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Sansei Artists
& the American
Concentration
Camps

Masako Takahashi

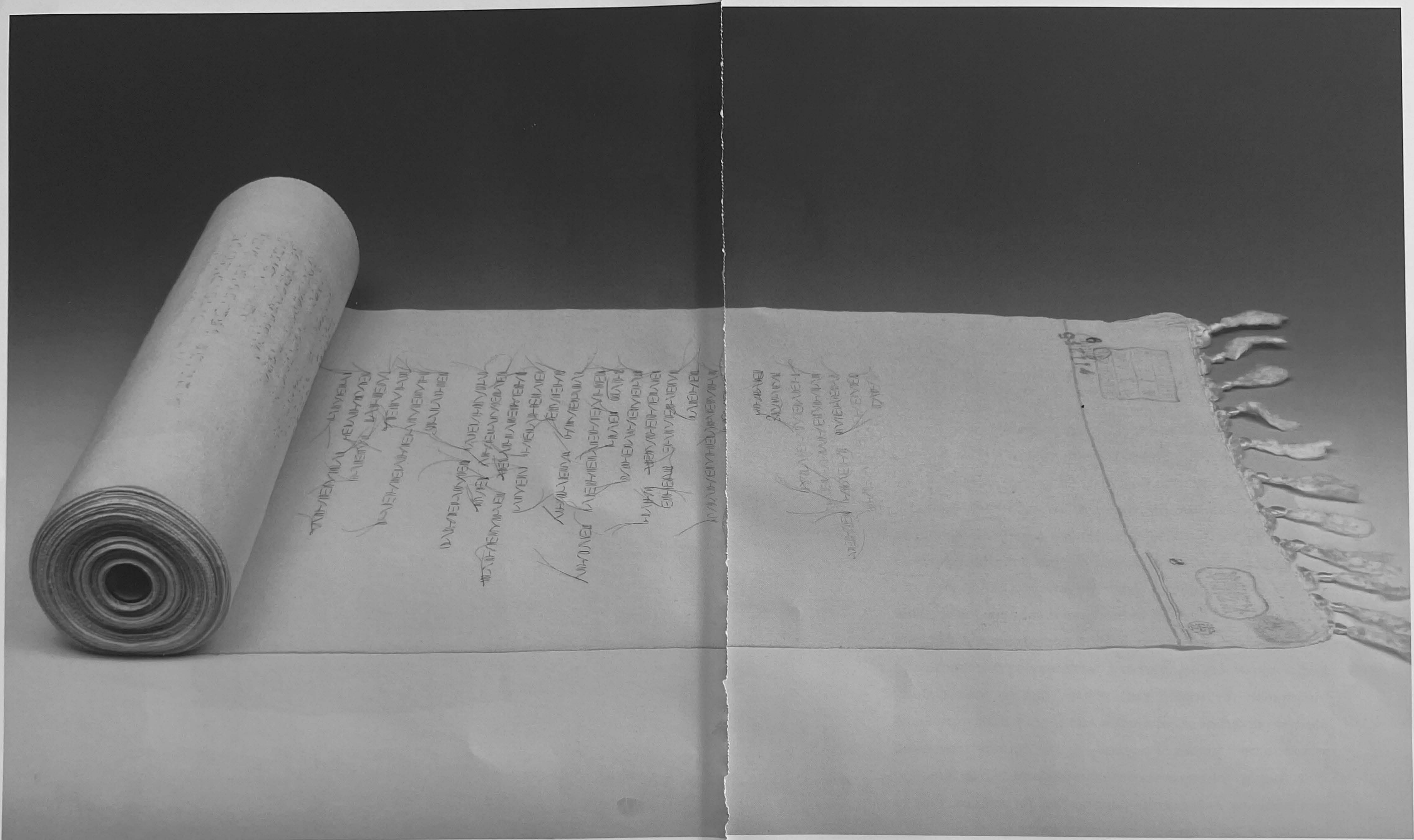
I never forget that I was born in a concentration camp. In the USA. For being of Japanese ancestry. The kimono installation, 'Generations', is my homage to my parents and what they had to go through. Japanese have a saying that they are like rice, they stick together. The kimonos touch each other at the sleeve, becoming a chain of kimonos, each one a link, a life lived and passing on to the next. The white hair I use on each kimono implies a lifetime of experience, memory, time.

