

Internship for aspiring future curators.

This September, we conducted a museum internship program at the Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum. Thirteen promising students from five universities in the Kyoto area participated.

The lectures aimed to cultivate future curators by providing multifaceted learning opportunities. We offered specialized lectures from leading experts in contemporary netsuke, advertising designers, the Kyoto branch manager, and our museum's deputy director. Practical training taught students how to handle cultural properties, culminating in students planning their own exhibition. It is currently on display at our museum, so please do check it out.

The students had never encountered netsuke before, but we were deeply moved to see how they grew to cherish and take an interest in them through their hands-on training. We look forward to their future endeavors.



Before becoming a netsuke artist, Italo was involved in the art field with miniature woodblock prints. He explained his new work, "Books, Encounters".



ITARO Born in 1961. His fine swordsmanship and openworking techniques are said to be the best of his generation.

The Artist's Perspective ITARO

"The inspiration came from the idea that all the characters were bad guys. I made the netsuke with a slightly stylish atmosphere. Playing cards were brought to Japan through trade at the end of the 16th century, but did not really spread until the 1870s. At that time, society was changing due to aggressive westernization policies. The "Cardsharps" that blended in with the Rokumeikan, a symbol of this westernization, are the subject of this work. However, they are all cardsharps! Who will win?"



ITARO
『Books: New Encounters』
H6.9cm

Special Exhibition for January to March 2026

Boost your fortune this New Year with Netsuke
"The Happiness of Netsuke"

- 1 "Netsuke Celebrating the New Year"
■ January 6 (Tue) to 31 (Sat)
- 2 "Netsuke that elicit laughter"
■ February 1 (Sun) to 28 (Sat)
- 3 "Auspicious Beasts Bringing Good Fortune"
■ March 1 (Sun) to 31 (Tue)

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→



Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum

The Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum is the world's only museum dedicated to netsuke, established in the ancient capital, Kyoto. The director of the museum, Muneaki Kinoshita (Chairman and CEO of Sagawa Printing Co., Ltd.) founded the museum in order to "preserve Japanese outstanding traditional crafts in Japan by Japanese people."

We aim to pass on and develop netsuke art and works as a museum open to the community and people with the motto of "attracting people," "fostering and supporting artists," and "cooperating with related organizations."



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.



[Index]

■Exhibition Highlights
■Letter from museum
■Artist's Perspective

[Publisher]

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

Netsuke that connects people and beauty. "Prosperity of Netsuke"

Our museum presents the Golden Netsuke Award annually to recognize works of outstanding creativity and technical skill from among the nominated pieces, with the aim of nurturing the next generation of netsuke artists. With each passing year, the artists have produced increasingly refined works through mutual inspiration and competition. It is no exaggeration to say this represents the cutting edge of contemporary netsuke.

Netsuke, described as "the art of refinement and wit," embodies the broad-mindedness and approachability cultivated by the aesthetic sensibilities of popular culture. They hold laughter and humor that enrich daily life, harbor a gentleness that quietly accompanies sorrow, and at times provide vitality for tomorrow. This year, works that fully express the charm inherent in such netsuke have once again gathered.

NETSUKE THAT CONNECT PEOPLE AND BEAUTY.

PROSPERITY of CONTEMPORARY NETSUKE

人をつなぎ、美をつむぐ根付
惹きこまれる根付の美展

October 1 - December 28

10月「日本の祭り」展 10月1日(水)~31日(金)
11月「秋の名品」展 11月1日(土)~30日(日)
12月「ものがたり」展 12月2日(火)~28日(日)

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Promotional poster

10 Special Exhibition in October

Discovering the spiritual roots of Japan “Festivals and ceremonies”

■ October 1 (Wed) ~ 31(Fri)

Japan still preserves festivals rooted in the local climate and customs of each region. Festivals are said to have originated as sacred rites dedicated to the gods, deeply connected to the spiritual origins of the Japanese people. Gradually incorporating elements of entertainment and competition, they spread to the common people. We will introduce these diverse festivals and customs, each unique to different parts of Japan.

11 Special Exhibition in November

Ambitious works pioneering the era are here. “Netsuke in all their glory”

■ November 1 (Sat) ~ 30(Sun)

The Golden Netsuke Award* is the museum's largest annual event. This award ceremony has been held annually since 2014 to encourage free and new challenges by contemporary netsuke artists with the aim of passing on the netsuke culture. Artists are creating for the Grand Prix with their ingenuity and new innovations. We will introduce works by artists who continue to take on new challenges.

