

The Japan Foundation Awards 2017 Go to Alexandra Munroe, Frederik L. Schodt, and Andrej Bekeš

Since 1973, the Japan Foundation has annually presented the Japan Foundation Awards to individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to promoting international mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and other countries through academic, artistic, and other cultural pursuits.

For 2017, the three recipients listed below have been selected.

The awards ceremony will take place at Hotel Okura Tokyo from 6:00 p.m. on Monday, October 16. Further details regarding the ceremony and commemorative lectures given by the recipients will be provided shortly.

The Recipients

■ **Alexandra Munroe** (Senior Curator, Asian Art, and Senior Advisor, Global Arts, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum)

<Introducing Japanese and other Asian contemporary art, from Yayoi Kusama to Gutai, to the world>

■ **Frederik L. Schodt** (Writer, translator, and interpreter)

<Presenting manga works by Osamu Tezuka and other artists to the world>

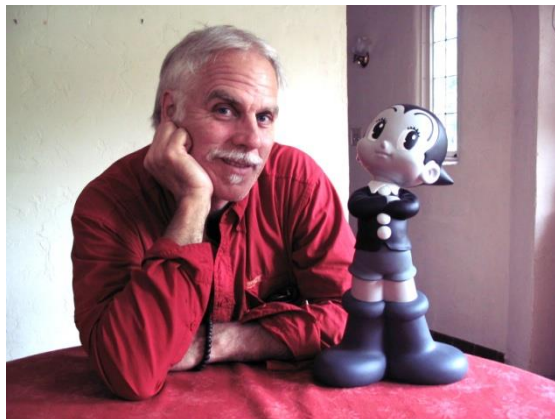
■ **Andrej Bekeš** (Professor Emeritus of Japanese Studies, University of Ljubljana)

<Pioneer of Japanese-language and Japanese studies in Slovenia>

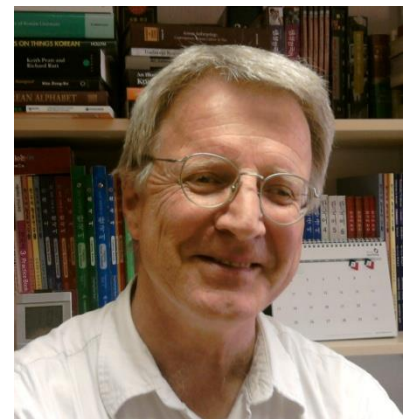


Photo by John Bigelow Taylor

Alexandra Munroe
(U.S.A.)



Frederik L. Schodt
(U.S.A.)



Andrej Bekeš
(Slovenia)

The profile of each recipient is on pp. 2–4 of this release.

■ **The Japan Foundation** <URL: <http://www.jpf.go.jp/e/index.html>>

The Japan Foundation is Japan's only institution dedicated to carrying out comprehensive international cultural exchange programs throughout the world. It was established in 1972 as a special legal entity supervised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was reorganized as an independent administrative institution on October 1, 2003.

The Foundation has 24 overseas offices in 23 countries and creates opportunities for people-to-people interactions through conducting various activities and information services to deepen mutual understanding between the people of Japan and other countries/regions with its mission statement: *Cultivating friendship and ties between Japan and the World.*

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■ Alexandra Munroe

(Senior Curator, Asian Art, and Senior Advisor, Global Arts, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum) [U.S.A.]



Alexandra Munroe with her exhibition catalogues 2015. Photo by John Bigelow Taylor

Alexandra Munroe is an art historian and curator who has engaged in empirical research and advanced the study of Japanese art from the postwar to the contemporary period, and has planned and organized several museum exhibitions. *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, an epoch-making exhibition which toured the United States from 1994 to 1995, was based on Dr. Munroe's profound knowledge and understanding of Japanese culture and presented Japanese avant-garde art to the world as an autonomous body of work on its own terms, moving beyond the Euro-American perspective. The show and its accompanying scholarly catalogue contributed to heightening the international appreciation of Japan's Gutai, Neo-Dada, and Mono-ha groups as well as the works of a younger generation of Japanese contemporary artists. Since 1989, she has curated or co-organized numerous exhibitions that have highlighted individual aspects of Japanese art of the postwar and contemporary periods, including *Yayoi Kusama: A Retrospective* (1989), *Daido Moriyama: Stray Dog* (1999), *YES YOKO ONO* (2000), *Little Boy: The Arts of Japan's Exploding*

Subculture, by Takashi Murakami (2005), and *Gutai: Splendid Playground* (2013). She has also published scholarly catalogues of the exhibitions, which include her own essays backed by solid academic research. These publications serve to introduce the contents of exhibitions to the English-speaking world, thereby helping to deepen understanding and appreciation of Japanese art in an expanded, global history of modern and contemporary art. At the Guggenheim, her exhibition, *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989* (2009), explored the impact of art, literary texts, and philosophical concepts of Japan and Asia on the development of American artistic practices from the late 19th century through the 1980s, and was awarded the National Endowment for the Humanities inaugural Chairman's Special Award. Dr. Munroe has contributed to the promotion of international mutual understanding through her many years of museum experience organizing groundbreaking exhibitions. We award her the Japan Foundation Award in recognition of her work and look forward to her future endeavors.

