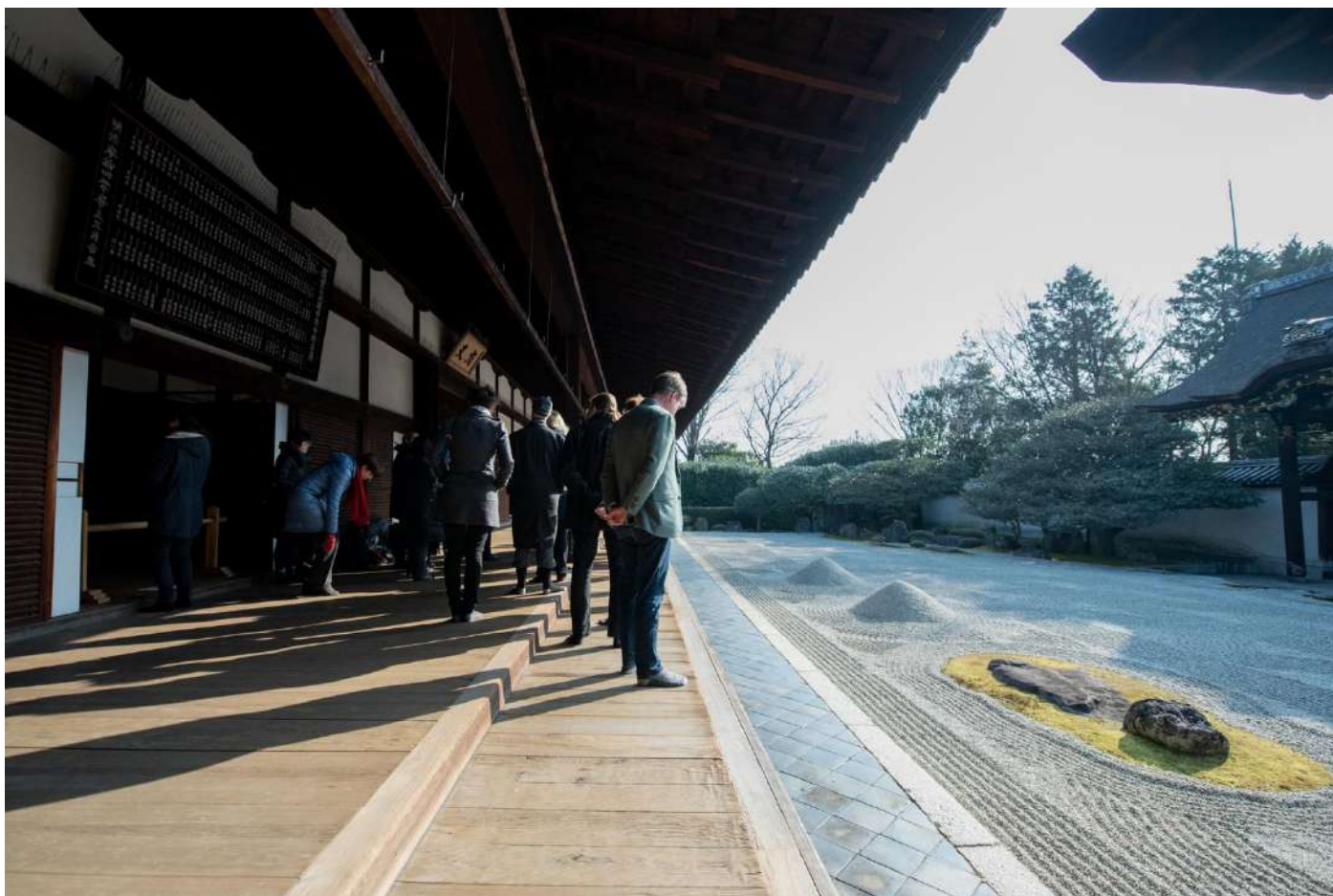


WORKSHOP • Feedback Session

February 3 – February 6, 2020



Purpose: The workshop allows participants to become familiar with the conservation and handling of Japanese cultural properties while providing opportunities for networking. This year's workshop included a calligraphy session at the Tokyo National Museum and a Japanese arms and armor handling session at the Kyoto National Museum, following by an excursion to sites in Kyoto areas. Participants of this annual workshop are museum professionals from outside Japan, including curators of East Asian art as well as registrars, educators, designers, and others who are involved in Japanese art exhibitions at their respective institutions.

