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BUILDING BRIDGES IN AN AGE OF WALLS

A Japanese garden in Portland, Oregon Paves a Path to Peace

Portland, Oregon: The world today is challenging peaceful coexistence, with each other and with the natural world. An organization in Portland, Oregon believes it can help. Portland Japanese Garden is proclaiming 2020 the Year of Peace by way of Nagasaki and Hiroshima and is dedicating all its programming to the idea. Selecting those two Japanese cities was no coincidence: 2020 marks the 75th anniversary since the end of the World War II.

“What happened 75 years ago in that devastating war was the most disastrous result of what happens when we stop trying to understand one another” says Steve Bloom, Portland Japanese Garden’s CEO. “Through our garden and our programs, we can reach a global audience. We can’t solve people’s problems for them, but we can help guide them to answers. It’s what our organization was founded on in 1963 and it is what our programs will do in this landmark year.”



In 2020, Portland Japanese Garden will host a wide array of cultural programs – both in Portland and around the world – to share some of the most significant lessons that the Garden has learned over its 55-year history.



There will be a presentation of Peace Lanterns to Hiroshima and Nagasaki from Portland Japanese Garden. The lanterns are exact replicas of a gift from Yokohama to the city of Portland in 1954 on the first merchant ship from Japan after World War II. The lantern bears the inscription “*Casting the Light of Everlasting Peace.*” The presentations will be coupled with a symposium in Nagasaki convening global peace ambassadors to discuss how to approach peace in the modern age.

This summer, Portland Japanese Garden will host the first ever Collegiate Peace Gathering, inviting students from universities across the United States to discuss how cultural diversity plays a role in the path to sustainability and peace.

On September 21, the United Nations designated International Day of Peace, a Peace Tea Ceremony will take place simultaneously in Kengo Kuma designed teahouses across the globe linking multiple cities and uniting different races, cultures, and ethnicities.

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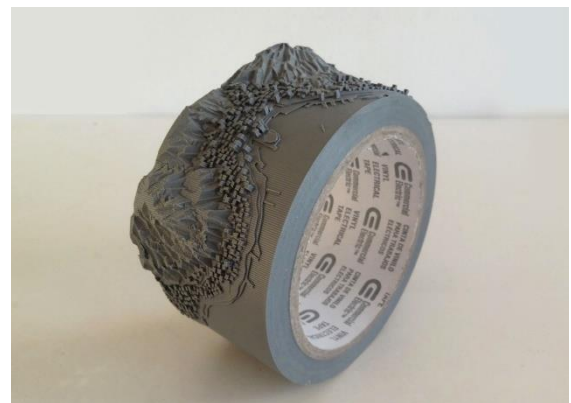


In October, Portland Japanese Garden will partner with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in London to present an International Symposium of Peace through Gardens. The two organizations will jointly conduct a 3-day forum for global discussion on peace and garden culture during Kew's *Japan Chrysanthemum Festival 2020* where an array of Japanese cultural and art forms in addition to performances will be showcased along with interactive workshops and lectures.

“Emerging from a visit to a Japanese garden inevitably helps the visitor to see the world around him or her with fresh eyes”

- Marcus du Sautoy, “The Geometry of Nature,”
excerpt from *The Japanese Garden* by Sophie Walker

Throughout the year, Portland Japanese Garden’s on-site programming will showcase lecturers and artists dedicated to seeking peace and with ties to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This includes bringing in Takahiro Iwasaki, (*Constructed Worlds* art exhibition from 5/30 – 7/12) Hiroshima-born artist who transforms everyday materials such as toothbrushes or towels into delicate landscapes, inviting viewers to look at things from various perspectives.



© Takahiro Iwasaki, *Duct Tape Sculpture, Geoeye (Victoria Peak)*, courtesy of [Urano](#)

“Seeing the world from another’s perspective is what Portland Japanese Garden was founded upon. It is what moves people to peace when they visit and it’s the keystone in building a bridge to peace” says Akihito Nakanishi, Portland Japanese Garden Curator

of Culture, Art, and Education. “Like a garden, peace requires cultivation. We must actively make choices that help it flourish. Just like the Olympics, an incredible symbol of global peace, we want our thematic focus on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to stimulate ideas and conversations around this necessary topic. Most importantly, we want to showcase what happens when humans choose to move beyond hurt to choose peace and unity.”

About Portland Japanese Garden:

Portland Japanese Garden is a nonprofit organization originally founded in 1963 as a place for cross-cultural understanding following World War II. It has become a global destination for Japanese art, nature, and peace in Portland, Oregon. It is considered the most authentic Japanese garden outside of Japan and the foremost Japanese cultural organization in North America.

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