I prefer my work to be at once personal and at the same time universal, that is, meaningful to another. So rather than be more documentary about my Camp considerations, I try to be more abstract in execution. The abstract text I create with the stitching of my hair is how I express my thoughts, agonies, and protestations without fixing a specific interpretation. Viewers can "fill in the blanks" with their own narrative.

During WWII Japanese Americans were rounded up and detained in concentration camps simply because they were born of Japanese ancestry— not for what they thought or believed nor for anything they may have done. I was born in Topaz, Utah, where many from the San Francisco Bay Area were taken. As a survivor, I hope to share my concern for all those currently incarcerated simply for the details of their birth. In my work, I filter personal experience through the act of art making. As far as the hair texts, I can only hope that, as in seeing written music, viewers hear their own compositions.



Masako Takahashi, *Shouldering Blame*, From *Generations series*. 2015. Artist's hair embroidered on silk kimono, 36 x 48 inches.

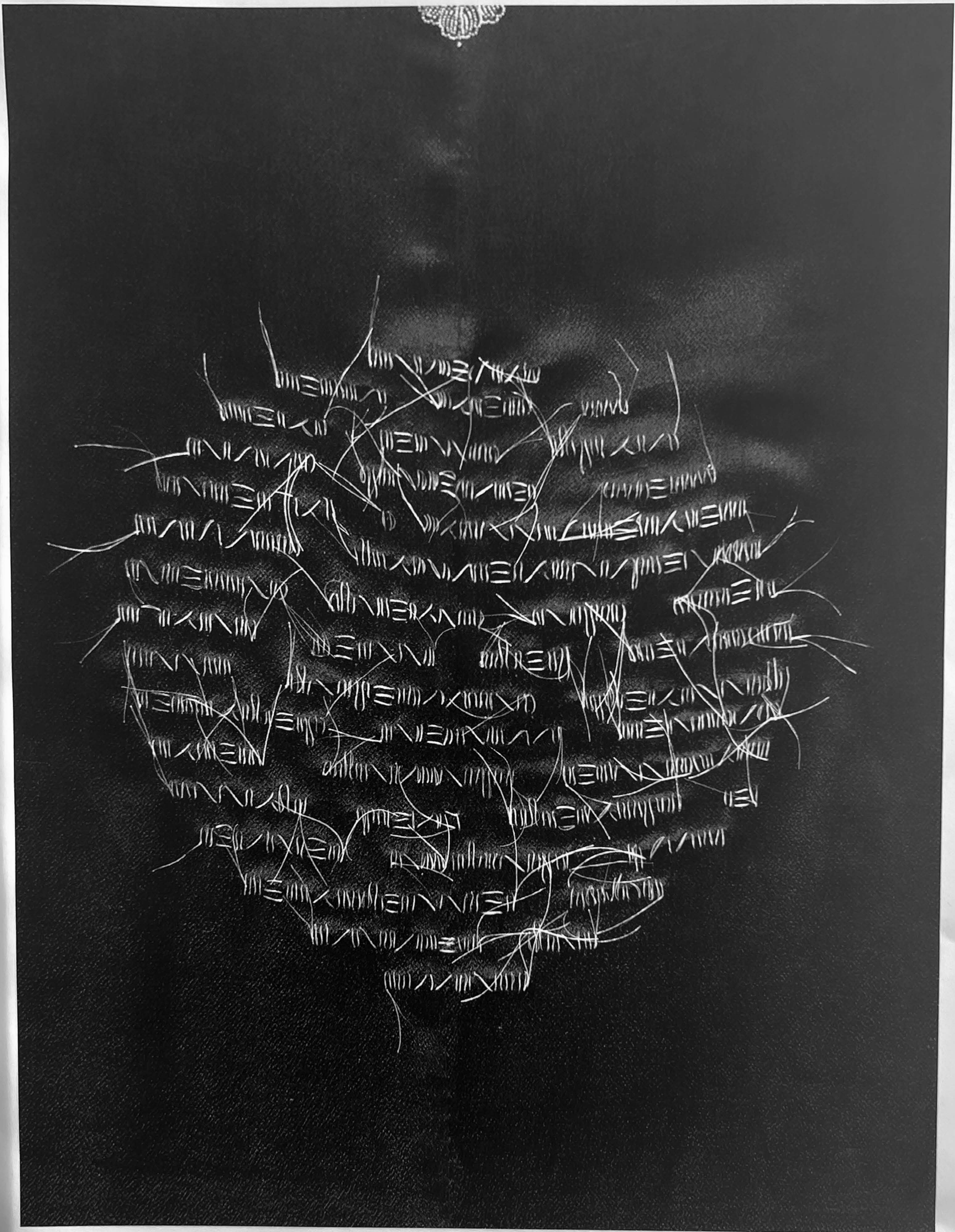


Masako Takahashi, *Journal/Diario*, 2017. Artist's hair, bolt of vintage kimono silk, 14.4 x 480 inches.

MASAKO TAKAHASHI exhibits in museums and galleries internationally, including the Central Museum in Utrecht, Netherlands; the Galeria Charpa, Valencia, Spain. She has shown in Mexico at the Bellas Artes museum, San Miguel de Allende; the Museo de la Ciudad, Queretaro, the Instituto de Artes Graficas, the Galeria Quetzali and the Textile Museum, Oaxaca, Mexico. Among the many US galleries are the Natalie and James Thompson Gallery, San Jose State University and the Jack Fischer Gallery, SF. Her work has been written about in several publications including the New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, Los Angeles Times, Mexico City Times, Forbes Magazine. She attended the San Francisco Art Institute, CA, Bard College, NY and graduated with a BA in Art from the UC, Berkeley. Born in the Topaz, Utah, Relocation Center of Japanese American parents, Masako Takahashi lives and works in San Francisco and has maintained a studio in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico since 1984.

