

It is my great honor to have the presence of Her Highness Sayyida Aliya bint Thuwaini Al Said for opening this exhibition. Please accept my heartfelt gratitude for embracing us.

Excellencies, Honorables, Dignitaries, Colleagues, Friends,  
Assalamu alaikum. I would like to thank you all for coming to join us. Your kind attendance always gives us courage and energy.

I would also like to thank the Omani Society of Arts for making this occasion possible. It was only March this year, soon after the reorganized Society was born, my Embassy cohosted the photo exhibition at this same venue. There was still a shadow of pandemic, and a lot of uncertainty.

Despite such circumstances, or, this is why, many people have accumulated steady efforts to organize cultural affairs in Muscat and elsewhere. My Embassy is no exception, and always with reassuring Omani partners, we have elaborated a series of cultural events throughout this year. Partly because this year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Oman: also because we believe in the power of culture. Its power to connect people, its power to add colors to our life.

And today, we come back to this place with a lot of certainty, gratitude and confidence. And today, we welcome a timely visit of very relevant artists: Yuho Kawaguchi, Seiren Kawaguchi and Ingrid van der Heyden. They say Japanese people express gratitude for the connections between the people, connections between the things and happenings. It is true. After overcoming the difficulty of pandemic, however, I believe this appreciation of connections with you, with you, with you, is now universal, not specifically Japanese alone.

Like Yuho-san, Seiren-san, and Ingrid-san, I believe in the power of culture to connect people. This has been one of the main reasons for long-standing warm relations between Japan and Oman. Like you all, I believe in the power of young generations to respect and appreciate each other, and rejoice at the people-to-people contacts. When the Embassy tried to organize a new event, I witnessed each time more and more young Omanis helping us, giving their hands to cultural collaborations. I can easily be optimistic. Our long-lasting warm relationship will remain unshakable.

Praying for many blessings to our friendship, I would like to extend my sincere wishes for the health and continued prosperity of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, and people in the Sultanate of Oman. I wish you a good happy day. Shukran jazilan.