

« Reconsidering museums versus contemporary archaeology »

Kyoto, Japan, September 2-4th 2019

ICMAH-ICOM Conference

The theme of this 25th ICOM-ICMAH general Conference focuses on a way to reconsider museums in front of contemporary archaeology. This topicality can easily be transposed to sports museums as sport history incorporates anthropological and ethnological matters. The objects conserved amongst the institutions are considered as antique or contemporary artefacts that enquire us on history and activities of past and present societies.

NB : During this edition, ICMAH didn't host a workshop on sports, however, a few speakers have talked about sports-related matters, alongside Marie Grasse.

Participants :

- **Hiroyo Hakamata**, National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo
- **Marie Grasse**, Director and curator of the National Sports Museum, France (marie.grasse@museedusport.fr)
- **Sachiko Niina**, Prince Chichibu Memorial Sports Museum, Japon

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“RECONSIDERING MUSEUMS VERSUS CONTEMPORARY ARCHAEOLOGY”

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Report on

SPORTS THEME

September 4th 2019, Kyoto

ICMAH being one of the oldest committees in ICOM, is also inclusive of the largest theme in museums by its professionalism on archaeology and history. Keeping the memory of all times and all traditions, archaeology and history museums and their collections are always missioned to transmit the knowledge of the humanity for future generations since centuries.

During this year's annual conference, ICMAH would like to examine anew the role of archaeological and historical museums in contemporary archaeology. In any country, a lot of museums used to be the center of archaeological activities and studies, and many are still.

However, the traditional relations between museums and archaeology changes with the practice of preventive - salvage (or contract) archaeology and other archaeological research practices that increase and disperse in number. The diversity of archaeological organizations modifies also the access to the resources and the data in the same region. In these circumstances a number of collections are commonly exhibited outside museums nowadays. On the other hand, the public has still the perception that the place to keep and to research of archaeological objects, findings and collections is a museum.

How should we consider this gap? How can we keep our museums active, updated and attractive as a 'hub' in contemporary archaeology? How should museums and associated organization work together with the local community to provide rich archaeology and history consciousness? This inclusiveness of theme proposes also a very wide evaluation of the museums as a 'cultural hub' in their location.

The essential approach is to open visions on the missions of archaeology and history museums to serve to their communities in the future. The essential approach is to open visions on the missions of archaeology and history museums to serve to their communities in the future.

- **Hiroyo Hakamata** and **Marie Grasse** "The sports body: two complementary approaches"

1. The French National Sports Museum's approach

Since its opening in Nice in 2014, the National Sports Museum has been committed to proposing a varied exhibition policy through themes that allow it to question today's society on its history, sometimes the most distant. In 2018, the school proposed a central subject not only for sport but also for our contemporary reality: the body.

It seemed interesting to us to present to you here the same theme: "the sports body" treated on the one hand by a museum of Western society and on the other hand by a museum of the Far East.

A tool of perfection since Antiquity, the body is symbolically the reflection of an ideal seeking to fill our failures, our natural weaknesses. The body fascinates. Fat, skinny, tall, short, young or old, male or female, healthy or sick, it is now the subject of most of the debates in our society. Body-pleasure, body-work, body-picture, body-sick... It is the temple of appearance; it preserves and reflects every imprint of life. The particularity of the *homo sportivus* is to evaluate its adaptive capacities, its performances... which are above all a response to a demand whether it is sporting, social, political or economic.

The cult of the body reflects this social and physical norm of society. The body itself symbolizes what makes it concrete to see and think: the flesh and blood man. All artistic forms have logically taken over the subject. That's what we tried to show at the Museum.

The body competition precedes the one that takes place in front of the public, whether it is an Olympic event broadcast by cameras around the world or the Sunday game with the encouragement of a few friends or family. Whatever his level, the athlete tries to bring his body to performative limits, often blurring the line between sporting action, scientific performance and the fight against the possible, the humanly attainable. States also illustrated by artist Marina Abramovic, who chooses performances to push the boundaries of physical and mental potential.

The body can also become the object of another battle, a machine that mechanical assemblies or chemicals try to push towards the exploits of an apparatus. Elite sport, through performance improvement, seeks a schematic improvement (adaptation, selection, progression) where doping can then appear as a logical component. Sport, and in particular high-level sport, then becomes an experimental laboratory of human performance that illustrates in this sense a heritage of the Enlightenment, of which the 19th century, with the birth of modern sport, by calibrating human strength and movement, becomes the turning point. Finally, the new technologies of the 20th and 21st centuries are appropriating sport as an extension of the mind, trying at all costs to robotize performance, to reduce to nothing the uncertainty of a competition subject to a

challenge that often goes beyond, if not systematically, the simple sporting framework.

