

Basic Detail Report



Pair of Pheasants

Date

18th century

Primary Maker

Maruyama Okyo

Medium

Watercolor on silk, paper, wood, and ivory

Description

Hanging scroll - The 18th century in Japan saw the rise of a new school of painters who moved away from the

abstraction of their contemporaries toward a return to a careful observation of nature. The leader of the school was Maruyama Okyo, the son of a farmer, who trained under the Kano school in Kyoto. Okyo was interested in the naturalistic bird and flower painters of China, particularly the subtle masters of the Yuan dynasty, as well as in Western realistic art introduced into Japan by the Dutch. But in the end, he looked with a scientific eye to nature. The painting of "Pheasants" illustrates his style well. Every feather is carefully marked. Legs, feet and claws have an almost tactile realism. Heads turn as if alive. The bodies are right. Within the realism, however, he enjoys playing off the strong Japanese tendency to pattern. Feathers transform easily into repeated decorative designs. The contours of the bodies are smooth contoured lines. One of the well known features of his style is the use of dramatic and unaffected compositional arrangements. The close togetherness of these two pheasants might symbolize a bond representing maternal love and protection. This artist was a praised painter of the royal court and went on to achieve a realistic style in his painting. His techniques were applied to a style taught to pupils. Okyo had many followers.

Dimensions

Object: 49 1/4 × 22 1/2 × 7/8" (125.1 × 57.2 × 2.2 cm)