

International Symposium

Creating Diverse Narratives:

The Arts of Japan in Museums Exhibitions

January 18, 2020

Heiseikan Auditorium, Tokyo National Museum



Introduction to the Symposium

In this age of global exchange, people, things, and information are crossing national borders on an unprecedented scale. People of diverse backgrounds are visiting museums around the world, with each person perceiving the art they encounter in different ways.

Moreover, the roles of museums are being reevaluated and the definition of “Japanese” art is becoming more inclusive. Narratives of Japanese art are also becoming more nuanced, with many scholars sharing the view that because the arts of Japan are so diverse and complex, they cannot be explained through a few essential characteristics.

This symposium will focus on the question of how Japanese art may be presented from diverse points of view in museum exhibitions. Generally, we may regard museums as places that create narratives between past and present through physical objects. Those who will present at this symposium—curators of Japanese art from Europe, the United States, and Japan—create exhibitions that are influenced by their respective cultures and environments. Through these exhibitions they interact with diverse audiences. Each curator and visitor creates his or her own narrative of Japanese art, yet none of these narratives is the single “correct” one.

Through concrete examples of museum exhibitions and the narratives they create, this symposium will provide an opportunity to better understand the diversity and complexity of Japanese art.

Kazutaka Kawano

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9:30-10:00	Registration
10:00-10:15	Opening Remarks Greetings from the Organizers Mr. Masami Zeniya (Executive Director, Tokyo National Museum) Chairperson: Mr. Kazutaka Kawano (Supervisor, Research Div., Curatorial Research Dept., Tokyo National Museum)
10:15-11:15	Keynote speech : <i>Narratives of Japanese Art in European and North American Museums</i> Dr. Kenji Yoshida (Director-General, National Museum of Ethnology)
11:15-11:55	Presentation 1 : <i>America's National Museum of Asian Art: Displaying and Collecting Japanese Paintings at the Freer Gallery of Art</i> Dr. Frank Feltens (The Japan Foundation Assistant Curator of Japanese Art, Freer Gallery of Art)
11:55-13:30	Lunch Break
13:30-14:10	Presentation 2 : <i>Against the Grain: Untraditional Explorations, Interpretations and Extrapolations of Japanese Woodblock Prints</i> Mr. Stephen Salel (Robert F. Lange Foundation Curator of Japanese Art, Honolulu Museum of Art)
14:10-14:50	Presentation 3 : <i>Curating Special exhibitions of Japanese Arts for an Overseas Audience</i> Dr. Khanh Trinh (Curator of Japanese and Korean Art, Museum Rietberg Zurich)
14:50-15:30	Presentation 4 : <i>An Unprecedented Presentation of Japanese Art at the Exhibition Marcel Duchamp and Japanese Art</i> Mr. Masato Matsushima (Supervisor, Planning, National Center for promotion of Cultural Properties, Tokyo National Museum)
15:30-15:45	Break
15:45-17:05	Panel Discussion Moderated by Ms. Satomi Kito (Special Research Chair, Curatorial Planning Dept., Tokyo National Museum)
17:05-17:20	Closing Remarks Mr. Hiroyuki Shimatani (Executive Director, Kyusyu National Museum)
