



Update: July 18, 2019 (original release date: September 12, 2018)

Extended Hours Announced for Final Weeks of *The Life of Animals in Japanese Art*

From August 3 through the exhibition's final day on August 18, ***The Life of Animals in Japanese Art*** will stay open late until 8pm. In addition to recovering hours that were lost when the exhibition's opening was delayed to June 2 as a result of the partial government shutdown and inclement weather, the extended hours will give visitors the opportunity to enjoy rare evening hours. During the extended hours, visitors can learn more during pop-up talks by Gallery educators, explore the exhibition with two engaging audio tours, and browse the Gallery's East Shop, which features a full suite of merchandise inspired by the exhibition.

Historic Exhibition of 17 Centuries of Animals in Japanese Art Will Showcase Masterpieces That Rarely Leave Japan



Unknown Artist, *Deer Bearing Symbols of the Kasuga Deities*, Nanboku-chō period, 14th century, bronze, Hosomi Museum

Washington, DC—Artworks representing animals—real or imaginary, religious or secular—span the full breadth and splendor of Japanese artistic production. The National Gallery of Art, Washington, presents ***The Life of Animals in Japanese Art***, the first exhibition devoted to the subject, covering 17 centuries (from the fifth century to the present day) and a wide variety of media—sculpture, painting, lacquerwork, ceramics, metalwork, textile, and the woodblock print. On view from June 2 through August 18, 2019, the exhibition features more than 300 works, drawn from 66 Japanese and 30 American public and private collections. The artists represented range from Sesson Shūkei, Itō Jakuchū, Soga Shōhaku, Katsushika Hokusai, Utagawa Kuniyoshi to Okamoto Tarō, Kusama Yayoi, Issey Miyake, Nara Yoshitomo, and Murakami Takashi.

Many of the nearly 180 works traveling from Japan are masterpieces that rarely—if ever—leave the country, including seven designated as an Important Cultural Property by the Japanese government. Three of the registered artworks are from the Tokyo National Museum: the six-foot-tall *Monju Bosatsu Seated on a Lion, with Standing Attendants* (1273) by the Buddhist sculptor Kōen; the intricately carved wood sculpture *Aged Monkey* (1893) by Takamura Kōun; and the *Footed Bowl with Applied*

Crabs (19th century) by Miyagawa Kōzan I. Two Buddhist hanging scrolls are on loan from the Nara National Museum: *Sword with Kurikara Dragon and Two Child Acolytes* (13th century) and *Fugen Enmei* (13th century). Finally, the wood sculpture *Fugen's Elephant* (13th century) is on loan from a private collection, and a spectacular bronze, *Deer Bearing Symbols of the Kasuga Deities* (14th century), is on loan from the Hosomi Museum, Kyoto.

Due to light-sensitivity, some 50 objects will be rotated halfway through the exhibition in early July. After July 13, repeat visitors will have the opportunity to see an additional selection of textiles, paintings, and armor. A robust schedule of programs will support the exhibition, ranging from a family audio tour and community weekend to a public symposium and extensive film series.

This historic exhibition is co-organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, the Japan Foundation, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), with special cooperation from the Tokyo National Museum. The exhibition is curated by Robert T. Singer, curator and department head, Japanese art, LACMA, and Masatomo Kawai, director, Chiba City Museum of Art, in consultation with a team of esteemed historians of Japanese art. LACMA is presenting an abbreviated version of the exhibition, titled *Every Living Thing: Animals in Japanese Art* from September 22 through December 8, 2019. The Gallery's presentation of the exhibition, covering 18,000 square feet in the East Building Concourse, is organized into thematic sections that explore the various roles animals have played in the art of Japan. A fully illustrated catalog has been published in association with Princeton University Press.

"This summer the Gallery's East Building will transform into an artful zoo, home to a plethora of animals made of wood, ink, or silk rather than fur, feathers, or scales. While zoologists and animal lovers will be particularly delighted by the exhibition, the objects will offer all our visitors a magnificent look at centuries of Japanese art history," said Kaywin Feldman, director, National Gallery of Art.

