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DE NANTES

EXHIBITION

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HOKUSAI

(1760-1849), MASTERPIECES FROM THE HOKUSAI-KAN MUSEUM IN OBUSE



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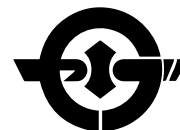
HOKUSAI

(1760-1849), MASTERPIECES FROM THE HOKUSAI-KAN MUSEUM IN OBUSE

EXHIBITION

28 June to 7 September, 2025

ORGANIZATION AND PARTNERS



Ambassade du Japon
en France

在フランス日本国大使館

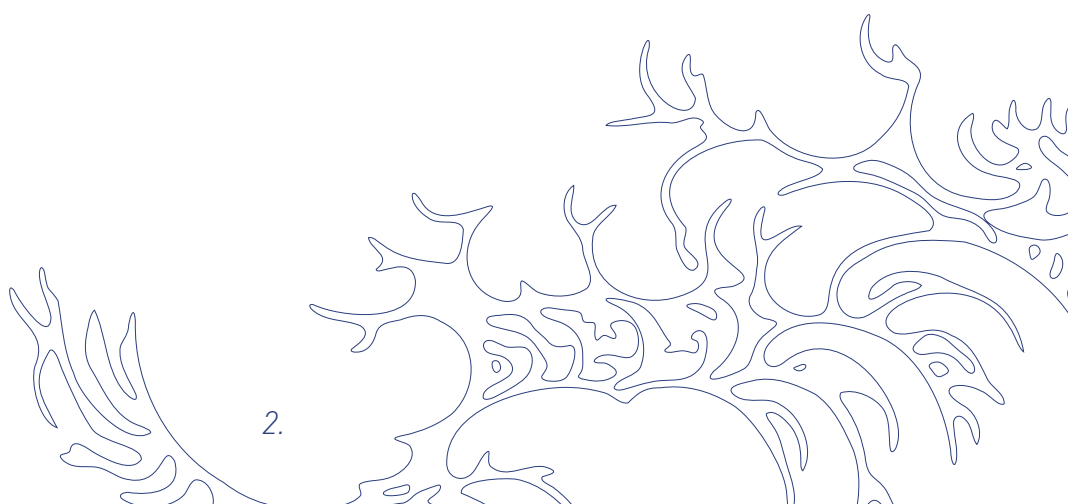


CURATORS (FRANCE)

Bertrand Guillet, Director of the Nantes History Museum

CURATORS (JAPAN)

Toshinobu Yasumura, Director of the Hokusai-kan Museum;
Miyuki Arai, Curator at the Hokusai-kan Museum



Featuring over one hundred and sixty artworks, including some forty or so paintings. Most of the works on loan have never left Japan.

Building on its ties with Osaka Castle, the musée d'histoire de Nantes regularly organizes Japanese-themed events open to the public. Following the major exhibition dedicated to samurai in 2014, and the presentation in 2021 of Toshihiro Hamano's masterpiece recounting the life of Shōtoku Taishi, the next chapter is an exhibition devoted to **Katsushika Hokusai**, in partnership with the Hokusai-kan Museum, located in Obuse, outside Nagano, in the Japanese Alps.

Hokusai visited Obuse four times towards the end of his life, between 1842 and 1848, and produced several important works there: the decorations of the ceilings of the parade floats for the Higashimachi and Kanmachi districts with dragon, phoenix, and wave motifs, and the spectacular phoenix-decorated ceiling of the Ganshō-in Buddhist temple.

Today, the Hokusai-kan Museum, one of several major museums dedicated to the painter Katsushika Hokusai, is home to several hundred works by the great Japanese master.

This exhibition attempts to provide an insight into the artist and the genesis of his work, not by means of a biography, as is often the case, but by developing the themes favoured by this prolific artist. These include his relationship with nature, the question of water and waves, his approach to landscape and particularly Mount Fuji—one of the artist's preferred subjects throughout his life—but also **the traditional theme of beautiful women and kabuki actors from the Edo period**. Hokusai's stays in Obuse are another theme of the exhibition, in connection with the collaboration between the two museums.

If Hokusai's art is best known to us through his engravings as part of the *ukiyo-e* movement ("images of the floating world"), the exhibition also presents a significant number of original works, drawings and paintings, some of which are shown for the first time in the West.

TICKET OFFICE

*Tickets for the Hokusai exhibition and guided tours will be on sale from 10am on **5 May 2025** onwards.*

Only holders of tickets with a specific time slot will be guaranteed access to the exhibition.

EXCEPTIONAL OPENING

*In order to allow as many visitors as possible to benefit from the Hokusai exhibition, the museum will be open on **Mondays 30 June and 1 September from 10am to 6pm**, in addition to its regular opening hours.*



Katsushika Hokusai's The Great Wave is an iconic image, famous the world over. Appearing on the one thousand yen note and Japanese passports, it also features in numerous commercial media and even has its own emoji! But how much do we really know about its creator: a brilliant, eccentric, and mischievous artist who went by more than thirty different names, moved ninety-three times throughout his life, and is now the most famous Japanese painter in the West?

