

# Art in the Garden

Michihiro Kosuge:  
The Quiet Voice of Metal & Stone

Winter 2008



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The quiet presence of stone in a Japanese garden evokes a depth and strength of spirit that speaks directly to the heart. In ancient times, stones of extraordinary shape or size were called *iwakura*—revered as the dwelling places of the gods. The careful selection and proper placement of stone is perhaps the single most important consideration in the creation of a garden that is itself a work of art. The early tea masters appropriated carved stone temple lanterns for the quiet touch of antiquity they added to the gardens of their tea houses.

For centuries, sculptors from both Eastern and Western art traditions have been working with the incomparable qualities of stone. The work of Tokyo-born artist Michihiro Kosuge bridges both worlds in a unique visual language all his own. This exhibition of his work in both metal and stone launches the first of the new four-part Art in the Garden series of exhibitions to be held throughout the year in

celebration of the four seasons at the Portland Japanese Garden.

Kosuge has been a prominent sculptor on the West Coast art scene since receiving his Master of Fine Arts degree from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1970. As former Chairman of the Department of Fine Art at Portland State University, Professor Kosuge has had major impact on more than one generation of young artists in the region, bringing a broad international perspective to both his art and his classroom.

He is noted for the many commissioned works of outdoor public art at sites throughout the region, and his work has been shown in over 100 exhibitions over his accomplished career. The work in this exhibition spans that career and speaks eloquently of his interest in the nature and use of materials and surface, transforming the natural qualities of

metal and stone (primarily Columbia River basalt and red granite from Oregon, Washington, and California) with the carefully considered touch of the stonecutter's tools.

With a blend of rough natural surfaces and smoothly polished shapes, his work embraces nature while it acknowledges the subtle touch of humanity, reflecting the aesthetic of the Japanese garden itself.



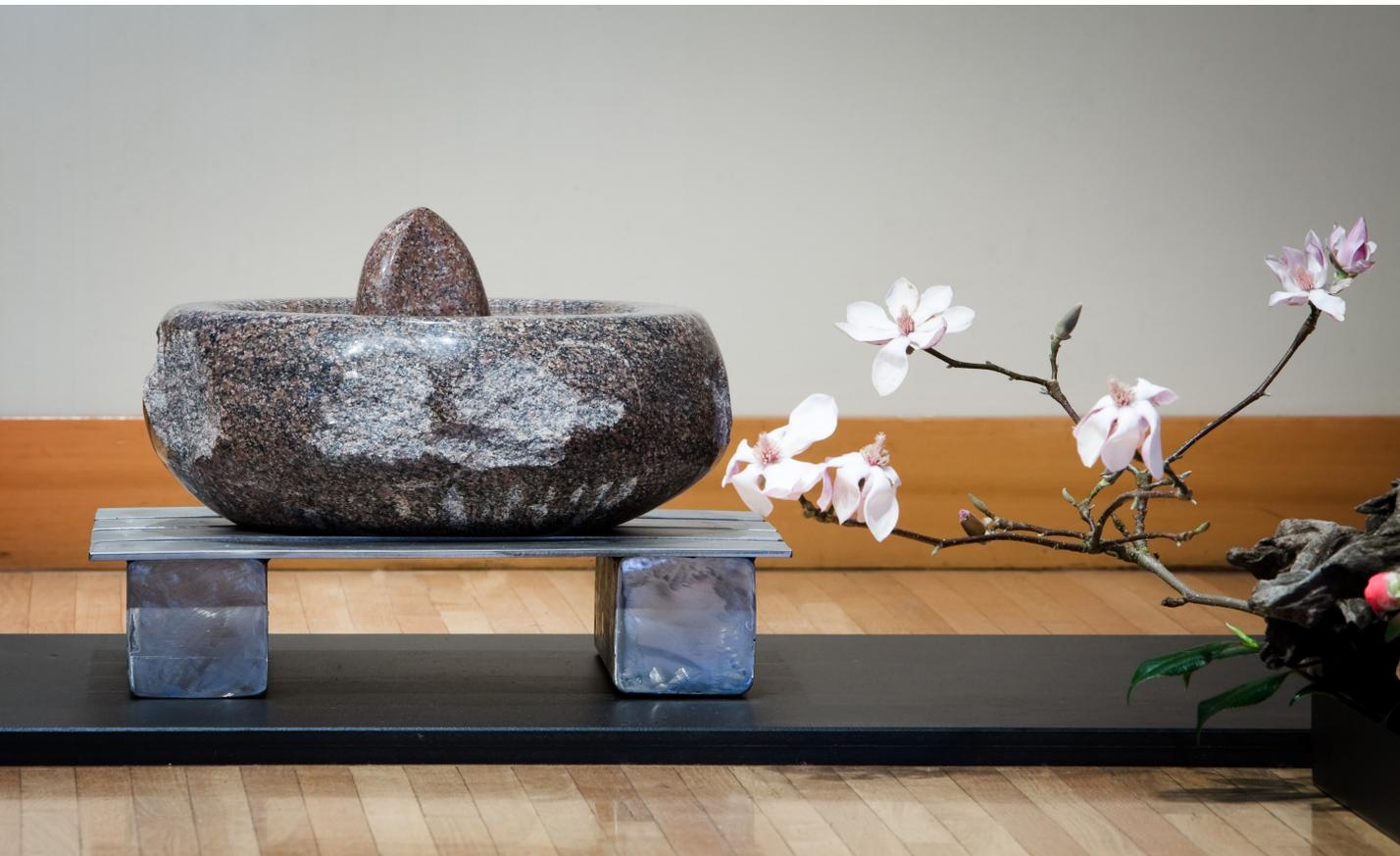
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📷 All Photos: Jonathan Ley

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