

OVERVIEW

History repeats itself so often that looking at it from a long view is forever important.

—Lanka Tattersall, Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

Resilience, A Sansei Sense of Legacy, is an art exhibition concerned with the Sansei (third generation) Japanese American artists' reflections on experiences surrounding parents' and grandparents' incarceration in the WWII American incarceration camps as a result of Executive Order 9066, which affected people of Japanese descent throughout the American countries in which the diaspora spread.

Resilience broadly addresses two questions: How has this traumatic experience been passed on through three generations? How does it resonate with the artists' senses of identity, justice and/or understanding of the current political climate?

The exhibit centers on the idea that the Sansei generation has had direct and intimate experience with either the incarceration itself or its victims which has then shaped their understanding of the present. The exhibition is organized by Celadon Arts, an arts management company, a 501c (3) corporation.

BACKGROUND

History is not a science but an art. As an art based in the written record, it relies on the power of words to render the truth. But while words have the power to transform events and people, the visual arts have equal- perhaps greater- power to shape our thinking. Art is transformative and as such, this exhibition was conceived to serve as a catalyst to cultivate social dialog and change around the issues of racism, hysteria and economic exploitation in America.

The United States, in its brief 243 years, has repeatedly demonstrated unjust treatment toward minority groups- treatment far from what our founding fathers envisioned. From the beginning, our nation considered the Native Americans outsiders and an obstacle to the exploitation and development of the land. The effects of the institution of slavery still reverberate today in the residue of dehumanization perpetrated on African Americans. And in 1942, at the start of WWII, President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 brought untold distress to all Japanese Americans, especially those living on the west coast.

Perhaps less well known is that the Japanese have also populated Latin America since their first major migration after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. The largest numbers are concentrated in Brazil (having the largest population of Japanese outside Japan) followed by Peru, Argentina, Colombia and Mexico. The United States has the second largest Japanese population outside Japan. World War II affected Japanese Latin Americans similarly to Japanese North Americans through forced deportation, loss of property and cultural restrictions. Peru and Colombia deported a large number of their Japanese population to Panama and then later to the United States where they were relocated in internment camps throughout the States. Brazil

relocated their Japanese population internally and imposed laws prohibiting the use of the Japanese language.

Japanese American and many Japanese Latin American families and individuals experienced the economic loss of property, the shame and indignation of incarceration and the task of re-integration into American society after release from the WWII incarceration camps.

How did the Japanese Americans achieve resolution to this travesty of justice? They have a saying for this- shikata ga nai- it cannot be helped. But there is another saying- gaman- persevere and stay silent, that better characterized the denial of their losses.

With a focus on Sansei (third generation) artists' experiences, Resilience is an art exhibition of six Japanese American artists- painters, photographers, filmmakers, and sculptors- who find meaning, catharsis and resonance through the examination and expression of their personal family histories and the Japanese American diaspora. These artists are mature in their development as artists and as citizens emerging from the Japanese American experience. Their experience is subtly powerful yet not unique in America. We are a country of people, all from somewhere else. This exhibition sanctions the succeeding generation of artists to share personal expressions of the emotions, insights and the deep collective acceptance unexpressed by their elders. Author David Brooks said, "If true racial reconciliation is achieved in this country, it will be through the kind of deep spiritual and emotional understanding that art can foster. You change the world by changing peoples' hearts and imaginations." Awareness is the first step toward a plural society and a sense of true belonging.

THE RESILIENCE ARTISTS

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KRISTINE AONO, Silver Spring, MD

Kristine Aono was born in Chicago, Ill. Aono received her BFA from Washington University, St. Louis, studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and attended residencies at the MacDowell Colony and the Virginia Center for the Arts. Grants include National Endowment for the Arts, Maryland State Arts Council, Painted Bride, Civil Liberties Public Education Fund and the Prince George's Arts Council. Aono's work has been included in numerous exhibitions including the National Academy of Design, NY, Wichita Art Museum, KS Japanese Culture Center, Japanese Embassy, Washington, DC, Bronx Museum of the Arts at Paine Webber, NY and the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, San Antonio, TX. Her installation Relics from Camp enlisted Japanese-American communities in Los Angeles (at the Japanese

American National Museum), Washington DC (National Museum of Women in the Arts) and Chicago (Harold Washington Library). In addition, she has had solo shows and installations at the International Sculpture Center(Washington, DC), University of Maryland, the Long Beach Museum of Art (CA), and the Washington Project for the Arts (DC).

