



For Immediate Release
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Perpetuating Tradition: Two International Artist Residencies on Japanese Restoration Arts to Open in Nara

A Unique Opportunity to Learn Traditional *Urushi*-based *Kintsugi* or *Hyogu* Paper Mounting in an Immersive Historic Setting

NARA, JAPAN – Toma House Artist-in-Residence announces that from September 2025, two new **artist-in-residence programs** focusing on ***hyogu* (mounting and framing of paper-based artworks)** and ***kintsugi* (literally “golden joinery,” the art of repairing pottery)** will begin. Each program will welcome up to 4 participants to experience these unique opportunities to explore the world of traditional Japanese art in the historic setting of **Toma House AIR** – the former ancestral residence of a Shinto priest family built in the 18th century in Nara, Japan. Additionally, Toma House AIR announces a special reduced rate for the opening sessions to kick off these new programs. More details and fee information can be found in the downloadable Program Guidelines.

Both programs are designed for those looking for a rigorous grounding in the artistry and practicalities of *hyogu* and *kintsugi*, led by a team of artisans, experts, and specialists. The participants can choose to learn either ***hyogu***, the mounting and framing of paper-based artworks, or ***kintsugi***, the traditional art form to repair broken pottery with natural *urushi* lacquer and gold. These residency programs will foster immersive cultural exchanges and address worldwide efforts on the importance of preserving and passing down traditional arts and crafts.

They also support **heritage tourism development** by offering **high-value cultural experiences** as a countermeasure to **over-tourism**. Additionally, this is an initiative commissioned by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan.

Residency Programs Overview

The ***Hyogu* - Art of Paper Mounting and Framing** program is Japan’s first-ever *hyōgu* focused program conducted in English. Participants will spend 4 weeks living in **Toma House AIR**, the historic ancestral home of a Shinto priest family in Nara, where they will learn the historical context, structural elements, and aesthetics integral to the artistry of *hyogu*. This program also highlights the opportunity to practice mounting ***kakejiku*** (hanging scrolls) under the guidance of an expert Japanese mounter.

The program seeks to impart the high skill and knowledge-centric threshold to learning *hyogu* for people from overseas, such as international artists who wish to incorporate mounting into their artistic practices, artisans who aim to master the authentic *hyogu* mounting techniques from Japan, and anyone interested in exploring the art of *hyogu*.

In the ***Kintsugi* Residency Program**, participants will stay 4 weeks in Toma House AIR. A British artist specializing in *kintsugi* and *urushi* lacquer art will guide the participants through the fundamental processes of

kintsugi, encouraging them to approach the method through each individual's own unique perspective while honoring the traditions and techniques of the past.

Kintsugi, having been invented in Japan in the 15th-century, has garnered worldwide attention for its philosophy of embracing and celebrating the **beauty of imperfection**, and its concept of restoring broken pottery with natural *urushi* lacquer resonates with modern zero-waste principles of **reusing and upcycling** for a more sustainable life.

The residency programs are designed and overlooked by experienced artisans, professionals, and course leaders, balanced with lectures, workshops, projects, field trips to meet local artisans and practitioners, along with free time to explore Nara and the surrounding areas. Both programs include a **handbook** dedicated to the program with a valuable set of **artisan-selected tools and materials** for participants to use during and after the program to employ in their future practices.

Support & Endorsement from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan

This project is commissioned by the **Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan**, and aims to enhance efforts to **preserve traditional artisanship** while **increasing accessibility to learning traditional Japanese techniques** for the international community. The residency programs seek to foster global engagement with traditional artistry while promoting **high-value cultural tourism**.

The project advisor, professor **Kiyoshi Tatsumi** from Osaka Seikei University, highlights that:

"The prospects of this project's effects include the formation of new demand for the necessary tools and materials for maintaining traditional skills from abroad and growing the number of people involved with them."

Residency Program Details

Both programs will run for two sessions, with the **Hyōgu** programs starting in late September and early November 2025, and the **Kintsugi** programs taking place in October and November 2025. Each program is limited to four participants per session to ensure an intimate and engaging experience.

The *Hyōgu* residency program is supervised by **SEIKADOU Co., Ltd.**, a century-old mounting studio that serves as the primary instructor in *kakejiku* mounting techniques. The program features a special guest lecture by **Bunkazaihozon Co., Ltd.**, one of only ten studios in Japan authorized to restore national treasures.

The **Kintsugi** residency program is led by **Clementine Nuttall**, a Tokyo-based British artist with more than a decade of experience in *kintsugi* and *urushi* lacquer art.

Application for the residency programs begins in **February 2025**. Early application is highly recommended due to **competitive selection** and **limited program capacity**.

Visit Toma House AIR's official website for **more details and to sign up**:

<https://tomaunrestored.com/artistresidency/>

New *Kintsugi* Experience Workshop in Nara

For international visitors who are interested in creating a unique *kintsugi* souvenir of their own, a 90-minute beginner-friendly *Kintsugi* Experience Workshop will be launched from May 2025. Participants will learn the basics of *kintsugi* and make their own *kintsugi* artwork in the studio of Toma House AIR, a former Shinto priest

family residence built in the 18th century and a registered cultural property in Nara.

This workshop is open to individuals and small groups upon reservation and is available with four language options: English, Japanese, Mandarin, and Italian.

For more information and to reserve Toma House AIR's **Kintsugi Experience Workshop**:

<https://tomaunrestored.com/artistresidency/kintsugi-workshop/>



About Toma House AIR

Toma House AIR is run by **Takabatake Trust**. The story begins in 2017 when the ancestral residence of a priest family from the *Kasugataisha* shrine UNESCO World Heritage Site originally built in the 18th century was on the verge of collapse after years of laying vacant. The Trust was founded to protect and revitalize the site through government funding, crowdfunding, and community engagement. Alongside the ongoing restorations, Takabatake Trust is active in organizing art exhibitions, artist residencies, workshops, and lectures. These initiatives celebrate history with art and innovation, transforming Toma House AIR into a vibrant hub for contemporary artistic practice while introducing traditional Japanese arts to people from around the globe.

By fostering preservation and innovation, Takabatake Trust ensures that Japanese arts and crafts remain relevant and accessible to artists everywhere and to audiences who value art, history, and culture. By preserving the only remaining priest family's residence in the neighborhood, Takabatake Trust embodies its mission to safeguard and revitalize Japan's artistic heritage in the center of Nara.

Media Contact

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Website: <https://tomaunrestored.com/artistresidency/>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFsYQQ10jaA>



Agency for Cultural Affairs,
Government of Japan



TOMA HOUSE
Artist-in-Residence