February 3

Workshop on kimono Instructor: Kikuchi Riyo (Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)



Handling workshop on calligraphic works Instructor: Maruyama Naokazu (Tokyo National Museum)



Viewing of the special exhibition "Izumo and Yamato: The Birth of Ancient Japan"

Instructor: Shinagawa Yoshiya (Tokyo National Museum)



February 4

Kyoto National Museum overview Sasaki Johei (Executive Director, Kyoto National Museum)



Handling workshop on arms and armor

Instructor: Suekane Toshihiko (Kyoto National Museum), Sato Hirotsuke (Tokyo National Museum)



Tofukuji Temple Instructor: Rev. Nagai Keishu





February 5

Ryokoin temple, Daitokuji Instructor: Rev. Kobori Geppo



Onishi Seiwemon Museum Instructor: Onishi Seiwemon XVI



Oka Bokkodo Co., Ltd. Conservation Studio Instructor: Mr. Oka Iwataro



Institute for Chiso Arts and Culture Instructor: Ms. Kato Yuriko



February 5 Feedback Session

Venue: Korin Room, Hotel Keihan Kyoto Grande

Chairman and Facilitator: Kito Satomi (Tokyo National Museum)

Participants

North America

Gwen Adams (Royal Ontario Museum)
Laura Allen (Asian Art Museum of San Francisco)
Rosina Buckland (Royal Ontario Museum)
Frank Feltens (Freer Gallery of Art)
Hollis Goodall (Los Angeles County Museum of Art)
Andreas Marks (Minneapolis Institute of Art)
Anne Nishimura Morse (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)
Rhiannon Paget (Ringling Museum of Art)
Aaron Rio (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)
Stephen Salel (Honolulu Museum of Art)
Shinoda Yayoi (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art)
Sinéad Vilbar (The Cleveland Museum of Art)

Europe

Karwin Cheung (National Museums of Scotland)
Timothy Clark (The British Museum)
Rupert Faulkner (Victoria and Albert Museum)
Menno Fitski (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam)
Gregory Irvine (Victoria and Albert Museum)
Daan Kok (National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden)
Nadejda Maykova (Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography [the Kunstkamera])
Manuela Moscatiello (Musée Cernuschi)
Kate Newnham (Bristol Museum & Art Gallery)
Mary Redfern (Chester Beatty)
Wibke Schrape (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg)
Alban von Stockhausen (Museum of History Bern)
Khanh Trinh (Museum Rietberg Zürich)
Elizaveta Vaneian (The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts)
Bas Verberk (Museum for East-Asian Arts, Köln)
Mio Wakita-Elis (Museum für Angewandte Kunst [MAK Wien])
Cora Würmell (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden)
Ainura Yusupova (The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts)

Abridged Transcript

Kito: This morning, we are having in the final part of the entire program, feedback session. Tell us what you think about the whole program or if there is any specific request on something or the overall schedule.

Let me go over the program schedule. Would share your comments on anything about the program over all? You can comment on any points as we go along.

Firstly, the symposium. Does anyone have any comments on it?

Fitski: I just want to ask you what the policy was for the involvement of the audience, not us but the general audience. I just was wondering what your ideas were about that as the organizers, because you selected one question from the audience, but it ties in to more. What do you see as the goal of the symposium? It was a general audience symposium, wasn't it? But it is also for us, so how is that balance?

Kito: Last year, the theme was about the things over the Orientalism and Occidentalism. Once again, we wanted to show the people that Japanese art cannot be mentioned from a single point of view, so we wanted to stress that to the public. Among us, we thought that we didn't have much chance to talk about our views of Japanese art, so we hoped to share the views of the Japanese art specialists in America and Europe and with the public so that the public would understand we could not really essentialize the Japanese art or art of Japan. Sometimes we are, especially at the Tokyo National Museum, mandated to show easy images of Japan or Japanese art. But it's tough to say "this is Japan" or "this is Japanese art." Talking about Japan as a whole involves multiple definitions, so we tried to let the public understand that Japan is not only based on a single view, but there are multiple ways to view Japan.

