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Remapping Topographies of Race and Public Space: Asian American Artists in California (1970s to Present)

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in the History of Art and Architecture

by

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Mabuhay!

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ABSTRACT

Remapping Topographies of Race and Public Space:
Asian American Artists in California (1970s to 2000s)

by

Julianne P. Gavino

This study seeks out diverse and complex intersections of space, place, and identity through selected Asian American artists working in California from the 1970s to 2000s. It does so in the format of three case studies exploring artwork by Kearny Street Workshop (1972-1977), Masumi Hayashi (1945-2006), and Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988). This art historical research attends to how aesthetics and politics meld together and investigates this through themes of race and public space. By analyzing representations of physical and cultural landscapes, I argue how important central texts and subtexts of the featured work divulge negotiated, culturally hybrid terrain. The study first examines Kearny Street Workshop's community arts engagement and graphic arts posters in urban ethnic neighborhoods. As such, new public images of Asian Americans were to emerge during a tumultuous era of social activism and cultural affirmation in the 1970s. It next considers Hayashi's "American Concentration Camps" series of panoramic

photo collages (1990-1999) representing pilgrimage landscapes of the WWII Japanese American internment (1942-1945). It investigates the imagery's transformative reflections upon history, memory, and civil liberties in crossgenerational ways. Lastly, it focuses on Noguchi's sculpture garden *California Scenario* (1980-1982) and nature-culture relations within a postsuburban environment, noting its global, transcultural, and performative intersections. Each of these case studies reveals how cultural specificity and cultural heterogeneity in contradistinction dispels any sense of singular or fixed spaces, places, and identities.

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"How can the doubly inhabited terrains with their often conflicting histories and claims be mapped so that one does not dominate and erase the other, does not become the singular history of the place?" (Rogoff 104)

Suspended from a high atrium ceiling at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, a large-scale stainless-steel wire sculpture looms large overhead. Its undulating, open, grid-like form echoes land and underwater topographical mappings of the nearby landscape. Part of the Civic Art Collection overseen by the San Francisco Arts Commission, *Where Land Meets the Sea* (2008) is created by Chinese American artist and architect Maya Y. Lin. The work inventively connects two San Francisco Bay landmarks, the Golden Gate Bridge and Angel Island (Figure 1.) The terrain's shape and elevation are represented through data points transcribed as lines. Instead of mapping all points of the same elevation through contour lines, Lin takes cross sections of soundings, from a point out in the ocean on the Pacific side of the bridge, across the land, and into the bay itself. The scale is intentionally magnified: five times over land, ten times underwater. Its overall dimensions are 36' x 60' x 15', made entirely of ⅝-inch-gauge marine wire.

Visually, there is no focal point for the viewer to latch onto, making the sculpture appear like an amorphous mass of lines floating like a cloud up above. When the viewer gets closer to the work, the details of the lines—high and low points, twists and turns, parts and whole—come forth. The sculpture reveals its entirety only when the viewer is positioned from afar. This spatial interplay is dynamic, yet elusive.

Integrating aesthetic exploration, scientific formulation, and industrial fabrication, Lin's abstract sculpture prompts immediate inquiry. It is rendered in literal and conceptual ways to challenge dominant narratives. At first glance, the work appears like a technical line drawing in space with sinuous contours of massive scale. The combination at once conveys fluidity and indeterminacy. However, the selection of regional topography and pinpointed landmarks is not something that simply honors the locale of the museum. Rather, Lin is making a specific historical and political point.

In the prevailing cultural narrative, the Golden Gate Bridge has functioned as an archetypal gateway to the Pacific since the bridge's opening in 1937. It frames the United States ideologically as a land of opportunity and ingenuity. So does the lesser-known Angel Island Immigration Station, which served as the West Coast's main entry port for predominantly Asian, Latin American, Russian, and Jewish immigrants from 1910 to 1940. The meaning of these two symbols remains open to contestation, with the latter being especially unstable. In the popular imagination, immigration processing seems benign, a celebratory event reasonably requiring a fair amount of waiting time before entry is granted. It is commonly hailed as an uplifting rite of passage that bestows Americanness. However, for those who passed through Angel Island during this period, this narrative did not often hold true. The historical record reveals that authorities forced detention and harsh interrogation

on of Chinese immigrants. These actual practices of institutionalized racism contrasted starkly with the nation's democratic ideals.[1]

Where Land Meets the Sea ventilates a tension between two very different notions of American identity: open, universal inclusivity, and fraught, restricted access. In subtle and suggestive ways, this public art installation creates an opportunity for remapping the region, that is, reimagining its history and challenging the "uplifting rite of passage" narrative that alone informs popular understanding. As a sculptural landscape, the installation transcends its local context to resonate on a broader level, demonstrating the entwinement of significant public issues together with space and place. In this, a diachronic/synchronic spatial conundrum arises. Fragments and frictions of both landscape and identity prove to intertwine symbiotically.

Where Land Meets the Sea lays out a worthwhile query. It exemplifies how certain works of art with "space and place" as subject can at times uncover complex layers found within landscapes. A viewer recognizes and discerns any landscape through cognitive and intellectual faculties. This kind of subjective process necessitates sensitivity and judgment to access a uniquely shaped knowledge base. As Schama points out, "Before it can ever be the repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from

[1] My discussion is largely informed by historical accounts and cultural interpretations of the Angel Island Immigration Station, such as *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America* (2010) by Erika Lee and Judy Yung; *Made in USA: Angel Island shhh: Exploring the Identity Secrets of Chinese Immigrants Detained and Interrogated in the United States* (2000) by Flo Oy Wong et al.; and *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island* (1991) by Him Mark Lai, Judy Yung, and Genny Lim.

layers of rock" (Schama 6-7). This applies equally to artist and interpreter. To approach any landscape critically is to understand it first as an interpretive exercise that is biased, selective, and shaped by overlapping individual and collective outlooks and experiences.

Overview and Background

I have briefly introduced the above example to demonstrate how and why I approach my research on intersections of visual art, landscape, and identity. I am especially attuned to selected works of art that illuminate an interplay between race and public space. My study focuses specifically on Asian American artists who themselves engage with the regional nature of California in the late twentieth century. This dissertation contributes to Asian American art history, a sub-field of American art history that has gained traction since the 1990s. My exploration of the field's spatial and geographic dimensions expands on regional studies of Asian American art in California undertaken by scholars, curators, and artists. California's vast and varied terrain is imbued with overlapping racial histories, contested spatial claims, and occasional collaborations, delineated through a significant body of work. It is just such an examination that I undertake.

Historian and activist Yuji Ichioka is credited for coining the term "Asian American" in the late 1960s while a UC Berkeley graduate student and founder of the Asian American Political Alliance.[2] Ichioka's intention was "to replace such

[2] This attribution is included in the abstract for the Yuji Ichioka papers, ca. 1880-2002, UCLA Library Special Collections.

derogatory labels as Asiatic or Oriental and [to envision] its politicized possibilities" (Schlund-Vials, Võ, and Wong 8, brackets mine). This very naming defined the pioneering Asian American Movement, an historical struggle that grew out of the Civil Rights Movement, various social movements, and anti-Vietnam War sentiments. The radical promotion of pan-Asian solidarity, self-determination, and social equity occurred across social and cultural spectrums throughout the United States and internationally in the late 1960s to the 1970s.[3] As such, Asian American activists often approached their work and causes to "serve the people" through multiracial and global coalition-building. Within this broad effort, numerous organizations, committees, groups, activists, scholars, and cultural workers advocated for self-defined Asian American identities and communities to dispel "yellow peril" and "model minority" myths, stereotypes, and other limitations.

Asian American art functions, as Lowe (2006) terms it, as a "counter-site" to national culture and memory. Asian American art has, to varying degrees, relied on biography as a reflector of individual and collective identities. As a defining tool, biographies are internally and/or externally imposed on the artwork and/or artist. In this process of elucidating Asian American art, an aestheticization of race and a racialization of aesthetics surfaces. Asian American art as a racialized and marginalized category is inextricable from conceptions of race, racial formation, histories, stereotypes, and myths in U.S. society. It is a racial project and a hybrid form (Bhabha).

[3] Significant contributors to the discourse on Asian American activism include: Aguilar-San Juan (1994), Liu, Geron, Lai (2008), Louie and Omatsu (2001), Maeda (2009), Okihiro (2014), and Wei (1993).

My overall exploration is further guided by the writings of Dolores Hayden, Lucy Lippard, and Irit Rogoff, whose inquiries concern how visual culture, alternative histories, and identity claims become interwoven with notions of time, space, and place. Specifically, I contemplate how Asian American visual imagery makes legible histories and conflicts beneath the surface of everyday life. As new patterns in American race relations intertwine with older configurations, public space continues to register and normalize social dominance. Kelly Brown Douglas equates "free space" with "white space," a color-coded sphere not intended for black people.[4] The racialization and regulation of public space is historically rooted, from slavery through de facto segregation, from urban white flight to police brutality against black bodies and maintenance of the prison industrial complex.

The notion of race being a social construct has had traction since the 1970s.[5] The essential argument is that shared meanings about social life make or define what is "real" in the act of experiencing life or lifeworlds. Hence, social categories such as race gender, sexuality, class, ability and age fall into the social defining and communicative realms. There are several features to how categories such as these can organize people into groups with shared cultural understandings and experiences. Yet each category does not entirely exist within a vacuum but rather is

[4] Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, a theologian, penned the article "Seeing God in the face of Freddie Gray" (CNN, April 28, 2015) in response to an alarming nationwide pattern of racial profiling and police brutality incidents against African American males in public space.

[5] For example, Berger and Luckmann (1991) consider how social identity intersects with and is formed through patterns of everyday life (e.g., habitualization).

configured in overlap with others (i.e., intersectionality of social identities.)[6] At the same time, a social category or configuration of social categories can also be utilized to establish dominance and preference in society, thus further amplifying how social hierarchies are construed and embedded in society's large-scale structures, systems, patterns and processes (Omi and Winant).

The racialization of American society throughout its history speaks to the character of society-at-large, suggesting a structure within which racial and cultural groups of all kinds struggle to achieve acceptance and integration. This racial dynamic—which is essentially a caste system—confronts all "non-white" groups with intense patterns of marginalization, racism, discrimination, oppression, and violence. These patterns manifest in various ways, through each group's unique matrix. Here we see evidence of America's ever-changing, "comprehensively racialized social structure" as posited by Omi and Winant (2014). In the United States, as elsewhere, identities reside within persistent yet fluid notions of race.

In this dissertation, I thus approach race as a profound social construct. The racialization of public space impacts society on micro levels, through daily interactions, as well as on macro levels, through the operation of institutions. The resulting social patterns can either enhance or obstruct the shaping of American race relations towards positive ends. Social and cultural identity is an evolving process of being and becoming that grapples with negotiations over race relations.

[6] I invoke the term intersectionality to consider interconnections between gender, sexuality, race, class, age and ability as "intersecting oppressions" (Crenshaw).

Identity formation influences and is influenced by the richly lived experiences, social positionings, and structural tendencies in which race and race relations reside.[7]

My investigation prioritizes politicized matters such as the airing out of racial identity amid conflict and accords them central importance in the building of art history theory. I pay greatest attention to visual art that is intended as activism or available to be read in terms of its political potential. When works of art raise questions about American race relations, they enable us more effectively to envision the historical crossings, present moments, and future directions through which race is performed. If racial integration and equity are indeed plausible goals for the foreseeable future, then art as a communicative act can disseminate the awareness and call to action necessary for achieving those goals.

In this introduction, I layout my dissertation's direction through several aspects:

- Research questions
- Research themes and related literature
- Methodology and research approach
- Summary of chapters

My discussion loosely adheres to the above order while making connections between the various points. The main research themes covered are "Race and Space", "American Art in a Multicultural Context" and "Asian American Art". I elucidate these themes through engaging with selected literature drawn from a mix

[7] In addition to Omi and Winant (1986/2014), my explorations of identity formation have been significantly shaped by Hall and du Gay (1996) who link identity expressions together with temporal space and cultural narratives.

of disciplines. This interlinked discourse sets the stage for my methodology and research approach. Lastly, I provide a summary of my subsequent chapters detailing three distinct case studies and my conclusion. Within this discussion, I further explain how I access and engage primary source material alongside secondary sources to set up my analyses of the artists and artwork.

Research Questions

My research proceeds from several points of departure and is then integrated throughout the entire dissertation. I begin with selected Asian American works of art about race and public space that I link to historical context and artistic intent. Next, I examine the art within a conceptual framework that underscores the imagination and interpretation of diverse landscapes at intersections where cultural identity formation and reflection emerge. Given how these conceptual handles necessarily become entwined, I further seek out the potential of such artwork to develop meaning and interpretation of social and cultural patterns. Art as social commentary paves the way toward integrating competing histories and claims, thereby cultivating a rich polycultural tapestry that, in turn, responds to Rogoff's inquiry about coexisting spaces.

This study prompts the reader and viewer of the artwork examined herein to consider a series of interrelated questions:

1) What are ways to interpret visual art that is attached to matters of race and public space? What are the significant historical and cultural contexts for such

work? How are these narratives mediated in relation to themes of landscape and identity?

2) What does the racialized category of Asian American art reveal both as its own process and about larger concerns regarding multicultural conditions and diversifying cultural production?

3) How do the works selected in this study bring forth visions for social and cultural transformation?

These questions link to my overarching query about artistic engagement in epistemic and pragmatic ways. Driven by these questions, I examine the interplay between aesthetics and politics to consider trajectories of American race relations. I ask: How can art equip critical viewers to probe and remap landscapes into alternate visions about space, place, and identity? How do the ways of seeing and engaging proposed by these Asian American artists open pathways for societal transformation? The dissertation utilizes social context and embedded identity as they are married to race relations and their interplay with contested spaces, to cast a new interpretive gaze onto the art objects themselves.

I seek to avoid reifying my interpretive method, hoping to problematize my approach along the way to explore and build a history of art with a broadened scope. In its forthcoming section, this dissertation self-reflexively addresses these questions and processes through a central framework built on the concepts of race and public space, American art within a multicultural context, and Asian American art.

My overall exploration is necessarily reflexive. As a socially engaged art historian, I operate within a cultural worker schema; yet, by nature of being a researcher, I also stand outside of that schema. Like Lin's wired tension in *Where Land Meets the Sea*, my own intellectual position is located by the very nature of its in-betweenness. Within that framing, I attempt to recognize how my intersecting social, cultural and intellectual markers—for example, Filipina American/woman of color/scholar/curator—are adjoined to my dissertation topic and selected case studies. My general inquiry about landscape and identity is prompted by my own local and global positionings and reflections. In this, I am compelled to explore how I am situated geographically and culturally in this call to art and social justice.

As the first generation of my family born in the United States, and specifically in Southern California, I thus acknowledge my own national, regional, and ethnic identity as a composite that I place in diachronic context. This harkens back to the mid-1960s, when my parents emigrated from the Philippines due, in part, to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965.[8] Professional and economic opportunities awaited them in the U.S., yet the perils and tragedy of a preceding war even more fully informed their migratory narrative. My paternal grandfather, Ernesto Gaviño,

[8] The larger historical context, according to Lowe, considers how "U.S. capital moved to Asian and Latin American sites of cheaper labor and production, and the 1965 act "opened" immigration, renewing domestic labor supplies. Since 1965, the profile of Asian immigration consists of both low-wage service-sector workers as well as "proletarianized" white-collar profein. Immigration, in this sense, continues to be an important historical and discursive site of Asian American formation, the locus through which the national and global economic, the cultural and legal spheres are modulate" (Lowe 36-37).

perished during the Bataan Death March of 1942.[9] Designed and implemented by the invading Japanese during World War II, this was an eighty-five-mile forced extermination walk of 76,000 prisoners of war (consisting of 66,000 Filipino soldiers and 10,000 American soldiers) from the Bataan to Pampanga provinces in the Philippines. Because of this devastating loss, my father received education benefits that put into motion his personal and professional journey.

As with many other family histories, mine has been unearthed only in fragments often obscure and conflicting. In terms of my own identity construction, my family history has positioned me to reflect in piecemeal fashion about what I see and experience as profound self-related concepts: imperialism, colonialism, patriarchy, village strength and limitations, cultural loss, dislocation, creativity and myth. Because of the cultural loss and dislocation that is part of that in my constant puzzling through I find in the fragments both despair and hope. Hence, in wondering about my ancestral origins and experiences, I consider my own identity formation in connection with race/ethnicity, space/place, history, and memory.

From within this inner epistemic universe, I imagine how the experiences of many other immigrant families likewise reflect an evolving mix of the past and present, traditional and contemporary cultures, and celebration and trauma. From this standpoint, I find myself crossing into an intersubjective space of exploring how others with different identity configurations and experiences approach race and public space.

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[99] See Murphy (2011) for a revisionist interpretation of the WWII Bataan Death March history and complex interplay of Japanese, American, and Filipino social and political relations.

Race and Public Space

An attempt of this nature first requires me to consider ontologies of landscapes and identity as they overlap with three major aspects of "public": public spaces and places, the diverse publics embedded within them, and the public issues that emerge. Regarding the first, I am attuned to both "official" and "unofficial" public sites. These may include alleyways, sidewalks, streets, and highways; parks and plazas; neighborhoods and city centers; and leisure sites and scenic destinations. In contradistinction, the public is comprised of various social and cultural groups that converge in these arenas. These groups adhere along lines of race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, and politics; they sometimes combine with and sometimes contest one another. The shared space, whether temporarily or permanently situated, propagates a host of overlapping and intersecting claims, debates, and creative cultural and social processes. Dynamic and interlinked social positionings and politics are essential to the public realm and highly relevant to the art to which publicity gives rise.

My work is informed by counterspheres, or counterpublics, which both support and challenge one another as well as the dominant group. This set of ideas develop from the notion of a public sphere which posits an ideal, unified, democratic setting for public opinion making and debate. Attributed to Habermas (2014), this type of social realm is closely linked to his conception of transformative social justice. Here, private individuals gather together in the name of public interest, which itself is mediated by social and economic forces, consumer culture, mass media, and state intervention. While useful, this theory's late-nineteenth-century,

European, male, bourgeois grounding has drawn trenchant criticism and fertile response.[10] This critique, with which I closer align myself, focuses on how imagination propels political action, which then opens space for many voices. The Habermasian public sphere therein acquires an element of mutuality that incorporates but does not obliterate cultural differences.