*This award is given to the best overall work among the new netsuke.

12 Special Exhibition in December

Characters and famous scenes from the story. “Netsuke narrating things”

■ December 2 (Tue) ~ 28(Sun)

The narrative form excels at explaining the passage of time and causal relationships. Furthermore, readers develop deeper empathy and trust toward the characters, stirring their emotions. It is also known that encountering emotionally resonant stories can heal the heart and enrich one's life. Such effects of storytelling are also utilized in netsuke. We will explore the relationship between these narratives and netsuke.



『Festival Out of Season』
ZANMAI (1967~) H5.0cm
In this work, even if the skeletons recall the vibrant festivals of their past lives, it is all in vain.



『Harvest Moon』
JIN (1956~) H4.2cm
It is a custom to admire the most beautiful moon of the year and celebrate the autumn harvest. In 2025, it falls on October 6th.



『Namahage (ogre)』
KINSUI (1926~) H4.0cm
The red ogre of Namahage is considered the Grandfather Ogre. On New Year's Eve, he walks around shouting, "Are there any bad kids?"



『Halloween』
KIYASU (1969~) H3.5cm
Lighting jack-o'-lanterns at Halloween serves to ward off evils and guide the souls. Inside, they hold candy for the children.



『Akita Kanto Matsuri』
DOSAI (1950~) H8.5cm
This festival is held to ward off misfortune and pray for a bountiful harvest. The poles with hanging lanterns symbolize rice ears.



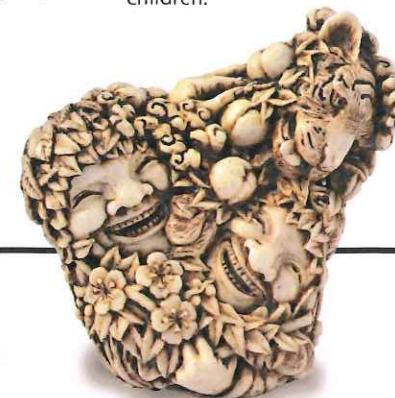
THE GOLDEN NETSUKES AWARDS GRAND PRIX
『Forms of "bond" in Folktales』
ITARO (1961~) H6.9cm
The folktale tells of a tragic love between a horse and a maiden. The father beheaded the horse, but the maiden mounted its head and ascended to heaven.



THE GOLDEN NETSUKES AWARDS GRAND PRIX
『Stylish Geisha』
MOTOMASA (1976~) H6.3cm
Edo-style geisha prized spirit and vigor, gaining fame for their spirited and handsome personalities.



Excellence Award
『Wealth and Success』
YOKA (1968~) H6.1cm
Men's and women's kimonos feature patterns symbolizing wealth and success, making them look very impressive.



Excellence Award
『Three Existences』
MOMO (1984~) H5.5cm
Two children symbolizing enlightenment in Zen Buddhism. By adding a tiger and plants, it expresses that all are part of the same nature.



Chairman's Award
『Bond of the Heart』
KUKAN (1968~) H3.8cm
Amid the bitter cold, the two huddles close, holding hands to warm each other, expressing the bond between their hearts.



『Bunbuku Chagama』
AKIHIDE (1934~) H3.1cm
From the tale of the teakettle transformed by a raccoon dog. Drinking this tea is said to bring blessings such as good fortune and a long life.



『Wolf and Kid』
KIHIO (1957~) H2.4cm
From the Grimm's Fairy Tale "The Wolf and the Seven Little Goats." The moral is: never be fooled by appearances, and evil will always be defeated.



『Soshi Arai Komachi』
ISSYU (1917~) H5.0cm
From a Noh play, during a court poetry contest, an enemy plots to deceive the peerless beauty Ono no Komachi, but she thwarts him with her wit.



『Messenger Santa Claus』
IPPU (1970~) H6.4cm
December is the peak of the Christmas shopping season. Back in the day, there might have been a Japanese version of Santa Claus.



『Messenger Santa Claus』
MOTOMASA (1976~) H3.8cm
The tale of the "Little Boy" is thought to have its origins in Japanese mythology, where destiny is shaped through strategy.