

# JAPAN HOUSE: New Public Diplomacy Initiative Grows Awareness & Appreciation of Japan



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## Global Vision, Strategic Approach

Japan will have a new platform to nurture deeper understanding and appreciation of the country around the world when the global JAPAN HOUSE initiative is fully realized in 2018.

An innovative initiative of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, JAPAN HOUSE consists of three modern and sophisticated facilities in three leading cities — London, Los Angeles and São Paulo. All three cities are enormously influential centers of creativity, culture, finance, industry, and trade. Together, the three cities are home to a residential population of 47 million people and attract over 95 million annual visitors for a total market audience of 142 million individuals, which is about 12% more people than the entire population of Japan itself. These three cities also have a combined annual GDP of ¥21.8 trillion.

Clearly, the placement of JAPAN HOUSE hubs in these global cities was smart and strategic. The goal is to develop meaningful and lasting connections between people — not just individuals who already are familiar and engaged with Japan and Japanese culture, but also, crucially, with people who have not had the opportunity to connect with Japan at all.

Through thoughtful, creative, and unique programming, JAPAN HOUSE will drive further artistic, cultural, and intellectual exchanges between Japan and the world as well as generate new business opportunities and inspire people to discover Japan firsthand by visiting the diverse regions of the country.

## A Finely Curated Visitor Experience

Visitors to JAPAN HOUSE experience the core values at the heart of Japanese culture: artistic excellence, continuous innovation, elegant simplicity, intellectual curiosity, and warm hospitality. Each facility has been designed to showcase the stunning yet often subtle beauty of Japanese aesthetics. Interior design, signage, and visual branding were all executed in close collaboration with carefully selected and outstanding architectural and graphic design experts in Japan. Exceptional care was taken to ensure that talent from across the whole of Japan had the opportunity to participate in the JAPAN HOUSE project.

Intended to showcase the very best of Japan across a wide range of popular subjects, each JAPAN HOUSE features similar amenities:

- An exhibition gallery displays carefully curated or important installations across the span of human creative endeavor — from fine art and architecture, to crafts and design, to innovation and technology — all guided by the same objective of prompting discovery and deepening an understanding and appreciation of Japan through objects and experiences.
- A retail shop features exquisitely crafted objects that visitors may purchase to enhance their living or work environment, to delight friends and family members or simply to preserve their positive memory of visiting JAPAN HOUSE.
- A small café offers visitors authentic Japanese tea to savor as they shop.
- A large salon offers a beautiful and relaxing multipurpose venue with comfortable seating and state-of-the-art equipment for the professional presentation of demonstrations, lectures, workshops, and films and videos, and often specifically tailored to enhance the understanding and appreciation of concurrent exhibitions in the gallery.
- A library houses a wide variety of aesthetically-rich and informative books on Japan for visitors to enjoy during their visit. Free WiFi is provided so that guests can continue their discovery of all things Japanese beyond the physical boundaries of JAPAN HOUSE.
- A refined “destination” restaurant offers a topflight menu of Japanese gastronomic creations — all expertly prepared to delight all the senses.

In Los Angeles, JAPAN HOUSE is located in the iconic Hollywood & Highland Center, a very large and popular retail and entertainment complex in the heart of Hollywood. The destination is perhaps best known as the home to the Dolby Theater, where the Academy Awards are presented each spring. The 3,400-seat theater also hosts some of the world’s biggest movie premieres as well as performances by such artists as Alicia Keys, Celine Dion, Elvis Costello, Barry Manilow, Stevie Wonder, Harry Connick Jr., Melissa Etheridge, Dixie Chicks, Tyler Perry, American Ballet Theatre, Cirque du Soleil and many touring theatrical productions direct from Broadway.

More than 45 million people visit Los Angeles each year, and 11 million of them pass through Hollywood & Highland, the majority of whom are visiting Los Angeles from elsewhere in the United States. Hollywood & Highland is located above one of the busiest subway stations in Los Angeles, serving a metro line that connects the dense



Photo: ©SANDWICH

Visitors will discover a selection of products that celebrate Japanese design and craftsmanship.

residential population centers of Downtown, Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley. It is also within walking distance of the world-famous Hollywood Bowl, which attracts thousands of concertgoers for the Los Angeles Philharmonic as well as A-list music performers of all ages and genres.

