Report on the first ISS Online Summer Festival

From July 27 to July 29, 2024, we held an online summer festival inviting students and faculties from both The Ohio State University (OSU) and the University of Tsukuba (UT). This festival included a wide variety of cultural and academic exchange activities and welcomed over 160 participants from both sides excluding the organizers and the exhibitors.

The festival was held on Remo, an online tool to organize large gatherings and events such as academic conferences or workshops. The organizing committee, on UT side, prepared four parallel events that students from both sides could join to interact with each other, both synchronous and asynchronous. This challenging format was adopted to allow for exchange between the two universities given the time difference between Japan and Ohio state. The four events were: a Main Stage event, an Activity Booths event, an Art Exhibition Booths event, and a Virtual Campus event. Below we will share the information and images of these events.

Main Stage event:

The main stage hosted daily talk shows and quizzes for the audience. The organizers hosted guests from OSU to share their cultural and academic experiences at OSU. On the first day, we hosted Watanabe Rio-san from OSU to share her athletic and academic career at OSU. She gave the audience unique perspectives on being a golf athlete, and on how she manages to combine academia and athletics during her years at OSU. On the second day, we hosted international students from Japan at OSU who shared their experiences of visiting the US and their inspiring studies about space exploration! On the third day, we hosted a live stream of the virtual campus, and we attempted to recreate the campuses of both OSU and UT in Minecraft. In the daily quizzes, many of the audience participated in fun Kahoot sessions with questions about both UT and OSU.
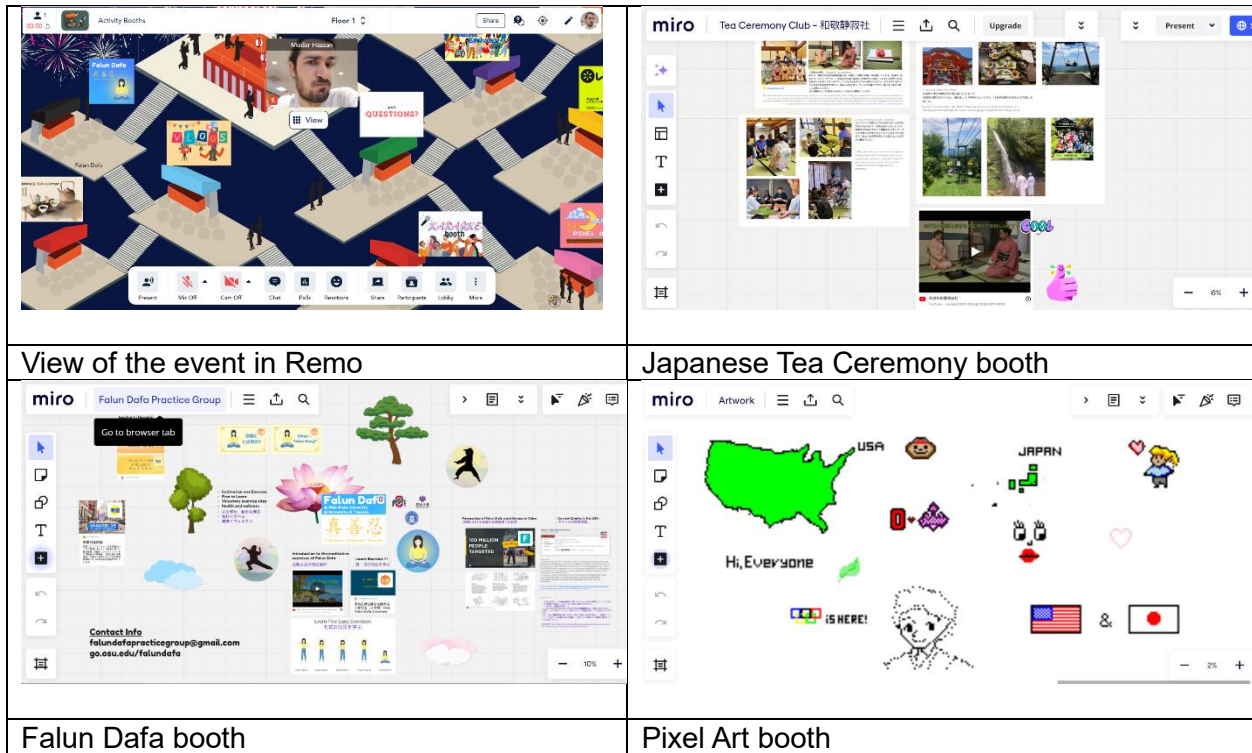

