

# USC Pacific Asia Museum

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### **USC PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM ANNOUNCES NEW ACQUISITION: MODERNIST KOREAN PAINTER PARK SOO-KEUN**

*"I have a humble belief that an artist should express the goodness in people. Therefore, what I express on canvas is not complex, but simple. I find a great joy in depicting grandparents, children and ordinary people that we find in our homes." – Park Soo-Keun*

(Pasadena, CA) – USC Pacific Asia Museum (USC PAM) is proud to announce the acquisition of a notable painting by Modernist Korean painter Park Soo-Keun (1914–1965). Donated by longtime Museum & USC Athletics patron, Mr. Herb Nootbaar, the USC PAM will be amongst the few institutions outside of Korea to own Park's work. This painting will add a great depth and quality to the museum's permanent collection, enhancing its status in the field.

Museum Members, the media and select V.I.P. guests are invited at the unveiling of the painting on Tuesday, November 17, 2015 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

### **About the artist:**

One of the most influential modernist painters in Korea, Park Soo-Keun, was a largely self-taught artist. Park is known for depictions of rural Korean men, women and children in intimate scales with thickly-built textured surfaces. His interest in depicting ordinary people was initially kindled by quiet images of peasants by the French painter Jean-François Millet (1814–1875). People engaged in mundane activities on his canvas seem to suggest the perseverance of the Koreans who lived through the difficulties of Japanese colonial period (1910–1945) and then the ensuing devastations of the Korean War (1950–53). Park's work was widely appreciated by Americans stationed in Seoul during the 1960s, and the artist maintained close relationship with Western patrons even after they went back to their country.

Because he did not receive a formal art education, some critics say Park's style is somewhat naïve, but his quote below indicates that he consciously deployed the style to resonate with his subject matter.

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Due to his short career that was shortened by his premature death, his body of work is quite small, no more than 400 paintings. He depicted unique beauty of Korean people through the characterization of simple shapes and lines with rough texture: although the rough surface texture, created by repeatedly layering and scraping the paint, delivers the sentiment of Korean people who went through tough times in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is a sense of warmth in his portrayal and palette that touches the viewer.

## **ABOUT USC PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM**

USC Pacific Asia Museum is Southern California's only museum exclusively devoted to the arts of Asia and the Pacific, and the only U.S. university museum dedicated to the subject. Since 1971, the museum's mission is to further intercultural understanding through the arts of Asia and the Pacific Islands.

Among many highlights in the Museum's history is the fact that USC Pacific Asia Museum presented the first North American exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art after the Cultural Revolution, including in 1987, *Beyond The Open Door: Contemporary Paintings from the People's Republic Of China* and in 1991, *I Don't Want To Play Cards with Cézanne and Other Works: Selections From The Chinese "New Wave" and "Avant-Garde" Art of the Eighties*. In the spring of 2016 the Museum again examines China, this time via its courtly art history by presenting the major travelling exhibition *Royal Taste: The Art of Princely Courts in Fifteenth Century China*.

For more information, please contact 626.449.2742 or visit [pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu](http://pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu)

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