For these reasons and more, the impact and reach of JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles will far exceed its physical location. JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles will benefit from its high-traffic, high-profile location to be sure, but it will be a unique oasis of elegance, simplicity and serenity among the bustling retail stores, restaurants and entertainment attractions. The facility has been designed by widely celebrated Japanese artists and designers. Kenya Hara serves as the chief creative director of the global JAPAN HOUSE project in Los Angeles, London and São Paulo. He is perhaps best known for his work as art director for MUJI and Daikanyama Tsutaya and Books. He is also the author of several books, including *Designing Design* and *White*, which has been translated into several languages.

The Los Angeles design force is led by Tamotsu Yagi, the creative director of JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles. He is a designer best known for his work with Esprit, Apple and those in the permanent collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The overall architectural concept of JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles was designed by special advisor Junji Tanigawa, founder of the firm JTQ, which provides creative direction for clients to “deliver [brand] messages through the medium of space”.

Rounding out the architectural creative team are Kohei Nawa, the designer of the 2nd floor space, who is one of the most renowned artists in Japan today whose artistic collective “Sandwich” produces work spanning from sculptures and architecture to environmental art installations and fashion; and Ryu Kosaka, the designer of the 5th floor space, who is the executive creative director at the high-end, commercial-space design firm Aoyama Nomura Design (A.N.D.) and who is known for his design of the Mandarin Oriental Tokyo and



Photo: ©SANDWICH

The gallery will host original exhibitions direct from Japan to showcase creativity, skill, innovation and ingenuity.

Grand Prince Hotel Takanawa, among other spaces.

JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles is conceived as “an immersion into portals of discovery that transcend physical and conceptual boundaries, creating experiences highlighting the best of art and culture, design, fashion, technology and cuisine from Japan,” says President Yuko Kaifu. It does that — and much more. Through its program of events and activities JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles drives further intellectual exploration and exchange between Japanese and American creators and thought-leaders, inspires people to visit Japan and generates new business opportunities spanning the Pacific.

### Leveraging Strong Japan-Los Angeles Connections

Today, Japan and Los Angeles enjoy a strong connection that began more than 125 years ago when Japanese citizens began immigrating to the US. In 1959, Los Angeles and Nagoya became among the first Sister Cities in the world through the program created by then-US President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Today, 16 cities in Los Angeles County have official Japanese Sister Cities, and they work to promote awareness and appreciation of Japanese culture throughout the year. In fact, Southern California has the largest population of residents of Japanese descent in North America.

As home to the largest port in North America, it's little wonder that Los Angeles County is the leading port of entry for imported goods to the US: for decades, nearly 50% of all imports to America have passed through the adjoining ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. As a result, the Los Angeles region has been the largest entry point for Japanese goods — chief among them vehicles, machinery, optical and medical equipment and aircraft — to the US market for nearly 70 years.

The largest industries in Southern California are simultaneously both natural markets and suppliers for Japanese businesses.

TABLE 1

**Top 10 imports from Japan to L.A.**

1) Vehicles & Auto Parts
2) Computer Machinery & Parts
3) Electrical Equipment & Electronic Components
4) Optical & Medical Instruments
5) Rubber & Rubber Products
6) Plastics & Plastic Products
7) Organic Chemicals
8) Iron & Steel Products
9) Other Chemical Products
10) Photographic Goods

Source: Los Angeles Economic Development Corp.

According to the Los Angeles Economic Development Corp., Los Angeles is the largest manufacturing center in the US, with energy, electronic goods, food, aerospace, fabricated metal, apparel and home furnishings goods and products leading the way. Given its expansive and busy port facilities, it's no surprise that Los Angeles County's second-largest industry is international trade, followed closely by retail trade and what is clustered as "professional, scientific and technical services" which include accounting and financial, advertising, architectural and engineering, computer systems design, design, legal, management, scientific research and development, and technical services. Health care, real estate, tourism and hospitality, arts and entertainment, education and information technology round out the top 10 industries in Los Angeles.

Los Angeles is also a world leader in driving innovation and new products and trends in aerospace, entertainment (including film, television, game design, digital arts and social media), fashion and beauty, biotechnology and health care, higher education, and renewable energy and transportation, among other cutting-edge fields.

