

The Lifestyle Magazine of the Central Coast

Carmel

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Jeff Bridges

Exclusive Interview
With the Film Icon

all in this Together

SHADOWS FROM THE PAST • 64TH ANNUAL MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL

Shadows from Monterey's Past

Shedding Light on the Silent Suffering
of our Local Japanese Community

BY DAVID YAMADA



Jerry Takigawa, "EO 9066," 2016. Pigment Print. 32"x 40"

On September 9, 2021, an exhibition of works by eight Japanese American artists titled "Shadows from the Past: Sansei Artists and the American Concentration Camps" will open at the Monterey Museum of Art. These eight Sansei (third generation) artists reveal the impact on the lives of their parents and grandparents who faced the ordeal of forcible removal from their homes and incarceration in America's concentration camps during World War II. Their art captures reality, seeks to illuminate the human condition and expresses a vision of hope for the future.

Jerry Takigawa,
"This World,
February 8, 1942,"
2016. Pigment
Print. 32"x 40"

"The great majority of our aliens are
harmless people, desperately anxious to keep
out of trouble and to abide by the laws."
SENATE

人々を苦しめる
人々の生活は
人々の生活は
人々の生活は



Lucien Kubo, "American Concentration Camp," 2005. Assemblage, encaustic, found metal object from Heart Mountain dump, images, photos. 18" x 18" x 4"

Their works take different forms: folding screens, fused glass imagery, mixed media collage, film, camp artifacts, and photographic essay. In this group-exhibit one may find a connecting bridge. Each Sansei artist draws introspectively on family experience embedded in America's concentration camps. For Issei (first generation) and Nisei (second generation) camp life meant suffering silently while enduring the humiliation of shame, the pain of lost dignity, the grief of confiscated property, the anxiety and fear of resettling after the war, and the denial of Constitutional rights. These artists capture and express this experience.

Arriving during the 1890s, the first immigrants from Japan who settled on the Monterey Peninsula came from prefectures such as



Wendy Maruyama, "The Tag Project: Manzanar," 2011, represents one of ten major American concentration camps from WWII, with paper replicas of tags worn by each of the thousands of incarcerated citizens. Ink, string, thread. 120"x 30"



**Reiko Fujii, Detained
"Alien Enemy Glass
Kimono," 2016.
Mixed-media, glass,
fused photo decals,
copper wire, muslin.
48" x 42" x 60"**

(Right) Masako Takahashi, "Ensō," 2003. Human hair scanned on archival paper. 24" X 24"



(Below) Lydia Nakashima Degarrod, "Scattered Seeds of the Cotton Bolls; The Legacy of WWII on my Japanese Peruvian Family," (detail) 2020. Cotton bolls, prints on handmade paper. Size variable.



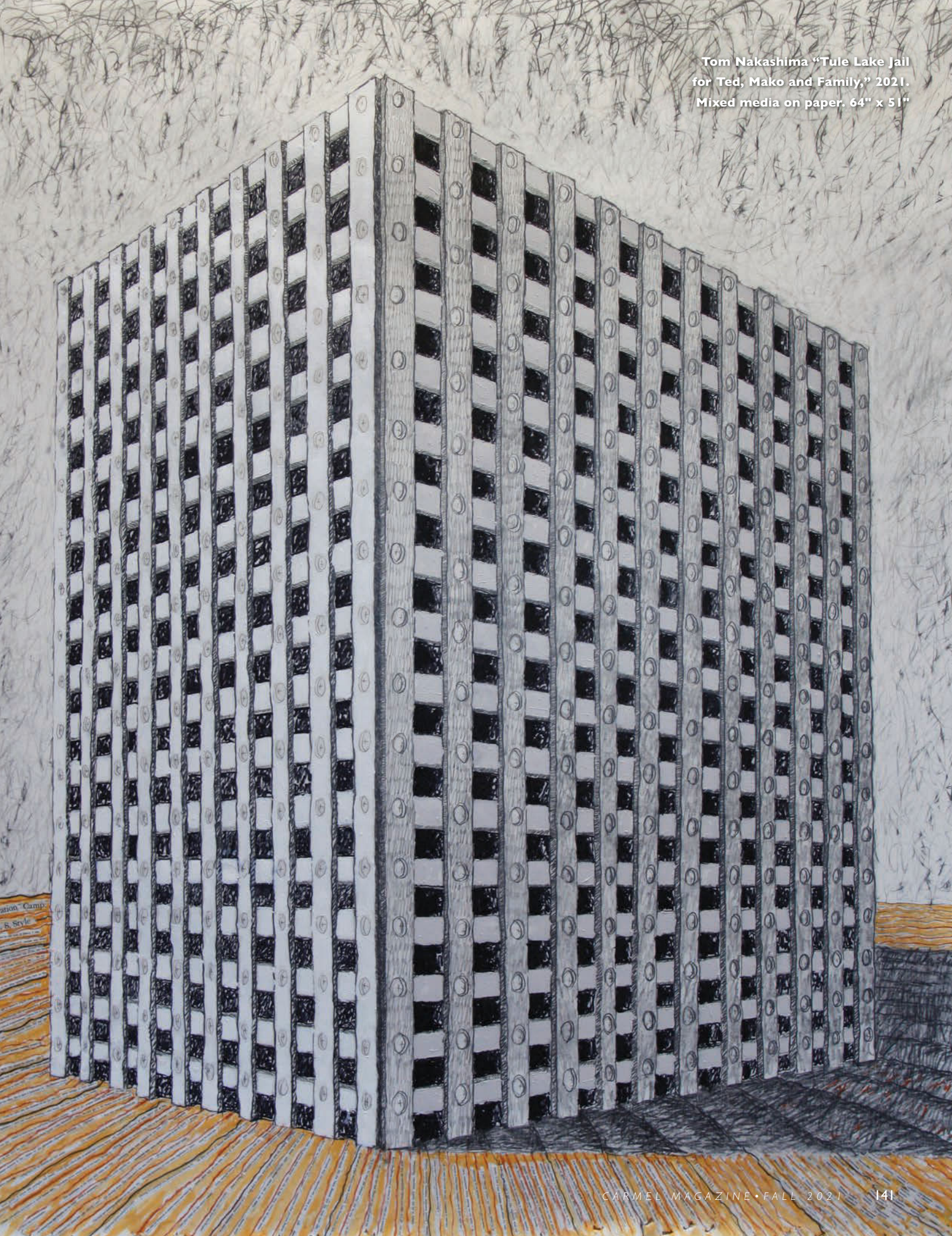
Wakayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Chiba and Kumamoto. Given their work experience in Japan, many Japanese immigrants took up commercial fishing in Monterey Bay, farming in Carmel Valley, abalone processing at Point Lobos and jobs along Cannery Row. As daily needs grew, others opened grocery markets, fishing supply stores, restaurants, barber shops and boarding houses, providing an organic fit for the growing Japanese community.

