PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM

THE ROLES AND REPRESENTATIONS OF ANIMALS IN JAPANESE ART AND CULTURE

June 7, 2019
10:30 – 5:00
East Building Auditorium
National Gallery of Art
10:30 – 10:35
Introduction

Robert T. Singer, curator and head, department of Japanese art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

SPIRITUAL AND SUPERNATURAL WORLDS

10:35 – 11:05
The War of the Twelve Animals: Anthropomorphosis and Allegory in Medieval Japan

Sarah E. Thompson, curator of Japanese art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

11:05 – 11:35
A Compassionate Heart for Pitiful Beasts: Animals in Japanese Religions

Barbara R. Ambros, professor in East Asian religions and department chair, department of religious studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and co-chair, Animals and Religion Group, American Academy of Religions

11:35 – 12:05
Bookish Beasts: Reading Animals in Japanese Illustrated Fiction

R. Keller Kimbrough, professor of Japanese, department of Asian languages and civilizations, University of Colorado, Boulder

12:05 – 1:15 BREAK

THE NATURAL WORLD

1:15 – 1:45
East Meets West: The Introduction of Exotic Animals to Japan

Rory A.W. Browne, director of the academic advising center and associate dean of Morrisey College of Arts and Sciences, Boston College
1:45 – 2:15
*Let the Animals Speak/The Language of Animals in Japan*

Daniel McKee, adjunct assistant professor and bibliographer, department of Asian studies, Cornell University

2:15 – 2:45
*Art, Science, and the Representation of Nature*

Federico Marcon, associate professor of East Asian studies and history and director of graduate studies, Princeton University

2:45 – 3:00 BREAK

THE MODERN WORLD

3:00 – 3:30
*Animals in Contemporary Japanese Art and Fashion: Yayoi Kusama, Takashi Murakami, Issey Miyake*

Miwako Tezuka, consulting curator, Reversible Destiny Foundation

3:30 – 5:00
*Discussion*

Robert T. Singer will moderate a discussion with the symposium speakers
BARBARA R. AMBROS is a professor in East Asian religions in the department of religious studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research on Japanese religions has focused on human-animal relationships, gender studies, and place, space, and pilgrimage. She is the author of Women in Japanese Religions (New York University Press, 2015); Bones of Contention: Animals and Religion in Contemporary Japan (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2012); and Emplacing a Pilgrimage: The Early Modern Ōyama Cult and Regional Religion (Harvard University Asia Center, 2008). She is co-chair of the Animals and Religion Group of the American Academy of Religions.

RORY A.W. BROWNE is the associate dean and director of the academic advising center of Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences at Boston College. An Oxford-educated historian of Britain and France, Browne has taught a wide range of Western European history, but he also offers courses in the history of animals and the environment. Born within sound of the lions roaring and the sea lions honking at the venerable London Zoo, he has always wanted to work with animals and now serves on the Board of Directors of Zoo New England, the non-profit that manages the Boston area’s two zoos. He has contributed articles on animals to the catalogs of two exhibitions of Japanese art at BC’s McMullen Museum, Portugal, Jesuits, and Japan: Spiritual Beliefs and Earthly Goods (2013) and Eaglemania: Collecting Japanese Art in Gilded Age America (2019).

Federico Marcon studies early modern Japan and is interested in the interaction of social, economic, and political dynamics in the formation of intellectual discourses and scientific knowledge in the early modern world. A native of Italy, he earned a laurea degree in East Asian Languages and Cultures from the Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, and after extended periods of research in Japan at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and Waseda University, he earned a PhD from the History-East Asia program of Columbia University. Since 2011, Marcon has been working at Princeton University, where he now serves as associate professor of East Asian studies and history and director of graduate studies. His first book, The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan (The University of Chicago Press, 2015), is a social and intellectual history of the creation, developments, institutionalization and eventual disappearance of a field of natural history in Tokugawa Japan. Marcon is currently working on two book manuscripts: the first is titled “Fascism: History of a Word;” the second, provisionally titled Money Talks: The Life of Money in Early Modern Japan, investigates the social and intellectual consequences of the monetization of Japanese society between the seventeenth and the mid-nineteenth century.
**DANIEL MCKEE** brings a background in Japanese literature to the study of art. His fascination with relationships between image and text has led him to a range of explorations, from such granular issues as the role of calligraphic inscriptions on particular paintings and prints to more expansive theories regarding the role of poetry in the advancement of new visual aesthetics. His area of particular focus is print culture of the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), including books and commercial prints (ukiyo-e), but with a special focus on *surimono*, privately commissioned woodblock prints with poetry. McKee’s major publications have been on surimono, including *Colored in the Year’s New Light: Surimono from the Becker Collection*, which introduced over 150 never-before-treated surimono with complete poetic translations. He has also contributed essays and content to over a half-dozen other publications on surimono, *haiga* (haiku paintings), ukiyo-e, illustrated Japanese books, and Japanese picture scrolls. Faculty member in the department of Asian studies at Cornell University, McKee serves as Japanese bibliographer in the University Library and collaborates often with the Johnson Museum of Art.

SARAH E. THOMPSON is a curator of Japanese art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), one of four working with the largest and finest collection of Japanese art outside Japan. With degrees in linguistics from Harvard University and Japanese art from Columbia University, she taught Japanese and Asian art history at Vassar College, Oberlin College, and the University of Oregon before joining the MFA in 2004. Her current specialty is Japanese prints; Thompson has created an online digital catalogue of the MFA’s collection of over 50,000 Japanese prints. She has curated numerous exhibitions, most recently a Hokusai retrospective in 2015 and Tattoos in Japanese Prints, which opened at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco on May 31. Thompson is also very interested in Yamato-e narrative painting and recently published a text translation of the fifteenth-century Picture Scroll of the War of the Twelve Animals, the subject of her doctoral dissertation and this symposium lecture.