[intro page text]

**[Title]**

**YOKAI: Ghosts & Demons of Japan**

**[Body]**

**Vivid in Japanese art and imagination are creatures that are at once ghastly and amusing.**

Yokai is a catchall word for ghosts, demons, monsters, shapeshifters, tricksters, and other kinds of supernatural beings and mysterious phenomena. Yokai interact with the human world and spark common notions of frightful things.

Yokai can definitely be scary, but the experience of fear can also be amusing. When frightening beings copy human behavior, they become less intimidating and can appear playful, relatable, and even cute.

But Yokai are not all tame and cute. Perhaps the most terrifying Yokai are those that shed light on the faults of human society.

*Who are the Yokai in your world?*

*Have you ever felt demonized?*

*Are you a Yokai?*

Explore all kinds of yokai and the ways that they became pop-culture sensations in Japan!

[link to other pages: art-history-lore]

[file name: Y200331002.tif (convert to jpg; crop to blue monster on platform – this would be the main image on this page)]

[caption]

Ao Bozu (Blue Monk)

Kono Junya

2006

Kyoto

Papier-mâché, craft foam, paint

International Folk Art Foundation Collection, Museum of International Folk Art (T.2019.48.1)

[file: kono-monster-selfie]

[caption]

Kono Junya and Ao Bozu selfie (traveling from Kyoto to Santa Fe), August 2019. Courtesy of Kono Junya.

Kono Junya is a Kyoto-based yokai artist and scholar. He teaches at Saga University of the Arts, where he founded the artist collective, *Hyakuyobako* (Box of 100 Yokai). [hyperlink *Hyakuyobako* (Box of 100 Yokai) to <http://kyotohyakki.com/> ]

Kono wants us to recognize the importance of yokai as an important feature of Japanese heritage. That is why Ao Bozu points to himself and says, “Look at me; I am a Yokai!” Kono created this sculpture of Ao Bozu out of a desire to give life to an image that traditionally had been painted. The artist stated, “[I wanted to] sit and talk in the same room as a yokai.” In Kono’s words, “Ao Bozu is now a member of the ‘US-branch of Box of 100 Yokai;’ through him, I hope Americans can see how much fun yokai are in Japan.”