



DIS displaced · dispersed · dispossessed

Parallel Canadian exhibitions:

University of Victoria Legacy Art Gallery, Victoria
Nikkei National Museum Karasawa Gallery, Metro Vancouver



Front cover image credit:

'Repatriation' to Japan, Slocan, British Columbia, c. 1946.
Courtesy of the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre,
Odamura Family Collection (1996.178.1.33.a-b).

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EXHIBITION

Curator: Sherri Shinobu Kajiwaru

Curatorial and Programming Project Team: Ciel Dong, Naomi

Keenan O'Shea, Sarah Stilwell

Nikkei National Museum

University of Victoria Legacy Art Gallery

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Past Wrongs
Future Choices

 **Nikkei**
national museum
& cultural centre



**University
of Victoria**

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Victoria Legacy Art Gallery, The Howard Green Foundation,
and Lloyd Howard and Martin Bonham.



Jon Sasaki, *A Descendant of
Tinker*, 2026, sculpture.



DIS – displaced, dispersed, dispossessed

DIS – displaced, dispersed, dispossessed pairs concurrent group exhibits at the Nikkei National Museum and the Legacy Art Gallery, bringing together work from contemporary artists exploring the lasting influence of the Second World War on Nikkei communities globally.

Through installation, video, sculpture-informed 2D/3D work, performance, illustration, and text-based practices, participating artists engage inherited memory, cultural continuity, and intergenerational experience.



From *Stolen Heirlooms*, Kellen Hatanaka

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Why DIS

Sherri Shinobu Kajiwara
Director|Curator, Nikkei National Museum
Head Curator, *DIS*

Reflecting on the journey that led to the exhibition *DIS*, I found myself returning often to its predecessor, *Broken Promises*, developed in 2020 as the capstone knowledge mobilization project of *Landscapes of Injustice*. That project examined the mass dispossession of Japanese Canadians during the 1940s. Fast forward to the *Past Wrongs, Future Choices* project, which expands those inquiries into a broader global context, and I was challenged to imagine an exhibition that revisited this history without duplicating *Broken Promises*, which continues to tour across Canada and Japan as I write this.

In my curatorial practice as Director|Curator at the Nikkei National Museum, I have long sought to combine storytelling with contemporary art as a way of engaging the layered and often difficult histories of Japanese Canadians. From the outset, *DIS* was envisioned through that lens and centred Nikkei artists: artists of Japanese ancestry whose practices speak to memory, identity, and inherited histories.



Broken Promises exhibition at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg Manitoba.

In my own curatorial dreaming, a nod to *Curatorial Dreams*¹ by Shelley Ruth Butler and Erica Lehrer, I always imagined the Canadian exhibition component of *Past Wrongs, Future Choices* taking shape through contemporary art practice. My understanding of “art” has always been expansive, extending beyond traditional painting, printmaking, and photography to include installation, performance, poetry, music, and interdisciplinary forms.

During early conversations with *Past Wrongs, Future Choices* (PWFC) project lead Dr. Jordan Stanger-Ross, I spoke about the differences between working with artists and working solely with academic researchers. In a perfect world, I suggested, we would hold artist residencies that would allow creatives to research

their Nikkei family histories connected to the 1940s. I lamented the fact that the Nikkei National Museum lacked both the resources and physical space to host such residencies, despite it being a longstanding aspiration of mine.



The Exhibitions Cluster of *Past Wrongs, Future Choices* at its 2024 Symposium in Banff, Alberta.

Without hesitation, Jordan proposed a combined artists-and-scholars residency program, which were ultimately held from 2022 to 2024 at the University of Victoria (UVic). The participating artists, many of whom also move fluidly within academic and scholarly fields, included visual artists, poets, performers, musicians, and interdisciplinary practitioners. The original residency agreement

made clear that there was no guarantee that works produced through the program would appear in the final exhibition. Rather, the intent was that these voices and creative investigations would help shape the exhibition's development. To that end, all participating artists were included in a symposium held in Banff in 2024.



Artist Showcase of *Past Wrongs, Future Choices* at its 2024 Symposium in Banff, Alberta.

One of the many benefits that emerged for the Nikkei National Museum through both *Broken Promises* and *DIS* was the invaluable curatorial and academic support made possible through the SSHRC-funded *Landscapes of Injustice* and *Past Wrongs, Future Choices* projects. For *DIS*, I am deeply grateful for the contributions of Ciel Dong, Naomi Keenan O'Shea, Lesley Marshall, and Sarah Stilwell, all of whom were integral members of the curatorial team. Together, we refined the exhibition through countless Zoom meetings and several ocean crossings between Vancouver and Victoria, as the final exhibitions would be presented at both the Legacy Art Gallery in Victoria and the Karasawa Gallery at the Nikkei National Museum in Metro Vancouver.

Additional exhibition design and graphic support came from Danielle Harumi Jette, Design & Exhibit Coordinator at the Nikkei National Museum. We are also profoundly grateful to the team at the Legacy Art Gallery, including Roger Huffman, Katie Hughes, Caroline Riedel, and Christine Walde.

The decision to centre artists of Japanese ancestry investigating their own familial connections to the 1940s remained foundational throughout our curatorial process. While inclusion in the final exhibition was never promised, the work that emerged from the residencies was so compelling that it became impossible to imagine the exhibition without it.

From the beginning, we envisioned *DIS* as a dual-site exhibition shared between the Legacy Art Gallery and the Karasawa Gallery. Because the exhibition schedules ran largely in parallel, creating a single travelling exhibition was not feasible. Given that the residencies were hosted through UVic, it felt geographically and conceptually fitting for the Legacy Art Gallery presentation to feature

the residency artists. The final roster at the Legacy Art Gallery includes Renay Egami, Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa, Brava Kilo (Brian Kobayakawa), Michael Prior, Elysha Rei, Nao Uda, and Justin Seiji Waddell.

The Karasawa Gallery exhibition at the Nikkei National Museum drew from a significant body of Nikkei artistic practice. In many respects, the exhibition also represented a return to earlier



Our curatorial team on site at the Legacy Art Gallery with the UVic Legacy Art Gallery and Libraries and Art Collections teams.

curatorial relationships and conversations that have shaped my work over the past decade. Several participating artists had previously contributed to the first exhibition I curated for the Nikkei National Museum in 2012 commemorating the anniversary of Japanese Canadian internment. Their inclusion in *DIS* created important continuities across generations of artistic engagement with histories of dispossession and incarceration. Additional artists incorporated research drawn from the *Landscapes of Injustice* database in order to examine family histories of property seizure, displacement, and state violence, while others have spent decades investigating intergenerational memory through textile, sculptural, and multimedia practices. Artists featured at the Karasawa Gallery include Mitchell Akiyama, Kellen Hatanaka, A.S.M. Kobayashi, Cindy Mochizuki, Judy Nakagawa, Emma Nishimura, and Louise Noguchi.

