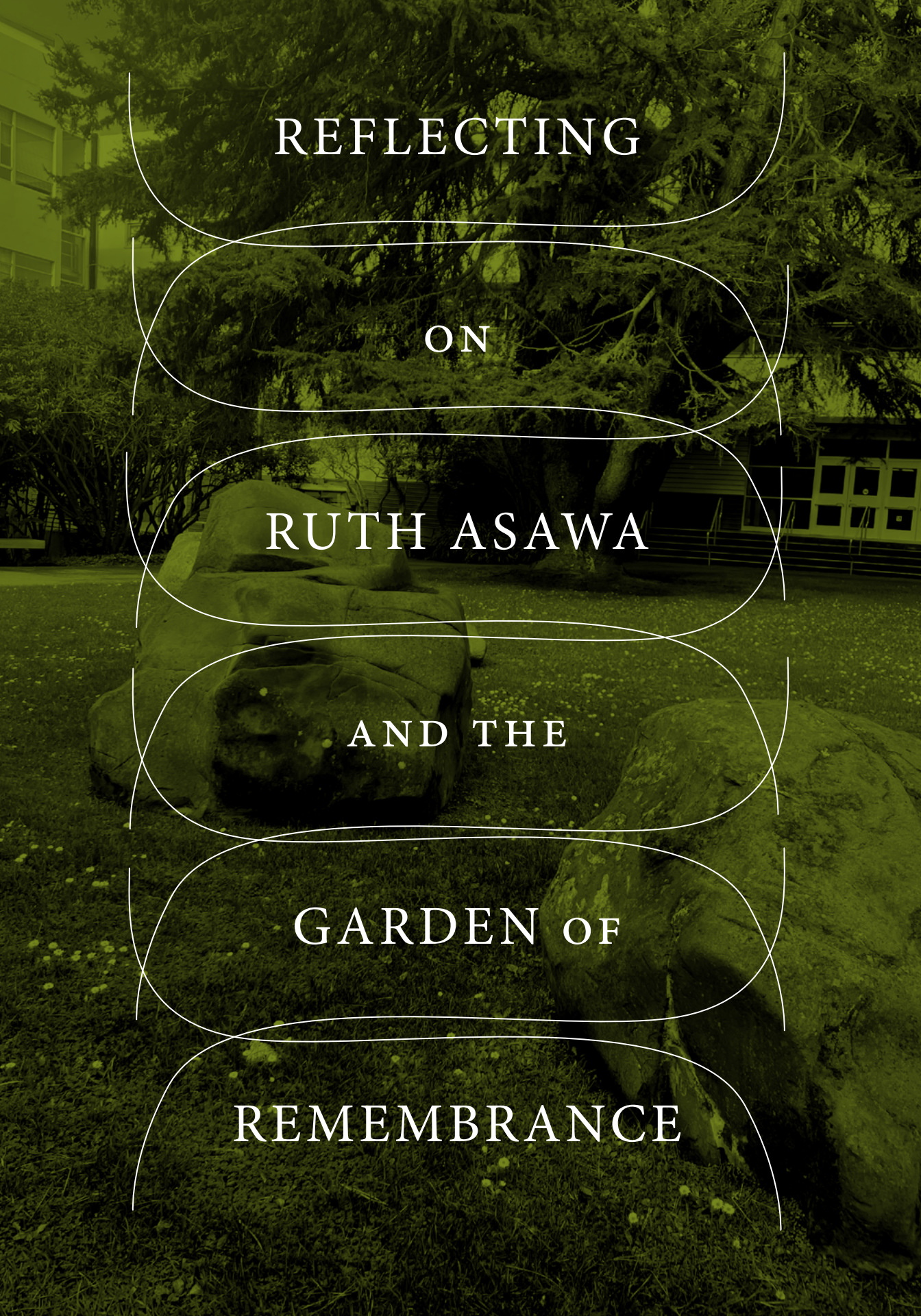

REFLECTING ON RUTH ASAWA AND THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

REFLECTING

ON

RUTH ASAWA

AND THE

GARDEN OF

REMEMBRANCE

FOREWORD

In the 1970s, my mother took a class with Ruth Asawa in which she learned how to make Christmas ornaments out of Baker's Clay dough. Excited about her discovery, she went home and shortly after made her three children make Asawa's Christmas ornaments as well. My mom gave me those tortured ornaments in spring 2023, clumsily formed out of my toddler hands and miraculously still intact. The recipe, and recommendation to coat the finished ornaments with resin, was perfectly created so as not to allow the growth of any mold or crumble even after half a century of storage in a garage. I would learn as an adult that this is precisely what Asawa meant to do, to make art broadly accessible and teach as many people as possible the transformative power of art and craft in everyday life. For my mom, Asawa's class was a welcome escape from the difficulties she faced as a shin-issei (postwar immigrant) from Japan. Indeed, every free moment she had, she took up craft, which I realize only now was her way to express herself and be larger than the three jobs that she juggled. I, in my naive youth, vowed never to be like my mother, who I saw as exhausted and imprisoned by family—so much so that by middle school, I rejected the creativity that my mom injected in me as a child, as part of her failing. Not until I met my partner, an artist and an academic, would I begin to feel the tremendous power of art as well as the creative release of craft. It is not just about individual expression, but rather is a larger statement of sociocultural issues that then can inspire or sadden us. Sometimes it is plainly legible, such as in Félix Gonzáles-Torres's *"Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in LA)*, in which the artist used a 175-pound pile of hard candy to signify his partner's body wasting away due to the government's nonresponse to the AIDS epidemic, and visitors are invited to take a piece to eat. Other times it might not be as legible, as in designer Patrick Kelly's excessive use of buttons on the Paris runway, which nodded to the big tins of buttons Black mothers and specifically his grandmother kept, and additionally signified his urgent call to embrace joy and happiness in a world full of sadness. As we commemorate the *Garden of Remembrance*, let us remember the power of art as well as craft in subverting what often appears to be insurmountable structures of oppression motivated by racism, sexism, queerphobia, and financial greed. Notably, Asawa, whose recognition in the art world was muted by some of these very structures, refused to believe that art should only be for the privileged and dedicated her life to community and the promotion of accessible craft. And in turn, immigrant women such as my mother could find humanity and creativity in a world that valued them only for their menial labor.

Amy Sueyoshi
Provost, San Francisco State University

left: *Garden of Remembrance,* SFSU, 2024

INTRODUCTION

In February 1942, President Roosevelt issued an executive order that remains one of the greatest tragedies in the history of civil rights in the United States. Executive Order 9066 authorized the forcible removal and incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry. A clear violation of civil rights, the order resulted in the mass incarceration of 126,000 Japanese American citizens and Japanese nationals residing in the United States. While some at the time recognized the racism that drove the order, it took more than thirty years to see the order officially repealed—a lasting testament to the persistence and codification of racism in the United States.

In 1988, more than forty-four years after the last sites of incarceration closed, Congress passed a law acknowledging and apologizing for the injustice and agreeing to make restitution. Congress also wanted to "discourage the occurrence of similar injustices and violations of civil liberties in the future." A decade later, California made good on this educational promise by passing the California Civil Liberties Public Education Act, which provided funding for activities and materials to "ensure that the events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal, and internment of civilians . . . of Japanese ancestry will be remembered . . . [and] . . . the causes and circumstance of this and similar events may be illuminated and understood."

The California Civil Liberties Public Education Act in many ways encapsulates what makes San Francisco State University special and the logical home for the study of social injustices. The commitment to community and social justice has long roots at SF State. Study almost any post–World War II movement for justice and you will likely find San Francisco State students, faculty, and staff at its core. Best known for the longest student strike in higher education, SF State prides itself on its lasting work to create inclusive, relevant educational programs and communities, symbolized by being home to the first College of Ethnic Studies in the United States. We are equally proud of our reputation as a premier institution of public higher education, home to nationally renowned scholars, talented students, and distinguished alumni.

In 1996, our academic and social justice missions inspired Carole Hayashino, a staff member, to push the university to participate actively in California's work to educate, honor, and redress the atrocity of Japanese incarceration. Hayashino, driven by a university document she'd discovered from 1942 naming the nineteen SF State students forced to leave school due to Executive Order 9066, worked with colleagues to see these students recognized with honorary degrees in 1998—the same year that an exceptional and internationally recognized local artist, Ruth Asawa, was awarded an honorary doctorate. Asawa acknowledged the natural world and her teachers at Black Mountain College as major influences in her work and in the creation of her commitment to social justice with art as its expression. Honoring those incarcerated with the work of Asawa inspired the creation of the *Garden of Remembrance.*

The *Garden of Remembrance* at San Francisco State University, designed by Ruth Asawa, Isao Ogura, and Shigeru Namba was dedicated in 2002, stands as a special testament to the historical past and the need to own that past, but it also stands as a place that celebrates the renewal of community—a joyful place for students to engage nature, art, and one another. As you enjoy the essays in this publication, attend future exhibitions, or just sit quietly reflecting within the *Garden of Remembrance*, hold the past near; pay homage to those who have given up so much in our long, complicated path to social justice; and commit yourself to the mission of San Francisco State University to "deliver academic excellence by pursuing knowledge, inspiring creativity . . . and advancing social justice and positive change in the world."

