

Kyoto National Museum International Symposium

MUSEUM EDUCATION IN ASIA TODAY

Case Studies from National Museums of
Korea, Singapore, and Japan

Saturday, February 4, 2023
13:00–17:00 JST (GMT+9)

Hybrid Format:

Kyoto National Museum (Heisei Chishinkan Lecture Theater)
and Online Zoom Webinar

Simultaneous Interpretation in English, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese



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Organized by the Kyoto National Museum

Symposium Overview

Museum education in Japan has been strongly influenced by the ideas and practices of museums in Europe and the United States, long considered to be leaders in the field. Accordingly, Japanese museum professionals—some of whom have themselves studied museology and museum education abroad—have regularly introduced Western museum trends and developments into Japan.

In contrast, there has been less flow of information among educators at museums within Asia, despite their geographical and cultural proximity and their wide range of innovative educational programs. In this symposium, we consider new possibilities for the future of museum education by highlighting a variety of initiatives taking place in four national museums in Asia.



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Schedule

- 13:00–13:05** *Greetings*
MATSUMOTO Nobuyuki,
Director, Kyoto National Museum
- 13:05–13:45** *Connecting Museums and People:
Cultural Property Sommeliers and Kyohaku Navigators*
MIZUTANI Aki, Curator of Education,
Kyoto National Museum
- 13:45–14:25** *Playing with the Past:
The Children’s Museum of the National Museum of Korea*
CHO Hyejin, Curator of Education,
Cheongju National Museum, Korea
- 14:25–14:35** *Break*
- 14:35–15:15** *Creating Connections:
Engaging Audiences at the National Museum of Singapore*
FOO Min Li, Assistant Director,
National Museum of Singapore (NMS)
- 15:15–15:55** *A Museum Education Project on Multi-Ethnic Coexistence
and Our Interactive Stations “Tempatempa”*
SASAKI Kazuyoshi, Senior Fellow, National Ainu Museum
- 15:55–16:05** *Break*
- 16:05–16:50** *Discussion and Audience Q & A*
- 16:50–17:00** *Closing Remarks*
KURIHARA Yūji,
Deputy Director, Kyoto National Museum



Connecting Museums and People: Cultural Property Sommeliers and Kyohaku Navigators



MIZUTANI Aki **Kyoto National Museum**

The Kyoto National Museum, opened in 1897 in Kyoto's Higashiyama district, has a mission to collect, protect, and preserve the nation's precious cultural properties for future generations. The museum collections, most of which date from ancient times through the late nineteenth century, comprise nearly 15,000 sets or single objects, nearly half of which are entrusted to it on long term loan from temples and shrines.

The Kyoto National Museum's pioneering educational activities began in 1924, when it began holding lectures by specialized scholars; these lectures have continued up to the present day. Educational activities aimed at a broader audience, however, did not start in earnest until the museum established its Education Department in 2012. Currently, the Education Department has four members: one chair (who doubles as a curator in charge of part of the art collection), a dedicated education curator, and two assistants. These four staff members are in charge of organizing lectures and workshops, developing and executing activities using hands-on teaching materials, organizing classroom visits, training and managing volunteers, supporting school groups, creating gallery self-guides and worksheets, and planning medium-scale educational exhibitions.



This presentation will focus on two programs unique to the Kyoto National Museum: the “Cultural Property Sommeliers” and the “Kyohaku Navigators.” The approximately twenty Cultural Property Sommeliers are university undergraduate and graduate school students who hold outreach classes on artworks in elementary and junior high schools in Kyoto City. The approximately two hundred Kyohaku Navigators are in charge of the museum’s hands-on carts and museum workshops.

This talk will introduce the activities of these volunteer groups and discuss how they have served to connect the museum and the community. By tracing the background and precedents for these activities, I hope to illustrate one aspect of museum education in Japan in recent years. Exchanging such information in a cross-cultural public forum should allow all of us to consider new possibilities for museum education in the future.