"Bringing these treasures to Washington is the result of a historic partnership between the Gallery, the Japan Foundation, and LACMA. We are deeply honored to work with the Japan Foundation to share these works with American audiences and grateful for their invaluable assistance in organizing and coordinating the many Japanese loans. We are also deeply indebted to the many institutions who have agreed to part temporarily with their treasures, and particularly to the Tokyo National Museum, the largest Japanese lender, which has offered 26 works from its unparalleled collection."

"The Japan Foundation creates global opportunities to foster friendship, trust, and mutual understanding through culture, language, and dialogue, to cultivate friendship and ties between Japan and the world. We believe this is a basis for building a truly peaceful and rich world," said Hiroyasu Ando, president, the Japan Foundation. "To achieve this mission, the Japan Foundation has organized numerous cultural events around the world and in the U.S. Among them, the upcoming exhibition of ***The Life of Animals in Japanese Art*** is one of the most ambitious and creative projects, and will display artworks of high quality for everyone's enjoyment. One may call these works of art—

created through long, close interactions between animals and Japanese people over 1,600 years—a gift from humans to animals. I very much look forward to sharing this gift with our American friends."

Exhibition Support

The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. The Robert and Mercedes Eichholz Foundation also kindly provided a leadership gift for this exhibition. Additional funding is provided by The Exhibition Circle of the National Gallery of Art and the Annenberg Fund for the International Exchange of Art. Additional support is provided by All Nippon Airways (ANA).

The exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

The exhibition is part of *Japan 2019*, an initiative to promote Japanese culture in the United States.

Exhibition Organization and Curators

The exhibition is coorganized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Japan Foundation, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, with special cooperation from the Tokyo National Museum.

The exhibition's curators Robert T. Singer, curator and department head, Japanese art, LACMA, and Masatomo Kawai, director, Chiba City Museum of Art, worked in consultation with a team of esteemed historians of Japanese art: Ryusuke Asami, supervisor, curatorial planning department, Tokyo National Museum; Masaaki Arakawa, professor, Gakushuin University; Hiroyuki Kano, former professor, Doshisha University; Mika Kuraya, chief curator, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; Yasuyuki Sasaki, curator, Suntory Museum of Art; Tomoko Matsuo, senior curator, Chiba City Museum of Art; Nobuhiko Maruyama, professor, Musashi University; and Hiroshi Ikeda, honorary researcher, Tokyo National Museum.

Exhibition Dates

National Gallery of Art, Washington, June 2–August 18, 2019

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, September 22–December 8, 2019

Extended Hours

From August 3 through the exhibition's final day on August 18, *The Life of Animals in Japanese Art* will stay open late until 8pm. In addition to recovering hours that were lost when the exhibition's opening was delayed to June 2 as a result of the partial government shutdown and inclement weather, the extended hours will give visitors the opportunity to enjoy rare evening hours. During the

extended hours, visitors can learn more during pop-up talks by Gallery educators, explore the exhibition with two engaging audio tours, and browse the Gallery's East Shop, which features a full suite of merchandise inspired by the exhibition.

Exhibition Highlights

The Life of Animals in Japanese Art takes an expansive look at the representation of animals in a variety of art forms, including painted screens, hanging scrolls, woodblock prints, netsuke, ceramic plates, kimono, and samurai helmets. The selection portrays all types of creatures—from foxes and frogs, snakes and sparrows to mythical animals such as dragons, phoenixes, and *kappa* river sprites. To explore the many roles animals have played in Japanese culture, objects are divided into thematic sections: Ancient Japan; The Japanese Zodiac; Religion: Buddhism, Zen, Shinto; Myth and Folklore; The World of the Samurai; Exotic Creatures and the Study of Nature; The Natural World: Creatures on Land, in the Air, and in Rivers and Seas; and The World of Leisure.

Since antiquity, animals have held spiritual and symbolic significance in Japanese culture, as evidenced by haniwa, ancient clay sculptures that were placed around gravesites, possibly to protect the dead in the afterlife. A sixth-century haniwahorse on loan from LACMA—standing nearly four feet tall—is one of the largest known sculptures of this animal from the period. In Buddhism, Shinto, and Zen, artworks depicting animals were commonly given places of prominence in temples and shrines according to the creatures' divine duties. For instance, Shinto deer were revered as messengers to—or even stand-ins for—the deities, as illustrated by the 15th-century *Kasuga Deer Mandala*, on loan from the Art Institute of Chicago.

