

## JAPAN HOUSE LONDON PRESENTS TOKYO 1964: DESIGNING TOMORROW EXHIBITION

A celebration of the lasting design legacy of the iconic 1964 Olympic Games  
Opens 5 August 2021

- *Tokyo 1964: Designing Tomorrow* shares often untold stories, artefacts, and designs from the 1964 Olympic Games.
- The exhibition explores how Japan realised the opportunity of the Games to tell a fresh story to the world following Second World War through ground-breaking design and architecture that still influences today.
- Visitors can discover a number of world firsts, including the pioneering use of the pictogram as a universal language for a global event, the bullet train (Shinkansen), the emergence of 'hi-tech' infrastructure, colour broadcasting and the first use of the word 'Paralympic'.
- Produced in collaboration with the Prince Chichibu Memorial Sports Museum & Library of the Japan Sports Council and curated by Japan House London in collaboration with Yamashita Megumi and David Phillips.

Japan House London opens *Tokyo 1964: Designing Tomorrow*, on 5 August 2021 to explore the revolutionary cultural and design legacy behind the historic Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games. The exhibition shares stories and artefacts never seen before in the UK and runs until 7 November 2021.

The 1964 Games were Japan's first, large-scale engagement with the world after the Second World War. They presented a chance to tell a fresh story and showcase Japanese creativity and design thinking across the globe, an opportunity elevated by the 1964 Games being the first to be broadcast in colour on TV to a world-wide audience via satellite.

Japan's hosting of the Games coincided with the country's emergence as a global leader in technological innovation. Winning the bid to host the Games increased Japan's newfound sense of confidence and creativity epitomized by innovations such as the high speed Tōkaidō Shinkansen, or 'bullet train', and elevated super-highways that dramatically transformed the urban landscape with 'space age' design through to Seiko's 1,278 state-of-the-art timing devices that performed precisely without errors.

This optimistic and creative environment challenged and enabled Japanese architects and designers working on the 1964 Games to develop some of the most radical architectural and graphic design that has ever been created.

These designs still resonate and influence today, including:

- The modernist promotion posters created by the innovative design team led by award-winning graphic designer Kamekura Yūsaku.
- Specially devised pictograms for both sports and facilities that helped create a visual language to guide the largest number of visitors to Japan the country had ever seen. The use of pictograms in international sporting events has been the norm ever since and their use extends far beyond sport.
- Radical and confident architecture for stadia, typified by the pioneering building design of the Olympic Memorial Tower and Yoyogi National Stadium amongst others. The work of Japanese architects Tange Kenzō and Ashihara Nobuyoshi inspired a generation of architects around the world and continues to be significant today.
- The pioneering use of technology at the Games. From the first colour broadcasts via a geostationary satellite to the split-second accuracy of precision timekeeping provided by Seiko.

(Further details on the design origins and influences of Tokyo 1964 in ‘Notes to Editors’ below)

Exhibits on display include:

- Original 1964 posters designed by Kamekura Yūsaku and the award-winning team of post-war designers, marking the first time that photography was used to promote an Olympic Games.
- Tickets, posters and the design guide itself which, for the first time in a worldwide sporting event, set out the visual brand including logotype, typography and the set of newly created pictograms.
- Architectural models showcasing the pioneering design of buildings such as the Olympic Memorial Tower by Ashihara Yoshinobu and the Yoyogi National Gymnasium by Tange Kenzō, the latter gaining the coveted Pritzker Architecture Prize for its vast suspension roof design.
- Uniform designs from the Games, including a crafted *furisode* kimono with obi that were worn by those presenting medals at the awards ceremonies.

The majority of objects in the exhibition are generously loaned from the Prince Chichibu Memorial Sports Museum & Library in Japan – many of which will be displayed for the first time in the UK.

Hiroyuki Kawamura Hiroyuki, Director, Prince Chichibu Memorial Sports Museum, said: “I am very pleased that we have this opportunity to share our collection in the UK in partnership with Japan House London. Please enjoy our major exhibits including the original posters designed by Kamekura Yūsaku and the models of Yoyogi National Gymnasium designed by Tange Kenzō.”

Simon Wright, Director of Programming, Japan House London said: “This exhibition shows how the design project for the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games, the first to be held in Asia, was revolutionary in creating a unified language by which to communicate the Games. It became the blueprint for subsequent major international sporting events. It illustrates Japan’s powerful emergence on the world stage after the dark years of the Second World War and how this Japanese design vision has influenced, and still influences, so much of what is now.”

A dedicated programme of events accompanies the exhibition including a look at the remarkable volleyball win by the ‘Witches of the Orient’.

Contributions to this exhibition, in the form of additional loaned items, have also come from The Seiko Museum Ginza in Japan and Central Japan Railway Company and the National Paralympic Heritage Trust in the UK.

**-ENDS-**

### **Public Ticket Information**

Tickets must be pre-booked on the [Japan House London website](#).

### **Media Information and Press Contacts**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Design origins and influences of Tokyo 1964**

The origins of the design and architecture of the Tokyo Olympics 1964 took place at the World Design Conference (WEDECO) held in Tokyo in 1960. This event was led by Katsumi Masaru, Tange Kenzō, Yanagi Sōri and Kamekura Yūsaku and funded by the Japanese government. Design had been identified as a key part of Japan’s recovery and reinvention, and the Games would be at the centre of this strategy.

WEDECO was attended by many of the leading global figures in architecture and design including Louis Kahn, Jean Prouvé, Paul Rudolph, Josef Müller-Brockmann, Paul Rand, Max Huber, Otl Aicher and Saul Bass. At the conference, the Metabolism movement came together and wrote its manifesto. Ideas about how corporate identity and visual language might be utilized in large organisations and events were debated.

In the rapid changes of post-war Japan, Metabolism was offered as a solution to the provision of mass housing and changing social structures. The architecture of the Games was one of the first manifestations of this type of construction. The dramatic suspended roof of Tange's Yoyogi National Gymnasium and the stacked brutalist silhouette of Ashihara's Komazawa communication tower demonstrated that Japan would be at the forefront of architecture in the coming decades.

Tokyo 1964: Designing Tomorrow displays Tange's drawings alongside an original model of the gymnasium complex and a 1:20 model of the Komazawa communication tower made by students from Camberwell College of Art. The elegant Olympic torch, designed by the product designer Yanagi Sōri (renowned for his Butterfly Chair and connection with Charlotte Perriand), recalls the arts and crafts tradition championed by his father Yanagi Sōetsu (instigator of the Mingei movement) and fuses this with modernism.

Alongside the leading figures of Tange and Kamekura who designed the logo and the posters, many other designers and architects contributed to the design of the Games. Some, such as Tanaka Ikkō (graphic designer and the first art director of MUJI), Yoko Tadanori (artist), Kikutake Kiyonori (architect), Isozaki Arata (architect), Ichikawa Kon (film director) would become globally influential.

The Tokyo Games were a turning point for Japan. A generation that had taken their design influences directly from European and North American modernism found a distinct voice that was uniquely Japanese. The ideas and methodologies that were developed for the Games are still relevant today and this examination of their origins for the first time fully recognises their significance