

The forefront of Netsuke research "The history of the Netsuke-fastener is the history of the user"

In order to explore various causes revolving around the birth of the fastener, I decided to focus on the wearer (or user) of the fastener. Of course, when something comes into being, convenience is extremely convincing in solving this. However, what must be noted here is the question of whether or not people then thought of convenience as we do today. And in fact, as mentioned in Edition No. 8, historical painting reference up to around the mid-Muromachi period (1336-1573) show that pouches were worn by either hanging them from the sheath of a short sword worn on the waist or by hanging them directly from the waist. These sources would seem to indicate that what was considered convenient in wearing pouches at the time was not the ability to attach and detach pouches through a fastener, but instead the ability to hang pouches directly from belts. And while the brush strokes can be slightly unreliable for judging the details of subjects in these paintings,

this would explain the reason why fasteners were not depicted. Additionally, for any certain object to become widely used, someone has to relate emotionally to its value (and to the object itself) or discover some kind of new value in that object. In other words, the birth of the fastener would have been impossible without the intervention of some user. Therefore, the author believes that the birth of the fastener is only clear within the relationship not between the physical objects involved, but between the fastener and the user of the fastener. And moving along in time a bit, clues about this user and the mystery behind the birth of the fastener can be seen in folding screens that depict the users of the Momoyama period, which were painted in the Keicho period (1600-1615).

Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum Curator
Kosuke (Tadakumo) Onishi

The Artist's Perspective Kurita MOTOMASA

Although he is the youngest in the ivory carving contest, he has won numerous awards, and he applies his skills to the creation of netsuke. Motomasa says, "I respect the classics, but I want to create something new from them. We asked Motomasa about the appeal of netsuke.

First of all, congratulations on winning the Golden Netsuke Award Grand Prix. Please tell us what you keep in mind when creating your work.

I like classical subjects and think that netsuke look most beautiful when worn with Japanese clothing. I try to create a classical or natural theme that fits with the atmosphere of the piece. In parallel with creating the work, I study a wide range of various classical arts (tea ceremony, flower arrangement, Japanese music, etc.). I create my works hoping to give them a chic atmosphere and a light lyricism.

What is the fascination of netsuke for Motomasa?

Netsuke are not just ornaments to be displayed, but are actually used, and the "beauty of use" is created by using a variety of techniques in a limited size and shape. In addition, the surface wears and becomes more textured with use, I value the taste and feel of a new product as if it has been used with love and care. I call it "neoclassicism of netsuke," aiming to fuse the texture of the classics with a modern sensibility.

Kurita MOTOMASA

Influenced by his father, a taxidermist, and the family business of handling tusk horns, Kurita became familiar with netsuke at an early age. He is well known for his deep carving and careful finishing.



[Willow in Wind]
H2.5cm



Special Exhibition for January to March 2023 Netsuke that accompanies our daily life

1 Special Exhibition in January
"Deities in Netsuke"

January 6 (Fri) to 31 (Tue)

2 Special Exhibition in February
"Delicious looking Netsuke"

February 1 (Wed) to 28 (Tue)

3 Special Exhibition in March
"Seasons depicted by Netsuke"

March 1 (Wed) to 31 (Fri)

We are posting the latest information and images of the Museum on Twitter and Instagram. We hope you to follow us.

- Awarded 9th Mizuki Jugodo Prize from Yamato Koriyama City, Nara Prefecture
- Featured in the February issue of Katei-gaho
- Featured in the NHK TV program "The Mark of Beauty"



Official Website

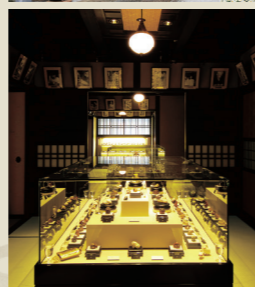


Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

- At the entrance the museum staff would measure your body temperature by non-contact thermometer and spray alcohol on your fingers. (If your body temperature is 37.5 degrees (Celsius) or higher, you may be refused to enter)
- We would ask you to write down your full name and address when entering the museum, as a countermeasure in the event that visitors or staff members were found to be a carrier.
- Please wear a mask inside the museum.

Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum

Contemporary Netsuke is the essence of Japanese aesthetics and craftsmanship. Many artists are creating netsuke works with adding new tastes. Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum is a museum that specializes in contemporary netsuke. We systematically collect, store, research and disclose documents and materials. Contemporary netsuke reflect social situation, technological progress and people's tastes of each era. Our mission is to contribute to the advancement of culture by researching contemporary netsuke from various viewpoints to investigate the characteristics of Japanese art.



