

## **NIFREL: Making a Living Museum Using Abstract Ecology Technique**

○Hiroshi Obata<sup>1</sup>, Hiroyuki Doi<sup>1</sup>,  
Hideto Nakagawa<sup>1</sup>, Kiyoko Onda<sup>1</sup>  
1. NIFREL

Located inside Osaka's Expocity, NIFREL is a unique type of zoological exhibit born of the challenge to design a new and unique way of engaging with nature. Whereas the exhibition at Osaka Aquarium KAIYUKAN provides a dynamic experience using a technique of environmental immersion, NIFREL uses a technique of abstract ecology, providing an experience where visitors are directed to a core, common attribute of exhibit species. The primary concept of NIFREL was to invoke “The Sense of Wonder” (as per Rachel Carson 1965), with seven zones constituted under common themes of animal diversity, color, shape, ability, etc., regardless of natural habitat or climatic origin. By creating a new type of museum, with mixed elements of aquarium, zoo, and art, we hoped visitors who were not interested in conventional aquariums and zoos, would become more aware of, and engaged by, the many surprises and mysteries in nature. The intent of NIFREL was to actively challenge traditional zoological exhibits by taking unprecedented actions—e.g., having artists of multiple genres expressing an exhibit theme during limited live installations. Opening on 19 November 2015, with a total floor space of ~7,200 m<sup>2</sup>, NIFREL received two million visitors during its first year of operation, and an additional 1.2 million visitors the following year. It appears that the original purpose of NIFREL, to reach a new audience, was successful. NIFREL challenges our community through a new expression of biology and by breaking the traditional norms of aquariums. We will continue to challenge these norms in an effort to engage and remind visitors, as much as possible, about the magnificence of living things and nature.