Kawano: Japanese museums also have many foreign visitors nowadays. These include Asian and European visitors. Our visitors are very diverse and Japanese art itself is a very abstract concept.

The question then is how museums should act. In the symposium's pamphlet, I said the thing I wanted to say most, namely that museums are places where a sincere dialogue between 'history' and the present takes place through the medium of 'objects.' These words point to the need for an ongoing dialogue with our visitors and with the objects in our collections. This is the idea I had in mind when I planned this symposium.

Paget: Two years ago when I was here, we took questions from the general audience. I think that would be quite interesting if we went back that. I know that's hard because sometimes no one asks anything and it falls flat. But when you're giving a talk, you can see the first two front rows and there are all your colleagues who you kind of know, and then there are all these people in the dark who you don't know. They're the ones for whom we are all doing this. It would be nice to have them more visible and dissolve that us-curators/them-general public that that we sometimes fall into.

Yusupova: Last year, the symposium was at the end, and it was really hard. This time, you started from the symposium and meeting with specialists and then the trip. This order is much better and more convenient for presenters.

Morse: Having the symposium first is preferable not only because of the enjoyment factor. Because the presentations have already been given, it gives us a lot to talk about throughout the rest of the time we are together.

Moscatiello: It was my first time and it was really a great experience for me. As it concerns with the symposium, I agree with Ainura and everyone even if I was not there last year. I wonder just about the number of speakers if it would be better to have more speakers and to teach more subjects that maybe end shorter.

Kito: Let's talk about the specialist meeting. We largely changed the setting from the past meetings. In the past, we noticed that there were not enough frank conversations. When I initially planned the meeting, I hoped the curators would share the common issues among you since you are all specialists of Japanese art. Till this year we have not included the workshop participants in the specialist meetings, but this time we included everybody so that we could all share our views more widely with each other. We had presentations followed by discussions about those topics. We also asked the higher- ranked managers not to attend this meeting to create an environment where more honest conversations would take place.

Kok: I think your plan worked. It was a bit more difficult to have a discussion with people all facing in the same direction, but I didn't think it was too much of a problem. It is better to have short presentations in the beginning to get the discussion going rather than the other way around, but they were really good. It was nice to have short issues then to use them for the discussions. Compliments to those presenters as well.

Kito: Thank you again for the presenters who contributed to that.

Schrage: I also like the new setting, but I think we do not need a break in between the two-hour discussion. We discussed a lot of issues already at the symposium, so we might not have to discuss what we already did in public again. Maybe it would be good to keep the first part really short and we can all give a brief feedback on the symposium yesterday. I think ten minutes were enough for the individual discussion presentations. It would be nice to have more topics discussed and no break in between. We are capable to do a two-hour discussion without any coffee break in between.

Yusupova: I like to thank Yoshida-san for his keynote lecture. It was great. Last year there was no keynote lecture, wasn't it? This time it was interesting to have some very special point of view from a specialist who is not an art historian, and it was very interesting to hear the presentations on the same subject. I think it is important to have a keynote from a specialist.

Kito: We had a keynote speech at the second conference, then we didn't do that for a while. Do you think a keynote speech would be nice to have or not? It was a 60-minute keynote speech. Was it too long?

Irvine: I think a shorter, sharper, and more succinct keynote lecture would be good. Make it snappy, get it over and done very quickly, get the pertinent points through, and actually have more people. Those will also be good things. Regarding the point about teas, we really lost momentum at that point. You need to build in some flexibility so that obviously it needs to fit in with timing properly. But building some kind of flexibility, so when we get a really good momentum going, we can keep it going.

Faulkner: I suspect in Japan, a keynote speaker is given a longer time than other speakers out of respect, but that isn't really how it works from my experience in events in Europe and maybe also in the USA. That doesn't need to be done through a measure of time.

