



Co-organizer's Statement

The Japan Foundation is an institution dedicated to carrying out comprehensive international cultural exchange throughout the world. With the objective of deepening mutual understanding between Japan and other countries/regions, our various activities and information services create opportunities for people-to-people interactions.

The Japan Foundation was established in October 1972 as a special legal entity supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In October 2003, it was reorganized as an independent administrative institution. In addition to its programs for overseas Japanese-language education, Japanese studies, and intellectual exchange activities, the Foundation has organized performing arts events and epoch-making exhibitions worldwide under its arts and cultural exchange programs. In the United States of America, such exhibitions include *Against Nature: Japanese Art in the Eighties* (1989), *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (1994), *The History of Japanese Photography* (2003), *Tokyo 1955-1970: A New Avant-Garde* (2012), and recently, *Sōtatsu: Making Waves* and *Between Action and the Unknown: The Art of Kazuo Shiraga and Sadamasa Motonaga*, both in 2015.

The Life of Animals in Japanese Art is the third exhibition to be organized by the Japan Foundation in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art, Washington, following *Japan: The Shaping of Daimyo Culture, 1185-1868* (1988), and *Edo: Art in Japan 1615-1868* (1998).

The exhibition features more than 300 works that demonstrate the Japanese view of nature over the centuries, revealing a familiarity with animals that results from coexistence with nature instead of conflict. Visitors to the exhibition have the opportunity to discover the appeal of this particular aspect of Japan's history and art.

The exhibition is organized as part of "Japan 2019," a series of events highlighting Japanese arts and culture in the U.S. throughout 2019, following the highly successful "Japonismes 2018" cultural initiative in France. Other exhibitions in the official program for *Japan 2019* include, *The Tale of Genji: A Japanese Classic Illuminated* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Mar. 5–Jun. 16), and *Shinto: Discovery of the Divine in Japanese Art* at the Cleveland Museum of Art (Apr. 9–Jun. 30). Performing arts events include, Satoshi Miyagi's *Antigone* at the Park Avenue Armory in New York (Sep. 25–Oct. 6) and a New York performance of *Sugimoto Bunraku Sonezaki Shinju: The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* directed by Hiroshi Sugimoto (Oct. 19–22, the venue to be announced on June 13). Each of the *Japan 2019* exhibitions and events is an opportunity to explore and enjoy the world of Japanese arts and culture in the United States.