

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

Lord Patten, Lady Patten,  
Dr Hunt,  
My lords, my ladies,  
Distinguished guests,

Good evening.

It is my great pleasure to attend this dinner  
tonight to celebrate the Praemium  
Imperiale and its remarkable laureates.

This award was created on the wish of the  
late Prince Takamatsu to contribute widely  
to the promotion of arts across the world.

It recognizes artistic excellence in five  
areas which are not covered by the Nobel  
prizes. It celebrates the universal power of  
arts to inspire us all.

First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all laureates of this year's Praemium Imperiale. Your art works have touched the hearts of so many people around the world, giving them inspirations and motivations to pursue their own dreams.

I am truly delighted to note that a few distinguished past recipients are also with us, making this event even more special.

When I was serving the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as his private secretary, I accompanied him to a Praemium Imperiale Dinner held in Tokyo in 2013. Mr Antony Gormley, who is sitting in front of me tonight, was one of the laureates for that year. Thank you, Mr Gormley for joining us tonight.

Also, among the laureates for that year was Mr Francis Ford Coppola. Prime Minister Abe loved watching films. Inspired by his presence, Prime Minister Abe said in his remarks, “If I had not become a politician, I would have wanted to become a film director ”. One small example of how arts can inspire people.

More than 40 years ago, I had the privilege of meeting His Imperial Highness Prince Takamatsu at his residence. I was a university student then, and was impressed with how he encouraged young people to pursue their dreams.

Therefore, I find it fitting that the National Youth Theatre has been awarded the Grant for Young Artists. It has nurtured and empowered young talents for nearly 70 years.

I am pleased to have with us this evening Mr Takashi Nakamoto, Deputy Executive Director of the Japan Art Association, who has travelled from Japan to present the awards in person.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Lord Patten for his many years of dedication and invaluable contributions as an International Advisor. He has made yet another great contribution in recognizing the National Youth Theatre.

In closing, I would like to, once again, congratulate all the recipients of the award for this year.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Japan Art Association, the International Advisors, and all contributors who support this prize.

Your generous support makes it possible for the Praemium Imperiale to spread the wings of arts, build bridges, and promote respect for each other across the world.

Thank you very much.