

For Immediate Release

Understanding ‘Supercute’ Phenomenon That is Hello Kitty®: Woodbury University’s Keith Nishida Weighs in For EMP Museum Exhibit in Seattle

***Fashion Marketing Professor (and Hello Kitty Scholar)
Explores Cultural Icon on Its 40th Anniversary***



LOS ANGELES (December 14, 2015) – For a pop star who’s actually a girl, not a cat, Hello Kitty® is one global feline sensation.

Just ask [Woodbury University](http://www.woodbury.edu)’s Keith Nishida, Assistant Professor of Fashion Marketing in the School of Business. Nishida -- who is branded as a “Hello Kitty scholar” following presentation of a paper at the Popular Culture Association’s 2014 National Conference – was a key go-to expert source for the first-ever large-scale *Hello Kitty* museum retrospective.

Created in celebration of the pop icon's 40th anniversary, *Hello! Exploring the Supercute World of Hello Kitty* opened at Seattle’s EMP Museum (empmuseum.org) on November 14. The retrospective is organized by Sanrio, the global lifestyle brand best known for *Hello Kitty*, and the Japanese

American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles, where the exhibition originated. “Hello” invites visitors to explore Hello Kitty’s colorful history and influence on art and culture, showcasing rare and unique pieces from Sanrio’s archive alongside mixed media works from contemporary artists inspired by Hello Kitty and her world.

Count Nishida among the academics seeking to bell the Kitty. His 2014 paper, “Hello Kitty Male Consumers: The Lost (Fan) Boys,” addresses the male fan subculture within the mainstream Hello Kitty fandom, their traits, their experience within the mainstream fan culture, and their backstory on how and why they became the fans they are now. The paper piqued the attention of EMP Senior Curator Jacob McMurray, who in October sought out Nishida for his expertise.

“Hello Kitty is brand power – it’s part of a media landscape rather than simply a commodity,” Nishida said. “Among the questions worth exploring: Why is Hello Kitty so loved? Why does it resonate? What is Hello Kitty’s appeal to multiple generations? How does it transform the complexity of the real world into something else? How have manga and anime paved the way for Japanese cultural vectors into the West? Hello Kitty’s versatility enables her to be the perfect vessel for storytelling through infinite product categories -- something we teach at Woodbury’s Fashion Marketing program.”

According to Bloomberg, the brand behind Hello Kitty posted nearly \$900 million in revenue in fiscal year 2011-2012, and the brand’s total net worth is estimated at some \$5 billion. Since making her debut 40 years ago, Hello Kitty has graced countless products, morphed through hundreds of thousands of design iterations, and befriended millions. As Hello Kitty always says, “You can never have too many friends!”

About Woodbury University

Founded in 1884, Woodbury University is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in Southern California. With campuses in Burbank/Los Angeles and San Diego, the university offers bachelor's degrees from the School of Architecture, School of Business, School of Media, Culture & Design, and College of Transdisciplinarity, along with a Master of Business Administration, Master of Arts in Media for Social Justice, Master of Architecture (MArch), Master of Interior Architecture (MIA), Master of Science in Architecture (MSArch), and Master of Leadership. The San Diego campus offers Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Architecture, Master of Leadership, Master of Interior Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture degrees, as well as an MSArch degree with a concentration in Real Estate Development. Woodbury ranks in the top 4 percent nationally in *The Economist*’s first-ever survey of American colleges. In 2014, the university ranked 15th among the nation’s “25 Colleges That Add the Most Value,” according to *Money Magazine*, and is a 2014-2015 College of Distinction. Visit woodbury.edu for more information.

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