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MIZUTANI Aki is Curator of Education at the Kyoto National Museum. She received her MA in art history from Doshisha University. Before joining the KNM’s Education Department in 2009, she worked at the Shinoda Toko Art Space in Seki, Gifu prefecture, and at The Museum of Fine Arts, Gifu. In her current post, she is in charge of various projects, including planning introductory feature exhibitions, managing and training volunteers, planning workshops, collaborating with area schools on school programs, and creating self-guides for the galleries. She is interested in thinking about how to create enjoyable experiences for adults and children who come into contact with cultural properties for the first time.



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Playing with the Past: The Children's Museum of the National Museum of Korea



CHO Hyejin
Curator of Education, Cheongju National Museum

Children are interested and undeterred in learning and challenging themselves with new skills. They are always ready to test and measure themselves mentally and physically. They like solving difficult riddles and putting Lego pieces together. The history of mankind is a story of discovery, invention, artistic achievement, experimentation, and innovation—characteristics that have much in common with childhood. For children, the past is a different world. Therefore, history exhibits can provide an environment for children to explore. For children, the act of “poking around” is instinctive. Inviting children into an unfamiliar space and allowing them to use their senses to explore a new world to their heart's content is the significance and value of a children's history exhibition.

Since original artifacts from the museum's collection are not displayed in special exhibitions for children, can a children's museum really be considered a museum? Is it possible to have a museum without artworks or artifacts? Through exhibits of objects such as an artist's paintbrushes, easels, objects such as the fruits used in the artist's works, photographs of landscapes, a recreated atelier space, and video interviews with the artist, visitors might imagine an artist's oeuvre. Instead of showing the works themselves, museums might show the various elements surrounding an artist.



When I saw the exhibition *Itami Jun: Architecture of the Wind* at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea, a few years ago, I viewed the architect's work not through his buildings, but through his artist drawings, blueprints, models, and video interviews. It was a wonderful exhibition for better appreciating the artistic world of architects and their works.

What about history museums? Is it possible to exhibit without artifacts? History is life. History is created, experienced, and constantly changed by people. History is made up of people's experiences. Life cannot be explained only through relics. Museums are said to be places that show the footprints and history of humankind. If so, shouldn't it be possible to exhibit history without using relics? Is it not possible to create historical exhibitions that focus on telling the stories of people who lived in the past?

The Children's Museum at the National Museum of Korea and the 13 National Museums are spaces that tell the stories of people who lived in the past and allow children to explore the spaces and discover their own stories. How long does it take to hull grain when you do it with a stone grinder? Are the people in the pictures real people? Did people in the Joseon dynasty also travel? The exhibitions show history as it relates to our daily lives. Through a variety of hands-on exhibits, we hope to convey to children more vivid and appealing aspects of the lives of people in the past. In this presentation, I would like to discuss the value and significance of the Children's Museum at the National Museum of Korea by introducing the history of Children's Museums and their exhibits.



CHO Hyejin is Curator of Education at the Cheongju National Museum. Until December 2022, she was Curator of Education in the Education Division of the National Museum of Korea in Seoul. She has a BA in History from the University of Hanyang in Seoul and an MA in Museum Studies from the University of Leicester in London. Her interest is identifying how visitors and education programs in museums interact with exhibitions during museum visits. From 2007 to 2020, she worked in the National Museum of Korea's Children's Museum Division, where she was in charge of children's exhibitions and explored the educational potential of children's museums. She then moved to the Education Division, where she worked on building a "museum education online platform" and creating an education space for the disabled. Hyejin Cho's email: hjchocho@korea.kr

Creating Connections: Engaging Audiences at the National Museum of Singapore



FOO Min Li

National Museum of Singapore

The National Museum of Singapore is Singapore's oldest museum that seeks to inspire with stories of Singapore and the world. As a national museum focused on presenting Singapore's stories – including Singapore's history, heritage, and cultures – it recognises the importance of creating connections between the audiences and the stories, the museum's collection, and the museum itself. How has the museum sought to achieve these goals in its programmes for the audiences?



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In the past six years, the museum has embarked on several initiatives for families with children with and without additional needs, seniors (including seniors with dementia) and a wider spectrum of students, for the following reasons:

- **Families:** the museum recognises that families visit the museum for leisurely activities and to learn about Singapore. Hence, how might the museum be a more welcoming space for families, including families with children with additional needs, so that more families have the opportunity to learn together?