The allegorical power of animals is not limited to the spiritual realm; they carry many meanings in secular works of art as well. Objects portraying the Japanese zodiac animals individually were commonly collected as symbols of an individual's identity. Even rarer are works that depict all 12 animals of the zodiac together. The exhibition includes several examples: a set of 19th-century woodblock prints by Utagawa Kuniyoshi on loan from the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, a finely embroidered 19th-century *Kosode with the Twelve Zodiac Animals* on loan from the National Museum of Japanese History, and a remarkable mid-to-late-19th-century netsuke by Kaigyokusai Masatsugu on loan from LACMA, with all 12 zodiac animals intertwined in one small piece of carved ivory.

Animals were popularly described in myth and folklore in anthropomorphic terms, often as a means of disguising social critiques. Ukita Ikkei's *Tale of a Strange Marriage* (c. 1858), on loan from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, illustrates a fox wedding as a thinly veiled criticism of the marriage of the Tokugawa shogun to an imperial princess. The painting was left unfinished after Ikkei was arrested in 1858 for his criticism of the Tokugawa shogunate, and died shortly after being released from prison a year later. Humans also adopted the form of, or decorated themselves with, animals for their symbolic

energy. Samurai commonly wore armor decorated with dragons or helmets in the shapes of rabbit ears, deer antlers, or the mythological *shachihoko*, which has the head of a tiger and body of a carp.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, artists developed an interest in the study of the natural world and drawing individual animals directly from life. Inspiration for most images of animals had previously come from earlier examples in art. While Itō Jakuchū painted with lifelike detail every barb in every vane of a feather in *Pair of Cranes and Morning Sun* (c. 1755–1756), on loan from the Tekisuiken Memorial Foundation of Culture, Utagawa Hiroshige carved every scale of a seabream in *A Shoal of Fishes*, his 19th-century woodblock print series on loan from the Harvard Art Museums. Many artists depicted numerous animals within a single species in order to convey their auspicious meanings. An elaborate formal kimono like the 19th-century *Uchikake with Phoenix and Birds*, on loan from the Kyoto National Museum, would have brought its wearer good luck, while giving someone a hanging scroll like *One Hundred Rabbits* (1784) by Maruyama Ōkyo, on loan from a private collection in Japan, conveyed a wish for prosperity and plenitude.

Contemporary artworks spread throughout the exhibition demonstrate the influence of traditional representations of animals on the work of living Japanese artists. Nawa Kōhei's *PixCell-Bambi #14* (2015) is installed alongside the work that inspired it, the medieval *Deer Bearing Symbols of the Kasuga Deities*, while Kusama Yayoi's polka-dotted three-dimensional dogs are in conversation with haniwa animals. On loan from the Broad Art Foundation, Murakami's 82-foot-long vibrant painting *In the Land of the Dead, Stepping on the Tail of a Rainbow* (2014) was created in response to the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Murakami, with his signature flourish and vibrant palette, drew inspiration from the work of Shōhaku and Jakuchū, while embellishing animals from Japanese art history, folklore, and popular culture, such as the *shachihoko*. Many of the works exhibited employ distinctly contemporary techniques to depict animals. Whimsical creations by designer Issey Miyake transform wearers into a starfish, a monkey, or a swallow. Tokyo-based collective teamLab's *Untitled, Fragmented, Repeated and Impermanent World* (2013), which greets visitors before they descend into the exhibition, takes inspiration for its pixelated depiction of an abundance of mythical and real animals from the unusual grid technique that Jakuchū used in folding screens depicting birds and animals. Another digital work, *Chirping* (2016) by Tabaimo, was created in response to a set of scrolls from the collection of the Seattle Art Museum (in-kind support for projection equipment is provided by NEC Display Solutions, Inc.).

Exhibition Catalog

Published by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, in association with Princeton University Press, a richly illustrated catalog features contributions by the exhibition's curators and an international team of esteemed experts in Japanese art. Included are essays by scholars Barbara Rossetti Ambros, department chair, religious studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Thomas Hare, William Sauter LaPorte '28 Professor in Regional Studies and professor of comparative literature, Princeton

University; and Federico Marcon, associate professor of East Asian studies and history, Princeton University. With 425 illustrations and some 400 pages, the catalog will be available in spring 2019 in the Gallery's shops, at shop.nga.gov, or by calling (800) 697-9350 or (202) 842-6002; faxing (202) 789-3047; or emailing mailorder@nga.gov.

