



## Greetings from the Creator

**ODANI Motohiko**

Associate Professor,  
Tokyo University of the Arts

Photo by Takumi Nemoto

What I was most conscious about in this project was the idea that the sculpture would be placed in a public space. While sculptures are found all over the world, they slip out of people's consciousness with time and become part of the scenery. A good sculpture is something that overcomes the passage of time and remains in people's memory in some way, even if it is placed in a public space.

Sculptures for the Olympic games were created in Olympia, the birthplace of Greek sculptures, revealing the ties shared between sculpture and sports since ancient times. The Olympian sculptures that now stand have parts missing, and are displayed with their remaining torso supported by frames. In keeping with the Lion-man, said to have started the relationships between religion and sculpture forty-thousand years ago, I had wanted to portray the superhuman through my work.

The first challenge was in determining shaping, which proved to be difficult. I had the chance to spectate a local match in Oita – not only did I see the movement of bodies in the form of freeze frames as if in a futurist sculpture, what was totally different from television broadcasts was the moment when a player had broken through the physical wall built by the defensive line. In the space of that moment, I had witnessed something perceptually extraordinary: beyond the physical wall lay an otherworldly dimension unbound by gravity; I saw the people in that space speeding on, carrying a beast-like quality about them and becoming something that transcends the human.

The COVID-19 outbreak began at the start of the project, and with it, society transformed into something that is different to an enclosed space. I feel as if the emergence of a new world and a new people from an enclosed space is an omen to current social conditions, and that an inevitable relationship was born between COVID-19 and the making of this monument. While it is very difficult to capture global affairs by sculpture, a time-intensive medium, I think I have managed to achieve the task via encapsulating several elements through rugby. The process had proven to be a very rewarding opportunity for me.

I hope that this monument will become a cause for celebration for many, an object that will linger in individual memories.



**Monument for Rugby World Cup 2019™ in Oita Prefecture**

# The Lionman

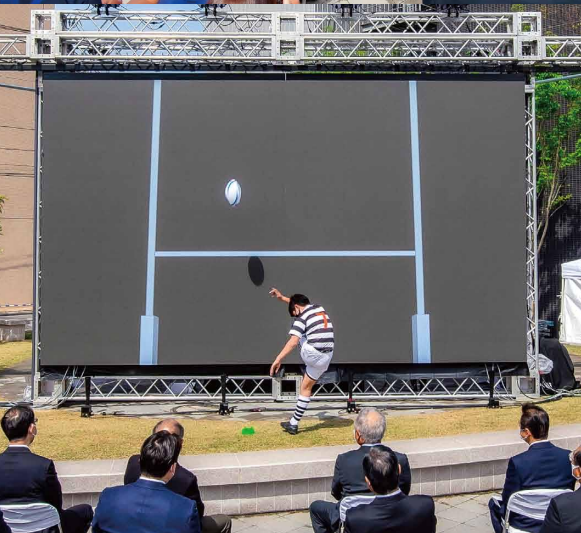
~ Continuing the Inspiration and Excitement of Rugby World Cup 2019™ ~

**Oita Prefecture**





Monument for  
Rugby World Cup 2019™ in Oita  
**Unveiling  
Ceremony**  
April 17, 2021



## Greetings



**HIROSE Katsusada**  
Governor of Oita Prefecture

Upon seeing the faces of key players of Rugby World Cup 2019 and dominant forces in Oita Prefecture's world of rugby, memories of past excitements are stirred. Three preliminary matches and two quarterfinals convened here in Oita – the prefecture had held the highest numbers of matches following Tokyo and Kanagawa. Moreover, the teams that visited Oita included powerhouses such as New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Wales, England and France. Aside from joining in the excitement of the dynamic matches held at the Showa Denko Dome Oita, I was able to receive a share of the rugby spirit of integrity, passion and solidarity.

The hospitality outside of the stadium was also something to behold. The great number of volunteers who supported the tournament showed their heartfelt hospitality even though there were language barriers. Owing to their efforts, visitors and locals alike were able to deepen their understanding towards each other. Moreover, the volunteers reinforced a sense of confidence that is critical in the age of globalisation.

I had requested Associate Professor Odani Motohiko at the Tokyo University of the Arts, an institution that shares deep ties with prominent local sculptor Asakura Fumio, to work on the monument. The product is a result of wonderful workmanship, and I cordially invite you all to admire it as much as you can.