Arriving during the 1890s, the first immigrants from Japan who settled on the Monterey Peninsula came from prefectures such as Wakayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Chiba and Kumamoto.

It did not take long for word to get back to families and friends in Japan that the Monterey Peninsula offered the opportunity for a new start in life. The peninsula's Japanese communities resided in Pacific Grove, New Monterey (on the hill above Cannery Row) and downtown Monterey. Between 1900 and 1940, economic, cultural and social activity blossomed into Monterey's Japan Town (Nihonmachi), a 16-square block residential and business area bounded by Alvarado, Del Monte Avenue, Webster, and Camino El Estero.

At the center of this vibrant community was a Japanese Association Hall built in 1925 by Issei leaders. This community hall served as a place for meetings, social events, cultural organizations, language school, church services, weddings and funerals. In 1941, title for this building was trans-

Tom Nakashima "Tule Lake Jail
for Ted, Mako and Family," 2021.
Mixed media on paper. 64" x 51"



ferred to the Japanese American Citizens League. Today, designated as a historical landmark, the original 1925 structure still stands as the JAACL Hall at 424 Adams Street.

By 1940, the Japanese population in America was 126,947, with 93,711 living in California and 1,578 residing on the Monterey Peninsula. On the chilly morning of February 11, 1942, FBI agents descended on Monterey, knocked on the doors of Japanese alien residents and rounded up 15 Issei community leaders. These leaders were taken to U.S. Justice Department facilities while their families, left behind, were soon imprisoned in concentration camps.

On February 19, 1942, the Roosevelt administration issued U.S. Executive Order 9066 which led to the creation of security zones and curfew restrictions applied to persons of Japanese ancestry. Starting in March of 1942, about 119,000 Issei and their Nisei children were given between three and five days to shut down businesses and sell property in a buyer's market. Ordered from their homes,

Monterey's Japanese aliens and Japanese American citizens were first sent to the Salinas detention center; then transported to concentration camps. Living in tar-papered barracks in desolate regions, most of Monterey's Issei and Nisei were imprisoned at camps in Arizona, Arkansas, California and Wyoming.

Among Monterey residents forcibly removed were James and Clara Takigawa, whose son Jerry is one of the Sansei artists. Upon the passing of both parents, Jerry discovered boxes of family documents, photos and mementos. Piecing together the Takigawa family story was a



Na Omi Judy Shintani, "Remembrance Shrine," 2007-2019. Birdcage, rice paper, ink. 48"x 24"x 2"

mind-transforming epiphany, revealing how war generates racial propaganda, hysteria, fear and injustice.

Third-generation Japanese Americans seldom heard stories or talked with parents about the impact of World War II and life in the concentration camps. Rather, there was the awkward sound of silence, parents' voices muted by shame, anguish and futility. Looking at America's history of Asian immigration, anti-Asian discrimination, and wartime hysteria, these eight Sansei artists interpret the impact of America's concentration camps on their families. In powerful and evocative art forms, they perceive the reality of the human condition, implying parallels to today's troubled world while expressing a ripple of hope for humanity.

This group of accomplished Sansei artists includes Jerry Takigawa, Lydia Nakashima Degarrod, Wendy Maruyama, Reiko Fujii, Tom Nakashima, Lucien Kubo, Na Omi Judy Shintani and Masako Takahashi. Their works have been exhibited at prestigious venues throughout California, the U.S., Europe and around the world,

including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, London Museum of Fine Arts, Griffin Museum of Photography, Berkeley Art Center, Santa Fe Art Institute, the de Young Museum in San Francisco and museums in Spain, Japan, the Netherlands and the Americas. The excellence of their works has been recognized by an array of awards represented by NEA grants, Fulbright fellowships, teaching appointments and top juror honors.

The exhibition will run from September 9th, 2021 through January 9th, 2022 at the Monterey Museum of Art. For more information, please call 831/372-5477 or visit montereyart.org.