The exhibition title emerged through reflection on the role of language in shaping public memory of Japanese Canadian dispossession during the 1940s. Euphemistic

terminology has historically functioned to obscure or soften the violence of forced removal, incarceration, property seizure, and dispersal. The prefix “dis,” however, also offered a productive conceptual framework through which to reconsider these histories.

Terms such as dispossession, displacement, dispersal, disenfranchisement, distortion, disregard, and dislocation speak directly to the experiences imposed upon Japanese Canadians during this period. At the same time, the prefix suggests other forms of engagement: discussion, disruption, discovery, disclosure, and dissent. The title *DIS* can operate simultaneously as fragment, interruption, and invocation, signalling both the historical ruptures under examination and the possibility of renewed critical engagement. It is my hope that the exhibition encourages audiences to pause, reflect, and engage more deeply with the enduring legacies of these histories.

The process — DIS and counterpoint

Sarah Stilwell and Naomi Keenan O'Shea

As we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally but contrapuntally [...]. In the counterpoint of Western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized inter-play that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work.

Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

The first and last time our curatorial team was all together in person, it was October 2023 and we were at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria. It has been such a journey since then.

Over the years, parts of our group met in person in Victoria, in Burnaby, in Banff at the *Past Wrongs, Future Choices* symposium, in Winnipeg at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, and eventually at the Legacy Art Gallery when it was time to get our boots on the ground.

Internally, we call this the “Canadian” exhibition of *Past Wrongs, Future Choices*. It joins others in Australia, Brazil, and the United States engaging with their national histories and public understandings of the uprooting and internment of Nikkei, as well as exhibitions in Japan. This exhibition, *DIS*, showcases contemporary art and artists, bringing into focus the inherited and intergenerational experiences of this history. Rather than looking solely to the past, it prompts us to reflect on how histories of uprooting and exile are shaping identity, community, and resistance today. While it may be the “Canadian” exhibition, many of the artists’ stories, our team, and our process have been global in scale. The curatorial vision of this exhibition, and everything that has followed, has been built largely through bi-weekly Zoom meetings between 3 and 4:30 p.m. Pacific Time—the sweet spot for our different time zones spread between Canada and Australia.

In an interview with Sherri in the summer of 2025, a year she coined as “our working year,” and 2024 “our dreaming year,” our leader and head curator reflected on how we have arrived at what is now *DIS*. Though connected with the exhibition *Broken Promises*, this new exhibition departs from it.

“*Broken Promises*,” Sherri noted, “came from mobilizing rigorous academic research. Here, the artists are the researchers, and what we learn from them is that there is not just one way to tell these stories.”

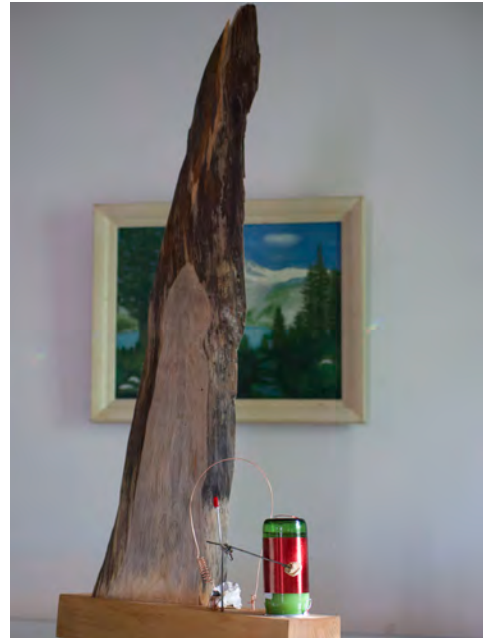
Inverting the model of research turning into an exhibition, this exhibition foregrounds artists engaging with their pasts. The artist-led approach opens up thinking about how researchers in the social sciences



and humanities can learn from artists and artistic works, particularly when it comes to collective memory, legacies of injustice, and intergenerational and inherited experiences. As PhD candidates in the disciplines of Political Science and Human Geography, we've taken more than a few lessons and inspiration from the artists you'll meet through their works at the Karasawa and Legacy galleries.

As we got closer to the exhibition, and conversations moved from ideas to production and fabrication, we knew we needed to start thinking about themes and concepts that would – in some way – unify the plurality of artistic voices and experiences, and range of art forms and mediums of *DIS*.

Contrapuntalism is a concept Edward Said developed as a metaphor for plurality and multiplicity, shifting focus from singular or dominant narratives to a plurality of experiences and histories¹. It derives from the musical concept of *counterpoint*, a term used to describe music consisting of two or more melodies simultaneously, maintaining their independence while interplaying with one another. As Sherri said, there is not one way to tell these stories, and after musing about contrapuntalism during a meeting in January 2026, by April we realized we had found the concept connecting how we understand this exhibition and our curatorial process.



Documentation of work in process. Courtesy of the artist, Justin Seiji Waddell. Found and gifted materials; galena crystal, copper, sake, seashell cluster, dried shiitake, wire, beeswax, fragment of memorial tree, wood.

In art, counterpoint manifests through interactions of different themes, narratives, and audio, visual and other sensory elements. We invite viewers to look, listen, read, sense, and feel contrapuntally in this dual-site exhibition of 15 artists to bring attention to the “intertwined and overlapping”² family and community histories at the heart of the artworks. We see the artworks contrapuntally in relation to each other, in dialogue within the unique sites of the Karasawa and Legacy galleries, and as paired exhibits in conversation across the Salish Sea. Working through a diverse range of contemporary mediums and practices, the artworks intertwine and overlap in form and practice, through thematic and multi-sensory resonances (such as seascapes, memoryscapes, dreamscapes) and in the convergence and divergence of their representations of Nikkei identity, loss, and resistance. Likewise, we can think contrapuntally about the ways artists engage with the dominant narratives and archives of settler states relating to Nikkei dispossession, incarceration, and exile in both Canada and Australia.

