

# The Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn in New Orleans

## BOOK AND ART EXHIBITION

OCTOBER 18—28, 2012

JONES HALL 2F, JONES GALLERY, TULANE UNIVERSITY, NEW ORLEANS

**Organizers:** The Planning Committee for The Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn in New Orleans / City of Matsue  
**Co-organizers:** Asian Studies Program & Louisiana Research Collection of Tulane University  
**In cooperation with** Japan Club of New Orleans / Japanese Garden Foundation of New Orleans / Japanese Society of New Orleans  
**Supported by** City of New Orleans / Consulate-General of Japan at Nashville

Patrick Lafcadio HEARN (KOIZUMI Yakumo) lived in New Orleans for ten years from 1877 to 1887 working as a journalist. For Hearn who was accustomed to buying one way tickets and travelling the world, this was one of his most lengthy stops. Hearn started off his life in New Orleans with a fresh perspective of “The Gate of the Tropics”, that emits an orange radiance, writing that “New Orleans is especially a city of verandas, piazzas, porches and balconies”, and Hearn was gradually drawn into the blended Creole culture during his stay. He was completely absorbed in his search of uniquely Creole proverbs, music, cuisine, voodoo, graves, ghost stories, and so on. Hearn also published four books during his time in New Orleans, thus seriously beginning his career as a writer. There isn’t a shadow of a doubt that it was because of Hearn’s ten years in New Orleans where multi-cultural society was flourishing that his sense of non-prejudice and open mind fully matured.

Hearn was born to an Irish father, Charles HEARN, and a Greek mother, Rosa KASSIMATI, on the Ionian Island of Lefkada, June 27<sup>th</sup> 1850. Having been separated from his parents at an early age, Hearn spent his childhood in Ireland before travelling to the four corners of the globe and eventually settling in Japan in 1890. Hearn interpreted his new homeland objectively through his own unique perspective, growing to understand, and to love Japan. There is a lot that we of the modern day can learn from Hearn’s unprejudiced ideals and openness.

The Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn<sup>\*1</sup> art exhibition was organized and held for the first time in October of

2009 in The American College of Greece, Athens. In October of the following year it was reheld in Matsue Castle and the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum (in one of Hearn’s most beloved towns) primarily based on works by Japanese artists. Continuing on from this success, the exhibition once again went overseas, and was held in autumn of 2011 in the Nippon Club of New York. There they displayed original publications of Hearn’s writings alongside pieces of art. The collaboration of art and beautifully bound books (The Efstathiou Collection) was enjoyed by many visitors.

Matsue is an official friendship city of New Orleans, a beautiful town from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Both cities share the common point of having a lake and river as part of the city. Tulane University which will be this year’s venue for the art exhibition also houses one of the best Hearn collections in the world. Thus Tulane University as the venue for the Hearn Exhibition has a very deep meaning.

### Implementation

Hearn’s Open Mind, in other words his tolerance and cooperative mindset, materializes in many of his writings. In particular, *Gombo Zhebès* and *La Cuisine Creole* written during his time in New Orleans, and *Two Years in the French West Indies* written in the Antilles with the same Creole cultural backdrop. Hearn praised the blended culture of the Creoles, and his open-mindedness regarding the contact and fusion of cultures was a new way of thinking that crosses over to modern

post-colonialism.

“The Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn in New Orleans” will display approximately 23 pieces from the 2010 exhibition in Matsue Castle; 2 pieces from The American College of Greece; 3 of his favorite items from the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum in Matsue; 26 of first editions of the books mainly from his time in New Orleans (Rare Book Collection, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library,<sup>\*2</sup> Tulane University). Pieces by the artists freely expressing Hearn’s life, philosophy, and open-mindedness as interpreted from his works and letters will be displayed along with the artists’ remarks. The beautifully designed covers of Hearn’s original publications create a harmonious display along with Hearn’s memo pad that he used as a journalist in New Orleans, and his favorite pen and inkwell, sharing with the viewer a sense of Hearn’s journalistic and writer’s spirit.

#### \*1. The Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn

“The Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn” is a project that has been nurtured by Takis EFSTATHIOU (Art Coordinator, Greece) since 1996.

Thanks to his passion and hard work, the world’s first Lafcadio HEARN themed art exhibition was held in The American College of Greece Athens in 2009.

