

Report on the Contemporary Netsuke Exhibition

Our museum lends out netsuke to museums all over Japan for the purpose of promoting netsuke. Last year, "Evolution of Contemporary Netsuke" was held at Hikaru Museum

(Takayama City, Gifu Prefecture) from September 7 to December 16. The exhibition attracted 19,000 visitors from Japan and abroad, who viewed netsuke, the pride of Japan.



new series Tinged with strange fates.

HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY NETSUKES

On the Eve of the Birth of Contemporary Netsuke: Postwar Netsuke for Abroad and the Ivory Boom in Domestic

After the war, Japan was occupied by the GHQ and many foreigners, including American soldiers, visited Japan. They were attracted to Japan's unique arts and crafts and brought ivory figurines and netsuke as souvenirs. Until the Edo period, each region of Japan had its own unique characteristics in netsuke, but since the Meiji period, the emphasis has been on export, and ivory craftsmen in Tokyo have taken charge.

Although the industry polarized into two major categories, from high-end netsuke (see photo 1.2) to popular products made in workshops, it boomed in response to strong demand. Ichiro Inada (b. 1891, Tokyo), who once aspired to become a painter, gained fame for his netsuke with pigment colors. Kishi Isshu (b. 1917, Tokyo) was renowned for his detailed sculptures. At that time, however, ivory carvings were mostly figurines. The price was determined by the weight of the ivory, so netsuke were seen as a low-priced, scaled-down version of figurines. Workshops for export were specialized by genre, such as figures, animals, birds, and vessels, and established a system to mass-produce the same designs. In Japan in the 1960s, when the country experienced a period of rapid economic growth, there was an ivory boom in seals and chopsticks, but netsuke had not yet become widespread. In addition, a youth culture that opposed existing values began to flourish. In the Netsuke world, young ivory craftsmen began to create new creations. In the next issue, contemporary netsuke will be sprouting.



1. ICHIRO 『Sesshu』
H3.8cm 1956



2. ISSYU 『Celestial Robe』
H5.3cm 1959

Special Exhibition for April to June 2025

"Secrets of Netsuke"

- 4 "Elaborate Techniques and Bold Designs"
■ April 1(Tue) - 30(Wed)
- 5 "Elegant Taste of Japanese Lacquer Art"
■ May 1(Thu) - 31(Sat)
- 6 "Brilliant Challenges of Goldsmithing and Inlaying"
■ June 1(Sun) - 29(Sun)

We have opened an official YouTube channel. We are posting the latest information and images of the Museum on Twitter and Instagram. We hope you to follow us.



Official Website



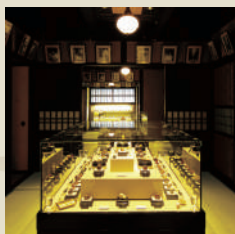
YouTube channel



As a leading company in the fields of printing and information processing, Sagawa Printing Co., Ltd. is supporting the Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum with the aim of passing Japanese culture to the next generation and developing global art.

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

Netsuke is a drama reflecting life. "Miracles beginning with Netsuke"

Muneaki Kinoshita, chairman of this museum, says, "Netsuke is a mysterious art. Kinoshita has been attracted to the world of netsuke and has led to many invaluable encounters with people through netsuke. Netsuke has a mysterious charm that interweaves strange destinies and brings together deep connections. It is truly a miracle that begins with netsuke. This exhibition will feature works that explore the mysterious charm of Netsuke,

with the theme of encounters and connections brought about by Netsuke, as well as the miracle of modeling. In January, we will introduce "Netsuke of Fateful Encounters. We will feature Netsuke based on the theme of dramatic encounters. In February, "Miraculous Shapes and Appreciation" will focus on the shapes of netsuke. In March, as "Netsuke of the World Connecting Together," we will introduce netsuke that connect fate, time, and beauty.

Netsuke are a drama reflecting life.