The exhibition catalog is made possible through the generous support of the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

Exhibition-Inspired Retail

Facing the exhibition entrance, the East Shop will transform to highlight both artwork from the exhibition as well as the importance of animals across Japanese history and culture. Visitors can commemorate their visit with a full suite of custom-made items chosen to complement the show and inspired by Japanese art and design. Several items will be imported from Japan such as handcrafted jewelry from artisan Chikako Yajima and a collection of handmade Zodiac sake cups. Other merchandise is designed by Japanese artists; artist Tadashi Ura has designed cards featuring *suibokuga* ink-wash paintings of animals, and a collaboration between Czech architect Tereza Hradilková and Japanese artist Kumi Kobayashi has led to paper art featuring animals. In addition to the exhibition catalog, the Gallery has curated a large selection of scholarly as well as artistic books. Other merchandise includes a Gallery-designed custom canvas tote, an exhibition poster, a zodiac desk calendar, postcards, and magnets. Plush animals, art supplies, and other toys—including a create-your-own paper robot dog—will delight visitors of all ages. Items are available for purchase at the East Shop, in the Gallery's [online store](#), and by emailing customer.service@nga.gov.

Related Programs and Resources

Family Audio Tours and Activity Guide

Available at the Concourse Information Desk and on nga.gov/tours

Children and adults can explore *The Life of Animals in Japanese Art* together with two audio tours of the exhibition. The tours are designed to spark conversation and inspire close looking and engagement with the objects on view. Developed as two 12-stop tours, visitors can learn about the stories and folklore represented in the works of art, as well as explore the symbolism of the many animals depicted in the show. An accompanying activity guide includes a scavenger hunt and drawing prompt.

Evenings at the Edge

Animals in Art

May 9, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Register at nga.gov/evenings

Take a walk on the wild side during the final Evenings at the Edge of the 2018–2019 season. Talks,

activities, and performances are inspired by *The Life of Animals in Japanese Art*. Expand your linguistic repertoire with Speed Japanese lessons, explore how animals have captivated artists throughout history and across cultures, and celebrate Japanese culture with performances and art-making stations.

Concert

Yumi Kurosawa, koto

With special guests Anubrata Chatterjee, tabla, and Virgil Gadsen, dancer

May 19, 3:30 p.m.

West Building, West Garden Court

This performance brings together the elements of Japan's spiritual philosophy and the importance of the animal world as represented in literature, art, dance, and music. To illustrate the soundscape of our story, the koto's melodic timbre recalls Japan's history with chant, the tabla reminds us of the heartbeat, and the featured element of dance echoes the natural world of movement.

Lecture

Introduction to the Exhibition—The Life of Animals in Japanese Art

June 2, 2:00 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

Livestreamed on nga.gov/live

Robert T. Singer, curator and department head, Japanese art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and co-curator of *The Life of Animals in Japanese Art*

Gallery Talks

The Life of Animals in Japanese Art

June 12, 19, 26, noon

June 13, 21, 24, 28, 11:00 a.m.

July 2, 22, 25, 30, 31, 11:00 a.m.

July 3, 10, 17, noon

August 1, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, noon

(60 minutes)

East Building Atrium

Nathalie Ryan or Heidi Applegate

Reptilian Motifs in Japanese Art

June 10, 17, 27, 1:00 p.m.

July 1, 23, 31, 1:00 p.m.

August 6, 16, 1:00 p.m.

(50 minutes)

East Building Atrium

Béla Demeter

Roosters, Rabbits, and Monkeys: Animals of the Zodiac

June 11, 18, 25, noon

August 6, 13, noon

(40 minutes)

East Building Atrium

Nathalie Ryan

Dragons, Tigers, and Phoenix: Auspicious Animals

June 13, 20, 27, noon

July 11, 18, noon

(40 minutes)

East Building Atrium

Nathalie Ryan

Butterflies, Fish, and Puppies: Animals and the Four Seasons

July 2, 9, 16, noon

August 8, 15, noon

(40 minutes)

