and the stone may be perceived in a single glance; at the same time, the use of kakejiku is a reminder that we are operating within a manifestation of Oriental culture. We have received many comments from viewers that realized that these displays have helped them to get a better understanding of our art.



Toko display: 'Alps', Exposeki, Spain



Toko display: 'Cenote', Exposeki, Spain

We realize that the toko displays of the exhibition do not strictly conform to a fully canonical kazari, but we have made our best to get close to the actual sensation and perception that a toko-kazari is to produce. To this effect, we have improved the emptiness through the use of white back and table boards, the compositional criteria and the holistic approach to get the connection of the elements used to produce a unique and coherent suggested scene. When looking at the suggested scenes, the viewer will perceive that the two toko by José Antonio de Frutos connect to Oriental culture of China and Japan, while the two toko of mine connect to other cultural environs.

The larger toko by Jose Antonio has the title '*Respect*'. The main element (the stone) suggests an educated person that gazes at the Milky Way and his myriads of stars (scroll), likely after having paid a glance (actual or imaginary) to the mythical animals, turtle and crane (horizontal complement) symbolizing longevity, strength, patience and internal peace. So, he pays respect to the gods and immortals living in the upper World and ask for help to join them after his passing this earthy world.

The smaller toko by José Antonio has the title '*Sunrising*'. The stone suggests a mountain range that just is starting to emerge from darkness. Above, a group of cranes is crossing the sky and get ahead of the rising sun (scroll). The position of the scroll places the sun and cranes relatively low, as we are in the early hours of the day, As the cranes fly from right to left, we shall likely guess the scene is happening in spring when cranes migrate from Japan to the mainland. There is no third elements.

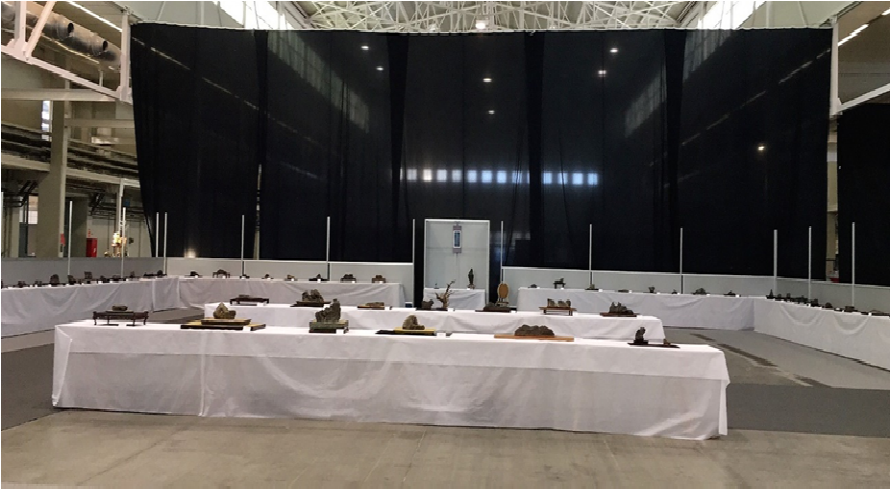
The larger toko by mine has the title '*Alps*', so the scene is located in this significant European mountain range. The stone, actually collected In Swiss Alps, suggests such an scenery. The scroll

roughly depicts a sunrise, with low diverse layers of clouds that almost hide the still feeble sun. Looking from distance, a veteran trekker (horizontal complement) has just momentarily stopped, admiring the moment and thinking on which the trip of the day will be.

The smaller toko by mine has the title ‘*Cenote*’ (*), so the scene is located in the subtropical areas around Caribbean Sea. I guess the stone arrived Europe from Indonesia (alternatively, from China). Her texture and cavity shape lead to think on those peculiar karstic formations we can see in Yucatan (Mexico) and other sites worldwide. The scroll drawing alludes to the luxurious vegetation that usually surrounds and often hide Yucatan cenotes, including the thin exposed roots that try to touch water. Against usual practice in narrow toko (this one, 120 cm), the display includes an horizontal complement, a colored bird, that adds a note of brightness to the scene.

It is impossible to describe with some detail stones in tana-kazari displays, due to the space limitation of this report (I hope the exhibitors will excuse), so I only attach a panoramic and an exhibitors’ group photos. I must express my personal gratitude to the exhibitors for the assistance and cooperation they are so kindly and generously provided and wish this exhibition be only the first in a series of periodical events in years to come.

() Though most people have only notice of Yucatan cenotes, this is not the only site where they may be observed and enjoyed: Australia, Bahamas, Belize, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Canada, United States and Zimbabwe also provide examples of them. A cenote is produced by the collapse of a karstic cavity whose mouth is at ground level and that collects and keeps sweet underground waters. Though they are open cavities, an amazing characteristic is that water remains uncorrupted in them.*



Partial panorama of the exhibition, Exposeki, Spain



Group of participants

Top: Julia Barceló, Francisco Gómez, Jesús Quintas, Manuel Díaz, Pilar Guillén, Miguel Angel Mendía, Juan José Bueno, Antonio Huerta, Begoña Palacios.

