

“Special Commendation from the Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs”

Muneaki Kinoshita, Director of Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum, has recently received the Special Commendation from the Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs. He was honored for his achievements, which were recognized as follows: “Over many years, he has collected netsuke and established a museum dedicated exclusively to netsuke. In addition to his efforts to train Netsuke artists, he has promoted exhibitions, preservation, and educational activities utilizing historic cultural properties, and has worked to raise international awareness of Netsuke. He has made a significant contribution to the promotion of Japan’s culture.”



new series Tinged with strange fates.

HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY NETSUKES

The Expansion of Contemporary Netsuke: The Washington Convention and the Awakening of Artists

The year 1980 began with the ratification of the Washington Convention. Since the ivory trade could continue for the time being, sales channels expanded domestically through sales events at department stores and to overseas collectors. In the 1980s, artists moved away from the static, figurative poses and detailed line engravings of kimonos that had characterized their work up to that point, and their sculptural skills evolved to better capture a rich sense of volume and dynamic movement. As these works were featured in the media, they gained recognition as works of art both domestically and internationally, gradually becoming more widely known. Another major boost came when His Imperial Highness Prince Norihito Takamado presented a netsuke to Her Imperial Highness Princess Hisako, an event that attracted widespread attention. Subsequently, His Imperial Highness Prince Norihito Takamado took the lead in guiding netsuke artists, advocating that the essence of Netsuke lies in “twists” and urging them to add a twist to both the form and the subject matter of their works. This aesthetic sensibility remains the core of contemporary netsuke to this day.



TANETOSHI
「Raven Embracing Skull」

Special Exhibition for October to December 2026

The Ultimate Netsuke as Envisioned by Artists
“The Diversity of Netsuke”

10 “The Dynamic Forms of Netsuke”
■ October 1 (Thu) to 31 (Sat)

11 “Masterpieces of Netsuke”
■ November 1 (Sun) to 29 (Sun)

12 “Netsuke Sparking the Imagination”
■ December 1 (Tue) to 27 (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

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.



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The only contemporary netsuke art museum in the world

Special Exhibitions of Kyoto Seishu Netsuke Art Museum

The Enchanting World of Netsuke: A Timeless Tradition

“Netsuke as Time Traveler”

Contemporary netsuke are time travelers capable of expressing imaginary worlds and stories that transcend time and place.

The works generally considered to be the pioneers of science fiction dealing with time travel are 『The Time Traveler』 by Enrique Gaspar i Rimbau (1887) and 『The Time Machine』 by H. G. Wells (1895). This stems from efforts to uncover the true nature of time,

spurred by the 19th-century Industrial Revolution and advances in science and technology.

In today’s anime and manga, there’s even a genre dedicated to reincarnation in another world. The concept of time travel—including parallel worlds and time leaps—is becoming increasingly widespread. So, let’s set off on a time-travel adventure through Netsuke together.

根付は
タイム
トラベラ展

The Enchanting
World of Netsuke:
A Timeless Tradition
“Netsuke as
Time Traveler”

2026年
7月1日(水)～
9月30日(水)

公財団法人 清宗根付館
京都 清宗根付館
Public Interest Incorporated Foundation
KYOTO SEISHU NETSUKES ART MUSEUM

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SAGAWA PRINTING

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Promotional poster

7 Special Exhibition in July

“Netsuke Traveling Through Time”

■ July 1 (Wed) to 31 (Fri)

When you open the door of a time machine that travels between the present, past, and future, you’ll find everything from ancient dinosaurs to Heian-period nobles, Sengoku-period warlords, and Edo-period townspeople—and you’ll be amazed by the evolution of the future. This month, we’ll be featuring the captivating leading figures from various eras, as depicted in netsuke. We will become witnesses to history.



『Fragments of Time』
IPPU (1970～) H4.4cm
From a series that likens the passing of the four seasons to a woman’s lifetime, here is “Summer: Girlhood.”



『Nap』
MEIKEI (1932～) H2.0cm
Both the woman and the cat are traveling through time while dreaming of their own glory days.



『Reviving Fossil』
YOKA (1968～) H3.7cm
The artist skillfully contrasts the black and white of the persimmon wood to carve both a fossil and a living dinosaur.



『Medusa vs. Perseus』
TETSURO (1960～) H3.7cm
If you could travel back to the age of mythology, you might witness this famous battle. However, you must not make eye contact with Medusa.



『Three Sages』
KUKAN (1968～) H4.4cm
This work depicts the conflict between religion, art, and science. Are monkeys the future of humanity?

8 Special Exhibition in August

“Longing for Another World”

■ August 1 (Sat) to 30 (Sun)

Time travel isn't just about moving through time; it also involves traveling to different spaces and dimensions. Parallel worlds are said to exist alongside our own, forming a relationship of “front and back.” The other world might be a labyrinth where the sun rises in the west and sets in the east, and the moon is visible during the day. This month, we’re featuring the inhabitants who live on the edge of that labyrinth.



『Auspicious Kappa』
TOMOE (1972～) H5.0cm
The kappa gave his benefactor a bottle of sake from which sake would keep welling no matter how much he drank.



『Stylish』
TANETOSHI (1947～) H6.9cm
A demon, dressed in stylish clothes, has slipped back in time into the world of a Western.



『Mermaid』
SUMI (1944～) H4.4cm
The mermaid longed for the humans who lived on land. A parallel world she could never cross over to.



『Night Parade of a Demon』
HIDEFUMI (1949～) H3.5cm
Darkness is a sign that leads to another world. A demon with a defiant expression stares with wide eyes as it chases its prey.



『Three Eyed One』
KANSUI (1955～) H4.2cm
A yokai with a third eye in the center of its forehead; its true form is a long-lived raccoon dog.

9 Special Exhibition in September

“Experience beyond Ordinary”

■ September 1 (Tue) to 30 (Wed)

Travel offers special experiences, such as unfamiliar scenery, delicious meals, and new encounters. When we return from a trip, we’ll likely view reality from a different perspective than before. At that moment, we’ll come to realize that “ordinary life” is a priceless source of happiness. This month, we’re featuring travel-themed items and introducing netsuke that capture both the ultimate escape from the ordinary and the tranquility of everyday life.



『Impression』
AKIRA (1949～) H4.5cm
The anthropomorphized slot machine took on a big challenge and hit the jackpot with three sevens!



『Flying up』
BISHU (1943～) H11.0cm
The sight of a horse raising its front legs high symbolizes overcoming obstacles and achieving one's goals.



『Devil and Snake Emerged』
HIDEYUKI (1941～) H4.4cm
Based on the proverb that says the future is unpredictable, just as you never know when something scary might appear.



『Thumbelina』
MASAYUKI (1954～) H3.1cm
From a fairy tale by Andersen. A girl about the size of a thumb endures many hardships but ultimately finds happiness.



『Crowded Train in Old Days』
MITUKUNI (1959～) H3.8cm
The high growth of the Showa period was supported by the businessmen who commuted by crowded trains.