

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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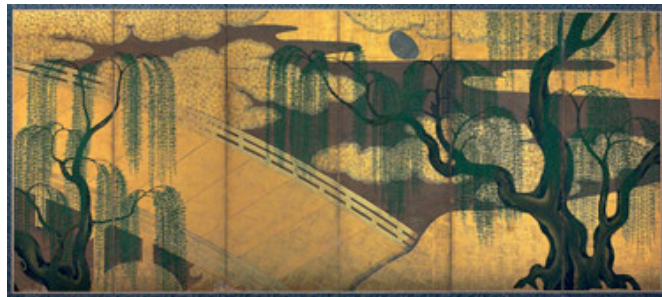
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EXQUISITE JAPANESE SCREENS UNFOLD AT THE ART INSTITUTE

**Beyond Golden Clouds Showcases Traditional and Contemporary Masterpieces from
the Art Institute of Chicago and the Saint Louis Art Museum Collections**

The Art Institute of Chicago and the Saint Louis Art Museum have collaborated on a major exhibition that showcases the rarely seen masterpieces of Japanese screens from both museums' permanent



collections. ***Beyond Golden Clouds: Japanese Screens from the Art Institute of Chicago and the Saint Louis Art Museum***—on view at the Art Institute's Regenstein Hall from **June 26 through September 27, 2009**—reveals the delicate dynamism of the screen format, its lasting significance in Japan, and its consistent appeal around the world. The exhibition, which will be shown at both museums, will include 21 of the most important screens or pairs of screens from the Art Institute and 13 from the Saint Louis Art Museum. Due to their fragility and sensitivity to light, these screens are rarely seen in such a large presentation. To protect them, the works will be featured at the Art Institute in two rotations, one that begins on June 26 and a second installation that begins on August 15.

The Japanese screen, or *byōbu*, has been an object of perpetual fascination in the West since Europeans had their first glimpse of these expansive, folding paintings in the sixteenth century. Part utilitarian object and part creative expression of the highest order, Japanese screens, then as now, connote status as well as aesthetic sensibility and, because of their

uniqueness, have come to symbolize Japan itself. Yet despite the long-held interest in screens, scholarship regarding the form has been almost silent on the role of the screen as an object—that is, a freestanding, framed partition usually meant to be viewed folded. Unlike any other painting format in Japan, the production of a folding screen carries with it particular compositional concerns resulting from the use of hinged panels and from its fusion of painting and craft techniques for the surface, brocade borders, lacquer frames, and metal fixtures. *Byōbu* have also had a wide range of important functions—from displays at special occasions to their integral roles in larger decorative programs at specific locations to their use as luxury gifts.

Beyond Golden Clouds offers a comprehensive view of the art of the folding screen: the place of screens as functional works of art; their characteristic materials and painting techniques; their development in Japan and collection in the West; and their influence on the art of other cultures. The exhibition also examines the “world within the screen”: the representation by Japanese artists of the country’s tradition and culture as well as the worlds of fantasy, literature, the sacred, and the foreign. Because their size allows for artists to create sweeping visions, larger than those in most other painting formats, the screens occupy a distinctive position in Japanese culture, also examined in the exhibition.

Unlike exhibitions of Japanese screens in the past, *Beyond Golden Clouds* includes a range of works from pre-Meiji era (1868-1912) ink paintings to modern day installation pieces. This exhibition celebrates the possibilities of the screen format in a way only the collaboration of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Saint Louis Art Museum could achieve, drawing as it does on the Art Institute’s strength in decorative and iconic screens of the 17th century and Saint Louis’s pivotal calligraphic screens and contemporary works. In terms of media, *Beyond Golden Clouds* is unprecedented in its inclusion of traditional works on paper or silk alongside contemporary screens made up of ceramic panels and varnished panels resembling lacquer.

Highlights of *Beyond Golden Clouds* include a pair of screens depicting a bustling ink landscape by Sesson Shukei (c.1490-after 1577), the earliest work on display. *Willow Bridge and Waterwheel* by Hasegawa Soya is a tour de force of the art of the folding screen, produced during the format’s golden age in the seventeenth century. Representing the screen’s modern and contemporary eras are Yamakawa Shuho’s entrancing *Relaxing in the*

Shade of 1933 and Kayama Matazo's powerful *Star Festival* of 1968. Morita Shiryu's *Dragon Knows Dragon* makes use of nontraditional materials; it is a calligraphic work in which the characters appear in gold on a black surface that shines with the finish of lacquer.

A fully illustrated, 216-page catalogue of the same title, published by Yale University Press, accompanies the exhibition. Enlightening essays by important scholars offer a "state-of-the-field" overview that covers such topics as the emergence of screens as an art form and a novel discussion of the relationship of Japanese screens to those made in other countries. Edited by Janice Katz, Roger L. Weston Associate Curator of Japanese Art at the Art Institute of Chicago, the book includes essays by Philip K. Hu, Janice Katz, Tamamushi Satoko, and Alicia Volk, and contributions by Fumiko E. Cranston, Elizabeth Lillehoj, Yukio Lippit, Melissa McCormick, and Hans Bjarne Thomsen. The book is available June 26, 2009, in the Art Institute's Museum Shop.

Beyond Golden Clouds: Japanese Screens from the Art Institute of Chicago and the Saint Louis Art Museum is organized by the Art Institute of Chicago and the Saint Louis Art Museum. After its Chicago presentation, the exhibition will be on view at the Saint Louis Art Museum from October 18, 2009, through January 3, 2010. The exhibition is curated by Janice Katz, Roger L. Weston Associate Curator of Japanese Art at the Art Institute. Support for *Beyond Golden Clouds* was generously provided in part by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

IMAGE: Hasegawa Soya. *Willow Bridge and Waterwheel*, c. 1650. Kate S. Buckingham and Frederick W. Renshaw endowments.

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MUSEUM HOURS

10:30 am–5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

10:30 am–8:00 pm Thursday

10:00 am–5:00 pm Saturday, Sunday

TARGET FREE THURSDAY EVENINGS AFTER 5:00 pm

SUMMER HOURS (from Memorial Day to Labor Day)

10:30 am–5:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

10:30 am–9:00 pm Thursday, Friday

10:00 am–5:00 pm Saturday, Sunday

TARGET FREE SUMMER EVENINGS THURSDAY AND FRIDAY AFTER 5:00 pm

FREE FEBRUARY 1 TO 28

Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

Please check www.artinstituteofchicago.org before your visit.

ADMISSION

Adults \$18.00 Includes all special exhibitions and coat check

Children 14 and over, students, and seniors \$12.00 Includes all special exhibitions and coat check

Chicago residents receive a \$2.00 discount with proof of residency

Children under 14 always free

Members always free

Free Evenings are free to all. City of Chicago residents with Chicago Public Library cards can borrow a "Museum Passport" card from any library branch for free general admission to the nine members of Museums in the Park, including the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Art Institute of Chicago is a museum in Chicago's Grant Park, located across from Millennium Park. Visitors can enter the museum via the Michigan Avenue entrance or the Millennium Park entrance on Monroe Street.