As the largest foreign direct investor in Southern California, Japan plays a leading role in Los Angeles' top industries, especially manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, financial services and information technology. Nearly half of all Japanese companies operating in California are located in Los Angeles, and local Japanese investment accounts for 2,500 businesses that directly and indirectly support 180,000 full-time, permanent jobs and more than \$13 billion in local wages.

Japan ranks among the top five sources of international tourists to Los Angeles, with more than 250,000 Japanese citizens visiting the area and spending more than \$600 million in the local economy each year, the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board reports. Japan

TABLE 2

**Top 10 exports from L.A. to Japan**

1) Optical & Medical Instruments
2) Aircraft & Parts
3) Computer Machinery & Parts
4) Electrical Equipment & Electronic Components
5) Plastics & Plastic Products
6) Organic Chemicals
7) Vehicles & Auto Parts
8) Inorganic Chemicals
9) Meat & Meat Products
10) Refined Oil Products

Source: Los Angeles Economic Development Corp.

also stands as the second-largest trading partner for the Los Angeles Customs District, with perhaps surprisingly similar imports from and exports to Japan, with six of the top 10 trading goods shared by Japan and Los Angeles, as shown in *Tables 1 & 2*.

The robust economic ties between Japan and Los Angeles point to potentially fertile areas to explore for continued and expanded cooperation, which JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles might contribute to through programming on topics of mutual interest to both trading partners.

**Strengthening Public Diplomacy Through Education & Culture**

With its historic and economic ties to Japan, it comes as no surprise that Los Angeles' two flagship universities — the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the University of Southern California (USC) — both house leading academic centers dedicated to research, teaching and public service engaging Japanese studies and initiatives.

The UCLA Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies, Research and Teaching is home to one of the finest Japanese Studies graduate programs in the US, specializing in art, history, language and linguistics, and literature. The USC Ito Center for Japanese Religions & Culture supports faculty research and publications, public conferences and symposia, graduate student education, postdoctoral fellowships and visiting scholars. Both centers regularly engage with Japanese universities and professional organizations in fulfilling their missions, and JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles will collaborate in areas of mutual interest with these important centers.

Meanwhile, both UCLA and USC and 12 additional Los Angeles area colleges and universities offer active and strong undergraduate

TABLE 3

## Los Angeles County

### Los Angeles County is home to:

- 705 professional musical ensembles
- 540 professional art galleries
- 364 annual cultural celebrations and festivals
- 220 professional live theater companies
- 205 museums
- 61 major historical sites
- 55 major architectural landmarks
- 54 annual film festivals
- 52 major performing arts venues
- 35 major libraries & archives
- 24 professional dance companies 16 major botanical gardens and arboreta, including 24 Japanese gardens
- And an abundance of ethnic neighborhoods, trend-setting restaurants, nightclubs and other attractions

Source: Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board

programs in Japanese language and culture studies as well as undergraduate study-abroad programs in Japan in the fields of architecture, business, communications, culture, engineering, humanities and language.

These academic programs provide great resources for JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles to unite artists, educators, industry professionals, researchers, scientists, and students to strengthen and grow interaction and partnerships between institutions of higher education in Japan and the US.

JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles will also promote knowledge and appreciation of Japanese culture through the region's abundant and outstanding cultural organizations. Los Angeles is often described as the "Creative Capital of the 21st Century" and the city is globally recognized as a leader in the visual and performing arts. It has been heralded as "the leading art-making center in the western world" by leading contemporary art museums from Beijing to Paris, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic has been named "the most important orchestra in the United States" by *The New York Times*, arguably the nation's newspaper-of-record.

The region boasts nearly 2,500 professional arts organizations and more artists per capita than any city in the world, providing virtually endless resources for creative partnerships in every category of arts and culture (*Table 3*).

### Overcoming Challenges to Connect with Residents

Of course, JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles will face challenges in

fulfilling its mission, regardless of the strength of its partnerships, especially in making lasting connections with area residents. Chief among those challenges is the sheer size of the city: although JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles is relatively centrally located in Hollywood, Los Angeles is so vast and most of the population relies on private transportation that attracting residents to the facility will take creativity and resources. Consider: the City of Los Angeles alone — not including neighboring cities — spans more than 1,295 square kilometers and is among the largest municipalities in size in the US.

