



# Hitomi Gilliam

(1952 - )

Hitomi Gilliam, an internationally acclaimed floral design artist and educator, is the eldest of three children. Born in Tokyo, Japan, Hitomi emigrated to the United States at the age of 12. After living in Illinois for 3 years, she and her family moved to Vancouver where she completed high school in 1970.

Instilled with an underlying "desire to be creative", she enrolled at the British Columbia Institute of Technology and while studying landscape architecture, got married and established a wholesale greenhouse business in Hatzic Prairie with her husband Wayne.

In 1977, they opened a plant shop on First Avenue in Mission to sell their greenhouse production and within 3 years were operating a successful full-service florist. After only "a few lessons" from a friend who was a retired florist, Hitomi became the principal floral designer at their shop.

In the 1980's, she began attending trade shows, design competitions and workshops to nurture her exceptional creativity and innovative approach to floral design. In 1984, the year her son was born, she won her first competition and then proceeded on to win innumerable awards, including the highly coveted gold medal for the AFS Great American Design Contest (1987).

Established as a leader in the industry, Hitomi then started judging and became "a proactive floral educator" teaching courses and co-authoring 3 books on floral design.

In 2000, she reflected on her remarkable career in floral art, stating: "I approach my profession with a great deal of passion and seriousness-the flowers, its vibrancy, exquisite textures, its very temporal fragility must be designed with utmost love and respect, so as to not take away from its integrity-that is the Artistry of Flowers."

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