For example, several artists draw from, repurpose, and undermine state archives to re-story the violence of bureaucratic procedures of racial dispossession. Louise Noguchi uses Canadian government archives to draw to scale the hull of the 1,137 confiscated boats seized from Japanese Canadian fishermen during the Second World War, repurposing state inventories to visualize the scale of dispossession, the *shape of loss*. A.S.M. Kobayashi's video installation draws upon her family's custodial file to ask, in the artist's own words, how we can “liberate forensic practices and state records to undermine their original intention... to reconstruct the community and families they were designed to dismantle?” Jon Sasaki's curious cat finds their way back home to the Nikkei National Museum as the descendant of the pet felines separated from Japanese Canadian communities during their forced relocation and internment. The roaming cat animates both the legacies of loss and the ongoing resistance of Nikkei who continue to make home and community. You will also find Tinker the cat roaming the catalogue pages, exploring *DIS*'s galleries and artworks. Nao Uda's video piece similarly explores disruption and reconnection through a fictional conversation based on

the journey of her paternal Nikkei grandfather, examining the complexity of untold and unknown family histories being reclaimed and reimagined through the artistic process and archival research. Elysha Rei's paper cuttings of Australian internment gardens harness paper as both material and metaphor in ways that reimagine relationships to paper records and archival documents. Renay Egami's hexagonal glass mirrors draw from the storefront mosaic tiles on Powell Street in Vancouver to reflect and embody the layered histories and enduring conditions of settlement, dispossession, and resistance for Nikkei and Indigenous peoples on Coast Salish territories. Both Brava Kilo and Justin Seiji Waddell bring sound-based counterpoint to the forefront of their work, using salvaged materials and soundscapes (from sea and field recordings) to reinterpret different family experiences of dispossession and to recognize interdependence and interacting with spirits and ancestors.

These are just a few examples of the ways we can think contrapuntally between the artworks themselves – the personal histories they animate, their material forms, their connections to place – and between the artworks and their resistance to dominant state narratives and archives, whereby the paired exhibits produce a polyphony of stories in which we are guided through counter-histories by the artists themselves.

As curators, the process of bringing this exhibition together was inspired by the artists and artwork itself and the moments of counterpoint we saw emerging guided the content and design of this catalogue. It made our process deeply collaborative and reflective, often playful, always creative, and we are grateful to and inspired by the artists from whom we have learned so much.

One of the guiding questions of the *Past Wrongs, Future Choices* project asks: what do we owe to one another in times of crisis and conflict? One of the project's foundational principles is recognizing the urgency to learn from history in ongoing struggles against racism. *DIS* came into being over the past several years of ongoing genocide, war, mass displacement, ever escalating state violence, racism, and policing, and indescribable devastation wrought on human life, communities, and the environment. The artists featured in *DIS* excavate personal family histories and relationships to place that offer us other ways of seeing, listening, feeling, and sensing complex histories and their enduring legacies. We believe this important work invites us into a space of critical witnessing and reflection upon the interconnections of our past and present.



Curatorial team member Sarah at the opening of Broken Promises at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Photo credit: CMHR

[1] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage Books, 1993).

[2] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 18.

Nikkei National Museum Karasawa Gallery



We respectfully acknowledge that the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre is on the unceded traditional territories of the Skwxwú7mesh Nation and the Hən̓qəmin̓əŋ - speaking Nations, including the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm, səliłwətaʔt, and kʷikʷəł̓əm, whose ancestors have cared for these lands for countless generations. We are honoured to live, learn and gather together, on Indigenous land.

Mitchell Akiyama & Emma Nishimura

Paradise

Emma Nishimura is a Toronto-based artist working across printmaking, photography, sculpture, and installation. Her practice engages questions of memory, loss, and intergenerational inheritance, drawing from family histories and the broader experiences of Japanese Canadians who were forcibly incarcerated during the Second World War. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, and her work is held in public and private collections including the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts, the Nikkei National Museum, and the Library of Congress. Nishimura is an Assistant Professor at OCAD University.



Mitchell Akiyama is a Toronto-based scholar, composer, and artist. His eclectic body of work includes writings about sound, metaphors, animals, and media technologies; scores for film and dance; and objects and installations that trouble received ideas about history, perception, and sensory experience. He is an Assistant Professor of Visual Studies in the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design at the University of Toronto. Mitchell and collaborator Maria Yablonina are the founders of MAYB Studio, an interdisciplinary art and design practice.



In Between: Slocan City, 2025

Paradise is a multimedia installation by Mitchell Akiyama and Emma Nishimura that addresses the complexities of intergenerational inheritance. Comprising prints, video, and sculpture, the installation offers a subtle, layered reflection on our relationship to the legacy of the Japanese Canadian Internment, to which our paternal grandparents were subjected.

Our families have been entwined since our Anglo-Canadian mothers met and became close friends while watching our Japanese Canadian fathers play hockey. The exhibition's title, *Paradise*, refers to a childhood summer day at a cottage in Northern Ontario that has become family lore. We, along with our siblings, spent an afternoon catching frogs and building an elaborate structure out of sand for our captives, which we called "Frog Paradise." As four mixed-race children raised with a sense of safety and belonging that stood in stark contrast to our Japanese grandparents' upbringing, this moment felt like a utopia. It was less so for the frogs, who likely did not survive the day.

Now, as adults with families of our own, we have come to understand that one person's or group's utopia may be another's living nightmare. In seeking to preserve the safety of its largely white settler population, the Canadian government forcibly relocated and interned Japanese Canadian citizens, many of whom had never visited Japan. This was a provisional utopia rooted in discrimination. The prints, sculptures, and video works included in *Paradise* reflect our efforts to understand the complexities and paradoxes of this legacy as it moves and shifts across generations.



Kellen Hatanaka

Stolen Heirlooms

Kellen Hatanaka is a Japanese Canadian painter and multidisciplinary artist based in Stratford, Ontario. His practice explores identity, belonging, and inheritance through work rooted in Japanese Canadian history, sport, and contemporary culture. Public art commissions include works for the City of Toronto, City of Surrey, University of Ottawa, and Nike World Headquarters. His work has been exhibited at the Nikkei National Museum and The Bows Artist Run Centre and he is the recipient of a Governor General's Award for Children's Literature (2016).



Stolen Heirlooms was inspired by my great-grandmother's story of having to leave her *shamisen*, a traditional Japanese string instrument, behind when she and my family were forcibly removed from their home in British Columbia during the internment of Japanese Canadians in 1942. Allowed to take only what they could carry, my family, like thousands of others, left behind objects that held cultural, monetary, and sentimental value. Those objects, and the lives they represented, were gone.