Vilbar: Many of us feel that there should be more and shorter presentations, but I was on the other side of that coin. We don't often have an opportunity to hear sustained arguments these days. The same way, we don't get to read a long format newspaper article. It's actually something that I appreciate to have the opportunity to have, although I concur that being succinct and getting one's point across is to be highly prioritized. But one can tackle a lot in if you have a longer span of time to work with. I actually do appreciate that longer format.

Buckland: People might not go for that kind of sustained argument approach. There's a tendency to make things much more accessible. I'd love to hear those kinds of presentations, but this might not be the place that they should happen.

I can feel that the discussion is slowing down now. People want to throw in comments that might only take a few seconds, but you have to wait and then you feel like it has to be worth calling the microphone to you. In a previous specialists meeting, we all had a static microphone in front of us. We still had to remember to turn it on, but at least it was there immediately and perhaps that would help to get a real discussion going. I totally agree with what Greg said that it was getting really good and people were arguing about things, some tussling. That was really a rare opportunity for all of us to come together and do that, so it's good to sustain it if we can.

Kito: Microphones are always somehow problematic, but we need to record the conversation to make a report. But there should be some other ways to do that. We will think about that.

Rinne: In the past, the setup of the room made us so far away from one other that I felt very distant from my colleagues on the other side of the room. However, this year, we had more physical proximity by having people in rows, even though we were not facing one another. Somehow it was nice that we could turn around and someone else was right there. We felt very close to the other people in the meeting, and I think actually that strangely it worked out really well.

Kito: We did the Tokyo workshop, do you have any comments on that workshop in Tokyo? The workshops are in principal meant to be for those people who are not too experienced or not a Japanese art historian but for those who are dealing with Japanese artwork, or for those who are possibly handling with Japanese art so that those people would become more familiar with materials of works created in Japan or in Japanese art.

Würmell: At first, I was a bit surprised because I thought why we are doing Origami. I am taking care of porcelain and ceramics, and it was such a lovely and hands-on approach to learn more about Kimonos. Both, the theory and practice parts were very well-balanced and it was an enriching experience. I will actually take that idea back home to our museum because I think it is a great way to learn more about Japanese kimonos, especially for our visitors

Von Stockhausen: It was great to really look into these different areas, but, we were a very large group. And generally, workshops were very short time. I didn't really get into any depth on all these subjects. What I would suggest is to make it possible to choose from two. There can be discussion and interaction, and workshop to be more than just looking at objects which mostly were in the end. It was great but I think it could use much more time.

Rinne: It's always bothered me a little bit that there has been a distinction between the workshops for the people who are supposedly "not so used to Japanese art" and the "specialist" meeting for specialists. I don't quite like that distinction, because I think whatever kind of museum you are in, you generally have some area you're most specialized in, and the area you're less specialized in. For example, some people are rolling and unrolling scrolls all day long but probably are never folding kimono, and some people are folding kimono all the time but don't handle scrolls. Everybody, even most specialists, has different things that they're doing. Some people are used to tying the cords on the wooden boxes holding ceramics. Some museums put these objects on the shelves without boxes but with sandbags around them, so their curators don't have the opportunity to practice tying cords on a regular basis, and it doesn't matter in their institutions. There's all different ways that museums handle this so it's always good to have review of traditional practices. Let's take away that distinction between people who really know and the people who don't because it's always good practice for everyone.

Verberk: I really agree with this. Since the event is based in the Tokyo National Museum, it's a great opportunity for us to see the knowledge from inside. The workshops and the visits yesterday were very well-balanced. We are all connected to Japanese art but are all ever owns specialism, so there was something for everyone to experience.

Würmell: I was really impressed by the handling sessions, especially about the metal workshop. It was such a special and unique opportunity to practice with someone who is in fact creating these pieces. It's a great way to learn about objects.

Vilbar: Every year, I've learned so much and it's been such a different set of visits. I am always amazed at how every year an entirely different set of things can be learned at the workshop. So it's one of the great pleasures of my working experience to be able to attend this.

