



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



City of Crafts
and Folk Art
KANAZAWA

• Member of the
• UNESCO Creative Cities
• Network since 2009

10 Things to know about

KANAZAWA UNESCO City of Crafts and Folk Art

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Profile of Kanazawa

Kanazawa is a typical Japanese city of traditional crafts, with a population of 450,000. Founded as a castle town in 1583, the city has been peaceful ever since, having managed to avoid serious natural disasters and wartime bomb attacks. In Kanazawa, many kinds of crafts have been developed and preserved along with the city's distinctive samurai culture and lifestyle.

Traditional crafts in Kanazawa

Twenty-two kinds of traditional crafts, including Kanazawa gold leaf, Kaga-yuzen silk dyeing, Kanazawa lacquerware and Kutani ceramics, are produced in Kanazawa. Craft artists live near the ruins of Kanazawa Castle, and the number of important intangible cultural properties (including living national treasures) in the field of traditional arts and crafts in relation to the total population of the city is the largest in Japan.

Kanazawa College of Art

Founded in 1946, this college was established by Kanazawa City to train people in crafts such as lacquerware, dyeing and ceramics. The college has collaborated with local industries, and has been involved in international contributions through crafts.

Kanazawa Utatsuyama Craft Workshop

This workshop was established in 1989. Here, trainees on a scholarship learn the techniques of ceramics, lacquering and dyeing for a period of three years. Even after completion of training in the workshops, graduates receive support in the form of a studio to work in or a shop in which to sell their products.

The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art

This museum, which was constructed for the purpose of integrating local traditional arts and performing arts with modern art, was opened in 2004 and houses works of art that have been produced since 1980, as well as holding open workshops, to which well-known artists are invited. The museum was designed by the world-famous architects Kazuyo Sejima and Ryuei Nishizawa.

Training of the next generation of traditional artisans

Kanazawa City has established the Fund for Training in Traditional Techniques and Arts in order to preserve traditional techniques and train successors in various fields, and provides scholarships to trainees, and subsidies to instructors who pass on their professional expertise and techniques.

Collaboration of industry and government

In 1989, industry and government collaborated to launch the Kanazawa Crafts Competition, which was developed into the World Crafts Competition in Kanazawa in 1999. Moreover, World Crafts Forum in Kanazawa started in 2003 for the purpose of promoting crafts in Kanazawa from a global perspective.

These activities have been contributing to the application of new techniques and the development of innovative products and designs, and provided the impetus for the planning of Kanazawa Life & Fashion Week.

Development of innovative traditional crafts

Kanazawa City has been providing subsidies to artists in the fields of Kaga-yuzen silk dyeing, Kanazawa Kutani ceramics, and Kanazawa lacquerware to develop new products and to expand to new markets.

World Creative City Forum

The Committee for the Promotion of Kanazawa as a Creative City, organized by Kanazawa City and craft and economic organizations, held the World Creative City Forum 2008 in Kanazawa, to which it invited members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. The second World Creative City Forum in Kanazawa is scheduled to be held on October 16th, 2009.

Development of Creative Tourism

As part of Kanazawa's creative tourism, artists' workshops in the city have been turned into craft museums, and a "Craft Tourism" event, involving a tour of workshops and art exhibits, is to be held on October 17, 2009.