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**Japan Society
Presents**

**The 16th Installment of its Annual Play Reading Series:
Contemporary Japanese Plays in English Translation**

Cooking Up

**Written by
Shoko Matsumura**

**Directed by
Jordana De La Cruz**

Monday, December 6 at 7:30pm

**Japan Society
(333 East 47th Street)**

New York, NY, November 8, 2021 – As part of its current Performing Arts Season, Fall 2021- Spring 2022, **Japan Society** presents a staged reading of ***Cooking Up*** by Japanese playwright **Shoko Matsumura**, led by Brooklyn-based director **Jordana De La Cruz**, taking place **Monday, December 6 at 7:30 PM** at **Japan Society (333 East 47th Street)**. ***Cooking Up*** marks the 16th installment of the Society's annual *Play Reading Series: Contemporary Japanese Plays in English Translation*, introducing topical plays from emerging playwrights from Japan to artists and audiences in the U.S.

The real and the surreal come together at a small French restaurant in Japan in ***Cooking Up***, one of the 2018 finalists for Japan's most prestigious award for contemporary plays, the Kishida Kunio Drama Award. The play takes an unusual turn when the head chef's wife asks her husband's mistress to join their household, taking the place of their beloved house cat, who has gone missing. **Jordana De La Cruz**, Co-Director of the OBIE Award-winning performance venue JACK in Brooklyn, directs this absurd sojourn into the private lives of the restaurant's employees. Playwright Shoko Matsumura joins in a post-performance Q&A with the audience and director. ***Cooking Up*** (Japanese title: *Koshiraeru*) was translated by Amanda Waddell, Program Officer, and Japan Society's

Performing Arts Department. Initially scheduled for March 30, 2020, this staged reading was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is now part of our Fall 2021 season celebrating NYC-based women artists with deep ties to the culture of Japan.

Tickets are \$15 / \$10 Japan Society members. Tickets can be purchased online at www.japansociety.org or by calling the Box Office at 212-715-1258 (M-F 9:00am – 5:00pm). Japan Society is located at 333 East 47th Street, between First and Second Avenues (accessible by the 4/5/6 at 42nd Street-Grand Central Station or the E at Lexington Avenue and 53rd Street). In compliance with CDC, New York State, and New York City guidelines, visitors will be required to show proof of vaccination and wear a proper, secure-fitting mask at each performance. View our current visitor policies and safety protocols [here](#). For more information, call 212-832-1155 or visit <http://www.japansociety.org>

Artist Biographies:

Shoko Matsumura (Playwright) is a director and playwright born in Yokohama in 1984. Since she was a teenager, she has appeared in small theaters, or *shogekijo*, in Tokyo. After her initial performance in Toshiki Okada's solo play *On the Harmful Effects of Marijuana* (*Marifana no gai ni tsuite*), she has acted in many of the playwright/director's plays for his theater company *chelfitsch*. Other theater companies she has worked with includes Okazaki Art Theatre, Yuenchi Saisei Jigyodan, Gessyoku Kagekidan and Potsudo-ru. She founded the theatrical troupe Momeraths in 2013, where she started writing and directing her own work. The name of the troupe was taken from a fictional creature in Lewis Carrol's nonsensical poem "Jabberwocky." She specializes in realistic plays with colloquial language that contain abstract side stories running alongside the main narrative. Her plays create chaotic worlds, in which the everyday and absurdism exist side by side. She is a recipient of the Excellent Direction Award and Audience Award at TOGA Theatre Artists' Competition in 2017, and a two-time finalist for the prestigious Kishida Kunio Award for Drama for *Cooking Up* (*Koshiraeru*) in 2017 and for *Hanpuku to Junkan ni Fuzui suru Bon'yari no Boken* in 2018.

Jordana De La Cruz (Director) is an Afro-Latina director, curator, and creative producer. She collaborates with active participants across multiple generations to examine and dismantle the stigmas that hold society captive. She creates performances, gatherings, and public programs sparking cross-cultural dialogue, empowering individuality, and expanding the concept of community with theatrical responses, workshops, and interdisciplinary conversations. Her work continually questions what it means to be free and, more urgently, how we help each other achieve this freedom. In 2015, she was instrumental in the creation of Public Programs at Park Avenue Armory and has continued to cultivate affordable, community-focused art and dialogue. She has previously directed and produced with JACK, La Mama, The Flea Theater, IATI Theater, INTAR Theatre, The Story Pirates, and Young Jean Lee's Theater Company, among others.

About Japan Society

Japan Society continues a return to live, in-person performance with programs in the disciplines of theater, dance, music and more, slated for Fall 2021 and Winter/Spring 2022. In Fall 2021, Japan Society spotlights the local artistic community, with the timely and topical works of three NYC-based artists with deep ties to Japan and its culture – **Suzi Takahashi's *The Story Box*** (September 11 – co-presented and produced by HERE), **Aya Ogawa's *The Nosebleed*** (October 1 – 10), and **Sachiyo Takahashi's *SHEEP #1*** (November 4 – 7).

Looking ahead to Winter/Spring 2022, **Japan Society** welcomes back international artists including emerging Japanese playwright **Shoko Matsumura** with this play ***Cooking Up*** (December 6); performers from Japan, Taiwan and Korea in the Society's **19th Contemporary Dance Festival** (January 14 & 15); and **Shomyo no Kai**, a group of Buddhist priests performing a millennium-old chanting ritual at **St. Bartholomew's Church** (February 11). In Spring 2022, the Society's Performing Arts programming will highlight indigenous art forms from Japan's northernmost and southernmost prefectures, Hokkaido and Okinawa, with two distinct programs to complete the season: ***Waves Across Time: Traditional Dance and Music of Okinawa*** (March 2022) and ***OKI: Music of the Ainu*** (May 2022).

Japan Society is the premier organization connecting Japanese arts, culture, business, and society with audiences in New York and around the world. At Japan Society, we are inspired by the Japanese concept of *kizuna* (絆)—forging deep connections to bind people together. We are committed to telling the story of Japan while strengthening connections within New York City and building new bridges beyond. In over 100 years of work, we've inspired generations by establishing ourselves as pioneers in supporting international exchanges in arts and culture, business and policy, as well as education between Japan and the U.S. We strive to convene important conversations on topics that bind our two countries together, champion the next generation of innovative creators, promote mutual understanding, and serve as a trusted guide for people everywhere who seek to more fully appreciate the rich complexities and abundance of Japan. From our New York headquarters, a landmark building designed by architect Junzo Yoshimura that opened to the public in 1971, we look forward to the years ahead, which will be defined by our digital and ideational impact through the *kizuna* that we build. Our future can only be enhanced by learning from our peers and engaging with our audiences, both near and afar. This year, Japan Society is celebrating our heritage through the 50th anniversary of our landmark building with the launch of a new distinct modern logo and visual identity. The “JS” monogram is created via overlapping, interconnected lines and shapes, reinforcing the idea of *kizuna* and that Japan Society acts as a platform that connects across, cultures, people, and time.

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Support for 2021-2022 Performing Arts Season

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‡ *In memoriam.*

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