

## Netsuke



*Frog on a lily pad, by British carver Michael Webb.*



*A rare boar's tooth netsuke, by Kokusai.*



*Reclining tiger, by eighteenth century master Tomotada.*



*Manju shaped netsuke with portrait of the Buddha, by Tokoku.*



*Black woodpecker, by twentieth century carver Masatoshi.*



*Daruma reading a love story, by So School master Morita Soko.*



*A rotting pear, by Bazan.*



*Two-piece netsuke depicting a puppeteer, by So School carver Gyokuso.*

## Famous Japanese Netsuke Collection acquired by the World Museum Liverpool

**A stunning collection of intricately carved Japanese netsuke, which were designed to function as kimono sash toggles will go on public display for the first time at the World Museum Liverpool on 23rd January 2009. The 128 miniature treasures were amassed by leading Swedish collector Jonas G Gadelius. (1926-2003) Jonas' widow Gabita donated the netsuke, about half his total collection, to the World Museum Liverpool which has a renowned collection of Japanese art. Emma Martin, curator of Asian collections, says: "This very generous donation will enrich and enhance our existing Japanese collections. The netsuke feature fascinating details and are supreme examples of the carvers' art."**

Netsuke were originally very simple and practical but eventually became more and more elaborate. The eighteenth and nineteenth century marked the zenith of netsuke art and they are still carved today. Mostly created from ivory and wood, they evoke the ancient cultural traditions of Japan. Each one tells a story and reflects the influences and interests of the person who originally wore it. Early examples may depict myths and legends while others relate to the seasons and the signs of the zodiac. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many carvers started to reflect everyday life with their subjects and this continues today. There are modern ones depicting snails crawling on soft drinks cans.

Born in Tokyo, Jonas was a member of the well-known Swedish steel manufacturing family. He grew up in Japan, where his family had business interests, and later moved to London. Emma adds: "Jonas visited the World Museum stores and was very impressed by what he saw, particularly our existing netsuke collection. He was given his first netsuke as a present in the 1950s. It depicted little fish but turned out to be a clever fake. This put Jonas off collecting for a while but he started around 1970. He focused on netsuke from all periods, with a particular love for the So School. He became very knowledgeable and was the most important UK collector at the time of his death." Jonas' collection was documented

and catalogued before it was donated in 2007. A custom-built case has been created to house examples from the collection. They will be changed regularly. Star exhibits include a beautiful tiger carved by eighteenth century master Tomotada, who was famous for this subject. A skilfully-carved snail on reishi (mushroom) made from umoregi, fossilised wood, is by eighteenth century carver Tomiharu. There are several examples of the work of Morita Soko (1879-1942), a famed carver of the So School, and beautiful figures by twentieth century carver Masatoshi. The So School are a great highlight of the collection, with netsuke by all recorded So School carvers represented in the collection.

Jonas' interest in contemporary netsuke stretch far beyond Japan and British carvers are well represented with pieces by Jack Coutu, Michael Birch and Michael Webb. The nineteenth century carver Bazan is represented by his speciality, rotting pears with insects inside, while there are several netsuke by well known carver Kokusai including a rare boar tooth netsuke. Mitsuhiro (1810-1875), was renowned for his beautiful, realistic carvings including sea slugs and other creatures.

World Museum Liverpool  
William Brown Street, Liverpool.

Admission FREE

Open 10am-5pm every day.

Information 0151 478 4393.

Website [www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)



19thC Japanese ivory netsuke carved as Kinko reading as he rides a giant carp through the waves, 5.5cm high. *Cheffins, Cambridge. Apr 04. HP: £1,700. ABP: £1,999.*



Ivory netsuke, kylin with small ball in mouth, holding larger ball, 2in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 05. HP: £1,600. ABP: £1,882.*



Toyomasa, mid 19thC, fine and rare Tamba School wood netsuke of sealife, incl. carp and crayfish, details boldly carved, good polish, 5.5cm signed Toyomasa, carved on an oval. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 04. HP: £1,500. ABP: £1,764.*



Masanao, late 18thC ivory netsuke carved as a boar reclining on a bed of leaves, coiling around the larger of the himotoshi, signed on red coral tablet, 5.5cm wide. *Cheffins, Cambridge. Apr 04. HP: £1,300. ABP: £1,529.*



Oriental carved hardwood Netsuke in the form of a rabbit, inset with stone eyes, carved character mark to base, 3.5cm high. *Eastbourne Auction Rooms, Sussex. Dec 05. HP: £1,300. ABP: £1,529.*



Japanese ivory netsuke, 18thC, figure of a Dutchman with a curly wig under his tasselled, wide brimmed hat, dressed in a long coat and breeches, signed on back leg, 7.5cm *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Feb 05. HP: £1,050. ABP: £1,235.*