Maykova: I agree with everybody about handling workshops. You usually hear and talk during the seminars and presentations, but you use all your other senses during the workshop. You touch things, and you learn by touching. This is a really important thing. You never forget what you learn with your hands, I think.

Salel: I agree that the workshops were an opportunity for us to intimately learn about methods and materials. Also, the zazen experience that we had was another great opportunity to physically learn about it. I like the way in which we were informed ahead of time about how to dress and how to prepare for the zazen experience. Regarding the workshops, it would be a good idea to tell us, for example, "Today we're going to be working with dye or ink or some messy materials, so dress very casually." Or tell us to prepare to get your hands dirty. Because that's part of the art making experience. As curators, we have few opportunities to really

learn in that sort of messy but very real way about making artwork, and that might be something we could do in future events.

Schrage: I would like to come back to the initial question and ask if there is a possibility to go more into details, especially about swords. I enjoyed the session on swords, but my problem is how to care for the swords. I know how to display them roughly enough but do not know much about maintenance. I know that you can use oil and powder to clean them, but I do not know how to do it. So I am rather not touching them at all. I hoped that we would get a bit more training in how to do these kinds of things. We come here with a lot of questions in our bag relating to the care for Japanese objects at our home institutions. Going more into detail might also be interesting for everybody who's not having those problems because you can still get useful information. I do not actually handle so many textiles, but last year, we had a great textile session. Menno Fitski actually made a powerpoint presentation on the textile session that was sent out to the participants afterwards. And when I have to deal with textiles now, I have this great presentation that I can go back to. Thus I would be interested in getting more into details about some difficult to handle objects and on how to care for them professionally.

Irvine: Your question leads directly into what I do. I look after the swords at the V&A to best of my ability. I clean and oil them. The question which needs addressing here is succession planning. I remember, a very long time ago, I've been given my first sword to clean at the British Museum and being absolutely terrified. 30 years on, I'm really confident with it. I've been training more or less and have been showing junior colleagues at the V&A how to do this. They are all absolutely terrified of handling it. So how do we pass on the knowledge that we've acquired over the years to future generations, not just in swords, not just in metal work, in textiles and in all of those other areas is a question, and perhaps this is something for the future program?

Newnham: I really appreciated any opportunity to learn about techniques. Yesterday when we saw the presentation about the Yuzen dyeing of kimono, it was absolutely fantastic. To see the different stages as well as the process is very useful and something that we will be able to pass on to our visitors in our museums. I can imagine it might be hard to organize, but it would be even more amazing to be able to draw some of the lines by oneself on a little piece of silk. I know that would be a lot of organization; however, if you read about something, you learn about it to a certain extent. If you see it, you learn about it a bit more, but if you actually do it, it's lodged somewhere deep within you. Any opportunity to learn about techniques is enormously useful.

Kito: Let's move on to the excursion part. Overall, I felt that the schedule was a little bit tight.

Irvine: The only reason why the schedule seemed so tight was the sheer number of people. Is this the largest number you've had? Moving this enormous pack is like herding cats.

Kito: This year, we had a bit more luxury about the budget and we could invite more people; therefore we didn't have to make particular distinction between the specialists and less-experienced specialists. We tried to include everybody into the meeting then to do things together. Sometimes because of the number, we had to split the participants into two groups. I don't know if it might be better to divide us all into groups. It is hard to say what the best way is, or how to solve this number problem.

Schrape: The program was a great opportunity to look at temples we usually do not get to see from inside, so I really enjoyed this year's excursion program. Sometimes I was a bit too tired, so a coffee break in between and or just an occasion to get a coffee would have been great. About mixing up junior and senior curators and the large number of participants, I feel very grateful to you for doing that. The first time, four years ago, I participated as a curatorial trainee and I remember being quite shy when meeting so many senior curators for the first time. In my experience, it takes a bit time to grow into the program. Therefore, it is great that we have the opportunity once and again to come back, catch up and develop a sustainable network including junior and senior curators.