East Building Atrium

Nathalie Ryan

Gallery Talks in Japanese

The Life of Animals in Japanese Art

June 12, 16, 23, 26, 30, 1:00 pm

July 7, 10, 21, 24, 1:00 pm

Akiko Kyubun Chan, Akemi Nishida, and Yasuko Okuno

Public Symposium

The Role and Representations of Animals in Japanese Art and Culture

June 7, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

East Building Auditorium

Moderated by Robert T. Singer, with illustrated lectures by noted scholars, including Barbara Rossetti Ambros, department chair, religious studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Rory Browne, director of the academic advising center and associate dean of Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences, Boston College; R. Keller Kimbrough, professor of Japanese, department of Asian languages and civilizations, University of Colorado, Boulder; Federico Marcon, associate professor of East Asian studies and history, Princeton University; Daniel McKee, adjunct assistant professor,

department of Asian studies, Cornell University; and Miwako Tezuka, *consulting curator*, *Reversible Destiny* Foundation.

Community Weekend

June 22, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

June 23, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

East Building

The Cafritz Community Weekend will explore how animals have captured imaginations throughout history and across cultures. Depicted in sculptures and paintings, these furry creatures and fantastic beasts tell stories and represent complex ideas. Discover the Gallery's menagerie of artful animals with a tour of the exhibition, *The Life of Animals in Japanese Art*, and experience the beauty of Japanese culture with a variety of activities including guided sketching, Haiku poetry writing, and origami.

Animals in Japanese Cinema Film Series

June 13 to July 28

All films are in the East Building Auditorium

Animals play many expressive roles in Japanese cinema, both in their own right and in their dealings with humans. With examples from a variety of film genres including *jidai-geki* (period drama), *bungei eiga* (literary narrative), and *kaijū eiga* (monster film), and comprising a selection of animations, shorts, and fiction features, this series of approximately 30 films also includes a number of works that make use of elements from other art forms such as Kabuki and Noh theater traditions. The animal characters—whether playing major or minor roles, or simply added as embellishments—include mythological creatures, talking animals, monsters and shape-shifters, household pets, and animals admired for their beauty or athleticism.

Tokyo Waka

June 13, 14, 27, and 28, 1:00 p.m.

June 29, 3:00 p.m.

A poetic city symphony, *Tokyo Waka* brings the Japanese capital to life through a focus on the city's enormous crow population and its relationship with the humans who also happen to live there. There are many stakeholders in this drama: longtime urban dwellers who view the birds as feral fauna and troublesome invaders, locals who have effectively adjusted to the presence of the big birds, scientists who study them, artists who portray them, Shinto and Buddhist priests who respect them, and lovers of nature who simply enjoy coexisting with the ancient and adaptable *Corvus macrorhynchos*.

"Sensually as well as philosophically, *Tokyo Waka* is attuned to the textures of everyday life" — Mark Jenkins. (John Haptas and Kristine Samuelson, 2012, 60 minutes)

Horse Beings

June 23, 4:00 p.m.

Director Ryohei Sasatani in person

Before the modernization of Japan, horses were not only useful laborers, they were also often considered members of families and even objects of worship. A new documentary on vanishing horse culture and the deep connections between human beings and horses that persist in northern Japan, *Horse Beings (Uma arite)* depicts entrenched customs, time-honored routines, religious traditions, and even the local myth of Oshirasama, the story of a girl who married her horse. "I observed remnants of this way of life when I visited. . . . People still live in a severe but beautiful world, a world of faith surrounded by the deep green mountains. I hope this film reaches many people and presents another aspect of Japan for discovery" — Ryohei Sasatani. *Director Ryohei Sasatani's presence at the screening of Horse Beings (Uma Arite) is supported by The Japan Foundation*

Brilliant Darkness: Hotaru in the Night

June 29, 2:00 p.m.

Brilliant Darkness explores the vital role that darkness plays in the cycle of life (and the damaging consequences of the ongoing erosion of truly black nights) through a study of firefly habitats in Japan and the United States. Firefly populations have been declining as artificial lights have increasingly disrupted their "languages of light." The film features artists and scientists who are working to better understand firefly flash patterns and how these interesting insects have adapted to urban settings. Among the experts included in the film are Rei Ohara, Nobuyoshi Ohba, Marc Branham, James Lloyd, and James Karl Fischer. Following a short documentary essay, the second half of the film consists of quiet scenes of fireflies in their habitats shown in sequence. (Emily Driscoll, 2015, 35 minutes) Special thanks to Marty Gross.

