

## Drawing the Future from Questions Without Clear Answers

### JATCO's Human Resource Development and the Power of Liberal Arts

At JATCO, we focus not only on technical and knowledge-based training but also on nurturing each employee's "thinking ability" and "sensibility."

As part of this initiative, a "Dialogic Art Appreciation & Art Thinking Session" was recently held at the Bernard Buffet Museum in Nagaizumi Town, Shizuoka Prefecture. Twelve employees from Japan, Mexico, Thailand, China, and South Korea—each from different departments—participated in an experience of confronting "questions without clear answers" through art.

We invited Mr. Yasuhiko Izumimoto as an external lecturer. Mr. Izumimoto is a business strategy consultant with extensive experience as a facilitator of human resource development programs using art thinking.

This initiative is closely related to "liberal arts education," which fosters broad knowledge and human qualities. Encountering diverse perspectives through art provides opportunities to develop depth as individuals—something that cannot be gained through technical expertise or job skills alone.



### Diverse Perspectives Born in Front of a Painting

The first program took place in front of a large painting displayed in the museum's spacious atrium. Participants were encouraged to share their impressions in English,

one by one.

"This is difficult."

"What should I say?"

At first, there was hesitation and awkwardness. But as the facilitator affirmed every comment—saying things like "That's an important perspective too"—the atmosphere gradually relaxed.

"To me, all three people look like the same person."

"The figure seems to be looking at us—it feels strange."

"They look like they don't want to see the future."

Inspired by someone's comment, another participant added their own thoughts. It was refreshing to see colleagues from different countries and departments freely express their sensibilities in front of the artwork.

One participant reflected, "At first, I felt I had to give the 'right' answer, but I realized that differing opinions were welcomed, which made it easier to speak."



### **A World Painted Only with Words**

The next session involved a paired activity. One person wore an eye mask while the other described a painting using only words.

"There are many trees."

"The sky is gray."

"The building looks slightly distorted."

The describer struggled to find the right words within a limited time, while the

listener imagined the scene based solely on auditory information and drew it on paper.

After about five minutes, the eye mask was removed, and the imagined drawing was compared with the actual painting—resulting in surprise and laughter.

“It was closer than I expected!”

“Totally different, but interesting!”

“Even with the same words, interpretations vary so much.”

Though it seemed like a simple game, the session offered a deep experience of the essence of communication—how to express and how to interpret.

Questions like “How can I convey this clearly?” and “How can I correctly understand the other’s intent?” became valuable lessons directly applicable to everyday work.



### **Facing Questions Without Clear Answers**

Through this program, participants experienced the importance of confronting questions without clear answers.

Artworks don’t have a single solution like mathematical formulas. One person may feel “sadness” from a painting, while another senses “strength.” Both are valid, and at the same time, there is no definitive answer.

The environment surrounding JATCO is increasingly unpredictable, and not all challenges can be solved by following manuals.

As the automotive industry undergoes a once-in-a-century transformation, what is required of each of us is the ability to identify issues in our own way, apply aesthetic sensibilities and values, and make proposals with compelling narratives.

Dialogue through art is a practical form of liberal arts education and contributes to enhancing human qualities.

One participant commented, “I usually focus on efficiency and logic, but today I realized the importance of ‘feeling’ and ‘accepting differences.’”



### **Drawing a Bright Future**

For JATCO to continue growing sustainably, it is essential to cultivate a culture where employees with diverse perspectives inspire each other and face challenges without clear answers.

This “Dialogic Art Appreciation & Art Thinking Session” was a first step that brought significant insights to the participants.

Just as art has no single correct answer, the challenges we face also lack one definitive solution.

That’s why it’s important to cherish the questions and feelings that arise within us and share them with colleagues as we envision the future together.

JATCO’s bright future will be born from each employee’s “questions” and “proposals with stories.”

And above all, art is close to us.

On your day off, why not visit a museum?

Spending time facing a work of art can lead to new discoveries and refreshment—and become a step toward cultivating your own liberal arts.

### **■ Bernard Buffet Museum**

<https://www.buffet-museum.jp/>

A museum dedicated to the works of French painter Bernard Buffet (1928–1999).

It houses over 2,000 pieces including oil paintings, watercolors, drawings, prints, illustrated books, and posters.

More than 100 works are always on display, allowing visitors to trace the evolution of Buffet's art from his early to late years.