

We conducted a museum internship program for college students.

From August through September, we hosted two sessions of a five-day internship program for 13 interns aiming to obtain museum curator certification. We held lectures on curatorial work and museum management, and we also had them set up an exhibition of netsuke and practice giving explanations to visitors. Finally, the students completed a special exhibition they planned on their own. The exhibition features works selected by the students themselves, accompanied by creative, handwritten explanations. We hope all our visitors will enjoy this student-curated exhibition.



Tinged with strange fates.

HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY NETSUKES

A Turning Point for Contemporary Netsuke: Entry from Other Industries and the Use of New Materials

A major characteristic of the 1990s was the entry of artisans from other fields into the netsuke industry. This trend was fueled by the 1989 global ban on international trade in ivory and the collapse of the economic bubble in 1991. Artists specializing in jewelry, lacquerware, and glass crafts, as well as artists from overseas, created realistic miniature works using a wide range of craft techniques. Furthermore, the informational value of word associations and puns was utilized as an important form of expression in Netsuke, reinforcing their appeal to the public and their entertainment value. In addition to traditional materials such as ivory and boxwood, netsuke artisans have begun using a wide variety of materials,

including precious metals, gemstones, acrylic resin, glass, and lacquer; as a result, the introduction of new techniques that make the most of these materials has become cutting-edge. In the 1990s, exhibitions featuring netsuke were held at museums both in Japan and abroad.

Furthermore, as netsuke began to be featured in various media, including television and print publications, people who had never seen netsuke before had more opportunities to encounter them.



KIHO 「In the Time Dimension」

Special Exhibition for January to March 2027

Happiness Hidden in Your Everyday Life

“The Playfulness of Netsuke”

- 1 “Netsuke Related to Proverbs”
■ January 5 (Tue) to 31 (Sun)
- 2 “Netsuke Inspired by Zen”
■ February 2 (Tue) to 28 (Sun)
- 3 “Sophisticated! Stylish! Netsuke”
■ March 2 (Tue) to 31 (Wed)

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.

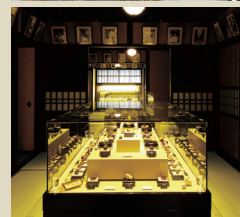


Official Website

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

At our museum, with the aim of nurturing the next generation of netsuke artists, we present the Golden Netsuke Award each year to works selected from among the nominees that demonstrate outstanding creativity and exceptional craftsmanship. With each passing year, the artists have been producing works that reflect their growing mutual inspiration and refinement. As described as “the art of sophistication

and wit,” netsuke embody a sense of openness and approachability nurtured by the aesthetic sensibilities of popular culture. They bring laughter and whimsy that enrich daily life, harbor a gentleness that gently comforts in times of sorrow, and sometimes provide the vitality to face tomorrow. This year, once again, we have gathered works that fully showcase the charm inherent in Netsuke.

The Ultimate Netsuke as Envisioned by Artists

『百花繚乱! 根付の世界』展

2026年10月1日 thu. - 12月27日 sun.

公益財団法人 清宗財団
京都 清宗根付館
KYOTO SEISHU NETSUKES ART MUSEUM

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SAGAWA PRINTING

10月「躍動する根付」展
11月「秋の名品」展
12月「想像ふくらむ根付」展

Promotional poster

10 Special Exhibition in October

“The Dynamic Forms of Netsuke”

■ October 1 (Thu) to 30 (Sat)

These netsuke, which convey a sense of dynamic movement, possess a charm that appeals to the viewer’s intuition. One can clearly see that the artist has carefully refined the arrangement and composition of the subject matter time and again to effectively highlight the theme, while also varying the emphasis on the subject, making bold omissions or exaggerations, and using exquisite craftsmanship to bring the artist’s subjective perspective and intent to the fore.



『Omori Hikoshichi and Ogress』
TETSURO (1960～) H4.7cm
The valiant Hikoshichi defeated a formidable foe, but the spirit of that enemy turned into a demon and attacked him.



『Dream Flow - Utopia』
KUKAN (1968～) H4.5cm
A boy jumps into the river to catch fish, and the splashes of water that take the form of various spirits to protect him.



『Peony』
IKKU (1949～) H5.5cm
The peony is the king of flowers. This work expresses the peony’s nobility as it endures the cold of winter.



『Hawk』
BISHU (1943～) H4.0cm
Although the eagle motif is a traditional subject, it is arranged within the round form characteristic of netsuke.



『Satisfactory Art』
SEIHO (1936～) H4.4cm
The decisive showdown. After an exchange of powerful moves, the match was settled with a spectacular finishing move.

11 Special Exhibition in November

“Masterpieces of Netsuke”

■ November 1 (Sun) to 29 (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 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.



THE GOLDEN NETSUKES AWARDS GRAND PRIX

『Hell Courtesan』
MOTOMASA (1976～) H3.3cm
A courtesan who declared herself to be in hell, saying, “The misfortunes of this life are due to my inadequate moral conduct in a past life.”



THE GOLDEN NETSUKES AWARDS GRAND PRIX

『Books, Encounters』
ITARO (1961～) H5.1cm
A book is an encounter with the unknown. Words carried aboard the vessel of a book are delivered to us across time and space.



Excellence Award

『AI』
KIHO (1957～) H3.5cm
A robot that has undergone an astonishing evolution is holding Adam's apple. What will the fruit of knowledge bring him?



Excellence Award

『Radiance』
AKIRA (1949～) H2.0cm
This netsuke embodies the grand theme of viewing Earth from a galaxy tens of thousands of light-years away.



Special Award

『Hanuman』
MOMO (1984～) H5.5cm
A monkey god from Indian mythology. He was a versatile warrior who could change his size, wield various weapons, and fly.

12 Special Exhibition in December

“Netsuke Sparking the Imagination”

■ December 1 (Tue) to 27 (Sun)

How do artists engage with their ever-changing ideas and mystical worldviews? In their work, we catch glimpses of the “twist” unique to netsuke—a blend of free expression and innovative interpretation—that brings out each artist’s individuality. This month, we feature Netsuke born from the artists’ rich imaginations, as well as evocative pieces that inspire viewers to let their own imaginations run wild.



『Reckless Bulldog』
KOMA (1985～) H3.2cm
Bulldogs are fierce dogs, but it seems one small prey that slipped through a tiny hole was one step ahead.



『Cat's Greeting on Stage』
AYA (1949～) H2.6cm
A cat depicted in a ukiyo-e print, offering a greeting. Its kimono features gold coin motifs, and its family crest is a footprint.



『Pushing and Shoving』
TOSHI (1957～) H4.5cm
A game where kids push each other on the back or buttocks, and whoever gets pushed outside loses. A nostalgic winter tradition.



『Butterfly』
YOKA (1968～) H4.6cm
A beautiful butterfly spirit. The butterfly's wings are rendered using the iridescent effect of abalone shell.



『Comb the Cat』
HIRO (1971～) H4.0cm
Cats don't like being combed. A cat's ears reveal its wariness or fear. This is a work that only a cat lover could create.