His influence on Japanese art is considerable

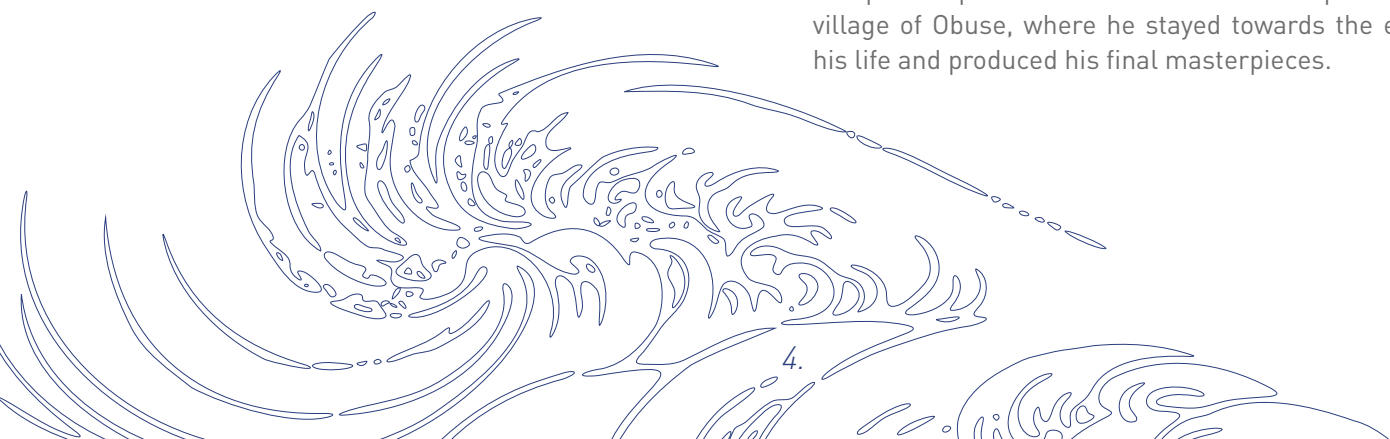
The work of **Hokusai**, who described himself as an “**old man mad about drawing**” (*Gakyō Rōjin*), is immense, both in terms of the longevity of his career and the quantity of works produced. For a period spanning over seventy years, he created more than three thousand polychrome engravings, two thousand printed books, thousands of drawings—including four thousand for *Manga*, the other “monument” of his career—and some four hundred and fifty paintings, the inventory of which continues to evolve through research and discoveries.

Hokusai was one of the major artists of the Edo period (1603-1868) and of the art movement known as *ukiyo-e* (which translates as “images of the floating world”). Already during his lifetime, his impact on Japanese art was considerable.

This influence was reinforced in Europe with Japanism and continues today in international contemporary art, with his works remaining a formidable source of inspiration.

In the face of this monumental production, the exhibition, without being a retrospective, offers an insight into Hokusai's work through several important themes explored by the artist: water and the motif of the wave, female beauties and kabuki actors, nature, landscape, and particularly the figure of Mount Fuji. These themes allowed Hokusai to fully express his talent, as well as his inventiveness and desire to challenge existing codes by integrating and mastering both Far Eastern and Western influences.

This exhibition is built around the collections of the **Hokusai-kan Museum in Obuse**, which include many of the master's key creations. Exploring some of the artist's preferred themes, it also reflects the rare and exceptional period of time that Hokusai spent in the village of Obuse, where he stayed towards the end of his life and produced his final masterpieces.



THE HOKUSAI-KAN MUSEUM, OBUSE

Obuse is a small village located in Nagano Prefecture, in an area known as the “Japanese Alps” in central Japan. A tourist destination, it is also famous for its traditional chestnut-based cuisine and for having hosted Hokusai on several occasions towards the end of his life.

In 1976, following several international exhibitions featuring works by the painter housed in Obuse, the decision was made to build a pavilion that would conserve and showcase the festival floats and their painted ceilings done by the artist, as well as an exhibition gallery displaying the master’s works. The Obuse Museum was the first museum in Japan entirely dedicated to Hokusai’s oeuvre.

Boasting over eight hundred of his works, this museum is now a major research centre on Hokusai’s art.



From the age of six, I began to draw all kinds of things. By fifty, I had already produced a lot of drawings, but nothing I did before my seventieth year was worthy of attention. At seventy-three, I began to understand the true structure of animals, insects, and fish, and the nature of plants and trees. As a result, by eighty-six, I will have made more and more progress so that by the time I turn ninety, I will have grasped the very essence of art. By one hundred, I will have reached a level of excellence and by one hundred and ten, every dot and every line of my drawings will have a life of their own. I would like to ask all those who survive me to observe that what I said was true. Written at the age of seventy-five by the person formerly known as Hokusai, but now known as Gakyō Rōjin, the old man mad about drawing.

Introduction to One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji, 1834

Water in Hokusai's work

The theme of water in Hokusai's work inevitably brings to mind *Under the Wave off Kanagawa*. But this iconic piece, done when the artist was seventy, overshadows the artist's carefully considered approach, dating back to his earliest works, on how best to capture the effects and movements of water, and to faithfully translate its vital energy to the page.

While the wave motif is prominent in Hokusai's work, the different variations of the effects of water—whether the sea, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, or even rain—also serve as a pretext for graphic exploration. Across his productions, particularly in his famous *Manga*, ripples, swirls, reflections, transparencies, sparkles, droplets, sea spray, and steam can all be seen.



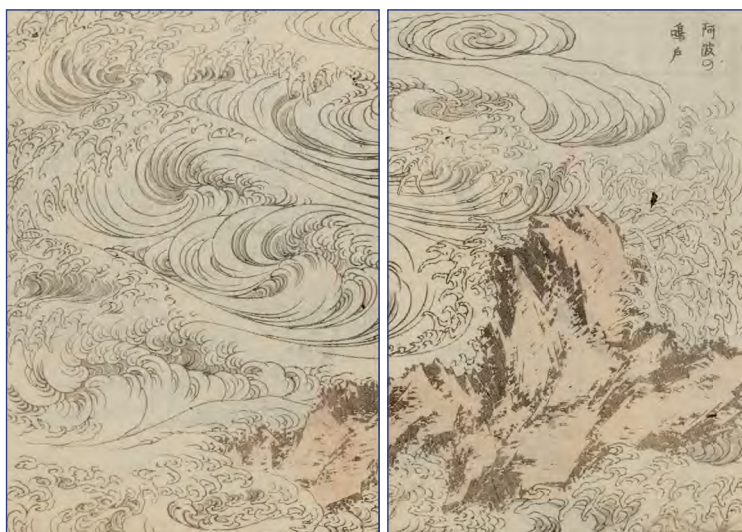
The work *Under the Wave off Kanagawa*, widely known as *The Great Wave* was the sixteenth print executed by Hokusai in 1831 for the series *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji*. It is one of his masterpieces. The exact number of copies published is unknown. Approximately one hundred proofs of the first prints made during the artist's lifetime are preserved today.

Whatever the case may be, *The Great Wave* is indisputably a hybrid work. Despite the distinctive Japanese aesthetic, it also uses Western techniques like the use of linear perspective and the Prussian blue pigment, a synthetic dye massively imported since the 1820s. It therefore bears witness to a period when nothing could be conceived without the other. Beyond its depiction of the fragility of human destiny, its syncretic dimension confers it with a universal status that speaks to us all, regardless of epoch and borders. The work is now a global icon, in the same way as Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* or *The Creation of Adam* in the Sistine Chapel, painted by Michelangelo.

