

International Snow Sculpture Competition

The International Snow Sculpture Contest is a major part of the Sapporo Snow Festival. Every year, teams from countries and regions around the world compete to make the most impressive sculpture. The competition demonstrates Sapporo's commitment to fostering positive relations with the international community and has opened up avenues of cultural exchange and creativity. The international competition began in 1974 with teams from six countries, and teams from 37 different countries and regions have taken part in the competition over the years.

The subjects depicted in the international competition are often quite different from those chosen by local sculptors. A team from New Zealand once created a giant rugby ball, and one year a Polish team portrayed a young Mother Nature. Teams from tropical countries where snow never falls also regularly enter the contest. Thai teams have participated in many years, one time creating a cheerful band of elephants, and another time the imposing facade of a grand palace in Bangkok. Malaysian teams have appeared often as well, one year building a sculpture of four proboscis monkeys.

The three-person teams have a long time to plan their sculptures, but they must construct them in just five days. Visitors are allowed to watch the teams create their entries and can talk freely with the team members.

The international sculpture competition takes place in the 11-chome block of Odori Park. The Sapporo TV Tower affords a bird's-eye perspective of the competition as well as all the snow and ice sculptures in the park. From the tower, it is possible to see all the way to the Olympic ski jump on Mt. Okura in clear weather.