We have received support from a tremendous number of people including Chairman Mitarai Fujio at Rugby World Cup Organising Committee and President Mori Shigetaka at Japan Rugby Football Union. Great number of individuals had offered their assistance towards the installation of the monument, for which I am deeply grateful.

## Message



**MITARAI Fujio**

Chairman,  
Rugby World Cup 2019  
Organising Committee  
Chairman & CEO,  
Canon Inc.

With the convention of the Rugby World Cup in Japan, the event was held in Asia for the first time ever in rugby's long history. I believe that the monument sheds light on the exceptional role fulfilled by Oita Prefecture in the series of events and therefore holds great significance. Five matches were hosted in Oita, where tens of thousands of spectators made their visit. Since most of these spectators had travelled from abroad, Oita's name has since spread far and wide across the globe.

On behalf of the organising committee, I would like to express my thanks to the Oita Prefecture, the Oita City, the Oita Prefectural Rugby Football Union, our volunteers and all others who have shown us their support. Moreover, I feel that this monument, unveiled in the midst of a once-in-a-century pandemic, holds momentous meaning.

'One Team' was the slogan adopted by the Japan rugby team. Even if we may hail from different birthplaces, cultural identities and walks of life, we can find solidarity in the process of reaching our goal and become one by overcoming our differences – such are the undertones behind the slogan.

Now is the time when we must become a team with our family, friends, other members of society and the rest of the world so that we may move forward and rise victorious against COVID-19. Rugby is a sport that holds a grand ethos connected to world peace. The idea that this monument is an ethos given form, something that will continue to exert its presence for the following centuries and enter the sight of young people in the future, fills me with profound emotions.

Lastly, I would like to express my heartfelt respect and gratitude towards the installation committee headed by Professor Fukai Takashi at the Tokyo University of the Arts, and sculptor Associate Professor Odani Motohiko from the same institution for this wonderful monument.



**MORI Shigetaka**

President,  
Japan Rugby Football Union

While a year and a half has already passed since the closing of Rugby World Cup 2019, I still remember the numerous thrilling moments as if it were yesterday. Powerhouses such as New Zealand, Australia, Wales and England entered pre-game training camps one by one in Oita Prefecture, and the locals offered their hospitality on behalf of the rest of Japan. The Showa Denko Dome, with a seating capacity of 40 thousand people, hosted a total of five matches including three preliminaries and two quarterfinals. The games and local hospitality were received with enthusiasm by people from both Japan and abroad.

173 thousand spectators watched the matches from the stadiums, while 115 thousand showed their fervent support from the Fanzones. I would like to thank the people of Oita once again for becoming one team and showing great enthusiasm as the representatives of Japan advanced through the ranks.

I believe that this monument will remain as a legacy of Oita's participation in the world cup and become a significant symbol for the spirit of rugby. In addition to the players in the rugby football union, I look forward to becoming a team with spectators and all others who support us so that we may generate new activities in local regions. I strive to deliver further contributions through the sport of rugby – now is the moment to devote my energy so that rugby may be used as a means to instil energy to people in local regions, as well as create opportunities for fellowship and inspiration.



**FUKAI Takashi**

Professor Emeritus,  
Tokyo University of the Arts  
Chairman, Monument  
Installation Committee

Japan was captivated by the excitement of Rugby World Cup 2019 as the national team moved up the ranks. The convention of heated battles, including two quarterfinals, remain vivid in my memory.

The creation of a monument began with the intent of commemorating the series of events, and a committee was formed by affiliated parties. The committee meetings produced many earnest discussions. As one of its members, I am deeply pleased to see the successful installation of the statue here in Oita.

The work's creator, Mr. Odani Motohiko, holds a brilliant career record as a leading sculptor in Japan. Some of his achievements include being elected as Japan's representative sculptor in Italy's Venice Biennale and holding a solo exhibition in the Mori Art Gallery in Roppongi, Tokyo. The sculpture installed here captures the dynamic figures in the midst of a fierce rugby battle. Encapsulating Mr. Odani's philosophy in sculpture, the piece is a wonderful, painstaking work that incorporates new techniques. I firmly believe that the work will be evaluated in the future as an outdoor sculptural piece that is representative of the 21st century. I hope that this monument will remain loved by the residents of Oita long into the future.

