



Northern Illinois University

NIU Art Museum

Press Release

Contact: Stuart W. Henn, Coordinator of Marketing and Education
815-753-1936 / email: shenn1@niu.edu

For Immediate Release

***Traditions Transfigured: The Noh Masks of Bidou Yamaguchi* on exhibition at the Northern Illinois University Art Museum**

DeKalb, IL – Northern Illinois University Art Museum is excited to present ***Traditions Transfigured: The Noh Masks of Bidou Yamaguchi***, a national traveling exhibition organized by the University Art Museum at California State University Long Beach, **opening March 24** at the Museum in Altgeld Hall on Northern Illinois University's DeKalb campus and **running through May 22, 2015**. Artist **Bidou Yamaguchi** will be present to discuss his work during a public **Artist Talk, Tuesday, March 24 at 5 p.m. in Altgeld Hall, room 315** prior to the exhibition's **reception from 6 – 8 p.m.** Join us then to celebrate the opening of the exhibition with live musical performance of traditional Japanese chamber music by members of the **Chicago Koto Group** playing shakuhachi (Japanese flute) and koto (Japanese zither) instruments.

The exhibition features sculptural works from master Noh mask carver and contemporary artist Bidou Yamaguchi. As a purveyor of masks for the Hōshō School of Noh, Bidou's masterfully carved masks are used in the highly stylized and formalized musical dramas of Japanese Noh Theater. But Bidou's other work in the exhibition departs from traditional Noh masks and borrows recognizable historic portraits. The subject matter of these masks are taken not from traditional Noh drama characters, but rather, iconic portraits from the European art historical canon and Kabuki actor portraits. The masks transfigure popular historic female portraits in oil into the three-dimensional Noh mask medium. This combination creates an uncanny mix of the familiar with the freshness of Bidou's work. The inclusion of Kabuki actor portraits also contrasts the formal Noh Theater with the informal, comic Kabuki plays in Japan. Bidou's work is a product of a highly skilled, technical craftsman and contemporary artist.

Bidou Yamaguchi himself represents two world's; simultaneously he is part of contemporary art training formally studying as an artist and designer in a modern art school and yet he is also a part of Japan's historic apprentice system where he trained with a master in the highly formalized, traditional structure before attaining the rank of master himself. The dual nature of his training bridges both the historic Noh mask making practice and the artistic practice of contemporary art.

He was born Yamaguchi Hiroki (b. 1970) in Fukuoka, Japan and attended the Kuwasawa Design School in Tokyo where he studied sculpture and graphic design. After working in the graphic design industry in Japan, Yamaguchi decided to pursue artistic expression outside of this commercial context and after a period of experimentation and self-taught Noh mask carving, Yamaguchi apprenticed with master carver Ogawa Gendou, who granted Yamaguchi master status and presented him with the art name Bidō (Bidou) in 1996. In 1998, Bidou was granted purveyor status of masks to the Hōshō School of Noh signifying acceptance into the formalized world of traditional Noh Theater.

- MORE -

Bidou's success in the contemporary artworld is evident as his works are in the permanent collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota; the Museum of Nihon University, Tokyo; the Target Corporation's collection, Minnesota; and Houshou School, Tokyo. His work has also been exhibited at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Portland Art Museum; Yamaguchi has also lectured throughout the United States and Europe.

The exhibition is on display at the NIU Art Museum through May 22, 2015. Visitors may find more information about this exhibition, associated events, and educational programming by visiting www.niu.edu/artmuseum or calling 815-753-1936.

About this Exhibition

This national traveling exhibition was organized by the University Art Museum at California State University Long Beach in conjunction with Dr. Kendall H. Brown. Major support has been provided by the McLeod Family Foundation and a grant from Instructional Related Activities at CSULB.

The exhibition installation at the NIU Art Museum was made possible through generous support from Ms. Patricia Anne Burke, the PLB Honor Fund, and Mr. Richard F. Grott. Lead funding was also provided by The Elizabeth Allen Visiting Scholars in Art History Fund and the Art History Division at NIU. Additional support has come from the Illinois Arts Council Agency; the Dean's Circle of the College of Visual and Performing Arts; and the Friends of the NIU Art Museum.

Associated Events and Programs

Public Artist Talk by Bidou Yamaguchi

Tuesday, March 24, 5 - 6 p.m., Altgeld Hall 315

Artist Bidou Yamaguchi discusses his work in the national traveling exhibition *Traditions Transfigured: the Noh Masks of Bidou Yamaguchi* on display at the NIU Art Museum, Tuesday March 24 through May 22, 2015.

Opening Reception

Tuesday, March 24, 6 - 8 p.m., Art Museum

Opening Reception for *Traditions Transfigured: The Noh Masks of Bidou Yamaguchi* with live musical performance by members of the Chicago Koto Group playing traditional Japanese chamber music on shakuhachi (Japanese flute) and koto (Japanese zither).

Japanese Prints of the Art Institute of Chicago followed by shopping trip to Mitsuwa Marketplace in Arlington Heights

Friday, April 17, 2015

Get-on-the-Bus Trip with private viewing of highlights from the Japanese print collections at the Art Institute of Chicago with Janice Katz, the Roger L. Weston Associate Curator of Japanese Art. Opportunity to discover more about Japanese culture with a shopping excursion to the extensive Japanese Mitsuwa Market. Bus departs NIU School of Art Parking Lot at 8:30 a.m. with return arrival at 6:45 p.m.