Lynn Mahoney
President, San Francisco State University

RIGHT: *Garden of Remembrance*, SFSU, 2024

ESSAYS

PATRICIA WAKIDA
LEWIS KAWAHARA
WESTON TERUYA

BRONZE, SKY AND STONE: RUTH ASAWA'S ART IN THE PUBLIC REALM

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PATRICIA WAKIDA

Over the course of her career, renowned artist, educator, and arts advocate Ruth Asawa's aesthetics evolved into a language of delicate looping contours, plump slabs of clay, and warm portraits in bronze and steel. Appreciation of Asawa has grown exponentially in the past decade, including major exhibitions in the United States and Europe, a biography, children's books, and an upcoming graphic novel. In 2020, she was honored by the US Postal Service with a series of stamps featuring seventeen of her iconic wire sculptures and she was inducted into the California Hall of Fame in 2021. What is less known is her legacy of publicly commissioned art and her decades of fierce advocacy, a life of activism on behalf of artists of every age, that has added enormous aesthetic and cultural vitality and fostered a sustained sense of pride and belonging to the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to designing the artworks, Asawa carefully researched the surrounding architecture, public pathways and other built environments, as well as the negative spaces such as sky and wind factors, and of course, how people would be integrated into the vision through touch, play, and connection. The public commissions allowed Asawa to experiment with new materials and techniques on a scale that she couldn't have afforded on her own and permitted her to work with whole neighborhoods to build something whole that was unified, beautiful and lasting.

Asawa's *Garden of Remembrance* (2000-2002) is a living memorial that balances pure nature against a harrowing story of wartime incarceration. The nineteen San Francisco State University (SFSU) students who were expelled in 1942 who are honored in the piece were among thousands of youth whose childhood and early adulthood were disrupt-

Ruth Asawa with Origami Fountains (PC.006) in San Francisco Japantown, 1977. Photo © Matt Wade. Artwork © 2024 Ruth Asawa Lanier, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy David Zwirner

ed when (like Asawa) they were systematically denied their basic civil liberties and exiled from their homes and schools after the passage of Executive Order 9066, which authorized the incarceration of over 126,000 Japanese immigrants and Japanese American citizens into government concentration camps for the duration of World War II. At that time, the largest population of Japanese immigrants and their American-born children in the US lived, worked, and studied in the San Francisco Bay Area. Nearly 8,000 Bay Area Japanese Americans were registered, tagged, and imprisoned at the Tanforan racetrack or other detention centers that the US government had converted from horse stalls, before transferring to one of ten permanent confinement sites scattered throughout the country. The majority of San Francisco's Japanese residents ended up at the concentration camp known as Topaz, in Utah. Two-thirds of those imprisoned were American citizens by birth; the others were noncitizens unable to obtain naturalized citizenship by federal law.

When Asawa first began work on the *Garden of Remembrance* in 2000, monuments dedicated to the WWII Japanese American camps were only beginning to garner popular support. Most of these early monuments were installed at the fifteen assembly centers or the ten permanent camps and took the form of historical markers and lists of the prisoners. This movement to recognize the impact of EO 9066 followed the passage of the 1988 Civil Liberties Act, which authorized redress, a formal government apology, and reparations of $20,000 to the former Japanese American incarcerees who were still alive. With the support of a $125,000 grant from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program, Asawa was invited to design a public memorial on the SFSU campus in collaboration with a team led by alum and SFSU director of development Carole Hayashino, who wrote the grant that funded the project. The garden also pays tribute to Edison Uno, who taught "Concentration Camps, USA" in SFSU's Asian American Studies Department and was a leader in building national support for the redress and reparations movement.[1] Initially, then SFSU president Robert Corrigan had hoped that Asawa would design a majestic fountain at the school's eastern entrance, but she had other ideas. Her partner at SFSU was Mark Dean Johnson, a painter, art historian, and director of the university's Fine Arts Gallery, and together they walked all over campus before she ultimately settled on the idea of a garden. It was the quietest area she could find, where an intimate work would have the most impact and students could come to rest and think among ferns and flowering shrubs, perhaps of those nineteen students whose education and futures were stolen from them just a generation ago.

Ruth Asawa at Milwaukee State Teachers College, c. 1943. Courtesy Ruth Asawa Lanier, Inc.

Asawa cultivated gardens throughout her life, for her own enjoyment but also for the enjoyment of others, for their inspiration as growing mediums as well as their beauty. A memorial as garden is intentionally designed to be an affirming space that can be explored with one's hands as well as one's eyes and ears. Working in close alliance with Isao Ogura and Shigeru Namba, two of the Bay Area's most revered landscape designers, they created a garden featuring a waterfall spilling into a tranquil pond, surrounded by blooming azaleas and cherry trees. Asawa put the weight of the wartime exile onto ten boulders, symbolizing the isolation of living in the harsh conditions of the WWII camps, in tension with the living flora. The passage of time is measured in the creep of moss spreading over stone, or trees maturing and eventually dying. Rather than build a fountain, they captured the constant change, sound, and pleasure of running water cascading down an incline of rocks, cleansing the soul and signifying the return of the survivors after the war; some small comfort for their suffering.

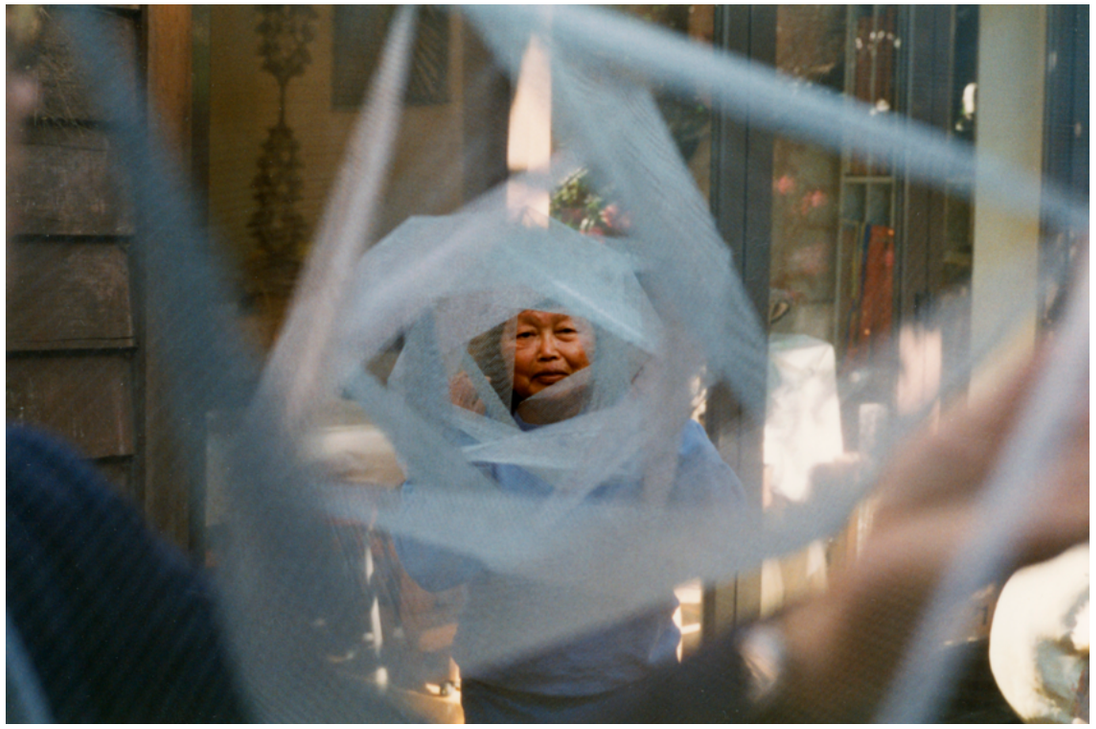
Since childhood, Asawa was enchanted by nature—the delicacy of insect wings, the spiraling instinct of vine tendrils, the weaving of webs. She was born on January 24, 1926, in Norwalk, California, surrounded by dairies, walnut orchards, and sugar beet farms, to Japanese immigrant parents, Umakichi and Haru Asawa. "I can see glimpses of my childhood in my work," she said in later years. "We used to make patterns in the dirt, hanging our feet off the horse-drawn farm equipment. We made endless hourglass figures that I now see as the forms within forms in my crocheted wire sculptures."[2] Asawa showed an aptitude for art at an early age. In 1939, she won a school art competition with her drawing of the Statue of Liberty, and in addition to her exposure to art education at her public elementary school, she attended a community Japanese language and cultural school on Saturdays, where she practiced calligraphy. Although she dreamed of studying at one of two prominent art schools in Los Angeles postgraduation—the Chouinard Art Institute (which merged with the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music in 1961 to become the California Institute of the Arts) or the Otis Art Institute—World War II changed everything.

