



For immediate release
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***The Chrysanthemum in Japanese Art*
Opens October 18, 2008,
at The New York Botanical Garden**

**An Exhibition of Artwork from The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
the Burke Foundation, and Other Private Collections
Showcasing Chrysanthemum Imagery in Japanese Art and Artifacts**

The fall exhibition in the William D. Rondina and Giovanni Foroni LoFaro Gallery of the LuEsther T. Mertz Library will celebrate the use of *kiku*, the emblem of the Japanese Imperial family and one of the cherished flowers of the people of Japan, as a versatile visual motif in Japanese art and artifacts through several centuries. *The Chrysanthemum in Japanese Art*, an exhibition of imaginative, stylistically intricate, and beautifully rendered representations of the chrysanthemum in many different media, will run from October 18, 2008 to January 11, 2009.

The 32 objects on display in *The Chrysanthemum in Japanese Art* will be on loan from exceptional collections of Japanese art outside of Japan—The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation, and the Mary Griggs Burke Collection of Japanese Art—as well as from other private collectors. The pieces illustrate the important place the chrysanthemum held in the arts and culture in Japan from its classical past to the early modern era. Even today, this flower remains an indispensable decorative element in virtually every aspect of Japanese visual arts.

Among the objects on display that demonstrate the use of *kiku* imagery will be woodcut prints of Japanese women in kimonos decorated with *kiku* motifs, hanging scroll paintings in color and in monochrome ink that incorporate *kiku* among autumn plants, folding screens, and a wide array of Japanese household treasures, including distinctive ceramic plates, refined lacquerware, and a picnic set. Different varieties of the many-petalled blooms appear in rich colors or in simple monochrome on objects as small as delicate lacquer boxes or as monumental as an eight-panel folding screen.

A large painting based on the Chinese-Japanese legend of the “Chrysanthemum Boy” will be displayed along with two hanging scroll paintings that include *kiku* among autumn plants and grasses. Two folding screens with *kiku* motifs will grace spots of honor, each in its own alcove. A selection of miniature lacquered boxes (*inro*) with gold inlays will further demonstrate the Japanese aesthetic’s rich creativity and unique sensitivity to the use of materials.

For centuries the chrysanthemum, or *kiku*, has figured as one of the representative flowering plants of autumn in the arts and literature of Japan. It is associated with longevity and nobility. In the visual arts, chrysanthemums, either alone or in combination with bush clover, crimson maple leaves, and stalks of miscanthus grass, became the supreme emblem of the autumn season. One of the objects on display will be a triptych on the theme of the *Kiku* festival, held on the ninth day of the ninth month in the lunar calendar and traditionally celebrated within courtly circles in Japan.

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Co-curators Dr. Miyeko Murase (Takeo and Itsuko Atsumi Professor Emerita, Columbia University, and former Special Consultant for Japanese Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art) and Stephanie Wada (Associate Curator of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation and the Mary Griggs Burke Collection of Japanese Art) are working closely with the Mertz Library's staff to design the exhibition.

A schedule of guided tours will be established closer to the opening date. An illustrated catalog of the exhibition's contents will also be published as a guide for visitors.

Living Artworks

After viewing *kiku* as interpreted in the arts, visitors can also enjoy many living specimens of Japanese plants at the Botanical Garden. *The Chrysanthemum in Japanese Art* opens on the same day and is part of The New York Botanical Garden's fall exhibition, *Kiku: The Art of the Japanese Chrysanthemum*, which will feature living chrysanthemums, grown and trained in the classical Imperial style, as well as bonsai, bamboo sculpture, and many other aspects of Japanese art and culture. From October 18 to November 16, four different styles of *kiku* and maples, bamboos, and other traditional Japanese garden plants will be featured in the elegant Courtyards of the largest Victorian-style glasshouse in America.

Throughout the year, many Japanese plants, including a majestic grove of Tanyosho pines near the reflecting pool at the Leon Levy Visitor Center, can be enjoyed on the grounds of The New York Botanical Garden.

Generous donors to the Garden-wide exhibition Kiku: The Art of the Japanese Chrysanthemum and its ancillary programs include:

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The New York Botanical Garden is a museum of plants located at Bronx River Parkway (Exit 7W) and Fordham Road. It is easy to reach by Metro-North Railroad or subway. For more information, please call 718.817.8700 or visit our Web site at www.nybg.org

The New York Botanical Garden is located on property owned in full by the City of New York, and its operation is made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. A portion of the Garden's general operating funds is provided by The New York City Council and The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Bronx Borough President and Bronx elected representatives in the City Council and State Legislature provide leadership funding.

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