The following year, with 2010 marking the 120th anniversary of Hearn’s arrival in Japan and the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, the art exhibition called on even more artists and was this time held in the castle and Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum of Matsue city.

The collaboration of the 400 year old historical building and

the modern art created a unique atmosphere.

On both occasions, a sculpture of the same name as the exhibition, created by New York artist NODA Masaaki, was erected in Athens and in Matsue. In 2011, as one of its international locations, the exhibit was held in New York.

There the art was displayed along with the addition of a display of beautifully bound original publications of Hearn’s works (property of Efstathiou).

The New Orleans exhibit is being held in 2012 in cooperation with Tulane University. Respect for Hearn’s open mind is continually growing, and the exhibition will be held in Toyama Prefecture (Japan), where is located “Lafcadio Hearn Library”, in 2014.

#### \*2. Rare Book Collection, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library

The University of Tulane was originally established in 1834 as the Medical College of Louisiana, and was officially inaugurated as Tulane University in 1884. Tulane University has one of the most preeminent histories of American universities, and is even referred to as the Harvard of the south. Hearn learned much about Creole culture and medical practices through Rudolph MATAS, a young doctor recently graduated from Tulane University. Hearn’s first published novel, *Chita* (1889), was written with the aid of Matas. The Lafcadio Hearn Room, a special collection in The Howard-Tilton Memorial, was opened in March of 1941, where Dr. Matas himself delivered the memorial speech. The majority of The Howard-Tilton Memorial Library’s collection is made up of books donated by the Howard Memorial Library in 1940. What is interesting about this is that it was none other than Hearn himself who wrote a review article on the opening of the library published in the *Times Democrat*, yet another curious coincidence.

**Period** October 18—28, 2012

MON—SAT: 10:00AM—6:00PM SUN: 12:00PM—6:00PM

**Venue** Jones Hall 2F, Jones Gallery (Room 200), Tulane University, New Orleans

MAP: <http://tulane.edu/about/visiting/uptown-campus-map.cfm> (Building 25)

**URL** <http://tulane.edu/liberal-arts/events.cfm>

**Free Entrance**

## LECTURE BY BON KOIZUMI & OPENING CEREMONY FOLLOWED BY RECEPTION

October 18, 2012 6:00PM—8:00PM

Jones Hall, Tulane University

6:00PM—7:00PM Lecture by Bon KOIZUMI (Lafcadio HEARN’s Great Grandson)

7:00PM—8:00PM Opening Ceremony and Reception

### Contact Information

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2) **Lee MILLER**, Head, Louisiana Research Collection TEL: 504-314-7833 E-MAIL: [lmiller@tulane.edu](mailto:lmiller@tulane.edu)

*Lafcadio Hearn*  
1889, Philadelphia



**Lafcadio HEARN**

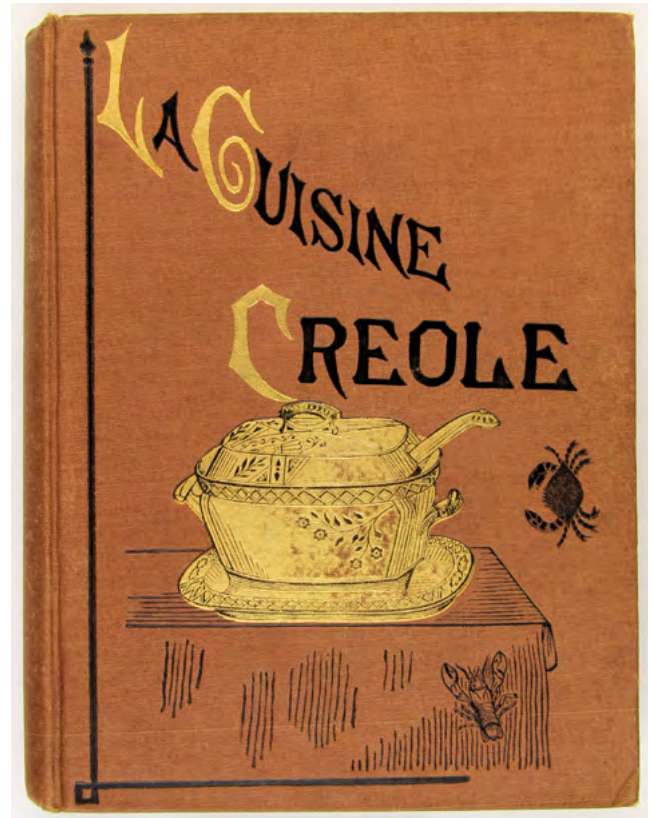
***La Cuisine Creole, A Collection of Culinary Recipes***

New York: W.H.Coleman

1885

Rare Book Collection, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library

This is one of three books published for the New Orleans World Expo. Hearn wrote down and gathered numerous recipes from seasoned Creole housewives, making it the very first publication of a collection of Creole recipes. Hearn's keen interests in Creole culture and his efforts as a folklorist are evident in this book.