She was only sixteen years old in February 1942, when her father was arrested by FBI agents and sent to a US Immigration and Naturalization Services internment camp in New Mexico. Before he was taken, he "dug a hole to bury the Kendo (Japanese fencing) gear, and burned the hakama, beautiful Japanese books on flower arrangement and tea ceremony, Japanese dolls, and Japanese badminton paddles,"[3] a painful ritual that was repeated throughout the West Coast by Japanese Americans who were terrorized into believing that their culture was criminal. Two months later, her mother, Asawa and five of her siblings closed

their farm and packed what few belongings they could carry, when they were forced out of Norwalk and into prison camps; her youngest sister Kimiko was stranded in Japan for the duration of the war. After registering with the government, her eldest brother George drove the family to the Santa Anita Racetrack Assembly Center, where they first moved into horse stalls. Six months later, they were moved to a permanent camp in Rohwer, Arkansas.

It is not typical for artists to begin their careers in incarceration, but Asawa drew and painted while at Santa Anita, and participated in art classes led by former Disney animators Chris Ishii, Tom Okamoto, and Ben Tanaka. Painter Benji Okubo, who was previously director of the Arts Student League of Los Angeles, joined forces with artist Hideo Date, a former classmate at Otis Art Institute, and together they continued Arts Student League activities from the racetrack's grandstand. Asawa was also surrounded by fellow incarcerees who knit and sewed and sculpted fine art from found shells, wood, or stone. Despite the damage that the prison camps inflicted, Asawa has said that she not only absorbed lessons from her time in camp, she acknowledged the importance of art in channeling the emotional impact it had on her personally and on her community as a whole. At Rohwer, she became the art editor of the class yearbook, providing numerous illustrations for the publication, and graduated from Rohwer High School in 1943. Asawa's father was finally released from the Department of Justice prison camp in New Mexico in 1943 and allowed to rejoin his family in camp, but by then Asawa had already left for college and would not see either of her parents again until 1948.

Although the war was not over, the government offered high school graduates a one-way ticket to the college of their choice, as long as it was on the East Coast or Midwest. Asawa attended Milwaukee State Teachers College from 1943 to 1946 on a scholarship sponsored by the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, with the intent of becoming a schoolteacher. In the summer of 1945, she and her older sister, Lois Masako, who was a student at the University of Wisconsin, headed to Mexico City, where Masako studied Spanish language and Ruth focused on Mexican furniture making, fresco painting and mural techniques, architecture, dance, and art. In Mexico, Asawa had a chance encounter with an artist who urged her to study under abstract painter Josef Albers, who ran the innovative visual arts program at Black Mountain College in North Carolina. She had first heard about this college while a freshman in Milwaukee from fellow students who shared colorful accounts of the college and also recommended Albers as an exceptional influence. Upon returning to the US, she discovered that no school in Wisconsin would hire an Asian American teacher, so merely



Ruth Asawa holding a project made in collaboration with San Francisco State University students, 1997. The piece currently hangs in the lobby of the Fine Arts Building. Photo © Laurence Cuneo. Artwork © 2024 Ruth Asawa Lanier, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy David Zwirner.

twenty-eight credits shy of her degree, she dropped out and headed for Black Mountain. Asawa would spend three transformative years there, under the instruction of mentors including Albers and Buckminster Fuller. She also met her future husband, architect Albert Lanier, at Black Mountain, and in 1949, she joined him in San Francisco and they were married in a loft above an onion warehouse that was also their new home.

Asawa and Lanier raised their six children while she worked religiously, gradually rising to prominence. Yet Asawa's genius was still vastly undervalued; after all, contemporary American art was completely dominated by white men. Asawa fervently believed that art belonged to everyone, so while maintaining her personal art making practice, she became involved in public arts activism and advocated over many decades as a member of the San Francisco Arts Commission, the board of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the California Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts Task Force, and other organizations, lifting others as she herself grew in stature. She devoted herself to putting art-making tools into the hands of youth, fundraising and lobbying mightily for in-school children's programs and helping to found San Francisco's public alternative high school of the arts (School of the Arts) in 1982, renamed the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts in 2010.

Intent on finishing her teaching credential, Asawa enrolled at San Francisco State College (as SFSU was then known) when she arrived in the city in 1950. But after learning that a banal "leather crafting" class that she found meaningless was a requirement for graduation, Asawa dropped out.[4] She formally returned to campus in 1995 when she was included in a major exhibit at SFSU's Fine Arts Gallery titled *With New Eyes: Toward an Asian American Art History in the West* that began a collaboration between Asawa and gallery director Mark Dean Johnson. At that time, School of the Arts was located next to the SFSU campus, so Asawa brought the high school students to see every exhibit. In 1996, the two wrote a $10,000 San Francisco Art Commission grant for an interdisciplinary workshop for School of the Arts and SFSU students, which culminated in permanent public artwork for the university's Fine Arts building. The workshop was titled "Zen / Bauhaus / Public Art" and jointly taught by Asawa and SFSU textiles professor Candace Crockett. The class combined philosophies of Buddhism and Asawa's Japanese upbringing with the principles of her Black Mountain teaching mentors.

It took fifty-two years, but in 1998, Asawa returned to the Milwaukee State Teachers College, where she was awarded the bachelor of fine arts degree that was denied decades earlier due to racial prejudice. That same

year, SFSU president Corrigan honored Asawa with an honorary doctorate in fine art and bestowed honorary degrees to the expelled Japanese American students. By the time the *Garden of Remembrance* was dedicated in April 2002, seventy-six-year-old Asawa's strength had waned considerably. Most survivors of her generation had already passed away; of the nineteen original students—Hatsune Arita, Percy Fukushima, Mary M. Hata, George Hirose, Kathryn Kawamorita, John Kikuchi, Norman Koyama, Grace Matsuda, Helen Mayeda, Yoshiko Miya, Aiko Nishi, Akiko Nishioka, Dora Sato, Tomiko Sutow, May Yoshino, Tom Yoshiyama, Atsuko Yusa, Helen (Nitta) Hori, and Kaya Ruth (Kitagawa) Sugiyama—only the last two listed were able to attend the dedication ceremonies.

Ruth Asawa died in the predawn hours at her airy, sunlit home in Noe Valley on August 5, 2013, survived by five of her six children, ten grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. Along with her family, San Francisco similarly mourned the loss of a beloved matriarch. Those seeking her energetic force can still find it in the radiant bronze, copper, brass, and steel sculptures and sparkling fountains that anchor neighborhoods throughout the city. Her own industriousness and perseverance taught others that disciplined work, especially in community, can transform people and the spaces that ebb around them. Asawa's incredible gifts of public work are triumphs of beauty that belong to everyone. She enabled us to build a string of monuments dedicated to ourselves and embedded them with the touch of the hundreds of collaborators who helped bring these visions alive. That's why they're so good.

1. "Garden of Remembrance," *SFSU Magazine* volume 2, no. 1 (Fall 2001), p. 26.
2. Mary Emma Harris, "Black Mountain College," in *The Sculpture of Ruth Asawa: Contours in the Air* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 66.
3. Undated and unpublished draft of speech, Ruth Asawa Papers (M1585). Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, California.
4. Personal correspondence with Mark Johnson, July 25, 2023.

THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE – LEWIS KAWAHARA

The *Garden of Remembrance*, located on the campus of San Francisco State University, was created as a place to reflect on the Japanese American concentration camp[1] experience during World War II, and to acknowledge the resulting expulsion of nineteen SFSU students of Japanese heritage. The nineteen Nisei[2] students, forced out of what was then known as San Francisco State College, were part of the 126,000 persons of Japanese ancestry forced into concentration camps at that time.

The garden's creative team included Ruth Asawa, Isao Ogura, and Shigeru Namba. Ruth Asawa was the artistic creator while the master landscape gardeners were Ogura and Namba. The *Garden of Remembrance* would be Ruth Asawa's final public commission and her second to address the Japanese American internment, the first being the *Japanese American Internment Memorial* in San Jose, CA. A master gardener, Isao Ogura was the past president of both the local Mid-Peninsula Landscape Gardeners Association and the Professional Gardeners Federation of Northern California (PGFNC). Shigeru Namba, trained in Japan as a master rock setter, designed the layout of the boulders throughout the landscaped area. In addition to the *Garden of Remembrance*, both men also masterminded the landscape design for the Tanforan Assembly Center Commemorative Garden (2007) and the Issei Commemorative Garden at Cottage Row in Japantown (2016).[3] Ogura and Namba donated countless hours on these projects. They both believed it was their way of giving something back to the Japanese American community, and to the Issei/Nisei[4] generation.