STATEMENT

I am a Sansei, third generation Japanese-American, born to parents who experienced World War II as children incarcerated with their families for three and a half years in places called Minidoka, Jerome, and Rohwer. Raising their children in Middle America, my well-meaning parents tried to bury the shame of their incarceration by alluding to “camp” as a benign place from their childhood. Eventually, we civil rights-era Sansei would unearth the truth, and that knowledge of our family histories would shape who we are and how we approach issues such as justice, racial prejudice, and civil rights. I address these topics in my art as a way to keep these stories alive and highlight their relevance to our present day.

REIKO FUJII, Alamo, CA

Reiko Fujii was born in Riverside, California. She is known for her installations and video art. She received an MFA from John F. Kennedy University and a BA from UC Berkeley. She was one two of the four featured Japanese American artists in Distillations: Meditations on the Japanese American Experience at the John F. Kennedy University Art Gallery. Other exhibits include two solo multi-media performances, sponsored by the Riverside Metropolitan Museum and performed for the Riverside Mayor's Office's Racial Equality Week. She and her daughter were invited to wear her Glass Ancestral Kimonos as the featured artist at the Glass Art Society conference at the Corning Museum of Glass, NY. Fujii has exhibited at Berkeley Art Center; JFK University Art Gallery; Cal State University Hayward Art Gallery; SOMArts Cultural Center; Henry Madden Library at Fresno State University, CA; National Japanese American Historical Society in San Francisco; and Pleasanton Museum on Main, CA.

Fujii was the recipient of the Susan Seddon Boulet Graduate Award from JFK University and received the Steven P. Corey Award at the 2006 Pacific Center for the Book Arts Bookworks Exhibit. Fujii's short documentaries have been shown at the Women of Color Film Festival, the Berkeley Small Films Festival, and the Society of California Pioneers in San Francisco. Her nine-minute documentary,

Arden Farey: Whistleblower, was featured on KarmaTube, and her half-hour documentary about Arden Farey, a talented artist who suffered from multiple sclerosis and was a paraplegic, was shown on various cable TV stations in the Bay Area.

STATEMENT

I often cry while creating art about my family's unjust incarceration. I think of my grandmother and her seven children trying to pack two suitcases each in preparation for their move to an unknown location for an undetermined amount of time. Chikayasu, my grandfather, had already been arrested and imprisoned in Tuna Canyon Detention Center. Almost a year of moving around to several different concentration camps had passed before Chikayasu met his youngest son, Anthony, who was born a month after my grandfather's arrest.

My father was a Kibei, born in America, he was educated in Japan and returned to the US, right

before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He was a proud man who was meticulous about arranging his produce display at his aunt's grocery store. When a Caucasian man came by and smashed his fruit display to the ground, my father wanted to beat him up. My aunt implored him to stay calm. These and many other experiences of prejudice, greed, and disappointment affected not only my parents and their generation but also me and my generation.

In my early 40s, I appeared to be a model citizen, volunteering at my children's school, married to a wonderful man, creating my art, and living in a lovely home. But my underlying depression, anxiety and low self-esteem became more and more apparent. By studying art as a therapeutic tool, I discovered opportunities to heal from my mental anguish. Through this introspective process, I came to realize the feelings of low self-worth had been passed on to me from the experiences of my parents and their contemporaries. By channeling my pain and theirs into art, I am able to give form and light to this difficult history, relieving the phantom heaviness passed down through generations.

WENDY MARUYAMA, San Diego, CA

Furniture maker, artist and educator Wendy Maruyama has been making innovative work for 40 years. While her early work combined ideologies of feminism and traditional craft objects, her newer work moves beyond the boundaries of traditional studio craft and into the realm of social practice. The wildLIFE Project focuses on the endangerment of elephants, a cause that is very personal to the artist. She recently took a sojourn to Kenya and met with wildlife advocates to investigate the dangers of the continued poaching of these magnificent animals. The trip served as a source of inspiration for the artist to create a new body of work and incorporate a strong societal message.

Wendy Maruyama has been a professor of woodworking and furniture design for over 30 years. She is one of the first two women to graduate with a Masters in furniture making from Rochester Institute of Technology. Maruyama has exhibited her work nationally for over four decades, with solo shows in New York City, San Francisco, Scottsdale, Indianapolis, Savannah, and Easthampton. She has exhibited internationally in Tokyo, Seoul and London. Maruyama's work can also be found in both national and international permanent museum collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas; Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, Australia; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Museum of Art and Design, New York; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte; Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton; Mingei International Museum, San Diego; and the Oakland Museum of California. She is a recipient of several prestigious awards, including the California Civil Liberties Public Education Grant, 2010; several National Endowment for the Arts Grants for Visual Artists; the Japan/US Fellowship; and a Fulbright Research Grant to work in the UK.