The sculptures in this exhibition are imagined lost possessions, each one an object that might have belonged to a Japanese Canadian family before internment. In making them I was grappling with the concept of collective loss, which is abstract and difficult to quantify. How do you assign value to a loss that goes beyond monetary value? These small, intimate objects, each one held on its own plinth, became a way to make that loss specific and tangible, one imagined heirloom at a time.

The title *Stolen Heirlooms* draws a parallel between the passing of objects through family generations and the passing of inherited trauma through generations of Japanese Canadians. The work asks: what does it mean to inherit something that was taken before you were born and what traces of that loss continue to shape who we are today?



File No. 2304 questions how the artist can liberate forensic practices and state records to undermine their original intention, repurposing them to construct the community and families they were designed to dismantle. *File No. 2304* is the first chapter of *Electric Neon Clock*, Kobayashi's installation and performance which uses her family's custodial file as a guide to reimagine their experience as Japanese Canadians during and after the Second World War.

A.S.M. Kobayashi

File No. 2304



A.S.M. Kobayashi is an award-winning interdisciplinary artist whose hybrid, interactive work mixes documentary and fiction through videos, performances, installations and illustrations. Her performance *Say Something Bunny!* received critical acclaim heralded as "The best new theater experience in town" by Vogue and was a NYTimes critics' pick. Kobayashi has exhibited widely at international art museums and festivals. She is a Creative Capital Awardee and was a fellow at Yaddo and MacDowell. She is currently based in Toronto and New York City.



105 Chrysanthemums as part of group exhibition *13 Ways to Summon Ghosts*, curated by Kimberly Phillips, Gordon Smith Gallery, 2018. Photographer SITE photography.

Cindy Mochizuki *105 Chrysanthemums*

Cindy Mochizuki creates multi-media installation, animation, drawing, audio fiction, performance, public artworks, films and community-engaged projects. She has exhibited her work in Canada, the United States, Australia, and Japan. Recent exhibitions include the Marianne and Edward Gibson Art Museum, The ACT Gallery, Art Gallery at Evergreen, Kamloops Art Gallery, and Prince Takamado Gallery. She has received the Vancouver Mayor's Arts Award in New Media and Film (2015) and the Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation for the Visual Arts VIVA Award (2020).



105 Chrysanthemums as part of group exhibition *13 Ways to Summon Ghosts*, curated by Kimberly Phillips, Gordon Smith Gallery, 2018. Photographer SITE photography.

The work explores my paternal grandmother (born in Eburne and raised in Haney) who was a nisei strawberry farmer in Walnut Grove, Langley before the war. She and her family (which includes my father and aunts) were interned in Sandon, Popoff, Bayfarm and Slocan and then “repatriated” to Japan. The work explores the unspoken stories and lived experiences shared between Japanese Canadian family members who were directly impacted by the Second World War and the displacement of lives.



Artist portrait by Jessica Jacobson Photography.



Judy Nakagawa

Obligation

Judy Nakagawa is a mixed media sculptor whose work explores the relationships between form, space, light and shadow.

Nakagawa studied at the Corcoran School of Art and Design in Washington, DC. She has shown her work at the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre in Burnaby, BC; the Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site in Richmond, BC; the Vancouver International Dance Festival; and the Ottawa Art Gallery. She recently showed a major work at Art Toronto. In 2026 she has solo shows at the City Hall Gallery in Ottawa and the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum in Almonte Ontario.



What do we owe each other, our families and our community?

I thought about how my parents lost their freedoms during the Second World War and, along with other Japanese Canadians, chose to honour their obligations to the community and even to the country. When the war ended, the community dispersed, with many families shedding their traditional family obligations and carving out lives more integrated with the larger Canadian community.

Another way that I look at *Obligation* is the lasting effect it had on my mother, in particular. When the war ended, her parents and her sister opted to return to Japan. My mother chose to remain, believing that life in Canada would offer more opportunity and independence. Witnessing her hard work and commitment to be successful influenced my own values and expectations.



Louise Noguchi

The Shape of Loss

My interest in the seizure of Nikkei boats by the Canadian government during the Second World War was likely sparked by a request from Mary Kitagawa, who led the campaign to hold a commencement ceremony for Japanese Canadians expelled from the University of British Columbia during the war. Mary asked me for my father's bio, as he was one of 76 Japanese Canadian students attending UBC in 1942. The biography was to be printed in *Return*, a book that accompanied the ceremony. For this, I interviewed my father about the key moments in his life, including his summer work at the Koyama fishing camp on Gabriola Island and his hopes of becoming a doctor—hopes cut short by internment. Shortly after I interviewed him, my father passed away, leaving me with questions I wished I had asked. *The Shape of Loss* grew out of research into my father's history as a fish camp worker. It expanded into the much larger story of the loss of 1,137 fishing boats, documented by Kishizo Kimura, that were confiscated by the Canadian government.





Artwork/installation image courtesy of Neill Sturgess.



Louise Noguchi is a visual artist based in Toronto. Using photography, sculpture, video, and other media, Noguchi's concepts confront the spectator's notions of identity, perception, and reality. Her artwork has been exhibited in Canada and internationally, including exhibitions at The Power Plant, Toronto; The Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; The Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver; Centre A, Vancouver; Neuer Berliner Kuntsverein, Berlin; Prince Takamado Gallery, Embassy of Canada, Tokyo; and the Deutsches Museum, Munich. Noguchi is a former Professor in the Art and Art History Program at the University of Toronto Mississauga and Sheridan College.



This work contemplates the awful choices that pet owners had to make in 1942, when they were cruelly forced to give up their dogs, cats, and other pets because animals were not permitted in the incarceration camps.

As a thought exercise, I began picturing an animal... a cat; a beloved pet in pre-war BC who once felt the comforts of family and community. I then pictured that same cat, forced from the domestic sphere in early 1942, trying to adapt to a new, feral life away from the home it once knew. And I thought of its lineage. Over the course of decades its descendants would be numerous; perhaps some might populate the same region, others could have wandered far afield. None, however, could

know or comprehend the tragedy that shaped their circumstances generations earlier, or the sense of belonging that was lost.

This sculpture depicts a cat in 2026, many generations removed from that pre-war home, suddenly, inexplicably, feeling compelled to search for something it hadn't ever known: community. I imagine its search begins at the Nikkei National Museum, where, throughout the exhibition visitors might notice a cat who seemingly wandered in off the street. Never in the same location twice, he is always peeking around corners, curious, and searching for a place he might belong.