1. *Under the Wave off Kanagawa* (also known as *The Great Wave*)
 (Kanagawa oki nami ura)
 Trente-six vues du mont Fuji
 (Fugaku sanjūrokkei)
 Vers le début de l'ère Tenpō (vers 1830-1834)
 Estampe nishiki-e, format oban
 Signature : Hokusai aratame litsu hitsu
 Editeur : Nishimura-ya Yohachi



2.



4.

2. Masculine Wave (Onami)

Peinture du plafond du char de festival du quartier

Kanmachi à Obuse

(Kanmachi matsuri yatai)

Bordure peinte complétée par Takai Kôzan

1845

Encre et peinture sur paulownia

Quartier de Kanmachi, Obuse, trésor préfectoral de Nagano

4. Whirlpool at Awa

Carnets de croquis divers n°7

(Hokusai manga Nanahen)

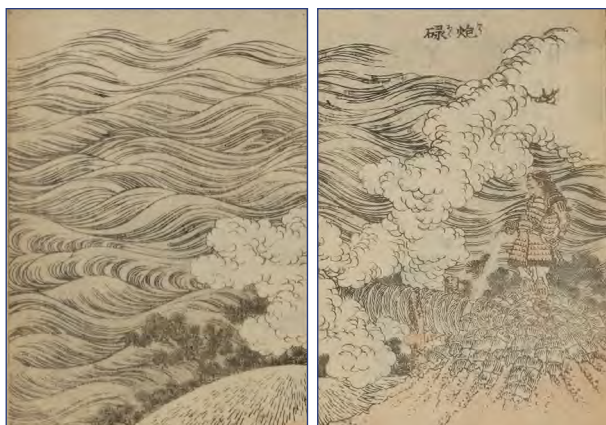
Ere Bunka an 14 (janvier 1817)

Livre Edehon, format honshibon

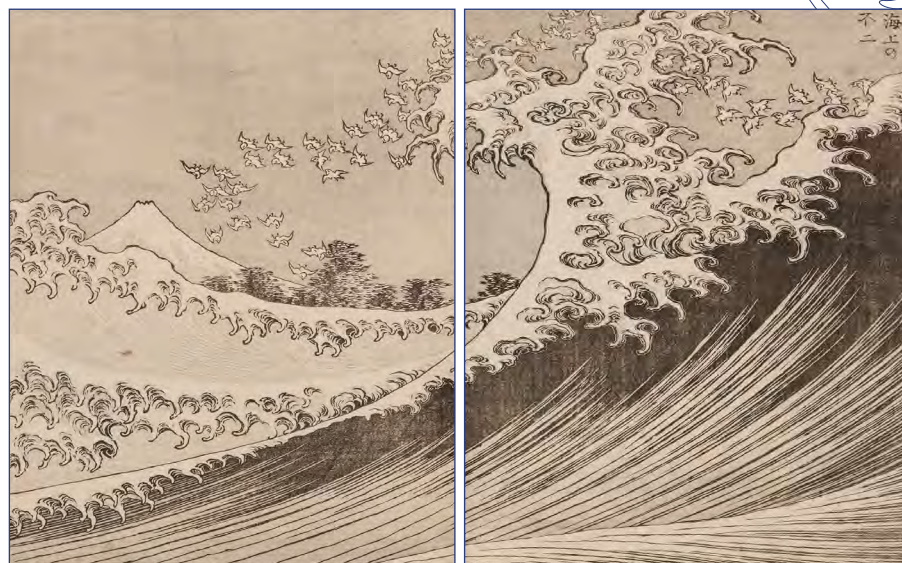
Signature : Hokusai aratame Katsushika Taito

Sceau : Fujinoyama

Editeur : Kakumaru-ya Jinsuke



4.1.



5.



5.1.

4.1 Rippling Water

Carnets de croquis divers n°9

(Hokusai manga Kyūhen)

Ere Bunsei, an 2 (printemps 1819)

Livre Edehon, format honshibon

Signature : Hokusai aratame Katsushika Taito

Sceau : Fujinoyama

Editeur : Kakumaru-ya Jinsuke

5. Fuji at Sea

(Kaijō no Fuji)

Cent vues du mont Fuji

(Fugaku Hyakkei)

Ere Tenpō an 6, 3ème mois (1835)

Signature : Nanajūroku rei saki no Hokusai

litsu aratame Gakyō Manji hitsu

Sceau en forme de mont Fuji

Editeur : Nishimura-ya Yūzō

5.1 Fuji in a Downpour

(Murasame no Fuji)

Cent vues du mont Fuji

(Fugaku Hyakkei)

Ere Tenpō an 6, 3ème mois (1835)

Non signé

Editeur : Eiraku-ya Toshirō

Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji

Hokusai was seventy years old when he began his famous series called *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji*. The number thirty-six refers to the *Thirty-Six Poetic Immortals*, an 11th-century compilation of celebrated poems. However, Hokusai's series actually comprises forty-six views, the main subject of which is Japan's sacred mountain.

The first edition dates from 1830 with the publication of the first ten blue-coloured prints. Ten more prints followed in 1831, and sixteen in 1832, thus completing this series of thirty-six. Successful sales brought the publisher Nishimura-ya Yohachi to publish ten new prints in 1833 and to reprint the initial series. During Hokusai's lifetime, and depending on the success of certain images, some plates were reprinted four to five times, and *The Great Wave* was even reprinted seven times.

