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“DIVERSUSHI”, A New and Inclusive Way of Enjoying Dining Inspired by Sushi Aiming to invent a dining experience that does not rely on the sense of sight

TBWA\HAKUHODO announced the launch of the "DIVERSUSHI" project that it has planned and been developing as the founding member of the "DIVERSUSHI Project Executive Committee," initiated by Japanese media artist Yoichi Ochiai and "the world's brightest visually impaired person" and social entrepreneur Shunsuke Narisawa, "DIVERSUSHI" is a new dining experience that allows people with visual impairments to eat fine-dining food directly with their hands in one bite, intending to solve issues that visually impaired people face when eating and creating a world in which anyone can enjoy meals together regardless of having visual impairment or not.



With the launch of the "DIVERSUSHI Project," crowdfunding began in May 2023, with the goal of holding the first dining event which will be held in July.

- Project Website: <https://diversushi.org/eng>
- Crowdfunding page: <https://readyfor.jp/projects/DIVERSUSHI>

■ “DIVERSUSHI” – A new dining experience that can be enjoyed together whether having a visual impairment or not

“DIVERSUSHI” is a combination of the words “Diversity” and “Sushi”. The term was coined from the insight from ‘the way of eating sushi’, which is known to be an easy, inclusive way of eating.

The insight from the project was from a conversation in 2019 between Yoichi Ochiai and Shunsuke Narisawa, a visually impaired social entrepreneur, when Ochiai asked, “If you were allowed to eat anything, what would you like to eat?” and Narisawa replied, “Sushi is good.” Narisawa’s answer was not only because he likes sushi. During dining, visually impaired people have to figure out the location, distance, and height of the tableware such as chopsticks or forks and foods. However, the Japanese traditional way of eating sushi, in which people take the sushi directly from their hands to their mouths all in one bite, is easy for any person.

DIVERSUSHI was the idea born from the insights from conversation. By implementing the way of “eat directly with your hands in one bite” just like eating sushi in all kinds of fine cuisines, including French, Italian, or Chinese, the team is aiming to create a new dining experience that makes everyone enjoy meals without frustration from visual impairment. The goal of the project is to see the day when the “DIVERSUSHI” way of eating is introduced to restaurants all over the world to provide inclusive options, just like Halal, vegan, and kosher are now widely accepted.

As a first step, we are beginning crowdfunding to hold a “DIVERSUSHI” dinner event with Chef Taichi Murayama, who has won Michelin awards for 11 consecutive years, and Chef Miyuki Igarashi, a Japanese cuisine chef. After the first event, we aim to expand this activity nationwide.



■ About Crowdfunding

We are planning to hold a “DIVERSUSHI” dining event in Tokyo on Sunday, July 2, 2023. We would like to invite both visually impaired and non-visually impaired people to attend the dinner so that many people

can experience the event. Furthermore, we are hoping to use this event as an opportunity to expand this activity nationwide.

- Crowdfunding platform: READYFOR
- Funding duration: May 15 ~ June 16, 2023
- Target Amount: 7 Million JPY (approx. 52K USD)
- Webpage: <https://readyfor.jp/projects/DIVERSUSHI>

■ The development of DIVERSUSHI, the new dining experience

Chefs Murayama and Igarashi, who have endorsed this project, are in charge of developing the menu for DIVERSUSHI. In addition, businessman Masamichi Toyama will join us as an advisor.

In consultation with the project members, they are developing the menu based on the following three points.

① From hand to mouth, without tableware

「Taking a cue from the message, "Even if you cannot see, it is easy to eat sushi because you are not confused by the distance between chopsticks, forks, and other tableware and your mouth," we aimed to create dishes that are eaten with your hands. We usually touch food mostly through tableware, but from the new way of eating, we hope you will enjoy the "feel" and "texture" of the food together with the taste.

② In one bite, clean without spilling

The idea of food to eat in one bite is inspired by the message, "When eating out, I am always worried about whether I am eating properly and without spilling." By eliminating this anxiety, the original taste of the ingredients and the different temperatures that spread in the mouth can be enjoyed.

③ "Looks delicious" without relying on sight

We hope to add an experience that not only relieves anxiety but also makes dining enjoyable.

Together with Yoichi Ochiai, we are creating a space that combines the sounds of ingredients and cooking with technology. We will provide an unprecedented dining experience that fully engages all the senses.

Furthermore, "DIVERSUSHI Project" involves the challenges with Ochiai's unique approach.

<The special menu born from AI application "ochyAI">

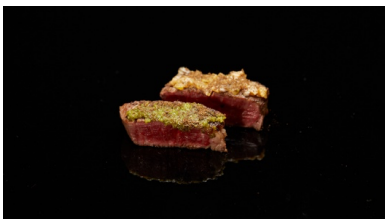
This time, we interviewed Mr. Narisawa, Mr. Makoto Okoda, a blind lawyer, and Mr. Keishi Ochiai, a former representative of Japan's blind soccer team, and developed "ochyAI," an AI application to help visually

impaired people explore what they want to eat. "ochyAI" generates one-of-a-kind recipes simply by inputting "what I want to eat," "difficulties," "troubles," "fun," "surprises," and other information that visually impaired people usually experience when eating. At this dining event, based on the recipe generated by "ochyAI," Chefs Murayama and Igarashi will try to produce through a trial-and-error process of not only making the recipe edible but also making it delicious and a dish with great impact.