Jon Sasaki

A Descendant of Tinker

Jon Sasaki is a Toronto/Tkaronto-based multidisciplinary artist who explores many concurrent streams of inquiry that regularly intertwine. For the past dozen years his Japanese Canadian heritage has figured prominently in his practice as he works to recuperate a relationship to Nikkei culture that was not part of his Ontario *yonsei* (4th generation) upbringing. Sasaki's work has been exhibited in solo exhibitions at The Richmond Art Gallery; The Esker Foundation, (Calgary, AB); The McMichael Canadian Art Collection (Kleinburg, ON); The Rooms (St. John's, NL); and the Art Gallery of Ontario. He has participated in group exhibitions at The Canadian Embassy in Japan (Tokyo); the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Seoul, South Korea); The Bentway (Toronto, ON); and the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (Toronto, ON). He is represented by Clint Roenisch Gallery in Toronto.



Artists & Artwork List

Mitchell Akiyama & Emma Nishimura, *Paradise*, 2025–2026, mixed media installation, hanging paper panels with woodblock prints on kozo paper, wooden dowel, thread; reclaimed wood shrines; furoshiki made from woodcut prints and filled with wood shavings; photopolymer gravure with gampi chine collé; time-based video work, television monitor.

Kellen Hatanaka, *Stolen Heirlooms*, 2025, wire, washi paper, acrylic paint, Douglas fir stand.

A.S.M. Kobayashi, *File No. 2304*, 2024, video (HDvideo and 16mm).

Cindy Mochizuki, *105 Chrysanthemums*, 2016, porcelain/chlorite pieces, embroidery thread, peach pits, woodwork, mirror, drawing.

Judy Nakagawa, *Obligation*, 2022, silk organza, polyester, thread, string, gauze, vintage paper, unfixed dye, wire, lath.

Louise Noguchi, *The Shape of Loss*, a documentary, 2026, video.

Jon Sasaki, *A Descendant of Tinker*, 2026, sculpture.

Legacy Art Gallery



We acknowledge and respect the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Xwsepsem/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Ləkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.



Glimmer (maquette). Photograph by Renay Egami.

Renay Egami
Glimmer

My work spans across sculpture, textiles, and immersive installations with emphasis on the metaphorical potential of materials. At times drawing on my Japanese heritage, I address the complexities and interplay between identity, place, and history.

Glimmer serves as a site of public and personal memory bridging the past and present. A glass mirror mosaic, patterned after architectural remnants of a former storefront entryway in Vancouver's historic Nikkei district, symbolically illuminates the resilience of the Japanese Canadian community as it continues to assert its historical presence to passersby walking on Powell Street. *Glimmer* both memorializes this once-vibrant economic hub and unearths my family's work history in the commercial fishing industry on the BC coast. Salmon, cast in chalk, give form to their labour and serve as a metaphor for the transmission of knowledge, time, and erasure. While this work is informed by Nikkei history, it also connects shared narratives of dispossession and displacement globally and closer to home. Mirror reflections below the objects suggests parallel histories and shared experiences of loss.



Morimoto tiles. Photograph by Renay Egami.

Born in Vancouver, Renay Egami is a visual artist based in Lake Country, BC. She has exhibited her work in Canada, the United States, and Japan. Renay is the recipient of several awards including the Canada Council for the Arts and the Organization of American States Academic Studies Program Fellowship, Washington DC. She is also an Associate Professor at UBC Okanagan where she teaches in the Faculty of Creative & Critical Studies in unceded Syilx Okanagan territory.



Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa with collaborating artist SD Holman

灰汁 / Aku



Artist photo and above image by SD Holman.

“Keyboard virtuoso and avant-garde muse” (Georgia Straight), Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa is “among Canada’s foremost contemporary music pianists” (Paolo Pietropaolo, CBC Radio). Known for her fearless performative risk, Rachel’s art practice explodes expectations of what is possible at the piano. A *sansei* (3rd generation) Japanese Danish mixed-race artist, Rachel’s art practice flowers in liminal collisions between genres, working with artists such as composers Hildegard Westerkamp, Rodney Sharman, Cris Derksen, and Keiko Devaux; director Nettie Wild; choreographer Jennifer Mascall; new media titan Paul Wong; and most notably with SD Holman, as artistic co-conspirators and co-founders of the Queer Arts Festival in Vancouver.

Critically acclaimed racialized dyslexic artist SD Holman augurs the Symbiocene through portraiture of human and non-human persons. Practicing lens-based art & other provocations, SD defines as a participant observer employing subjective conceptual documentary / environmental intersections, dealing in paradox and cognitive dissonance. SD deploys Indeterminacy to open artistic practice to the random and radically break from tradition, convention, and habit, to wake up to the very life we’re living; not the perfect moment but pointing at something just out of our perceptual reach.

灰汁 | Aku

From the kanji

灰 ashes; cremation

汁 soup; juice; sap

Noun

Definitions:

1. Lye, Sodium Hydroxide (NaOH)
2. Harsh taste; bitter taste
3. Self-assertiveness; strength of will

In August 2025, I traveled to Southern Alberta for Tonari Gumi's Japanese Canadian Sugar Beet Wellness Tour. We tour-goers numbered about 5 dozen, most of us descendants of families who in 1942 were treated as enemy aliens and expelled from their homes on the Canadian West Coast to do forced farm labour through a program negotiated between the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers Association and Canada's federal and provincial governments.

In February 1942, my father Kaz Iwaasa, his father and three siblings left
Royston, British Columbia for Raymond, Alberta.
They were assigned to work on Mr. Anderson's sugar beet farm.

Our Sugar Beet Tour met with representatives from the Alberta Sugar Beet Growers Association, who took us to a working sugar beet farm, then to a campground where they fed us a picnic. On parting, they gave us each a tube of peppermint lip balm embellished with the words "100 Years ASBG EST. 1925".

灰汁 Aku, lye, is made with ashes and water. Highly corrosive, lye was once
an everyday household chemical, used to make drain cleaner, soap, and ramen
noodles, among other things. On April 12, 1942, 6 weeks after arriving in
Alberta, my Aunt Chiyo ingested a fatal quantity of lye.
Chiyo was 21 years old.

This installation work juxtaposes a conceptual portrait of Chiyo created by SD Holman, with ready mades: my commemorative ASBG tube of lip balm; an antique lye crate; my father's letter to the editor about the suicide of his friend and colleague Nelson Small Legs Jr.; and my prose poem drawing them all together.