Because my study highlights American artists of Asian descent, I must also mention transnational and diasporic public spheres. These encompass the large-scale global movements of peoples, shining valuable light on more contained cultural spaces by reframing what local means. Transnational spaces are rooted in historical geographic processes that occur through sometimes difficult personal and group unfoldings. The various reasons behind these migratory patterns—which can be political, economic, religious, or ideological—often result in individual and/or collective physical and psychic anomic dislocation. Taking place around traditions, customs, and languages, cultural negotiations confront profound challenges. Hybrid cultural identities sometimes form, blending past and present ways of being and becoming.

This transnational framing gives perspective on how public spheres, over time, become imbued with multiple and hybrid identities. These identities can fragment within themselves, conflict with one another, or give birth to new identities. When visual art addresses multiple processes, it can capture and interpret their complexities in fertile, useful ways. Rogoff reminds us that

[10] Appadurai (1996), Fraser (1990), and Warner (2002) are significant contributors to the discourse on diasporic, transnational, inclusive, and democratic public spheres.

multiplicity and power distinctions become manifest through space: "Space, as we have understood it, is always differentiated, it is always sexual or racial, it is always constituted out of circulating capital and it is always subject to the invisible boundary lines which determine inclusions and exclusions" (Rogoff 35). Rogoff explains how space is socially coded and stratified by gender, race, and class. From this vantage point, privileged groups dominate society's centers while disenfranchised groups skirt its margins. With this hierarchical formation, social boundaries may nonetheless fluctuate, even as the social structure is maintained. Category crossing requires social actors to possess either hierarchical power, ideological mobility, access to the exchange of currency such as financial or cultural capital, and/or the ability to negotiate politically.

How then do visual artists imagine social segregation and potential integration? I argue that artists who are responsive to the discursivity of public life configure critical platforms via art for its further examination. As a brief example, the Filipina American artist collective Mail Order Brides (M.O.B.), consisting of Eliza Barrios, Reanne Estrada, and Jennifer Wofford, presents performance art within public places and cultural institutions. M.O.B. considers gendered and racialized physical bodies framed within local and global forces.[11] Thus, bodily and spatial configurations of identity and landscape are key layers to the artists' approach. My study recognizes but does not explore how identity is constructed through visual

[11] Tagle (2014) examines M.O.B.'s gendered and racialized artwork through socio-economic structures and shifts of space and place.

representations of the body. Instead, I focus on how space and place achieve similar ends.

Transcending conventional definitions of art, art in public space from the late twentieth going into twenty-first century might include sculpture, monuments, murals, installations, land and environmental art, "happenings" or art events, performance art, site-specific works, "new-genre" public art, and social practice art. The latter types often attempt to cultivate community reflection and engagement. For many artists creating with such intent, this involves "sharing power rather than imposing solutions" and "healing wounds inflicted by the fragmentation and social segregation of contemporary public space" (Finkelpearl 5). In this approach, public art has potential to build and nurture community by fostering relations, mutuality and respect. From this basis, community transformation can then take shape. Public art, when grounded in local spaces and places, pays especially close attention to the immediate community and its needs, thereby enlivening it with layers of diversity, democracy, histories, and memories (Hayden et al.) Connecting ideas that matter to local inhabitants and their supporters through artistic intervention, has the potential to establish common ground in a dynamic public sphere.

Public art in and for communities serves as a beacon for my project. Thus focused, I consider how a range of art forms exert similar impact. Artwork that connects to ideas of space and place can shift spatial experiences in the process of telling it; by its very presence, art can reshape narratives. This is a recursive process. It exerts a spatially interactive presence and is not a mere exercise in civic pride, historical reflection or moral storytelling. It develops complex spatial contexts

rather than simple backdrops for public life. This kind of art has the potential to activate select background aspects and bring them to the foreground through imagination. By examining this kind art, I am able consider how diverse social groups interrelate in shared space and place.

That, in turn, focuses my larger exploration of how representations of landscape and identity offer salient points of reflection for understanding race relations and transforming communities. I approach this larger matter by examining selected works by Asian American artists. While one might assume that such an examination would fall within the province of cultural advocacy for Asian American communities, this is only partially true. My examination of Asian American art is part of a broader effort—the drawing of thematic connections within as well as across social and cultural group boundaries. What transpires from this is a recognition and growing understanding of liminal space where these boundaries tend to blur or even cease to exist as categories.

This liminality calls my attention not to the content of whichever categories are changing but to the nature and problem of social category itself and its inherently essentialist nature. In fact, I believe, imagination and everyday experiences narrate spatial boundaries in ways that are quite permeable. Race and public space are fluid. Considering that, I now explore how this problem manifests regarding art and multiculturalism.

American Art in a Multicultural Context

Herein, I explore how my dissertation falls within an ongoing discourse on multiculturalism in American art. I consider how the large canvas of the contemporary artworld is profoundly socially stratified. Within this cultural sector, economics and power play out across individual roles and organizations. The gamut of artists, curators, critics, collectors, gallerists, arts administrators, art historians, galleries, museums, and cultural institutions themselves occupy different places in the social strata. Artworld interests cannot help but brush up against the issues of race, public space, and power dynamics laid out in my previous section.

Cahan et al. find great value in applying the concept of multiculturalism to the art realm. The authors argue that to critically engage the word "multicultural" concerns the following:

> [It is an] attempt to destabilize the very structures that elevate one style of art or one group of artists and create the linear succession of dominant art styles that make up the historical canon. It is precisely this hierarchical and linear notion of art history that has prevented work by artists of color from being part of the official story. "Multicultural" is not a style that came and went, but a condition of social existence (Cahan et al. 5).

In response to the epistemic limitations, Cahan et al. suggest developing less hierarchical and exclusive interpretive frameworks to challenge and reform entrenched approaches. Broadening and diversifying the art historical canon is a first step to infusing it with badly needed proportionality. To be sure, traditional orientations in the discipline have provided scholars with invaluable knowledge. Yet, in the end, Eurocentric discourse acts as an envelope unable to situate knowledge outside of itself very easily.

With that in mind, I take these assertions as a launching point to problematizing pluralities of culture. In this, I effectively pursue one of my major objectives, an articulation of links between art and activism. My concern for social equity and social justice in American society drives a large part of my research agenda. In fact, this overlaps with both my historical and theoretical concerns. In this dissertation, I deliberate on how socially conscious cultural production is a process that can be carried out by individuals, even as it connects to a wider network of similar thought and action.

Cultural workers such as artists, critics, and scholars need to embark on an "intellectual, existential, and political" enterprise "to empower and enable social action and, if possible, to enlist collective insurgency for the expansion of freedom, democracy, and individuality" (West 20). West's words are a cultural call to arms that is emancipatory, and even revolutionary. West exhorts the cultural worker to act as a catalyst who would dialectically celebrate the "best of what the mainstream has to offer—its paradigms, viewpoints, and methods" even while "affirming and enabling subcultures of criticism" (West 33). The cultural worker would incur a personal, existential responsibility that transcends envisioning goals of social change. In this framing, one is understood as a thoughtful, proactive, forceful part of an historic discourse about ideas, methods, and ideology.

My racial, ethnic, and cultural background gives me a grounded, reflexive foundation for my research in Asian American art history. As I hone in on race and public space as a frame for this inquiry, I am drawn to regional unfoldings. Visual art and its conceptual handles provide lenses on these phenomena. As I will

demonstrate more closely in the next section, Asian American art encompasses the work of multiple generations, backgrounds, and perspectives—a multiplicity that translates thematically in dynamic ways. My involvement in developing Asian American art history is intended as a racial project in which I can participate in scholarly efforts across racial and institutional boundaries. Through my attention to selected works by Asian American artists in California, I read local and regional perspectives as markers for future studies across regional geographies, both within the nation and around the globe.

Embarking on this kind of cultural work within the academy as well as within cultural institutions prompts me to consider what activist scholarship can produce considering its inherent limitations and opportunities. My methodology resonates with how "the production of knowledge and pedagogical practices [is articulated] through active engagements with, and in the service of, progressive social movements" (Okazawa-Rey and Sudbury 3, brackets mine). Such developments and implementations of interdisciplinary activist scholarship advance a broad social-equity agenda. Within that discourse, considerations of racism, sexism, homophobia, and poverty are given privilege.

Histories of social struggle in the United States, especially regarding racism and antiracism, bear significantly upon my study. I attune myself to how divisive attitudes, behaviors, and events have set the stage for evolving cultural transformations in the post–Civil Rights era. My work traces these transformations through visual art and popular media images. Previous scholarship on multicultural

contexts for art history overlaps with those positionings.[12] Such scholarship diversifies art historical knowledge while also revealing the highly charged nature and the not-so-easily-definable limits of social group categories within the field.

Within American art history, the subfields of African American art, Asian American art, Chicano/a art, and Native American art offer insights on the complexities of cultural identity and artistic production within the United States. These investigations shed new and extended light upon art historical chronologies, artist biographies, and regional artistic expressions. The incorporation of American artists of color into American art survey publications, in addition to museum collections and exhibitions, has been an evolving process. Gender, sexuality, ethnic-specific, and other cultural studies bring attention to the broad-based, multidimensional history of American artists of color.

Examination of mixed race art and crosscultural collaboration enlarges the scope. American art history scholarship must keep pace with an ever changing, many-cultured society.[13] Cultural themes cutting across these categories of race and ethnic-specific American art include national and global politics, the racialized body, and cultural hybridity. By extension, there are insights shared on diasporic experiences, real or imagined places of origin, and globalization/transnationalism. Many artistic expressions that specifically engage personal and/or collective

[12] In addition to Cahan et al. (2011), authors such as Lippard (2000), Pinder (2002), and Pohl (2018) foreground inclusive approaches regarding gender, race, ethnicity, and class within art criticism and art history.
[13] Pohl (2018) offers such an inclusive and revisionist account of American art history, incorporating social and political contexts.

identity stake a range of claims whose content may appear ironic, ambivalent, positive, and/or uplifting.

Often, however, artwork in that vein constitutes a response to, reinterpretation of, and appropriation of dominant and popular culture views of the cultural other, as it seeks to invert stereotypes. Racial stereotyping, a shortcut and limiting lens on specific groups, provokes and compels the work of contemporary artists of color. Their determination derives largely from their awareness of how American cultural workers, in their responses to the social, cultural, and political climates following the Civil Rights era, paved new ways to defy racial stereotypes and demand inclusivity in the artworld.

Artists from diverse cultural backgrounds who organized into groups, collectives, and coalitions have set out to challenge the marginalizing tendencies of the art establishment on the East and West Coasts. These have included women artists, artists of color, LGBTQ artists, and their supporters. Some museums and galleries, along with art critics and scholars, have embraced the flurry and sometimes fury of grassroots cultural activism. Two critically examined high-profile East Coast exhibitions are *The Decade Show: Frameworks of Identity* (The New Museum, New York, NY; 1990) and the *1993 Whitney Biennial* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY). Intricate issues and debates have arisen about the place of multiculturalism in the visual arts and about the challenges that marginalized artists face in gaining artworld validation.[14]

[14] Multiculturalism in America has also been contested on the rather different grounds that it tends to silo politically disempowered groups and increase their marginalization. See the debate between political theorist Michael Walzer and historian David Hollinger. Michael

Before these exhibitions and on the West Coast, Filipino American artist and curator Carlos Villa initiated a series of "community actions" at the San Francisco Art Institute in Northern California, beginning with *Other Sources: An American Essay* (1976).[15] *Other Sources* exemplified cultural activism dedicated to shifting perceptions of "minority" artists in major ways. Villa and his collaborators advocated for multiculturalism in the arts—perpetuating a collective voice that deeply resonates in the San Francisco Bay Area cultural scene to this day. This and other efforts highlighted local multicultural expressions in art, film, video, poetry, dance, and music through an exhibition and exhibition catalogue.

I consider how Villa's significant effort comprise scaffolding for the twenty-first-century critical, multicultural discourse on American art. The artist-curator addresses a grossly distorted and incomplete record of American creative achievement, uneven representations of the country's diverse artistic expressions, and fragmented understandings of cultural differences. How that manifests through a framework of visual art, race and public space is my primary inquiry. In the next section, my discussion extends to Asian American art and its related conceptual discourse.

Walzer, "What Does It Mean to Be an American?" *Social Research,* 57 (Fall 1990), 591–614; David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (1995).

[15] See Villa and Gonzalves (2012) for an extensive survey of Villa's artistic and curatorial contributions to San Francisco Bay Area incorporating multicultural perspectives.

Asian American Art

Up to this point, I have explicated my methods for making race, public space, art, and multiculturalism meaningful for this study. I also have discussed preliminarily how these overlapping discourses adjoin with my research. My inquiry, I have shown, has been shaped by my personal unfolding narrative and outlook. My scholarly approach derives from my conception of identity formation in the public sphere/public space, and furthermore, how it is tied to cultural activism. In noting how all these factors have impacted the course of American art history in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, I have laid the groundwork for this introduction's final section on Asian American art. As I turn toward Asian American art, I acknowledge the specificity of my racial project and its enlargement of American art history.

Because my study focuses on post-1970 Asian American art in relation to race and public space, I consider such art within relevant historical contexts alongside larger intersecting social and cultural forces. In terms of United States histories, my starting point is the post–Civil Rights era and its subsequent social movements. Asian American activism has generated increasingly positive, visible, and vocal platforms within the public sphere. Thus, the essential purposes of my work are to enhance the legacy of Asian American artists and their work; to recognize the cultural value of Asian American art as a significant subfield of American art; and to illuminate critical connections across conceptual and geographic boundaries. In this, I consider how Asian American art is wedded to

Asian American cultural studies. It is within the bounds of this interdisciplinary discourse that I locate and analyze themes of race and public space.

Asian American art encompasses the work of United States–based artists of Asian ancestry produced since the mid-nineteenth century. On this cultural ground lie historical and other markers indicating where Asian American artists stand, albeit with varying cultural awareness and personal attitudes towards their racial identity. Their unique biographies, artistic careers, and sense of personal agency overlap with a collective Asian American historical and cultural experience defined by shifting patterns of migration, demography, and diversity. Chang et al.'s *Asian American Art: A History* (2008), for example, presents a comprehensive historical survey of Asian American artistic achievements prior to 1970. The volume primarily focuses on painting, sculpture, and photography created by predominantly male artists of East Asian ancestry, especially from Chinese and Japanese ethnic groups. Also represented, although to a lesser extent, are Asian American artists of Korean, Filipino, and South Asian descent, as well as Asian American female artists in general. Overall, the featured artists are a heterogenous mix whose work reflects a myriad of artistic styles and influences. Their range of artistic exposure, training, and professional engagements are equally diverse.

Cultural references by Asian American artists range from traditional Asian cultures to American modern art to contemporary hybrid expressions. These references are largely cast in a positive and celebratory light, born out of a fruitful, creative cultural dialogue shaped both within and outside American society. At the same time, the social and political discrimination faced by Asian Americans,

especially during their first wave of immigration, casts a long shadow on their collective identity formation. The typical racism, discrimination, oppression, and marginalization sustained by minority racial and ethnic groups played out in graphic ways for Asian Americans. On the U.S. West Coast, they endured the anti-Chinese riot of 1877 in San Francisco, CA; the Depression-era riots pitting whites against Filipino farm laborers throughout California, among which the Watsonville riots of 1929–1930 were the most severe; and the World War II Japanese American Internment of 1942–1945. San Francisco's Chinatown has been deemed the "first racially segregated neighborhood in America" (Brooks 5). Events like these were encoded into widespread public opinions of Asian Americans through mass media accounts and notably through visual representations such as documentary photography, political cartoons, advertisements, and government propaganda. They ranged in tone; some were humanizing and empathic, while others came across as essentializing, pejorative, and inflammatory.

The residual effects of discriminatory laws, social exclusion, and social marginalization faced by earlier generations bear powerfully on all Asian Americans, regardless of their place in a heterogeneous social hierarchy. Oppressive institutional structures as well as day-to-day prejudice and microaggression have had lasting impact on social integration and cultural placemaking. Asian Americans are frequently cast as "other." Within popular culture, they are stereotyped in various ways, tagged as the "perpetual foreigner" or the "model minority"—labels that overshadow Asian Americans' self-defined cultural identities. The othering process often constricts Asian American identity and sets a limited bandwidth for

individual and group expressions vis-à-vis the broader American cultural landscape.[16]

The racialization of public space has long impacted affected Asian Americans. Their engagement with dominant structures and claims within public space has often been quite circumscribed. Spatial configurations of center and periphery manifest as segregated neighborhoods and reproduce the urban-suburban cleavages found across the U.S. Asian ethnic enclaves such as Chinatowns—with their ethnic-specific business storefronts, social services, cultural centers, thematic street festivals, and signage—bespeak a communal self-sufficiency as well as segregation from the city's broader cultural landscape. The spatializing of people ties directly into spatialized culture as form, content, and local ideology.

Pan-Asian identity is characterized by an intersectionality among varying national and ethnic groups emerging from the East Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian diasporas. The subcategorization of diasporic groups such as Chinese American, Japanese American, Korean American, Indian American, Pakistani American, Filipino American, Vietnamese American, and Cambodian American—noting persistent differences between them—suggest the complex, problematic nature of the term "Asian American". Due to the limitations of this discussion, I refrain from defining distinct identity concerns and politics of the various Asian and Pacific Islander groups noted above.

[16] Works by Lowe (1996), Palumbo-Liu (1999), and Okihiro (2014) are foundational to Asian American cultural studies.

Asian American identity is, above all else, a dynamic continuum and typology of different ways of experiencing the multiplicity of what "Asian American" means. Unity amid diversity is largely the product of the othering norms and behavior that typify dominant global Western culture (Said). At the same time, the resiliency and generativity of pan-Asian identity constitute a positive response to spatial and cultural containment. The emergence of mixed race and hybrid identities add yet another layer of complexity. These groups, subgroups, and intergroupings are "communities of affinity" arising out of Asian diasporas that do share some histories, memories, and traditions (Chang 6).

