PRESS RELEASE
Minneapolis Institute of Art To Present First Complete Retrospective of Japanese Painter Minol Araki

Minneapolis, September 13, 2017—The Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) will present the first complete retrospective of Japanese painter Minol Araki (1928–2010). Best known as an industrial designer, Araki was also a prolific amateur ink painter active in Tokyo, Taipei, Hong Kong, and New York. Straddling notions of Chinese and Japanese art, East and West, design and art, and amateur and professional, Araki’s immense body of work reflects his deep engagement with traditional East Asian ink painting and an innovative reimagining of that tradition. “Boundless Peaks: Ink Paintings by Minol Araki” will be on view October 7, 2017, through June 24, 2018.

The exhibition centers on five monumental paintings created by Araki in the 1980s and early 90s. These multi-panel, modular paintings each stretch more than 70 feet in length and depict monochrome and polychrome landscapes, dragons flying among clouds, playful snow monkeys, and a luxuriant lotus pond. Accompanied by a selection of earlier and later works, each painting presents a distinct facet of Araki’s work: design and modularity, his trademark splashed-ink-and-color technique learned from his mentor Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), his fixation on the Chinese painter Zhu Da (better known as Bada Shanren, c. 1626–1705), and his delayed interest in modern Japanese painting.

“Araki’s lifelong approach to ink painting was one of relentless study and experimentation. The works in this show reflect both his fascination with classical Sino-Japanese ink painting and a concurrent attraction to the modern paintings and drawings he encountered during his world travels,” said Aaron Rio, PhD, the Andrew W. Mellon Assistant Curator of Japanese and Korean Art at Mia. “This exhibition presents the full scope of Araki’s artistic output—paintings that quote or recast old Chinese and Japanese paintings, portraits that unexpectedly merge Ben Shahn’s figures with the anthropomorphized birds of Zhu Da, and, of course, his dark, drippy, and deeply personal landscapes.”

Encompassing four galleries and more than 50 works by Araki drawn from Mia’s collection and a handful of private collectors, the exhibition also features a selection of works by Araki’s primary influences, including masterpieces by the aforementioned Zhang Daqian and Zhu Da lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Also included are objects from Araki’s career in industrial design—modular housewares, perpetual calendars, desk organizers, and other innovative household products.

A fully illustrated catalogue, featuring an essay by curator Aaron Rio and deluxe foldouts of the five large-scale paintings, accompanies the exhibition and is available in The Store at Mia for $29.99.
About Minol Araki
Minol Araki was born in Japanese-occupied Manchuria in 1928 to Japanese parents. As a child in China, he trained in traditional Chinese painting, but he turned his attention to graphic and industrial design after he was repatriated to Japan at the end of World War II. In Tokyo in the 1950s and early 60s, he studied with Japan’s leading modernist designers and associated with the postwar Tokyo avant-garde. A successful designer, Araki went on to establish a network of design studios in the 1960s, work that took him to cities throughout Asia and North America. In his forties, he first met and took as his painting mentor Zhang Daqian (1899–1983), considered the preeminent Chinese traditionalist painter of the modern age. Araki’s creative zenith came after Zhang’s death in 1983; over the following decade he created five monumental paintings that both demonstrate his mastery of Zhang’s trademark techniques and signal a shift toward modern Japanese painting techniques, an interest explored most fully in the last decade of his life. Araki’s work was previously exhibited at galleries in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Santa Fe, and New York, and in a traveling exhibition at the National Museum of History in Taipei, Taiwan, and the Phoenix Art Museum in 1999.

Related Programming
Programming will include In the Lotus Pond: The Life and Art of Minol Araki, an opening-day talk from the exhibition’s curator, Aaron Rio, on October 7, 2017, at 1:30 p.m. Additionally, Aida Yuen Wong—Nathan Cummings and Robert B. and Beatrice C. Mayer Chair in Fine Arts and Associate Professor of Fine Arts at Brandeis University—will present Four Meditations on Ink, a talk examining the medium of ink in modern East Asian art, on February 22, 2018, at 6:30 p.m. Admission for each program: $10, $5 for My Mia members, free for Asian Art Affinity Group members. Tickets: 612.870.3000; tickets.artsmia.org.

Support
Generous support for this program is provided by the Gale Family Endowment. Named for a generous gift from Alfred P. Gale, the Gale Family Endowment supports Mia’s efforts to reach a spectrum of audiences through a variety of programs, events, materials, exhibitions, and publications focused on its renowned collection of Asian Art.

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About The Minneapolis Institute Of Art
Home to more than 89,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of world history, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) inspires wonder, spurs creativity, and nourishes the imagination. With extraordinary exhibitions and one of the finest wide-ranging art collections in the country—Rembrandt to van Gogh, Monet to Matisse, Asian to African—Mia links the past to the present, enables global conversations, and offers an exceptional setting for inspiration.

General admission to Mia is always free. Some special exhibitions have a nominal admission fee.

Museum Hours
Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday 10am–5pm
Thursday, Friday 10am–9pm
Sunday 11am–5pm
Monday Closed
For more information, call +1 612 870 3000 or visit artsmia.org