Sport connects. Athletes practice "bodybuilding" by showing their bulky muscles because medicine and technology are currently on board. The bodies are directly dimensioned: cyclists, speed skaters with thighs with adapted muscles, like the series of athletes photographed, composed by Howard Schatz. Today, naked bodies are visible at anytime, anywhere on modern media, advertising, newspapers, magazines or calendars such as the stadium gods.

Finally, the question of the body cannot be addressed without echoing the diversification of practices, their evolution and the objects of sport that have accompanied, inspired and developed them.

To design an exhibition around the sports body means offering visitors a set of objects, illuminating as much as varied, on the way in which this same body is represented, evaluated and experienced: instruments, books, engravings, photos, sculptures, posters, clothing, control or evaluation devices, piloting or exploration devices. It also means considering, and reminding us, that in each sporting era there is a body culture of its own, which requires us to show its originality as visually as possible.

It is also about distinguishing periods, each one having specific characteristics and technical or technological tools in line with the possibilities offered at the moment. But turning the sports body into an exhibition means, above all, telling an exciting story, with as much rigour and clarity as possible, in order to transform the simple scientific discourse into a journey through time, into a fun and educational experience that is necessarily accessible to all, in order to meet the expectations of visitors to the National Sports Museum.

2. La vision du National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, Japan

During the summer of 2020, the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, (NMWA) will hold the "Sports and the Human Body (proposed title)" exhibition to coincide with the Tokyo 2020 Olympics⁶. While the NMWA collection includes very few archaeological items, this temporary exhibition will consider how archaeology and social history—in this case the history of sports—can be combined with the history of art. This report will show how this exhibition is

⁶ The exhibition is organized by the NMWA, Nikkei Shimbun, NHK, NHK Promotions, and curated by Takashi Iizuka (Ancient Greece) and Hiroyo Hakamata (Modern era).

an experiment for a Japanese art museum and how museums cut across disciplinary boundaries in their exhibition planning.

The NMWA was founded in 1959 on the basis of the Kojiro Matsukata Collection of primarily 19th century French and English art which was given to the Japanese people by the French government after its sequestration toward the end of the World War II. Hence, the Museum's ongoing aim is to make Western art all the more accessible to Japanese audiences. Since then the Museum has developed as Japan's only national museum dedicated to Western art as a whole. In addition to its exhibition activities, the Museum also collects Western artworks and related materials, conducts surveys and studies, carries out conservation and restoration work, educational activities and publishes a variety of materials.

The Collection Galleries are located in the Main Building designed by Le Corbusier, which was recognized as a World Heritage site in 2016, and in the New Wing designed by Kunio Maekawa, who apprenticed under Le Corbusier. A selection of works from the Matsukata Collection, along with those acquired since the Museum's founding, are presented throughout the year in these galleries. The Special Exhibitions Wing is used to present special exhibitions approximately three times a year, drawn primarily from works loaned by museums in America and Europe, and focusing on introducing various aspects of Western art.

The NMWA has primarily acquired works dating from the late medieval period through the early 20th century. With the exception of the "Cycladic Sculpture" donated by the painter Ryûzaburô Umehara and the ancient rings included in the ring collection donated by Kanjirô Hashimoto, there are almost no items in the collection that fall within the purview of archeology. However, several exhibitions of ancient art have been held at the Museum under the guidance of NMWA curators who specialize in ancient Greek art. For example, in 2011 the NMWA held "The Body Beautiful in Ancient Greece from the British Museum" exhibition, followed in 2015-2016 with "The Golden Legend" exhibition, which presented gold masterpieces from ancient Mediterranean civilizations along with paintings on the theme of gold. The "Sports and the Human Body" exhibition to be held in 2020 similarly includes content related to both archaeology and art history. In commemoration of the Tokyo Olympic Games, which will be held at the same time, this exhibition will consider the history of sports as one element of social and cultural history.

An exhibition no "sports bodies"

What do sports mean for people. This exhibition will use numerous paintings and sculptures to depict how the aims and forms of sports have changed over the years. This exhibition focuses on Ancient Greece, with a second section on the modern era focusing on the 19th century. This pairing will explore how sports and images of the human body have been handled in Western art over the course of history.