- Seniors: the museum's artefacts and stories have rich potential to engage seniors in meaningful conversations. Hence, how might the museum be a space for seniors, including seniors with dementia, to enjoy and look forward to visiting, and share stories about Singapore with their families and friends?
- Students: the museum recognises the importance of engaging, even at a young age, to spark their interest and curiosity in Singapore's history and heritage. However, with the students' differing interests, what are the different ways and opportunities to connect with them?

In this presentation, the museum will share more about these initiatives – the inspiration, the approach and learning points – and what the possible journey ahead may look like.



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FOO Min Li is an Assistant Director at the National Museum of Singapore (NMS). She heads the programmes team which engages schools, families, members of the public and seniors at the museum. Prior to joining NMS, Min Li worked on research and education at the Preservation of Sites and Monuments Division of the National Heritage Board from 2009 to 2016, researching on Singapore's National Monuments' histories and presenting them through school and public programmes. At NMS, she has coordinated programmes for the Singapore Heritage Festival and National Day Celebrations, and her current projects include working with her education colleagues on a programme to enhance students' learning experience at the museum and engaging seniors at the museum.



A Museum Education Project on Multi-Ethnic Coexistence and Our Interactive Stations “Tempatempa”



SASAKI Kazuyoshi National Ainu Museum

An=ukokor aynu ikor oma kenru, the National Ainu Museum opened in July 2020 on the shore of Lake Poroto in Shiraoi, Hokkaido. It is the first Japanese national museum to exhibit and conduct extensive research on the history and culture of the Ainu, an Indigenous People. Located approximately one hour from Sapporo, the museum was established by Japan’s Agency for Cultural Affairs to be one of the core facilities of *Uaynukor Kotan*, the National Ainu Museum and Park — nicknamed “Upopoy.” The museum is built on the former site of the privately operated Ainu Museum, known as “Porotokotan.” *Porotokotan* carried out activities related to Ainu culture for 53 years until 2018. The National Ainu Museum houses approximately 10,000 Ainu-related materials, including those inherited from the former “Ainu Museum.”

The mission of the National Ainu Museum is to “respect the dignity of the Ainu as an Indigenous People, promote proper recognition and understanding of Ainu history and culture in Japan and abroad, and contribute to the creation and development of a new Ainu culture.” In accordance with this mandate, the museum has four divisions in its Research and Curatorial Department and five specialized teams made up of researchers from different fields working together. The Museum Education Division and the Education Team are staffed by a number of researchers, curators, and six educators who are primarily responsible for researching, planning, and implementing the museum's educational activities. These staff members conduct lectures, workshops, and gallery tours. In addition, there is always a curatorial staff member on hand in the museum galleries to respond to questions from visitors.



In this presentation, I will introduce our attempts to encourage visitors to the museum and *Upopoy* to think about multi-ethnic coexistence in light of the current state of awareness of the Ainu people and Ainu culture in Japan. We do this through the museum's educational programs and dialogue in the galleries, as well as through the include an exploratory exhibition, Interactive Stations "*Tempatempa*," which is part of the museum's permanent collection gallery. This exhibition comprises eighteen hands-on interactive units for the purpose of museum education, which provide interactive experiences that help visitors to better engage with the themes and materials in the permanent collection. We will use this as a means to discuss the educational activities at the National Ainu Museum.



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SASAKI Kazuyoshi is Senior Fellow at the National Ainu Museum, Shiraoi in Hokkaido, Japan, where he is in charge of museology, audience research, and evaluations for exhibition development. Mr. Sasaki also worked on the preparation of an interactive gallery in the permanent collection, on special exhibitions, and on the library for the museum, which opened in July 2020.

Mr. Sasaki is now in charge of museum education inside and outside the National Ainu Museum, bridging gaps between both ethnicities within Japan, and conducting research on evaluations and audience research. One of the National Ainu Museum exhibitions that he developed, Interactive Stations "*Tempatempa*," received the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry Minister's Award at the 15th Kids Design Awards in 2021.



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Symposium program and more information is available on the museum website.

www.kyohaku.go.jp

Organized by the Kyoto National Museum