Low: César García, Yoyo Hernández, José Antonio de Frutos, Miguel Angel Domínguez, Ivan Domínguez, Juantxo Labiano

Sparkling minerals and poetic stones

by Sandro Tchudin

The Basel Mineral Days are known far beyond the region as the largest mineral fair in Switzerland. It takes place annually at the beginning of December in the huge fairgrounds of the Messe Basel. Around 2,500 visitors attended to marvel at treasures from around the globe on over 500 meters of sales stands and exhibition spaces. Opals and gold nuggets from Australia, meteorites from various desert regions of the world, unbelievably old fossils, jewellery and beautiful objects made from semi-precious stones and precious stones from all over the world, as well as the most magnificent finds from the Swiss mountains, together form only a fraction of what the fair was all about. The approximately 130 exhibitors left nothing to be desired and the lively flow of visitors never ceased.

A big thank you for the invitation to Daniela and Marcus Stauffer with the team from the Basel Minerals and Fossils Association, who, with their optimism and great routine, offered such a wonderful platform for the Suiseki Special Exhibition.

The Suiseki Special Exhibition joined the magnificently colourful world of minerals and created a space of tranquillity. The Japanese aesthetics set an attractive contrast to the busy hustle and bustle among the minerals and fascinated with a completely different view of stones. In the very open and reserved atmosphere of the Special Exhibition, many visitors to the Basel Mineral Days took the opportunity to calm their senses. Having arrived, the unusual stone presentations tempted a first contact with the art of Suiseki. Completely different from the radiant beauty and the obvious miracle of the minerals, the hidden beauty of the 15 exhibits wanted to be discovered by the interested visitors. Each presentation was accompanied by a haiku written for the stone, which enabled a poetic introduction to the viewing. The Suiseki were always accompanied by a matching Japanese scroll painting and other exquisite presentation elements such as accent plants (Shitakusa) or bronze figures (Tenpai). It was clear that all the elements had been chosen with great care and helped to reinforce the message of each presentation.



*“The east wind blows
so hard and dry
the gentle slope»*

Bergstein (mountain stone) (Garschella), Switzerland, M. Fercher

Daiza: S. Tschudin

Accompanying image: Old Japanese scroll painting with orchid

Tenpai: Bronze Locust, China

Photo: Marcus Stauffer

Late summer picture

*The orchid embodies the emergence that the grasshopper feasts on.
However, the insect will not survive the change of season.*

*The east wind anticipates this decline. It blows the orchid into the same
shape as the gentle hilltop.*

The adoration of nature is also reflected in the aesthetics of Japan through the design of Bonsai, which, as images of old, venerable trees, can put the viewer in a state of inner peace and stimulating amazement.

Together, the two arts of Bonsai and Suiseki have the power to tell stories and thus stimulate the viewer's imagination to take them on an inner journey. Thus, it is understandable that these two arts are considered and cultivated in Asia as the two sides of the same coin.

The three combined presentations with Bonsai and Suiseki were made possible by the Basel Minerals and Fossils Association. This very innovative and energetic group laid the basis for the successful Special Exhibition in many respects: They contacted the group Moyogi Bonsai- and Suiseki-Freunde Dreiländereck Basel, made the infrastructure available and prepared it with the "Moyogis", who rounded off the exhibition with an information table about Bonsai. Their live Bonsai demonstrations offered further highlights for many interested people during the weekend.

The Suiseki presentations were curated by Kawasemi Studios (Sandro and Nadja Tschudin), Martin Fercher and Daniel Battaglia. Thanks to M.Fercher's meticulous layout work, the exhibition could be set up in one day. Such an undertaking requires many committed hands and it was wonderful to see how all the steps came together to form a convincing overall picture.

The quiet power of the stones touched many people this weekend - I would like to invite you to discover your own story on the following mental walks. Our interpretations can be found under each picture in the form of a haiku we created, followed by a brief explanation.

Hoping to have captured and transported some of the dense atmosphere, I would like to thank the organizers and helpers of the Mineral Days on behalf of all those involved in the Special Exhibition and close with the wish to hopefully give again a poetic contribution in sparkling company at the following event in beautiful Christmas Basel.



*«When the surf beats
just become a stone
little turtle»*

Stone: grotto stone, high alpine Swiss serpentine

Finder: S. Tschudin

Suiban: N. Tschudin

Coaster: Japanese Urushi lacquer panel

Accompanying image: old Japanese scroll painting with turtles

Summer picture

The turtle moves in the productive and yet dangerous scouring of the tide. The strong contrast between the forces of the sea and the fragile creatures becomes palpable in this presentation.



"Quiet

Only the pale crescent moon

Gently cuts the last stalk"

Bonsai: semi-cascade, juniper, Roland Müller

Stone: landscape stone, Ligurian limestone

Daiza: S. Tschudin

Accompanying picture: old Japanese scroll painting with deer under moon

Photo: Marcus Stauffer

Autumn picture

The sharpness of the sickle gives an idea of the clear, biting cold air at night and associates the ruthlessness of high alpine regions. Loneliness spreads.

Editorial

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PLEASE NOTE!

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2023

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Website European Suiseki Association:

<http://esasuiseki.com/>



Fly

Fly into the spring"

Stone: Mountain Stone (Kibune Murasaki), Japan

Daiza: Japan

Accompanying image: scroll painting, Japan

Side plant: Yellow-spotted ragwort

Spring picture

The beginning of spring is captured in this presentation: first warmth, last melting snow, the scent of fresh blossoms - a feast for the senses.