STATEMENT

In an atmosphere of World War II hysteria, President Roosevelt, encouraged by officials at all levels of the federal government, authorized the internment of tens of thousands of American citizens of Japanese ancestry and resident aliens from Japan. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, dated February 19, 1942, gave the military broad powers to ban any citizen from a fifty- to sixty-milewide coastal area stretching from

Washington state to California and extending inland into southern Arizona. The order also authorized transporting these citizens to assembly centers hastily set up and governed by the military in California, Arizona, Washington state, and Oregon.

My first visual experience of this event was initially through the images of documentary photographers Dorothea Lange and Toyo Miyatake. My family was directly affected by the evacuation but little was mentioned of this by my mother or grandparents. This chapter in my family history was heavily veiled: because of this, I avoided any association with this connection- partially out of suppressed anger, partially out of just wanting to move forward.

I was awarded an artist-in-residency opportunity at SUNY Purchase in Fall 2008 and decided to immerse myself in research and investigation of Executive Order 9066 and its effect on the Japanese American psyche as I know it now. This is just the beginning and it is a point of departure.

LYDIA NAKASHIMA DEGARROD, Ph.D, Oakland, CA

Lydia Nakashima Degarrod, Ph.D. is both a visual artist and a cultural anthropologist who creates installations that blur the line between ethnography and art in order to convey experiences of extraordinary nature and address issues of social justice. Combining visual art and ethnography, she has explored the beauty of Mapuche dreams of heaven (Harvard University 1997-98), miracles in Chilean cities (UC Berkeley 2000-02), people and birds at Lake Merritt (2005-06) long term exile (Center for Art and Public Life, 2007-8), and maps of urban memorable dreams (2015-18). Her latest work, Hallucinations, a collaborative installation was exhibited in Santiago de Cuba at the Francisco Prat Puig Art Center in May 2018. She has received awards and grants from the Wing Luke Memorial Museum of Art, Saint John's University, the Ministry of Culture of Chile, National Endowment for the Humanities, Fulbright Hays, and the California Council for the Humanities. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally at museums and galleries. She has been an artist in residence at de Young Museum of Art, Harvard University, and the Center for Art and Public Life. She teaches at the California College of the Arts.

STATEMENT

I am a Sansei Chilean Japanese. Growing up at the most southern edge of the Japanese diaspora in a country where people of Japanese descent were rare, I learned about the quiet resilience of the spirit from the stories that I heard from my parents and grandfather. World War II affected members of my family in different ways. My father, who grew up in Peru- the son of a scientist hired by the Peruvian government to start the aqua-culture industry- was spared from deportation, but had to report daily to the local police. My mother's experience in Chile differed from my father's since the country, the last nation joining the allies in 1945, didn't place any form of restrictions on its small Japanese population. My parents, however, lost all their Japanese relatives during the bombing of Hiroshima, their ancestral city, and grew up with the sense of cultural loneliness and of fierce individuality. Growing up in Chile, without a community of people sharing a common ancestry, I learned about the resilience that is embodied in the term gaman from my parents and grandfather. They taught me to be proud of what made me different from the rather homogenous Chilean society. The only public display of suffering that my maternal grandfather allowed himself was when he sang and cried every year during the birthday of the emperor.

TOM NAKASHIMA, Floyd, VA

Tom Nakashima was born in Seattle, Washington and is known primarily as a painter and printmaker, Nakashima has made over 50 Japanese-style screens (byōbu). He received his MFA from The University of Notre Dame, and is Emeritus Professor at The Catholic University of America and Morris Eminent Scholar Emeritus at Augusta University. His work has been featured in exhibitions in Japan, Malaysia and throughout the US in museums, galleries, alternative spaces. Currently, his painting, Sanctuary With Western Sunset is on view in The Smithsonian American Art Museum. Exhibitions include The Shah Alam International Art Biennale, Malaysia, The Japanese Chamber of Commerce Gallery, NY; Sasakawa Peace Foundation Gallery, The Japanese Embassy and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Long Beach Museum of Art, Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, CA. Awards include The Joan Mitchell Fellowship, SECA Awards in The Visual Arts 11, The DC Commission on the Arts, The Mayor's Award for Excellence in an Artistic Discipline, Washington, DC, Mid Atlantic Visual Arts Fellowship, National Printmaking Fellowship (NEA). His works are in over 60 public collections and include the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Mint Museum, Long Beach Museum of Art, Denver Museum of Art, Ogden Museum of Art and The Hermitage Museum St. Petersburg Russia.