Identity politics of the 1970s through 1990s set in motion, among cultural groups such as Asian Americans, debates about how best to respond to social inequality and oppression. Through exhibitions, marginalized artists have, as I stated earlier, staked claims in a highly stratified and elitist artworld, infusing the cultural and political scene with difference, dialogue, and debate. Asian American cultural workers have entered the fray and made an impact. The New York-based grassroots collective *Godzilla Asian American Art Network* sparked public dialogue when promoting work of Asian American artists through gatherings, events, newsletters, and exhibitions during the 1990s.[17] Much of the message of the Godzilla

[17] Along these lines, Godzilla penned an assertive letter to David Ross, then director of the Whitney Museum of American Art. The letter protested the underrepresentation of Asian American artists within the 1991 Whitney Biennial. Ross subsequently met with 12 members of Godzilla and planned the inclusion for more artists of color in the next exhibition, the 1993 Whitney Biennial. See Alexandra Chang's *Envisioning Diaspora, Asian American Visual Arts Collectives: From Godzilla, Godzookie, to the Barnstormers* (2009).

network was geared toward recognizing the centrality of the work and the contributions of Asian American artists to the artworld itself. Godzilla members Karin Higa and Margo Machida carved out distinct pathways for Asian American art history scholarship to emerge in foundational ways, prompting scholars such as myself to apply their scaffolding in new ways. The artist and curator Yong Soon Min, another Godzilla member, brought this spirit into global art networks by way of transnational-themed artwork and art exhibitions.

Looking critically and comprehensively at Asian American art history holds immense value for wider societal concerns and identity-formation possibilities. Pioneering scholarship explores this: Elaine H. Kim, Margo Machida, Sharon Mizota, *Fresh Talk, Daring Gazes: Conversations on Asian American Art* (2003); Alice Yang, Jonathan Hay, Mimi Young, *Why Asia?: Essays on Contemporary Asian and Asian American Art* (1998); Gordon H. Chang, Mark Johnson, Paul J. Karlstrom, *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970* (2008); Margo Machida, *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary* (2009); and Alexandra Chang, *Envisioning Diaspora: Asian American Visual Arts Collectives* (2009). Asian American art framed as cultural artifact not only narrates extended moments of Asian American identity; it also provokes questions regarding national and global identity.

Margo Machida notes, "The imaginative efforts of Asian American artists, by consciously and unconsciously giving voice to the impact of larger social and political conditions on personal and communal experience, bestow tangible shape and texture to the Asian American presence in the United States" (Machida 3). Asian

American artistic expressions intersect in important ways with the broader creative streams of American society. Machida further recognizes that these artists are indeed "public figures" whose individual insights and ideas extend a transformative hand to the entire "social imaginary" (Machida 6). Asian American artwork constructs a reflective space about embedded and conflicted histories, sparking social change in both subtle and overt ways.

American colleges, universities, research institutes, cultural centers, museums, and galleries have increasingly supported such scholarly and curatorial endeavors. Conferences, symposiums, programs, university courses, and gallery talks have been organized alongside these efforts and events. The 2012 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Institute "Re-envisioning Asian American Art History," organized by Alexandra Chang and Margo Machida, encouraged the evaluation of past efforts and the development of new directions in the field. By pairing together earlier and emergent generations of artists, curators, and scholars, the initiative set a viable stage for advancing research and launching new scholarly and curatorial partnerships. As an invited scholar, my participation in the NEH Summer Institute exposed me to a stimulating range of ideas and possibilities for collaborations within the field.

Asian American solo exhibitions in museums, galleries, and other cultural spaces expose Asian American artists to broad public gaze and engage diverse audiences with their work. Such exhibitions offer critical insights into the artists' biographies, creative influences, and career-long creative development. Asian American group exhibitions shown in major museums suggest useful thematic

frameworks. Examples include *Asian/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art* (1994) [Asia Society, NY]; *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now* (2006) [Asia Society, NY]; *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900-1970* (2008) [DeYoung Museum, San Francisco, CA]; and *Portraiture Now: Asian American Portraits of Encounter* (2011) [Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.]. Regional cultural institutions and organizations have also hosted Asian American exhibitions. Featured artists and artworks reflect overlapping facets of identity, cross-cultural leanings, and hybrid forms and approaches.

Reflecting on even earlier Asian American art exhibitions, Yang considers their impact and significance:

> While such exhibitions can be instructive, they are also panaceas for a broader problem—the failure to integrate Asian American artists more fully into a wide range of exhibition formats and other cultural discourses that cut across racial boundaries. They reveal a tendency toward rigid classification along racial lines that can contribute to an ossification of concepts of identity (Yang 94-95).

In Yang's view, Asian American art exhibitions have the potential to strengthen cross-racial/cross-cultural ties through broadened cultural access and knowledge. Yet such exhibitions can also reproduce exclusionary institutional and curatorial practices. As Yang indicates, Asian American art circulates within a narrow field that can sway too quickly into constricting and compartmentalizing. It reinforces a necessary and yet limited typology that characterizes this emerging period in the field of Asian American art. It tows the line between championing "communities of affinity" and setting up continuing reifications as to what we should expect. Its capacity for realizing critical visions may be less than is commonly realized.

Asian American artistic legacies continue to be showcased and preserved nationwide not only through exhibitions but also through public and private collections, archives, and scholarship. On the West Coast, many Asian American artists and cultural institutions and organizations have visibility in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. My own study centers on the state of California because of these reasons, and because of the state's regional diversity. Focusing on California also affords me the chance further to develop my own local identity through this research process. In engaging specifically with California, there is much opportunity for me to explore its layered histories and its complex identities, which manifest in its varied cultural landscapes and public spaces. While not necessarily a microcosm of larger Asian American cultural processes per se, California nonetheless offers analytically rich ways of scholarly engagement because of this intragroup heterogeneity of expressions and meanings.

Asian American identity cannot be circumscribed within any set boundaries. Chang recognizes that the category of Asian American art "invites more questions than answers" (Chang 5). What are the limitations of "Asian American art," or any other culturally specific grouping, as an organizing principle? This question continues to be debated within the contemporary artworld by various players and institutions that try to fathom the influence of factors such as aesthetic and scholarly trends, art education, the art market, community needs, and audience engagement. There is consensus that for Asian American art to thrive across a wide epistemic band, artistic recognition, critical response, and cultural awareness should be

nurtured. Opinions diverge not on why it should be done but on how it should be done.

What are the consequences for research and knowledge-building if ambivalence towards Asian American art as a category is accepted or reframed because of its open-endedness? Perhaps permeability can become the new focal point, as suggested by the title and premise of the 2006 exhibition *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now*. Indeed, according to Min, there are advantages to a fluid process of identity formation that sets a stage to "'unravel' the presumed distinctions and boundaries of what constitutes the Asian American community" (Min 39). As identity assumptions become less rigid and contained, the range of expression for Asian American visual artists is widened. The ground becomes more fertile for deep consideration of Asian American identities as they intersect within and across social and cultural boundaries as well as through varied spaces and places. This could have far-reaching impact, as it could spark additional forms of Asian American cultural production.

My dissertation aligns itself with this ongoing and still-emergent discourse across Asian American art scholarship and curatorial practice, both of which lay out a foundation for cultural activation beyond restrictive categories. The dilemma of not categorizing is met then with nuanced approaches to existing and new typologies of Asian American art and its interpretation. Here, I embrace permeability to engage with visually complex and multivalent art. In my broader conceptual approach, I situate dynamic notions of race within the infinite playing field of public space. Public space itself is a contested, restless realm ripe for

exploration. As I examine Asian American art at multiple points of intersection, I envision a remapped topography able to broaden horizons for American art. My project's larger scope lays out new routes for understanding avenues of social and cultural transformation. I intend these to be meandering, contradictory, and unresolved.

Summary of Chapters

Each chapter of this dissertation revolves around identity-related themes of race and public space through the engagement of Asian American art. I examine and analyze selected case studies of Asian American art that enrich an understanding of these interlinking themes by way of the substance and the methodological framework I employ. I document related social, cultural, and historical contexts of the art and artists, provide a visual analysis of the relevant work, and lay out critical exploratory frameworks. My interpretation relies foremost on art historical inquiry; yet, by necessity, I incorporate reflexive and other scholarly perspectives. Purposefully, I select an eclectic mix of contemporary art forms, from graphic art posters to a site-specific work to photographic collages.

This epistemic direction of my approach has led me delve into and uncover multiple interacting layers that hinge upon art's transformative aspects—in particular, its potential to reflect upon and inspire social and cultural awareness, reflection and change. This task and process means that I represent and reinterpret artistic possibilities about shared spaces and places. In this, I contribute to the making of alternate art history narratives.

Following this introductory chapter is the first case study, Chapter Two: Reimagining Community: Kearny Street Workshop Posters in San Francisco's Chinatown, Manilatown, and Beyond (1972-1977). The second case study is covered in Chapter Three: Recomposing Pilgrimage Landscapes: The Necessary Ruins of Masumi Hayashi's *American Concentration Camps* Panoramic Photo Collage Series (1990–1999). The third case study is titled Chapter Four: Reclaiming (Post)Suburban Spaces: Finding the Hispanic Playwrights Project's *California Scenarios* (2001-2002) in Isamu Noguchi's *California Scenario* (1980-1982). Lastly, Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research completes and reflects upon this overall study. The following serves as more extended overview of each chapter:

Chapter Two: Reimagining Community: Kearny Street Workshop Posters in San Francisco's Chinatown, Manilatown, and Beyond (1972-1977) investigates Kearny Street Workshop's graphic art posters, community arts, and the related background of Asian American activism during the 1970s and 1980s. The posters widely circulated in San Francisco's Chinatown/Manilatown neighborhood and beyond, revealing new public images of local Asian American urban ethnic communities throughout the post–Civil Rights era Asian American Movement. It was during Kearny Street Workshop's 2008 exhibition *Activist Imagination* when I first encountered the posters as archival documentation of a community's energetic journey in identity formation and social change. Overall, I find these ideas merging with my own diasporic longing for a just and rooted sense of Asian American identity, space, and place.

The posters document the region's social and cultural activism, immigrant and first-generation experiences, and self-defined identities that countered prevailing racial stereotypes. The ones I feature in this discussion engage themes ranging from celebrations to struggles that include local cultural events and programs, low-income housing conditions, labor rights, and youth issues. I place emphasis on the value of oral histories/interviews that I conducted with the artists and other contributors. I also utilize the Kearny Street Workshop Archives and Poster Collection housed in the California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, Special Research Collections Department, University of California, Santa Barbara Library.

In Chapter Three: Recomposing Pilgrimage Landscapes: The Necessary Ruins of Masumi Hayashi's *American Concentration Camps* Panoramic Photo Collage Series (1990–1999), I delve into Masumi Hayashi's photographic representations of the historical sites of the World War II Japanese American internment. This substantive body of work is concerned with aspects of space and place merged with themes of war, memory, trauma, and American civil liberties. While my family experience during World War II falls within an entirely different set of circumstances, I am nonetheless drawn to this subject for what it takes to task through quiet reflection.

Hayashi's images represent the remains of internment camps to reflect upon the historical past as it connects with present and future generations. Recent public commemorations and civil pilgrimages to these camps, spread out across remote locations around the Western United States, mark the tragic episode of American history when Japanese Americans—two-thirds of whom were citizens—were imprisoned and stripped of their civil liberties due to racial fearmongering and

political opportunism. I examine how selected works from the series process this significant event through a critical and contemplative lens. For this chapter, I reviewed the artist's collection and archives of the Estate of Masumi Hayashi in Cleveland, Ohio, in addition to the Japanese American National Museum collection and archives in Los Angeles, California.

In Chapter Four: Reclaiming (Post)Suburban Spaces: Finding the Hispanic Playwrights Project's *California Scenarios* (2001-2002) in Isamu Noguchi's *California Scenario* (1980-1982), I examine a 1.6–acre public art site located in Costa Mesa, California. It is a largescale, site-specific work comprised of a series of abstract sculptural forms made of water, stone, steel, and organic material. The site itself is situated within a Southern California office park and framed by modernist office towers, a shopping mall, and freeways. Thematically, it pairs local and regional environmental awareness within postsuburban space and place. It thus offers for its visitors an immersive, experiential, and multisensory environment.

Through its immense scale, *California Scenario* offers a reflective and inventive platform. It inspired a theatrical production, the similarly named *California Scenarios*, performed in 2001–2002 by the Hispanic Playwrights Project/South Coast Repertory in Costa Mesa, CA. The production utilized the sculptural site as its stage for exploring Latino racial identity and the deterioration and isolation of public life. My engagement with this case study grew out of previous research and a continuing inquiry of Noguchi's carefully crafted cultural spaces for public engagement tied in with his transnational outlook. I explored this in my master's thesis focusing on Noguchi's two eponymous museums in Long Island City,

Queens, New York in the United States, and Mure, Shikoku Island in Japan (Gavino). Noguchi was a multiethnic American artist and designer of Japanese and European ancestry who incorporated local, regional and global influences in his work. I engage in site-specific study and draw from the artist's writings, which span his sixty-year career. Moreover, I incorporate archival material from The Noguchi Museum in Long Island City, Queens, New York, and South Coast Repertory in Costa Mesa, California.

In final chapter, Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research, I revisit notions of race, public space, and Asian American art through exploring interconnections between the case studies. To do so, I revisit my overall research problem, epistemic journey, and methodological framework. In this, I summarize key research findings on the selected artwork by Kearny Street Workshop, Isamu Noguchi and Masumi Hayashi. I then consider how my analyses of the three selected case studies interrelate and how they altogether can offer further reflections. I express how an inquiry such as mine can be expanded to include other delineations between race and public space. Within that discussion, I identify productive and resourceful ways to advance the field of Asian American art through future scholarship and academic projects centered on multivalent intersections.

II. Reimagining Community: Kearny Street Workshop Posters in San Francisco's Chinatown, Manilatown, and Beyond (1972-1977)

"In general, art is a powerful tool to inspire, uplift and build community and foster positive affirmation—of our individual and collective identities, histories, neighborhoods, sexuality, pride. It can be a healing and unifying force or jolt viewers into questioning the world around them. It can also educate and provoke discussion and inquiry into injustices" (Nancy Hom, 2009).[18]

Introduction

In the promotional poster for Curtis Choy's film *Dupont Guy: The Schiz of Grant Avenue* (1976), fifteen young and hip Asian American men and women group together in front of a street sign (Figure 2.) The street sign is labeled "Grant" and includes the number "900," indicating the specific block of the main street Grant Avenue in San Francisco's Chinatown. The pole of the street sign, a vibrant green, is positioned along the vertical centerline of the poster. Many of the figures look straight ahead while posed in a casual and relaxed manner. Created by Jack Loo for Kearny Street Workshop in 1975, the *Dupont Guy* film poster incorporates a black and white photo transfer image.[19] Its photographic quality suggests, if not determines, its documentary nature.

The poster can be viewed as a group portrait of Chinatown's young generation claiming space in the neighborhood's main thoroughfare. The group asserts a new collective Asian American public identity full of confidence, optimism, and nostalgia. Altogether, the group embodies an attitude on par with Choy's film

[18] Nancy Hom (Kearny Street Workshop artist and former Executive Director), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, in Spring 2009.
[19] The KSW archives poster collection lists that the poster is by an unknown artist; Jack Loo confirmed that he created it. Jack Loo (Kearny Street Workshop artist/photographer), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, Oakland, CA, October 9, 2010.

which examines "cross-cultural currents of San Francisco's Chinatown: assimilation, self-contempt, schizophrenic language, duplicitous behavior."[20] The film's title imparts a significant historical reference about Chinatown. The Cantonese "Dupont Guy" in English translation is "Dupont Street." When city leaders redeveloped Chinatown after the 1906 earthquake, the street was renamed Grant Avenue. Thus, the film poster reveals lingering tensions between past and present and within space and place that are necessarily part of identity processes and conscious efforts to shape futures.

Two details in the image draw attention. First, a female figure wearing a bucket hat and dark sunglasses is perched in the center of the group. This individual further stands out because of her checkered patterned shirt and her sidelong glance directed towards the left side of the image. A sense of her independent spirit comes forth, highlighting how individuality can coexist amid collective identity. Moreover, her gaze can be read as a wistful turn away from the present moment, a subtle gesture that symbolically melds that present moment with Chinatown's past.

A second outstanding detail of the image lies in the background. There, a male figure is stands above everyone else. He holds up an alternative sign labeled "Dupont Guy," the original street name. This gesture affirms the sign's symbolic and historical relevance. The featured group of people in the poster sustains this knowledge of the past, forging connections to a local and rooted sense of identity. Yet, as well, this specific narrative and other ones eventually become paved over as

[20] This description appears on the filmmaker Curtis Choy's website, *Chonk Moonhunter* (see References.)

place-names change and as other shifts of the environment occur. What this recounting indicates is a complex yet unblunted trajectory of displacement, erasure, recovery, and reclamation. This poster serves as a portal for understanding cultural identity as an ongoing process shaped by time, space, and place. I begin with this specific image because it brings together race and public space into sharp relief.

This chapter frames race and public space through a case study of Kearny Street Workshop (KSW) during its founding years of 1972–1977. An urban Asian American community arts organization, the group worked in and around San Francisco's Chinatown/Manilatown neighborhood of San Francisco, California, during this period. Its center was in a storefront space of the International Hotel at the corner of Kearny and Jackson Streets (Figure 3. and Figure 4.) As a notable part of its many cultural offerings, KSW produced vibrant graphic art posters promoting local cultural events and programs. These new visual representations of Asian American life and identity circulated around the community and throughout the region. Thus, the selection of KSW posters I discuss in this chapter constitute far more than print ephemera. I argue that the posters are social tools used to imagine and envision Asian American public life in transformative ways, affirming cultural identities and facilitating social empowerment.