JERRY TAKIGAWA's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in museums, galleries and alternative spaces including the San Francisco Museum of Craft and Design; Los Angeles Center of Photography; Sonoma Valley Museum of Art; Santa Barbara Museum of Art; the New Orleans Photo Alliance, Louisiana; Griffin Museum of Photography, Winchester, Massachusetts; Turchin Center for the Arts, Boone, North Carolina; Providence Center for Photographic Arts, Providence, RI; Site Brooklyn, NY; Atlanta Photography Group, GA; Serre dei Giardini Margherita, Bologna, Italy; Casadell'Architettura, Rome, Italy; Atelier de gravure Zec, Paris, France; Serra dei Giardini, Venice, Italy; and Vkhutemas Gallery, Rojdestvenka, Moscow. He has been the recipient of a variety of photographic honors and awards including the *Imogen Cunningham Award*; nominated for the *Santa Fe Prize*; twice nominated for the *Prix Pictet*; *Critical Mass Top 50*; the *Clarence John Laughlin Award*; *Lens Culture, Fine Art Photography Awards Finalist*; *NY Center for Photographic Art, Humans, First Place*; *CENTER Awards, Curator's Choice, First Place*; the *Rhonda Wilson Award*; and *Foto Forum Santa Fe's* inaugural annual photo award. Takigawa studied photography with Don Worth at San Francisco State University and received a BFA with an emphasis in painting. Takigawa was born in Chicago, Illinois. He lives and works in Carmel Valley, California.

GAIL ENNS is widely known as a curator, art dealer and director of Celadon Arts and Green Chalk Contemporary. *Shadows from the Past, Sansei Artists and the American Concentration Camps* is one of a series of exhibitions she began in the early 1990's centering on the cultural influences of Japan on contemporary art. These include *Transcendental Vision, Japanese Culture and Contemporary Art*, Sand City, CA; *Assimilations*, the Nippon Gallery, Japanese Chamber of Commerce, NYC; *Inheritors of a Legacy*, in conjunction with the 75th Anniversary of the Freer Gallery, Japan Embassy, Washington, DC; and *Rob Barnard, A Potter's Journey*, Museum Jan, Amstelveen, Netherlands. Currently, *Resilience—A Sansei Sense of Legacy*, co-curated with artist Jerry Takigawa, is on a five-year tour with Exhibits USA.



Masako Takahashi, *Generations*. White hair on silk kimono (detail).



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