Wood netsuke of two toads, Yamada School, 19thC, signed Masakatsu, signature to base, 5cm. *Henry Adams, Chichester. Sep 02. HP: £950. ABP: £1,117.*



Ivory netsuke, Meiji, two rats on an engraved fan, signed, (one eye missing) 2in long. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 03. HP: £750. ABP: £882.*



Ivory netsuke of a mouse, c1900, inlaid eyes eating a gourd, 3cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £540. ABP: £635.*



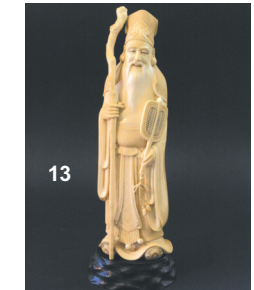
Japanese ivory netsuke, carved as a warrior wrestling an Oni, signed, 1.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 08. HP: £500. ABP: £588.*



Ivory manju netsuke, late 19thC, by Gyokuhosai, group of seals, undersides engraved with names and red-stained, surmounted by a shi-shi, fungus, hare and a loose ring, central seal with engraved lotus, engraved Gyokuhosai, 4cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £440. ABP: £517.*



19thC carved wood netsuke of a recumbant cow, 6cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 04. HP: £400. ABP: £470.*



Japanese carved ivory figure of a sage, Meiji period, holding a staff and fan, a netsuke and intro carved to his back, 10.5in, on wood plinth. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jun 05. HP: £400. ABP: £470.*



Amusing ivory netsuke, last quarter 19thC, of Fukurokoju and Hotei engaging in a bout of sumo wrestling, 4cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £400. ABP: £470.*



Japanese carved wood netsuke, seated scribe, signed, 3.5cm high, and one other wooden netsuke of a traveller giving alms. (2) *Rosebery's, London. Feb 06. HP: £360. ABP: £423.*



Japanese carved ivory netsuke, as an Oni wearing elaborate costume crouched with an adze in his hand, oval base, signed, 4.5cm high. *Wintertons Ltd, Uttoxeter. Mar 06. HP: £360. ABP: £423.*



Ivory netsuke, Meiji period, a resting man, chimpanzee climbing about his back, 2in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jun 06. HP: £360. ABP: £423.*



Japanese ivory okimono, group of 2 old men and two children, signature to base, 20cm high, and a Japanese ivory okimono of 3 frightened samurai warriors, signature to back, 13cm high, and a Japanese ivory netsuke of an emaciated man with a toad on his shoulders, 7cm high. (3) *Rosebery's, London. Dec 05. HP: £340. ABP: £399.*



19thC Japanese carved ivory netsuke, modelled as 6 figures wrestling over a stick, signed, 1.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 08. HP: £340. ABP: £399.*



Erotic ivory netsuke, late 19thC, by Gyokuhosai in the form of Okame giggling as she rests her hand on a giant phallus bedecked with festival ribbons, details lightly coloured, engraved black Gyokuhosai and red seal, 3.8cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £310. ABP: £364.*



Ivory netsuke, Meiji, artisan grinder; his kimono with engraved detail, signed, 1in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 03. HP: £300. ABP: £352.*



Eight ivory netsuke, 19thC. (8) *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £300. ABP: £352.*



Japanese carved wood netsuke as a trio of comical masks, 4.5cm long, another of a man screaming and one other. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Dec 05. HP: £300. ABP: £352.*



Japanese carved ivory netsuke, dragon faced warrior holding a sword, on a dome with a snake coiled round, base with 2 character mark, 4.5cm high. *Rosebery's, London. Sep 04. HP: £280. ABP: £329.*



Two Japanese hardwood netsuke, carved as a rat and two gourds. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 04. HP: £260. ABP: £305.*



Ivory manju netsuke, last quarter 19thC, by Kosai Moritoshi, well carved in low relief with a woman with a hawk and a running samurai, engraved Kosai, 4.3cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £260. ABP: £305.*

## Netsuke

### Selection of Netsuke from our Database at [www.antiques-info.co.uk](http://www.antiques-info.co.uk)



**27**  
Ivory netsuke, Meiji, 3 mythological characters and shishi, signed, 2in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 03. HP: £240. ABP: £282.*



**28**  
Stag antler manju netsuke, 19thC, pierced/carved with the moon framed by a tree in leaf and flowers, 4cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £220. ABP: £258.*



**29**  
Ivory netsuke, Meiji, father and son at play, father wearing engraved kimono, signed, 1.25in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 03. HP: £200. ABP: £235.*



**30**  
Japanese ivory netsuke, a rat on a parasol, 3.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 06. HP: £200. ABP: £235.*