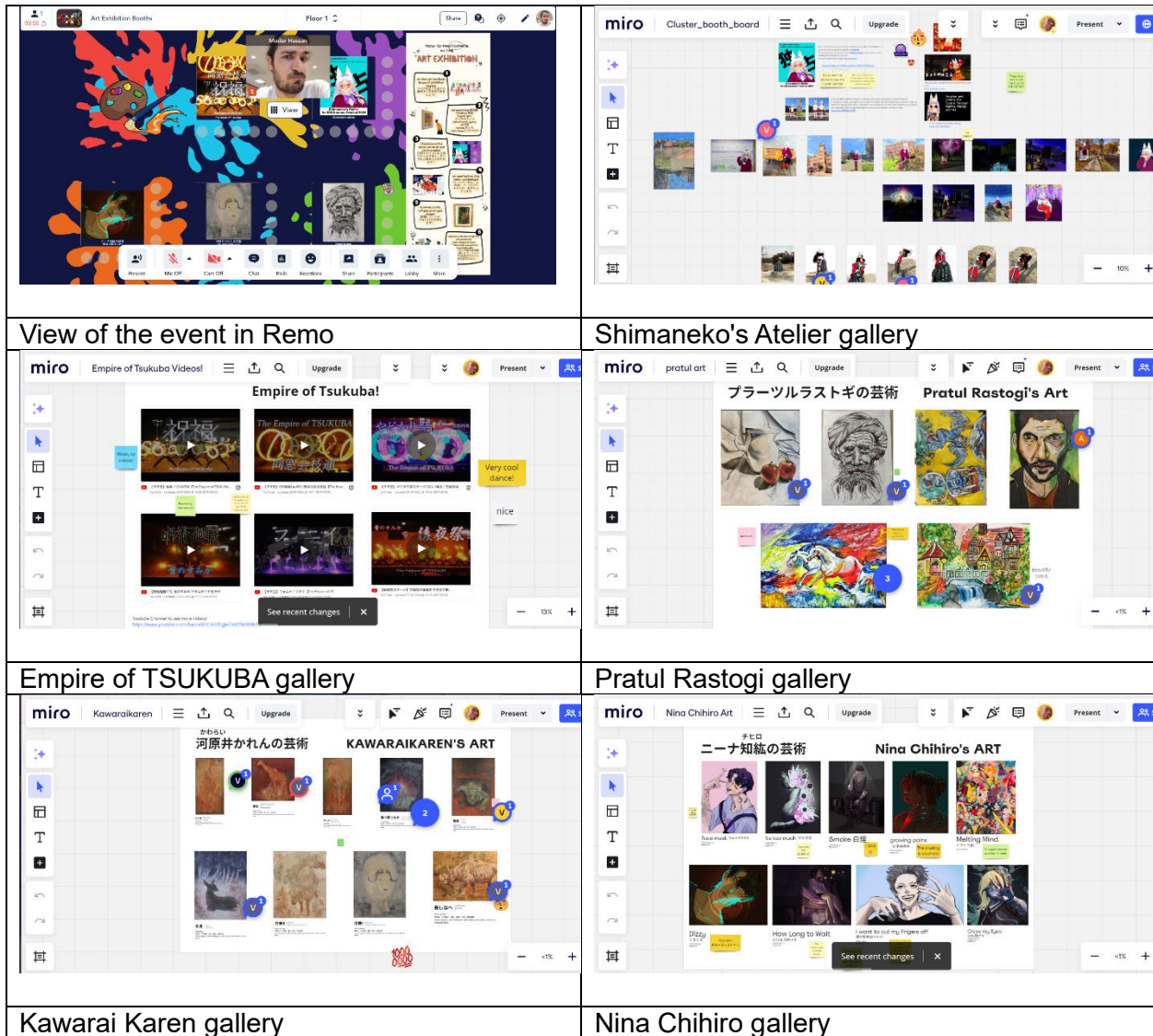| Talk show on the 2nd day | A snippet from the daily quiz |

Activity Booths event

The Activity Booths event hosted many booths managed by organizers from both UT and OSU. The booths included Vlogs, Karaoke, Language exchange, Falun Dafa, Japanese tea ceremony, Pixel art, and esports!

Many of the booths used online interactive boards of Miro, to enable the visitors to view and interact with their content at any time of the day. Snippets are below!

