

Library devoted to Japan novelist Murakami to open in Tokyo

By Mari Yamaguchi
The Associated Press

TOKYO — A library devoted to Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami's writings, scrapbooks, and record collection has opened in Tokyo as a spot for literary research, cultural exchange, and a gathering spot for his fans.

The Haruki Murakami library, which opened October 1 at Waseda University, his alma mater, features a replica of his study with a simple desk, rows of bookshelves, and a record player, as well as a café run by students that serves his favorite dark roast coffee.

"I hope this will be a place where students can freely exchange and materialize ideas — a free, unique, and fresh spot on the university campus," Murakami, 72, said at a news conference announcing the library's opening.

Visitors enter through a tunnel-like passageway in the five-story building designed and renovated by architect Kengo Kuma, one of Murakami's many fans and the designer of the Tokyo Olympics stadium. Kuma said tunnels are his image of Murakami's stories, in which protagonists often travel between the real and the surreal.

The library, officially called the Waseda International House of Literature, currently houses about 3,000 of Murakami's books, manuscripts, and other materials, including translations of his work in dozens of languages, and part of his massive collection of records. At a lounge next to the library, there is an audio room where records are on display, some stamped "Petercat," the name of the jazz bar he ran after graduating from Waseda.



They include records by Billie Holiday, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, and Miles Davis.

"I wish a place like this had been built after my death, so I can rest in peace and have someone take care of it," Murakami

MURAKAMI'S LIBRARY. A journalist visits (top photo) and a man sits outside (bottom photo) Waseda University's new Haruki Murakami library in Tokyo. The library, officially called the Waseda International House of Literature, currently houses about 3,000 of Murakami's books, manuscripts, and other materials. (AP Photos/Eugene Hoshiko)

joked. "I feel a bit nervous seeing it while I'm still alive."

Murakami said he will contribute as much as possible to the library. It currently focuses on his works, but he said he hopes it will be expanded to include those of other novelists "so it becomes a wide-ranging and fluid research space."

After his 1979 debut novel, *Hear the Wind Sing*, the 1987 romance *Norwegian Wood* became his first bestseller, establishing him as a young literary star. He is also known for bestsellers such as *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, and *1Q84*, and is a perennial candidate for the Nobel Literature Prize.

Murakami is an avid listener and collector of music ranging from classical to jazz and rock, and it serves as an important motif in many of his stories. He also has written books on music.

Beginning in 2018, Murakami has hosted a "Murakami Radio" show on Tokyo FM on which he plays his favorite music and sometimes takes requests and questions from listeners.


The archive project emerged in 2018 when Murakami offered to donate his collection of materials, which had grown so much over the past 40 years that he was running out of storage space at his home and office.


Tadashi Yanai, the founder of the parent company of Uniqlo and a Waseda alumnus, donated 1.2 billion yen (\$11 million) for the cost of the library.


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