



# FREDERIK MEIJER Gardens & Sculpture Park

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Amy Sawade | Public Relations Manager | 616-975-3155 | [asawade@meijergardens.org](mailto:asawade@meijergardens.org)

### **FREDERIK MEIJER GARDENS & SCULPTURE PARK ADDS JAPANESE GARDEN TO COLLECTION**

*International garden in Japanese tradition combines horticulture and sculpture*

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., – February 15, 2012** –Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the nation’s most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, announces plans for The Richard and Helen DeVos Japanese Garden. One of the most revered and deeply appreciated international garden styles, the 8½-acre addition will further the organization’s dual mission of horticulture and sculpture.

“Fred and Lena Meijer shared their love of Japanese garden design with us many years ago,” said President and CEO David Hooker. “This artistic, centuries–old yet timeless horticultural presentation style is an important contribution to this organization.”

The garden, to be located in the northeast corner of the 132-acre property, will exude the very essence of the Japanese tradition—tranquility, simplicity and beauty. The design will re–imagine existing features of the land—water, elevation changes and quiet surroundings—with a combination of manicured and naturalistic areas.

The artful design by Hoichi Kurisu, president and founder of Kurisu International, Inc., will reflect this essence through a variety of horticultural elements such as zen, moss and bonsai gardens, scenic bridges, waterfalls and a tea house, among many other features. Plans also include works of contemporary sculpture by major international artists whose aesthetic and form will work in harmony with the space.

“Highly unique to our Japanese Garden will be the inclusion of Contemporary sculpture,” said Vice President and Chief Curator of Horticulture and Sculpture Joseph Becherer. “Several landmark works by international masters will represent the aesthetic and form of the Japanese tradition while combining our dual mission of horticulture and sculpture.”

The first confirmed sculpture is a major work by Anish Kapoor, one of the most acclaimed artists working today. It is one of the few works in granite the artist has created. Circular units on the front surface of the sculpture reflect and enhance the surrounding environment while the quiet mood of the work encourages meditation.

Meijer Gardens recently began a \$22 million capital campaign to support the project. Frederik and Lena Meijer and Richard and Helen DeVos made significant gifts.

“When Fred and Lena invited us to participate in the Japanese Garden planning, Helen and I were excited to have the opportunity to join them in further enhancing the remarkable organization they have built,” said Richard DeVos.

“Japanese gardens are one of the most ancient and profound horticultural traditions in the world and we’re pleased to bring it to this Midwest cultural gem.”

“We are forever grateful to the Meijer and DeVos families for their generosity,” said Hooker. “This garden is a major gift that will keep giving to our community well beyond our lifetimes.”

Groundbreaking will take place no later than the spring of 2013 and excavation work may happen this year. Progressive AE and Owen Ames Kimball will provide architectural, engineering and construction management support.

# # #

Images available at <http://bit.ly/FMGNewGarden>

### **About Hoichi Kurisu**

President and Founder of Kurisu International, Inc., Hoichi Kurisu has been designing and building gardens for over forty years. From 1968 to 1972, Hoichi served as Landscape Director for the Japanese Garden Society in Portland, Oregon, and supervised the construction of the Portland Japanese Gardens. He founded Kurisu International, Inc. in 1972. The landscape firm has an established reputation for gardens of the highest quality including Anderson Gardens (Rockford, IL) and Morikami Museum and Japanese Garden (Delray Beach, FL). Their unique garden designs create “inner space” for inspiration and healing.

### **About Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park**

One of the world’s most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park serves more than 550,000 visitors annually. Meijer Gardens was recently ranked in the top 100 most-visited art museums worldwide by “Art Newspaper,” the leading publication in global art news. The 132-acre grounds feature Michigan’s largest tropical conservatory; one of the largest children’s gardens in the country; arid and Victorian gardens with bronze sculptures by Degas and Rodin; a carnivorous plant house; outdoor gardens; and a 1900-seat outdoor amphitheater, featuring an eclectic mix of world-renowned musicians every summer. The internationally acclaimed Sculpture Park features a permanent collection including works by Rodin, Moore, Bourgeois and Plensa, among others. Indoor galleries host changing sculpture exhibitions with recent exhibitions by Picasso, Degas, di Suvero, Borofsky, Calder and Dine.

## **ABOUT HOICHI KURISU**

President and Founder of Kurisu International, Inc., Hoichi Kurisu has been designing and building gardens for over forty years. Born in Hiroshima, Japan, Hoichi spent his childhood among rice fields and the wild landscapes of surrounding mountains. As a small child he witnessed the atomic bomb. In the aftermath of this event, the resilience of the Japanese people and nature's role in providing hope for the future left a deep impression on Hoichi that would influence his life and work for years to come.