Research Questions and Background

Kearny Street Workshop, as a leading example of Asian American community arts, provides a helpful lens for examining race and public space issues. I look at how, early on, KSW established a cogent community presence through cultural activism and placemaking in the face of neighborhood shifts and

cultural upheaval in San Francisco's Chinatown and Manilatown. Then, as now, the group had a hand in visibly shaping Asian American identities, bringing forth multiple intersections across gender, ethnicity, and generational cohort. The posters established new public images of and for Asian Americans in overt and nuanced ways. That lens suggests to me the following research questions:

1) How did the context of Asian American community arts development play into the specifics of the local environment of the San Francisco Bay Area? How was the social, cultural, and political scene conducive to its launching and purpose?

2) In this case study, what did Asian American community arts engagement look like? How did the graphic art posters produced by KSW bring to light complexities of cultural identity and possibilities for social and political power?

3) How did selected posters facilitate community imagination, self-determination, and transformation?

Methodologically, I consider major themes (e.g., race, public space, placemaking) alongside primary source documents, oral interviews I conducted, related literature, and my selection and visual analyses of artwork. I first address the questions by providing an overview of related historical background and cultural contexts. Mainly, I share how the Asian American Movement as a social and cultural awakening in the post-1965 Civil Rights era forms the foundation for this study.

Next, I closely examine the specifics of the case study, namely KSW's formation and connection to broader community arts efforts in San Francisco, California, during the 1970s. My focus upon the workshop's early history and graphic art poster production incorporates archival research of related historical

documents and poster reproductions. Here I utilize the Kearny Street Workshop Archives and Poster Collection housed in the California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, Special Research Collections Department, University of California, Santa Barbara Library. Of note, my own initiation and development of the Kearny Street Workshop Digital Project (2009-2010) created an online database of over 180 items with extensive metadata. This digital collection of posters and photographs is publicly available through the Online Archive of California and UC Calisphere. In addition, my organization and curation of the UC Santa Barbara exhibitions "Nancy Hom" (2009), "Public Lives of Posters in San Francisco's Chinatown, Manilatown, and Japantown, 1970s" (2010), and "Come Together: Interethnic Collaboration for Equity and Social Change in the 1970s" (2011) further inform this research. Other materials for this chapter are accessed from the personal collections of early KSW leaders and artists.

Of the selected posters, I examine artistic and production processes, artistic intention, and Asian American themes (e.g., identity, community, and activism.) Strikingly, this work illustrates new kinds of images contrasting popular and mass media stereotypes of Asian American people and spaces. I thus investigate the posters as *counterimages* produced by Asian American visual artists who set out to chronicle ancestral and family histories, traditions, rituals, and contemporary expressions. I reflexively approach these posters as testimonies of how identity forms over time, finding valued fragments of oneself that collectively come together like pieces of a puzzle. That reflexivity crosses my own gender, ethnic, and historical identities (see Introduction.)

In this chapter, I also place emphasis on oral interviews that I conducted with KSW leaders, poster artists, and other contributors. The individual points of view enrich the historical narrative and shed light on creative engagement in relation to activist and community-building practices. These dialogues occurred through in-person or phone interviews that I recorded and transcribed. My training through the Advanced Oral History Summer Institute, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley prepared me in methodological, theoretical, and technical ways.

Historical Background and Cultural Context: The Asian American Movement

This chapter acknowledges and builds upon previous scholarship on Asian American activism and its visual culture. Prominent among that scholarship are Steven G. Louie and Glenn K. Omatsu, *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment* (2001); Michael Liu, Kim Geron, and Tracy Lai, *The Snake Dance of Asian American Activism: Community, Vision, and Power* (2008); Asian Community Center Archive Group's *Stand Up: An Archive Collection of the Bay Area Asian American Movement 1968-1974* (2009); Daryl Joji Maeda, *Rethinking the Asian American Movement* (2012); and Karen L. Ishizuka, *Serve the People: Making Asian American in the Long Sixties* (2016). These works portray how the Asian American Movement emerged in the late 1960s and the 1970s to develop political inroads and potent cultural expressions. Each presents some discussion on the documentary photography, posters, and illustrations that characterized Asian American self-identifications as they primarily formed in urban ethnic communities as well as urban university and college campuses. Furthermore,

these critical examinations relay how social consciousness was born out of a combination of local, national, and global histories as well as contemporary influences. Moreover, Peter Selz and Susan Landauer's *Art of Engagement: Visual Politics in California and Beyond* (2006) is one comprehensive study that sheds further light on crosscultural connections addressed in my study.

As it has come to be known, the Asian American Movement was concerned with social inclusion and social equity, seeking "guarantee of equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment" (Okihiro 174). It was influenced by the Free Speech Movement, Civil Rights Movement, anti-Vietnam War sentiments, and various social movements. There was advocacy for Asian American self-determination, and this encompassed the predominant ethnic groups of the era (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, South Asian). In the West Coast counterculture of the 1970s, marginalized social and cultural groups sought out ways to challenge the status quo through social, cultural, and political action. Multicultural coalitions and their collaborations strengthened these efforts on local, regional, and national levels, especially in solidarity with multiracial groups (e.g., African American, Chicano/Latino, Native American).

The Third World Liberation Front of 1967–1969 launched student strikes at San Francisco State College and the University of California at Berkeley to press for the adoption of African American, Asian American, Chicano/a, Native American, and comparative ethnic studies by universities. These solidarity movements addressed American imperialism as well as oppression in non-Western countries. Students, faculty, and supporters came together for common

causes and shared sentiments. As students on their respective campuses, KSW's early leaders and artists experienced this front and center.

In the next section, I detail how KSW's community arts engagement grew out of socially conscious era in crosscultural ways. Their overall efforts constitute a significant aspect of the Asian American Movement and its regional impact in the San Francisco Bay Area. I emphasize how the group's mission and activities redefined existing identity claims and generated new ones, especially regarding race and public space. KSW artists legibly rendered these ideas through posters that were prominently displayed in local and regional communities. From a storefront location in the Chinatown/Manilatown neighborhood, KSW maintained a dynamic local presence to become a significant social force and locus of creative engagement that spanned across the region.

Kearny Street Workshop (KSW): Mission and History

The vibrancy of the San Francisco Bay Area scene, the critical potential of community arts, and the communicative impact of graphic art posters together set a foundation for understanding the historical crosscurrents that shaped KSW in its early years during the 1970s. Social protest and countercultural expression precipitated similar agendas of many neighborhood-based and racial/ethnic–specific organizations such as KSW. The Asian American Movement and Third World Liberation Movement had significant impact on the KSW's development, giving rise to a panethnic Asian American outlook complemented by a global consciousness of the marginalization and oppression of non-Westerners both domestically and globally. In this, KSW consciously sought to cultivate the vitality,

creativity, and wellbeing of Asian American individuals and communities through its varied offerings of art and culture.

In 1972, Chinese Americans Michael Chin, Jim Dong, and Lora Jo Foo started KSW as a local grassroots effort. Over several decades, KSW has evolved into a nationally and internationally acclaimed Asian Pacific American multidisciplinary arts non-profit organization, one that remains active to present day.[21] It has since branched out from neighborhood-based outreach to broad support of emerging and established contemporary visual artists, writers, and performers in professional development and community connections. Rather than examining how KSW progressed over the course of forty-five years, I turn to its foundations.

During the formative years from 1972-1977, KSW's main goal was to develop a locally run outlet for inclusive artistic engagement that was, in the parlance of the time, *for the people*. As such, KSW was attentive to how its youth, adult, and senior audiences embodied and reimagined Asian American culture and identity. Blending art and activism, KSW founders were joined by a large group of friends and associates who gathered informally and provided support as leaders, instructors, and participants. What they shared was a progressive and compassionate attitude that marked the era's social movements and community arts. The core group mostly consisted of trained and developing artists from varied disciplines who were around college age (i.e., late teens and twenties.)

[21] KSW's mission "is to present, produce, and promote art that empowers Asian Pacific American artists and communities." Further up-to-date information is found on the Kearny Street Workshop website, (see References.)

Many of them self-identified as “ABCs,” or American-born Chinese. Some grew up locally in Chinatown, while others came from various neighborhoods around the San Francisco Bay Area, throughout California, and outside the state.

KSW flourished within the city of San Francisco’s supportive community arts network. Bernice Bing, a staff member of the Neighborhood Arts Program, a sub-organization of the San Francisco Arts Commission, served as the liaison to help secure $2,000 in start-up funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. With some reluctance and suspicion of “the establishment” and especially government authority, KSW founders would move forward only when assured that the workshop would retain autonomous decision-making power. They insisted that cultivation, creation, and support of community arts be approached in self-determined, ethnic-specific ways.

This outlook was clearly expressed in an early grant proposal (c. 1972):

> Art gives valuable insight into a culture. It records the social conditions and attitudes. Recently a cultural revival or more appropriately a new cultural awareness is taking place. Many Chinese Americans are aware of the relevance and need of art which depicts social changes as they take place in their communities, and that this art must come from people within the Chinese American community. In this way Chinese Americans can begin to break down dependence on white standards in the creative art field.[22]

The "new cultural awareness" among Chinese Americans put forth more than a desire to address local community needs within circumscribed identity concerns. Just as much, it challenged a structural context seen as suppressing the community. The very act of “break[ing] down the dependence on white standards” begins with

[22] This excerpt comes from an unpublished document from KSW co-founder Lora Jo Foo’s personal collection.

the assumption of an epistemic and economic domination (i.e., a Western/Euro American patriarchy). This ultimately interferes with cultural participation and knowledge development for all potential artists and art audiences. Thus, community arts recognizes and supports women and minority artists to counteract structurally limited opportunities of the "artworld."

Bringing in fresh ideas bolstered by college education, social activism, and a new cultural awareness, KSW leaders intended to give back to Asian American communities. Thus, the group focused on community-building practices such as operating a physical space for meetings and workshops, accessing cultural resources, and nurturing creativity (Figure 5.) KSW developed as a local hub for advancing the interests of its constituents—the individuals and families who faced struggles under low-income urban conditions such as child and family welfare concerns, poor housing, labor exploitation, and crime and gang violence. Here, the community arts center evolved into a lived and felt space that transcended traditional boundaries and helped people frame a group identity based upon shared knowledge and experiences.

KSW approached aesthetic and creative growth for Asian American communities across the disciplines of visual art, photography, literature, poetry, music, and performance (Figure 6.) In all, KSW intended its cultural products and programs to recognize cultural achievements and perform social justice work. Notably, the visual art mainly consisted of posters and murals, with poster production becoming one of the more popular activities. For Asian American communities, the overall imagery offers points of reflection and cultural imaginings

on identity extending even beyond this pivotal era and abounding radical zeitgeist of the 1970s.

Current scholarship and art exhibitions recognize the range and impact of Kearny Street Workshop's art and cultural activism. For example, *Activist Imagination* is a 2007 exhibition and accompanying catalog based on a series of public discussions and a gallery exhibition at Kearny Street Workshop. Organized by Christine Wong Yap, *Activist Imagination* takes a comparative view of work focused on cultural activism from its founding years to the present day, marking the organization's then thirty-fifth anniversary. It includes a compilation of selected KSW posters, offering a cursory glance into the group's extensive and eclectic collection. When I visited the exhibition prior to embarking upon this study, I encountered reproductions of the posters and discerned how these public expressions of Asian American community concerns might hold potential value beyond their original time and place. This is part of what prompted my initiation of the Kearny Street Workshop Archives Digital Project and related research and exhibition projects.

In addition, Margo Machida's essay "Art and Social Consciousness: Asian American and Pacific Islander Artists in San Francisco, 1965-1980," published in *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970* (Chang et al.), provides a larger context for Asian American art and activism. Machida recognizes selected artists, working in both "high" and "low" artforms, who represent progressive ideas across diverse media and venues. Also, Machida specifically examines KSW as a "foundational role" in Asian American community arts, noting their extensive contributions and

projects in small press publishing, visual arts, and exhibitions (Machida 268). Moreover, Machida's exhibition and related catalog *Icons of Presence: Asian American Activist Art* (2008) investigates the biographies and work of three prominent Kearny Street Workshop visual artists—Jim Dong, Nancy Hom, and Leland Wong. These artists each convey distinct styles in their paintings, illustrations, and posters while overlapping in their attention to Asian American themes and experiences. Without question, Machida's work has served to greatly influenced mine. I expand upon this research in the next sections to illuminate how these three KSW artists and their peers advanced crosscultural understandings of race and public space through community arts, postermaking, and placemaking.

San Francisco Community Arts

Collaboration as an ideal formed a solid foundation for community engagement and social action. Nancy Hom, who joined KSW in the mid-1970s and served as its executive director from 1995 to 2003, remarks:

> For a lot of us, the values of those early movement years informed our choices for the rest of our lives – values such as inclusiveness, openness, and unity.... In general, art is a powerful tool to inspire, uplift and build community and foster positive affirmation—of our individual and collective identities, histories, neighborhoods, sexuality, pride. It can be a healing and unifying force or jolt viewers into questioning the world around them. It can also educate and provoke discussion and inquiry into injustices.[23]

Hom notes how the democratic values of the wider movement for social justice have a natural affinity with artistic expressions of social cohesion and self-determination.

[23] Nancy Hom (Kearny Street Workshop artist and former Executive Director), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, September 27, 2010.

By cultivating cultural knowledge, sensitivity, and diversity, the arts bring a vital dimension to efforts at social change.

Thus, a democratic ethos permeated the work of KSW and similar community-based art workshops in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1970s. Beyond nurturing the wellbeing of their local communities, these organizations disseminated social movement propaganda for other cultural groups and on behalf of numerous activist issues. A vibrant and publicly engaged cultural scene easily gave rise to intergroup cooperation, which manifested in a proliferation of murals and posters throughout the region. Moreover, loose affiliations between various San Francisco Bay Area community arts organizations precipitated intercommunal and intercultural exchange. KSW co-founder Jim Dong acknowledged the following:

> Communities other than the Chinatown community... [such as] Chicano and black communities were also involved in the arts. . .. [They were] using art to communicate issues...Chinatown needed a base for that type of art. . . . [We all] formed around the same time...mutually sharing what each other are doing. . .. This [was] the climate of the time in the 60s and 70s.[24]

Dong notes how the neighborhood groups cultivated rapport and collaborated with one another. Their shared outlook grew out of a regional synergy and aesthetic very much aligned with crosscultural and crossracial solidarity. Recognition of the shared struggles of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos/Chicanos, and Native Americans resonated on social, cultural, and political levels. These overlappings gave substance and energy to the surrounding urban

[24] Jim Dong (Kearny Street Workshop artist/co-founder), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, phone interview, August 2, 2011.

public space. These community arts organizations were driven, above all, to repair and empower communities in need. Among their typical concerns were poverty, insufficient social services, police harassment and abuse, low wages, harsh labor conditions, and the exposure of youth to gangs, crime, and drug use.[25] Community arts also engaged global perspectives. During the 1970s, this agenda included envisioning peace in conflict and war zones, egalitarianism, political freedom, anti-capitalism, and environmental protection. As a rule, this occurred organically, as community arts organizations understood themselves as embedded among as well as representative of communities and the individuals and families that comprised them.

In trying to appeal to society at large, community arts organizations acted on a vision where art and democracy were as mutually dependent. Goldbard (2006) outlines such a vision, emphasizing seven points about community cultural development that have, she believes, been adopted by practitioners over time. Goldbard demonstrates that these artists play an active part in community life; that diversity is a social asset; that all cultures should stand on equal footing; that culture is a conduit for social transformation; that cultural expression is a "means of emancipation"; that culture is a "dynamic, protean whole"; and that artists function as agents of social transformation (Goldbard 54-58). Essentially, Goldbard's seven points delineate "best practices" in community arts. This

[25] Jerry Jew (Kearny Street Workshop photographer), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, October 5, 2010.

contrasts starkly with the assumptions of the mainstream artworld and the roles played by its contributors (Goldbard 43).

For example, makers of collective art aim to transcend egotism. It was often the case that San Francisco community artists during the 1970s produced work anonymously or under the banner of a group name. This was part of a general attitude that intentionally ran counter to the prevailing individualism and competition characterizing the artworld as well as greater American society. Such a deliberately non-commercial approach contrasted how museums and galleries then mostly recognized white male artists and Western art movements within elitist environments. Indeed, the very nature of community arts during this era was to carve out an inclusive cultural sphere for marginalized artists and publics.

Community arts provides an avenue for artists, other participants, and supporters to come together in innovative and collaborative ways. A National Endowment for the Arts and National Council on the Arts Annual Report (1971) noted how frequently racial and ethnic minorities assert a cultural pride and awareness that they believe to be essential to their survival in "White America". The public and political platforms that they advance are integrated into new and developing, if not controversial, perspectives of visual art.

The Poster

This next section explores overlapping frameworks about the signifying power of posters and print workshops. I consider in such a light, KSW's specific contributions to this larger scene. Generally, the poster medium performs as an "artistic barometer of society," measuring the pulse of the social landscape while

communicating an agenda to a targeted public audience (Ansell and Thorpe 7). As print ephemera, posters function either as consumer advertisements or as tools of social propaganda. To be effective, posters typically incorporate visuals comprised of simple, bold, clear imagery that varies from realist to abstract (Ansell and Thorpe 7). The scale is eye-catching, and the coloration is vibrant (Ansell and Thorpe 8). The postermaking process lends itself to cheap, mass production allowing for widespread distribution.

The poster can readily "get the word out." When posters are used as street propaganda, attempts to gain social power are made more feasible. For communities at the margins, the poster signifies clear resistance to mainstream media imagery and upends common stereotypes.[26] Activist communities—especially those that are working class and/or possess minimal leverage—tend to have restricted access to mainstream artworld channels and rely on posters to convey information, inspiration, and cultural pride (Goldman 52). The local context and development of the San Francisco Bay Area poster movement succeeded at communicating in public space by connecting with a large and readily available pedestrian population (Goldman 51).