REMARKABLE OBJECTS



13. *Kajikazawa in Kai Province*
(*Kōshū Kajikazawa*)
Trente-six vues du mont Fuji
(*Fugaku sanjūrokkei*)
Vers le début de l'ère Tenpō (vers 1830-1834)
Estampe nishiki-e, format oban
Signature : Hokusai aratame litsu hitsu
Editeur : Nishimura-ya Yohachi

A Tour of the Waterfalls of the Provinces



26. Amida Falls in the Far Reaches of the Kisokaidō
(Kisoji no Oku Amidaga taki)
Voyage au fil des cascades des différentes provinces
(Shokoku Takimeguri)
Vers l'ère Tenpō, vers l'an 4 (vers 1833)
Estampe nishiki-e, format oban
Signature : Saki no Hokusai litsu hitsu
Editeur : Nishimura-ya Yohachi



32. Kirifuri Waterfall at Kurokami Mountain in Shimotsuke
(Shimotsuke Kurokamiyama Kirifuri no taki)
Voyage au fil des cascades des différentes provinces
(Shokoku Takimeguri)
Vers l'ère Tenpō, vers l'an 4 (vers 1833)
Estampe nishiki-e, format oban
Signature : Saki no Hokusai litsu hitsu
Editeur : Nishimura-ya Yohachi

Remarkable Views of Famous Bridges in Various Provinces



40. Old View of the Boat-bridge at Sano in Kōzuke Province
(Kōzuke sano funahashi no kozu)
Vues extraordinaires des ponts des différentes provinces

Ere Tenpō, vers an 5 (vers 1834)
Estampe nishiki-e, format oban
Signature : Saki no hokusai litsu hitsu
Editeur : Nishimura-ya Yohachi

Female beauties and actors of the Edo period

The depiction of female beauty was a preferred theme of *ukiyo-e* artists.

In the 17th century, during the Kanei and Kanbun eras, portraits of courtesans and prostitutes, as well as peasant, merchant, and weaver women appeared. These images testify to the emergence of an urban and merchant bourgeoisie in Ōsaka, and later in the capital Edo.

Beyond the depiction of female beauty, the appeal of these images lay in their potential to convey changing trends in fashion (fabrics, hairstyles, make-up, etc.), illustrating an evolving society despite the highly codified organization implemented by the shogunate. The images also reflect an aesthetic specific to the Edo period based on the notion of *iki*, a concept that is difficult to translate but which refers to the ephemeral, the cult of the moment, and a sense of detachment from the world through an emphasis on discreet charm, elegance, and worldliness. Faithful to this fashionable theme, Hokusai produced remarkable portraits of women from all social backgrounds: the wives of high-ranking warriors or aristocrats, merchants' wives, courtesans and prostitutes, teahouse waitresses, and working-class women. Following in the footsteps of his first master, Shunshō, who revived the genre, Hokusai also painted portraits of actors, meeting the strong demand from his contemporaries. Kabuki theatre was the preferred cultural activity of city dwellers, and actors were akin to today's celebrities.



41. *Beauty with Umbrella beneath a Willow Tree*
(*Ryūka kasamochi bijin*)
Vers l'ère Kyōwa (vers 1801-1804)
Kakejiku, encre et peinture sur soie
Signature : Gakyōjin Hokusai ga
Sceau : Tokimasa

REMARKABLE OBJECTS



42.



43.



51.



67.

42. Shirabyôshi Dancer
(Shirabyôshi)
Ère Bunsei an 3 (1820)
Kakejiku, encre et peinture sur soie
Signature : Hokusai Taito aratame litsu Hitsu
Sceau : Katsushika

43. Two Beauties
(Ni bijin)
Vers l'ère Kyowa an 3-4 (1803-1804)
Kakejiku, encre et peinture sur soie
Signature : Gakyôjin Hokusai ga
Sceau : Kimô dasoku

51. Actor Segawa Kikunojô III as Osome Segawa
(Sendaime Segawa Kikunojô Osome)
Ère Tenmei an 9 (1789)
Estampe Nishiki-e sur papier
Signature : Shunrô ga

67. Plum Tree and Two Beauties
(Ume to ni bijin)
Surimono
Ère Kansei an 11 (1799)
Estampe Nishiki-e sur papier
Signature : Sôri aratame Hokusai ga



Painting nature

80. *Chrysanthemums*

(Kiku)

Hokusai et Katsushika Ôi (vers 1800-après 1857)

Ère Kôka an 4 (1847)

Kakejiku, encre et peinture sur soie

Signatures : Hachijûhachi Rôjin Manji hitsu

(droite). Yowai hachijûhassai Manji hitsu (gauche)

Sceau : Katsushika



83. Falcon on a Perch
(Takajô no taka)
 Vers l'ère Tenpô an 5-7 (1834-1836)
 Encre et peinture sur papier
 Signé : Saki no Hokusai litsu
 aratame Gakyô Rôjin Manji hitsu
 Sceau : Fuji



91. Salted Salmon and Mice
(Shiozake to shironezumi)
 Vers l'ère Tenpô an 5-7 (1834-1836)
 Encre et peinture sur papier
 Signé : Saki no Hokusai litsu
 aratame Gakyô Rôjin Manji hitsu
 Sceau : Fuji



91.1 Sparrow and Scissors
(Hasami to suzume)
 Vers l'ère Tenpô an 5-7 (1834-1836)
 Encre et peinture sur papier
 Signé : Saki no Hokusai litsu
 aratame Gakyô Rôjin Manji hitsu
 Sceau : Fuji

Yōkai and protective Shishi

References to *yōkai*
(supernatural creatures) and
yūrei (ghosts) were omnipresent
in Edo-period Japan.

110.1. The Mansion of the Plates
(*Hyaku monogatari*
Sarayashiki)
Cent contes de fantômes
(*Hyaku Monogatari Shūnen*)
Ere Tenpō, an 2-3 (1831-1832)
Estampe Nishiki-e sur papier, format
chûban
Signature : Saki no Hokusai hitsu
Editeur : Tsuru-ya Kiemon

110.2. The Ghost of Oiwa
(*Hyaku Monogatari Oiwa-san*)
Cent contes de fantômes
(*Hyaku Monogatari Shūnen*)
Ere Tenpō, an 2-3 (1831-1832)
Estampe Nishiki-e sur papier, format
chûban
Signature : Saki no Hokusai hitsu
Editeur : Tsuru-ya Kiemon



110.1



110.2

Hokusai in Obuse

105. Preparatory sketch for the Phoenix
painting in Ganshō-in Temple, Obuse
(Ganshō-in Hō-ō zu shitae)
Non signé et attribué à Hokusai
Vers l'ère Kōka an 3 (1846)
Kakemono, encre et peinture sur papier
Collection du temple Ganshō-in. Obuse



Observing and sublimating the landscape

115. *Mount Fuji and Xu Fu*
(*Fugaku et Jofuku*)
Ere Kôka an 3 (1846)
Kakemono, encre et peinture sur soie
Signature : Fujiwara Sukenari hitsu
Sceau : illisible





113. *Landscape with Boats*
(Tosen sansui)
Ere Kôka an 4 (1847)
Kakemono, encre et
peinture sur papier
Signature : Hachijûhachirô
Manji hitsu
Sceau : Hyaku

Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji

118. South Wind, Clear Sky (also known as Red Fuji)

(Gaifū kaisei)

Trente-six vues du mont Fuji

(Fugaku sanjūrokkei)

Vers le début de l'ère Tenpō

(vers 1830-1834)

Estampe Nishiki-e sur

papier, format oban

Signature : Hokusai aratame

litsu hitsu

Editeur : Nishimura-ya

Yohachi



118.