STATEMENT

Unlike the other artists in this exhibition, I had no immediate family interned during WWII. My family was spared because my father was drafted as a surgeon into the US Medical Corps. We were sent to Camp Chaffee, Arkansas while all my relatives were incarcerated in either Minidoka or Tule Lake. I was born in Seattle and raised all over the US (mostly Midwest) to a Japanese American father and a Canadian mother of Catholic, Jewish and Irish heritage. I had little touch with Japanese relatives with the exception of my uncle, George Nakashima. We often visited his family compound in New Hope, PA. It was there that I remember being jealous when cousins laughed and joked as they spoke (in what seemed a nostalgic manner) about "camp". I knew enough to understand it was not like scout camp but I felt like an "outsider" in the presence of my Japanese family relatives. I know many of the stories of hardships and suffering imposed on my people in the Internment Camps during WWII. But in the end I was not there. I feel lucky on one hand and on the other there is a little piece missing from me. I'm like the Grinch and I will always be a Who wannabe.

ROGER SHIMOMURA, Lawrence, KS

Roger Shimomura was born in Seattle, Washington and spent two early years of his childhood in the Minidoka internment camp. He was a distinguished military graduate from the University of Washington and received his MFA from Syracuse University. Shimomura has had over 150 solo exhibitions of paintings and prints as well as experimental theater pieces at venues such as the Franklin Furnace, NYC, Walker Art Center and The Smithsonian Institution. He is the recipient of more than 30 grants of which four are National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships in Painting and Performance Art. Shimomura is in the permanent collections of over 100 museums nationwide including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery. He has been a visiting artist and lectured on his work at more than 200 universities, art schools and museums across the country and has been honored with numerous grants, honors and awards including the College Art Association Distinguished Body of Work Award. He has been named by the Asian American Arts Alliance, NYC as an Exceptional Person in Fashion, Food & the

Arts and was the featured guest on the Day of Remembrance at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Shimomura began teaching at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS in 1969 and was the first faculty member ever to be designated a University Distinguished Professor.

STATEMENT

Accepting a teaching position at the University of Kansas in 1969 led me to move to the Midwest which was to change my life and bring new direction to my art. In the American Midwest I was constantly mistaken as Native American and Asian otherness such as Chinese, Vietnamese, et al. The repetition and frustration of these mistaken identities finally inspired me to make my first painting regarding my ethnicity as an American of Japanese descent. Soon after that, the translations of my grandmother's diaries (1912-1968) revealed her roles as a photobride, WWII incarcerated, midwife, and naturalized citizen. These diaries as well as her other writings would provide content and authentic narrative to my paintings, prints, and theatre pieces. The bulk of my career as an artist has been spent attempting to recapture the essence of the camp environment. Tar paper barracks, barbed wire fences, guard towers, and distant mountains become like a theatrical stage setting. Despite research by many scholars and experts in history and immigration, many misconceptions that stigmatized the Japanese American experience are contained in similar issues that now plague the American Muslim community. These are the new horizons I am investigating in my recent work.

JUDY SHINTANI, Half Moon Bay, CA

Judy Shintani was born in Ames, Iowa but has lived most of her life in California. Her art focuses on remembrance, connection, and storytelling. She makes assemblages, produces installations, creates performances and facilitates social engagement activities to generate visual stories that bring vital issues to light. Judy Shintani has a Masters in Transformative Art from JFK University and a BS in Graphic Design from San Jose State University. She has exhibited nationwide and been an artist in residence at Vermont Studio Center, Santa Fe Art Institute. Solo exhibition venues include University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, Springfield College, Springfield, MA, Ruth's Table, San Francisco, CA, Peninsula Museum of Art, Burlingame and The Monterey Museum of Art, CA, Santa Fe Art Institute, Santa Fe, NM. Shintani is a member of the Asian American Women's Artist Association and on the board of the Northern California Women's Caucus for Art. She founded the Kitsune Community Art Studio in Half Moon Bay and currently a teaching artist at Foothill College.