The exhibition rightly begins with Ancient Greece, the birthplace of the Olympic Games. The Ancient Greeks believed it was essential to achieve excellence and honor. The cultivation of the right appearance and superb athletic ability were part of the pursuit of excellence, and this meant that victory in athletic events was particularly honored. Sports provided an ideal opportunity for realizing these goals, given that citizens could become victorious athletes by training their bodies. Thus the human body and sports were inextricably linked in Ancient Greece. The first section will present close to 100 Ancient Greek sculptures and vase paintings which depict these themes as it explores Ancient Greek thought as seen in artwork imagery.



The second section shifts the focus to modern Europe and America, where competitive sports were established and sports came to be enjoyed by the general populace. Each person, whether male or female, controls their own body; it is not controlled by the gods. Thus humans became conscious of physical health and sports were pursued for both physical health and pleasure. Women have enjoyed participating in sports throughout the modern era, as seen in some of the works displayed here. This part also explores the scientific and realistic observation of the human body, along with the popularization of sports and how they became fashionable in the modern era. The second section introduces how traditions in human body expression and sporting types continued from Greek traditions, and how scientific and medical advances meant the changed perception and visualization of the human form. The section also explores how sports became pastimes for the masses and subject to trends and fashions. All of these elements are conveyed through the display of paintings, sculptures, posters, other forms of graphic arts and fashion items.

Our exhibit approach

In this manner this exhibition uses an academic approach as it aims to create an exhibition that considers the intersections between art history, sports history and the consideration of the human form, as it also explores how to expand an art museum's approach to exhibitions.

This approach has previously been used by the Musée National du Sport in Nice, France, along with the museums in various countries specializing in sport and on the Olympic Games. However, the NMWA as a museum that specializes in Western art has predominantly viewed ancient sculpture in terms of art history, or has focused on modern paintings and graphic arts. As a result, the exhibition does not use the inclusive and extremely specialized history of sports approach taken by sports museums, and the actual objects, such as sporting equipment and other non-art objects, have not been included in our exhibited items. When we consider what to exhibit, we naturally focus on our museum's original social role, and align with our nature as an institution that works with art objects



And yet, for the NMWA, which frequently plans exhibitions around the themes of specific Western artists or artistic schools or the collections of specific American or European art museums, the planning of this type of academic exhibition has provided us with new discoveries. For example, unlike in ancient art, images of the human body involved in sports rarely appears in high art forms, but rather are more often found in popular media such as magazine illustrations. Such expressive means are closely linked to people's actual life experiences and customs, and they in turn become eloquent expressions of the social trends and philosophical beliefs of a particular time and place. Thus when we are considering the aesthetic value and art historical value of an artwork, we must also consider its value in terms of historical document. By further deepening our understanding of the cultural background that gave birth to that artwork, we can further deepen our enjoyment of that artwork.

We have also been conscious of the meaning of the holding of this exhibition in Japan. The tradition of discerning beauty in the human body in Japan is not as long or as deep as that in the West. And while information on sports today is widely known and understood in Japan, knowledge of the history of sports in the West is still lacking. As an art museum presenting this exhibition, we are also aware that this exhibition provides an opportunity for visitors, who are used to coming to the museum with an interest in a specific artist or specific art style, to experience art works from a different

vantage point. This exhibition's experiment, to provide as visual a depiction of the originality of body culture in each sporting era as possible, takes the display methods used at sports or body culture-related museums, such as the Musée National du Sport in Nice, and we hope that our exhibition and its methods will in turn provide new ideas for others.

- **Sachiko Niina**, “The needs of building a sports museum network in Japan”

Prince Chichibu Memorial Sports Museum is a unique museum in Japan that used to show various sports exhibits, unlike other museums which tend to specialize in a specific sport, making it the only integrated sports museum in Japan.

Our museum was named after Prince Yasuhito Chichibu (1902-1953) a symbolic sports figure in Japan. Prince Chichibu was known as the Sportsman Prince. He liked playing many sports and contributed to popularizing sports in Japan during the first half of the 20th century. Our museum opened in 1959 in the National Stadium in Tokyo, 6 years after he died. Our aim is to commemorate Prince Chichibu's contribution to sports and to introduce historical sports artifacts. This year is the 60th anniversary of our museum. Our museum has 60,000 memorabilia — such as medals, sportswear, gear and competition equipment and documents. We have besides a sports library with a collection about 30,000 volumes of books and 90,000 volumes of periodicals.