Asawa collaborated with Namba and Ogura in selecting the rocks, handpicked for the shape, character, and energy they felt the rocks gave out. The chosen rocks created a sense of calm and comfort. Mr. Namba methodically arranged the rocks to show each one's most natural position while also

LEFT: *Garden of Remembrance*, SFSU, 2024

Video still from the delivery of the boulders to SFSU's campus 2000. Filmed by Lewis Kawahara.

showing its imperfections. Getting the rocks in the perfect position took the movers several hours of gradually repositioning each rock, maybe only by a few inches at a time, to the perfect spot. What we see now is how Namba envisioned the placement of the rocks.

The waterfall is the most important fixture in the garden. Namba said that if he could hear the water hitting and splashing against the rocks as it was falling, he would know from that sound that the rock was placed in the right spot. Ogura talked about the flow of the water and the need for a correct water pump: "It *had* to be one that gave out a certain amount of pressure—not too fast or not too slow."

The ten rocks on the lawn area represent the ten concentration camps, forming an abstract pattern of the United States. The two rocks closest to the bronze scroll are the Rohwer and Jerome, Arkansas concentration camps.

The cherry trees surrounding the garden were donated by the Mid-Peninsula Landscape Gardeners Association,[5] the San Jose Landscape Gardeners Association, and the Diablo Gardeners Association,[6] then planted by PGFNC members. The blossoming cherry trees were added for their beauty as well

Day of Remembrance observed in the *Garden of Remembrance*, SFSU, 2023. PHOTO CREDIT: Lewis Kawahara

Bench with commemorative plaque, *Garden of Remembrance*, SFSU, 2024

as their being a symbol of Japan and a representation of Japanese Americans and Asian America.

The creative team had many plans and dreams for the garden. They were hoping that students would use the garden as a gathering site, a place to reflect, a spot to gather their thoughts and to read and study, and where events could be held. This has all come to pass. After the official opening of the garden, ownership of the pond was taken over by members of the campus community, who stocked the pond with goldfish and cared for them. One time, the water pump needed to be replaced, and the pond had to be drained. This caused outrage from a few people who wanted the goldfish to be secured and returned as soon as the waterfall was flowing again. The goldfish were protected and returned upon completion of the repairs!

At the garden's inaugural celebration in 2002, then university president Robert A. Corrigan welcomed guests and the public with a program that included contributions from Reverend Richard Grange of the Konko Church of San Francisco and entertainment by Gen Taiko, currently known as GenRyu Arts. All nineteen expelled students were recognized, and two surviving former students plus family members of other students were in attendance. In addition to the public, members of PGFNC[7] were also in attendance.

The *Garden of Remembrance* could not have been created without the guidance of Carole Hayashino, at that time SFSU's director of development. Under her leadership, the university received a grant from the California State Library, the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP). CCLPEP provided grants for projects addressing the internment and treatment of Japanese Americans. SFSU professor of art Mark Johnson, an authority on Asian Pacific Islander art and artists, was instrumental in connecting Ruth Asawa, with whom he had a close friendship, to the project.

After twenty years, evidenced by my observation of students socializing or reflecting or using the space as an outside library to study or read, or just sitting in it, the garden is being used as it was originally designed to be. It helps for people to have a place of solitude on a busy campus. SFSU's *Garden of Remembrance* serves our campus and the community well. It uses art and culture to boost creative ways to learn about different cultures and traditions. By showing the living art of a garden and the use of space in a more environmentally friendly way, it models for students how to integrate this into their lives. The camp experience is part of almost all Japanese Americans' past. The question "What camp was your family interned at?" is an easy way of establishing a connection with another person of Japanese ancestry.

In 1979, the first California Day of Remembrance[8] was organized by members of SFSU's Japanese American Studies program and held at Tanforan in San Bruno, the site of a now demolished racetrack that in 1942 had been converted into an assembly center for Japanese Americans, and where a shopping center is located.[9] With the addition of the *Garden of Remembrance* to the SFSU campus, now during Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (May) and in February, for Day of Remembrance programs, AAPI student groups can hold events in the garden.

My personal connection to the garden is that my father and uncles were gardeners. I want the spirit of Japanese American gardeners to be remembered. After the end of World War II, Japanese Americans were returning to the West Coast to resettle their families and community. Due to prejudice toward Japanese Americans, it was difficult for men to find employment, but they could find work as gardeners since many white homeowners thought all Japanese Americans had "green thumbs." From the mid-1940s through the mid-1980s, Japanese American men dominated the greening industry on the West Coast.

I saw firsthand how Hayashino and her staff visited the garden and spoke with the gardeners throughout this process. Much of this time was after their workday duties and even on their days off, when some would bring their young children with them.

A variety of voices, not a singular voice, is echoed throughout the campus community to tell the story of the making of the garden. And new voices, with new histories and new ways of seeing the garden, will be experienced and revealed. We have rediscovered that anti-Asian hate in America is

Students gather in the *Garden of Remembrance*, SFSU, 2023. PHOTO CREDIT: Lewis Kawahara

still very much a part of American life. We can only hope that the power of a green space and remembering this legacy of prejudice can help to educate people. Asian Pacific Islander Americans are part of the changing face of America and our stories need to be strongly told. We are the voice and we want to ensure that our communities survive and our stories are preserved for future generations. The garden is one such story.

1. These concentration camps were euphemistically called "relocation centers" by the War Relocation Authority (WRA).
2. Nisei: second generation Japanese Americans who were born in the United States.
3. Tomo Hirai, "Plan for Commemorative Garden Draws Mixed Reactions," *Nichi Bei Times*, August 18, 2016 (accessed March 25, 2023).
4. Issei: first generation Japanese Americans who were born in Japan.
5. Mid-Peninsula members lived and/or worked in the Menlo Park–Palo Alto region.
6. Diablo members lived and/or worked in the cities around Mount Diablo.
7. PGFNC disbanded in the early 2000s.
8. The Day of Remembrance highlights the shameful executive order signed by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, which allowed the military authority to set up the internment of all persons of Japanese ancestry.
9. Makeshift concentration camps provided housing for about one hundred and twenty-six thousand persons of Japanese ancestry under Executive Order 9066.

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RESUSCITATING MEMORIES IN THE BODY

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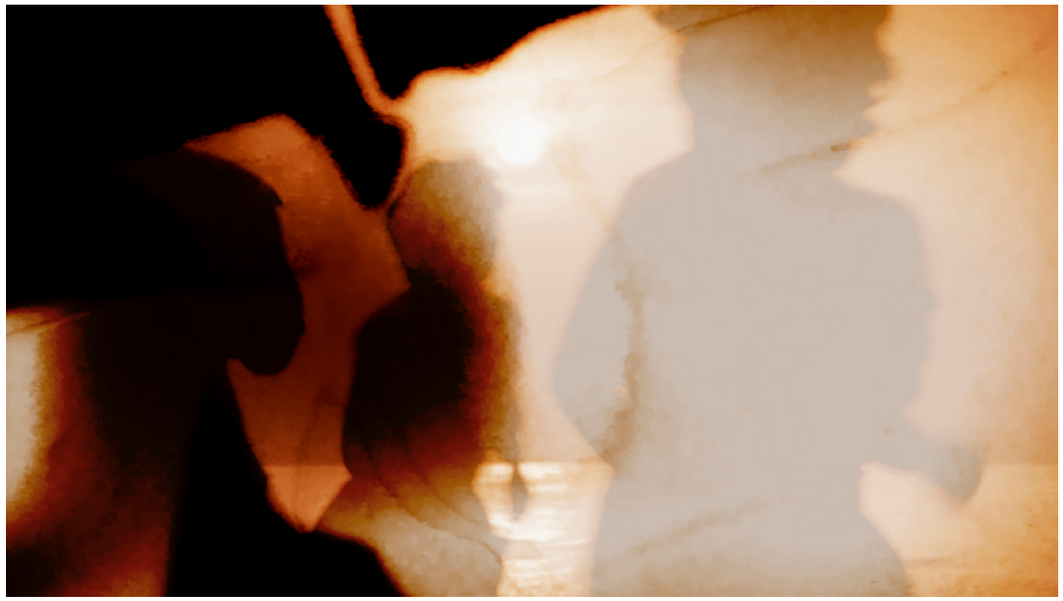
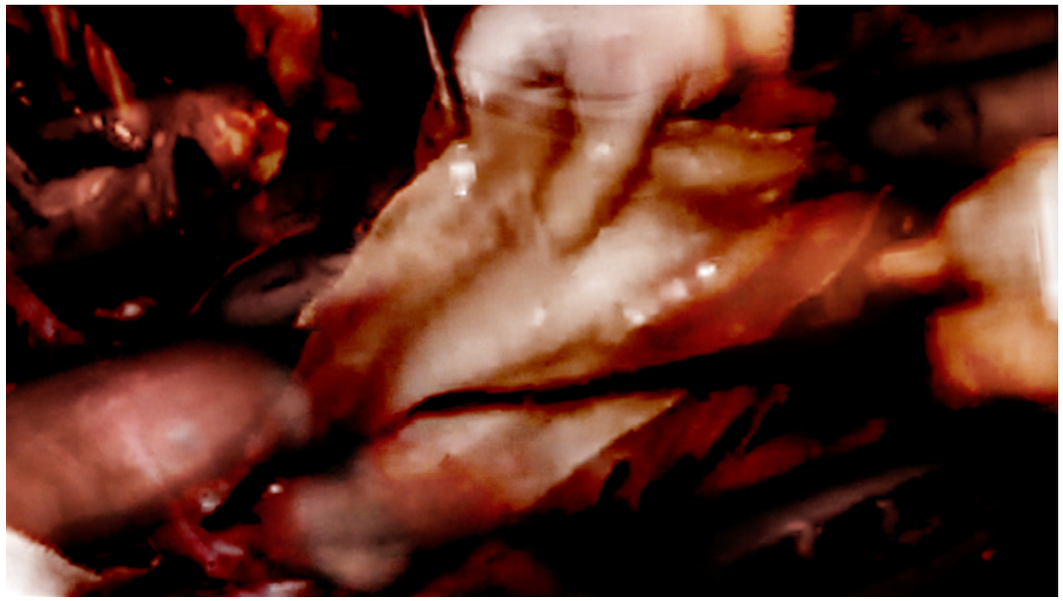
WESTON TERUYA

