USC Pacific Asia Museum Presents,
*Tsuruya Kōkei: Modern Kabuki Prints Revised & Revisited*
On view February 8, 2019 to July 14, 2019

PASADENA, CA (January 9, 2019) – USC Pacific Asia Museum is proud to announce the museum’s new exhibition, *Tsuruya Kōkei: Modern Kabuki Prints Revised & Revisited*, celebrating the 30th anniversary of this contemporary artist’s first solo show—held at PAM in spring 1989—Kokei is widely celebrated as one of Japan’s leading contemporary print artists. Organized by guest curator, Dr. Kendall Brown, Professor of Asian Art History in the School of Art at California State University Long Beach.

"Kokei’s work is relevant in at least two ways. First, it brilliantly shows how creative artists can innovate within even the richest traditions.” Said guest curator, Dr. Kendall Brown, “Second, his portraits of Kabuki actors and his own face suggest how identity is also constructed through shifting negotiation between the self we present and that seen by others."

USC Pacific Asia Museum Interim Director, Selma Holo said, "Tsuruya Kokei is the leading contemporary print maker in Japan, and USC Pacific Asia Museum had the foresight of presenting his prints thirty years ago, when he was lesser known outside of Japan. Flash forward thirty years later, and we are revisiting that ground breaking exhibition to showcase this now established artist that honors the past while making kabuki prints contemporary.”

**About exhibition:**
Known for his bold, even disturbing, portraits of Japan’s leading actors in a dynamic theatrical form, Tsuruya Kōkei responds to the idiosyncratic late-18th century kabuki prints by the great Sharaku. A master in his own right, Kōkei captures the intense color, movement and emotion of kabuki. Yet diverges from tradition by designing, carving and printing his own work. Using extremely delicate paper, his works juxtapose emotionally dynamic images with fragile materials to create objects of extraordinary power.

The exhibition presents an unprecedented complete collection of all of Kōkei’s actor prints from 1984-1993. To explore the broader contours of Kabuki actor prints, Kōkei’s work will be on view along with actor prints by Sharaku as well as two-dozen by contemporary Japanese and western artists.

The exhibition utilizes the complex issues of identity in Kabuki—where actors take on multiple roles and males take on female roles—to explore broader questions of self-definition and its representation. It includes several of Kōkei’s emotionally torqued self-portraits produced after he gave up actor prints in 2000. It concludes by examining how kabuki actor imagery has inspired pop images over the last 20 years, demonstrating the productive link between Japan’s historic ukiyo (floating world) and our own culture.

About Tsuruya Kokei:

Tsuruya Kōkei (b. 1946, real name Mitsui Gen) burst onto the Japanese art world in 1978 with self-carved and self-printed portraits of Kabuki actors. Although the grandson of the noted painter Nakazawa Hiromitsu, the self-taught Kōkei produced about a dozen actor portraits every year from 1978 to 2000, observing actors at Tokyo’s Kabukiza Theater and then selling his prints there or by subscription. The British Museum writes that Kōkei’s “perceptive, slightly grotesque studies of contemporary actors have made him the most notable artist of Kabuki prints” after World War II. His first foreign solo exhibition was at PAM in 1989. From 2000 he turned almost exclusively to self-portraits, but returned to printmaking in 2017.

**SCHEDULE OF RELATED PROGRAMMING**

**Thursday, February 7, 5:00pm**  
**PAM on Campus: Japanese Prints and Illustrated Books**  
**University Park Campus**  
Japanese woodblock prints were met with an enthusiastic audience in the United States in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Dr. Jeannie Kenmotsu, Assistant Curator of Japanese Art at Portland Art Museum, will explore the lesser known history of collecting Japanese art on the west coast. Free.

**Friday, February 8, 7:00pm - 8:30pm**  
**Conversation@PAM: Tsuruya Kōkei**  
In a rare special visit to Southern California, hear directly from exhibiting artist Tsuruya Kōkei about his creative inspirations and process in conversation with exhibition curator Dr. Kendall Brown. Sponsored by the Japan Foundation. Free with museum admission.

**Tuesday, February 19, 5:00pm - 6:30pm**  
**PAM on Campus: The Triumph of Calligraphy over Typography**  
**East Asian Library Seminar Room, Doheny Memorial Library, University Park Campus**
Dr. Ellis Tinios will consider the conjunction of linguistic, technological, and economic factors that lead to the adoption of xylography over typography for book production in early modern Japan and the impact of that choice on book design. Free.

**Wednesday, February 20, 9:00am – 12:00pm**
**PAM on Campus: Workshop on Early Modern Japanese Books**
**Feuchtwanger Room, Doheny Memorial Library, University Park Campus**
This workshop will offer an opportunity to become acquainted with the USC Library’s holdings of early modern Japanese woodblock-printed books. Topics that will be covered include the structure, production, distribution, and consumption of books in early modern Japan. Free.

