

Spring 2011



# Come Back Koi!

As part of this year's Art in the Garden theme of Living in Harmony with Nature, the title of this exhibition reflects the successful "Come Back Salmon!" campaign that took place in Northern Japan more than three decades ago, when the citizens of Hokkaido sought to restore salmon to their natural habitat at a time when the numbers of fish returning to spawn each year had begun to diminish.

*Come Back Koi!* honors the koi that were lost to the Garden in the winter storm of 2008 and celebrates the arrival and release of new koi into the Garden's Lower Pond on May 7 as part of our Children's Day festivities.

The colorful koi are a vital part of both the beauty and the ecology of a Japanese garden, bringing the ponds to life with their graceful and calming presence. Koi are also the subject of ancient legend, the most famous of which tells of a koi that swam up a waterfall and turned into a dragon, making the valiant fish exemplary of the kind of perseverance needed to succeed in all of life's endeavors. Koi banners and flags, as well as kites in various shapes and sizes, are flown on Children's Day each year in May as a reminder to children of the importance of perseverance.

This exhibition brings together the work of a number of artists and craftsmen, both contemporary and historical. Twenty-seven original woodblock prints of koi by Tokyo artist Kunio Kaneko, an array of 19th and early 20th century koi-nobori and nobori-bata festival banners from the private collection of Naoteru Hayashi of Yoshitoku Company celebrating their 300th anniversary as purveyors of fine festival dolls and accoutrements, and a selection of handmade kites by Mikio Toki, Nobuhiko Yoshizumi, Greg Kono and Scott Skinner from the Drachen Foundation of Seattle —all are assembled here to celebrate koi and the traditional virtue of perseverance they represent.

The world has been much impressed by the sense of quiet perseverance shown by the Japanese people in the aftermath of the Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami on March 11, 2011. This exhibition is dedicated to those who were lost and to all those who now must persevere to rebuild their communities.



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**SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

Naoteru Hayashi, Koi Banners with Sumiko Enbutsu, Tokyo; Kunio Kaneko, Woodblock Prints, Tokyo; Drachen Foundation, Kites with Ali Fujino, Seattle

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