This collection of artworks is an intergenerational remembrance: a deep sensory reflection on ancestral practices and cultural traditions that are studied across veils of time and oceans, and the unearthing of elided histories and traumas from beneath stone memorials or out of the recesses of overlooked archives. This is a relationship of care extended to found and biological family, community, and our shared stories, manifested in shadows and portraits, knots and weavings, inspirations from the artists who came before us, like Ruth Asawa, and in the artistic labors of our five artists: Mark Baugh-Sasaki, Tina Kashiwagi, Paul Kitagaki Jr., Lisa Solomon, and TT Takemoto.

What does it mean to remember? It's rarely a cerebral exercise; we resuscitate memory in our bodies, giving them fullness as they reoccupy corporeal and emotional space. In several artists' works, this is channeled through the hand—Solomon's knotting, Takemoto's weaving, Baugh-Sasaki's massaging of persimmons as they dry to make hoshigaki. Even in projects where we only see the resultant ephemera or apparatuses around this slow process, there is an implied ache of this handwork and that repetition of motions, echoes over time. While manifesting in vastly different forms, Takemoto, Kitagaki Jr., and Kashiwagi utilize an expansive approach to portraiture to consider individual embodiment in relationship to place, history, community, and family. Their projects are part of a retelling of past narratives, oral and written histories layered into film, image, digital media, and inherited objects.

Installation view of the exhibition "Reflecting on Ruth Asawa and the *Garden of Remembrance*" with the work of Mark Baugh-Sasaki (foreground) and Paul Kitagaki Jr. (background). 2024. PHOTO CREDIT: Claire S Burke





TT Takemoto
On the Line (2018) 6:40 minutes, single channel digital video, hand-processed 8mm/16mm, paint, digital video, sound design by Kadet Kuhne

On the Line is inspired by Isa Shimoda, a butch gender nonconforming immigrant who served meals to Japanese American tuna cannery workers in her restaurant on the docks of San Diego in the 1930s. She was known for her masculine attire as well as her skills at naginata, a sword-based martial art practiced by Japanese women. Her restaurant was a refuge for the women who endured gruesome hours cleaning fish and lived in meager housing shelters known as "fish camp." Shimoda has two sets of wartime records from the incarceration camps—one identifying her as female, the other as male.

On the Line uses Shimoda's story as a point of departure for honoring the Japanese American women who lived, loved, and worked together during the prewar era and beyond. The film uses hand painted and hand processed Super 8 and 16mm film combined with archival footage from the Center for Asian American Media's home movie collection. It conjures up the homosocial worlds of the tuna factory, the restaurant, and naginata, where women might find same-sex intimacy amid sake and fish guts while the men were off to sea. –TT Takemoto

LEFT: Video stills from *On the Line*, TT Takemoto (2018).

FOLLOWING PAGE: Installation view of TT Takemoto's video installation Untitled (Spectres and Shadows) 2024. PHOTO CREDIT: Claire S Burke

TT Takemoto's project extends their research into the stories of women cannery workers on the San Diego, California docks in the 1920s and '30s, where they cleaned fish and worked the factory line, living in what was known as Fish Camp, a tight cluster of wooden homes on the piers. The otherwise unremarkable small quarters stood out against the skyline, decorated with koinobori carp wind socks fluttering off them in the ocean breeze. Among those accounts, Takemoto learned about Isa Shimoda, a butch, gender-nonconforming restaurant owner, whose small café near the docks fed workers and created a space of respite and community. In a 2018 experimental short film, *On the Line*, Takemoto charts an impressionistic journey through this history, using layered manipulated film stock; a soundtrack of environmental sounds; recreated and archival images; and snippets of groups of women in action, practicing naginata martial forms with bamboo polearms, working on the assembly line, running together. Among the images scrolling across the screen, there are brief shots of hands preparing food—working dough, de-veining shrimp—and the edges of smiling faces as they turn, giving the feel of affectionate excavations across time, seeking out queer kinship amid these gestures.

In preparation for a pair of new films in the exhibition, Takemoto produced hundreds of woven wire forms, abstracted fish bodies, hung in a curtain of bulbous teardrops that gave the impression of a fresh catch, spilling from barbless hooks on rows of fishing lines. Takemoto nods to Ruth Asawa's signature looped wire technique in these shapes, further applying that formal approach to this unique melding of mesh and fish. In the new work these forms are elusive: we see cast shadows of the shapes through what at first appears to be the afternoon light from an open window on a wall, or the ghostly suggestion of their piscine movements filmed in black and white. Despite the sense of labor and time in the work, we can only access its material through the intangible, like the traces of this history found in archival records and the implications around those uncovered anchor points. The work lives in the in-between, through mediated layers of filmic interpretation and speculative gestures.


ttt
小東京卓球

Similarly, Tina Kashiwagi's project delves into historic archives, inviting reconsideration by creating an immersive video installation for investigative imagination, queering the record to build an understanding of the unknowable, unspoken gaps in Kashiwagi's relationship to their paternal grandfather, who served in K Company of the 442nd Infantry Regiment during World War II, the segregated unit of Nisei soldiers known as the most decorated group in US military history. The 442nd's famous motto, "Go for Broke," gives a sense of their determination and the implicit, urgent need to prove Americanness in the face of xenophobia, racism, and mass incarceration of our community. In his older years, Kashiwagi's grandfather became a publicly outspoken educator, carrying this history and giving a number of interviews about his story—even being featured in a Ken Burns documentary—but within the private space of the family, he never spoke to any of those experiences. In the oral histories Kashiwagi has delved into, their grandfather often mentioned his moments hidden in a foxhole, trying to find safety during battle after being injured. Kashiwagi reinterpreted this burrow as the anchor point for the gallery installation, a space that holds a video reflecting on family and human relationships amid war.

In Japanese American history, we often speak about gaman, the cultural ethos of solemn endurance, the tamping down of suffering and the unbearable, in relation to the painful and humiliating experience of mass incarceration during the war and the subsequent generational silence that resulted. This was an unspoken wound to be buried deeply in the earth beneath boulders or in a foxhole in the French countryside. Gaman might also be used to describe Kashiwagi's grandfather's bifurcated relationship to the public and his family in regards to his military service. While being expressive to the outside world in the name of public education and advocacy, he remained quiet in his most intimate relationships.

Kashiwagi's work utilizes embodiment as a vehicle for drawing family stories and relationships from the past into the present, future, and back again. By building out room for alternate retellings in their family's archive, time slips and becomes unmoored, opening possibilities to refigure stories and relationships. Across their projects, this has taken the form of performance, as well as projection mapping and other digital tools that manifest speculative and lost things. Taking these ideas into the body or imbuing them in objects allows Kashiwagi to ground the expansiveness in their relationships with their family. Art making becomes a process of proximity and care, a healing of the gaps that grew in silences, in internalized wounds never spoken. In spite of the circuitous path through public records needed to understand their grandfather, this project centers on an intergenerational relationship and the retracing of this mediated connection.

