

High-definition digital archive data captures original beauty of Cultural treasure

Using various media in aiming to preserve and display cultural assets

Since 2007, the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage Tokyo National Museum and Toppan Printing Co., Ltd. have been conducting a joint project to develop new ways to display cultural assets using virtual reality (VR). As part of this joint project, digital photography and color measurement with an unprecedented degree of accuracy have been conducted for the “Genre scenes in Kyoto (Funaki version)”, a screen painting held by the Tokyo National Museum that is designated as an Important Cultural Property. Using the digital data obtained, various forms of expression will be used to demonstrate the beauty of the Funaki version to a wider audience, including the release of a VR production.

Aiming for both the preservation and display of cultural assets through the use of digital technology

Due to the need for preservation, historical Japanese style paintings such as the “Genre scenes in Kyoto (Funaki version)” can only be displayed publicly for a limited time each year. It is possible to preserve the real artifact while allowing a greater number of people to see it by using data obtained through high-definition digital photography and color measurement to produce media with accuracy and color that rival the real thing. The use of digital data also increases the possibilities for academic research by enabling unique ways of viewing pieces such as zooming in on the minute details and providing perspectives that are not usually possible. The joint project aims for both the preservation and display of cultural assets through digital technology via methods such as this.

“Genre scenes in Kyoto (Funaki version)” – an Important Cultural Property

“Genre scenes in Kyoto (Funaki version)” is a work of art that depicts the city and suburbs of Kyoto just before the fall of the Toyotomi clan during the Siege of Osaka. It is one of the most popular artifacts housed at the Tokyo National Museum. The piece presents a confrontation with the right side showing the hall of the Great Buddha of Hoko-ji temple, a symbol of the Toyotomi clan, and the left side showing the Tokugawa clan’s Niijo Castle. The packed streets of Kyoto and the people of various classes and types that lived there are vividly depicted with over 2500 people shown.

Important Cultural Property “Genre scenes of Kyoto (Funaki version)” Edo period 17th century

Side screens: height 162.5/width 54.2cm Center screens:
height 162.5/width 58.3cm



Right screen



Left screen

With high-definition data, even the expressions of the people are clear



Previous image

Image taken using high-definition digital photography

Combining the left and right screens, a total of around 2.21 billion pixels of high definition images have been obtained. Applying color management, the original colors have been faithfully reproduced. Offset printing with the original dimensions is also possible.

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Toppan Printing; head office: Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo; President & CEO: Naoki Adachi

NOTE: This product is not available in the United States. For more information, please contact Ron Ens at 732-469-8400 ext. 2505.