

A touring exhibition from the V&A

# Japan Myths to Manga

V&A

## Japan: Myths to Manga

Japan is an island nation bursting with creativity and imagination. With mountains, ancient forests and bustling cities, the country boasts an extraordinary variety of landscapes and natural threats.

In this exhibition, discover how Japan's extreme geography, beliefs and a sense of playfulness have shaped its ingenuity. See how play is encouraged at all ages and permeates Japanese hobbies, designs, and attitudes.

Unfurl Japan's rich storytelling history from traditional spoken word fables to today's computer games. Explore how mythical tales, both ancient and new, continue to inspire people to innovate and to better understand the world around them.

Come with us on an exciting journey through Japan, from the sky to the sea, through the forest and into the city.

This will be the first temporary exhibition at Young V&A, formerly V&A Museum of Childhood, when it reopens in 2023, following redevelopment.



## Sky

The sky is the playground for Japan's celestial beings. The sun, stars and moon have all inspired legendary tales of creation, love, and kindness. Japan's epic folklore has generated a vital visual culture from historic woodblock prints to contemporary video games, as well as boundless global designs.

## Forest

Japan is covered in ancient forests and mountains which have long been a site of mystery and a place to retreat to and respect. Its forests, populated with woodland creatures, have long since been fertile ground for tales of survivalism and enchantment.



## Sea

The sea provides essential resources, like food, but is also a powerful and mysterious place that holds many secrets as well as dangers. Sea life and the curiosities of the sea are a rich source of creativity and imaginative storytelling in Japan, inspiring epic tales, beautiful artworks and innovative safety systems.

## City

In Japanese cities modernity and traditionalism sit side-by-side, and ancient beliefs and customs help forge cutting-edge technologies. These are places where playfulness can be found in abundance, to be enjoyed by all.



## Curatorial team

The exhibition was conceived by Josephine Rout, previously curator at the V&A and now Senior Curator at National Wool Museum Geelong. It is curated by Katy Canales, Project Curator at Young V&A with Masami Yamada, Japan Curator in the Asia Department at the V&A.

Size: 400–600 m<sup>2</sup>  
Touring from 2024

## Contacts

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Shigetoshi Furutani, Tokyo Dizzily Land, 2020  
Woodblock print depicting the Shinto sun goddess Amaterasu emerging from a cave after persuasion from other gods, E.5594-1886

'Seascape' necklace of polyester fabric and steel, designed and made by Mariko Kusumoto, USA, 2019, M.63-2021

Hand-guard (tsuba) for a sword, M.33-1920

Heel-less shoes by Noritaka Tatehana, Japan, 2021