Maykova: I'm really grateful to be able to get into the places we never been before, and I am even more grateful to see the artifacts and the art objects in their natural environment. When objects go into the museum, they are stuck and nobody actually using them. It's easy to forget how it's actually used. It's a really good opportunity to learn about their usage, learn about how people behave around them, and how people handle those objects in everyday life. It was a really good experience.

Kok: I was actually impressed by the words of the monk said that you were surrounded by paintings by Kano Tan'yu, and he wanted you not to look at them because that was not what you were there for today. He continued that if you wanted to see them you should come back some other time. That was a wonderful thing to say to this group. That experience in general was really very profound. I say that as a very cynical person towards religion in general. Yesterday I felt that was really very special. That is quite different for all of us who have experience going to Ryoan-ji or something. The number of tourists makes an enormous difference, and we understand what the actual practice of such a temple is when no tourists are looking.

Von Stockhausen: This was the first time for me to be at the program, and especially for people in my situation where I'm elected to the whole collection. It's much larger field I'm in-charge of, and I'm not a specialist on Japanese Art. This is really useful because it gives me the opportunity to make our collection be more visible and to join in a network which otherwise I wouldn't have access to. I think especially these smaller hidden collections can gain profit a lot from programs like that.

Shinoda: As a junior curator, attending this program was an excellent opportunity to get to know curators and researchers in and outside of Japan. Throughout the program I had opportunities to talk to professionals with diverse interests and backgrounds, which broadened my perspective. The workshops and excursions also helped me shape a better understanding of the arts and culture of Japan. I am grateful for the Tokyo and Kyoto National Museums for giving me this invaluable opportunity.

Verberk: To get back to the question, if the program was too long especially in Kyoto. It was long, but it was worth it since the time was limited. These are all very exceptional locations. The good thing was that we visited many places but there was not a moment that we had the rush feeling. So it was very organized in that sense. We were busy until from 9 to 6 o'clock, but it was such a great experience and interesting for all of us. I can't imagine to do this in another way because there is a very good balance of different locations. It was well-balanced. I could see that sometimes people were tired. I am so tired myself, but it was worth doing.

Kito: My question is the timing of this program. We usually have this program either at the end of January or early February. It's partly because the budget confirmation comes sometime around July so it is impossible to have this program in the first half of the year. Is this time of the year comfortable for your schedule?

Verberk: I think it's a perfect timing. January or beginning of February is ideal because there are not so many tourists. Statistics say also that these are the driest months of the year in Japan. The weather was wonderful.

Buckland: Buckland: A different point I want to make about the opportunity to meet colleagues in Japan. The Yamanaka Shokai evening was a very special event at a special place, but it was really useful to be able to meet new colleagues. There are always new people that we can meet, and the INJA event last night was also a really good opportunity. Perhaps as the INJA gets stronger in the future, that's something we can co-host with and bring that network alive each time we have this program as an actual meeting with people.

Redfern: It would be really useful to get a list of participants at the beginning of the program, maybe with just a couple of lines about what each of us do, what we are interested in or projects we are currently working on. If people will consent to having their pictures in that too, that would really help. Especially when the group gets this large, we don't get a chance to speak to everybody. So just a bit of our background information would be really helpful to ensure we don't miss an opportunity to connect.

Maisawa: I guess I'm the only Japanese who is participating here and who doesn't belong to the Tokyo National Museum. The number of Japanese participants who are not organizers is too small. At the Tokyo National Museum, there might be junior curators who might be interested in participating here to listen to the discussions and to have the opportunity to give the opinions; however, I don't see any. There was a reception where you also talk with those people, but not many Japanese people are here. I think there should be more. Since this is a very important project for the Tokyo National Museum, it would be a good opportunity for the young curators to think about the advantage of hosting this event for their Museum and what the Museum aims to achieve in the coming years.

Kito: This program is organized not just by the Tokyo National Museum but by the whole National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, which includes four national museums and two research institutes. Next year, we will definitely endeavor to include more Japanese curators, not only those who belong to the National Institutes but curators from other private museums or some other museums in Japan.