Ran

June 30, 4:00 p.m.

July 3, 1:00 p.m.

Reworking *King Lear* in a feudal Japanese setting, Akira Kurosawa blends William Shakespeare's tragedy with the story of Mōri Motonari, a notable old daimyo who cunningly strengthened the power of his clan. According to legend, the fearsome warlord divided his kingdom among three sons— thus replacing the daughters in *King Lear*, with comparable consequences. With hundreds of horses on screen, thousands of meticulous medieval costumes, a full-scale replica of an ancient castle, and a grandly staged boar hunt, *Ran* became the most expensive Japanese production at that point in history. Costume designer Emi Wada won an Academy Award for her work. (Akira Kurosawa, 1985, subtitles, 162 minutes)

Godzilla

July 5, 1:00 p.m.

A primordial monster disturbed by nuclear bomb tests strikes the city of Tokyo. Following the huge Japanese box office success of *Godzilla (Gojira)*, Toho, the film's producer, released a torrent of monster sci-fi movies in the ensuing years — but none as empathetic or emblematic as the original

Godzilla, released at a time when the country was reeling from nuclear attack and testing in the Pacific. Its raging radioactive creature is an icon of modernism. (Ishirō Honda, 1954, subtitles, 96 minutes)

Mothra

July 5, 3:00 p.m.

Toho's sci-fi fantasy *Mothra* (Mosura), written by Shinichi Sekizawa and starring beloved comic actor Frankie Sakai, follows an outing to an island test site where, among other wonders, a pair of miniature singing princesses cracks open an oversize egg. The giant larva swims to Japan and wreaks havoc on Tokyo. *Mothra* became Japan's second-most popular kaijū eiga (monster film) after *Godzilla* — with seven sequels and a trilogy. (Ishirō Honda, 1961, 35mm, subtitles, 101 minutes)

Horse

July 6, 12:30 p.m.

A poor farm girl (the radiant Hideko Takamine) adores the horse she has nurtured from birth, but finds out from officials that it will be seized and sold to the army. Naturally, the young woman fights to protect her beloved animal. *Horse* (Uma), with its portrayal of sacrifices suffered by humble Japanese farmers in remote mountainous locations, was Akira Kurosawa's final film as an assistant director before launching an independent career. (Kajirō Yamamoto and Akira Kurosawa, 1941, 35mm, subtitles, 128 minutes)

The Hidden Fortress

July 6, 3:30 p.m.

The Japanese chanbara eiga (swordplay film) that inspired George Lucas to create *Star Wars*, *The Hidden Fortress* (*Kakushi Toride no San-Akunin*) tells the action-packed tale of a princess traveling through enemy terrain accompanied by a warrior and two ragtag comrades. The wittiest of Akira Kurosawa's samurai films, *The Hidden Fortress* stars Toshirō Mifune who, in addition to his fabled movie actor reputation, was also a skilled horseman; he easily mastered the horseback combat sequences. Period swordplay films set in feudal Japan mixed folklore with melodrama and were created for a market seeking rousing entertainment. (Akira Kurosawa, 1958, 35mm, subtitles, 139 minutes)

Seven Samurai

July 7, 4:00 p.m.

Seven Samurai (*Shichinin no Samurai*) elevated the ronin — a nomadic, masterless warrior of feudal Japan — to a privileged symbol in Japanese popular culture. Six roving ronin, trailed by an oddball rogue (Toshirō Mifune) who eventually proves his worth, agree to protect a poor country village from a gang of thieves. Filming of the final battle sequence was delayed more than once due to an inadequate number of available horses — and, when the shooting was finally scheduled, the battle

was staged during one of the coldest months on record. (Akira Kurosawa, 1954, 35mm, subtitles, 207 minutes)

I Am a Cat

July 12, noon

Natsume Sōseki's classic 1905 novel *I Am a Cat* (*Wagahai wa Neko de Aru*) portrays middle-class humans from a Meiji period cat's point of view. In Kon Ichikawa's madcap film adaptation, charismatic actor Tatsuya Nakadai stars as the lead, an indolent and scatterbrained middle school teacher called Kushami. When the film opened, a New York Times reviewer praised the performance of the cat who, for a while, keeps a feline sweetheart — "though his affair goes no better than those of everyone else in the story." (Kon Ichikawa, 1975, 35mm, subtitles, 116 minutes)

Black Cat

July 12 2:30 p.m.