119. Storm below Mount Fuji

(Sanka hakū)

Trente-six vues du mont

Fuji

(Fugaku sanjūrokkei)

Vers le début de l'ère Tenpō

(vers 1830-1834)

Estampe Nishiki-e sur

papier, format oban

Signature : Hokusai

aratame litsu hitsu

Editeur : Nishimura-ya

Yohachi



119.

123. Fujimigahara in Owari Province

(Bishū Fujimigahara)

Trente-six vues du mont

Fuji

(Fugaku sanjūrokkei)

Vers le début de l'ère Tenpō

(vers 1830-1834)

Estampe Nishiki-e sur

papier, format oban

Signature : Hokusai

aratame litsu hitsu

Editeur : Nishimura-ya

Yohachi



123.

127. Mitsui Shop at
Surugachō in Edo
(Edo Suruga-chō Mitsuimise
Ryakuzu)
Trente-six vues du mont
Fuji
(Fugaku sanjūrokkei)
Vers le début de l'ère Tenpō
[vers 1830-1834]
Estampe Nishiki-e sur
papier, format oban
Signature : Hokusai aratame
litsu hitsu
Editeur : Nishimura-ya
Yohachi



127.

131. Morning after the
Snow at Koishikawa in Edo
(Koishikawa yuki no ashita)
Trente-six vues du mont
Fuji
(Fugaku sanjūrokkei)
Vers le début de l'ère Tenpō
[vers 1830-1834]
Estampe Nishiki-e sur
papier, format oban
Signature : Hokusai
aratame litsu hitsu
Editeur : Nishimura-ya
Yohachi



131.

135. Sazai Hall at the
Temple of the Five
Hundred Arhats
(Gohyakurakan-ji Sazaidō)
Trente-six vues du mont
Fuji
(Fugaku sanjūrokkei)
Vers le début de l'ère Tenpō
[vers 1830-1834]
Estampe Nishiki-e sur
papier, format oban
Signature : Hokusai
aratame litsu hitsu
Editeur : Nishimura-ya
Yohachi



135.

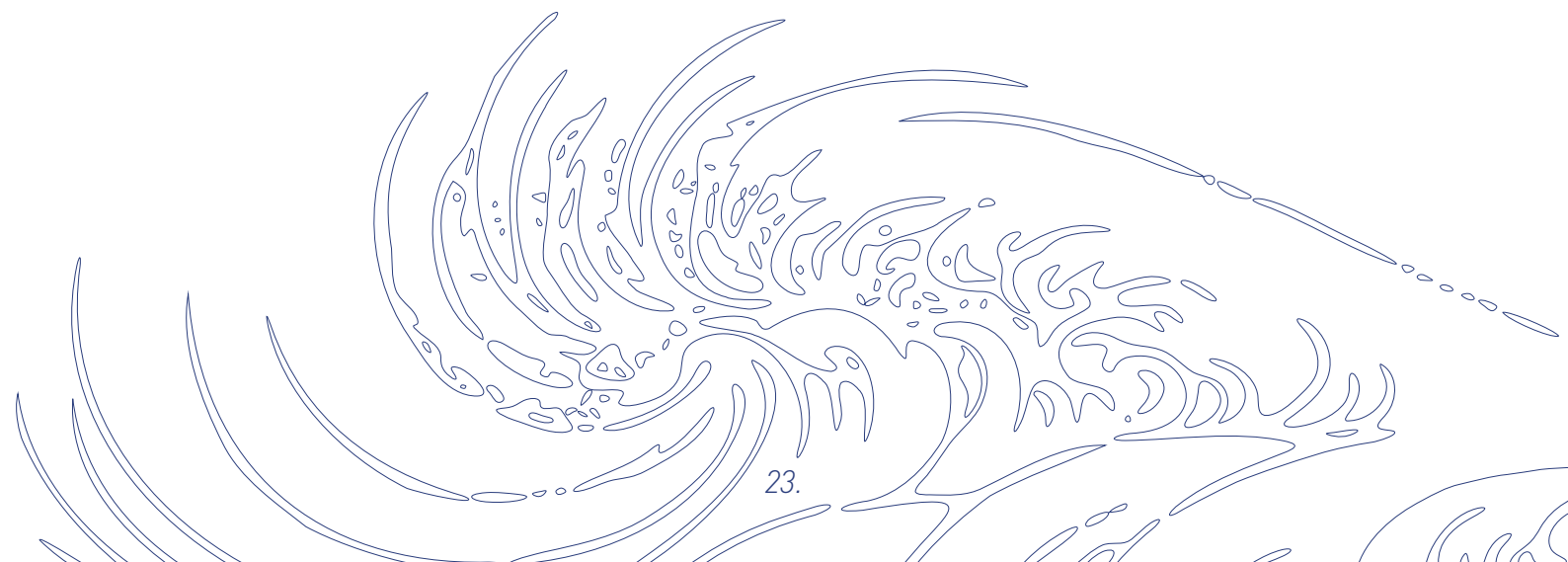


151. *Dragon Rising above Mount Fuji*
(Fujikoshi no Ryû)
Ere Kaei, premier mois de l'an II (1849)
Kakemono, encre et rehauts de couleurs sur soie
Signature : Kaei ni tsuchinoto tori doshi/ shôgatsu tatsu no hi/ Hôreki jû kanoë tatsuno toshino umare/ kyûjû Rôjin Manji hitsu [Du pinceau de Manji, un vieil homme de quatre-vingt-dix ans né l'année du dragon Hôreki 10 (1760) – le jour du dragon du premier mois de Kaei 2 (1849)]
Sceau : Hyaku

*Hokusai left nothing to chance; he
had the entire world in his head,
and what he saw, he recognized.*

*Fuji was none other than himself,
it was his measure of eternity, of
the sun and of storms [...]. He died
in 1849 at the age of eighty-nine.
Today, he lives on [through] Fuji...*