Tina Kashiwagi
Go For Broke (2024) 62" x 42" Cotton Tapestry
The 442nd Infantry Regiment's famous motto was "Go For Broke," which meant to put everything on the line in order to win big. The 442 insignia features a raised arm holding the torch of liberty with a flame burning in remembrance of the lives lost in battle. The center image highlights a picture of my grandfather standing proudly in his army uniform. PHOTO CREDIT: Claire S Burke

Tina Kashiwagi
Meet Me Here at Dawn (2024)
Multimedia installation

My grandfather Robert Kashiwagi was a proud member of the 442nd Infantry Regiment. The most decorated regiment in the history of the U.S. Army, the 442nd consisted of Nisei (second-generation) Japanese American men. During World War II he voluntarily risked his own life to fight for the United States while his family was living behind barbed wire inside the Amache Japanese incarceration camp.

Meet Me Here at Dawn is an imagined built environment inspired by my grandpa's stories of his experiences during the war. The form of the structure simulates a foxhole, dug into the ground to be used as a place for soldiers to shoot from as well as shelter from enemy attacks. During combat my grandpa was shot and wounded, prompting him to leap inside the nearest foxhole for protection. The video displayed within the foxhole consists of both personal and public archives as well as present-day recorded material by me and various family members. This piece is a tribute to my grandfather and to the thousands of men who courageously fought in the war, to celebrate their achievements and to honor the sacrifices that they made for this country.
–Tina Kashiwagi

For almost two decades, Paul Kitagaki Jr. sought out and documented the stories of Japanese Americans incarcerated in the wake of Executive Order 9066 who had anonymously been documented by white photographers working with the War Relocation Authority. Kitagaki Jr. identified and forged relationships with these Japanese American elders, interviewing them and taking new portraits to ensure that those critical memories circulate in our collective body even as our Issei and Nisei generations age and pass on. The project began when Kitagaki Jr. learned that his own grandparents, father, and aunt, unaware of the painful hardships ahead, had been photographed by Dorothea Lange as they waited at a civil control center in Oakland before being eventually shipped to and detained at the Topaz concentration camp. After tracking down this document of his family in the holdings of the National Archives, Kitagaki Jr. embarked on the slow research process of putting names to faces in other photographs from that period, building community trust, and facilitating first voice recounting of these stories.

The resulting images, taken with a 4 x 5 camera with black and white film, are paired with the historic images taken by Lange and other photographers like Clem Albers, Ansel Adams, and Francis Stewart, a strategic echoing of the format used in the 1940s. With this shared aesthetic palette, the contrasts in the juxtaposition become even more evident. The older images functioned as a cultural communication tool that largely told a governmentally sanctioned story of harsh but humane conditions and bureaucratic processing. In almost all of Kitagaki Jr.'s new

Paul Kitagaki Jr.
Family Number: 01106 Yukiko Okinaga Llewellyn, 66, on her first visit to the Manzanar War Relocation center since her release, stands in a field near Block 2, where she lived with her mother. (2005/2024)

Paul Kitagaki Jr.
Family Number: 20247 The wooden chair Suyematsu Kitagaki crafted from scrap lumber sited on the exact location where he lived at Block 22 / Row 12 / Apt E in the Topaz Incarceration Center during WWII in Delta, Utah. (2024)

portraits, subjects are positioned in direct address, looking at the camera with intense gazes. Even without the accompanying text, their faces carry a weight, a readiness to bear witness. They have carried these wounds within their bodies and offer them before us to take up in shared remembrance, a reminder that these memories might be recalled through the work of artists, but we have also been tasked with keeping them alive.

New to this exhibition, Kitagaki Jr. returned to his own family story, embodied in a wooden chair crafted by his grandfather while at Topaz, later passed down to his father before Kitagaki Jr. inherited it in turn. Chairs are a social record. They hold the traces of Kitagaki Jr.'s family and everyone who has shared space with them, whether in harsh camp barracks or their homes since then. Kitagaki Jr. took one of these chairs on a return pilgrimage to Topaz, resiting it in the cracked earth landscape where his family's living quarters once sat, to take a portrait of his grandfather's handiwork. Even without a visible figure sitting in the photograph, like his other photographs of Issei and Nisei, we are confronted by the haunting legacy of this space and the desolation of systemic criminalization and exclusion.

Gambatte! Legacy of an Enduring Spirit

On February 19, 1942, the reverberations of a nation grappling with the aftermath of a Japanese attack manifested in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's issuance of Executive Order 9066. This decree marked the inception of a harrowing chapter that forcibly displaced nearly 120,000 ethnic Japanese, the majority being native-born American citizens. Removed from their lives in California, Oregon, Washington, and Arizona, they found themselves relocated to desolate incarceration camps far from the West Coast.

The second-generation Japanese Americans, the Nisei, bore the weight of this historical injustice with stoic resilience. The shame and pain they harbored led to a collective silence, as they chose not to burden their children with the heavy toll of personal loss. Growing up, these experiences lingered as elusive whispers in my family, revealing only fragments of the profound impact of Executive Order 9066.

In the late 1970s, I was beginning my journey as a photographer, and my uncle, the San Francisco artist Nobuo Kitagaki, disclosed a life changing detail: Dorothea Lange had photographed my grandparents, father, and aunt in 1942 as they awaited a bus in Oakland, California. Lange's images, ones that I deeply admire, encapsulated more than frozen moments; it held the untold stories buried in the past.

Driven by numerous questions and a quest for understanding, I embarked on a mission in 2005 to identify Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans immortalized by Lange and other War Relocation Authority photographers. This challenging undertaking led me to photograph over 60 of the original subjects or their direct descendants across various states.

This narrative is an American story, a poignant reminder that fellow Americans rounded up their own, forcibly incarcerating them in camps guarded by armed countrymen. Post-WWII, they returned to American communities, and in 1988, formal apologies were extended for the violation of their rights as American citizens.

President Ronald Reagan, upon signing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, acknowledged racism, prejudice, wartime hysteria, and the failure of political leaders as factors that led to the internment.

The Issei and Nisei, the first and second-generation Japanese Americans, carried their stories in silence. As some began to recount their experiences, tears and emotions surfaced, revealing long-forgotten memories. For many, this was the first time they publicly spoke about what they endured.

To capture the essence of Lange's work, I strive to create contemporary images that complement and mirror the original photographs, using a 4x5 camera and Polaroid black and white film to recreate the format of the 1940s. Audio and video interviews with 61 subjects further amplify their faces and voices, allowing them to recount, in their own words, the incarceration experience.

In May 2023, I immersed myself in the harsh living conditions at the Topaz Incarceration Center in Delta, Utah, where both my dad's and later my mom's family spent WWII locked behind barbed wire. Sitting on a chair my grandfather crafted from the scrap lumber used to build the camps, I sat on the lakebed soil where they once lived at Block 22, Row 12, Apt E.

Gambatte! Legacy of an Enduring Spirit is a testament to the enduring spirit of those who lived through one of the darkest chapters in American history. It encapsulates a lifelong commitment to sharing a crucial chapter of American history, fostering remembrance, and ensuring that such injustices are never forgotten.

The faces captured in Lange's photographs and mirrored in my contemporary images are not mere subjects; they are bearers of stories that deserve to be etched into the fabric of our collective memory. So we'll always remember.

— Paul Kitagaki Jr.

Mark Baugh-Sasaki has similarly become the caretaker of family memories, an archivist of the extensive collection of materials amassed by his father, including ephemera from his time incarcerated at the Tule Lake concentration camp and material from the (now defunct) family farm in Loomis, California, lost during that time but thankfully held by friendly neighbors until it could be reclaimed after the war. While specific crops varied—especially as members of the family grew up and moved away to start their own farms—there were a number of fruit orchards. The inherited practice of caring for the land and tending to plants and animals carries into the material sensibility of Baugh-Sasaki's art making. Wood, stone, soil, and metal might initially be unremarkable, but come from sites that bear a lingering sense of history and place. In the process of coaxing out the embedded memories within these things, Baugh-Sasaki taps into an intergenerational community knowledge.

While reflecting on this familial relationship to fruit crops, as well as the practices of farming within many of the camps during incarceration, Baugh-Sasaki decided to learn how to make traditional hoshigaki, dried Hachiya persimmons. After a failed attempt at learning on his own, he turned to relatives experienced in the practice to learn how to care for the fruit after the fall harvest to transform them into the valuable treat. The intensive process involves peeling the fruit, tying them up by their stems in a space with plenty of circulation to discourage molding, and gently massaging them every day for weeks. The makeshift scaffolding for hanging the fruit becomes its own incidental sculpture linked to the specific microclimate where they are made—be it the eaves and doorways of a building or a jumble of sawhorses and boards. The dangling fruit, carefully spaced out along the lengths of the suspending beams, become a marker of seasons.

