

Rui Sasaki at the Portland Japanese Garden



By Jim Hill

Portland, Or. I recently had the wonderful opportunity to visit the Portland Japanese Garden this last week. It was a little chilly out, but the air was fresh and the trees were just starting to blossom.

My reason for my visit was to see Rui Sasaki's exhibition *Subtle Intimacy: Here and There*. While the Garden wasn't too busy that day, there were a lot of people there to see Rui Sasaki's art, which is currently exhibited in four different locations in the Garden. I was there for about an hour, which gave me time to speak to some visitors from the East Coast and a group of five guys from San Diego, California. They were all very impressed with both the gardens and the exhibit. The staff on hand that day were all friendly and professional people. They really take care of their visitors and are knowledgeable about the Garden and exhibits.

Rui Sasaki is a Japanese artist whose chosen medium, glass, has a real beauty and natural transparency. A major part of Sasaki's practice involves sandwiching plants between sheets of glass, which she then bakes to melt and bind the sheets together. To make these works, she often selects different leaves, ferns, and tree limbs, many of which are native to Japan, and for this particular show, she chose some of the flora from the Portland Japanese Garden. Every work is a unique, beautiful object, and I think that some are for sale in this exhibit. Rui Sasaki's exhibit is inspiring and make above wonderful souvenirs to take home as well.

Rui Sasaki is also a university teacher and has participated in numerous artist-



Rui Sasaki

in-residence programs and exhibitions around the world. *Subtle Intimacy* is his first solo show on the West Coast here in Portland.

If you love forestry plants, rain, and the freshness of being outside, you'll enjoy this exhibit as much as I did. I absolutely loved seeing people walk through, enjoying all the great work that has been done. This garden is truly alive. It's so beautiful, and now there are new plants and walls with scrubs. It has never looked better.

You know, today, I thought about how they could relocate the tennis courts and put a Japanese Garden restaurant there. People often get extra hungry when exploring the Garden and it would be so convenient.

I had to leave, I was getting hungry for a Korean Fresh Corn dog. Please visit the Portland Japanese gardens soon. You won't want to miss the cherry blossoms in full bloom!

If you are not a member, then you need to be one, especially if you're from the area.

The Portland Japanese Garden is located in Washington Park at 611 SW Kingston Ave, Portland, OR 97205 and is open every day, except Tuesday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.