*Nelly Delay
One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji
Hazan, 2008*



AROUND THE EXHIBITION

REFERENCE PUBLICATION

*La vague Hokusai, 1760 - 1849, Chefs-d'œuvre du Hokusai-kan Museum d'Obuse**

** Hokusai's Wave, 1760 – 1849, Masterpieces
from the Hokusai-kan Museum in Obuse*

Beyond the extremely iconic *Under the Wave off Kanagawa* and *Manga*, this book demonstrates the true genius of the mischievous Japanese master, Hokusai (1760-1849). A painter who was “mad about drawing”, his modern works can be placed within the *ukiyo-e* movement. To forge his unique aesthetic, he combined traditional Far Eastern techniques with those used in the West. He loved depicting nature, but in his works, also cast a subtle and humane gaze on the men and women of his day, as well as representing various Japanese landscapes. He created some remarkable illustrations to accompany poetry anthologies, as well as popular, successful books. Over the course of his lengthy career, with great energy and audacity, he created an extraordinary body of work. At the end of his life, he stayed several times in Obuse and created his last masterpieces there, such as the phoenix of Ganshō-in.

This book boasts contributions by some of France's and Japan's greatest specialists of ukiyo-e — Arai Miyuki, Higuchi Kazutaka, Hinohara Kenji, Ishigami Aki, Brigitte Koyama-Richard, Emmanuel Lozerand, Christophe Marquet, Matsuba Ryoko, Manuela Moscatiello, Ōkubo Jun.ichi, Sakurai Takanori, Pierre-François Souyri, Tanaka Yūko, and Yasumura Toshinobu. The publication also features a number of prints and paintings, including masterpieces from the Hokusai-kan Museum in Obuse, along with other works conserved in various international collections.



24 x 30 cm - 512 pages
 Bilingual French-
 Japanese edition
 RRP (provisional): €49
 (In partnership with the
 Hokusai-kan Museum,
 under the patronage of
 the Japanese Embassy in
 France)

VISITING THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition can be visited free of charge on the first Sunday of every month (except in July and August). It is free every day for visitors under 18.

Whether visiting independently or with a guide, several options exist to help the public best discover the exhibition.

RESERVING A TIME SLOT

Only holders of tickets with a specific time slot are guaranteed access to the exhibition. This allows visitors to experience the exhibition in the best possible conditions.

Visitors with free access (holders of the Pass Musées and under 18s) also need to reserve a time slot (free of charge).

Tickets can be booked online, by telephone, or on site at the museum ticket desk.

GUIDED TOURS AND MANGA WORKSHOP

A guided tour of the exhibition lasting 75 minutes is on offer daily (from 7 July to 31 August at 5pm, and on 3 and 6 September at 4.30pm), and younger visitors between 12 and 15 years can participate in a special manga workshop with the association Envie de Japon, and cartoonist-illustrators.

By booking only: www.chateaunantes.fr or 0811 46 46 44 (0.05€/min + cost of the call).

EVENTS AT THE CHÂTEAU AND IN NANTES

A JAPANESE WEEKEND 28 & 29 JUNE 2025

To mark the opening of the exhibition, in partnership with the Japanese Embassy, the City of Obuse, and Nantes-based associations, a rich programme of events allowing the public to explore and discover Japanese culture in all its forms will be available, subject to availability.

Tea ceremonies, master classes and introductions to calligraphy, fittings of yukata (traditional clothing), demonstrations of ikebana (traditional floral art), introductions to furoshiki (a Japanese technique for tying fabrics used as bags and/or gift wrapping), quizzes on Japanese culture and Hokusai, as well as drumming performances, a yosakoi dance display, and tastings of Japanese specialties will be held over the course of this very special weekend.

A host of memorable activities will allow visitors to enjoy Japanese art and culture!

With the JNTO, the City of Obuse, the AJFJ, L'atelier du Furoshiki, Atlantique-Japon, Chanoyu Pays de Loire - Tankokai Urasenke Val de Marne Nantes, Envie de Japon, Nantes Université, and Odoritsuru Yosakoi Nantes

At the Château des ducs de Bretagne

Free of charge but subject to availability, except for the Master class and introduction to calligraphy with the calligraphy master Wakasugi Maaya. Detailed programme available from 5 May onwards



PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION A VIEW OF JAPANESE GARDENS 5 APRIL > 2 NOVEMBER 2025

In the Japanese-style atmosphere of the Maison de l'Erdre and the Japanese garden on the Île de Versailles, the City of Nantes invites the public on a journey of discovery to the gardens of Japan, through this remarkable photography exhibition. Visitors can admire some of the most beautiful gardens photographed in various cities and regions of Japan by Clément Keller and Frédéric Soreau.

Clément Keller is an architect with a passion for the aesthetics of Japanese gardens. He has dedicated a website to them, with some 6,300 photos, accompanied by drawings and plans.

Frédéric Soreau is a professional photographer who specializes in reportage and travel photography. He has published around ten books and travel guides.

This exhibition also shines a light on the gardens of Niigata, a city twinned with Nantes since 2009, and the gardens of Osaka Castle. The latter has close ties to the Château des ducs de Bretagne.

Bonsai trees are on display in the hall of the Maison de l'Erdre and the dry garden of the patio. Visitors can learn how these trees are grown in pots, pruned, and trained to evoke the beauty of old trees and natural landscapes.

To coincide with the photography exhibition, various associations promoting Japanese culture will bring the space to life with a host of demonstrations, displays, and introductory workshops. From the art of ikebana to Japanese paper techniques, the traditions associated with tea, and even readings of haiku and kamishibai (a form of street theatre and storytelling), the list of activities is rich and varied.

Île de Versailles, Nantes

Information and programme available on metropole.nantes.fr

HOKUSAI'S BIOGRAPHY

1760-1777

The early years

Born in the Honjō-Warigesui district in eastern Edo (Tokyo) on 23 September 1760, Hokusai was adopted at the age of three by artisan Nakajima Isei, an official mirror maker for the shogunate. Named **Tokitarō**, he was later given the name **Tetsuzō** when he turned nine. Initially a polisher for his adoptive father, as a teenager, he became an apprentice to a wood engraver, learning the process of making prints and books. His keen and precocious taste for drawing—he claims to have begun drawing at the age of six—was expressed amidst the creative and stimulating context of the printed arts of the mid-Edo period (1603-1868).

