

TOKYO STORIES

A thrilling artistic encounter with one of the world's greatest cities.

DIRECTOR **DAVID BICKERSTAFF** | PRODUCER **PHIL GRABSKY**

From the Director:

Every time I've been to Tokyo, I've felt a huge rush of energy from this amazing city. I'd made an Exhibition on Screen film there before – *Van Gogh and Japan* – and jumped at the opportunity to go back when we heard about the Ashmolean's exciting exhibition on the city and its artistic history. It's a wonderful city to film in – art seems to be everywhere, from little private gardens and peaceful shrines to the very walls and buildings around you. For me, Tokyo itself is an artwork – dynamic, vibrant and ever-changing.

From what I saw, Japan has a very different concept of art, it encompasses anything from the way people prepare food to the design of gardens or clothing. This makes it much broader than the typical Western idea of what art is. It is this different way of thinking and engaging with your surroundings that makes Tokyo such a fascinating setting for an art film covering four centuries and so many different styles.

In the film, we wanted to show a broader sense of the development of Tokyo from its roots as a village by a marshy estuary to the mega metropolis it is today. To tell the story of artistic innovation and cultural endeavour that shifted over time as each political and cultural movement developed. Thus I was keen to build a portrait of everyday Tokyo, told through the eyes of a wide range of artists both historic and contemporary. Voices that may challenge any misunderstood notions or misconceptions about what Japanese culture is and the role art can play in defining the identity of a city.


David Bickerstaff

“Tokyo has a powerful engine that just doesn't stop. There is an energy, a particular floating power in Tokyo. Whatever happens, this city gets rebuilt again and continues to move forwards.”

Machida Kumi



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