**31**  
Ivory manju netsuke, first half 19thC, box form carved all over with wave scrolls, lid with a shi-shi, its hair engraved and with attractive wear; 3.5cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £200. ABP: £235.*



**32**  
Japanese carved ivory netsuke as an elder, enlarged head, and a seated buddha surmounted by a toad, 5cm high. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Dec 05. HP: £200. ABP: £235.*



**33**  
Japanese ivory netsuke carved as a rat on a skull, 1.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jun 03. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*



**34**  
Ivory netsuke, Meiji, two playful boys, one seated upon the other's back, signed, 1.75in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 03. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*



**35**  
Ivory manju netsuke, 19thC, pierced, carved with sea life incl. squid, fish, shells and coral, deep sepia stain, drilled?, 4cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*



**36**  
Ivory converted seal netsuke, 18thC, Chinese sennin resting against a tiger, underside with seal characters, whole with attractive wear, 4cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*



**37**  
Wood netsuke, mid 19thC, boy seated with a gourd, wood of good colour; signs of wear, 4cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*



**38**  
Japanese wooden netsuke carved as a seated puppy, 2.7cm high. *Rosebery's, London. Jan 06. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*



**39**  
Japanese ivory netsuke carved with a Buddha and two small figures 1.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jun 03. HP: £170. ABP: £199.*



**40**  
Carved ivory netsuke as a drummer, 3cm high approx, and another of a seated man. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Dec 05. HP: £160. ABP: £188.*



**41**  
Ivory netsuke, late 19thC, two small boys squabbling, one foot forming the himotoshi, 4cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £150. ABP: £176.*



**42**  
Ivory netsuke, late 19thC, by Hoko, raging dragon curled over on itself, engraved Hoko, 4.3cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £150. ABP: £176.*



**43**  
Amusing stag antler netsuke, probably c1800, shi-shi rolling on its back on a rock, 4.5cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £150. ABP: £176.*



**44**  
Wood netsuke, 19thC, of a grimacing Hotei mask, eyes pierced, signed Mitsuhiro saku, 4.2cm, possi. by, or influenced by, Ohara Mitsuhiro (1810-1875) an Osaka School carver. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £150. ABP: £176.*



**45**  
Wood netsuke, 19thC, wolf with jaws agape and inlaid ivory eyes salivating over a human skull, 4.5cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £150. ABP: £176.*



**46**  
Japanese ivory netsuke carved with two toads seated on a mushroom, signed, 3cm high. *Rosebery's, London. Jan 06. HP: £140. ABP: £164.*



**47**  
Walrus ivory erotic netsuke, mid 19thC, woman struggling under the weight of a huge, suggestively-formed fungus roped to her back, one foot restored, 4.5cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £130. ABP: £152.*



**48**  
Ivory netsuke carved as an eagle attacking a dragon, signed, 1.25in high. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 07. HP: £130. ABP: £152.*



**49**  
Two Japanese ivory netsuke, both as immortals, one carrying a fish on his back, the other with a sack, one signed. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 08. HP: £130. ABP: £152.*



**50**  
Ivory netsuke, 19thC of an oni with a giant pouch and tonkotsu on his back, chip, and a skeleton beating a skull, damaged, 4cm and 5cm. (2) *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £120. ABP: £141.*



**51**  
Two Japanese netsuke, each carved from a walnut with a face emerging from the outer skin, 1.75in high, one signed. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Apr 08. HP: £120. ABP: £141.*



**52**  
Amber netsuke carved as a cat, 1.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Feb 01. HP: £110. ABP: £129.*



**53**  
Early 20thC Japanese ivory netsuke carved as a noh mask, 2in. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £110. ABP: £129.*



**54**  
Ivory netsuke, c1900, of a bearded immortal seated with a fan, signed, 3.5cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £110. ABP: £129.*



**55**  
Ivory netsuke, first half 19thC, immortal with a gourd at his shoulder, wearing stylised leaf clothes, damaged, 6.2cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £110. ABP: £129.*



**56**  
Three ivory figures, 18th/19thC, a netsuke of a rakkon on a rock, Buddha and a Jurogin and boy, some damage, 4cm. (3) *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £110. ABP: £129.*

Prices quoted are actual hammer prices (HP) and the Approximate Buyer's Price. (ABP) Includes an average premium of 15% + VAT.



