



Meet Netsuke! Storytellers of Japan

Antique Netsuke Exhibition

Media Contact: Japan Information & Culture Center, Embassy of Japan

Phone: 202-238-6900, Email: jicc-press@ws.mofa.go.jp

March 15 - May 15 | Headliner Exhibition with a Lecture and Demonstration

Admission: Free, walk-ins welcome for exhibit. Registration required for lecture and demonstration.

The Japan Information & Culture Center (JICC) will host a unique exhibition of finely crafted miniature sculptures known as netsuke [pronounced netz-kay] brimming with stories of life during Edo period Japan (17c-19c). Netsuke originated as functional accessories, but grew in popularity as eccentric fashion statements. Rarely displayed in public in these numbers, these pieces display not only rich history, but also meticulous craftsmanship.

Originally created as toggles to attach wallets, tobacco pouches, and other small boxes to the obi belt on Japanese kimono, netsuke became symbols of wealth, character, and personal values. Artful sculptures of everything from comical creatures to honored elements of nature, frightening mythological figures, and scenes from everyday life, each netsuke piece has a unique story to share about Japan.

Co-presented by the JICC and the Japan-America Society of Washington DC. Sponsored by the Freeman Foundation and a generous local donor. Works loaned courtesy of the Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore; and the Beverly and Jay Hopkins Collection.

I. Events

The exhibition will kick off with a lecture and demonstration by the Komada family, featuring Ryushi Komada, the number one contemporary netsuke artist in the world, and his daughter, Makiko Komada, a premier scholar of netsuke.

1. Exhibition Opening: Netsuke – Japan’s Tiny Goodwill Ambassadors

March 15, 2017 | Wednesday at 6:30PM | Japan Information & Culture Center

Admission: Free, registration required.

Lecturer/Demonstrator

- i. Makiko Komada (Deputy Secretary and Board member of the Japan Netsuke Society and member of the International Netsuke Society)
- ii. Ryushi Komada (Number one contemporary netsuke artist, third-generation sculptor. Former president of the International Netsuke Carvers’ Association)

Presented in two parts. Makiko Komada will give an English lecture on the history of netsuke as tiny cultural ambassadors and introducing the role America has played in protecting, supporting, and developing netsuke. Ryushi Komada will speak about his life as a netsuke artist and demonstrate some of his personal techniques. Famous for his beautiful carvings of faces, he will walk the audience through his creative process. This may be considered the first time that such an in-depth lecture on the creation of netsuke by a Japanese artist has been offered in America. A 15-min Q&A session will follow.

Co-presented by the JICC and the Japan-America Society of Washington D.C. Sponsored by ANA, the Freeman Foundation, and a generous local donor.

For opportunities for press coverage please email jicc-press@ws.mofa.go.jp at least 24 hours prior to the event for access. Due to security for these tiny treasures, there will be limited space for media coverage.

2. Conversation- Art in the Palm of Your Hand: Netsuke in Japanese

March 16, 2017 | Thursday at 6:30 PM | Sackler Gallery, sublevel 1 Smithsonian’s Freer and Sackler Galleries
Admission: Free, registration required

Discover netsuke, artful miniature sculptures from Japan’s Edo period, through a discussion at the Smithsonian’s Freer and Sackler Galleries with Freer|Sackler Curator, Dr. James Ulak, and a demonstration by master netsuke artist Ryushi Komada. Before the introduction of European fashions, Japan was a "world without pockets." Men carried their belongings in small pouches suspended from their kimono with netsuke, which doubled as enviable status symbols. Common motifs include everything from animals and honored elements of nature to frightening mythological creatures, with each piece having a unique story. A live translation will be provided by Ryushi’s daughter Makiko Komada, board member of the Japan Netsuke Society and author of *Netsuke* (Kadokawa, 2015).

This program is co-presented with the Smithsonian’s Freer|Sackler.

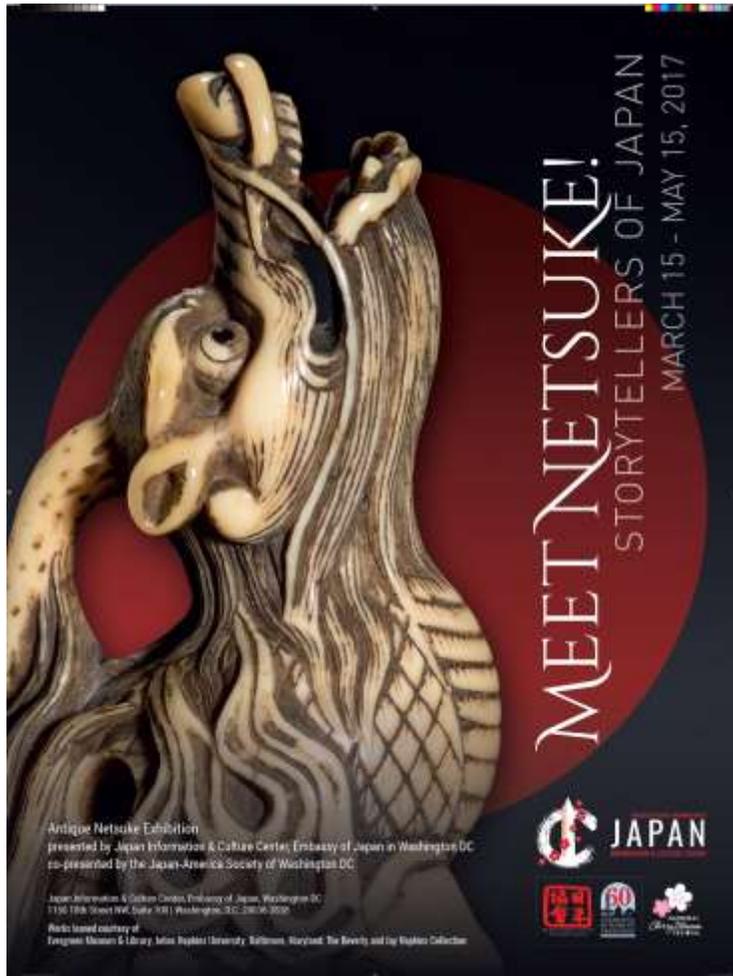
For opportunities for press coverage please contact:

Freer/Sackler

Erick Hoffman 202-633-0447 or 202-412-3916; hoffmane@si.edu

Megan Krefting 202-633-0271; kreftingm@si.edu

II. Pictures



III. Further Information

For more information, please contact the JICC at jicc-press@ws.mofa.go.jp.

The Japan Information & Culture Center (JICC), Embassy of Japan in Washington DC is the region's #1 authoritative resource for Japan-related information and culture, a gift sponsored by the people of Japan since 1981. As part of the Embassy of Japan's public outreach program, the JICC is deeply committed to enriching the relationship between the people of Japan and the United States through an active, vibrant cultural and informational exchange. For more information, please visit <http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc>.

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