In *Black Cat* (*Kuroneko*), a classic tale of medieval Japan, provincial female ghosts with catlike features avenge past abuses by attacking the throats of traveling samurai. When the governor sends a warrior to suppress these disturbances, the unsuspecting young fighter meets his match in an electrifying struggle with these mystical feline demons. (Kaneto Shindō, 1968, 35mm, subtitles, 99 minutes)

Animals in Animation I: Kōji Yamamura and Image Forum

July 13, 12:30 p.m.

A program of recent and classic animated shorts from Kōji Yamamura — a celebrated illustrator of children's literature and independent creator of music videos and delicate animated drawings — includes *The Old Crocodile*, *Natural History*, *Short Happy Life of a Goldfish*, *Zodiac One Third*, *Amefuri Kumanoko*, and *Anthology with Cranes* (Kōji Yamamura, 1985 – 2016). Yamamura's films are followed by *A Place Where There Are Moths* (Mika Seike, 2001) and *The Mechanism of Spring* (Wada Atsushi, 2010) — selected from the famed Image Forum, the largest art film festival in Japan. (Total running time approximately 50 minutes)

Animals in Animation II: Osamu Tezuka and Kihachirō Kawamoto

July 13, 2:00 p.m.

Renowned animator Osamu Tezuka's *Legend of the Forest*, inspired by Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4 in F Minor, uses this orchestral music as a score. Tezuka (1928 – 1989) worked on his short film for a decade, never quite completing his original concept — a survey of the history of animation styles in tribute to the art form. In this first installment we see the manga character Mosa, a flying squirrel, steeling himself against forest invaders. (Osamu Tezuka, 1987, 29 minutes)

Two shorts by famed puppetmaker and animator Kihachirō Kawamoto (1925 – 2010) — *Dojoji Temple* (1978, 16mm, 19 minutes), a heartbreaking tale of *amour fou* between a young priest and a widow, and

House of Flames (1976, 16mm, 19 minutes), based on the legend of a poet and a warrior infatuated with the same beautiful woman — feature animal forms from dragons to dogs. (Total running time approximately 70 minutes)

Cinema Kabuki: Triple Lion Dance

followed by *Heron Maiden*

July 13, 4:00 p.m.

In *Triple Lion Dance (Renjishi)*, a father and his sons become powerful beasts who test their relationships. This legendary performance is renowned not only for the famous Kabuki master Kanzaburō, but also for his real-life sons Kankurō and Shichinosuke as the younger lions — a showcase for three of Japan's best theatrical artists. *Triple Lion Dance* is part of the series Cinema Kabuki, a production of Shochiku. (Yōji Yamada, 2008, subtitles, 55 minutes) Shifting from a white heron to a coquettish girl to a woman seducing her lover, *Heron Maiden* is one of the most demanding roles in Kabuki. With fifteen musicians on stage and quick costume changes in swirling snow, the dance is performed here by Bandō Tamasaburō V, a celebrated *onnagata* (male actor specializing in female roles). Entering the repertoire in the eighteenth century, *Heron Maiden*, in this iteration, was recorded live at Kabuki-za Theatre, Tokyo, in 2005. (Hiroyuki Nakatani, 2005, subtitles, 32 minutes)

Mādadayo

July 14, 4:00 p.m.

Mādadayo's sweetly sentimental account of a retired professor and his dutiful students was a digression for Akira Kurosawa, who generally did not dabble in such slender tales. Tatsuo Matsumura plays real-life author and academic Hyakken Uchida (1889 – 1971), whom we encounter at the end of his career, greeting his final classes with impish good humor. Sensei, as he is called, settles in with his books and writing desk, as well as a pet cat, whose apparent departure provides an emotional interlude. (Akira Kurosawa, 1993, 35mm, subtitles, 134 minutes)

Akanishi Kakita

July 19, 12:30 p.m.