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The only contemporary netsuke art museum in the world Special Exhibitions of Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum

The Pride of Japan, Passed Down to the Future "Dynamism of Netsuke Culture"

Since its opening in 2007, the Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum has been dedicated to collecting, exhibiting, and educating the public about contemporary netsuke. Netsuke has been inherited on the tradition that has continued since the early Edo period, and have developed by dynamically incorporating the changing times and new craft techniques. At the same time, it has reflected the complex values of today's multi-layered society. Netsuke artists are expected to have individuality and original expression. Please take a look at the cultural

dynamism that these contemporary artists struggle with and try to challenge. October is the "Vibrant Netsuke" exhibition. These are the latest works that put a lot of creative effort into immovable sculptures. November is the "Autumn Masterpieces" exhibition. These are the winning and nominated works from the contests encouraged by the museum. December is the "Netsuke Related to Sake" exhibition. We have collected works that will help you welcome the New Year with a fresh spirit.

十月の企画展
「躍動する根付」展
惹きこまれる表現力。
10月1日(土)〜30日(日)

十一月の企画展
「秋の名品」展
オーラル・根付・ワット。
栄光はさらなる高みへー躍動と進展。
11月1日(火)〜30日(水)

十二月の企画展
「酒にまつわる根付」展
一年の労苦が醸す味。人が人に惚れる味。
12月1日(木)〜28日(水)

根付文化の躍動展
Exhibition in October
Dynamism
Exhibition in November
Autumn Masterpieces
Exhibition in December
Netsuke about Sake

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年報は、2023年1月6日(金)より開催いたします。

Promotional poster

10 Captivating power of expression

Special Exhibition in October

“Netsuke with dynamic movement”

■ October 1 (Sat) to 30 (Sun)

The real appeal of netsuke lies in their vivid depiction. This is because even though they are small sculptures, they can be made to appear larger or to move through figurative ingenuity.

The aesthetic inherited from the master craftsmen of the Edo period has been incorporated into the latest works by contemporary artists. Also, please take a look at the dynamic netsuke that satirize the changes of the times from a new perspective.



〔 Assigned to the West 〕
KANGYOKU (1944~)
H3.9cm
A fierce white tiger guarding the west.



〔 Guardian Deity 〕
TETSURO (1960~)
H4.5cm
Vaisravana and tigers facing difficulties



〔 Leaping 〕
TANETOSHI (1947~)
H5.5cm
A butterfly leaps and a child's life leap.



〔 Orca 〕
AYA (1949~)
H3.0cm
The dynamic movement is given by bending over.



〔 Kagami Jishi 〕
TERUO (1936~)
H4.7cm
Emphasis on depth. Expresses a moment of flight.

11 Glory to greater heights! Vibrancy and progress

Special Exhibition in November

THE GOLDEN NETSUKE AWARDS “Supreme Selection”

■ November 1 (Tue) to 30 (Wed)

Since the origin of netsuke, the traditions handed down over the past four centuries and the "innovations" that artists are currently exploring are constantly at competing with each other as they evolve their works. Netsuke can also develop culturally through the collaboration of its creators and bearers. Netsuke, which were born in Japan, are now spreading around the world as NETSUKE. The museum has established THE GOLDEN NETSUKE AWARDS* to encourage free and new challenges by contemporary artists.



THE GOLDEN NETSUKE AWARDS
GRAND PRIX
〔 Mighty Female Warrior 〕
KUKAN (1968~)
H5.3cm
A female warrior famous for thousand strengths.



THE GOLDEN NETSUKE AWARDS
GRAND PRIX
〔 Amulet on Arm 〕
MOTOMASA (1976~)
H6.4cm
A chic geisha who wishes you happiness.



THE GOLDEN NETSUKE AWARDS
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
〔 Good Old Showa Era 〕
MITSUKUNI (1959~)
H4.6cm
Memories of a vibrant high-growth period.



THE GOLDEN NETSUKE AWARDS
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
〔 Ray of Light 〕
TOSHI (1957~)
H4.1cm
A mythical god who overcomes many trials.



THE GOLDEN NETSUKE AWARDS
CHAIRMAN'S AWARD
〔 Every Storm Will Passt 〕
AKEMI (1959~)
H4.8cm
Even in the fury of nature, people overcome.

12 The taste of a year's labor. Attractive taste.

Special Exhibition in December

“Netsuke associated with Sake”

■ December 1 (Thu) to 29 (Thu)

This section introduces the climate and culture of Japan by focusing on the familiar culture of sake. The origin of sake is believed to date back to prehistoric times in many parts of the world. Here we introduce netsuke related to sake, which is indispensable for everything from offering sake to the gods, to relieving fatigue, facilitating communication, celebrating, and driving away evil spirits.

The custom of New Year's Eve became a banquet as we know it today during the Edo period.



〔 Old Sake Cask Frogs Jumps in a Splash of Sake 〕
TOMOE (1972~)
H3.8cm
A parody from the famous haiku by Matsuo Basho.



〔 Drinking Sake while Flower Viewing 〕
KIHO (1957~)
H3.3cm
Floating petals add a touch of elegance.



〔 Worldly Desires 〕
HIDEYA (1971~)
H4.8cm
Is alcohol an affliction? Is it the water of life?



〔 Courtesan 〕
RYUSHI (1934~)
H5.6cm
A woman admired by the common people of the Edo period.



〔 Morning Mermaid 〕
SUMI (1944~)
H4.2cm
Her melancholy about him she met last night.