Hoichi joined his father's small landscape maintenance business in the San Fernando Valley when he arrived in the United States for the first time in the mid 1960s. There Hoichi saw firsthand both the affluence and excess of post-war American life and the impacts of an increasingly industrial society. But despite the beautiful houses and big cars, Hoichi sensed profound imbalances between material wealth and spiritual well being. At this time, Hoichi became convinced of the power of nature to meet some of humanity's most fundamental needs. He returned to Tokyo, Japan, to study landscape design and construction under distinguished designer Kenzo Ogata.

From 1968 to 1972, Hoichi served as Landscape Director for the Japanese Garden Society in Portland, Oregon, and supervised the construction of the Portland Japanese Gardens, considered some of the finest Japanese gardens outside of Japan.

### **About Kurisu International, Inc.**

In 1972, Hoichi founded Kurisu International, Inc., a landscape design/build firm whose unique gardens create "inner space" for inspiration and healing. Kurisu believes in the restorative powers of nature and the necessity of natural encounters for lasting health of our minds, bodies and communities. In pursuit of this mission, Kurisu has established a reputation for gardens of the highest quality and has completed projects across the United States and internationally.

Headquartered in Portland, Oregon, Kurisu International provides comprehensive design, construction, and consulting services on projects as intimate as residential courtyards and as vast as public parks. Kurisu addresses projects with an acute aesthetic sensibility and an evidence-based approach that uses natural patterns to solve complex design challenges.

Derived from ecology in its broadest sense, Kurisu's approach to landscape, business and life depends on rigorous study of local conditions, sensitivity to history and above all, humility. The result is whole-system design, a methodology deeply rooted in the specificity of place, people and purpose, and uniquely suited to draw out nature's ability to meet humanity's need for inspiration, restoration and healing.

## **Selected Honors and Activities**

Vice President of the First International Symposium on Japanese Gardens, Portland, Oregon, October 1996

National Landscape Award presented at the White House, Washington, D.C., 1992 & 1998.

ALCA Environmental Improvement Grand Award–1979, 1983, 1987, 1989, 1994, 1997, 2001

Named one of top 10 most influential Japanese garden designers worldwide–Roth Journal, 2005

## **Education**

Waseda University, Tokyo B.A. 1961

## **Affiliations**

Japanese Garden Society of Oregon

Center for Health Design

United States Green Building Council

Oregon Health Care Association

Washington Health Care Association

Oregon Natural Step Network

Board Member, Morikami Japanese Gardens

###

**Contact:** Amy Sawade, Public Relations Manager, 616-975-3155, [asawade@meijergardens.org](mailto:asawade@meijergardens.org)

**THE RICHARD & HELEN DEVOS**  
**JAPANESE GARDEN**  
AT FREDERIK MEIJER GARDENS & SCULPTURE PARK

## **ABOUT ANISH KAPOOR**

*"It (Japan) is important to me; from poetry to the whole aesthetic world, it is very much a part of my language."*

Anish Kapoor (b. 1954, Bombay, India) is among the most acclaimed artists working today. His sculptures are among the most highly sought after by both public and private collectors. Kapoor studied at Hornsey College of Art, London and Chelsea School of Art, London and currently lives and works in London. One of his most celebrated works, *Cloud Gate* is on display in Chicago's Millennium Park.

According to Lisson Gallery, "Kapoor sees his work as being engaged with deep-rooted metaphysical polarities; presence and absence, being and non-being, place and non-place and the solid and the intangible. Throughout Kapoor's sculptures his fascination with darkness and light is apparent; the translucent quality of the resin works, the absorbent nature of the pigment, the radiant glow of alabaster and the fluid reflections of stainless steel and water. Through this interplay between form and light, Kapoor aspires to evoke sublime experiences, which address primal physical and psychological states."

### **Sculpture in the Japanese Garden**

"Untitled" is a large scale, unique work in granite dating to 2010. Measuring approximately 10 'h.x5'w.x2'd., it is one of the few works in granite the artist has created. While the rear and sides are roughly hewn, the front surface is polished at two degrees of finish. The three large circular units run concave, convex, to concave from top to bottom and are highly polished to a mirror finish, and stand out against the matte finish of the rest of the façade. In keeping with his other projects in stainless steel and resin, each of the circular units is intended to reflect the surrounding environment to both enhance and manipulate the viewer's understanding of a given space. The scale and mood of the work is noble and quiet, encouraging the artist's preoccupation with the meditative and experiential power of art.

