

East and West Rendezvous in Yokohama:

Makuzu ware, Yokohama photographs and Yokohama wood-carved furniture from the Yamamoto Hiroshi collection

Saturday 11 October 2025 – Monday 12 January 2026

The opening of the ports at the end of the Edo period turned Yokohama into a meeting point for Eastern and Western cultures. Western culture and technology were introduced to Japan, while Japanese culture and traditional techniques spread overseas. Furthermore, the collision and fusion of these two worlds fostered the growth of new cultures. The word *rendezvous* also means 'a gathering point for fleets'. Yokohama can therefore be seen as the place where the fleets of Eastern and Western cultures gathered and confronted each other. Examples of this include Makuzu ware, which astonished the world; Yokohama-carved furniture, which blended Japanese and Western styles; and Yokohama photographs, which fused Western and Japanese techniques. These artefacts convey the spirit of people striving desperately to survive amidst a turbulent era.

Mr. YAMAMOTO Hiroshi, a Yokohama businessman who loved his hometown, collected cultural artefacts from Japan and abroad to convey its culture and history. The collection includes Makuzu ware, Yokohama photographs, carved furniture, Western musical instruments and much more, with over 1,000 items in total. This exhibition presents approximately 200 exceptional pieces from the collection. Yokohama is the city where East and West met. What will we perceive when we step into a space filled with distinctive objects born there? We hope you will experience the unique character and charm of Yokohama's history through the Yamamoto Collection.

Part 1: Makuzu Ware: Its Rise and Fall

During the Meiji era, Yokohama was a major export hub for ceramics. After the port opened, Western visitors to Yokohama began to encounter Japanese crafts such as ceramics and lacquerware. Furthermore, in the latter half of the 19th century, as Japanese decorative arts gained prominence at international expositions across Europe and America, a major trend known as *Japanism* or Japanese taste emerged. In response to this demand, merchants and artisans specializing in ceramics and other decorative arts for Western markets flocked to Yokohama, quickly transforming the city into a major export hub.

The leading figure among them was the first-generation Miyagawa Kōzan (1842–1916), creator of the world-famous Makuzu ware ceramics. Born and raised in Makuzagahara in Kyoto, Kōzan moved to Yokohama in the early Meiji period, establishing the Makuzu Kiln there. There, he produced diverse ceramics, including pieces featuring the early style of "high relief" with sculptural decoration, as well as "underglaze painting" utilising intricate glaze techniques. Makuzu ware gained high acclaim overseas, with many pieces being exported from Yokohama to foreign markets.

This exhibition presents around 50 pieces of Makuzu ware from a collection of over 500 items, showcasing the work of the first-generation Kōzan as well as pieces by the second and third generations. Makuzu ware is one of the artistic cultures nurtured by Yokohama, a pioneering port



Makuzu Ware, Pair of Vases with Crane Motif on Water's Edge in High Relief, c. 1876–1882, Collection of Miyaga Kōzan Makuzu Museum

city where Japanese tradition and techniques met Western culture.

1-1 Taka-ukibori (High Relief)

The first Miyagawa Kōzan adorned his vessels with exquisitely crafted, three-dimensional depictions of flowers, birds and small animals. This realistic, sculptural style, known as 'high relief', characterised the early works of Makuzu ware. From around the time of the Philadelphia International Exposition of 1876 (Meiji 9), he increasingly focused on sculpturally decorated ceramics featuring intricate carvings. This evolved from the idea of improving upon the popular *Satsuma Kinran-de* ware of the time, which featured gold paste and gold powder decorations on vessel surfaces. By reducing the amount of gold paste and powder, and by applying glazes that he had developed himself, he successfully established the unique 'high relief' style. At the World's Fair, vases and incense burners featuring realistic depictions of birds and flowers received widespread acclaim, and were awarded a bronze medal in the decorative arts category. This success launched the reputation of Makuzu ware overseas, with many pieces being exported from Yokohama.