<The menu under prototype>

After two tasting sessions, a total of four to five dishes will be served at the dining event.

*Below photographs are under development and are different from the dishes to be served at the actual event.



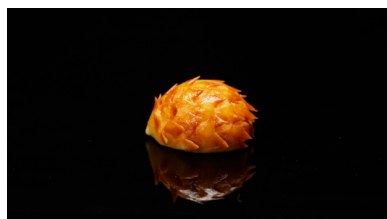
Wagyu Fillet



Extra hot sweet sea bream



Deep-fried soup



Hedgehog shaped buns

■ Project Members

Initiator | Yoichi Ochiai (Media Artist)



Born in 1987. Received his Ph.D. in Applied Computer Science from the University of Tokyo, the Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information (Studies in 2 years the fastest record). Associate Professor at the University of Tsukuba, Director of Research and Development Center for Digital Nature. Principal Investigator of JST CREST xDiversity Project. Also served as the agent for Cultural Affairs' Cultural

Exchange Envoy for FY2020-2021 and as the producer of the Osaka-Kansai Expo theme project. (photo: Ninagawa Mika)

Comment: Eating is one of the most fundamental activities for people, regardless of any disabilities. We are gathering people who are willing to take on the challenge of making it more diverse and inclusive.

Initiator | Shunsuke Narisawa (The world's brightest visually impaired person)



Born in Saga Prefecture in 1985. Under the catchphrase "the world's brightest visually impaired person," he has accompanied more than 60 companies and projects in Japan and abroad as a management consultant and artist. He has managed several companies for more than 10 years, and now mainly interacts with business owners to help them redefine their lives and management.

Comment: We who are blind prioritize what we can do over what we want to do. We hope to overcome this barrier and challenge ourselves to prioritize what we want to do, without compromising what is delicious.

Chef | Taichi Murayama (Chef & Management Consultant)



Opened "Restaurant L'asse" in Tokyo. Upon opening, he became the fastest chef to be awarded a star in Japan, and has held it for 11 consecutive years. His blog "The owner-chef of a starred Italian restaurant in Meguro thinks about the earth 200 million years in the future while working part-time at Saizeriya" recorded 260,000 PV and became a hot topic. His book "Why do I, a starred chef, work part-time at Saizeriya?" recorded 30,000 copies sales. He was featured in NHK's "Reversing Life" in 2021.

Comment: If it doesn't taste good by the sound and texture the moment you put it in your mouth, it doesn't work as a taste. We challenge ourselves to see how much we can convey the enjoyment of food to visually impaired people.

Chef | Miyuki Igarashi (Chef & Tea ceremony master)



After graduating from university, she became a chef in Kyoto in order to deepen her knowledge of Japanese culture. After studying kaiseki cuisine for five and a half years, she worked as a sous-chef at the Italian Restaurant L'asse in Tokyo. In 2020, she returned to Fukui Prefecture and opened her own restaurant, "Mutsu no Hana". She offers kaiseki cuisine that incorporates multinational cooking techniques and the sensibility of the tea ceremony.

sensibility of the tea ceremony.

Advisor | Masamichi Toyama (Entrepreneur)



Born in 1962 in Tokyo. After graduating from Keio University, he joined the Mitsubishi Corporation and founded Smiles, and The Chain Museum. In addition to Soup Stock Tokyo, a soup specialty shop, he has also developed giraffe, a necktie brand, PASS THE BATON, a contemporary select recycle shop, and 100 Spoons, a family restaurant. A professor at Joshibi University of Art and Design.

■ DIVERSUSHI Project Executive Committee



DIVERSUSHI was born from a conversation between Yoichi Ochiai, a media artist, and Shunsuke Narisawa, a visually impaired social entrepreneur, and was established to develop and promote a new food experience that can be enjoyed by everyone, both those who cannot see and those who can.

【TBWA\HAKUHODO Creative Director Masatoshi Usami Comment】

The "Sound-Free Concert" I planned and carried out in collaboration with Mr. Yoichi Ochiai and Japan Philharmonic Orchestra was a "designing the listening" that aimed to create a concert that everyone could enjoy regardless of whether they could hear sounds or not. The "DIVERSUSHI" project that we are challenging for this time is "designing the eating" which aims to create a dining experience that can be enjoyed by everyone regardless of whether they can see or not. I hope this concept creates new ways to enjoy meals and resonates worldwide.

【TBWA\HAKUHODO プロジェクトメンバー】

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■ About TBWA\HAKUHODO

TBWA\HAKUHODO is a full-service advertising agency based in Tokyo, established in 2006 as a joint venture between Hakuhodo and TBWA Worldwide Inc. With the combination of TBWA's DISRUPTION® methodology, a global network spanning over 100 countries/regions and Hakuhodo's in-depth knowledge of the Japanese market and longstanding reputation for trustworthiness, the agency continues to create and deliver high-quality solutions to all of our clients - solutions that cause change and have the power to get noticed. <https://www.tbwahakuhodo.co.jp/en>