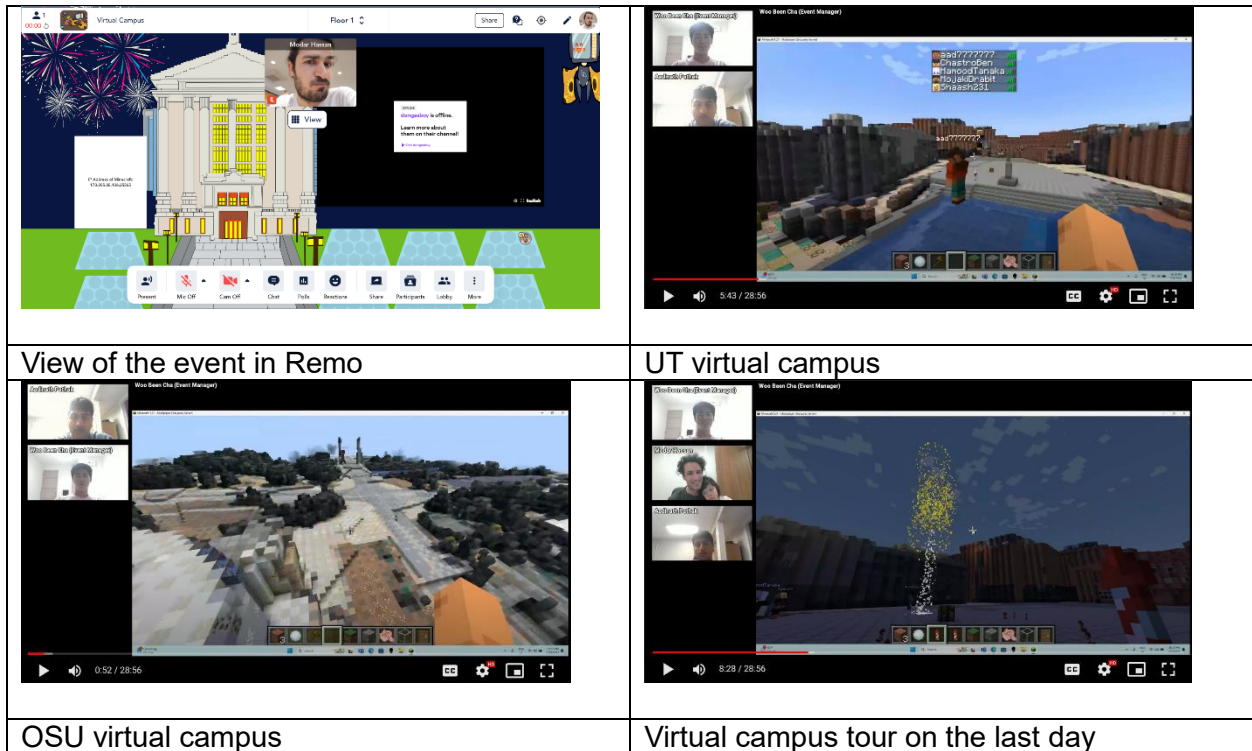|	
View of the event in Remo	Japanese Tea Ceremony booth
Falun Dafa booth	Pixel Art booth

Art Exhibition Booths event

The Art Exhibition Booths event hosted several booths showing art created by student and faculty member artists from both UT and OSU. This event was completely asynchronous, meaning that visitors could join the event at any time and view the art pieces, similar to a 24/7 art gallery. The visitors could leave comments and feedback to the artists, which we shared with them after the event. The exhibitions included paintings, dance, and digital arts! As usual, snippets are below!

View of the event in Remo

Shimaneko's Atelier gallery

Empire of TSUKUBA gallery

Pratul Rastogi gallery

Kawarai Karen gallery

Nina Chihiro gallery

Virtual Campus event

In the virtual Campus event, we created a virtual campus of both UT and OSU in the famous game Minecraft. We used Google Maps and special software to create the blueprints of both campuses, created a public online Minecraft server, and asked the visitors to restyle and decorate these campuses to look like the real ones.

Each day we had a campus tour hosted by one of the organizers, and on the last day, we streamed the virtual campus tour on the Main Stage event. Snippets of this activity are below:

View of the event in Remo	UT virtual campus
OSU virtual campus	Virtual campus tour on the last day

The ISS Online Summer Festival was a unique activity that brought over 160 UT and OSU students an opportunity for cultural and academic exchange over the Internet. One of the main challenges was the time difference between the two regions. The synchronous and asynchronous design of the various activities helped us find unique ways for the students from both sides to interact. We look forward to finding more innovative and interactive ways to participate in future iterations of this event.

Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to everyone who participated in this event. The organizers who dedicated many hours to realizing each of the events, the guests who gave unique and inspiring insights into their experiences in OSU, and the visitors who created a lively and welcoming atmosphere.

Link: ISS Summer Festival

Please look forward to more in the next year, join and bring your friends.

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