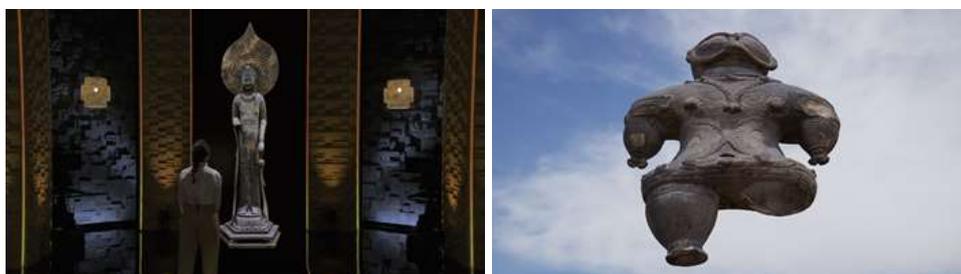




Press Release

Uncovering the Secrets of Ancient Japan with New 8K Technology in Partnership with Tokyo National Museum



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Tokyo, March 15, 2021 — NHK is pleased to announce the premier broadcast of the series *Fresh Encounters with our Cultural Heritage* (3 x 30 min) on March 20 on NHK's BS8K satellite channel. The series was produced in collaboration with the Tokyo National Museum. NHK's reputation of over 50 years for producing high-end art programs enters a new phase of production using the latest state-of-the-art technology, including 8K filming and scanning, and photogrammetry.

NHK and the Tokyo National Museum have been engaged in a joint research project *Cultural Heritage in 8K*. The aim is to produce an ultra-high-definition 3DCG digital inventory of the artifacts in the museum including national treasures. This makes it possible to capture every detail of the artifacts inside and out for the viewers to see. NHK offered the latest technological knowledge and innovative storytelling, while the museum curated the selection of the artifacts and advised how best to show them. Combining their expertise, both organizations collaborated to seek new ways of art appreciation in the forms of VR, AR, Projection Mapping and other digital means.

A TV series *Fresh Encounters with our Cultural Heritage* is part of this unique joint research. Each episode looks into one artifact – namely, a 3000-year-old mysterious *Dogu* (clay figurine), a 400-year-old golden *Byobu* screen depicting the life of the Samurai and people in Kyoto, and a highly artistic wooden statue of the *Kudara Kannon* deity which is part of the world’s oldest existing wooden architecture from *Horyuji* temple, all in 8K. NHK has succeeded in recreating a 3DCG model of each artifact by using hundreds of extremely high-resolution images which were photographed and 3D-scanned. For instance, in order to recreate the golden *Byobu* screen of *Rakuchu Rakugai Zu* (Picture of the inner city and outskirts of old Kyoto), 210 images at 8192 x 8192 pixels were used. Interactive CG content which shows 8K quality 3DCG in real-time was also developed. Looking at these recreated artifacts on the latest 8KHDR LED panels or projector, the program’s host, by manipulating the gaming console, could examine each artifact in ways which wouldn’t be possible in physical reality. This would potentially reveal answers to the questions academics and researchers have been asking for years.

NHK’s 8K channel controller Hakuno Takahiko said: “We are proud to be able to offer NHK’s 8K technology and the knowledge we had accumulated over the years to this new series by building a good partnership with the museum.” Tokyo National Museum’s curator for Japanese painting, Matsushima Masato stated: “The pandemic has led museums and galleries all over the world to seek new ways to serve people. 8K imaging has huge potential.” In 2022, when the museum will be celebrating its 150th anniversary, there is a plan to hold a special exhibition based on this joint research.

BROADCAST SCHEDULE:

March 20, 2021 at 7PM (JST) on NHK BS8K channel

About Tokyo National Museum - The Tokyo National Museum collects, houses, and displays a comprehensive collection of art works and antiquities from Japan as well as other Asian countries. The museum also conducts research and investigations concerning its collection of books, rubbings, and photographs, related to fine art, and makes these items available to scholars.

About NHK - NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) is Japan’s sole public broadcaster. Funded by fees from Japanese households and businesses, it has a reputation for impartial, high-quality programming. Through its six nationwide TV channels and three radio channels, NHK reaches about 60 million households and businesses. Besides being a broadcaster, NHK produces a vast array of high-quality programs covering news, documentaries, children’s and educational programs, music, entertainment, culture, animation and drama. Known as the pioneer of HD, NHK now actively produces programs in 4K and 8K.