A more recent examination concentrates on the regional impact of activist posters. The exhibition *All of Us or None: Social Justice Posters of the San Francisco Bay Area (March 31-August 19, 2012)* held at the Oakland Museum of California is credited as "the first comprehensive exhibition exploring the poster renaissance

[26] See Margolin (1975) who frames American art posters from the late nineteenth century to the twentieth century within social, cultural, and political contexts.

that started in the mid-1960s as a legitimate art form as well as a powerful tool for public debate on social justice issues."[27] Organized by guest curator Lincoln Cushing, it featured selected work from the collection of Michael Rossman, a Free Speech Movement activist, author, and educator who assembled 24,000 posters over a thirty-year period. According to *All of Us or None,* these posters were more than more than cultural documents with substantial aesthetic value. Just as much, they constituted "social justice printmaking."

Poster printmaking blossomed throughout the 1970s in the San Francisco Bay Area. Not only do posters repair, enrich, and empower the communities in whose interests they are created. Just as much, posters help to shape the culture of public spaces and places. The predominant printmaking process was screenprinting, then known as silkscreening because of the available materials and technology of the time. The process relied heavily on manually operated machinery along with collaborative effort to handle mass production.

The following provides a snapshot of some of these community arts print workshops, when they were established, and their locations:[28]

Media Project, est. 1970 (Berkeley)

Galería de la Raza, est. 1970 (Mission District)

East Bay Media, est. 1971 (Oakland)

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[27] This description of the exhibition comes from the webpage for *All of Us or None: Social Justice Posters of the San Francisco Bay Area (March 31-August 19, 2012),* Oakland Museum of California (see References)

[28] I initially compiled this list during my research as co-curator for the 2011 exhibition *COME TOGETHER: Interethnic Collaborations for Equity and Social Change in the 1970s* (College of Creative Studies Gallery, UC Santa Barbara).

La Raza Silkscreen Center/La Raza Graphics, est. 1971 (Mission District)

Kearny Street Workshop, est. 1972 (Chinatown/Manilatown)

Taller de Artes Graficas, est. 1972 (Oakland)

Inkworks Press, est. 1974 (Berkeley)

San Francisco Poster Brigade, est. 1975 (San Francisco)

Japantown Art & Media Workshop, est. 1977 (Japantown)

Mission Gráfica, est. 1977 (Mission District)

Community Asian Art & Media Project, est. 1979 (Oakland)

These organizations received support through private and public backing. The latter included major support from federal, state, and local government sources. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Expansion Arts Program, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), the California Arts Council, and the San Francisco Art Commission Neighborhood Arts Program (NAP), were among the granting agencies.[29] Overall, the funders were concerned with creating employment for individual artists, strengthening community organizations, and revitalizing neighborhoods through art and culture.

At KSW's printmaking facilities, formally trained Asian American artists and amateur contributors alike created posters, combining imagery and text in inventive ways. KSW posters, issued primarily as publicity for local issues and events, were widely distributed in public places. Over time, the posters gained high visibility and

[29] The San Francisco Art Commission Neighborhood Arts Program (NAP) was officially launched in 1967 under the slogan "Arts for and by the people where they live and work" (Riess 1978).

traction within the community and beyond as they were found on telephone poles, community boards, and storefront windows. Produced by Asian Americans primarily for Asian American audiences, KSW posters imparted messages of self-affirmation and ushered forth the complexity, diversity, and vibrancy of urban Asian American life.

The poster images embodied visual aspects of Asian American identity across various attitudes and generations. The *Dupont Guy* poster detailed at this chapter's introduction is a key example. This poster, along with several others that were produced by KSW, assert and facilitate comprehension of self-defining identity. Thus, by taking on a didactic quality, the imagery combines ancestral and historical reflection alongside scrutinization of contemporary life to envision community transformation.

Kearny Street Workshop (KSW) in Chinatown/Manilatown

My further exploration of KSW's community arts engagement considers its close ties to Chinatown/Manilatown's urban scene during the 1970s. First, I share relevant historical background and theoretical insights on these two neighborhoods which once existed alongside each other. Then, I turn to additional posters that visually ground and narrate these ideas. I believe that the selected posters about Chinatown offer salient and intimate perspectives on Asian American experiences and communities, notably those featuring KSW's programs, events, and classes for a range of participants from youth to aging populations. My attention on Manilatown centers on posters that focus on the struggle against urban gentrification, namely to

save low-income housing for elderly Filipino and Chinese immigrants. The related images emphasize calls for solidarity on this plight.

Of historical note, Chinatown took root in the mid-nineteenth century and has evolved today into a thirty-block residential, commercial, and tourist hub as well as "the oldest and second largest Chinese American community" in the United States.[30] Situated alongside Chinatown, Manilatown came about in the early twentieth century primarily as a "bachelor society" consisting of Filipino male immigrants, most of whom were seasonal workers. It met its demise in 1977 when, on the neighborhood's last remaining block, the International Hotel (I-Hotel) succumbed to a lengthy eviction process, falling victim to urban renewal and redevelopment. Both communities were products of longtime, nationwide urban patterns of institutionalized racism and segregation. Their geographic and racial boundaries were shaped by exclusionary laws, anti-miscegenation laws, and housing covenants.

Laguerre refers to ethnic enclaves as "minoritized space," products of "the myriad of forms of positionality that generate social distance and that maintain and reproduce social hierarchy, oppression, and discrimination in society" (Laguerre 5). Laguerre argues that an analysis of minoritized space might spur the dismantling of these patterns. "Commoditized Chinatown" and "defunct Manilatown," he recognizes, share an intricacy and vulnerability faced by many urban ethnic communities (Laguerre 2). The place identity of these neighborhoods might be best

[30] These facts and other neighborhood details are found in SF Planning, General Plan, Chinatown Area Plan (see References.)

fathomed by reckoning with the influence of large social and economic forces. An effective analysis would pay attention to nuanced indicators of place identity, including the daily microaggressions and tensions that occur when civic space is shared.

Many Chinatown/Manilatown residents faced social challenges such as racism, discrimination, isolation from mainstream life, and cultural and language barriers. Jerry Jew, a Chinatown youth leader and KSW photographer, captured the circumstances of many of the workshop participants during the time:

> The positions of the young people or the immigrants [in Chinatown/Manilatown] were just as you can imagine. They were immigrants that had no experience, no means to do anything other than survive...put food on the table. So, we . . . as a workshop, knowing or not knowing, we provided them, with other outlets like guitar classes, ceramics, silkscreen classes, all kinds of classes.[31]

Community art and culture provided alternatives to the challenges of immigrant life. Jew argued that creative expression and recreation provided a site of relief and recovery. Although his recounting reflects just one perspective, it resonates with tales told frequently by immigrants about the social and economic ordeals that they and their families faced. Aware that community support was needed at all age levels, KSW offered courses and hosted activities and events for children and adults.

The workshop addressed not only the community's most pressing issues but also its insularity, as seen in two posters that reflected contrasting experiences of the local youth. First, Leland Wong's *Asian American Summer Art Workshops in Ceramics, Photography, Silkscreen* (ca. 1974-75), consists of a grainy black and white

[31] Jerry Jew (Kearny Street Workshop photographer), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, October 5, 2010.

photo transfer image that is circular in shape, suggestive of the sensation of gazing through a camera lens (Figure 7.) The image depicts three young women, each of whose facial expressions appears muted, if not troubled. The trio stands within an urban setting, behind a chain link fence. Behind the figures is a row of parked cars that recedes into the background. Below this image, conveyed through tidy handwritten lettering in black, is a listing of available art classes, their schedule, and their locations. Void of any coloration, the overall black and white contrast complements both the straightforward informational content and the somber tone of the image. The artist recalled that the image was based on a photograph that he had taken immediately after a brutal street fight, witnessed by the young women.[32] In capturing this local event and the aftermath of neighborhood violence, the poster problematizes the potential threats and harsh realities faced by the community.

The second poster contains the header *Summer Happenings, Chinatown-Northbeach Area Youth Council and Kearny Street Workshop Co-sponsors* (Artist unknown, ca. 1973) (Figure 8.) The central image illustrates three people carrying outdoor gear. The group of figures is situated in front of a large, shining yellow sun whose rays of light extend out to the edges of the picture plane. Below is a listing of the program's scheduled offerings, which included trips to Chinese farms, camping, and horseback riding. This is spelled out in vibrant green lettering. This depicted scene and accompanying text suggest that the attendees will gain exposure to rural experiences. The summer youth programs drew hundreds of participants. Intended

[32] Leland Wong (Kearny Street Workshop artist/photographer), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, September 29, 2010.

as a diversion from gang activity and other urban conditions, the programs took local adolescents out of their daily routines and settings. The poster promotes an alluring journey and suggests a bright and hopeful future.

Unlike the previous poster, *Summer Happenings* puts forth a light and optimistic outlook. It indicates that the pairing of identity formation and cultural enrichment can achieve positive results. Clearly, KSW helped local youth broaden their knowledge base and life experience beyond their immediate community. My analysis of the two posters reveals finer details about how Asian American cultural affirmation occurs both in micro and macro moments. I demonstrate that lived experiences in Asian American communities, despite daily hardship and social obstacles, generate rich, creative, productive public dialogue.

Leland Wong contends that visual representation plays an important role in deepening cultural engagement and identity:

> In the world I grew up in there were hardly any images of ourselves . . . of our community. . .. if you're [part of] a community [like] Chinatown, or [another] Asian immigrant community, your art should reflect it, and it should be representing us as well in a good light, and to tell our story and our history as well.[33]

Wong considers how community is bonded by common ancestry, a trajectory of upheaval and resettlement, and struggle in social positioning in American society. Concerned with how "our story" and "our history" are relayed, Wong implores art producers from the community to employ visual production that presents wide-ranging narratives about Asian American life.

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[33] Leland Wong (Kearny Street Workshop artist/photographer), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, September 29, 2010.

Like *Summer Happenings,* Wong's own posters and photography capture portraits and vignettes of community life with a mixture of pride, dignity, concern, and, at times, critique. Wong and similar artists speak to previous generations of Asian immigrants who bore cultural knowledge from their countries of origin, who settled into new ways of living, and who faced major challenges while positioned in the margins of American society. Ultimately, community identity builds upon such stories and histories, connecting newer generations with previous ones and reinforcing understandings of their origins.

A former Chinatown youth leader and KSW instructor Norman Yee expands on this insight. Yee reflects on how KSW leadership questioned the limited representations of Asian Americans in public life:

> So, you didn't really see . . . an Asian American image of doing more mainstream things, like camping, for instance. And I think part of it was, and this has made me proud . . . we were challenging media, challenging society, saying we're Americans and you need to include us. If you're not going to include us, we're going to include ourselves. You need to include us in trying to create our own images and not accepting whatever stereotyped images you've done in the past.[34]

For Yee, constructive action stimulates Asian American cultural pride and social empowerment. Operating outside of popular culture, KSW generated and circulated new public images for community reflection. The contributing artists created counterimages to challenge the status quo and cultural hegemony. However subtle, KSW posters enabled members of the neighborhood to see themselves in a new light within their own communities.

[34] Norman Yee (Kearny Street Workshop artist), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, October 4, 2010.

KSW's critical representation of San Francisco's Chinatown contradicted mass media and commercial depictions of the neighborhood in the years leading up to the workshop's emergence. In the popular imagination, Chinatown was and remains picturesque, an exotic and fanciful tourist destination possessing none of the neighborhood's gritty, oppressive, socially divisive qualities. For example, the Rodgers and Hammerstein 1958 Broadway musical and 1961 film adaptation *Flower Drum Song* in addition to Dong Kingman's travel advertisements and urban landscapes are memorable examples. In total, however, the notion of "Chinatown" remains a site of complexity and contradiction where fantasy and reality collide. Those that critique or reject fantastic representations include Anthony Lee's *Picturing Chinatown: Art and Orientalism in San Francisco* (2001) and Arthur Dong's documentary *Hollywood Chinese* (2007).

Intentionally, KSW set itself and its posters apart from popular perceptions and commercial interests—especially those of the Chinatown elite. The posters document the organization's support of neighborhood cultural traditions and events, such as the *Year of the Ox Calendar* (1973), Spring Festival, Chinatown Worker's Festival, and The Hop Jok Fair. The poster text for the latter event translates *Hop Jok* as "cooperation". Jew reports that KSW contributed to this community fair through collaborative artistic engagement by operating concession booths.[35] The narratives embedded in these posters reveal the local spirit and

[35] Jerry Jew (Kearny Street Workshop photographer), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, October 5, 2010.

penchant for community-based gatherings and activities. Chinatown's vibrant public life and continuously sustained cultural identity are made plain and clear.

The International Hotel (I-Hotel) Struggle

Much like Chinatown, Manilatown was a site where art imagery and place identity interconnected in myriad ways. Manilatown's development evinced a large, parallel wave of Filipino migration to the United States in the 1920s. By the 1960s, the community's ten-block area had shrunk markedly, the result of urban development and a rapidly encroaching financial district. As the decade wore on and the demographic siege intensified, the International Hotel (I-Hotel) became the locus for Manilatown's struggle. Built in 1907, the I-Hotel was a low-income, single-room occupancy residential building at the corner of Kearny and Jackson Streets, bordering Chinatown. The three-story brick building provided low-income housing. By the late 1970s, most of its tenants were elderly Asian immigrant bachelors of Chinese and Filipino heritage who had, for several decades, considered it home.

An important part of this place narrative as it relates to Kearny Street Workshop concerns the I-Hotel eviction struggle from 1968 to 1977. This ten-year ordeal has become a pinnacle case study for studies in urban gentrification, low-income and senior housing rights, and Asian American history. In a startling feat of solidarity, a series of anti-eviction demonstrations drew thousands of supporters across age, gender, and race/ethnicity. "We Won't Move" was their resounding call to action. While I-Hotel tenants ultimately lost the battle and the Manilatown community disintegrated, an ambiguous and uncertain outcome unfolded over subsequent years. According to Salomon, "the early I-Hotel demonstrations became

a political introduction for large numbers of Asian American students in search of their cultural roots" (Salomon 97). The I-Hotel site served as a cultural hub for the cultivation of space, place, and identity.[36]

KSW's intimate involvement in the demonstrations shows the presence of street and community life within the space/place of the resistance. KSW occupied a ground floor storefront in the I-Hotel throughout the eviction struggle. Initially, the workshop shared a vendor's space filled with used television sets and soybean sacks.[37] Jim Dong led collaborative teams that painted a mural above the store's front entrance and another on the Jackson Street side of the building. The glass front door was emblazoned with its name "Kearny Street Workshop" in hand lettering and with the image of a tiger placed below (Figure 9.) Some of the neighboring storefronts included mom-and-pop businesses and other progressive community organizations. I-Hotel's elderly residents often commingled with the younger generations and attended KSW's events and exhibitions with regularity. KSW photographers documented many of these elements as they are intertwined with the spaces of and places of Manilatown.

Some KSW posters specifically addressing the I-Hotel eviction struggle. Michael Chin's *Save the International Hotel* (1972) illustrates the hotel's iconic brick building set against a vibrant yellow background (Figure 10.) Block lettering in

[36] Further historical details are recounted in Estella Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel*: *Mobilizing the Filipino* American *Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement* (2007) and by Larry S. Salomon, *Roots of Justice* (2001). In addition, Curtis Choy's films *The Fall of the I-Hotel* and *Manilatown Stories* are significant resources.
[37] Mike Chin (Kearny Street Workshop artist/co-founder), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, phone interview, October 6, 2010.

black states, “Save the International Hotel,” a plea to safeguard Manilatown’s last remains. This depiction signals the neighborhood’s grave situation. In contrast, another poster embodies the fighting spirit of the I-Hotel tenants during the eviction crisis. *Supermanong! Peace with a Lease* (1975), by an unknown artist, features an emboldened male figure wearing a red, blue, and yellow superhero costume (Figure 11.) Staring straight ahead and raising an enlarged fist, *Supermanong* rides a crouching red-eyed tiger, an animal symbolic of the “West”.[38] The title references the Filipino/Ilokano word *manong*, a term of respect to designate elderly males. Power and resilience, not vulnerability, was the message of this image.

Save the International Hotel and S*upermanong! Peace with a Lease* posters convey significant aspects of the I-Hotel historical narrative as well as the resilience of the Manilatown community. Even though the eviction fight was lost, the property developers did not carry through their original redevelopment plans. Instead, through the efforts of continuing social activism, a new building was erected in 2005. Today, the International Hotel Senior Housing/Manilatown Heritage Center provides low-income senior housing in addition to an elementary school site. At street level, the Manilatown Heritage Foundation hosts various community events, performances, and exhibitions to usher in a new generation of culture bearers and seekers. The building’s facade features *I-Hotel Mural* created by Johanna Poethig in 2010. As a tribute to Manilatown’s history and memory, the mural depicts various personalities alongside community settings and symbols.

[38] The tiger is noted as a popular visual representation across East Asian cultures with symbolic ties to Five Elements and Daoist philosophies as well as Buddhism (Kim).

Cultural Engagement and Community-Building

KSW's impact beyond the localized borders of Chinatown and Manilatown overlapped with a broader progressive political climate in the San Francisco Bay Area. In its early years, KSW oriented its cultural programs and other offerings towards serving local community needs. Over time, in solidarity with other activist groups resisting local and global oppressions and contributing to multiple social causes, KSW extended its outreach. This shift was exemplified by Jim Dong and Nancy Hom, who brought art education to local classrooms. They also taught Asian American art and culture courses in the ethnic studies departments at San Francisco State College (known today as San Francisco State University) and the University of California at Berkeley.

As a UC Berkeley undergraduate during the mid-1970s, Zand Gee (KSW artist and executive director from 1981-1982), participated in a field trip to Chinatown lead by Jim Dong. Gee recalls how this introduction to the neighborhood brought attention to local issues and possibilities for neighborhood enhancement.[39] For many of its participants, this experience introduced them to KSW's efforts and cultivated deeper interest in Asian American history and community arts. For example, Japantown Art and Media Workshop (JAM) was established in 1977 in San Francisco's Japantown to serve interests and needs of the Japanese American community. Leland Wong was both a KSW and JAM poster artist and photographer who grew up in Chinatown/Manilatown. In his work, Wong represented

[39] Zand Gee (Kearny Street Workshop artist/photographer and former Executive Director), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, Orinda, CA, September 30, 2010.

celebrations, trials, and tribulations of these neighborhoods. In these instances, artistic engagement further substantiates social awareness and community identities.