STATEMENT

I grew up in California, the child of Japanese American parents who had been incarcerated in the Japanese American Internment Camps during WWII. When they were released from the Camps, their goal, like that of so many others, was to assimilate and become thoroughly "American." For some families it was difficult to hold onto Japanese traditions and culture. My parents, however, told me many stories of their lives before the war and we celebrated many Japanese traditions such as the Japanese New Year Celebration. Still, they discouraged me from learning to speak Japanese and anything "Japanese" was burned such as books, dolls and Japanese-style clothing. I like many of my generations, did not learn to speak or read Japanese. In my work, I honor my family members, most of whom have passed on. They spent 4 years in the Tule Lake Concentration Camp. 70+ years later my father still recalls happy times of living on a houseboat in Washington and enjoys bringing his children to visit his childhood locale.

JERRY TAKIGAWA, Carmel Valley, CA.

Jerry Takigawa is an independent photographer, designer, and writer. He is founder and the creative force behind the Center for Photographic Art's PIE Labs. He received the Imogen Cunningham Award in 1982, the Clarence J. Laughlin Award in 2017, and CENTER's Curator's Choice Award in 2018. His work is in the permanent collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Crocker Art Museum, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the Library of Congress, and the Monterey Museum of Art. He studied photography with Don Worth at San Francisco State University and received a degree in art with an emphasis in painting. He is a past president of People in Communication Arts, Monterey, CA and the Center for Photographic Art, Carmel, CA and is a former trustee of the Monterey Museum of Art.

STATEMENT

After my mother passed away, my brother and I were left with boxes of old photographs. Among them were images of family members taken in camp. In my family, when anyone spoke of "camp," they weren't referring to an idyllic pine-scented summer retreat; they were referring to the WWII American incarceration camps sanctioned by President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. While this project gives voice to my family's story, the process of researching and making these images has greatly informed the roots of my ideology.

Piecing together the fragments of my family history puzzle of old photographs and artifacts, I began an examination of my family's story and the history of the American Japanese diaspora. I gained a new understanding and appreciation for the struggles my family endured to create a home in this country. This series represents personal interpretations of the emotions, insights, and deep collective acceptance of the injustices unexpressed by my immigrant grandparents and American-born parents.

As an artist who works in photography, I make art so that I might know myself better and connect to a larger world. I believe if true change is to be achieved in this country, it will be through the kind of deep spiritual and emotional understanding that art can foster. There is no scientific basis for race. Race and racism are social constructs. I invite you to consider how racism is an institution we sanction that leads to labels, judgments, and separation—motivated by social and economic power.

EXHIBITION PROGRAMING (DRAFT)

JAPANESE CONSULATE- Opening Ceremony

EXHIBITION CATALOG- Takigawa Design. Writer: Teresa Watanabe

SANDY LYDON/TIM THOMAS- Historical Presentation

WORKSHOPS- Judy Shintani, Reiko Fujii, Jerry Takigawa, Tom Nakashima

SUSAN KOMEI- Managing Director of the Spatial Sciences Institute, University of Southern California Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences (USC Dornsife).

KAREN KOREMATSU- Civil Rights, Education, Korematsu Institute

SAMPLE IMAGES

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KRISTINE AONO

The Nail That Sticks Up the Farthest
Cultural Inheritance

This piece is called Cultural Inheritance and it is composed of truncated kimono forms made of a sewn, wire mesh. The version I wish to do will have four kimono forms representing the Issei, Nisei, Sansei, and Yonsei generations. The basin underneath represents the Gosei and subsequent generations (I will create a much bigger basin). A mix of crumbled, black coal ash, dried, red Japanese maple leaves, and gold leaf flakes is poured into the top kimono. This mixture of natural elements passes thru each generation, like a sieve, gradually dissipating. Like culture, some things don't get passed on, but inevitably, the tiniest of particles do remain as reminders of the past.

REIKO FUJII

Detained Alien Enemies
Glass Kimono

WENDY MARUYAMA

The Tag Project—EO 9066

LYDIA NAKASHIMA DEGARROD, Ph.D.

Exile- Video Project

TOM NAKASHIMA

Vertical Cage
Sanctuary
Requim

ROGER SHIMOMURA

Night Watch
Lush Life
Enemies
Friend or Foe

JUDY SHINTANI

Pearls Left Behind and Remembrance Shrine
Ancestor's Chimes
Plesdge Allegiance

JERRY TAKIGAWA

"This World," February 8, 1942
Yes. Yes.
EO 9066
Possession of Navigational Charts of Monterey Bay
Memories

