

# LACMA

**INSTALLATION: *CRANES* BY MARUYAMA OKYO**

**ON VIEW: JANUARY 19, 2013–TBC**

**LOCATION: PAVILION FOR JAPANESE ART**



(IMAGE CAPTIONS ON PAGE 3)

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is pleased to present the U.S. debut of Maruyama Okyo's *Cranes* (1772), an extraordinary pair of Japanese screens recently acquired by the museum's Curator of Japanese Art, Robert T. Singer.

Maruyama Okyo (1733-95) is pivotal to Japanese art history for being one of the first artists to paint directly from nature rather than from paintings and sketches. Of his five most famous pairs of screens, four are registered National Treasures by the Japanese government and may therefore never leave Japan except on loan. Only these legendary screens remain unregistered, and on February 22, 2011 after a two-year campaign by Singer, the Ministry of Culture of Japan granted an official export license to LACMA for the opportunity to acquire these screens. This honor was granted in recognition of the growing importance of LACMA's Pavilion for Japanese Art and its collections, and in the hope that Americans and Europeans can thereby appreciate the very highest achievement in the history of Japanese painting.

Prior to its LACMA acquisition, *Cranes* was preserved only in two private collections: the Yamada Collection (1773-1926) and the Harihan Collection (1926-2012). Due to their extraordinary collection history, and to their only being shown in public exhibitions twice (for four weeks in 1996 at the Kyoto University Museum of Art and in 2004 at the Osaka Museum of

Art), this pair of screens is in outstanding condition, almost without parallel for paintings in mineral pigment on paper from the same period. Besides the screens' eight weeks on public display, they have been shown in private viewings only to Emperor Showa (Hirohito) in 1956 and to the present emperor (Akihito) in 1958, when each emperor visited the legendary Harihan Estate in Kobe especially to view these screens. The crane is a symbol of good fortune and long life in Japanese culture. The Red-crowned Crane, in particular, is an auspicious symbol of the New Year, peace, harmony, prosperity, and fidelity. The two species of cranes (Red-crowned Cranes and White-naped Cranes) shown in these screens, foraged together, peacefully, on the grounds of the Imperial Palace at that time.

The pair of screens together measure five and a half feet tall and twenty-two feet long. Depicted are seventeen cranes, twelve of one species (Red-crowned Cranes), five of another (White-naped Cranes), which are shown resting, sleeping, nestling, and peering into the distance. Much copied by later Japanese artists, these paintings were revolutionary at the time Okyo painted them: there is no ground plane, no water or streams, no rocks, and no vegetation of any kind. The screens consist simply of seventeen near-life-size cranes against a solid background of pure gold leaf. Meticulously painted in the finest detail, each crane possesses its own character, personality, and feeling.

### **Credit**

This installation was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

### **About LACMA**

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography-and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a contemporary art museum on its campus. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing *Transformation* project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

**Location and Contact:** 5905 Wilshire Boulevard (at Fairfax Avenue), Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | 323 857-6000 | lacma.org

**Hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 11 am-5 pm; Friday: 11 am-8 pm; Saturday, Sunday: 10 am-7 pm; closed Wednesday

**General Admission:** Adults: \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+: \$10

**Free General Admission:** Members; children 17 and under; after 3 pm weekdays for L.A. County residents; second Tuesday of every month; Target Free Holiday Mondays

**Image caption:** Maruyama Okyo, *Cranes*, 1772, An'ei period (1772-1780), Pair of six-panel screens; ink, color, and gold leaf on paper; a-b) Mount 67  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 137  $\frac{3}{4}$  x  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (170.82 x 349.89 x 1.91 cm) each, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Camilla Chandler Frost in honor of Robert T. Singer (M.2011.106b), Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA

**Press Contact:** For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at [press@lacma.org](mailto:press@lacma.org) or 323 857-6522.

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