



Renka
DESIGN GROUP

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about renka design group

The members of Renka Design Group met through the Sogetsu Ikebana training of Soho Sakai, Riji, AIFD. They first worked together for the exhibition "Floral Sculptures in the Gardens of the Oakland Museum of California" in October 2007, which celebrated the 80th birthday of the Sogetsu Ikebana School, and 10th anniversary of Soho Study Group.

Over the course of nine months they developed the design of a large-scale sculptural work from woven arica palms, which was suspended over the twenty-foot koi pond at the museum entrance. Photos of this work were invited for submission to the latest book on Ikebana to be published by Stichting Kunstboek (Belgium) to be released in 2009.

In meeting the challenges of this project, the group has found a dynamic harmony together. Diversity of styles and background stimulate creative collaboration, while our shared ikebana background provides a common aesthetic understanding.

renka design group members



from left to right:
rachel johnson, ricardo ramirez, ulrike kotak, & norma mcdonough

about the designers

Rachel Johnson

Healing and the Arts are recurring themes for Rachel. With a BA in Art History and Literature, and a lifelong interest in dance and movement, she currently teaches Shiatsu & related Asian Bodywork subjects. Ikebana brought together her diverse interests in an unlikely, but natural way: the tactile skill and sensitivity to the living energy of plants, the visual appreciation of a dynamic and ephemeral art form, together with a meditative practice rooted in the concepts of Asian philosophy.

Rachel has been practicing Ikebana for seven years, has completed the extensive Sogetsu school curriculum with Sensei Soho Sakai, and was awarded the 3rd level teaching diploma in 2007. She is currently a volunteer on the Flower Committees of the deYoung Museum, the Legion of Honor, and the Asian Art Museum. She enjoys making ikebana for individuals and events, as well as soulful, personal work that enhances a healing environment. She has recently begun to share her passion for ikebana by teaching classes.

Ricardo Ramirez

Ricardo's innate creativity found a natural outlet in floral design. He learned the skills of weaving and working with natural materials at an early age. He started working professionally while still completing the extensive professional training offered at City College of San Francisco. Presently, Ricardo continues to study ikebana with Soho Sakai, has completed the Sogetsu student curriculum, and is working towards a Teaching Credential.

His work is dynamic, unconventional and expansive, making it particularly suitable for large-scale public spaces such as the Hotel Rex, City Club, Prana Restaurant and Nightclub, and Puccini Consulting, Design & Development, Inc. He designs for weddings, parties and corporate events, and provides weekly floral design throughout the Napa home of a well-known social hostess.

Ulrike Kotak

With a background in Textile Engineering and Computer Science, Ulrike has worked for several years as a Consultant and Project Manager in the Software and Health Care Industries. She shifted her focus to floral design as her full-time occupation after completing a comprehensive floristry program at the City College of San Francisco. What first appeared to be a creative outlet to her day job soon became her passion and she decided to pursue a career in this fulfilling endeavor. She continues to broaden her experience and skills through opportunities to assist some of the leading international designers at the AIFD National Symposium, as well as attending floral design workshops on regular trips to Europe.

Ulrike has her own floral design studio called Floraley, based in San Francisco, which creates designs for weddings and corporate events in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. She has received formal recognition and awards for her work from prestigious organizations such as the National Symposium of the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD), as well as from the San Francisco Garden Club. Ulrike continues to study with Master Ikebana teacher Soho Sakai. She has completed the Sogetsu student curriculum and is working towards a Teaching Credential.

Norma McDonough

A passion for design is reflected in Norma's creative background. With a BFA in Advertising Design she now runs a graphic design business, Project Redhead. She has been studying Sogetsu Ikebana at San Francisco City College with Master Ikebana teacher Soho Sakai since 2002. Having completed the Sogetsu student curriculum she is now working towards a Teaching Credential.

The practice of Ikebana stimulates Norma's creative process, as the art form constantly challenges her to combine sculptural simplicity with dynamic expression. As well as creating Ikebana designs for weddings and parties, Norma especially enjoys the opportunity to work on large-scale installations with like-minded flower lovers.

portfolio

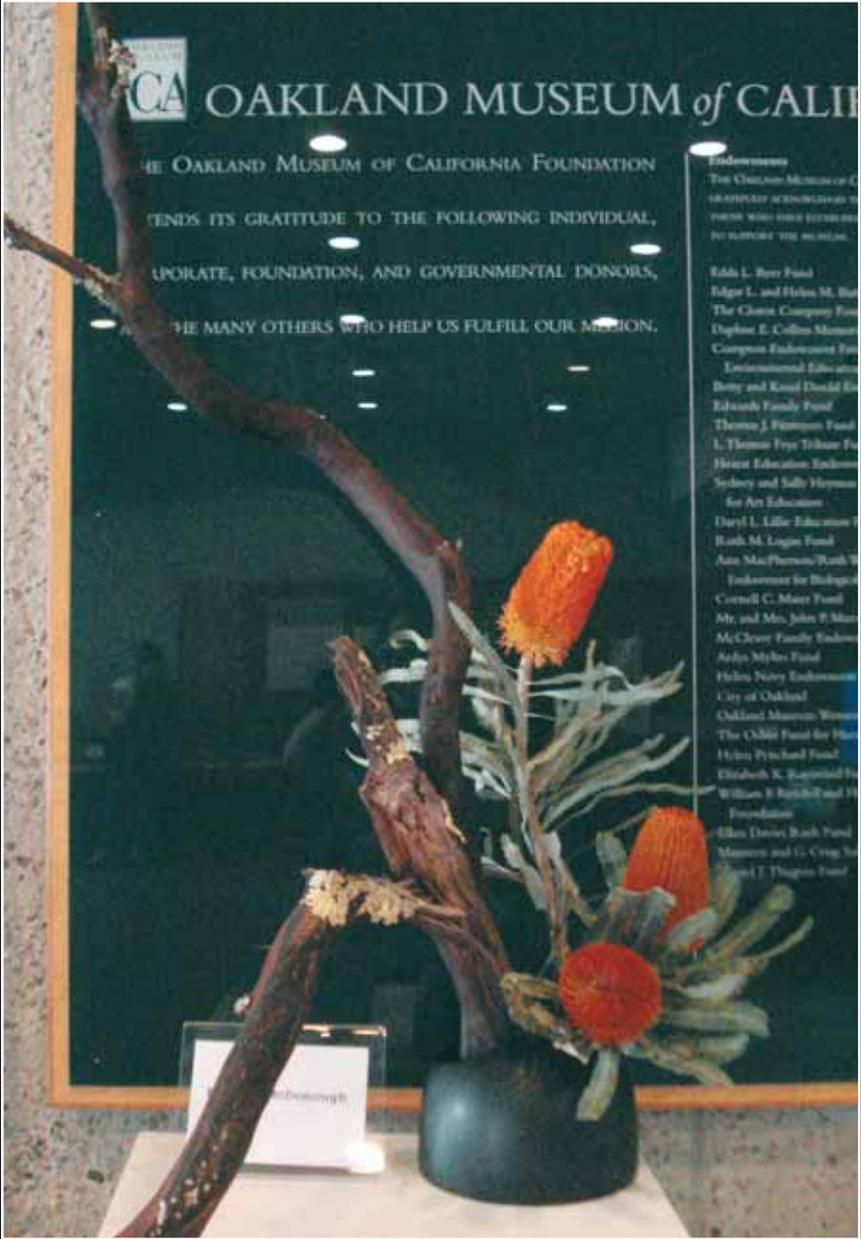




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