



## Press Release

17<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Embassy of Japan in Botswana

### **The Embassy of Japan and Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development officially opens the Japanese art exhibition ‘Variety and Autonomy: the Prints of Contemporary Japanese Painters’**

The Embassy of Japan in Botswana and the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development are pleased to announce that, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2021, the Japanese art exhibition ‘Variety and Autonomy: The Prints of Contemporary Japanese Painters’ has been opened to the public at the Botswana National Museum. The event will be held until the 11th September 2021.

To inaugurate the opening, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of Botswana, H.E. Mr. HOSHIYAMA Takashi, took a tour of the exhibition this morning with Ms. Monica Selelo, Principal Curator of Visual Arts, the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development. Ambassador Hoshiyama said “contemporary arts are often very difficult to understand because they are not graphically painted, but expressing artists’ thoughts or philosophy. So it could be fun to guess what they are intended to be.” Ms. Monica Selelo, Principal Curator of Visual Arts, the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development, said that "it is an inspiring exhibition which relates to the experiences of artists and the viewers. It evokes those silent hopeful messages. The abstract works tend to involve the viewers more and take them through the journey which makes them want to see even more of Japanese art. It is an exhibition worth visiting."

This exhibition will showcase 42 prints produced by 10 prominent Japanese contemporary painters, namely, Yayoi Kusama, Hitoshi Nakazato, Kosai Hori, Masanari Murai, Naoyoshi Hikosaka, Natsuyuki Nakanishi, Toeko Tatsuno, Tomoharu Murakami, Toshinobu Onosato, and Yasukazu Tabuchi. They explored a wide range of possibilities through prints and expanded the range of expression in contemporary art using the print medium in the 1970s. Rather than focusing on specialists who are considered to have shaped the history of contemporary Japanese prints, the exhibition deals with

prints by painters who drew on trends in contemporary art and attempts to reassess the existing history of contemporary Japanese prints.

The exhibition is a traveling exhibition initiated by the Japan Foundation and conducted by various Japanese Embassies around the world to promote Japanese culture through Japanese arts. The Japan Foundation was established in October 1972 as a special legal entity supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to cultivate friendship and ties between Japan and the world through culture, language and dialogue.

The Embassy of Japan, in the past, hosted 4 traveling exhibitions in Botswana; “Counter-Photography: Japan’s Artists Today” (2011), “the dolls of Japan” (2012), “Handcrafted Form: Traditions and Techniques” (2016) and “Beautiful Handicrafts of Tohoku, Japan” (2019).

This year’s exhibition is special on two accounts. First, this exhibition is held during the year that we celebrate the 55th anniversary of Japan-Botswana diplomatic relations. Secondly, it provides us with the opportunity to introduce Japanese arts to Botswana, immediately after the Tokyo 2020 Olympic games, whilst the excitement of the games is still high, and when the Paralympic games are about to begin. Thus, this exhibition will give Botswana an opportunity to know and to learn more about Japan and its culture beyond the Olympic and Paralympic games.

This exhibition comes at a time when the world is grappling with the COVID-19 global pandemic. It was feared that this event may be affected by this formidable challenge. However, due to the strong commitment and dedication from our co-host, the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development, the event has materialized, and all the precaution will be taken to hold this event in a safe environment. This event is testimony to the strong ties that the Embassy of Japan and the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development have nurtured over the years through a variety of events, not only in the field of arts but also in the field of sport. The exhibition is expected to contribute to further bolstering the relations between Japan and Botswana.

**【Information】**

Admission: Free (open to the general public)

Event Period: 17 August to 11 September 2021 (Closed: Mondays), 09:00 – 16:00

Venue: Main Gallery, Botswana National Museum

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