【Profile】

Alexandra Munroe received a doctorate from New York University for her thesis on art and politics of postwar Japan. She is internationally known as a researcher and author specialized in Asian art as well as one of the most important curators of her generation. *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky*, for which she comprehensively explored postwar Japanese art, was highly acclaimed in the U.S. Her exhibition held at the Guggenheim in 2009, *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989*, in which she examined the impact of art concepts of Japan and Asia on the development of American artistic practices, received the inaugural Chairman's Special Award from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

【Note】

Dr. Munroe plans to donate her award to PoNJA-GenKon (Post-1945 Japanese Art Discussion Group / Gendai Bijutsu Kondankai) to create an online library of academic research on Japanese contemporary art.

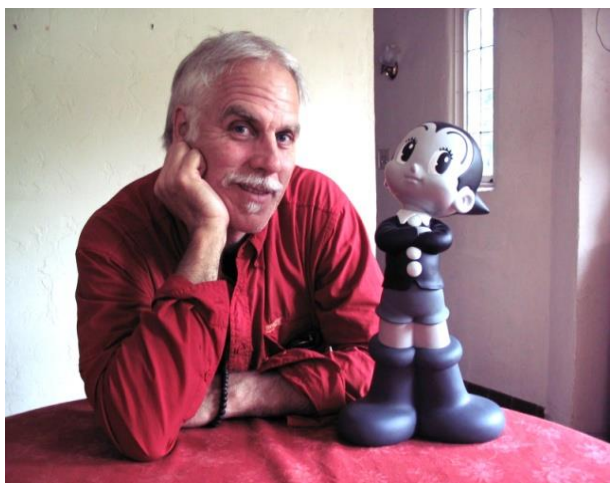
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■ **Frederik L. Schodt** (Writer, translator, and interpreter) [U.S.A.]



Frederik L. Schodt

Frederik L. Schodt is a writer and translator and best known as a pioneer of manga and translation for four decades.

Schodt provided not only a rich seam of information in his first monograph *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*, but also almost one hundred pages of translated manga.

Schodt has also drawn attention to other forms of marginalized art. These include a Japanese circus troupe formed by an American acrobat in the 19th century, as investigated in his monograph *Professor Risley and the Imperial Japanese Troupe* (2012), and translation of a 1931 graphic novel by Henry Yoshitaka Kiyama, depicting the lives of four young Japanese men in the United

States between 1904 to 1924, (published in 1998 as *The Four Immigrants Manga*).

It is precisely Schodt's commitment to intercultural as multilateral exchange that deserves an accolade. We accordingly present him with the Japan Foundation Award and look forward to his future successes.

【Profile】

Frederik L. Schodt (b. 1950) encountered manga while studying at the International Christian University during the 1970s and has been fascinated by it ever since. He has significantly contributed to popularizing manga culture through his translation, publications, lectures, and interpretation. He sparked the manga boom in the U.S. by translating works by Osamu Tezuka, including *Mighty Atom*, Riyoko Ikeda, Leiji Matsumoto, Masamune Shirow, Yukinobu Hoshino, Naoki Urasawa, and many others. For his achievement, he received the Tezuka Osamu Cultural Prize (Special Prize) in 2000, and the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette in 2009. His recent translation work is *The Osamu Tezuka Story: A Life in Manga and Anime*.

■ Andrej Bekeš (Professor Emeritus of Japanese Studies, University of Ljubljana) [Slovenia]


Andrej Bekeš

Andrej Bekeš has been a driving force for Japanese-language education and Japanese studies in Slovenia for many years. In 1995 he was appointed as the first head of the newly established Department of Asian and African Studies in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana, where he worked to advance Japanese studies and cultivate human resources in Slovenia. He has also engaged actively with other Japanese studies research institutions in Europe and has played a pivotal role in creating Europe-wide research networks for researchers in Japanese studies, particularly in the field of Japanese-language education and Japanese linguistics. He has held teaching positions in Japan also, including at the University of Tsukuba, and has concentrated his energies on nurturing researchers in Japanese studies.

Professor Bekeš has thus contributed to the promotion of international mutual understanding through long years of dedication to Japanese-language education and Japanese studies in Slovenia. We award him the Japan Foundation Award in recognition of his work as a researcher and educator who has built bridges between Japan and Slovenia and Japan and Europe, and we look forward to his future endeavors.

[Profile]

Andrej Bekeš (b. 1949) came to Japan in February 1971 after graduating from the University of Ljubljana and received his doctorate in literature from the University of Tsukuba in 1986. He then became involved in the establishment of Japanese Studies course at Department of Asian and African Studies (current Department of Asian Studies) of the University of Ljubljana in 1995. The course develops active Japanese-language education and Japanese studies welcoming 200 students annually not only from Slovenia but also neighboring countries, including Croatia and Belarus.

Professor Bekeš has created numerous education materials for Japanese-language learners including the best-selling *Kyoshi to Gakushusha no Tame no Nihongo Bunkei Jiten* (Sentence structure dictionary for students and learners) in 1998, which he co-authored and translated into many other languages. He received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette in 2008.