KSW's cultural outreach also included art exhibitions, musical performances, poetry readings, and other programs in Jackson Street Gallery (Figure 12. and Figure 13) In 1974, KSW opened the gallery in an adjacent I-Hotel storefront located at 565 Jackson Street, around the corner from the workshop. One of the gallery's earliest art exhibitions featured activist posters by local Chicano artists Rupert Garcia and Juan Fuentes, both of whom were based in the Mission District (Figure 14.) KSW organized this exhibition to honor the work of its community arts allies, a purposeful departure from its usual shows with an Asian American focus. Indeed, the exhibition attracted larger audiences and nurtured crosscultural Chicano-Asian connections within Chinatown/Manilatown.

The Jackson Street Gallery also hosted exhibitions that addressed intergenerational concerns. In his promotional poster *Jackson Street Gallery "Grand Opening Day"* (1974), Leland Wong offered a personal reflection on Chinatown regarding space, place and identity (Figure 15.) For the 2008 *Icons of Presence* exhibition, Wong retitled the work to *Looking Back on Galileo High School*.[40] As the latter title implied, the poster's image references Wong's public high school experience in San Francisco. Rendered through illustration and photo transfer, the image focuses on a self-portrait of Wong as a young man whose gaze "faces the

[40] Leland Wong (Kearny Street Workshop artist/photographer), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, September 29, 2010.

East." With furrowed eyebrows, he looks preoccupied. He is positioned in front of a quatrefoil-patterned grille. Behind this screen, there is a group of people assembled, presumably in the school quad. Through one of the quatrefoil openings a tall, balding man wearing a suit and tie appears. Seemingly, he is a figure of authority, substantiated by the by young male students who surround him. The poster's coloration is black, white, and red. The predominant contrast of red issues a foreboding tone. In hindsight, Wong recalls a difficult period as high school student discerning the school administration's tense relations with the mostly non-white student body.[41]

Jackson Street Gallery lasted for only a few years, closing its doors before the I-Hotel eviction. In 1976, one exhibition left a particularly profound imprint on the community and drew a sizeable audience. It featured Angel Island, a site of historical significance located in the San Francisco Bay. Many elderly Chinatown inhabitants had been processed through the United States Immigrant Station on Angel Island so their individual and collective memories of their initial landing on American soil were revisited in this exhibition. A counterpart to the East Coast entry point Ellis Island, this West Coast immigration station had been in operation from 1910 to 1940. Due to neighborhood demand, the exhibition run was extended beyond its initial schedule from January 10–March 2, 1976.[42]

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[41] Leland Wong (Kearny Street Workshop artist/photographer), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, September 29, 2010.
[42] Jim Dong (Kearny Street Workshop artist/co-founder), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, phone interview, August 2, 2011.

KSW's critical, penetrating Angel Island exhibition constitutes a uniquely valuable historical record, one that challenges accounts provided by more mainstream representations. Visitor enthusiasm stemmed from historical revelation and renewed public interest. By 1970, the site had fallen into disrepair and had been slated for demolition. California State Park Ranger Alexander Weiss then uncovered Chinese characters carved into the interior walls. Asian American scholars translated the text which turned out to be compelling personal poems by former detainees (Lai et al.) Resulting from these historical findings and subsequent Asian American activism, the Angel Island Immigration Station Historical Advisory Committee formed and advocated for preservation and restoration. More than two decades later, in 1997, the site would be designated as a National Historic Landmark.

KSW contributors gave tireless attention to the immigration station. Photographers Bob Hsiang and Jerry Jew each recalled taking a group excursion to Angel Island to document the site's abandoned buildings.[43] Two KSW posters further historical reflection. The first was Leland Wong's 1976 promotional poster for the Angel Island exhibition at Jackson Street Gallery (Figure 16.) It featured an illustrated portrait of his own father as a young boy at Angel Island, an image inspired by a family photograph. The figure is shown from the chest up, positioned in front of an illuminated barred window of a nondescript building. Looking forward with a wide-eyed gaze, he is dressed in a black jacket, white collared shirt, and gold

[43] Bob Hsiang (Kearny Street Workshop photographer), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, September 27, 2010 and Jerry Jew (Kearny Street Workshop photographer), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, October 5, 2010.

bowtie. The poster imagery manifests youthful innocence along with a modern attitude as conveyed through the Western-style clothing. At the same time, these aspects are bounded by confinement and oppression, as suggested by the barred window.

Another KSW work about Angel Island, an untitled poster by Laurie J. Chan in 1975, uses image and text to reveal further complexities of race and public space (Figure 17.) The poster features a ghostly figure wearing traditional Chinese clothing and a coolie hat. The figure looks through a large barred window or door at a view of another building with glowing windows. Heavy pixilation throughout the image emphasizes the poster's textured and graphic quality. Placed below the image is a poem written in both Chinese and English:

The small building with three beams is just
sufficient to shelter the body.
It is unbearable to relate the accumulating
stories on these island slopes.
Wait till the day I become successful and
fulfill my wish.
I will not be yielding and I will overthrow
the detention center.

In combination, the image and text convey physical confinement, collective oppression, and internal tension. The captured moment of the solitary figure with the accompanying poetry give a sense of the transitional time and space that are

needed for gathering personal strength and developing resilience for a more hopeful future.

The poster's message reverberated with the succeeding generations that inhabited Chinatown/Manilatown and helped establish a bridge between moments in cultural identity. Many of the older inhabitants had withstood a harrowing immigration process at Angel Island. Historical documents and cultural interpretations show that many of these "paper sons and daughters" had buried their past and their secrets (Lai, Yung, and Lim). The more recent, American-born generations had limited knowledge of the experiences of their parents, grandparents, and cohabitants in the neighborhood. The Angel Island exhibition at Jackson Street Gallery created a public forum for once-hidden stories and historical trauma to emerge. The intergenerational dialogue sparked by the exhibition connected those who were elderly and sought to reconcile past experiences together with those who were younger and in search of knowledge of their ancestral background. Together, they gained a remarkable opportunity to puzzle through the fragments of a collective identity. As Jim Dong recalled, the Angel Island exhibition "created a situation where in the Chinatown community [the older generations began] talking about immigration experiences more openly. . .. It showed to them that my generation wanted to know more about it."[44]

The exhibition facilitated meaningful group interaction through active dialogue. The gallery space nurtured community ritual and reflection. Likewise, the

[44] Jim Dong (Kearny Street Workshop artist/co-founder), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, phone interview, August 2, 2011.

Wong and Chan posters communicated distinct and powerful ways of engaging community history and memory. These poster examples attest to Kearny Street Workshop's undeniable hand in raising social awareness and change in Chinatown/Manilatown and beyond, setting an indelible foundation for shaping Asian American identities through creative force.

Conclusion

In its founding years from 1972-1977, Kearny Street Workshop developed a conduit for public visibility of Asian Americans *by* Asian Americans. The group's cultural work and activities, especially through the visual communicative action of its posters, shared a progressive consciousness that reached well outside of the physical boundaries of Chinatown/Manilatown. Bob Hsiang affirms that the local community arts scene was both multifaceted and far-reaching. KSW, he maintains, permitted "a sense of discovering oneself in the field of the greater community" and of "plac[ing] oneself in the community of common concern, whether it be racism, economic disparity [or] finding new paradigms for Asian Americans."[45] The community arts organization fostered social connectivity and social awareness and left behind a legacy offering tremendous potential for collective growth.

KSW early participant Ida Foo clarifies the point made by Hsiang: "If nothing else, that was part of what we were doing, not accepting stereotypes. KSW gave all

[45] Bob Hsiang (Kearny Street Workshop photographer), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, San Francisco, CA, September 27, 2010.

of us a sense of empowerment" and "gave us confidence to go out in the world."[46] Foo's reflection reveals a transformative experience of self and community as one in the same, in the spirit of togetherness. For Foo and countless other Asian Americans, cultural engagement and activism set a firm foundation for embracing social identity and purpose, while also cultivating an open and expansive outlook on a multicultural society.

Herein lay the essence of *kapwa*. *Kapwa* is clearly manifest within Kearny Street Workshop's community arts efforts, creative collaboration, and connection to urban Asian American communities and beyond.[47] A Filipino–Tagalog term, *kapwa* connotes "togetherness"—a "'oneness" and "'interconnectedness' among living beings and the broader environment" (De Guia 2). A person who experiences *kapwa* possesses a self-awareness interlinked with a collective way of knowing and being. Katrin De Guia's use of the term, which DeGuia ties to "shared identity," a sense of "the self in the other" (De Guia 28). According to DeGuia, "individuals who are guided by *kapwa* can be recognized by their genuine, people-centered orientation, their service to those around them and their commitment to their communities" (De Guia 28). *Kapwa* integrates individual and group social values, instilling a togetherness that cultivates common ground and sustains relationships.

[46] Ida Foo (Kearny Street Workshop participant), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, phone interview, August 19, 2011.
[47] Johanna Poethig introduced me to the term *kapwa* during our collaboration with Nancy Hom on the *I-Hotel Culture/Action/Tribute* project for the 2011 Community Arts Research and Convening at the Maryland Institute College of Art.

III. Recomposing Pilgrimage Landscapes: The Necessary Ruins of Masumi Hayashi's *American Concentration Camps* Panoramic Photo Collage Series (1990–1999)

"To those who lack powers of observation it may be nothing but an ordinary desert" (Inoue 63).

Introduction

Gila River Relocation Camp, Foundations, Gila River, Arizona (panoramic photo collage with Fuji Crystal Archive prints, 1990, size: 22" x 56") by Masumi Hayashi (1945-2006) is an image of an abstract desert landscape with ruins (Figure 18.) A composite of vertically erect concrete support blocks atop horizontally laid concrete slabs fills the foreground of the panoramic picture plane. In the middle ground, round concrete water reservoirs rise above ground. The industrial remnants are punctuated with the detritus of rusty pipes and gaping holes, appearing like skeletal structures that emerge from the surrounding sprawl of dry shrubbery and sand-covered earth. These are the foundations of a sewer.[48]

This image brings attention to a wasteland found on the outskirts of a former World War II Japanese American internment camp that spanned across 16,500 acres. The War Relocation Authority, a United States federal government agency, leased the acreage from the *Gila River Pima-Maricopa* Indian Reservation, located fifty miles south of Phoenix, Arizona. Closer examination of Hayashi's photo collage discloses two white sheets of paper propped at bottom left of the composition, giving historical context for the landscape. They are copies of Civilian Exclusion

[48] Artist interview in campus publication titled *Inquiry Magazine*, Cleveland State University, Spring 2000. Artist Files, Estate of Masumi Hayashi.

Order of 1942, the legal document that systematically uprooted Japanese American individuals and families, neighborhood by neighborhood. Exclusion order notices circulated within public spaces, tacked onto buildings, billboards, and telephone poles. The notices mandated that preparation for immediate "evacuation" be carried out within one week.

A collage arrangement of eighty-five individual parts form an offset and contrasting grid pattern that overlays the entire landscape image. The nearly perpendicular horizontal and vertical lines of the grid create movement and tension across the image's surface. In this, a well-defined horizon line splits the composition into two parts and two moods: the bottom half described above appears weighty and both somber and sober in tone, while the top half is filled with an intense blue sky and feathery clouds. Together, they relay an atmospheric and contemplative effect. In this conjoining of disparate parts, two overarching narratives collide—the ambiguity of fate and the persistence of possibility. At the bottom left of the image, a shadow form of a camera and tripod materializes. This is an interventionist detail, standing in for the photographer herself.

This is no ordinary landscape. With its determined focus on the sewer, the image is metaphoric and palpable. On one hand, sewers are essential to civilizations, as is the case with the infrastructure that sustained and maintained ancient Roman cities. Sewers function to transport human waste to keep settlements sanitary. Yet, here in this image, the sewer represents the antithesis of a civilized system. It signals the brute incivility of rounding up innocent people and regulating them through the industrial wonders of waste management.

Moreover, because of its deliberate insertion in the image, the historical document (exclusion order) transforms into an inverted symbol. It exhibits the political power and authority over a targeted, marginalized, and disenfranchised ethnic group. The camera and tripod shadow stand in as post facto witness to this scene. Within this new context, the image's overall message intones a subtle yet complex remembrance of a grave social injustice. The internment ruins convey historical knowledge and memory about the inhumane stripping of personal and collective power of incarcerated Japanese Americans. Hayashi artistically inverts these ideas, enabling the viewer to reinterpret the landscape and address the injustice with the power of insight and knowledge.

This image—the first one completed in the *American Concentration Camps* photo collage series (1990-1999)—marks what the artist calls a "personal pilgrimage".[49] Hayashi was born in 1945 at the Gila River internment camp, where she spent the first year of her life in confinement with her *Nisei* (second- generation) parents and *Sansei* (third-generation) siblings. Unsurprisingly, she was far too young to remember this challenging episode. The Hayashi family rarely shared wartime experiences, deeply burying their internalized shame like so many of the other imprisoned Japanese Americans.

Much like visual art, physical ruins within a landscape reveal to the viewer subterranean narratives that invite reinterpretations of cultural objects and self—and consequential response. Simmel proposes that the ruin propels us to preserve and reshape its remnants. Ruins possess "purpose and accident, nature and spirit,

[49] *American Concentration Camps* series (1990-1999), Artist Files, Estate of Masumi Hayashi.

past and present, and [a] tension of their contrasts" (Simmel 385). The legibility of that experience relies upon a synthesis that reads the ruin within the context of the encompassing landscape and its unfolding narrative. Facing this incompleteness can stir responses such as puzzlement, wonder, nostalgia, repulsion, and even indifference.

Abstract landscapes of internment ruins recur throughout Hayashi's *American Concentration Camps* series. The series consists of eighteen distinct panoramic photo collages representing the physical remains of ten former WWII Japanese American Internment sites. Beginning in 1990, Hayashi visited each of the locations—found in remote areas of the western and southern United States—and completed the series over a ten-year period. On the surface, the resulting images capture sweeping landscapes of dilapidated remnants, decayed interiors, solitary monuments, and desolate grounds. Hayashi's evocative body of work intimates a "necessity for ruins," a phrase coined by cultural geographer J.B. Jackson (1980). That necessity positions the remains of abandoned built environments as a tangible catalyst with the power to unearth the past and redefine the present.

As a palimpsest, these necessary ruins are comprised of any number of symbolic layers accessible through the panoramic photo collages: intra- and intergenerational history, memory, trauma, and personal freedoms. At one juncture, for example, a direct connection is made between then and now, that is, the history and memory that presently reverberates in internment survivors themselves. Next, crossgenerational experiences about historical trauma can be considered. Apart from immediate victims and their progeny is the whole nation invested in civil

liberties as a concept and reality. Indeed, Hayashi's series presents points of reflection about personal, family, group, and national loss alongside opportunities for regaining hope and ideals through acts of remembrance.

Research Questions and Background

Hayashi's *American Concentration Camps* series provides a fulcrum for contemplative action informed by reimagining and remapping internment landscapes.

From this, a few framing questions arise for me in this inquiry:

1) What are the significant aspects of the historical background and social context driving the series? What do the images represent and for what purpose?

2) How does the artistic process, technique, and conceptual framework yield a rich interpretive experience? To what extent is the panoramic photo collage format effective to that end?

3) Given the series' immersion in collective history and memory, how do its images engage with aspects of cultural identity and public space and thereby lay the groundwork for social change?

American Concentration Camps does far more than document physical sites. Its panoramic photo collages train a critical lens on the aftermath of a challenging episode in American history, to depict the ruins themselves as *necessary* for social and cultural renewal. To flesh out this argument beyond its skeletal form, I engage with constructs of pilgrimage and publics. "Pilgrimage" signifies an "organized travel to and from sacred places" (Campo 4), while "publics" encompasses multiple,

imagined, and politicized groups within the social landscape (Warner). The convergence between them occurs within a spectrum of human complexity and dynamic social relations greater than the sum of its parts.

Herein, I proceed in my study of Hayashi's panoramic photo collage series through the traditional methodology previously laid out. This includes aspects of how I understand my own personal lens (i.e., reflexivity) that I bring into this research experience. Shaped by a constellation of related experiences and reflections, the artwork and themes of pilgrimage and publics resonate with me through the formidable memories of my field research visits to two former internment sites, Manzanar National Historic Site in Independence, California, and Tule Lake Unit, WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument in Tulelake, California. As a participant observer, my research included firsthand encounters with the internment ruins themselves during the Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage and Tule Lake Pilgrimage.

Masumi Hayashi's artwork intertwines with this dissertation's overarching concepts of race and public space over several dimensions. To get to this, I first share the artist's biography and background interlinked with her artistic journey, ethnicity, and family heritage. Next, I briefly cover relevant historical and cultural context of the WWII Japanese American Internment, especially tied to photography and other artforms. Finally, I analyze selected work from the *American Concentration Camp* series in relation to artistic intention and process, major themes of pilgrimage and publics, and theoretical underpinnings.

My exploration also draws from selected literature and my findings through archival and collections research. I conducted this research at the Masumi Hayashi Foundation, Cleveland Museum of Art, and Museum of Contemporary Art, in Cleveland, Ohio; Akron Art Museum in Akron, OH; and the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, California. As a researcher for the Masumi Hayashi Foundation, my discussions with Dean Keesey (Hayashi's son) and her former colleagues and friends inform my study. By contributing to the 2017 publication *Masumi Hayashi Panoramic Photo Collages* (1976-2006) edited by Barbara Tannenbaum, I expanded my perspective on Hayashi's artistic and career achievements across thirty years. Through these various encounters with people, spaces, and places intimately connected to the artist during her lifetime, I reflect how my role as an art historian and cultural translator helps to maintain an artist's legacy for current and future audiences.

Overall, I found that in these research activities, my own cognitive, social and environmental awareness became that much more attuned to a deeper historical sense of myself. This harkens to my own family connection to World War II and the loss of my paternal grandfather during the Bataan Death March in the Philippines (see Introduction.) Hence, themes of war, memory, and cultural trauma stem loom large. In addition to this aspect of my reflexive process, I also consider some of my political sensibilities. Thus, I consider my own awareness of civil liberties, social activism, and Asian American identity. In the above, I make an argument that the researcher is inextricably part of the storytelling, and thus the boundaries of purely objective fact gathering are challenged in this recognition.