Brava Kilo

Salvage/Sarubēji



Brian Kobayakawa makes music in Toronto. As *Brava Kilo*, he released the experimental instrumental album *Hang On, You Demons!* and co-created *Kintsugi*, a multi-disciplinary, interactive installation-art piece that has toured galleries and festivals across Canada. Brian was a member of *The Creaking Tree String Quartet* from 2001-2011 and is currently a busy touring and session musician. He also composes for film and television. This installation is an audio-visual project centred around salvaged materials and recordings captured at the shipwreck of a boat his ancestors built before the government seized their business, *Kobayakawa Boat Works*, their homes, and most of their possessions during the internment of Japanese Canadians.





Being able to build this work into objects that were a part of the dispossession and forced relocation of my ancestors is humbling. I hope this work can honour my father and his parents, siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, and the entire community who were subject to the internment. By creating music from and with the salvaged physical remnants of their past, I aim to deepen my connection to their experiences while expressing my own reactions to both the hardships that were forced upon them, and to the inter-generational impacts that I encounter. I believe that by creating lasting physical works that engage with racism from the past, I am also creating a symbol of anti-racist resistance for the present and future.

Salvage / Sarubēji continues my ongoing fascination with incorporating the sounds of boats my ancestors built into my music. This interactive installation combines acoustic, electric, and electronic instruments with a sound palette created from sample recordings captured at the ocean's floor near Hornby Island, BC, at the shipwreck of *Carloda N*. While wearing the provided headphones, a different piece of music will play based on which element of the physical installation hanging on the gallery wall the user chooses to look at. And, on Thursdays, and after sunset, alternate pieces of music will become available.

FOUR-LEAF CLOVER

Night falls, and I open the album
I've chosen not to open until now.
At first, I don't understand
why she left it to me: Polaroids
of a honeymoon in Vegas,
mimeographed evacuation orders—
and then, a dozen four-leaf clovers
pressed between wax paper,
looking, somehow, less fragile
dried than alive. We picked them
together. Or, over twenty years,
I watched her comb through tall grass
in parks, baseball diamonds,
overgrown lots, the backyard of the house
they would lose to debt-sifting stalks
so tangled they rippled like water
under her hands. What is luck
but an endless negotiation between
what one wants and will not have?
Having been an orphan, having been
born with a face that led to a camp,
she had seen more cruelty than kindness.
She saw it blossom in me: *Yancho*
bōzu she muttered whenever I hid
Lego in my sister's shoes, shattered
a snail's whorled home—*Engimono*
each time she found those four
lobed leaves, their radial symmetry
like an MRI of a dreaming brain.
What she loved most about the world
were its ephemeral forms: miso's
maelstrom in a bowl of stock,
the bubbles blown and tumbling
from a pipe cleaner's twisted loop.
Shi, she sighed near the end,
meaning four, or maybe death,
blood drying in the cracks
that cut across her lips and made it
hard to speak. I wouldn't know.
I never learned the tongue
she murmured behind closed doors.
Behind those half-open in my mind:
her swollen limbs, the x-rays'
ashen ghosts. What is luck
but someone else's easier history,
a hand drawn from a deck rigged
for regret? I am full of remorse
counting the moments I chose
to forget what she had
so keenly, ineffably, known. Luck:
the iridescence marbling
the bubble before it breaks. Luck:
a child failing to master
the future tense, an orphan shutting
the door to a tarpaper shack. Once,
when I was eight, she bought us
scratch tickets at the station
and won forty dollars. We played
until there was nothing left.

Michael Prior

Four-Leaf Clover

Michael Prior is a biracial *yonsei* (4th generation) writer, teacher, and editor. His second book of poems, *Burning Province*, won the Canada-Japan Literary Award and the BC & Yukon Book Prizes' Poetry Prize. His next book of poems, *Wartime Measures*, will be published in Spring 2027. The recent recipient of fellowships from the Amy Clampitt Residency, the New York Public Library's Cullman Center, and the Jerome Foundation, Michael has published poems in places like Poetry, The Nation, The New Republic, and the Academy of American Poets' Poem-A-Day series.



The poem *Four Leaf Clover* is an elegy for my *nisei* (2nd generation) grandmother, whose family was displaced into Tashme during the Second World War. The poem explores her life, and in doing so, poses questions of generational memory and cultural trauma. It asks what responsibilities younger generations might bear in the caretaking of collective memory. It asks if and how certain forms of belief, fear, and anxiety might shape our imaginations.

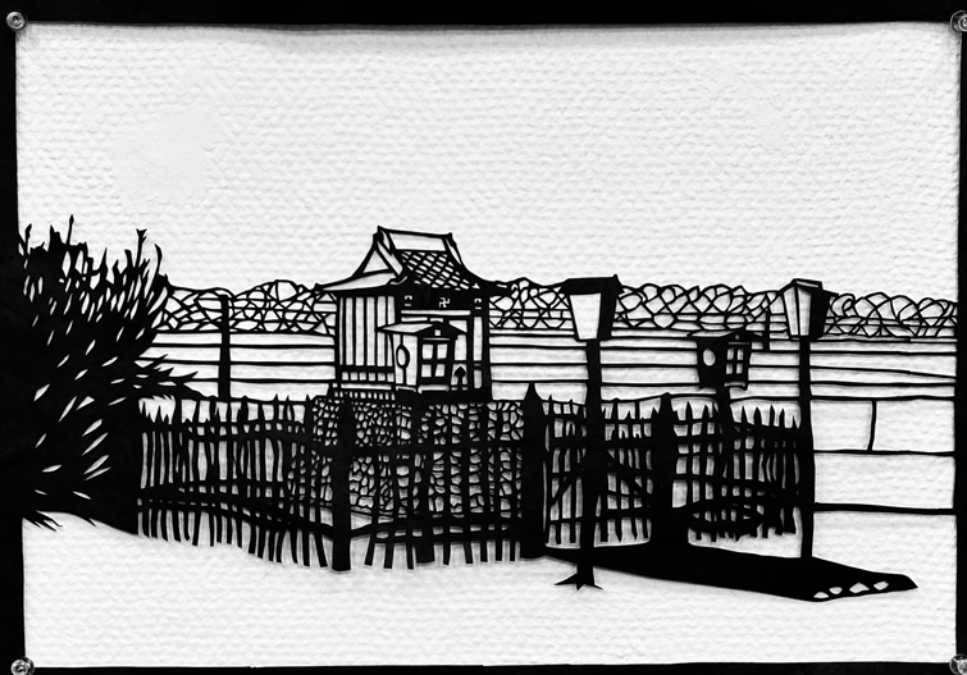


Elysha Rei



Artist portrait by Louis Lim, 2025.

