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## Local Artists Helping Japan

By Andrea A. Firth



(From left) Local artist Makiko Vazifdar, Norm Nicholson, and Kimiko Kogure have organized a silent art auction to help with recovery efforts in Japan. Photo provided

"Knowing how lost the many people of Japan must feel following the disaster, I wanted to help from this side of the ocean," says Orinda resident Komiko Kogure. To achieve her goal, Kogure decided to put her love of art to work. Kogure participates in a weekly figure drawing class through the Orinda Community Center. Working with the class instructor, Norm Nicholson, and several of the other artists Kogure has organized a silent art auction to raise funds to help with the recovery efforts in Japan.

Over 100 artworks have been donated to the auction by dozens of Bay Area artists. "We reached out to our friends and the art community to spread the word, and we have had a wonderful response," says Kogure. "It's been a very healing process for me."

For Kogure, who is Japanese, the effects of the tsunami hit close to home. Although she has lived in California for 31 years, she has family and many friends who still reside in Japan. One close friend of Kogure's, who lived very close to the damaged nuclear plant, keeps her posted on the details of what is happening. "They have not moved on to recovery yet. They are still sifting through the debris to see what is left," says Kogure.

The silent auction will be held at the Orinda Community Center on Saturday, June 11th from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., bidding will close at 2:30 p.m. The original art will include paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, fabric art, jewelry, and ceramics. All of the proceeds will be donated to the Japanese Red Cross.

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