Masumi Hayashi (1945-2006): Selected Biography and Artistic Background

As previously mentioned, Masumi Hayashi was born on September 3, 1945, in the Gila River Internment Camp. She was a newborn baby among the 13,348 internees who populated that site at its peak. Her birthplace portended much of the significance of her effort on the *American Concentration Camps* series. Hayashi first searched for her birthplace following two significant events: the deaths of her parents during the 1980s and the passing of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.[50] The first two events augured deep personal loss. The following event, a public proclamation, consisted of the United States government's formal apology for the WWII Japanese American internment and $20,000 compensation to all former internees. As a victim of unjustified coercive actions, Hayashi received a letter of apology signed by President Bill Clinton and dated October 1, 1993.[51]

In a 1994 artist statement, Hayashi conveyed that "this work is about memory and the American concentration camps. The stories and voices of American survivors and families, the photographs of the archeology that is left, and the historical information, all create a language of place for the Japanese Americans interned there."[52] Using a spatial framework, Hayashi suggests history, memory, and personal and collective narrative meld together in these panoramic photo collages.

[50] On August 10, 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed into law an acknowledgment, apology, and restitution for the fundamental injustices of the World War II Japanese American Internment. For extended historical discussion of Japanese American grassroots struggle and activism for redress and reparations see Hirabayashi (2018).
[51] Copy of Presidential Letter of Apology addressed to Masumi Hayashi, Artist Files, Estate of Masumi Hayashi.
[52] 1994 Artist Statement, Artist Files, Estate of Masumi Hayashi.

The overall artistic argument thus considers how the visual medium is a requisite communicative act for cultural engagement and subsequent social transformation.

Hayashi attended the Gila River 50th Anniversary Reunion (March 17-19, 1995), a gathering of 734 individuals. In a newsletter, the artist recounted how the collective experience was "touching base with so many people who seem like me"[53] I interpret these words to indicate that she could draw meaningful connections with people about a profound, shared experience. Further, as Hayashi stressed in this reflection, the idea of finding similarity with others points to an aspect of identity formation. In a way, the reunion created opportunity for Hayashi to rediscover an extended family in fellow internees, essentially seeing parts of herself in them.

Following internment, Hayashi grew up in the Watts and Compton neighborhoods of South Los Angeles, California. The family endured the Watts Rebellion of 1965; this was a cataclysmic event of civil unrest causing significant upheaval throughout a then predominantly African American community. As a young adult, Hayashi briefly studied at the University of California, Los Angeles, before moving to the East Coast with her then husband, Larry Keesey, a Naval officer during the Vietnam War. Arising from a lifelong interest in art, she attained a bachelor's degree in art (1975) and a Master of Fine Arts (1977), both from Florida State University. In 1982, Hayashi joined the Art Department as a professor at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio, where she remained until her tragic death on August 17, 2006. Hayashi and John Jackson, a fellow artist and building

[53] News clipping from *The Bulletin* (September 1996), Artist Files, Estate of Masumi Hayashi.

superintendent, were both killed in their apartment building by a mentally unstable neighbor. She was survived by her son Dean Keesey, daughter Lisa Takata, brother Seigo, and sisters Connie, Amy, Nancy, and Joanne.[54]

Several art critics, scholars, and curators recognize Hayashi's art for its inventive approach and socially engaged content. Her artistic legacy persists through a supportive base of friends and colleagues in the Cleveland arts community and through the Masumi Hayashi Foundation. Affirming her significance, Cleveland State University awarded her a posthumous honorary doctorate in late 2006 and installed two mural-size reproductions in the Main Classroom Building in 2018.[55] Hayashi's original artwork is found in major institutional collections such as the Japanese American National Museum and Los Angeles County Museum of Art in Los Angeles, California; the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York; the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England; and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Art in Tokyo, Japan.

Solo and group exhibitions of her work have been held in local, national, and international venues.[56] Margorie Talaylay curated "Translocation/Disclocation: Images of Upheaval" (November 15, 1996 to January 26, 1997) at the Cleveland

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[54] This was noted in my informal discussions with Dean Keesey and published in a Los Angeles Times obituary (see References.)

[55] The installed reproductions are based on Hayashi's original works of art, *Public Square, Cleveland, Ohio* (1994) and *Edgewater Park, Cleveland, Ohio* (1992).

[56] The exhibitions that occurred during Hayashi's lifetime and posthumously are too numerous to list here. See Exhibitions, pp. 165-169 in Tannenbaum (2017) for more details. I list only the exhibition records reviewed during my 2014 field research at the Estate of Masumi Hayashi and art institutions in Cleveland, OH, and at the Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, CA.

Center for Contemporary Art. The artist statement and text accompanying Hayashi's work included historical background, copies of historical documents, relocation center information, and audio interviews with internment victims.[57] Additionally, Karin Higa curated the retrospective "Sights Unseen: The Photographic Constructions of Masumi Hayashi" (May 31 - September 14, 2003) at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, California. The exhibition pamphlet features an undated quotation from Hayashi, "We see the surface, but there is something beyond the surface," alongside selected images from *American Concentration Camps* series and a *Portrait of Fumi Hayashida* (1998-2002) ("Sights Unseen").

In 2007, shortly after Hayashi's death, memorial exhibitions were organized by several Cleveland-based art institutions, as "Masumi Hayashi, Meditations: The Memorial Exhibition," (Curated by Michael Gentile, Cleveland State University Gallery); "A Tribute To Masumi Hayashi: Student Works" (Curated by Michael Gentile, Cleveland State University Gallery); "Masumi Hayashi, Meditations: Two Pilgrimages" (Curated by Barbara Tannenbaum, Akron Art Museum); "Masumi Hayashi, Meditations: Heartland" (Curated by Susan R. Channing, Spaces Gallery); and "Masumi Hayashi, Meditations: Remembering Injustice" (Curated by Megan Lykins Reich, Museum of Contemporary Art). A joint exhibition catalog titled *Masumi Hayashi, Meditations* was published by Cleveland State University in 2007 (Hayashi et al.)

[57] "American concentration camps, artist Masumi Hayashi, 1996" compilation, exhibition records from Estate of Masumi Hayashi and Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art.

A 2018 group exhibition, "Accused of No Crime: Japanese Incarceration in America" (Co-curated by Ara and Anahid Oshagan, ReflectSpace Gallery, Glendale Library), focused Hayashi and other Japanese American contemporary artists and photographers Mona Higuchi, Paul Kitagaki, Kevin Miyazaki. Their artwork was shown alongside archival photographs by Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, and Clem Albers, to share reflections on internment history. The exhibition was funded by California State Library's Civil Liberties Public Education Program, acknowledging the significance of this cultural work to perpetuate ongoing public dialogue about governmental infringement on personal freedoms in the twenty-first century.

The Estate of Masumi Hayashi currently sustains the artist's self-initiated "virtual museums" in two separate websites. According to Keesey, Hayashi actively learned computer graphics and web publishing to expand her artistic projects.[58] Masumi Hayashi Photography (www.MasumiHayashi.com), published in 1994, features her extensive creative research for the *American Concentration Camps* series. It includes the panoramic photo collages, maps of the ten internment camps, the Family Album project consisting of photographs taken by internees and camp visitors, audio recordings of internee interviews conducted by Hayashi, and historical documents. Also shared is artwork and research associated with Japanese Canadian Concentration Camps.[59] The Masumi Hayashi Museum (www.masumimuseum.com), launched in 2004, initially presented galleries of the

[58] Dean Keesey (Estate of Masumi Hayashi), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, Oakland, CA, August 5, 2011.
[59] See, for example, Mona Oikawa's *Cartographies of Violence: Japanese Canadian Women, Memory, and the Subjects of the Internment* (2012).

artist's various series of work and has since shifted towards maintaining an archival focus.

According to a 1986 artist statement, Hayashi's early artistic work explored self- and place-identity utilizing emerging technologies in experimental photography, color Xerox, found imagery, three-dimensional photography, and computer graphics.[60] She also produced collages with found objects, fabrics, scraps, and mementos. Eventually, her creative focus primarily turned to photography with a spatial-conceptual basis. By the late 1980s, Hayashi fully realized the "panoramic photo collage," a specification that overlaps with developments in contemporary landscape photography. Within each panoramic photo collage, she included her own color analog photographs taken at the featured site that, later in her studio, are developed and manually arranged together into a grid layout. There are no found materials incorporated in the compositions. Thus, her work closely corresponds with photomontage, a layering technique using photographic images.[61]

Hayashi's panoramic photo collages emerged as her signature style. Aiming to "reconstruct space," she created wide-format compositions representing various landscapes that are literally and symbolically gridded.[62] Often, the content reflected Hayashi's keen interest in social and political environments, notably built structures and human-transformed landscapes. The subject matter of her work includes cityscapes, post-industrial landscapes, prisons, war and military sites, and sacred

[60] 1986 Artist Statement, Artist Files, Estate of Masumi Hayashi.
[61] Notably, the European avant-garde, specifically the Dadaists, advanced photomontage as a response to World War I brutality and political dissent.
[62] Artist Files, Estate of Masumi Hayashi.

architecture. Hayashi's inception of the *American Concentration Camps* series overlapped with her *Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.) Superfund Sites* series (1989-1993) (Figure 19.) This group of images bring attention to contaminated sites in Ohio and New York and the effects of invisible poisons and toxic waste. In completing these various projects, Hayashi's artistic process typically engaged several stages of historical and community research, logistical negotiation with administrators and agencies, fieldwork, and studio work.[63]

Hayashi's panoramic photo collages draw from contemporary composite photography, or "the combination of the images of a number of allied objects in such a manner as to produce one photographic impression embodying the effects of all" (Taylor 360). Waldheim et al.'s *Composite Landscapes: Photomontage and Landscape Architecture* (2014) is a recent examination of photomontage and the conceptual, experiential, and temporal dimensions of landscape through its analog origins. These studies emphasize how the fusion of photographic images possesses a deep potency beyond the sum of its various parts.

Hayashi counted Robbert Flick (1939–) and David Hockney (1937–) as significant influences. Each artist engages a distinctive approach to create highly structured landscapes. Flick's *Sequential Views* series (1979–1990) takes multiple photographs of contiguous urban and natural scenes and mounts them serially in rows to form a grid (Figure 20.) For Flick, "The sequence and the grid are an inherent part of photographic notation," as he intends to represent a perception of

[63] Dean Keesey (Estate of Masumi Hayashi), interviewed by Julianne Gavino, Oakland, CA, August 5, 2011.

place combining notions of time, location, and experience.[64] Flick's series denotes open and occupied spaces shown in contrast, then connoting nature and culture relations. In turn, the subject matter combined with multimodal perception constructs and highlights the associated social, political, and environmental concerns.

In Hockney's photographic collages, also known as *joiners*, there are multiple images combined to form a single composition. For example, *Pearblossom Highway*, *11th-18th April 1986, #2,* features a roadway and succession of traffic signs and roadside litter in interplay with the distinctive and protected Joshua trees of the California desert landscape (Figure 21.) The overall composition consists of overlapping photos arranged with crooked borders that appears like a ruptured grid. The result is an abstract scene with multiple vantage points, suggesting fluidity and movement in and through space and place. The layered nuances of this image suggest various and dynamic human positionings, attitudes, and intrusions upon a natural environment.

The above artwork of both Flick and Hockney integrate the grid structure in distinct ways. I understand their respective approaches to mirror logic (e.g., Flick) and intuition (e.g., Hockney). In Lytle's view, "Flick uses the grids to create order as he dissects the landscape, and as a method to create a visual diary," whereas Hockey's treatment is "very informal in structure."[65] The grid on its own appears

[64] Lytle interviewed Flick for the article noted here: Lytle, Larry. "Robbert Flick: A New Vista". *Black & White: For Collectors of Fine Photography.* Issue 117, October 2016, pp. 50-61. Lytle granted permission to use information from the interview dated April 2016, which itself remains unpublished.
[65] See above footnote.

efficient and uncompromising. To rupture the grid unsettles these qualities, prompting the viewer to decipher the image in unpredictable ways.

Beyond photography, the grid has captivated Western artists since the Renaissance and the development of linear perspective. In Modernism, its vast capacities have been explored from Cubism to Pop Art. Indeed, the grid has spatial and temporal dimensions as well as physical and aesthetic ones (Krauss 51-52). Symbolically, its rationale separates the sacred from the secular: "The peculiar power of the grid, its extraordinarily long life in the specialized space of modern art, arises from its potential to preside over this shame: to mask and reveal it at one and the same time" (Krauss 54). I interpret Krauss' statement to characterize the artistic impulse to engage the grid as an attempt to reconcile order and disorder.

Returning to *American Concentration Camps* series, Hayashi assembled several photos in the form of an offset grid-structure. From this, the panoramic landscapes of the internment site ruins would materialize. This offset grid creates slightly shifting perspective lines that spatially reconfigure and destabilize the overall scenes. Hayashi "reconstructs space" to then remap the political landscapes she studied. In other words, the rupture of space and place is essential to the work's meaning. That is, the landscapes must be broken apart to be made whole once again. These images retain and/or activate memory of the internment, raising questions about its history, its consequences, and its reconciliation. The grid references order, while its rupture signals disorder. These ideas of Hayashi's grid-structure approach are further explored and grounded in specific works from the series in forthcoming discussion.

Moreover, in Hayashi's work, the hybrid format of photography and collage forwards the images as part visual record and part aesthetic reflection. Photography, as is often argued, puts forth a semblance of realism and "truth claims" (González 379). Photography's subjective aspects include the focus, framing, and formal decisions made by the artist. Collage, a manual process that involves "pasting and combining dissimilar elements onto a surface" (Messina and Lamberti 14), offers unlikely juxtapositions within the composition that bring attention to the artistic hand. Such gestural and spontaneous aspects of the collage process resonate when viewing in person Hayashi's original work.

Collage can further be understood through its full disclosure of its composite parts and the seams (or gestures) that connect them. In this, collage evinces an attempt to resolve issues of composition by exploring and accentuating its decomposition.[66] According to Hoffman, collage relates "multiple layers and signposts pointing to a variety of forms and realities, and to the possibility or suggestion of countless new realities" (Hoffman 1). From its very form, the substantive meaning of the work then emerges. These general ideas about the collage medium enable a deeper awareness of Hayashi's artistic choices and processes. The formal complexities of her images permit multiple approaches and interpretations. In considering these aspects, I next examine selected historical and cultural contexts of the *American Concentration Camps* series.

[66] Collage in 20th c. modern art is explored by David C. Driskell, Clement Greenberg and others.

Historical Background and Cultural Context: World War II Japanese American Internment (1942-1945)

The panoramic photo collages of the *American Concentration Camps* series demonstrate the possibilities of how aesthetics and politics interconnect. The abstract landscapes of ruins are layered with personal and collective narratives of the World War II Japanese American Internment, from its nascence to its aftermath. These stories evolve from the date December 7, 1941, when Japanese military forces coordinated an aerial attack on Pearl Harbor in United States-Hawaii territory. Over 2,300 Americans perished in this tragic and unexpected event, prompting the United States to enter World War II. Government propaganda, news media, and popular culture bred mass hysteria and an erroneous perception of people of Japanese ancestry as a national security threat—especially those individuals and families who were living on the West Coast.

Following the fearmongering, Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans were collectively targeted and punished as "enemy aliens." Despite a lack of evidence proving disloyalty, President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized Executive Order 9066, dated February 19, 1942, which formed the ostensible basis of the forced mass removal of populations of Japanese descent from designated exclusion zones in the states of Washington, Oregon, California, and Arizona. Under pretext of military necessity, 120,000 men, women, and children were taken into federal custody from 1942–1945. Two-thirds of the incarcerated were American citizens, and one-third were resident aliens.

In short order, these innocent people were concentrated within makeshift internment camps in isolated regions of California, Arizona, Utah, Colorado,

Montana, North Dakota, and Arkansas. Each of these forced settlements became "instant cities" that grew to populations of 10,000-20,000. Armed guards were stationed at their gates and towers, while barbed wire marked the perimeters. The U.S. government employed the official terms "war relocation center" and "internment camp" as euphemisms that rationalized its gross violation of civil rights and obscured the harsh realities of daily life in the camps. Employed by Hayashi in the title of the photographic series, the term "concentration camp" denotes "a camp where non-combatants of a district are accommodated" and "one for the internment of political prisoners, foreign nationals, etc." (Oxford English Dictionary). The term's powerful Holocaust allusions prompted Japanese American Internment scholars and activists, deliberately and controversially, to adopt, redefine, and promote the term, to emphasize the government's brutality and duplicity.[67] The disruption of personal lives and family structures within the camp is well documented. So, too, is the reclaiming of human dignity in the daily life of internees, captured in creative cultural work.

Prominent visual examples of the internment period include documentary photography by Dorothea Lange, Ansel Adams, and Toyo Miyatake. The work of each photographer was tightly restricted. Lange, who was hired by the Department of the Interior's War Relocation Authority (W.R.A.), took more than eight hundred photographs focusing on California. The photographer visually explored each stage of the internment as it occurred, from exclusion to forced removal to internment.

[67] This discourse on the WWII Japanese American internment and concentration camp nomenclature is attributed to Daniels (1971), Okihiro (1973), Weglyn (1996), and others.

The government placed clear parameters on the scope of Lange's work, forbidding her to photograph any of the barbed wire fences, armed guards, watchtowers, or instances of detainee resistance.[68]

Adams faced similar limitations when documenting the Manzanar internment camp with authorization from the W.R.A. and oversight by his friend and camp director Ralph Palmer Merritt. The photo-essay publication, *Born Free and Equal: Photographs of the Loyal Japanese-Americans at Manzanar Relocation Center, Inyo County, California* (1944), features Adams's efforts, "conceived on a human, emotional basis, accenting the realities of the individual and his environment" (Adams 9). Prior to his incarceration, Miyatake was a thriving photographer in the Little Tokyo neighborhood of Los Angeles, California. Although internees were forbidden to bring in photographic equipment, Miyatake smuggled a lens into the Manzanar camp, built a camera box from wood, and captured everyday vignettes from his insider's point of view (Howe, Adams, and Miyatake).