**Lafcadio HEARN**

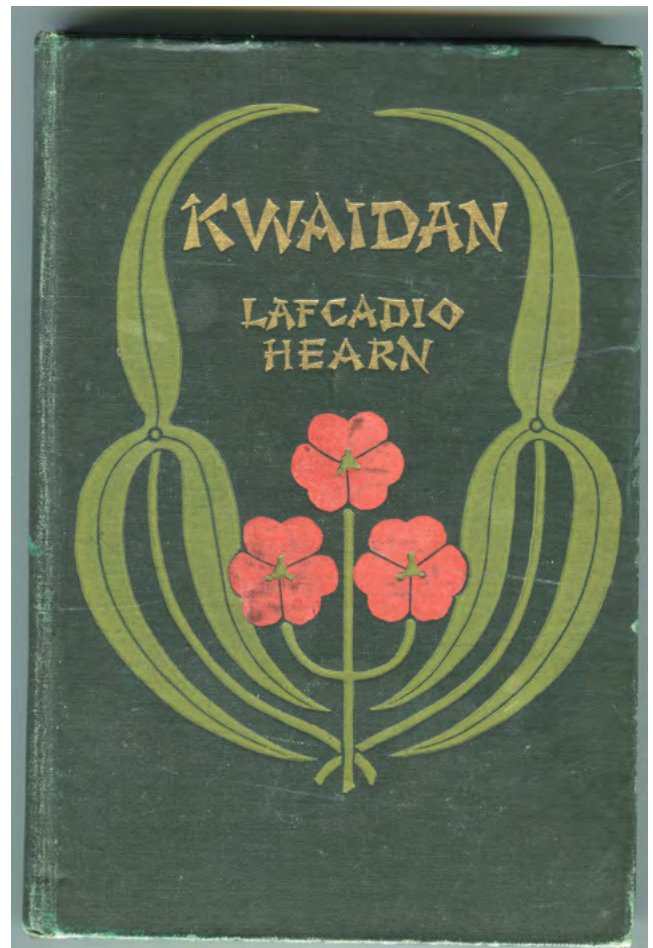
***Kwaidan***

Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

1904

Rare Book Collection, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library

The best of Hearn's works which belong to the genre of retold tales. He rewrote Japanese traditional grotesque tales narrated by his wife, Setsu, in English, having infused literary spirits in them. Hearn wrote this book to persuade the universal truth which he believed is the mental base for human beings to live on. The book has been translated into many languages.



## Ynez JOHNSTON

USA

### *Ocean Images*

33,5×30,5cm

water colors on shikishi paper

2010

Collection of Matsue City

Johnston's work is characterized by 'jigsaw' shapes reminiscent of primitive designs. Her unique style blends modernism and ancient art forms from her travels to Africa, Greece, Italy, Mexico, India, Japan and Nepal. It was these journeys that perpetuated her interest in exoticism and a mythical world, and this penchant for the foreign or otherworldly is embodied in the present homage to Lafcadio Hearn.

Megakles ROGAKOS

Former ACG Art Curator of The American College of Greece



## Masaaki NODA

Japan (act: USA)

### *The Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn*

55×27,5×18cm

stainless steel

2010

Collection of Matsue City

The two waves of the upper section cross and join at the sculptures centre to signify the connection and interaction between the East and the West, and also form a clear opening. The heart shape embodies Hearn's open mindedness and is designed to share said open mindedness far and wide amongst the next generation.

This sculpture located in The American College of Greece Athens and on the shore of Lake Shinji symbolically connects both countries.

These two sculptures modeled on Hearn's tolerance and open mind have been entitled "The Open Mind of Lafcadio Hearn", and lend the same name to the coinciding events.

