

## **Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art**

The Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art has a collection of over 4,000 pieces that exemplify the sophistication and diversity of Ishikawa arts and crafts and demonstrate the essential role they have played in the culture and history of Japan. The collection includes a National Treasure on permanent display, six Important Cultural Properties, and many works by the prefecture's esteemed Holders of Important Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The museum is one of the oldest regional art museums in the country. It was founded in 1959 at a smaller facility on the edge of Kenrokuen Garden. In the late 1970s, the prefecture began making plans for a new museum that could hold larger-scale exhibitions and would be better equipped to maintain the historical items in its collection. The current building opened in 1983 at the heart of Kanazawa's greenery-rich cultural district.

The museum's collection is comparatively large and includes a significant number of important pieces from Ishikawa's long history as a center of traditional arts and crafts. During the Edo period (1603–1867), the ruling Maeda family brought master artisans to the area and fostered the establishment of cutting-edge workshops. While some of the resulting works circulated to other parts of the country, many stayed in the region and were passed down through local families. During World War II, Kanazawa was spared the large-scale destruction of other major cities. As a result, many private collections survived those tumultuous years and were later donated to the museum.

Between the museum's permanent and temporary exhibits, around 250 pieces are on display at any given time. These include works that showcase the craft techniques and styles for which Ishikawa is famous—Kutani ware, Kaga *yūzen* textiles, and gold-decorated lacquerware—as well as finely crafted artifacts of regional history, such as decorative swords and horse tack, a ceremonial palanquin, and Buddhist sutras. The collection also includes works that demonstrate local participation in Japan's broader artistic spheres: tea ceremony implements, noh masks and costumes, and calligraphy tools. Modern artworks, such as oil paintings and photography by contemporary Ishikawa artists, show how techniques and aesthetics continue to evolve.

The museum continues to acquire both historical and recent works related to local arts

and crafts traditions, aiming to play a core role in their preservation. It also offers local residents and visitors alike a welcoming place to learn about the cultural heritage of Ishikawa.