For the exhibition, Baugh-Sasaki created an installation centered on the visual language of Japanese garden design and the display of bonsai and suiseki, emphasizing the mechanisms of tradition that become stand-ins for the relational practice of familial remembrance and learning behind hoshigaki making, farming, and tending to history. Titled *Confluence*, the work is a nod to the location of the family farm at a fork in the American River, a journey through the life of Baugh-Sasaki's father, and an effort to embody generational memories before they are lost. Projected videos mapped across the installation capture snippets of the farm and along the river that in their accumulation speak to the inexorability of natural cycles and change. Leaves will turn, flowing water slowly wears at rock faces and carries sediment downstream. As much as we might hope to corral our creative and professional processes to align with the expanse of time and seasons, these relationships and processes don't unfold on exhibition schedules, they are ties that are made well before and extend in lengths long after the gallery closes.

FOLLOWING PAGE:
Installation view, Mark Baugh-Sasaki *Confluence* (2024) foreground, Tina Kashiwagi *Go For Broke* (2024) background.
PHOTO CREDIT:
Mark Baugh-Sasaki

Mark Baugh-Sasaki, *Confluence* (2024) detail. PHOTO CREDIT: Claire S Burke

Mark Baugh-Sasaki
Confluence (2024) Family archive materials, wood, plywood, stones gathered from the American river, sound, and video

Confluence explores my family's relationship to the California landscape ranging from the fertile foothills of the Sierras to the desolate high desert borderlands of Tulelake. The concept for this piece came from exploring boxes of family ephemera–photos, documents, journals, and clippings dating back more than 120 years. After going through them many times, I was drawn to the documents surrounding our family's farm. For me, the documents and objects reveal a tight knit community whose livelihood was tied to their relationship to the land.

These records tell the story of how the landscape shaped my family, whether it was a place of safety, comfort, and home on open acres of farmland or of dislocation and trauma during the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. This ephemera, intentionally saved and passed down for generations, are vessels transporting their experiences, emotions, and memories directly to me.

Throughout my planning for this project my father has been losing his memory. In witnessing this process, I feel like I am losing the connection to my family and their legacy. Yet, at the same time, I have reconnected with family still living in the Rocklin/Loomis area of California. They continue to live in the house they built in 1958 surrounded by fruit trees–a small farm oasis in the middle of an ever-growing subdivision that developed when they sold the farm in the late 90s.

On this one acre of land, they follow the cycles of the seasons planting, pruning, harvesting, and preserving what this area was known for. Their willingness to share these practices and processes with me has helped me re-form my connection to part of who I am.

The title *Confluence* is taken from the location on the American river where the North and South Fork merge together. The river acts as a metaphor for the merging of personal, family, and community experiences and history within the landscape to create a space that holds the past and has allowed me to access part of who I am through it. Using the visual language of Japanese garden design and the display of Bonsai and Suiseki, combined with objects and materials from my family archive, and video and audio recorded throughout the Loomis/Rocklin area I am creating a garden of memory. A place where one can reflect on personal, community, or human experiences and how rooted they are in our surroundings.
–Mark Baugh-Sasaki

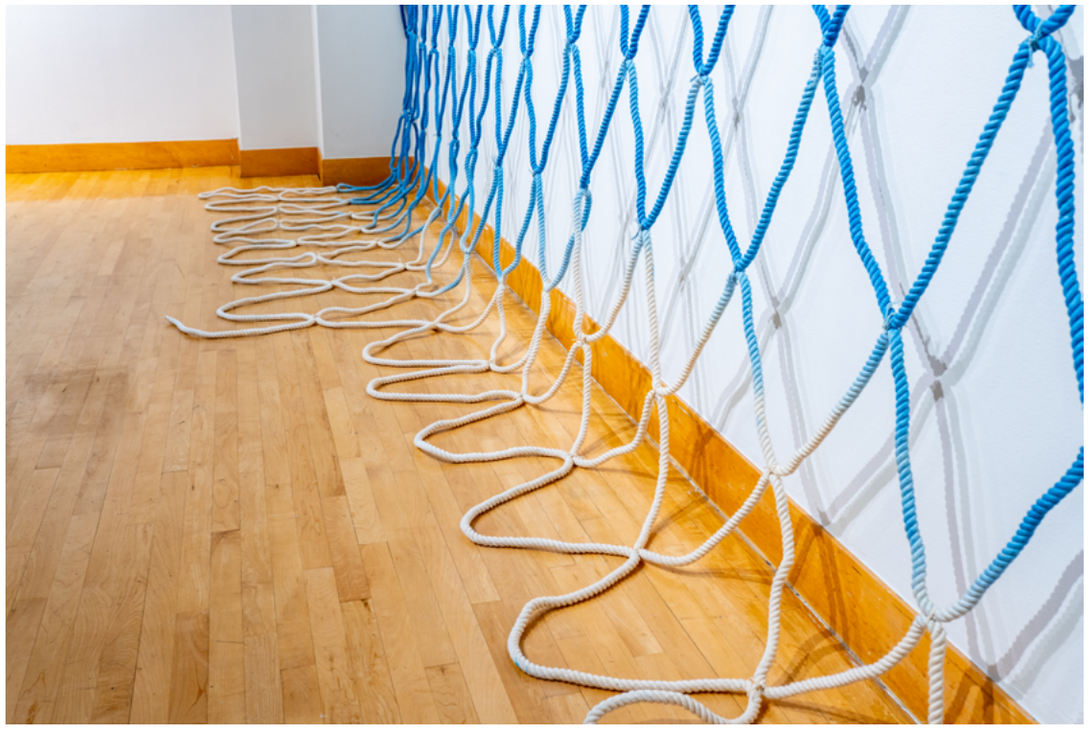
In Lisa Solomon's work, this practice of care as carried in materiality comes to the fore. In developing her work, Solomon delved into Japanese textile and ropework traditions and the handcraft behind those motifs and objects. Her research and making enact a reconnection with shared ancestral modes of working.

On one wall of the gallery, Solomon has installed an oversized fishing net, based on a traditional amime pattern, woven from a length of rope. The loose mesh pattern of interlocking and rhythmic wavy lines is a common motif in ceramics and textile designs, traditionally adopted by fishermen to grant fortune on a catch, and since then interpreted more broadly as a symbol of luck and resilience. Solomon uses the form as an open receptacle for a variety of interpretations; after all, at this scale, the pattern might also be read as a chain link fence, a contested boundary, or the edge of a carceral space. By dyeing the piece with a gradient of indigo pigments, it also gives the chromatic sense of a receding ocean at the shoreline or an open sky torn by the fence and barbed wire of a remote and desolate camp. The installation optically oscillates between barrier and open sea, riding the crests and troughs of the waving lines.

On the adjacent wall, Solomon exhibits an arrangement of rope knots referencing senninbari, traditionally a thousand knots or stitches made by groups of women in a belt or length of cloth to be worn as a protective talisman by male soldiers going off to war. Japanese American women also occasionally carried out the practice in the camps, where craft and the expression of cultural traditions became their own kind of subtle resistance. Mothers whose children volunteered or were drafted into military service—eventually forming the bulk of the 442 Infantry Regiment—occasionally organized senninbari crafting circles to create vests or belts for their departing sons. Each knot was meant to be made by a different person, making these objects a collective act of care tied together through repeated labor. While the much larger knots installed in this exhibition were produced by Solomon, this apotropaic sense still hums underneath this larger-scale reinterpretation.

Similar to the sculptures hinted at in Takemoto's installation, Solomon utilizes repetition to give the patterns of knots and netting a sense of texture and evenness across, but on closer observation, the deliberate imperfection of the gestures of this weaving become evident. These are not perfect, machine-made patterns. The handmade is not the fetishization of labor for its own sake; it is, in part, the subtle reaffirmation of amorphousness, irregularity, and the unpredictable.

Fluidity serves as both a liberatory metaphor and a grounding in materiality and practice: as we take these things in, reinterpret them, process them through our generational contexts, they naturally morph.



Lisa Solomon, *amime-net* (2024) detail

Remembering doesn't mean that contexts or generational impacts are flattened, but that the process of healing, remembering, and seeking justice are ongoing yet constantly shifting struggles that must be renewed and assessed.

A remembrance is a public practice with the hope that we might create an interwoven scaffolding that protects us from the dangers of forgetting. Ruth Asawa was an educator who believed in the power of seeding creative knowledge and assisting others in picking up her threads of research and making. She cofacilitated the creation of the *Garden of Remembrance* because it continuously holds the space for a set of memories. In the seemingly innocuous green space, the low thrum of those stories might be heard hundreds of times before registering as an urgency. The slow process of remembering requires durational listening, like artists' investigations into previous generation's stories, traditional forms, and aesthetic systems. Not in the sense of a deterministic cultural essentialism, but in ongoing family relationships, in research, in travel, in a yearning for connection and the care for those who came before. If remembering our ancestors keeps their, and our, spirits whole, the taking in of these modes of art making becomes a deeply rooted remembrance. In learning from their means of surviving, negotiating worlds that may have been hostile to them, we are granted a sense of what is possible today and what we would like to reimagine for our futures.