1-2 Underglaze

Around 1882 (Meiji 15), production of high-relief pieces decreased dramatically. At that time, overseas preferences for ceramics shifted from richly decorated pieces to simpler, more refined designs. Additionally, Qing dynasty porcelain was becoming increasingly popular. Recognising these changes, the first Kōzan began exploring a new artistic style. He studied Qing dynasty porcelain, developed various coloured glazes and glazing techniques, and shifted his focus from pottery to porcelain. He employed the 'underglaze' technique in particular, applying transparent glaze over painted designs and firing them at high temperatures to vividly bring out the colours of the underglaze. His elegant works, featuring simple forms and refined colours, received high acclaim and came to characterise the Makuzu Kiln thereafter.



Makuzu Ware, Pair of Large Vases with Waterfowl on Tall Floating Lotus Design in High Relief, c. 1876–1882. Collection of Miyaga Kōzan Makuzu Museum



Celadon glazed Vase with Lotus Design in underglaze, c. 1901–1904. Collection of YAMAMOTO Hiroshi

1-3 Second and Third Generations

The second-generation Miyagawa Kōzan (also known as Hannosuke; 1859–1940) was the son of the elder brother of the first Kōzan, Chōhei. He was adopted following Chōhei's death. In 1870 (Meiji 3), he moved to Yokohama with the first-generation Kōzan. Having studied pottery techniques from a young age, he had become Kōzan's trusted assistant by the age of twenty. In July 1917 (Taisho 6), the year after the first-generation Kōzan passed away, Hannosuke announced his succession as the second-generation Kōzan. The spirit and techniques of the first generation were passed down to the second and then the third generation of Kōzans (1881–1945).

However, the Great Yokohama Air Raid on 29 May 1945 (Showa 20) claimed the lives of the third-generation Kōzan, his family and the artisans, forcing the Makuzu Kiln to close. Subsequently, the third-generation Kōzan's younger brother, Tomonosuke (1884–1964), adopted the name of the fourth-generation Kōzan. However, maintaining the Makuzu Kiln proved extremely difficult in an era of social exhaustion, bringing its history to a close.

1-4 Makuzu Kiln

In 1871 (Meiji 4), Umeda Hannosuke, a merchant who supplied the Satsuma domain, commissioned the first-generation Kōzan to produce ceramics for export in Yokohama. This led him to decide to relocate to Yokohama. With financial backing, he established the Makuzu Kiln on a 1,000-tsubo site (approximately 3,300 square metres) in Fujiyama-shita, Ōta Village (present-day Konoedai, Minami-ku, Yokohama City), in homage to his hometown of Kyoto. The major challenge in Yokohama was sourcing suitable clay. Kōzan travelled throughout the Kanto region and discovered high-quality deposits in places such as Nashimoto in Amagi, Izu and Hadano. From an early stage, the Makuzu Kiln produced both pottery and porcelain to a high standard.



Workshop Scene, Magic Lantern Slide, Meiji Period.
Collection of YAMAMOTO Hiroshi

Part 2: Yokohama Photographs and Foreign Trading Firms

2-1 Yokohama Photographs

Westerners who came to Japan, such as O. E. Freeman and F. Beato, first opened photography studios in the foreign settlement in Yokohama. Later, Japanese photographers such as Renjo Shimooka and Kinbei Kusakabe, who had learnt these techniques, began to work in the field. Visitors to Yokohama were captivated by the beautifully hand-coloured photographs of Japanese landscapes and customs. These photographs were printed on egg-tempera paper or glass lantern slides and then hand-coloured using Japanese pigments. As Yokohama was the centre of production, these photographs are also known as *Yokohama Photographs*. These photographs can be considered a form of souvenir art, resulting from the fusion of Western photographic techniques with traditional Japanese arts such as painting, lacquerware and maki-e.