1778-1794

Formative years

At the age of nineteen, he became a student in the studio of Katsukawa Shunshō (1726-1793), a popular *ukiyo-e* artist, known for his prints depicting beautiful women (*bijin-ga*) and portraits of famous kabuki actors, a genre he was able to renew. Signing his first works **Shunrō** (meaning “the brilliance of spring”), Hokusai produced numerous prints on a variety of subjects (warriors, beautiful women, remarkable sites, sumo wrestlers, etc.), and portraits of actors for *kibyōshi* (illustrated books with a yellow cover for adults combining caricatures and humour). Only a few rare paintings from this period have survived, in the *uki-e* (floating image) style incorporating Western effects of perspective. Although faithful to the Katsukawa School in the style of his master Shunshō, Hokusai left the studio shortly after his mentor's death in 1793 for unknown reasons, although possibly due to a quarrel of some kind. His touchy character was well-known.

1794-1804

The Sōri period

After leaving the Katsukawa School, Hokusai changed his name to Sōri upon being made head of Tawaraya Sōri's studio, active between 1760 and 1780. This name is associated with the famous Rinpa School founded in the 17th century by Tawaraya Sōtatsu and Hon'ami Kōetsu, and whose great master was Ogata Kōrin (1658-1716). Although he was initially influenced by the decorative Rinpa style, Hokusai quickly freed himself from it to create his own Sōri style, characterized by a certain sadness and gentle melancholy. Moving away from the world of *ukiyo-e* in favour of a classical career as a painter, he was then closely linked to the world of *kyōka* (a style of witty poetry known as “mad poetry”). He authored poems and executed numerous non-commercial prints (*surimono*) and picture books for literary circles, including the Asakusa circle, composed of writers and scholars. At the same time, he began experimenting with the use of Western perspective and chiaroscuro. In 1798, he abandoned the name Sōri and became **Hokusai Tokimasa** in reference to the bodhisattva Myōken, a deification of the North Star (*hokushin*) and tutelary figure of the Nichiren Buddhist sect of which Hokusai was a follower.

1805-1811

A popular illustrator

This new period in Hokusai's life was tremendously successful. He produced numerous images for popular literature (*yomihon*), notably illustrating the adventure novels of the famous author Kyokutei Bakin (1767-1848), including *Strange Tales of the Crescent Moon*. His mastery of drawing, black ink, and its many variations revolutionized this literary genre. Hokusai was also known for his eccentric productions for temples, where he executed gigantic portraits of the Bodhidharma Daruma. These years were also marked by an abundant production of works, especially paintings, and saw the beginning of a new phase in the artist's career, that of manuals. Hokusai adopted several pen names depending on the works produced: **Katsushika Hokusai** for example, in reference to the district where he was born, and **Taito**, from Taihokuto, meaning “the star of the little bear”.

1812-1829

The Manga years

Hokusai's studio flourished, with many apprentices working for the master, and his teaching methods and style were copied all over Japan. Hokusai produced countless drawing manuals for artists, poets, and artisans, as well as children. The first of these, published in 1810, was entitled *Basic Instruction in Sketching* and was followed in 1814 by the initial volume of the famous *Manga*. Four thousand drawings over fifteen volumes were produced and printed, with the last volume being published posthumously (1878).

The *Manga* project was inspired by a trip to Nagoya to visit Maki Bokusen (1775-1824), a samurai aesthete. While visiting the former, Hokusai produced several hundred sketches which he referred to as *Manga* ("drawings with a brush"). Compiled together, these first drawings form the initial volume of the *Denshin kaishu* series, the *Hokusai manga* (*Transmitting the Spirit, Revealing Form of Things: Picture Album of Drawings at One Stroke*). This was followed by other manuals: *Album of Drawings in Three Ways* (1816), *Quick Pictorial Dictionary* (1817), and *Album of Drawings with One Stroke* (1823).

Hokusai forged a new name for himself: **litsu** (meaning "one again"), to coincide with his sixtieth birthday and the end of the long calendar cycle of the Zodiac, and the start of another. He was extremely successful and his *surimono* production, notably his series on shells in 1821, had reached an unparalleled artistic level. However, on a personal level, Hokusai encountered several difficulties: the death of one of his daughters and his second wife, his grandson was crippled by debt, and he himself suffered a stroke. His daughter Ōi, who was also a painter, came to work with him at this time.

1830-1834

The Wave and Mount Fuji

In the early 1830s, Hokusai returned to the forefront with the publication of several innovative series: *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* in 1830-1833, featuring the famous *Under the Wave off Kanagawa*, *A Tour of the Waterfalls of the Provinces* in 1833, *Eight Views of the Ryūkyū Islands*, and *Remarkable Views of Famous Bridges in Various Provinces* in 1834. These publications would revolutionize the landscape genre in Japanese art and the extreme popularity of these works with the public inscribed this theme in the art of *ukiyo-e*. The publication of the illustrated three-volume book *One Hundred Views of Mount Fuji*, a masterpiece of the art of printmaking, in 1834, brought this exceptional artistic period to a close. To sign this opus, Hokusai chose a new name for himself, **Manji** ("ten thousand years"), preceded by **Gakyō Rōjin** ("the old man mad about drawing"). A red seal in the shape of the sacred mountain so dear to the artist began to appear on his works.

1835-1849

Obuse and the last paintings

Despite publishing the series *One Hundred Poems Explained by a Nurse and Panoramic View of the Famous Places of China*, Hokusai moved away from the art of *nishiki-e* to devote himself fully to painting, perfecting his technique and representation of his subjects. Beginning in 1842, Hokusai made several stays in Obuse in Shinano Province, near the present-day city of Nagano, at the invitation of his friend and patron Takai Kōzan (1806-1883). He produced several major works, including the decorations for the festival floats for the Higashimachi and Kanmachi districts and the impressive phoenix ceiling of the Ganshō-in Buddhist temple. At the end of his life, Hokusai signed his paintings with the **Hyaku** ("one hundred") seal, signifying his intention to continue to work for as long as possible, becoming, in his own words, a true painter. Hokusai died at the age of ninety on the eighteenth day of the fourth month of the second year of the Kaei era (10 April 1849). His ashes were placed in the Asakusa-Seikyōji temple in Edo (Tokyo).