**Sunday, March 10, 11:00am – 5:00pm**
**Free Second Sunday in March: Anime**
Discover the art of anime. Learn to draw your own anime-style characters, see an anime film, enjoy storytime for kids, and go on a docent tour of the special exhibition. Free.

**Thursday, March 21, 7:00pm – 8:30pm**
**Conversation@PAM: Japanese Aesthetics and National Identity**
Exploring the rich philosophical undercurrents of manga, woodblock prints, and Takashi Murakami’s theory of “superflat” art, USC Ph.D. candidate Ichigo Mina Kaneko will lead a discussion on the complexities of aesthetics and national identity. Free.

**Thursday, March 28, 7:00pm – 9:00pm**
**Performance@PAM: Kabuki**
Nakamura Gankyo (AKA Bandô Hirohichirô) and his students will perform selections from Kabuki plays as well as demonstrate what goes into creating a Kabuki character through performance. Audience participation encouraged! $15.

**Thursday, April 4 and 11, 7:00pm – 9:30pm**
**Performance@PAM: Artists at Play Readings**
Continuing its mission to present stories of underrepresented communities, Artists at Play develops and showcases new plays for the Los Angeles theatre community. In the midst of a national discussion on the lack of diversity and representation, local theatre collective Artists at Play will present two new plays by emerging playwrights of Asian descent with distinct voices that feature diverse casts. Free.

**Thursday, April 25, 4:30pm – 7:30pm**
**Educator Night@PAM**
K-12 educators are invited to explore the theme of identity and learn new ways of integrating art into their classroom. The evening will include a tour of the special exhibit, gallery activity, an artist led workshop, curriculum packet, and refreshments. Free, RSVP required.

**Saturday, April 27, 2:00pm - 4:00pm**
**Conversation@PAM: Faces, Identities, and the Visual Culture of the Selfie**
Popular discussions of selfies tend to revolve around celebrity life or moral anxieties about narcissism in contemporary culture. But by placing the selfie on a continuum of visual self-representation that includes portraiture and
photography, USC postdoctoral fellow Dr. Anirban Baishya examines its significance for articulating identity in a digital era. Free with museum admission.

**Friday, May 17, 6:00pm - 8:00pm**  
**Teen Night@PAM**  
Teens are invited to a special evening of exploring the museum with activities programmed by the USC PAM Teen Ambassadors. Enjoy food, music, art making, and more! Free and open to 6th-12th grade students with valid school ID. Free.

**Saturday, May 18, 1:00pm - 4:00pm**  
**Workshop@PAM: Manga**  
Comic book artist and writer Sylvia Leung will explore the similarities and differences between Western comics and manga storytelling in this interactive workshop for high school to adult participants. Some prior artistic experience recommended. Space is limited and all supplies provided. $20

**Thursday, May 30, 7:00pm - 8:30pm**  
**Conversation@PAM: Paul Binnie**  
Exhibited artist Paul Binnie will share his interest and background in Japanese woodblock prints and what inspired his contemporary interpretations of the art form. Free.

**Sunday, June 9, 11:00am - 5:00pm**  
**Free Second Sunday in June: Self-portrait**  
Explore the art of self-portraiture. Create your own artwork, participate in a contemporary artist’s performance, go on a docent led tour of the special exhibit, and listen to storytime for kids. Free.

**Thursday, June 13, 7:00pm - 9:00pm**  
**Workshop@PAM: Japanese Woodblock Printmaking Techniques**  
Learn the basics of relief woodblock carving and create your own print inspired by Japanese masters. Led by artist Kiyomi Fukui. Space is limited and all supplies provided. $20

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**About the 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. The museum holds a collection of more than 17,000 items from across Asia and the Pacific Islands, spanning more than 5,000 years.

**Admission:**

Members: Free; General Admission: $10; Students with I.D.: $7; Seniors (65+): $7; Children under 12: Free; USC Staff, Faculty & Students: Free; Admission is free every Thursday from 5pm to 8pm.

**Hours:**

Wednesday - Sunday: 11-5PM; Thursdays: 5-8PM; Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays

Find us online: pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu | Facebook @PacificAsiaMuseum | Instagram @USC_PAM | Twitter: @USCPAM #USCPAM

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Image credits:
Tsuruya Kōkei (b. 1946), Matsumoto Koshiro as Kamakura Kangoro, Japan, July 1991, Ink on Ganpi paper, USC Pacific Asia Museum Collection, Gift of Drs Aziz and Deanna Khan

Tsuruya Kōkei (b. 1946), Nakamura Tomijuro V as Todorokibo Shinsai in "Onna Shibaraku", Japan, July 1990, Ink and color on Ganpi Tori no Ko paper, USC Pacific Asia Museum Collection, Gift of Drs Aziz and Deanna Khan

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