Elysha Rei is a Japanese Australian artist whose intricate hand-cut paper works explore memory, identity, and belonging. Transforming single sheets of paper into detailed installations and site-specific artworks, her practice bridges cultural histories with contemporary art. Over the past two decades, Rei's work has been commissioned, exhibited, and collected nationally and internationally.



Australian internment garden series paper cut study 1, Hand cut washi paper, 29.7 × 42 cm.

Australian internment garden series paper cut study 2, Hand cut washi paper, 29.7 × 42 cm.

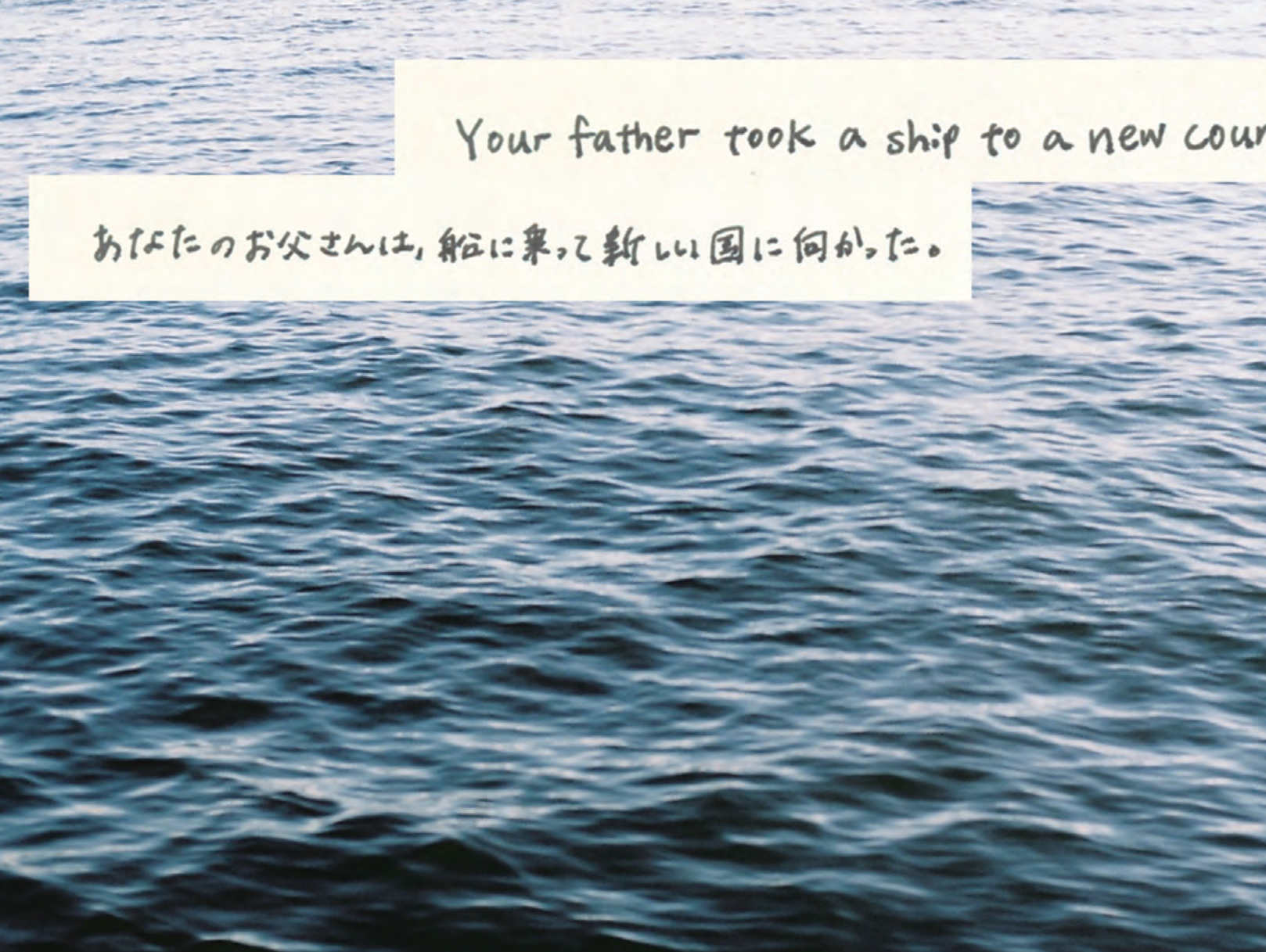
Australian internment garden series paper cut study 3, Hand cut washi paper, 29.7 × 42 cm.

As a third generation Nikkei Australian, my arts practice investigates transcultural identity that is imbued with the ambivalence of pride in Japanese cultural heritage, intergenerational remnants of pain from racial discrimination, and the experience of inhabiting a third space where “the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences”¹. Expanding upon a paper cutting practice of 20 years, a new direction began in 2023 investigating the materiality

of paper and its connection to paper records and historical documents, where both play a role in the creative process and conceptual development of the work. Using archival records as a starting point for mapping Japanese Australian history, my work intertwines documented histories, oral histories, and cultural remnants that archive silent narratives of Japanese Australian migration and Nikkei identity in Australia in hand-cut paper artworks.

[1] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994), 218.





Your father took a ship to a new country.

あなたのお父さんは、船に乗って新しい国に向かった。

As a Japanese artist living in Taiwan, and a granddaughter of a Nikkei grandfather and Japanese grandparents, I try to preserve my long and slow process of understanding my inherited but untold histories by creating artwork.

My piece was inspired by all the conversations and personal memories that many elders had shared with me. They lived in different locations at the same period of time and were affected by the policy and decisions of a nation. Many of them have passed away now, and I hope that their voices staying in my work will talk to someone who needs to know what their inherited but untold histories are.

How to Translate Family History is a video piece about how a family looks for their untold roots, through a fictional conversation with a lost baby

in the family. It is based on the actual journey of finding the missing trace of my paternal Nikkei grandfather. It started from an encounter with a Japanese Canadian gentleman, George, in 2013. He saw my last name and told me that he had been looking for an old classmate whose last name was also Uda. He showed me his signature book that he had collected signatures of his classmates before they separated. On the page he opened, I found the message that my grandfather wrote to him in 1941. The English message read "Words Fail Me." He translated it for me using fluent Japanese and said, "It means 'there was no way to express the complicated feelings he had'." Similar to that phrase, family history might not be completely translated or passed down over time, but it is important that we know it was there.

try.