Le Château des ducs de Bretagne Musée d'histoire de Nantes

Located in the historic heart of Nantes, the Château des Ducs de Bretagne – built in the early 13th century, then rebuilt in the late 15th century by François II, the last Duke of Brittany, and made even more beautiful by his daughter, Anne de Bretagne, twice Queen of France – boasts over eight centuries of history. Though originally it was the abode of the Dukes of Brittany, followed by the Kings of France, it is now home to the Musée d'Histoire de Nantes, (an official **Musée de France**), which reopened to the public in 2007 following a major renovation.

The Musée d'histoire de Nantes paints a picture of the town, from its beginnings to the city that it is today. The 32 rooms of the permanent visit offer an understanding of the city and its development, through key identity-forming events. The 1150 items from the Museum's collection, together with a number of multimedia features, offer an absorbing introduction to the history of Nantes: capital city of the Dukes of Brittany, setting for the Edict of Nantes under Henry IV of France, a great Atlantic port since the 17th century, a flourishing industrial city during the 19th and 20th centuries, a witness of the two world wars and a cultural and artistic urban centre today.

The museum regularly organizes **international exhibitions dedicated to major ancient and contemporary civilizations**. These exhibitions, which explore Nantes' relationship to other societies, allow us to question our understanding of history and the contemporary world. These temporary exhibitions are the result of **partnerships with major institutions**, along with national and international museums, and offer an opportunity to reveal objects that are rarely presented to the public.



These include:

. *France Nouvelle France* ("France New France"), in partnership with the Musée d'histoire de Montréal, Pointe à Callière, (Canada), 2007,

. *La Soie et le canon, FRANCE-CHINE (1700/1860)*, ("The Silk and the Canon, FRANCE-CHINA 1700/1860") in collaboration with Musée Guimet, Paris, 2010,

. *Samourais, 1 000 ans d'histoire du Japon*, ("Samurais, 1,000 years of Japanese history"), in partnership with Osaka Castle (Japan), 2014,

. *Îcônes, trésors de réfugiés*, ("Icons, the treasures of refugees"), in partnership with the Byzantine and Christian Museum of Athens (Greece), 2016,

. *Les Esprits, l'Or et le Chaman*, ("Spirits, Gold and the Shaman"), in partnership with the Gold Museum (Bogota, Colombia), 2017,

. *Nous les appelons Vikings*, ("We call them Vikings"), in collaboration with the Swedish Historical Museum, (Stockholm), 2018,

. *Amazonie. Le chamane et la pensée de la forêt*, ("Amazonia. The Shaman and the forest's thoughts"), in collaboration with the Musée d'Ethnographie de Genève, (Switzerland), 2019,

. *Inde, reflets de mondes sacrés*, ("India, reflections of sacred worlds"), with the Museo delle Civiltà in Rome (Italy), 2022,

. *Gengis Khan. Comment les Mongols ont changé le monde*, ("Chinggis Khaan. How the Mongols changed the world"), with the Chinggis Khaan National Museum (Mongolia), 2023.

Since 2007, 30 exhibitions have been presented to the public, 6 of which have been designated of "national interest" by the French Ministry of Culture.

The museum has also been awarded the "**Qualité tourisme**" and "**Tourisme et Handicap**" labels, with a view to promoting inclusion and providing the best possible experience for all visitors.



PRACTICAL INFORMATIONS

OPENING TIMES

Courtyard and ramparts - freely accessible: Open 7 days a week: 8.30 am to 7 pm
1 July > 31 August: 8.30 am to 8 pm

CHÂTEAU INTERIORS, MUSEUM AND EXHIBITION

10 am to 6 pm, closed Mondays
1 July > 31 August: 10 am to 7 pm, 7 days a week
(Ticket booth closes 30 minutes before closing)
Exceptional opening of the exhibition: Mondays, June 30 and September 1

Site annual closing dates : 1 January, 1 May, 1 November, 25 December

ADMISSION

*Admission to the museum is free on the first Sunday of every month from September to June and everyday for under 18s.
The ticket office for reserving time slots for the Hokusai exhibition and guided tours will open on May 5, 2025. Only holders of tickets with a specific time slot are guaranteed access to the exhibition. This allows visitors to experience the exhibition in the best possible conditions.*

PASS MUSÉES : 15€

Visit the Musée d'histoire de Nantes (in the Château des ducs de Bretagne), the Muséum d'histoire naturelle, the Musée d'arts de Nantes, the Musée Jules Verne, and Le Chronographe (in Rezé), with no time limit for an entire year.

Museum + exhibition

Full fare: €9

Reduced fare: €5

Ticket valid for one day

Free* : Under 18s – job seekers – RSA recipients – Carte Blanche holders – disabled persons and their companion.

Reduced fares* : young persons aged 18 to 25 – holders of the 'Familles nombreuses' card.

**please provide proof of less than 6 months / Bookings can be made at www.chateaunantes.fr*

GUIDED TOURS

Museum + exhibition

Full fare: €12

Reduced fare: €7,50: young persons aged 18 to 25, teachers... | €4: job seekers – RSA recipients – disabled persons and their companion. | €2,50: Under 18s - holders of the 'Pass Nantes'

Free : Under 7s

*Bookings can be made at www.chateaunantes.fr, at **0 811 464 644** Service 0.05€ / min + prix appel, or at the museum reception*

Possibility of organizing visits for groups, from 15 people. T. + 33 2 40 20 60 11

ACCESS

The Château des ducs de Bretagne is situated in Nantes' Medieval quarter, Bouffay, a few minutes' walk from the Cathedral, the Musée des beaux-arts de Nantes, Nantes' Events Centre 'La Cité', the National Theatre venue, the Lieu unique, and the SNCF train station.

High-speed train (TGV): from Paris: 2 hours (20 trains per day)

By car : A11 from Paris – A83 from Bordeaux – RN 137 from Rennes

Tramway : line 1 - Duchesse Anne stop

Busway : line 4 - Duchesse Anne stop



**Château des ducs
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d'histoire de Nantes**
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44000 Nantes

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*Château des ducs de Bretagne
is a listed historical monument
owned by Nantes Métropole.
As part of a public service
delegation, SPL Le Voyage à
Nantes manages all aspects
of the site*