



"These baskets represent a search for the beauty and precision in nature and a way to balance the chaos evident in our times. Using traditional Japanese bamboo basketry techniques in combination with local materials, these pieces reflect the traditions of Japan and the unrestrained style of this country." —Lloyd Cotsen, Collector

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# Art in the Garden

# 2008

## *Dream Weaver: The Bamboo Art of Jiro Yonezawa*



Photography by Jonathan Ley



### *Dream Weaver: The Bamboo Art of Jiro Yonezawa*

The Portland Japanese Garden celebrated the fall season in 2008 with an exhibition of bamboo basketry and sculpture by Jiro Yonezawa, whose mastery of traditional techniques is matched only by his creativity and dedication to exploring new forms and ideas that bring this ancient art form to the attention of the 21st-century art world.

Yonezawa uses traditional Japanese bamboo basket weaving techniques, such as the formal, symmetrical, tightly woven baskets for tea ceremony or flower arrangement, or the looser and irregular weave characteristic of the indigenous Japanese farming and fishing baskets. He freely combines these traditional techniques to create baskets that are free and inventive. His baskets are further enhanced through the application of several layers of Japanese lacquer. He also applies a special powder, carefully gathered from pine soot and other ingredients to fill the deep crevices of the basket weave in some of these works. Each piece has a whisper of containment while bursting with unrestrained freedom of form.



Yonezawa studied basket-making at the Beppu Industrial Arts Research Center in Kyushu, Japan. Beppu has been famous in Japan for producing fine bamboo basketry since the 15th century. He was also apprentice to Ono Masakatsu, a master bamboo craftsman. Yonezawa is one of ten bamboo artists in Japan to receive the prestigious Lloyd Cotsen Award in 2006. His work is part of the Cotsen Bamboo Basket Collection, now in the collection of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.

For 18 years, Yonezawa made his home in Beaverton, Oregon. His work bears the mark of both cultures, combining the superb traditional mastery of techniques learned in Japan and the exuberance of artistic freedom he found in the United States. His return to live permanently in Japan in 2008 made this exhibition all the more significant for the Garden to host in recognition of his close ties with this community.