Salel: I wanted to thank all of those who talked about INJA and the database that they're developing. The symposium is a great opportunity for us to make connections with one another and to be able to contact one another regarding professional matters that we come across. When we first heard about INJA, some of us immediately started to register for it. Then I realized that the website is still being fine-tuned, but since we have our information here connected to this symposium, we could share that information with one another. In addition to INJA, I think that would be wonderful.

Rio: I couldn't agree more with what Mary said about having some ability to have contact information; basic sort of details on individuals participating in the program. But if it were not just the people who participated this year but rather the entire group of six years participants, that would be even better. Since we are all

professionals in the same field, we should have relatively immediate access to one another. I appreciate the very thoughtful planning of the workshops and various excursions. It was extremely diverse in terms of locations, histories and all kinds of things. If there is a way to know where we are going to go and what we are going to do in advance, that would be extremely beneficial. For example, for the visit to the Iron Kettle Museum, I might have done some studying on iron kettles before we showed up. If I know in advance what we are going to be doing in a hanging scroll handling session, I would request what to cover in the workshop. It might make the workshops even more helpful to various participants.

Adams: I was just wondering if there will be an opportunity to tour one of the storage areas of the museums because collection care is one of the major things that I do. When we went on a tour to one of the temples, we were able to see the way how they stored their screens and doors. It was very helpful for me to see how that was done.

Kawano: Next year we will go down to Kyushu, and the Kyushu National Museum will be the counterpart for this program.

Kyushu National Museum has always opened some of its repositories to the public. Furthermore, our repositories are all made using only the core part of lumber. This is because insects tend to eat the outer section. By showing this to people, it will help them to understand the efforts made by Japanese people to transmit our cultural properties to the future.

Morse: If the Curatorial Exchange will take place in Kyushu, it would be great if we could talk about transcultural display presentations because that is what the Kyushu National Museum does so well.

Schrage: To go further in this direction, we can also talk about transcultural relations in the specialist meeting. Talking about the connections to Asian art in this circle seems to me a bit one-sided as we are mostly Americans and Europeans meeting our Japanese colleagues. I therefore ask myself if there is any possibility, especially when the program is in Kyushu, to invite colleagues from China, Taiwan or Korea to speak about the diverse narratives inside Asia? East Asian beside Japan have collections of Japanese art and curators as well, so it might be good to speak with them about their narratives as well in the transcultural context.

Another thing I would like to propose for next year's program is how to activate the collection, not only in exhibitions but in a wider scope such as online collections. How do online collections and museum displays complement each other? I think that is a challenge we are all facing. What are our new tasks as museums? What are the opportunities to have digital materials and how do these digital materials complement our daily work and exhibitions? This is also a question related to whom we are going to reach out to and what is the purpose of our work as curators. Of course we maintain the objects and want to reach wider audiences, but an exhibition is just one option to do this. The program is really exhibition-focused so far. I would like to open the perspective also to include not only digital materials in exhibitions but to speak about how we are trying to negotiate our collections beyond special exhibitions. How can we activate the collection in exhibitions or online collections or in museum displays? Digitizing oversee collections of Japanese art is also a great opportunity for our colleagues in Japan because they can get access to our collections online. There are various issues which are related to this question of activating the collection, such as how to display provenance information in databases and in exhibitions.

Another issue would be how to include educational programs not only in online collections but also in exhibitions.

Newnham: It would be wonderful to connect with colleagues at the Asian Art Museum in Fukuoka, who are doing such amazing work in terms of transcultural contemporary Asian art. They are leading the way in looking at contemporary art across Asia and building a magnificent collection and wonderful triennials.

Salel: Regarding Southern Japan, one thing that I missed from the symposium was something akin to a State of the Union address: a report about the state of affairs of Japanese art in light of the destruction of Shuri Palace and some of the events of that sort that have affected the field within the past year. I know that, in other Japanese art history forums, there has been a lot of discussion about Shuri Palace and how it is affecting the plans of researchers and institutions going forward.

Kito: We will consider all the suggestions for the workshops, program structure, and the participant issue. For next year, we will see what we can do for the betterment of programming and come back to you again. Thank you very much, and see you in Kyushu.