

Kyosai, the Kaleidoscopic Painter: Works from the Kawanabe Kyosai Memorial Museum

The multifaceted painter Kawanabe Kyosai (1831–1889) lived through the late Edo and early Meiji periods, creating a diverse body of work that spanned themes ranging from gods and buddhas to beautiful women, scenes from everyday life, and animals. His distinctive style—marked by humor, rebelliousness, and mystery—extended across various formats, including paintings, woodblock prints, and illustrated books. Renowned for his versatility, he earned a reputation for being able to “paint anything.” Art historians in recent years have reaffirmed that his artistic foundation can be found in his training and pride as a Kano painter.

Kyosai began studying painting at age eight under the ukiyo-e artist Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797–1861). At ten, he entered the Kano school, and upon completing his training at nineteen, he received the sobriquet “Toiku Noriyuki.” These two influences—ukiyo-e and the Kano school—shaped the vibrant richness of his works.

This first-ever Kawanabe Kyosai exhibition in Osaka showcases works from the Kawanabe Kyosai Memorial Museum, founded by his great granddaughter, Kawanabe Kusumi, who also serves as its director. In addition, Kano school and Chinese paintings from the Kosetsu Museum of Art will be featured here, providing insight into Kyosai’s legacy as a master of traditional Japanese painting. This exhibition also presents an important work from the collection of the confectionery shop Eitaro Sohonpo Co., Ltd.

Admission

Adults

¥ 1600 (¥ 1400*)

High school and university students

¥ 800 (¥ 400*)

Elementary and junior high school students

¥ 400 (¥ 200*)

*For groups of 20 or more



Battle of the Frogs

Kawanabe Kyosai

Genji 1 (1864)



**The Constellation of Wen Chang,
Deity of Literature and Culture**

Kawanabe Kyosai
circa Meiji 20 (1887)



**Frolicking Animals: Nekomata (Cat Demon)
and Tanuki (Raccoon Dog)
(preparatory drawing)**

Kawanabe Kyosai



Winter Crow on a Withered Branch

Kawanabe Kyosai
Meiji 14 (1881)



Beauty Reading Letter

Kawanabe Kyosai
Meiji 21 (1888)