Miracles beginning with Netsuke

根付は人生を映したドラマ。
根付から始まる奇跡展

2025年
1月「運命の出会いと根付」展 1月7日(火)~31日(金)
2月「奇跡のカタチと鑑賞法」展 2月1日(土)~28日(金)
3月「結び合う世界と根付」展 3月1日(土)~30日(日)

京都 清宗根付館
Public Interest Incorporated Foundation
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佐川印刷株式会社は印刷及び情報加工の分野でのリーディングカンパニーとして、日本文化の継承と芸術の発展を目指し、京都 清宗根付館を応援しています。

SAGAWA PRINTING

Promotional poster

1 The story begins at this moment.

Special Exhibition in January
“Netsuke of Fateful Encounters”

■ January 1(Tue) - 31(Thu)

As a theme appropriate for the New Year, we will focus on “encounters. The word “encounter” reminds us of the phrase “once in a lifetime encounter”. This phrase tells us to cherish the moment of a once-in-a-lifetime encounter, as encounters with people are never repeated. What kind of stories will start from the netsuke that expresses various “encounters”?

2 Unlocking the secrets of one-of-a-kind modeling

Special Exhibition in February
“Miraculous Shapes and Appreciation”

■ February 1(Fri) - 30(Sat)

Netsuke has a unique form with the volume and toughness to withstand practical use. Based on these fundamentals, the artist's playful spirit and skillful technique will expand the profound world of the work. Since Netsuke are characterized by an artistic style born from shape, we will focus on the shape of netsuke in February. By deciphering the geometric composition of netsuke, we will introduce the effects of shape.

3 Connections, fate, time, and beauty

Special Exhibition in March
“Netsuke related to the world of knot”

■ March 1(Sat) - 30(Sun)

In March, you will see netsuke with the theme of “the world of knot”. We weave our lives like a tapestry, making knots with ourselves as the warp and the world as the weft. Currently, when human relationships are becoming less and less common, the solid relationship of “Knot” is being revalued, and the world connected through Netsuke will be the focus of attention.



『 Encounter 』
MIYABI (1977~)
H4.2cm
The parrots symbolize family security and marital bliss, as the couple raises their chicks together.



『 Passing the Winter
-Starving and cold 』
KUKAN (1968~) H3.0cm
The parrots symbolize family security and marital bliss, as the couple raises their chicks together.



『 Brothers 』
TAISEI (1953~)
H3.0cm
The older brother was amazed that his newborn little brother looked so much like him.



『 Little Elephant's Date 』
AKIRA (1949~)
H4.3cm
This elephant is based on a true story that began in 1950 when he traveled around Japan and met many children.



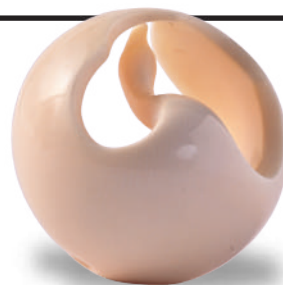
『 Seaside Poem 』
TAKESHI (1940~)
H6.0cm
On the seaside, two crabs whisper a love hymn amongst the reels, presenting flowers.



『 Stretching 』
KIHO (1957~)
H6.1cm
Before a match, sumo wrestlers perform a ritual in which one foot is lifted high and stepped onto the ground.



『 Hotei 』
KUKAN (1950~)
H3.0cm
The bag carried by Hotei, who helped many poor people, is filled with compassion and gratitude from everyone.



『 Landing on the Water 』
BISHU (1943~)
H3.5cm
An ambitious work from the 1970s, it attempted to fuse classical netsuke with Western art.



『 Crescent Moon 』
AKEMI (1959~)
H3.1cm
Boldly hollowed out of amber, the transparency and luster of the amber represent an ephemeral crescent moon.



『 Knot 』
HIDEAKI (1979~)
H4.4cm
The irregular shape of the accidentally formed eucalyptus mass was utilized to create a miraculous form.



『 Betrothal 』
YUKO (1952~)
H4.3cm
The monkey is considered a symbol of marriage because it has the same sound as the Japanese word for marriage.



『 Final Bout of the
Tournament Day 』
SEIHO (1937~2003) H6.5cm
In the grand finale of a Sumo wrestling match, the remaining Sumo wrestlers fight with all their might.



『 In Fairy Tales. 』
KANGYOKU (1944~)
H4.3cm
The work alludes to well-known Japanese folktales, such as the rat and pestle, the small hammer.



『 Vow Knot 』
TETSURO (1953~)
H5.4cm
A famous scene from the Three Kingdoms, where brothers-in-law are bound together under the peach.



『 Festive Sake 』
TOSHI (1957~)
H4.1cm
The irregular shape of the accidentally formed eucalyptus mass was utilized to create a miraculous form.