**57**  
Three ivory netsuke, Meiji, seated shishi, 1.25in, fisherman with pipe, 1.5in (rod missing) and seated lady, 1.25in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 03. HP: £100. ABP: £117.*



**58**  
Ivory netsuke of a hare and a leveret, carved in crouching position, signed, 1.75 in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jun 03. HP: £100. ABP: £117.*



**59**  
Ivory netsuke of Hotei, mid 19thC, grinning god with protruding stomach, shouldering a sack, toe chipped, 6cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £100. ABP: £117.*



**60**  
Ivory netsuke, late 19thC, in the form of a demon face wearing a priest's cap, chip, 5.2cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £100. ABP: £117.*



**61**  
Japanese ivory netsuke, carved as a monkey with hatching eagle egg, 1.75in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Sep 04. HP: £95. ABP: £111. ec 04. HP: £90. ABP: £105.*



**62**  
Two ivory netsuke, 19thC, Shoki on a wicker basket and an oni, 3.5cm to 4.2cm. (2) *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £90. ABP: £105.*



**63**  
Japanese ivory netsuke as a dog and puppy, 4cm high, another model of a fruit and another of a fish. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Dec 05. HP: £90. ABP: £105.*



**64**  
Japanese carved ivory okimono as an elder, one hand raised, wearing a netsuke and intro to his belt, 13cm high. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Dec 05. HP: £85. ABP: £99.*



**65**  
Japanese netsuke of a crouching sumo wrestler, signed, 4.5cm high. *Rosebery's, London. Aug 06. HP: £80. ABP: £94.*



**66**  
Japanese stag antler netsuke, 18th/19thC, recumbent water buffalo, 6.2cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Sep 07. HP: £70. ABP: £82.*



**67**  
Early 20thC carved ivory netsuke, figure with revolving sad/happy faces, 2 character signature, 1.75in. *Diamond Mills & Co, Felixstowe. Mar 06. HP: £60. ABP: £70.*



**68**  
Ivory netsuke depicting two standing male figures, 5.8cm high. *Rosebery's, London. Oct 06. HP: £60. ABP: £70.*



**69**  
Japanese netsuke carved as a rat crawling out of a hole, stylised floral decoration, signed Japanese characters, 2.25in long. *Fellows & Sons, Hockley, Birmingham. Oct 03. HP: £55. ABP: £64.*



**70**  
Japanese carved ivory netsuke, depicting two figures in an erotic embrace, length, 5cm. *Rosebery's, London. Oct 06. HP: £55. ABP: £64.*



**71**  
Japanese ivory netsuke, boy holding a large gourd on his back, polychrome etched decoration, 2 character signature, with another netsuke of a boy, largest 1.75in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 08. HP: £50. ABP: £58.*



**72**  
Japanese ivory netsuke carved as half length figure of an elder holding a length of parchment, 1.25in high. *Fellows & Sons, Hockley, Birmingham. Oct 03. HP: £45. ABP: £52.*



**73**  
Two Japanese ivory netsuke, c1860, both damaged, and a crocodile, 5.2cm to 12cm. (3) *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Sep 07. HP: £45. ABP: £52.*



**74**  
Set of Japanese netsukes as the 3 wise monkeys, another netsuke modelled as a rabbit and another of 2 mice seated on a fruit. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Dec 05. HP: £40. ABP: £47.*



**75**  
Ivory netsuke modelled as a water buffalo, signed to rump, 5cm high, a model of an angel fish and another of a dragon. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Dec 05. HP: £40. ABP: £47.*



**76**  
Signed mammoth ivory netsuke, approx 2in, depicting man with chicken. *A F Brock & Co Ltd, Stockport. Aug 07. HP: £40. ABP: £47.*



**77**  
Mammoth ivory netsukes, in form of oriental tradesmen, all signed, all modern. (4) *A F Brock & Co Ltd, Stockport. Aug 05. HP: £30. ABP: £35.*



**78**  
Oriental erotic fruitwood netsuke's, all signed. (4) *A F Brock & Co Ltd, Stockport. Nov 05. HP: £30. ABP: £35.*



**79**  
Signed bone netsukes, approx 45mm & 50mm, in form of sages. (2) *A F Brock & Co Ltd, Stockport. May 08. HP: £30. ABP: £35.*



**80**  
Japanese carved bone netsuke of a rodent, 3.2cm high. *Rosebery's, London. Aug 06. HP: £25. ABP: £29.*



**81**  
Carved wooden netsuke's, a pair of hippopotamus, a monkey, an owl & a pair of sumo wrestlers, all signed. (4) *A F Brock & Co Ltd, Stockport. Oct 06. HP: £25. ABP: £29.*



**82**  
Japanese ivory netsuke carved as a recumbent ram, signed, 2.6cm high. *Rosebery's, London. Jan 06. HP: £20. ABP: £23.*



**83**  
Japanese carved netsuke of an octopus clutching a shell, signed, length 4.5cm. *Rosebery's, London. Aug 06. HP: £20. ABP: £23.*



**84**  
Boxwood netsukes/okimono, carved as a rat, rabbit, snake and kittens in basket, all modern. (4) *A F Brock & Co Ltd, Stockport. Aug 05. HP: £15. ABP: £17.*