



Incense Burner (Koro)

Date

1873-1915

Medium

Bronze and gilt

Description

This koro, the Japanese word for incense burner, was produced for export during the Golden Age of Expositions in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. During this period, there was a coordinated effort by the Meiji government for Japanese objects sold at expositions to use government-researched designs and motifs known to be popular in the west, though this was more generally reserved for furniture items. The golden eagle finial topping this koro was only rarely used as a motif until the Meiji era, but eagles became commonplace following a welcome reception in the west where it is a symbol of national identity in both Germany and the United States. Perhaps the most famous Japanese bronze caster of the time, Suzuki Chokichi, was highly renowned for his ability to cast birds in bronze. The twelve falcons he cast for the

World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago in 1893 indicate an incredible ability to capture birds in metal, something also seen in this koro and another possibly made by Chokichi in the Khalili collections. Other elements seem more confused though, the winged-dragon handles appear to have no antecedent in Japanese art whatsoever and the two panels depicting rural Japanese life do not feature the traditional elongated bodies of Japanese figures.

Dimensions

83 × 33 × 23 in. (210.8 × 83.8 × 58.4 cm)