The popularity of Yokohama photographs peaked around 1897 (Meiji 30), after which they gradually declined in favour of coloured picture postcards. Unlike individually developed photographs, postcards were mass-produced and affordable. However, the colouring was still done by hand by skilled artisans, continuing the tradition of Yokohama photographs and producing images of a

quality that could not be achieved through colour printing. Here, we present a selection from Mr. YAMAMOTO Hiroshi collection of over 500 Yokohama photographs and hand-coloured postcards.

Around 1900 (Meiji 33), when private production of picture postcards was permitted, postcards with photographs printed on the reverse side began to appear. The catalyst for the postcard boom was the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 (Meiji 37) and 1905. The boom was ignited when the Ministry of Communications issued commemorative Russo-Japanese War postcards. In Yokohama, postcards depicting the city's famous landmarks were mass-produced. Visitors from Japan and overseas bought them as souvenirs or to send greetings back home. Each card vividly captures the landscapes and daily lives of the era. After the designs were monochrome-printed, craft workers hand-coloured them, achieving a beauty that rivals colour printing.



Bund Yokohama, Hand-Coloured Photograph, c. 1895.
Collection of YAMAMOTO Hiroshi



See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil, Hand-Coloured Post Card, c. 1907–1917. Collection of YAMAMOTO Hiroshi

2-2 Foreign Trading Firms

When Yokohama Port opened as a foreign trade port in 1859 (Ansei 6), foreign settlements were established. The first was the Yamashita Settlement, which corresponded to the area now known as Yamashita-cho and Nihon-odori, followed by the Yamate Settlement. The lives and economic activities of foreigners were essentially confined within these settlements. Although the foreign settlement system was abolished in 1899 (Meiji 32) following revisions to the unequal treaties, many foreigners continued to live in the former settlements and trading posts from various countries operated there until the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 (Taisho 12).



Area near No.5 on the bund, Hand-Coloured Photograph, c. 1880–1902. Collection of YAMAMOTO Hiroshi

Topic 1: *Kanagawa Daiba* and *Katsu Kaishū*

Mr. Hiroshi Yamamoto serves as Chairman of the Kanagawa Daiba Regional Revitalisation Promotion Association. Kanagawa Daiba (battery) was constructed off the coast of Kanagawa-Suku in 1860 (Man'en 1). The battery fired celebratory salutes on occasions such as the birthdays of kings and presidents of nations that had signed treaties with Japan, as well as upon the arrival and departure of foreign consuls and ministers. Today, the battery's foundation stones remain at the

original site. Mr. Yamamoto has long been active in preserving these stones and educating citizens about the battery's history. His collection includes old photographs and postcards depicting the battery. Furthermore, as Katsu Kaishū designed Kanagawa Daiba, the collection also contains several portraits of him. The two photographs of the battery displayed here are colourised versions of black-and-white photos taken from the mid-Meiji period onwards, clearly showing the battery constructed in the sea. The former landscape no longer remains due to extensive land reclamation near battery. Consequently, these photographs serve as invaluable historical records, conveying the battery's lost appearance to the present day. The picture postcard depicts an embankment leading to a battery constructed in the ocean, and is thought to have been photographed around the late Meiji period.

Topic 2: Western Musical Instruments in Yokohama

Yokohama is recognised as the birthplace of Western musical instrument manufacturing in Japan. From the Meiji period through to the pre-war Showa era, Western instruments — primarily organs and pianos, known as *fūkin* or *yōkin* — were actively manufactured here. Initially, British and German instrument dealers were prominent, but later Japanese and Chinese individuals who had learnt the techniques also started manufacturing organs and pianos. This section introduces valuable materials and instruments related to the German instrument dealer J. G. Doering from the Yamamoto Collection.

