

Remarks by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
for Bestowal of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays
upon Dr. Rupert Faulkner,
and of the Foreign Minister's Commendation,
upon Ms. Anna Jackson
on October 1st, 2021

Distinguished Guests, Good evening, and welcome to my residence.

We are gathered here today with the very agreeable purpose of honouring two eminent Japanese art specialists, one recently retired after a long career at London's V&A Museum, and the other still extremely active there, for their outstanding contributions to cultural relations between Japan and the United Kingdom.

Let me begin with Dr. Rupert Faulkner, whose association with the museum goes all the way back to 1984, when he was hired as Curator of Japanese Art. He was immediately involved with the setting up of the UK's first permanent, large-scale gallery of Japanese art, the Toshiba Gallery, which opened in 1986. Having applied his expertise in Japanese ceramics in other aspects of the museum's work, more recently he oversaw the renewal of the Toshiba Gallery, which opened in its new guise in 2015.

Over the years, Dr. Faulkner has achieved rapport with a number of experts, artists and craftspeople, with whose support and cooperation the V&A has emerged as one of the leading players in the promotion of Japanese culture in the UK. He will be especially remembered for the crucial role he played as leader of a UK-Japan research and conservation project, focusing on the Mazarin Chest, an exquisite piece of Japanese

lacquerware made for export to Europe in the first half of the 17th century. As part of the legacy of the project, he was able to pioneer an approach to conserving objects made with *urushi* (lacquer) that reconciled western conservation principles with the Japanese preference for the use of traditional materials. The chest now enjoys a prominent place in the Toshiba Gallery.

With his expertise in Japanese ceramics, ukiyo-e woodblock prints and modern Japanese craft and design, his research output and curatorial activities have been prodigious. For instance, he has assembled one of the most important public collections of studio crafts outside Japan, has produced a range of publication, and has shared his research achievement in academic conferences and symposiums in the UK, Japan and elsewhere. He has maintained cordial links with Japanese specialists in his field and has done much to encourage interaction between British and Japanese artists, conservators, craftspeople, curators, researchers, scholars and students.

Dr. Faulkner well deserves The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, which the Government of Japan awarded him last year. Congratulations, Dr. Faulkner!

Distinguished Guests of this evening,

I now turn to Ms. Anna Jackson, Keeper of the Asian Department at the V&A. Her fascination with Japanese art and culture was triggered by chance when she first placed as a junior curator in the Far Eastern Department, which was then called. This exposed her to Japanese art and inspired her to become an occasional student at SOAS, where she studied under Professor Timon Screech, as she put it herself “I have never looked back!” Having been made the head of the whole Asian Department, she has never lost the thrill and fulfilment she derives from being a curator.

In her early research Ms. Jackson studied the acquisition, reception and influence of Japanese art and design in the West during the Meiji period. She has since widened the historical scope of her interest and has contributed to a number of V&A exhibitions and their related publications. She remains particularly interested in the way art and design is transmitted and transformed across cultural borders.

Being fascinated by Japanese textiles, Ms. Jackson made her first acquisition, of a Taisho period kimono, in 1994. Her interest in kimono culminated in what she regards as the greatest highlight of her career at the V&A so far, her curating of the exhibition “Kimono: Kyoto to Catwalk”. Although it had to close after only 18 days because of the pandemic, it eventually re-opened and attracted many positive reviews, both in the UK and outside. In preparing the exhibition, she particularly enjoyed collaborating with colleagues in Japan and studying some of the outstanding pieces in their collections.

Noting that the V&A was founded just one year before Commodore Perry’s arrival in Japan, Ms. Jackson is proud of the important role it has played over so many years in presenting the art of Japan to the British public. Looking to the future, she plans to continue studying kimono and is to produce a book with her colleague, Japanese art curator Yamada Masami, on ukiyo-e, which will feature some of the hitherto unpublished prints in the museum’s large collection.

For what she has done and will no doubt continue to do in making Japanese art and culture accessible to the British public, Ms. Jackson is a most deserving recipient of the Foreign Minister’s Commendation, which she was awarded last year. Congratulations, Ms. Jackson!