However, in June 2014, due to the rebuilding of the decrepit National Stadium for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, our museum's warehousing functions have been relocated to Ayase in Adachi-ku, Tokyo about 20 km away from the stadium. Now the items in the Museum's collection are not available for viewing.



Temporary warehouse has been relocated away from the stadium.

According to our initial plan, our museum would have expanded and reopened in the New National Stadium. But the stadium's architectural design was overhauled and building costs ballooned. In order to reduce the stadium's space, only a small gallery for Prince Chichibu will be opened in the new national stadium while other items will remain in temporary warehousing. The fate of our permanent installation is still undecided.

Not having a function of exhibition, for the time present, but our functions of research and education are still alive. For example, we engaged in the "Project for Collaborate and Propagate the Sports Museums" that was subsidized by the Agency for Cultural Affairs from 2015 to 2017. In this project, we executed a survey of the sports collections in Japanese cultural facilities and held travel exhibitions in museums among 10 regions. In this travel exhibitions, we made arrangements for each site with cultural organizations of their regions and lend them our sports items about Olympic Games or relative items of their locations.

In this report, I would like to describe the situation over preservation of sports collections in Japan based on the results of this project.

Results of the survey of sports collections in Japan

In 2015, we sent out a questionnaire survey on the sports collections in Japan with 504 museums or facilities including museums and libraries, local governments, universities, sports societies and federations, and sports facilities. The number of replies is 301, and 233 (74% of the responding facilities) possessed sports collections.

Among 233 facilities, 167 facilities (71.7%) have collections about the National Sports Festival which is held every year and has already been held in all prefectures. 154 facilities (66.1%) have collections about Olympic Games, and 79 facilities (33.9%) have collections about Paralympic Games. Additionally, 85 facilities (36.5%) have collections about athletes who are related to that facility. However, among 233 facilities, only 67 (28.8%) managed the sports collection by list or catalog and 139 (59.7%) have no list of sports collections.

In addition, the collections of sports collections in Japan are not collected in one place. For example, three Olympic Games were held in Japan, (Tokyo in 1964, Sapporo in 1972, and Nagano in 1998) and the tournament items are stored in museums and memorials in the host city. However, in each host city, it is stored across various places, such as municipalities, private companies, and individuals such as athletes and their families or collectors.

In regards to athletes' equipment, they are collected at each local area because athletes have connections to different places such as hometowns, universities, club teams and training facilities for the event.

As a result of this survey, the location information of the sports collections is divided to fractions and cannot be seen at a glance. And when you investigate some historical evidence related to the certain artifacts, it is difficult to find out where it is, and it is difficult to confirm accurate information. This situation also prevents the use of the collections when planning any cultural event on Sports.

Collaboration nationale pour des expositions itinérantes

We held travel exhibitions from 2015 to 2017 in 10 regions throughout Japan. The theme is to look back on the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and promote understanding of the Tokyo 2020 Games. Our museum has been collecting and displaying artifacts that were used by Japanese athletes during their debut Olympic Games since 1912. It was difficult to curate the collections given that local museums have collections of special artifacts used by local

athletes. A total of about 100 items related to the Olympians and competitions held were introduced. As an example, we report the efforts of the Tohoku History Museum in Miyagi Prefecture and the Mie Prefectural Museum.

Our museum asked the Tohoku History Museum and the Mie Prefectural Museum to check if they could borrow past or current sports equipment and medals from players who were related to the local area. In Tohoku History Museum, we were able to borrow costumes and medals from figure skater Yuzuru Hanyu and Shizuka Arakawa. In addition, the museum was able to borrow gear from active fencers, bobsledders and weightlifters in Miyagi. It seems that not only visitors to the travel exhibition, but also curators at the Tohoku History Museum have noticed that sports have taken root in Miyagi prefecture's culture.



Bobsledding are active in Sendai University in Miyagi, and the sled was displayed.

The other collaboration was with Mie Prefecture Museum, they planned an original exhibit about torch relay in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics as a travel exhibition. In the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the torch relay ran all over the country and torch relay runners ran across Mie prefecture, too. However, half a century after the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, local people do not know exactly where the torch relay course was in Mie prefecture in 1964 and who ran as a torch relay runner.

Then, Mie Prefecture Museum started research based on our museum's archival documents about the torch relay such as course maps and implementation guidance in Mie prefecture. They could confirm the location of torch the relay course in Mie prefecture. And they found some photos of local streetscapes where torch relay runners ran. We introduced these documents to the travel exhibition in Mie Prefecture Museum.



