



ART with a HEART

Katsuhiko Hibino (red shirt) and participants in the Heartmark Viewing workshop held at 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Tokyo.

Located among the office buildings of Tokyo's Chiyoda Ward, the arts center 3331 Arts Chiyoda was the host on April 23 of another Heartmark Viewing workshop. Heartmark Viewing is an art project in which participants cut and sew heart-shaped pieces of fabric onto square pieces of fabric and then sew their work together to form a single large tapestry. The tapestries created in this way are then hung at the shelters for victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake. People from around Japan and overseas who have learned about the project from the Internet or newspaper reports have been send-



Artist Katsuhiko Hibino (kneeling, right) alongside participants in a Heartmark workshop held at a primary school-turned shelter in Kesenuma, Miyagi Prefecture

NAOTO KITA



ing heart-adorned pieces of cloth to the project base, 3331 Arts Chiyoda. At the workshop on April 23, these cloth squares were sewn together to form several tapestries measuring roughly two-meters square.

A woman in her forties who took part in the workshop says, "I've wanted to do something for those in the area affected by the disaster, but I didn't know what would be good. It's fun to work on this while trying to figure out how to assemble the pieces of cloth to make a cheerful tapestry."

The artist that came up with the idea for Heartmark Viewing is Katsuhiko Hibino. After the

2004 Niigata Prefecture Chuetsu Earthquake, Hibino had taken colored pencils and sketchbooks around to the shelters and spent his time drawing pictures with the children there.

Hibino says, "I started Heartmark Viewing not only to create a place where the disaster victims can feel a sense of relief, but also to give form to the feelings of people who want to do something for the victims, and then bring that to them. I decided to use hearts because everyone sees the heart as an icon of love and kindness."

The workshop has been held around Japan in places such as Kyoto, Osaka, Gifu and Kumamoto Prefectures. Families and groups of friends often attend. So far, more than 300 people have participated in Heartmark Viewing workshops.

From April 29 to May 8, presentations of the completed tapestries and workshops were held at twelve shelters in Ibaraki, Fukushima, Miyagi and Iwate Prefectures. Anywhere from five to fifteen people participated in each workshop. One of the victims of the disaster who participated says, "It's been a long time since I made something myself. It was fun." The completed tapestry was hung inside the shelter.

Workshops will also be held at a festival in Iwate Prefecture, and at a museum and hot spring resort in



A mother and daughter work together on a pattern at a Heartmark workshop in a shelter in Ofunato, Iwate Prefecture.

Fukushima Prefecture.

"I want the disaster victims to feel that they can participate too by expressing themselves," says Hibino. "When they're creating art, it's a break from the reality of living in the shelter—it's time for themselves. I think that's something extremely important for the hearts of the victims." 