Transportation fees: NIU Art Museum Members: \$12; St/Sr non member: \$15; Other: \$18. *Museum admission, meals, and incidentals on your own.* AIC members have free admission to the Art Institute; Museum General ticket admission: Adult: \$23; St/Sr: \$17. *Limited to 20 participants. Pre-registration/Payment deadline: Wednesday, 04/01/15.*

Slide Lecture "The Afterlife of Appropriation"

Wednesday, April 22, 5 - 6 p.m., Altgeld 315

"The Afterlife of Appropriation" a slide lecture presented by Sarah Evans, Assistant Professor of Art History, NIU, who examines art of the 1970s and its contributions to postmodernism, will discuss appropriation art which reuses and references borrowed images.

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Make Your Own Mask

Saturday, April 25, 1 – 4 p.m., Art Museum

Mask-making Workshop for 2015 Artigas! with gallery component followed by hands-on activity led by Eric Fuertes of Barb City Initiative. Age 13 and up. Limited participants and pre-registration required. Registration details please call 815-753-1936.

Film Screening and Discussion of Akira Kurasawa's 1957 classic *Throne of Blood*

Thursday, April 30, 7 - 10 p.m., Egyptian Theatre, 135 N. Second Street, DeKalb

Film screening and discussion with NIU History and Language Professors E. Taylor Atkins and John R. Bentley moderating this Japanese re-interpretation of Macbeth. \$7 adults; \$5 student/senior/NIU Art Museum Member. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford

Saturday, May 30

Get-On-The-Bus Trip with Teppanyaki lunch at a Japanese restaurant followed by afternoon at the glorious Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford ranked among the highest quality and most authentic Japanese gardens in North America. Bus departs NIU School of Art Parking Lot at 10:00 a.m.; Return arrival at 6:00 p.m. Transportation and Garden admission included: NIU Art Museum Members: \$20; St/Sr non member: \$22; Other: \$25. Lunch costs and incidentals on your own. Please note: Garden paths are uneven. *Registration/Payment deadline: Thursday, 05/21/15.*

Images



Bidou Yamaguchi. *Mona Lisa*, 2007. Japanese cypress, seashell, natural pigment, Japanese lacquer; (8.27x5.31x2.76 in.). Courtesy of Kelly Sutherlin McLeod and Steve McLeod Collection. © Bidou Yamaguchi.



Bidou Yamaguchi. *Zō-onna* (Middle-Age Woman), 1998. Japanese cypress, seashell, natural pigment, Japanese lacquer; (8.27x5.31x2.76 in.). Courtesy of Kelly Sutherlin McLeod and Steve McLeod Collection. © Bidou Yamaguchi.



Tōshūsai Sharaku. *Ōtani Oniji III as the Retainer Edobei (Sansei Ōtani Oniji no yakko Edobei)*, 1794. Ink and pigment on paper, reprinted by Adachi, 1940. (15.38x10.25 in.). Courtesy of Pacific Asia Museum. Gift of Peter Ries.



Bidou Yamaguchi. *Edobei*, 2011. Japanese cypress, seashell, natural pigment, Japanese lacquer; (8.27x5.51x3.54 in.). Courtesy of Sebastian Izzard, LLC. © Bidou Yamaguchi.

High-resolution images will be sent as a separate attachment.

Also on display

NIU Art Museum's spring exhibition series resonates around themes of cross cultural influence between Japanese and European and American fine art and popular culture. Also on display at the Museum: *Amerimanga! Convention and Expression* which showcases American comics that have been aesthetically influenced by Japanese manga. The Museum hopes to explore through these exhibitions our shrinking world and the windows through which we examine different cultures as well as emulate them. The two exhibitions demonstrate cross-influence and broadened perspectives as artists both embrace tradition and experiment with convention while seeking out their individual expressions.

About the NIU Art Museum

The NIU Art Museum contributes to the University's educational curriculum and provides opportunities for art education and cultural enrichment throughout the community. The Museum serves to educate, preserve, exhibit, and enlighten by balancing the challenges of contemporary art with the riches of traditional media for a comprehensive examination of visual culture.

The exhibitions and programs of the NIU Art Museum are sponsored in part by the Illinois Arts Council Agency; the Dean's Circle of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, NIU Foundation; and the Friends of the NIU Art Museum.

Gallery Hours

Tuesday through Friday 10 am – 5 pm and Saturday 12 – 4 pm; by appointment for group tours which can be arranged by visiting www.niu.edu/artmuseum or calling 815-753-1936.

Exhibitions are open to the public and admission is **FREE**.

The NIU Art Museum is located on the first floor, west end of Altgeld Hall, located on the corner of College Avenue and Castle Drives on the campus of Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL. Parking is available in the Carroll Avenue Visitor's Pay Lot; handicapped and metered spots in front of Altgeld Hall; and during public receptions and programs in Lot 3 northeast of Gilbert Drive and College Avenue. Campus parking is free on weekends and after 7 p.m. weeknights.

More information about the exhibitions, events, and educational programming at the NIU Art Museum may be found by visiting www.niu.edu/artmuseum or calling 815-753-1936.

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NIU Art Museum

Altgeld Hall 116, First Floor, West End

1425 W. Lincoln Hwy., Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115, 815-753-1936

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