Some photographs of Mie prefecture streetscapes where torch relay runners ran in 1964 were displayed.

We received feedback from some visitors who said it brought back memories and emotions from the 1964 Olympics. And that could benefit from learning about the 1964 Olympics and I want to enhance my knowledge about the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics.

Through the activity of the travel exhibition in cooperation with the local communities, we were able to dig up sports items related to the local area and to show that sports are rooted in the local culture. However, these actions are unsustainable due to the lack of budget and human resources.

Firstly, these actions were made possible by yearly subsidies. Therefore it has been difficult to continue since the conclusion of the subsidization program. We need to continue to discuss how to secure the budget. For this purpose, it is important to re-examine the meaning of sports artifacts. Sports artifacts tend to be regarded as "souvenirs" like athletes' achievements and competition materials. Researchers and curators of sports history have not yet re-examined the texture and chronological nature of sports artifacts and have not been able

to re-examine the meaning of artifacts in the context of time. It is important to persevere the financial authorities for the purpose of surveying sports artifacts, assigning meanings to the artifacts, and the significance of exhibiting as a result, as well as the expenses required for the maintenance.

Secondly, the lack of human resources in Japan means there are few museums specialized in sports and that there are few professional staff members, such as curators, archivists, librarians, and staff for education or restoration. For this reason, there are sports artifacts that cannot be properly stored and managed for sports collections and is still unknown to the world. Also, the history of sports and the significance and fun of sports are not well communicated to the general public through sports collections.

It is difficult to solve the problem of securing personnel immediately. However, as in the case of the travel exhibitions, even if it were not museums dedicated to sports, in cooperation with us, we introduced sports rooted in the region and discovered the 1964 Tokyo Torch Relay course. From this, if our museum could take a leading role in activities such as travel exhibitions, other museum's curators can try to actively investigate and discover new items or acquire new knowledge of sporting history



Discussing how to preserve the Olympic Games collection

The building of a Sports Museum Network

Japan Sports Agency carried out "Research Project for constructing Sports Digital Archives" since 2016 and our museum has been participating in it. The purpose of this project is to constructing a trial database of sports collections. Major museums, sports universities, libraries and archives in Japan which hold sports collections brought catalog information and thumbnail images together, for they can search and use the data of sports collections in cross-section. We analyzed the catalog information and thumbnail images together and found out the tendency and methods of classifications in them, and what is the minimum condition of common metadata in different formats. As a result, a trial database will be built with the catalog information of each institution and about 42,000 data and 15,000 thumbnails attached to it on the completion of this work. And

for institutions that have not catalogs, we made a guideline to show procedures for document arrangement, inventory preparation and licensing. In the future, general users will enable to search for the location of sports collections across the nations, and to be able to use the sports collections' images.

But this project will be carried out until next fiscal year and it has been undecided whether it will continue thereafter or not. We hope that our Sports Museum will take over this project and continue to develop the collaboration among institutions which have sports collections.

This presentation summarize into 3 points: "Necessity of collaboration with regions in preservation and management of sports collections" "Necessity of organization of sports data through constructing sports museum network" and "Necessity of the national centre functions as a node of Sports Culture."

There recognized sports collections in Japan are scattered and their data is in state of isolation. Many sports items are not managed properly and just wait for deterioration. It is urgent to clarify what, where, and in what state it exists. And the questionnaire conducted in 2015 is a survey of the possession of sports collections, not the type or number of cases. More detailed research is needed to find new sports items. The value of sports collections is also important. Sports collections tend to be regarded as mere "memorabilia" like athletes' achievements and competition materials, and the idea of a "common property of the people" is not distributed. To find new values in sports collections in historical point of view, that is fatal important matter in sports culture. If there is a network in which museums and institutions holding sports items lend and borrow each other's collections, they can share experiences and information with each other and improve their level. The Japanese sports museum has been operated by a small number of staff compared to many issues to be executed. Therefore, we have not fully communicated to visitors the interest of the sports collections themselves. I suppose that the Sports Museum Network works effectively in solving those problems.

Participation of ICOM-ICMAH Sports Museum Working Group

It has been confirmed that the issues of the preservation and utilization of sports collections in Japan and the development of the system to support them were discussed in the Sports Museum Working Group within ICOM-ICMAH, which was launched in 2017. We appreciate this critical consciousness and we hope participate in this working group from now. We also appreciate it if you could share the current situation of sports museum in Japan with us and provide feedback from the museums in other countries facing the same problems.