Lisa Solomon
amime—knots (2023)
228 knots this configuration
hand tied and dyed cotton rope
120" x 135"
amime—net (2024)
hand tied and dyed cotton rope
139" x 217"

The Japanese pattern Amime stems from fishing nets. It came into prominence in the Edo period and symbolizes success—in fishing and more largely in life—the idea of catching something desired in one fell swoop. I first fell in love with it on the wrapping of a package while shopping in Japan many years ago. I soon realized it was common on numerous Japanese items, from traditional kimonos to dishware, hand towels to origami paper. Its simplicity and beauty instantly makes me think of Japan. When thinking of my own connection and love of Ruth Asawa's work, the pattern reminded me of how her wire sculptures were built and interconnected. I thought it would be interesting to explore Amime in 2 ways—with a nod to the color indigo. Indigo was first brought to Japan in the 5th or 6th century and originally was reserved for the wealthy and Samurai class—particularly because Indigo had anti-bacterial qualities and repelled insects. By the 17th century thousands of indigo vats spotted the country and the color became synonymous with Japan. Indigo is loved for its ability to be many shades of blue [as I allude to in the ombre nature of both works] and of course it also references the water—harmonious for a fishing net.

Both of these works play with a sense of scale—something magical happens when we physically have to relate to something that has shifted in size from our normal perception of it. The materiality and tactility of them are also of importance. This was a crucial element in Asawa's work as well—using materials perhaps not always associated with "fine art" and utilizing them to create something more delicate and lovely than wire—or in my case rope—seems to imply.

I have been making large French knots in a tribute to Senninbari—belts that women made to protect men's hara [a spiritual source that resides in one's gut]—that contained 1000 French knots. Ideally the belts were made with each knot stitched by a different woman [people often gathered in gymnasiums or were recruited outside train stations], generating a collective luck that I find inherently fascinating. I like the idea that collective luck and success may be reliant on one another. These installations also require multiple hands in their making and hanging—thanks to those who help me cut, glue the hardware in and drill the holes/hammer the nails. I thought it would be visually pleasing to present these two takes on Amime side by side—mimicking one another in size, color, material origin, and yet also quite different in their appearance and execution. While they form the recognizable fishing net pattern, upon closer inspection it's very clear that there is a hand involved in them. Each knot tied by me, slight imperfections and differences that can only happen in a handmade item. These pieces represent an accumulation of labor in a nod to tradition as well the idea that labor itself offers solace, moments of resistance, and is often something we overlook, but it incredibly important. The Amime pattern is also open enough to allow for other visual interpretations—like chain link fences— that can generate metaphors that relate to our current times.
–Lisa Solomon

Installation view of Lisa Solomon's *amime-net* (left) and *amime-knots* (right). PHOTO CREDIT: Claire S Burke

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our project began in early 2020 when a community advisory group convened to help us envision a program to honor Ruth Asawa and her memorial to the Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during World War II, while involving contemporary artists to push this work forward. Through our Covid isolation we held countless Zoom meetings and would like to acknowledge Hiro Edeza, Mark Dean Johnson, Lewis Kawahara, and Patricia Wakida for their guidance and support. Our advisory group recommended that we invite Garden of Remembrance stakeholders to consider adaptations to the then twenty-year-old memorial while we planned our project. The expanded advisory grew to include elders and civic leaders from San Francisco's Japantown; Ruth Asawa's children and grandchildren; San Francisco State University's current and retired faculty, staff and administrators; and the students of SF State's Nikkei Student Union. Student graphic designers Jazlyn Hernandez Aldana, Zoë Miller, Jacksaline Perez, Jill Yamanishi, and Alyssa Yi and School of Design faculty Joshua Singer worked with us to develop new signage. School of Art students Takahiro Okubo, Owen Takabayashi, Ruby Eddo, Kevin Lopez, and faculty Mike Arcega, with staff Jenna Meacham and Eusebio Lozano, collaborated on its fabrication and installation. Nick Holmes from SFSU's Capital Planning, Design and Construction department has been our staunch partner in moving all things forward. In addition to improved signage, a website (gardenofremembrance.sfsu.edu) has been launched to share in-depth information about Ruth Asawa and Japanese American incarceration with the help of Adrienne Cruse, Ruth Truman, Yuki Obayashi, Vivian Tong, Wesley Ueunten, and Laura Lisy-Wagner. Throughout all of these developments, *Reflecting on Ruth Asawa and the Garden of Remembrance* has served as a unifying hub.

Early support for this project was awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding was provided by the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and SF State's Instructionally Related Activities fund.

Students enrolled in SFSU's exhibition design classes, taught by Kevin B. Chen, have been involved at all stages of the planning and installation of this exhibition. Thank you to artists Mark Baugh-Sasaki, Tina Kashiwagi, Paul Kitagaki Jr., Lisa Solomon, and TT Takemoto for the beautiful new work they have created for this project. Along the way we have had the help of many, including Claire Isola, Claire Burke, Cecilia Li, Stephanie Louie, and Antonio Dorey, as well as our stellar copy editor Anne McPeak and graphic designer Justin Carder. Essayists Lewis Kawahara, Weston Teruya, and Patricia Wakida enliven the publication with their thoughts. University president Lynn Mahoney and provost Amy Sueyoshi have graciously contributed our introduction and foreword. Weston Teruya has produced a podcast with an interview with each artist. The Asawa-Lanier family and Ruth Asawa Lanier, Inc. continue to support our efforts. Thanks to all.

—Sharon E. Bliss and Kevin B. Chen,
project curators

REFLECTING ON RUTH ASAWA AND THE GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

Presented February 24 to April 6, 2024 at the Fine Arts Gallery,
San Francisco State University.
gallery.sfsu.edu

Mark Baugh-Sasaki
Tina Kashiwagi
Paul Kitagaki Jr.
Lisa Solomon
TT Takemoto

CURATORS
Sharon E. Bliss and Kevin B. Chen

Reflecting podcast hosted by Weston Teruya
https://rss.com/podcasts/reflectingsfsu/

Ruth Asawa public art tour, created by the Estate of Ruth Asawa Lanier
https://ruthasawa.com/ruth-asawas-public-art-tour/

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS arts.gov

Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

This project has received major support from the National Endowment for the Arts, and additional support from the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and San Francisco State University's Instructionally Related Student Activities Fund.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

MARK BAUGH-SASAKI
Confluence (2024)
Family archive materials, wood, plywood, stone gathered from the American river, sound, and video

TINA KASHIWAGI
Me Here at Dawn (2024)
Multimedia installation

Go For Broke (2024) 62 x 42" Cotton tapestry

PAUL KITAGAKI JR.
FROM THE SERIES *Gambatte!*

- *Family Number 21365: Katsumoto*
- *Family Number 21537: Aso and Asano*
- *Family Number 21474: Hibi*
- *Family Number 13611: Nozaka*
- *Family Number 18661: Matsumoto*
- *Family Number 01504: Kojimoto*
- *Family Number 19073 and 19022: Nakamoto and Hashiki*
- *Family Number 01106: Hayakawa*
- *Family Number 06350: Shimada*

Each work include the historic photographs taken of the family, along with text from an interview and a current portrait taken by Paul Kitagaki Jr. Presented in one frame. Dates vary. Framed size: 32 x 26" (vertical) or 26 x 32" (horizontal).

Digital prints produced for the exhibition, sizes vary:

- *Family Number 20247: Kitagaki* The wooden chair Suyematsu Kitagaki crafted from scrap lumber sited on the exact location where he lived at Block 22 / Row 12 / Apt E in the Topaz Incarceration Center during WWII in Delta, Utah. (2023)
- *Family Number 20247: Kitagaki Family photographs* (2023)
- *Topaz Incarceration Center, Delta Utah* (2023)
- *Woodland, California Train Station* (2023)
- *Family Number: 01106* Yukiko Okinaga Llewellyn, 66, on her first visit to the Manzanar War Relocation center since her release, stands in a field near Block 2, where she lived with her mother. (2005/2024)
- *Family Number 06350: Shimada*
- *Suyematsu Kitagaki's chair* (1942)

LISA SOLOMON
amime-net (2024)
Hand tied and dyed cotton rope, 139 x 217"

amime-knots (2023)
Hand tied and dyed cotton rope, 120 x 135", 228 knots in this configuration.

TT TAKEMOTO
On the Line (2018) 6:40 minutes
Single channel video, hand-processed 8mm/16mm, paint, digital video. Sound dsign by Kadet Kuhne.

Untitled (Spectres and Shadows) (2024) 2:50 minutes
Multi-channel digital video, sound design by Kadet Kuhne, camerawork by TT Takemoto and Kaz Mendoza Rodriguez.

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