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Embassy of Japan in Luxembourg

Mangaka in Luxembourg – Part 3: Ikuko

Manga is on a steady rise, all over the world. In the last few years, Japanese comics have gotten more and more popular, even more so in the pandemic. With this international rise, many mangakas start out their careers and draw their own manga, some only recently, and some have been drawing for decades.

Luxembourg is no exception, there are manga here in this country as well, drawn by talented artists. In this article series, we would like to present some of them, continuing our series with Kumiyo Mitsuoka, aka “Kumiyonoe”. In our article series about mangaka in Luxembourg, we continue with a unique newcomer to the Luxembourgish manga scene.

Due to the current pandemic, we were not able to meet her in person, but conduct an interview via webcam. We hope you still enjoy this article.

After Sabrina Kaufmann and Kumiyonoe, let us take a look as: **Ikuko Ikeda**.

Ikuko came to Luxembourg in 2011, where she found access to the local comic and manga world. At LUXCON and at occasional visits to the Fantasybox in Luxembourg City, she noticed that there is definitely an interest in reading – but no publishers to release manga books. And what is a manga reader without a local book to read?

So, she decided to not only draw manga herself, and after gathering

feedback at LUXCON, and feeling supported by other artists’ opinions, she decided: found a publishing brand, KIWI E.L.G., which also takes care and its responsible of manuscripts. By being both into publishing and a creating, she can be fully independent, and even offer to publish other artists in the future. She advocates for more people to pick up drawing, as “we need more artists, both online and offline”, she says.

She studied 2D/3D design for video game works at LISAA (L’Institut Supérieur des Arts Appliqués) in Paris, but soon went into the direction of the mangaka role instead. Her mother was an illustrator, her father was a writer – the combination of the two parental skills, writing and drawing, fused together in her original work. Her start with manga was reading Tensai Bakabon and other children’s stories



Ikuko at her stand in Salon Walferdange, where she draws portraits and sells her own work at the convention.

before going to bed, and then going over to the big Shonen and Shojo Manga, such as “Saint Seiya” and “Sailor Moon”. Her mother introduced her later on to more mature works, such as Osamu Tezuka’s “Buddha” and “Black Jack”.

Looking at her work, it is fascinating to see the many skills and styles Ikuko encapsulates, influenced by many different works, but also by her different skillsets and interests. Ikuko draws shorter works, often situated in the genre of comedy, slice of life and gag manga. But that is not all, her talent also includes sci-fi, adventure and mystery. On her website, she publishes animation as well, and has a small series of historical animated films for younger audiences on the website “Whisperies”, which focus on many different tales and topics: Flying on a big bird around the Saarland, a Japanese samurai story or classic Christmas tales.

Her latest works include “Tête de COVID”, a comedy manga about the recent escapades of the global pandemic – a work to spread more laughter through these difficult times.

Upon asking what Ikuko would wish for the most regarding the manga culture in

Luxembourg, she wishes for something new, something that would “change up the pace” from the usual works that people see as popular. An unusual genre mix perhaps, like the mix of poetry and action, as most manga that sell in Europe and Luxembourg are classic adventure stories.

For her own future plans, Ikuko wants to publish her works online as ebooks, and look into webtoon publishing in 2022. She wishes to draw a sequel of her work “Un Confinement sans faim”, and focus on more serious series in the future. A yet unnamed project of a mix between romance and Japanese legends is on her mind. In addition, in 2021, she trained in therapy and psychology at ALTHA (Académie Luxembourgeoise des Thérapies HARmonisantes) as well as other complementary training in other organisations, for her online offers of “Coach artistique et bien-être”.

We are happy to have Ikuko as the newest addition to the mangakas in Luxembourg, and her new approach to publishing, as well as her multi-faceted talent in styles and stories, both on paper and in animation!

Links:

<https://ikukoikeda.com/>

<https://ikukoikeda.com/videos-whisperies-francais/>

This article concludes our series on “Anime and Manga in Luxembourg”, and we thank you very much for your attention, support and feedback! It was a pleasure to research and interview for these articles, and 2022 will continue with brand-new reports and articles regarding Japanese and Luxembourgish culture all around Anime and Manga!



Ikuko IKEDA
Tête de Covid !