Nao Uda

How To Translate Family History



Nao Uda is a visual artist who works in several mediums including painting, photography, ceramics, and creative writing. She was born in Japan as a granddaughter of a Japanese Canadian grandfather who moved to Japan in 1941. After she received a BFA in Photography at School of Visual Arts in New York in 2007, she internationally presented her artwork in solo shows and participated in artist-in-residence programs in many places including Japan, the United States, Canada, and Taiwan. She completed her MFA in 2019 at the National Tainan University of the Arts in Taiwan and is currently based in Taiwan and Japan as a professional artist.

Photo: Nao Uda

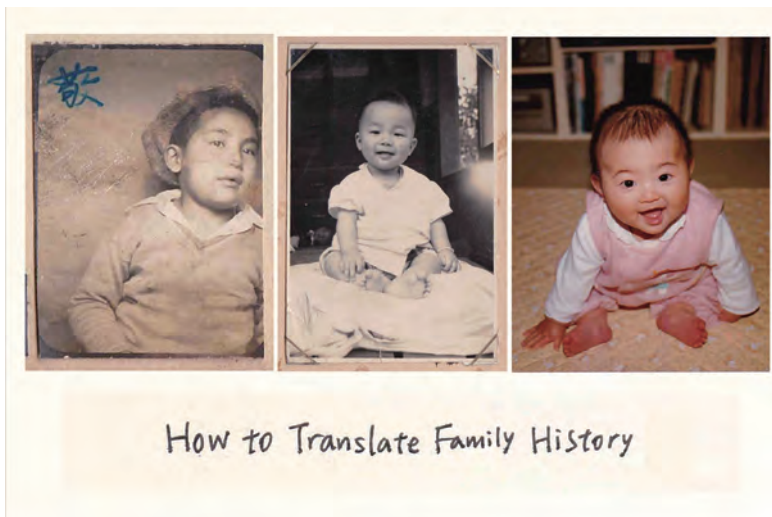


Photo: Nao Uda

Justin Seiji Waddell

*the earth is always shifting, the light
is always changing, the sea does not
cease to grind down rock*



Justin Seiji Waddell is an artist and Associate Professor in the School of Visual Art at the Alberta University of the Arts in Mohkinstsis (Calgary, Alberta). He has worked in various capacities at several artist-run centers, festivals, galleries, and magazines in Canada, including Prefix Photo, Trinity Square Video, Lola Magazine, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the New Gallery, Emmedia, and Mountain Standard Time Performative Art Festival. During the Fall of 2024, he was an Artist in Residence with *Past Wrongs*,

Future Choices at the University of Victoria. In 2025, he returned to Japan as an Artist in Residence with Studio Kura in Itoshima, Fukuoka Prefecture to research the measurement of time and the history of bronze mirrors while building kinetic solar sculptures and making audio recordings in the Sea of Japan. More recently, he was an Artist in Residence with the Public Art for Sustainable Futures residency hosted by the Calgary Public Art Program.

The title for the work, "*the earth is always shifting, the light is always changing, the sea does not cease to grind down rock*"^[1] is an excerpt from an essay by James Baldwin included in *Nothing Personal*, a bookwork between Baldwin and their childhood friend, Richard Avedon.

These crystal radios have been in development since 2019 and have had many different iterations. This version was built around a fragment of a razed memorial tree at Ontario Place, planted in honour of Mikio Nakamura, former President of the Ontario Chapter of the JC Memorial Centennial Society. Nakamura had led the fundraising campaign for the Centennial Temple Bell and Belfry and had presented the bell to the Province in 1977. This fragment is generously on loan from Toronto NAJC President, Lynn Deutscher Kobayashi.

The galena crystal was found on the shores of Slocan Lake, BC, near New Denver and the Orchard JC Internment Camp. The Slocan Valley is part of the traditional, ancestral territory of the Sinixt and Ktunaxa Nations. During the 1890-1901 silver rush, the valley was extensively mined for silver-rich galena ore which was shipped by arial tramlines, barge, and train. Some of the copper and other metallics were salvaged from Silversmith Power and Light located in the ghost town of Sandon, BC. This family-owned hydroelectric generation station is fed by Carpenter Creek, which feeds into Slocan Lake at the edge of the Orchard Internment Camp, and has been running continuously since 1897, providing electricity to both Sandon and New Denver. The radio's wooden base has been sealed with beeswax (harvested by an apiary outside New Denver) and hand carved for placement of the copper coil, memorial tree, and a seashell cluster from the Sea of Japan.

A galena crystal, acting as a diode, and a copper coil inductor are the basic materials used to build a simple crystal radio. Radios, cameras, and other recording/broadcasting devices were banned from Japanese Canadians during internment.

[1] Hilton Als, "Richard Avedon and James Baldwin's Joint Examination of American Identity," *New Yorker*, November 6, 2017.



Documentation of work in process. Courtesy of the artist. Found and gifted materials; galena crystal, copper, sake, seashell cluster, dried shiitake, wire, beeswax, fragment of memorial tree, wood.

Artists & Artwork List

Renay Egami, *Glimmer*, 2026, glass mirror tiles, wood, cast chalk.

Rachel Kiyo Iwaasa with collaborating artist SD Holman, 灰汁 / *Aku / Lye*, 2026, mixed media: Giclée print on archival cotton paper, graphite on washi paper, creative non-fiction, ready-made wooden box, lip balm.

Brava Kilo, *Salvage/Sarubēji*, 2026, salvaged boat pieces, recorded music, interactive headphones, photographs.

Michael Prior, *Four-Leaf Clover*, 2023, poetry.

Elysha Rei, *Australian internment garden series paper cut study 1* | *Australian internment garden series paper cut study 2* | *Australian internment garden series paper cut study 3*, 2023, hand-cut washi paper, 29.7 × 42 cm.

Nao Uda, *How To Translate Family History*, 2023, video.

Justin Seiji Waddell, *the earth is always shifting, the light is always changing, the sea does not cease to grind down rock*¹, 2020-2026, found and gifted materials; galena crystal, copper, sake, seashell cluster, dried shiitake, wire, beeswax, fragment of memorial tree², wood.

[1] Hilton Als, "Richard Avedon and James Baldwin's Joint Examination of American Identity," *New Yorker*, November 6, 2017.

[2] Mikio Nakamura Memorial Tree on loan from Lynn Deutscher Kobayashi.

