

Remarks by H.E. Mr Hiroshi Suzuki,
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,
at the Praemium Imperiale Announcement

Lord Patten,
Mr Thorne,
Distinguished Guests,

It is a great pleasure for me to join you all
today for the announcement of this year's
Praemium Imperiale laureates.

This prestigious award reflects the vision
of the late Prince Takamatsu, who believed
deeply in the power of the arts to build
bridges and bring people together.

The Praemium Imperiale promotes artistic
excellence on a global scale – recognising
outstanding achievements in five fields of
art not covered by the Nobel Prizes.

I first attended an event of the Praemium Imperiale 20 years ago. In 1994, Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress — now the Emperor Emeritus and Empress Emerita paid a state visit to the U.S. I was in the entourage as His Majesty's interpreter.

When Their Majesties visited New York, they attended a reception at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in celebration of the Praemium Imperiale. The presence of Mr David Rockefeller and so many distinguished figures left a deep impression on me.

I thank the Japan Art Association and all the people who make this important award possible.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Lord Patten, who has been a dedicated supporter and a valued International Advisor of this award for many years.

Your visionary guidance and enduring commitment greatly contribute to make it possible for this award flourish as world's top prize for many years.

Thank you very much.