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.