

2026 Nijo-jo Castle Painting Gallery Original Mural Exhibitions Series: 400 Years Since the Kan'ei Imperial Visit

	Exhibition period	Exhibition overview	Works to be exhibited
Spring	42 days From Mon.20. Apr. to Sun.31. May	<p>The Great Pine in the Background —Shikidai-no-ma of the Shikidai—</p> <p>This year marks the 400th anniversary of the Kan'ei Imperial Visit, when Emperor Go-Mizunoo visited Nijo-jo Castle in the ninth month of Kan'ei 3 (1626). The events of the Imperial Visit were centered around the Imperial Visit Palace, which had been constructed on the south side of the Ninomaru Garden, but on the fourth day, Noh was performed on a stage built to the south of the Ninomaru-goten Palace Grand Hall, and the assembled guests watched from within the palace. Records indicate that the attendants and guards accompanying the invited party were seated along the veranda of the Shikidai. They were positioned quite far from the stage, with a clear view of its side and the bridgeway. Behind them, the Great Pine depicted in the Shikidai-no-ma loomed in all its grandeur.</p>	<p>Murals in the Shikidai-no-ma in the Shikidai. <i>Matsu-zu (Pines), Kacho-zu (Flowers and Birds)</i></p>
Summer	60 days From Sat.12. Jun. to Tue.11. Aug.	<p>The Shogun Takes His Seat —San-no-ma (Third Room) of the Ohiroma—</p> <p>The San-no-ma (Third Room) of the Ohiroma served as a supplementary room to the Ichi-no-ma (First Room) and Ni-no-ma (Second Room), where formal audiences were held. During the Kan'ei Imperial Visit of 1626, a Noh stage was set up outdoors to the south of the Ohiroma, and <i>Ogoshō</i> (retired shogun) Hidetada and Shogun Iemitsu watched the performances from the Third Room. It was highly unusual for them to be seated in the Third Room rather than the First Room, where the shogun would normally sit. The Third Room features paintings of a magnificent pine symbolizing prosperity and peacocks, whose rarity made them emblems of power. Hidetada and Iemitsu must have savored the Noh performances while immersed in this splendid atmosphere.</p>	<p>Murals in the San-no-ma (Third Room) in the Ohiroma. <i>Matsu Kujaku-zu (Pine Trees and Peacock)</i></p>
Fall	60 days From Thu.10. Sept. to Sun.8. Nov.	<p>Murals Adorning the Imperial Seat —Ichi-no-ma (First Room) of the Ohiroma—</p> <p>On the fourth day of the Imperial Visit, the Second Room of the Ohiroma served as Emperor Go-Mizunoo's viewing gallery for the Noh performances. Bamboo blinds were hung at the corridor and room boundaries, and raised tatami mats and cushions were placed inside the room near the blinds to create the Emperor's seat. To the Emperor's right, a seat was prepared for the <i>Chugu</i> (Empress), and to his left, one for the <i>Nyoin</i> (Dowager Empress), his mother. Behind the Emperor stood the grand <i>toko</i> (alcove) of the First Room, where a <i>sanpukutsui</i> (set of three hanging scrolls) by Muqi was hung on the wall depicting a great aged pine. Among the <i>Matsu Kujaku-zu</i> in the Second Room, the peacock depicted above the western <i>nageshi</i> (horizontal beam) appeared to soar as if watching over the Emperor and his party from above.</p>	<p>Murals in the Ichi-no-ma (First Room) in the Ohiroma. <i>Matsu take kinkei-zu (Pine Trees, Bamboo, and Golden Pheasants), Kaki-zu (Flowers)</i> Murals in the Ni-no-ma (Second Room) of the Ohiroma. <i>Matsu Kujaku-zu (Pine Trees and Peafowls)</i></p>
Winter	57 days from Tue.19. Nov. 2026 to Sun.17. Jan. 2027 * Closed from Tue.29 to Thu.31. Dec. 2026	<p>A Magnificent Banquet Setting —Ichi-no-ma and Ni-no-ma (First and Second Rooms) of the Kuroshoin—</p> <p>The Kuroshoin was where the shogunate entertained members of the Imperial court during the Kan'ei Imperial Visit. Banquet seating in the Second Room was reserved for high-ranking guests such as members of the Imperial and Regent houses and former ministers, while the Third Room hosted imperial-lineage abbots, and the Yon-no-ma (Fourth Room) through the East Corridor accommodated court nobles and courtiers. The murals of the Kuroshoin First and Second Rooms featured in this exhibition focus on richly colored scenes of spring with cherry blossoms and plum trees in full bloom, while above the <i>nageshi</i>, landscapes of ancient China are rendered in ink wash. We invite you to experience these murals that so brilliantly transformed this space into a setting worthy of the grandest hospitality.</p>	<p>Murals in the Ichi-no-ma (First Room) and the Ni-no-ma (Second Room) in the Kuroshoin. <i>Okakiji-zu (Cherry Blossoms and Pheasants), Rokaku Sansui-zu (Pavilions and landscape)</i></p>