Kapoor's sensitivity to materials and ability to search and discover the potential of that material is universally celebrated. Such exploration of materials, as in the case with his more granite pieces, is in sympathy with the aesthetics of the design for the Richard and Helen DeVos Japanese Garden. Further, Kapoor's interest in surfaces which can be manipulated to reflect as well as distort offer the opportunity for both personal reflection and introspection. Such opportunities for inspection, illusion and contemplation in complete harmony with the visitors experience in the context of a Japanese garden.

###

**Contact:** Amy Sawade, Public Relations Manager, 616-975-3155, [asawade@meijergardens.org](mailto:asawade@meijergardens.org)

**THE RICHARD & HELEN DEVOS**  
**JAPANESE GARDEN**  
AT FREDERIK MEIJER GARDENS & SCULPTURE PARK

## **ABOUT THE JAPANESE GARDEN**

### **Why a Japanese garden?**

Japanese gardens are one of the most revered and deeply appreciated garden styles in the world. Based in centuries of philosophy and tradition, it is widely admired as among the most artful horticultural practices. Fred and Lena Meijer had long appreciated the traditions and experiences of the Japanese garden. In 2009, Fred Meijer articulated his and Lena's shared love of Japanese gardens and asked about adding one to Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. During the planning process, it became quite apparent that the concept was universally popular with horticulture and culture enthusiasts alike, but general audiences as well. In keeping perfectly with the mission of Meijer Gardens, a Japanese garden would not only be popular with members, volunteers and supporters, but with the more than 550,000 guests that visit the organization from across the globe. The universal response to Meijer's inquiry was resoundingly positive.

### **Why a Japanese garden at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park?**

Tranquility, simplicity and beauty are the very essence of a Japanese garden. Our dedication to horticulture, sculpture, nature and the arts will be greatly enhanced by such a garden.

Since its beginning, Meijer Gardens has joined beautiful green spaces with extraordinary works of art and the natural environment. As a centuries-old, yet timeless horticultural presentation style, a Japanese garden complements our mission and values, and allows us to explore unique ways to bring the art of the garden and the art of sculpture together. Adding such an international garden has been part of our master planning process for more than a decade and we have selected an ideal location on our grounds that includes water, elevation changes and quiet surroundings. The addition will significantly broaden our horticulture and sculpture collections to include international influences that will enhance the guest experience and cultural diversity of our offerings. Our Japanese Garden will feature areas of planned, horticultural design as well as natural, undeveloped areas.

Highly unique to our Japanese Garden and in harmony with our mission, will be the inclusion of landmark works of Contemporary sculpture by international masters such as Anish Kapoor, among others, whose aesthetic and form are in keeping with the essence of the Japanese garden tradition and the aesthetics and philosophy behind it. All of which are central to our mission to promote the enjoyment of horticulture, sculpture, the natural environment and the arts.

Fred and Lena Meijer made a significant gift to begin the process. They also believed that this garden deserved to have the name of another Grand Rapids family who could provide essential leadership in making our region among the best cultural communities in America. In support of Fred and Lena's vision and leadership, Richard and Helen DeVos have made a substantial gift to the project that will bear their names: The Richard and Helen DeVos Japanese Garden at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park.

## **About Hoichi Kurisu**

The Japanese Garden begins with an artful design by Hoichi Kurisu and the firm Kurisu International. Kurisu has been designing and building gardens for more than 40 years. His work ranks among the finest Japanese gardens outside of Japan including Portland Japanese Gardens (OR), Anderson Gardens (Rockford, IL), Morikami Museum and Japanese Garden (Delray Beach, FL).

Founded in 1972, Kurisu International is a landscape design/build firm whose unique gardens create "inner space" for inspiration and healing. The firm's approach to landscape is based on rigorous study of local conditions, sensitivity to history and above all, humility. The result is whole-system design, a methodology deeply rooted in the specificity of place, people and purpose, and uniquely suited to draw out nature's ability to meet humanity's need for inspiration, restoration and healing.

###

**Contact:** Amy Sawade, Public Relations Manager, 616-975-3155, [asawade@meijergardens.org](mailto:asawade@meijergardens.org)



01\_Map\_Overview



02\_Map\_Garden Closeup



03\_Aerial



04\_Gate



05\_Main Island



06\_South Waterfall



07\_Hoichi Kurisu\_2010



08\_Anish Kapoor - Photo by Philip...



