

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sasha Ali
Manager, Exhibitions & Communications
sasha@cafam.org | 323.937.4230 x 25



Yamaguchi Ryuun, *Fire*, bamboo and rattan, 2006. Courtesy of the Cotsen Collection.
Photo: Susan Einstein



Akio Hizume, *Fibonacci Tunnel*, site-specific installation, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.

BAMBOO

May 27 - September 9, 2018

LOS ANGELES - The Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) presents *Bamboo*, a group presentation of thirty historical and contemporary works that explore **the trajectory of Japanese bamboo basketry and sculpture**. Drawn mostly from the Los Angeles-based Cotsen Collection, this exhibition reflects the evolution of the a unique art form, **from fine Chinese-style tea ceremony baskets to striking contemporary sculptures**. A large-scale, site-specific installation by Japan-based artist and architect Akio Hizume evokes the possibilities of bamboo as an artistic material. The exhibition will be on view May 27 - September 9, 2018.

Fine bamboo basketry gained a foothold in Japanese culture during Japan's medieval period (1185-1573 CE) as the tea ceremony was adapted from China and became an important part of Japanese lifestyle. The demand for fine Chinese-style bamboo tea and flower arranging vessels resulted in numerous talented artists and apprentices devoted to the art form. Though earlier artists were emulating Chinese forms, by the mid-nineteenth century Japanese bamboo artists were making artist-signed baskets with a distinctly Japanese aesthetic that embraced the imperfect and organic simplicity known as wabi-sabi. From the twentieth century to present day, **bamboo basketry became less functional and more radically sculptural**.

"Bamboo is a beautiful and multi-faceted material, and this centuries-old art form has continued to survive due to artists' dedication to material and innovation," **says CAFAM executive director Suzanne Isken**. "We are excited to share these dynamic and unique forms with the greater public and are especially grateful to the Cotsen Foundation for Academic Research and Japan Foundation, Los Angeles for their collaboration in bringing this exhibition to light."

Bamboo is an expressive material that is challenging to work with, involving complex weaving, plaiting, dyeing, bending, and knotting. Though early artists learned through apprenticeship and were part of artist lineages, present-day artists are often self-taught and begin learning through university programs. Included in the exhibition are two works by **Shono Shounsai** (1904-1974), the first bamboo artist named a Living National Treasure (1967) by the Japanese government. Artist **Yamaguchi Ryuun**, noted for his voluminous bamboo forms, apprenticed with Shounsai and is active in teaching a new generation of bamboo artists. Though the art form mostly passed down to male practitioners, there are a small number of women artists working today. These include **Kajiwara Aya** and **Tanabe Mitsuko**, who both studied the art form after marrying into families of bamboo artists.

Architect and artist **Akio Hizume's** *Fibonacci Tunnel* (2018) is an architectural installation that shows new directions in bamboo artistry. Made entirely of bamboo poles and stakes, the large tunnel incorporates the geometric principles of the golden ratio and Fibonacci sequence and is meant for visitors to walk through. Hizume will lead a workshop at the museum during the course of the exhibition.

As the importance of the tea ceremony declined in Japan during the last century, bamboo basketry was no longer a sustainable enterprise for artists. Collector Lloyd Cotsen saw a decline in the artistic legacy and created a competition for young bamboo artists that took place from 2000 to 2007. The competition helped revive contemporary bamboo basketry and has encouraged a new generation of artists to expand and innovate the art form.



Ueno Masao, *Memories From the Sea*, bamboo basketry sculpture, 2006. Courtesy of the Cotsen Collection. Photo: Susan Einstein



Honma Hideaki, *Sign of Wind*, bamboo basketry sculpture, 2002. Courtesy of the Cotsen Collection. Photo: Susan Einstein

OPENING RECEPTION

An opening reception for *Bamboo* takes place on Saturday, May 26, 2018 from 6:00-9:00PM. The reception is free for CAFAM members and open to the public for a \$12 entry fee.

CREDITS

Bamboo is organized by CAFAM exhibitions curator Holly Jerger and Lyssa Stapleton, curator of the Cotsen Collection, at the Craft & Folk Art Museum.

This exhibition is supported by Japan Foundation, Los Angeles, with additional support from the Pasadena Art Alliance.

PROGRAMS

CAFAM will offer a full slate of exhibition-related programs, including artist-led workshops, demonstrations, and gallery walkthroughs with curators. Details can be found at www.cafam.org/programs

Seeing Stars: A Bamboo Sculpture Workshop with Akio Hizume

Sunday, May 20 | 1:00 - 3:00PM | \$50 / \$40 members

Bamboo: Gallery Talk with Lyssa Stapleton and Holly Jerger

Sunday, July 15 | 1:00PM

Situated on historic Museum Row since 1965, the **Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM)** is an invaluable contributor to Los Angeles culture, exhibiting current artists with intriguing perspectives and distinctive practices. Exploring the leading edge of craft, art, and design, CAFAM gives audience to diverse makers and artists whose work is often not represented in larger art institutions. The museum is a place to see art and make art — all under one roof. CAFAM coordinates a robust roster of hands-on workshops led by professional artists and makers. The intimate, atypical museum space and independent spirit at CAFAM combine to create an atmosphere of excitement and innovation, where people in Los Angeles deepen their relationships to art, creativity, and one another. For more information, visit www.cafam.org

Location: 5814 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Admission: FREE every Sunday Regularly: \$7 for adults; \$5 for students, teachers, and seniors; free for CAFAM members

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11AM to 5PM; Saturday & Sunday, 11AM to 6PM; closed Mondays. Every first Thursday of the month, extended hours 6:30 - 9:30PM.