In fact, the cities of Boston, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, Saint Louis, and San Francisco and New York City's Manhattan Island could all comfortably fit within the borders of the City of Los Angeles — excluding all neighboring cities — with room to spare.

Another major challenge for JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles is presented by unrivalled competition for public attention and the sheer media saturation of what is undeniably the "Entertainment Capital of the World" and the second-largest media market in America. In addition to other media-worthy events, well-funded and nationally publicized movie premieres, television show debuts, annual star-studded entertainment award shows, major product launches and publicity stunts regularly compete for media coverage and consumer awareness in Los Angeles and across the globe.

### Sustaining Interest & Effectiveness Over Time

JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles will present programming not

available at any other venue in the region, attracting intellectually curious and adventurous audiences. Examining and engaging the curatorial theme of “art and innovation” in its inaugural year, JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles exhibitions will be created and curated by knowledgeable and talented professionals and will span the range of human endeavor from art and craft to design and fashion to innovation and fabrication.

The following is a brief glimpse of exhibitions visitors will have the opportunity to view in 2018:

#### ANREALAGE

For its inaugural installation opening in January 2018, JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles is presenting the first US solo exhibition of works from the fashion label ANREALAGE and designer Kunihiko Morinaga, a vanguard of next-generation Japanese innovators. Morinaga engages mindful observation, attention to detail, and advanced technologies to create strikingly high-concept collections that awaken awareness of the extraordinary within the everyday.

##### *Subtle: Takeo Paper*

The delicate world of paper is explored by Japan’s leading fine paper manufacturer. The exhibition illuminates the sense of beauty within Japanese culture and reveals ideas of subtlety within the things and objects with which we come into contact in our daily life.

##### *Prototyping in Tokyo*

This exhibition highlights the experimental and advanced technologies of Japan in the form of prototypes, highlighting the roles of design and an implicit Japanese aesthetic playfulness in creating the future.

##### *Futures of the Future*

Through his groundbreaking work, award-winning architect Sou Fujimoto encourages and promotes new perspectives on living and work spaces centered on the synergy between architectural space and ecology. The exhibition showcases Fujimoto’s fresh approach to creating designs redefining the relationship between architectural space and nature.

These and other exhibitions are complemented with public programs that include lectures, film screenings, gastronomic events, craft demonstrations, performances and readings at JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles and at partner venues throughout the region to expand and deepen an understanding of Japanese culture to the widest possible audience.

As programs are being conceived and designed, they will be driven by specifically articulated key performance indicators to ensure that

each program has the best potential to deliver a desirable, documental outcome. Visitor intercept surveys and other tools will be deployed to assess outcomes at key moments in the life of each program or activity at JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles.

### The Solid Impact of Soft Power

The global JAPAN HOUSE initiative is a living demonstration of the potential of “soft power” to build meaningful and measurable awareness and appreciation of Japan on three continents over time. A term coined by Harvard University political scientist Joseph Nye, soft power is defined as the ability to shape the opinions, preferences and sometimes even the decisions of others through engaging them in appealing and attractive activities to achieve desired outcomes. Soft power is in direct opposition to hard power, which uses force or money as a means of persuasion.

The major instruments of soft power are culture that is attractive to others, consistent and transparent political values, and reliable foreign policies that are viewed with legitimacy and moral authority. (On a more granular level, although he may not have thought of it in this way, President Eisenhower’s vision and establishment of the US Sister Cities Program was grounded in the idea of nurturing and spreading the nation’s soft power on a person-to-person level. His thinking was that people of different nations who work together, attend school together, create art together and share in other civic and cultural activities would be much less likely to tolerate let alone stimulate conflict.)

The annual report titled *The Soft Power 30: A Global Ranking of Soft Power*, produced by the strategic consulting firm Portland Communications, ranks the soft power of countries based on the perceived quality of each nation’s political institutions, the extent of its cultural appeal, the strength of its diplomatic network, the global reputation of its institutions of higher education, its appeal as an economic model and its digital engagement with the world. Japan is consistently ranked among the top 10 nations for the influence of its soft power, along with Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the US and the United Kingdom. In fact, between 2015 and 2017, Japan jumped from 8th to 6th place in its soft power ranking. The JAPAN HOUSE global initiative will only push Japan’s ranking higher.

To learn more, visit [www.japanhouse.jp/losangeles](http://www.japanhouse.jp/losangeles)

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