09\_Kapoor\_Untitled



10\_FMG\_Sunset\_William J Hebert



11\_Fredrik GH Meijer



12\_Fred and Lena Meijer



13\_Richard and Helen DeVos



14\_FMGSP Logo



15\_Japanese Garden Logo





# FREDERIK MEIJER Gardens & Sculpture Park

## FACT SHEET

**CONTACT:** Amy Sawade, Public Relations Manager, 616-975-3155, [asawade@meijergardens.org](mailto:asawade@meijergardens.org)

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, located at 1000 East Beltline N.E. in Grand Rapids, MI, opened to the public in April of 1995. One of the nation's most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, Meijer Gardens includes Michigan's largest tropical conservatory; three indoor theme gardens; outdoor gardens, nature trails and boardwalk; sculpture galleries and permanent sculpture collection; library; café; gift shop; classrooms; and meeting rooms. Both indoors and outdoors, the 132-acres are barrier free and handicap accessible. Since it opened, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park has welcomed more than seven million visitors.

### Horticulture

The Tropical Conservatory is a five-story, 15,000 square-foot facility featuring rock landscapes, a waterfall and a variety of exotic plant selections. The conservatory houses tropical plants from around the world, including fig trees from India, exotic orchids from Central and South America, Asiatic bamboo and banana trees. Additional indoor gardens include the nation's most comprehensive carnivorous plant house, arid house featuring Saguaro cacti, Victorian conservatory and Seasonal Display Greenhouse.

The outdoor gardens feature four-season plantings that can be enjoyed throughout the year. To foster an educational awareness of the numerous ecosystems in West Michigan, the Wege Nature Trail winds through a forested section while the Frey Boardwalk introduces visitors to the natural wetlands. Featured on these walks are bird watching sites, natural prairie areas, a tadpole pond and beautiful vistas. From watching the snow fall to the leaves changing color, these areas are perfect for experiencing Michigan's changing landscapes.

The Gwen Frostic Woodland Shade Garden commemorates the artistic influence of this well-known naturalist artist and features woodland plants like ferns, hostas, bleeding hearts, rhododendrons, and azaleas. The English Perennial & Bulb Garden and the New American Garden are two additional outdoor features highlighting the organization's continuing commitment to horticulture.

### Sculpture

The sculpture program at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park is composed of both an internationally-acclaimed permanent collection and dynamic exhibition programs. The permanent collection features more than 300 works including important examples ranging from Auguste Rodin and Edgar Degas, to Henry Moore and Alexander Calder to Mark di Suvero and Andy Goldsworthy. Works are sited in both interior settings such as the conservatories as well as featured outdoors across the gardens and grounds. The greatest concentration of work is featured in a 30-acre sculpture park, which plays host to both colossal and more traditional scale works sensitively sited in a natural environment. Of special interest is the colossal sculpture, *The American Horse* by Nina Akamu, as well as masterworks by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, Alexander Liberman and Richard Hunt. In addition, Meijer Gardens hosts three temporary exhibitions every year. A suite of indoor galleries offers approximately 4,000 square feet of display space. For example, major presentations of artists ranging from Magdalena Abakanowicz to George Segal, Dale Chihuly to Anthony Caro have captured widespread critical acclaim.

### Highlights

The Lena Meijer Children's Garden is one of the most interactive children's gardens in the country. Here children can look through viewports to answer questions about sculpture, dig into the sand quarry to uncover information about fossils and build bridges over the Great Lakes water feature. They can explore tree houses, a log cabin, a butterfly labyrinth, a sense garden and a child-sized beaver lodge. Highlighting hundreds of plants as well as whimsical, child-oriented sculptures, it is perhaps the only children's garden in the United States with natural wetlands running right through the middle of it.

Michigan's Farm Garden is reminiscent of a 1930s family farm. This delightful setting includes an heirloom vegetable garden, an orchard, a barn, a sugar shack, a produce stand, a windmill and a ¾ scale replica of Lena (Rader) Meijer's childhood farmhouse.

The Frederik Meijer Gardens Amphitheater is a distinguished venue for musical events and a summer concert series every year. The outdoor amphitheater boasts brilliant acoustics and tiered lawn seating for 1,900 people. Past musicians featured on the Meijer Gardens stage include Art Garfunkel, B.B. King, Lyle Lovett and Willie Nelson.

*Butterflies are Blooming* is an annual exhibition that takes place every March and April, featuring more than 6,000 tropical butterflies from more than 50 species of South American, Central American and Asian origin fly free in the five-story, 15,000 square foot tropical conservatory. This is the largest temporary tropical butterfly exhibit in the nation and attracts more than 150,000 visitors during the months of March and April.

*Christmas and Holiday Traditions Around the World* is a celebration that takes place every November and December – featuring more than 40 different cultures and customs from around the world, trees and displays both indoors and out, more than 300,000 Christmas lights, horse-drawn carriage rides, visits from Santa and educational activities to coincide with the exhibition. The Railway Garden expands through three lush indoor gardens with a model train traveling past glittering lights and over high trestles. Within the garden are 25 buildings modeled after Grand Rapids landmarks, all handmade of natural materials by railway garden designer Paul Busse.