Part 3: The World of Yokohama Wood-Carved Furniture

From the late 1880s (the mid-Meiji period) until the 1930s (the early Showa period), the city produced highly decorative, carved wooden furniture for export to Europe and America. This became renowned as *Yokohama furniture*. The furniture's defining feature was the intricate carving style known as *miya-bori* (temple carving), which was inspired by shrine and temple architecture. Motifs such as dragons, birds of prey, and scenes of nature were carved in relief onto chairs, tables, and chests of drawers to cater to Westerners' fascination with the Orient. Notable makers of Yokohama carved furniture include Masakichi Takamatsu, Takesaburō Tange, Jirōbē Numajima and Yoshijirō Shinohara. It is said that the *Miyajiboshi* carvers displayed their skills in their workshop. They were gradually losing their livelihoods due to the effects of the abolition of Buddhism and the destruction of Buddhist images following the Meiji Restoration. As Yokohama woodcarving was primarily intended for export, few pieces remain in Japan. The pieces introduced here are examples of Yokohama-carved furniture that have returned home from Britain.



Iris Design Chair, Yokohama Wood-Carved Furniture, c. 1890–early 1920s. Collection of YAMAMOTO Hiroshi

Topic 3: Yokohama Shibayama Lacquerware

Yokohama Shibayama lacquerware originated in Shibayama lacquerware, which was produced in Shibayama Village (now part of Shibayama Town in the Sanbu District of Chiba Prefecture) in the Shimōsa Province during the Edo period for sale in Edo (present-day Tokyo). Following the opening of the port of Yokohama in the late Edo period, Shibayama lacquerware attracted the attention of Western visitors to Japan. Many artisans relocated to Yokohama, where they produced goods tailored to Western tastes, giving rise to Yokohama Shibayama Lacquerware. Products ranged from small items such as trays, writing boxes and photo albums, to large pieces of furniture like folding screens, chests of drawers and display cabinets. The splendid style, employing various techniques

such as lacquer, *maki-e* (painting with gold and silver powder) and *raden* (mother-of-pearl inlay) to decorate materials like ivory, shell, and coral, captivated the hearts of Westerners.

The production of Yokohama Shibayama lacquerware required artisans with specialised skills for each stage, as it employed a variety of techniques. These included craftsmen such as the *kiji-shi* (woodworker), who crafted the wooden base; the *nuri-shi* (lacquerer), who applied lacquer to the base; the *makie-shi* (makie artist), who applied *maki-e*; the *shibayama-shi* (Shibayama craftsman), who created the intricate Shibayama inlay work; and the *horikomi-shi* (carver), who fitted the inlay into the wood.



Flower and Bird Pattern Decorative Shelf, Yokohama Shibayama Lacquerware, Meiji period.
Collection of YAMAMOTO Hiroshi

Topic 4: Yokohama Yamate, the former foreign settlement

Due to political instability in the late Edo period, British and French troops were stationed in the area now known as Mount France and Mount America Park from 1863 (Bunkyo 3). Subsequently, in 1867 (Keio 3), the Yamate district was formally incorporated as a foreign settlement and gradually developed into a residential area. Following the complete withdrawal of the British and French forces in 1875 (Meiji 8), numerous residences were constructed. While the Yamashita settlement developed into a commercial area lined with shops, banks, hotels and trading houses, the Yamate settlement evolved into a residential and cultural-educational area featuring homes, schools, hospitals, churches and parks.

Part 4: Makuzu Ware: Kaleidoscope

From the founding of the Makuzu kiln by the first-generation Kozan in 1871 (Meiji 4) to the third-generation Kozan in 1945 (Showa 20), a wide variety of works were produced over more than seventy years. These include highly embossed vases featuring fierce-eyed hawks, elegant underglaze-painted incense burners and a vase in the *Ko-iga* style that seems to echo the sound of cicadas. The charm extends even further to playful *tanuki* (raccoon dog) figurines and coffee cups.



Celadon-Glazed Ashtray, Miyagawa Kōzan III?
Collection of Miyaga Kōzan Makuzu Museum

Incense Burner with gilded beckoning cat design, said to bring good fortune., c. 1876–1882
Collection of YAMAMOTO Hiroshi



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Hours 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Admission until 4:30 p.m.) Closed on Monday. For more details →

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