

Exhibition: *Park Dae Sung: Virtuous Ink and Contemporary Brush*

Dates: July 17–December 11, 2022

Location: Resnick Pavilion



(Image captions on page 3)

(Los Angeles, CA—May 4, 2022) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Park Dae Sung: Virtuous Ink and Contemporary Brush*, an exhibition spotlighting the artist’s large-scale ink paintings that portray contemporary subjects with calligraphic lines, effortlessly fusing the aesthetics of East and West.

Park Dae Sung (박대성 朴大成), born in 1945, during the waning days of Korea’s colonization by Japan, is one of the most prolific calligraphers and ink painters in South Korea today. Self-taught from the early age of five, Park is respected for his consummate command of the styles of legendary Chinese and Korean ink masters from centuries ago. Park has spent time in China and walked the Silk Road, searching for the meaning of hanja (Chinese characters), the aesthetic foundation of his calligraphy and paintings. The artist’s practice has matured into one that is refreshingly his own, unapologetic, open-minded, and free from conceptual boundaries, and his visual evolution has defied the polarity of categories like “traditional” and “contemporary.”

“This exhibition is intended to encourage viewers to take a moment and slow down while immersing themselves in Park’s landscapes,” said Virginia Moon, Associate Curator, Korean Art at LACMA. “Whether it is through the juxtaposition of the flowing stream alongside a sturdy brick bridge, the sound of bulls’ horns colliding, or even the imperfections of a tea bowl, these works reveal the natural tensions within the earthly world that give them their inner strength. Each deliberate brushstroke becomes an expression of Park’s own.”

“LACMA is thrilled to present these paintings, which skillfully combine influences from Park’s extensive travels throughout Asia and his study of Eastern and Western art while expressing the beauty of the Korean landscape,” said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. “With this exhibition, we continue our

longstanding commitment to share Korean art with visitors in Los Angeles and beyond.”

The works in *Park Dae Sung: Virtuous Ink and Contemporary Brush* reveal the variations of the line found in Park’s calligraphy. With a single brush, he paints contemporary subject matter using traditional techniques, and the exhibition invites the viewer to examine his brushstrokes up close. Although he is particularly recognized for his large-scale works, Park’s talents scale a range of subject matter, technique, and size.

This intimate exhibition features eight works of ink on paper. Alongside six large-scale pieces, two smaller works provide a sense of Park’s artistic range. His *Diamond Mountain* (2004), which depicts the legendary mountain range in North Korea, is noteworthy in that Park is one of the few contemporary artists to have visited the site in person and painted it from memory, giving it a highly imaginative form and bird’s-eye view. In *Snow at Bulguk Temple* (1996), one of Park’s masterpieces, he makes use of the natural white of hanji (Korean mulberry paper) to depict the purity of an unblemished snowscape. His smaller works, each depicting a lone object—a hyperrealistic Joseon bowl, or a bird emerging from a single brushstroke—highlight minute details that are often missed in today’s fast-paced world. As a result, his works are both legible and compelling regardless of culture and ethnicity, even as they quote Korean cultural and artistic history.

A booklet featuring texts by Virginia Moon and scholar Britta Erickson, published by LACMA, will also be presented in conjunction with the exhibition and will be available at the LACMA Store.

Exhibition Highlights

Diamond Mountain, 2004

The Diamond Mountain range, located in present-day North Korea, is one of the most revered mountain ranges on the Korean Peninsula. Since the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910), before the peninsula was divided, painters often paid homage to Diamond Mountain with realistic, traditional renderings. This re-imagined landscape, with its bold, dynamic strokes, demonstrates Park’s ability to learn from the old masters while being open to contemporary experimentation.

Namsan in Gyeongju, 2017

Namsan is considered a sacred site in Gyeongju, the capital of the Silla kingdom (57 BCE–935 CE). In this work, Park, whose home is in Gyeongju, incorporates a multitude of sculptures and culturally important architectural structures—such as Cheomseongdae, the oldest surviving astronomical observatory in Asia—and demonstrates a masterful versatility of forms and brushwork with an undulating abstract style.

Snow at Bulguk Temple, 1996

This landscape featuring Bulguk Temple (a National Treasure and a UNESCO World Heritage site constructed in 774 CE) exemplifies Park's consciousness of the medium. With fine brushstrokes, he uses negative space to capture the serenity and silence of a scene blanketed in fresh snow. After taking a trip to study in New York, Park lodged at Bulguk Temple for about one year. It was during this time that he witnessed snow falling in Gyeongju, which is located over 170 miles southeast of Seoul, and created this immersive work whose scale invites viewers to imagine themselves in the landscape.

Credit:

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About LACMA

Located on the Pacific Rim, LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of more than 147,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe. Committed to showcasing a multitude of art histories, LACMA exhibits and interprets works of art from new and unexpected points of view that are informed by the region's rich cultural heritage and diverse population. LACMA's spirit of experimentation is reflected in its work with artists, technologists, and thought leaders as well as in its regional, national, and global partnerships to share collections and programs, create pioneering initiatives, and engage new audiences.

Image captions: Park Dae Sung, *Blue Mountain and White Cloud*, 2013, © Park Dae Sung, photo courtesy of the artist; Park Dae Sung, *Snow at Bulguk Temple*, 1996, © Park Dae Sung, photo courtesy of the artist

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