In the 1930s, Mansaku Itami (father of Jūzō Itami, who directed the 1985 film *Tampopo*) adapted Shiga Naoya's popular 1917 novella *Akanishi Kakita* for the screen. A poor, over-the-hill, cat-loving samurai is charged with the task of spying on a rebel clan from within. Bold for its era, *Akanishi Kakita* playfully lampoons male heroism and the samurai code as its star, Kataoka Chiezō, enacts two roles — the lowly samurai and the enemy lord. (Mansaku Itami, 1936, 35mm, subtitles, 77 minutes)

If Cats Disappeared from the World

July 19, 2:30 p.m.

When a young worker receives a terminal diagnosis, he makes a deal with the devil (who is in fact his doppelgänger): for each additional day of life the man is granted, the devil will remove one

worldly delight. Each of the ensuing losses, especially the cat he inherits from his mother, radically alters the man's life history. *If Cats Disappeared from the World (Sekai kara Neko ga Kieta nara)* mixes fantasy and emotion with a deeper philosophical inquiry. (Akira Nagai, 2016, subtitles, 100 minutes)

Pom Poko

July 27, 12:30 p.m.

The heroes of Isao Takahata's anime *Pom Poko* are the tanuki, the fabled shape-shifting Japanese raccoon dogs. Beginning in the 1960s, tanuki of the ancient Tama Hills near Tokyo are alarmed by the reckless construction of houses and shopping centers bordering their homes. They finally join together to fight back, practicing their ancient art of transformation into human forms and even staging a grand deception by shifting the newly developed land back into its primeval state. Director Takahata was a founder of the prestigious production house Studio Ghibli. (Isao Takahata, 1994, 35mm, subtitles, 119 minutes)

Princess Raccoon

July 27, 3:30 p.m.

Seijun Suzuki's quirky and colorful operetta is a folkloric tale of young love inspired by the form of the raccoon dog (tanuki). *Princess Raccoon* (Operetta tanuki gote) stars Zhang Ziyi as a shape-shifting tanuki princess and Joe Odagiri as Prince Amechiyo, in danger because he has displaced his father Azuchi Momoyama (Mikijirō Hira) as the most beautiful man in the kingdom. Intrigue, trickery, and romance ensue as the young princess saves the day, absconding with the prince to her own palace. (Seijun Suzuki, 2005, 35mm, subtitles, 110 minutes)

Dreams

July 28, 4:00

In eight beguiling vignettes inspired by recurring dreams, Akira Kurosawa follows his surrogate self through the stages of life. In the final dream, "Village of the Water Mills," a wise old man describes the rewards of living a simpler life without the conveniences provided by advanced technologies. A subtext of *Dreams* is the beauty and primacy of nature, with a gentle admonition about its conservation and perpetuation. Animal forms are leitmotifs, frequently accentuating this premise. (Akira Kurosawa, 1990, 35mm, subtitles, 119 minutes)

The Japan Foundation

To cultivate friendship and ties between Japan and the world, the Japan Foundation creates global opportunities to foster friendship, trust, and mutual understanding through culture, language, and dialogue. 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. Based on a government endowment of 78 billion yen, the activities of the

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The National Gallery of Art, Washington

The National Gallery of Art has served the nation and the world for the past 78 years not only as a center of visual art but also as a center for education and culture. With a collection of more than 150,000 paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, photographs, prints, and drawings spanning the history of Western art, the Gallery welcomes some five million visitors annually. Across 363 days a year, the Gallery offers a full spectrum of public programs and some 20 temporary exhibitions free of charge.

Update: July 18, 2019

This update includes the addition of extended hours from August 3 through August 18.

Update: April 26, 2019

This update includes a slight change in the number of objects, a quote from director Kaywin Feldman, details regarding object rotations in early July, exhibition-inspired retail, and additional resources and programs.

Update: March 14, 2019

This update changed the exhibition opening and closing dates from May 5–July 28, 2019 to June 2–August 18, 2019. The opening and closing dates changed following delays due to the partial government shutdown and inclement weather.

Press Contact:

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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Exhibition Press Release

[Exhibition Checklist](#) (pdf 2.3 mb)

[Checklist of Rotating Works](#) (pdf 1.3 mb)

[Japan Foundation Statement](#) (pdf 214 kb)

AUDIO/VIDEO ▼

Press Event Audio: [The Life of Animals in Japanese Art](#)

ONLINE RESOURCES ▼

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PRESS CONTACT ▼

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