Professionals and amateurs alike produced visual art, illustrations, and design objects within the internment camps by utilizing scavenged material, scraps, catalog finds, and contributions sent by friends on the outside. Miné Okubo's graphic narrative *Citizen 93660* (1946), a memoir offering keen and poignant observations of the camps' daily trials and tribulations. Painters such as George Matsusaburo Hibi, Hisako Hibi, Estelle Ishigo, Chiura Obata, and Henry Sugimoto created emotive

[68] For some examples, see Dorothea Lange, Linda Gordon and Gary Y. Okihiro, *Impounded: Dorothea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese American Internment* (2006) and Prints & Photographs Online Catalog, Library of Congress.

portraits and landscapes, some with subtle social commentary. Karin Higa's *The View from Within*: *Japanese American Art from the Internment Camps, 1942-1945* (1992) and Delphine Hirasuna's *The Art of Gaman: Arts and Crafts from the Japanese American Internment Camps 1942-1946* (2005) are two comprehensive exhibitions and publications that further highlight the rich and insightful cultural production of the internment period.

Tomie Arai, Gail Aratani, Ruth Asawa, Betty Nobue Kano, Jimmy Mirikitani, Patrick Nagatani, Roger Shimomura, Rich Tokeshi and other modern and contemporary visual artists share narrative, abstract, and/or conceptual imagery linked to Japanese American identities and experiences of war, incarceration, and its aftermath. For example, Nagatani's "Virtual Pilgrimage: Japanese American Concentration Camp Portfolio" (1993-1995) engages the history and memory of internment landscapes through the point of view of a Sansei (third-generation) artist and photographer (Nagatani and Alinder). Documentary and experimental films related to the internment engage physical, mental, and emotive mappings linked to retrieving history, memory, and identity. Rea Tajiri's *History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige* (1991), Linda Hattendorf's *Cats of Mirikitani* (2006), and Tad Nakamura's *Pilgrimage* (2007) are significant examples of this genre.

U.S. history and Asian American history assigns great importance to the history and memory of internment. Historian and comparative ethnic studies scholar Gary Okihiro asserts that the "subject of Japanese Americans and World War II is clearly the most written-about episode in Asian American history and perhaps is the most recognized historical event of significance to Asian Americans among

contemporary Americans" (Okihiro 10). The Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, the National Japanese American Historical Society in San Francisco, and the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center in Washington, D.C., are examples of leading cultural institutions in major cities that sustain public awareness. The National Archives and Records Administration and Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project provide significant online databases and archival material. Moreover, several of the former internment camps are under preservation and have achieved public distinction in the National Register or as National Historic Landmarks or National Historic Sites. Public history plays an enormous role in the collective comprehension of the past and how that past is also relevant to today's society and social/cultural concerns.[69]

Yet, although the incident establishes perhaps the pinnacle historical moment for past, present, and current generations of Asian Americans, knowledge of the full impact of the internment and its aftermath remains veiled in mainstream accounts of U.S. history. An alternative account of the latter is provided by Caroline Chung Simpson in *An Absent Presence: Japanese Americans in Postwar American Culture, 1945-1960* (2001), which examines nationwide discourse in the internment aftermath. During this period, Japanese American identity was quickly and completely recast according to Cold War tropes of nationalism, citizenship, and democracy. The ominous, widespread "Yellow Peril" stereotype of Japanese

[69] For example, the internment is referenced in media accounts concerning detainment of Arab Americans post-9/11 and Mexican/Latino migrants.

Americans was replaced with the "model minority" stereotype.[70] Seemingly benign and paternalistic, this new socio-cultural attribution was maintained amid a silence over the causes and effects of internment as a lived experience and cultural landscape.

Chung Simpson formulates that construction of the model-minority stereotype presents a paradoxical challenge to a static interpretation of American tradition. The stereotype threatens an ideal Americanism by swaying like a double-edged sword, equally threatening those who exceed social expectations and those who fall short. It is as if America, for multiple reasons, cannot in earnest ask itself, "What have I done?" and instead wishes the blight away. This generates an "absent presence" of the internment, a simultaneous remembrance and forgetting that continues to marginalize Japanese Americans and foment social contradictions in an unsettled American social terrain. These tensions play out visually and conceptually in the *American Concentration Camps* imagery.

Despite the abundance of scholarly and cultural work, oral histories, archives, exhibitions, and websites, the story of the WWII Japanese American Internment could not be formulated and comprehended without the internment sites themselves. This is challenging given how remote the locations are. Subsequently, they fall on the outskirts of broad cultural knowledge and engagement. Cultural mediation through learning institutions, museums, and digital technology are crucial to the preservation and dissemination of these internment

[70] See Ellen D. Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (2015).

histories and related geographies. Firsthand narratives play an indispensable role in filling in the gaps of information.

American Concentration Camp series (1990-1999): An Overview

In this section, I expand upon Hayashi's artistic intention and process reflected in selected work of the *American Concentration Camp series* (1990-1999). This discussion is grounded in my analysis of three images representing the Manzanar Historic Site and Tule Lake Segregation Center, both of which are overseen by the National Park Service. Thus, these two sites are protected and preserved as natural and cultural resources for the public. The Manzanar Historic Site is located between the towns of Lone Pine and Independence in the Owens Valley of Eastern California. Tule Lake Segregation Center is part of the Tule Lake Unit, WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument, located in Tulelake, California, in Northeastern Siskiyou County close by the Oregon border. These two fieldwork sites of my research fit within the overall dissertation framework (i.e., race, public space, California) and demonstrate how national and cultural history and memory is constructed in remote geographies. My related artwork analyses link to the larger themes of pilgrimage and public alongside theoretical reflections.

To complete the *American Concentration Camps* series, Hayashi applied a systematic approach, attending to its historical foundation, contemporary context, and cultural relevance. Her large vision for the project necessitated a considerable outlay of time, funding, and personal dedication over the course of its decade-long completion during the 1990s. Support came from fellowships and grants from the

Ohio Arts Council (Columbus, Ohio), Cleveland State University (Cleveland, Ohio), and the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund (CLPEF), the latter of which supported her exploration of both Japanese American and Japanese Canadian internment camps.[71] Hayashi's recognition by the CLPEF is quite significant, given that the fund had been authorized by the United States Congress following the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.[72] As stipulated by the grant, Hayashi developed the project to elevate public awareness and create a reflective, instructive platform.

Ahead of her "personal pilgrimage" to former internment camps, Hayashi began with historical research and logistical coordination. This included consultation with Hank Tanaka, a leader of the Japanese American Citizens League Cleveland Chapter in Cleveland, Ohio, where Hayashi resided and worked. Hayashi then traveled to each of the ten main sites either on her own, with a local guide, or as part of a pilgrimage group. On occasion, she met former internees in these settings and recorded their oral histories. Hayashi eventually compiled an eleven-minute CD of these interviews for inclusion in exhibitions and a website dedicated to the "American Concentration Camps" series called *Masumi Hayashi Photography.* Hayashi's personal orientation grew into a collective one through the project process. The series developed to include close consideration of audience

[71] *American Concentration Camps* series, Artist Files, Estate of Masumi Hayashi.
[72] The CLPEF's mission is "to publish and distribute the hearings, findings, and recommendations of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) so that the events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal and internment of civilians and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry will be remembered, and so that the causes and circumstances of this and similar events may be illuminated and understood" (*Personal Justice Denied* xi).

engagement and public history through various exhibition outlets such as museums, galleries, community centers, and websites.

When onsite, Hayashi would carefully select a scene at the designated location, set up a tripod for her manual camera, and shoot above and below the horizon line while pivoting around 180 to 360 degrees. Back in her Cleveland studio, Hayashi would then assemble up to 140 individual processed shots—3.5" x 5" and 4" x 6" inch prints—into a wide horizontal layout, creating an encompassing single work. She considered the panoramic photo collage approach to be a "remapping" of captured space and time in which "the image is beyond peripheral vision, beyond the range of the human eye"[73]. The photo collage brings forth distorted perspectives along with a textured appearance of a two-dimensional surface. The final image approaches abstraction, thereby complicating its interpretation. It presents nothing less than a single panoramic view that is both sweeping and totalizing.

The word *panorama* (Greek origin), is derived from *pan*, meaning "everything, the whole world" "all of mankind" or "all," or "the whole universe," and *orana*, indicating "a vision" (Oxford English Dictionary). The panorama, a patented nineteenth-century invention of Irish-born painter Robert Barker (1739-1806), was a large scale circular format for the viewing of a scene, typically comprised of historical events and imperialist landscapes. Intended for art and entertainment, this format consisted of a painted panoramic canvas installed within a rotunda. Some of the rotundas had multiple-level viewing platforms (Comment 161).

[73] 1994 Artist Statement, Artist Files, Estate of Masumi Hayashi.

The panorama awakens the audience to a grand illusion and instigates an inclination to suspend disbelief (Oleksijczuk). The sensation of being in two or more places at once within the panorama can be destabilizing. It creates a spatial and temporal disjunction that stimulates perception: "The panorama was a visual form that operated on both intellectual and somatic levels to convey ideologically powerful messages" (Oleksijczuk 3). The experience facilitates mental awareness and physical sensation or embodiment. The visual device of the panorama potentially fosters a longer observation period and intensifies interest. The panorama presents "distant worlds" that solicit a deepened level of engagement.

The panoramic photograph emerged in the same century as the painted panorama, with the discovery of an 1843 Austrian patent for a hand crank panoramic camera and the *Megaskope* camera in 1844 (Vanvolsem 11). Such photographs captured architectural and landscape views as well as group portraits (Vanvolsem 11-18). Unlike the painted panorama, the panoramic photograph was not intended for mass entertainment. While portraits were possessed as keepsakes, the landscapes had a more pragmatic purpose. They were used as a tool to survey land. Photographers Eadweard Muybridge, Carlton Watkins, and others produced survey topographies of the American West in the mid-to-late 19th century. According to the Library of Congress, "early panoramas were made by placing two or more daguerreotype plates side-by-side," notably creating simple grid structures from visual and physical lines that separated the sequential images ("A Brief History…"). Here, historical connections can be made to the use of grids that

emerged in contemporary panoramic photography in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Robbert Flick, David Hockney, and others.)

Along these lines, Hayashi's engagement with the panoramic photograph format overlaps with its historical usage of land survey. When visiting each of the ten internment camps, she inspected and documented the landscapes to comment on where the sites are located, what the ruins look like, what they were used for, and what is their current relevance. The further integration of the collage and grid structure sets up this systematic process and associated contrasts previously detailed (i.e., logic and intuition, order and disorder, past and present.)

Manzanar Relocation Camp, Monument, 1995 and the Pilgrimage Landscape

Comprised of sixty-five individual photographs, *Manzanar Relocation Camp, Monument,* a panoramic photo collage with Fuji Crystal Archive prints, 1995, Size: 20" x 30", serves as both an iconic image of the series and as a linchpin for this study's central argument (Figure 22.) Its focus is the Ireito Monument, a white tower in the shape of an obelisk imprinted with black Japanese characters in vertical placement along its length. The translation of this text is "Soul Consoling Tower" (*Reflections* 28). The solitary monument stands erect in the middleground of the composition, resting atop a cracked concrete foundation. Short wooden pillars and some groupings of stones line up along its left and right sides and recede toward the background. Dotted with shrubbery, the surrounding desert land appears dry and vast. The atmosphere that blankets the monument from above is dense with darkened clouds. A low mountain range lies at the horizon line. While not appearing imposing, the mountains lend a contemplative backdrop that hints at the possibility

of yet another journey ahead. The image displays a few objects or mementos that have been left on the base of the tower. These vestiges give the desolation a human sensibility.

The Ireito Monument was erected in 1943 by the Manzanar Buddhist Association in the middle of the small cemetery in the central/northwest section of the Manzanar National Historic Site. The tower memorialized those who perished during imprisonment: the elderly and the sick, including a three-month-old baby, Jerry Ogawa (*Reflections* 28). The Sierra Nevada mountains loom in the distant background. Their prominence conveys natural order and signals how the land provides a physical and mental anchor for humankind. I find myself wondering is it not at the end of life stage, at death, when one returns to the land as a final resting place?

In any event, a visitation to a burial site is a complex ritualistic event to honor and remember the dead. Any tokens left behind demonstrate the pilgrim's conscious awareness, acknowledgement, and action. Taking a closer look at *Manzanar Relocation Camp, Monument*, it reveals some small items found on one of the tiers forming the monument's base. An exhibition label from the Akron Art Museum gives further description and context of this detail:

> Origami cranes have been left on the monument as offerings. For the Japanese, the crane is a symbol of honor and loyalty. Legend says that if you fold 1,000 origami cranes, your dearest wish will come true. The cranes were transformed into a symbol of peace in 1955 by a young survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima who was stricken with leukemia. Wishing for continued life, she began to fold cranes but eventually decided to ask instead for world peace.[74]

[74] From the exhibition files for *Masumi Hayashi, Meditations: Two Pilgrimages* (October 27, 2007 - January 27, 2008), Akron Art Museum, Akron, Ohio.

The origami mementos presented on an altar-like surface indicates Hayashi's subtle attention to poignant, yet hopeful gestures of internment memorialization. Emblematic of collective remembrance and social healing, the monument has become a focal point for the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage, a public gathering that has occurred each year since 1969. Organized by the Manzanar Committee, the event attracts well over a thousand participants each spring, on the last weekend of April. Its program typically offers transgenerational and transcultural speeches, rituals, and activities from day through evening.[75] Indeed, for many Japanese Americans, the pilgrimage has become a consequential part of a civil religion imbued with religious, cultural, and political dimensions (Iwamura). Victor Shibata, one of the founders of the Manzanar Pilgrimage, coined the term "pilgrimage" as it specifically relates to internment remembrance and rituals (Matsuda). By calling direct attention to this symbolic monument, Hayashi's panoramic photo collage forwards the cause.

Hayashi's work at once resembles and differs significantly from the documentary film *Pilgrimage* (2006) by Tadashi Nakamura. Nakamura's film reveals how a growing awareness of historical events triggered Asian American activism in the late 1960s, including the establishment of the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage. The film further conveys the significance of social justice of this kind for current generations and various publics. The storyline is presented through historical and contemporary imagery, interviews, and hip-hop music soundtrack. This unique

[75] During my field research, I participated in and made observations of this program at the 41st Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage in 2010.

combination gives full-bodied expression to the discourse of history, memory, space, and place attached to the Japanese American Internment, and calls attention to the Manzanar site. Like the panoramic photo collages of Hayashi's "American Concentration Camps," Nakamura's film pieces together an impressionistic narrative often through the incorporation of montage, a quick-paced sequence that collapses time and space.

Some of the most powerful scenes use archival black-and-white and color film footage to center on the scattered ruins of Manzanar around 1969. In one sequence, young Asian American activists revive the Ireito Monument, in the camp cemetery, by scrubbing it clean and clearing its overgrown sagebrush. They gather around, eager to see change and transformation. Current interviews with some of the participants help impart a sense of recognition, reclamation, and hope for a better and enlightened future. The contemporary footage that follows highlights the immediate aftermath of 9/11 with a nighttime vigil and call for solidarity between Japanese Americans and Arab Americans held in the public plaza fronting the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. These present-day concerns are further amplified by an artful depiction of anti-war street demonstrations by activist groups holding signage expressing diverse cultures and languages. Through linking past and present activism, the film convincingly makes the case that musty ruins uncovered in the desert can effectively be reanimated to translate into urban action for social justice.

While Nakamura's *Pilgrimage* focuses on the people and activities that make the sacred journey to Manzanar visible and concrete, Hayashi's *Manzanar Relocation*

Camp, Monument, relates something quite different. The panoramic photo collage emerges from the intersection of what was once suppressed and kept invisible and what is now reclaimed and rendered visible. While shedding light on the cause for remembrance, the images stir a sense of renewal for viewers. This representation of the pilgrimage landscape serves as a cogent prompt for social change.

The lived and shared experiences of the viewer/participant of the work can be filtered through the adjoined concepts of landscape and pilgrimage. Informed by anthropology and religious studies, Campo defines pilgrimage as "a set of ritual actions involving specific human communities, institutions, and organized travel to and from sacred places" (Campo 41). While pilgrimage, in general, has tangibility in terms of its ties to a specific destination or locale, it is also highly symbolic of the constructed landscape. In addition, there are different types of journeys connected to cultural geography, such as “spatial relationships,” “perception of places,” and “attachment to place” (Stoddard and Morinis ix-x). Pilgrimage experiences can be further typologized along lines of religious ritual, civil-religious behavior, and secular values.[76] It is this very diversity that reveals the contours of landscape and richness of human experiences.

For Campo,

> ...landscape helps us think about the territories in which [pilgrimage sites] are located because it captures the importance of humans in their creation, appropriation, organization, and representation.... Pilgrimages, like their landscapes are made, not revealed. Once they are made, they can exercise a power over thought

[76] For example, these various types of pilgrimage journeys include visits to state and national historic sites such as The California Missions Trail, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York, NY.

and action... Ritualization (or commemoration) and imagination enable pilgrimages to take place (Campo 42).

Campo underscores the interrelated construction of experiences and thus memories. Therein, he ties the general concept of landscape into a spatialized comprehension of identity and its traversing over time and space. The landscape can be said to be extended into the lives of the pilgrims when they arrive as well as depart. Wherever the pilgrims find themselves, they are at multiple levels narrating their individual and collective lives in conjunction with the landscape that they carry by way of images, texts, and sensations.

In one narrative example, Okihiro recounts his own 1972 quest to the former site of the Manzanar internment camp, located in the Owens Valley of Eastern California, two hundred miles northeast of Los Angeles. Okihiro's immersion in the environment enabled him to imagine vividly the communal facilities and insufferable conditions that were once experienced there:

> The place was indeed sacred. I felt it within my bones, as I wandered through the remains of the camp. I easily made out the concrete foundations and support blocks, and determined which ones served as barracks for the internees and which ones as the toilets, washrooms, and mess halls. I could see them, as clearly as the desert sky, the flimsy structures of two-by-fours covered with tar paper nailed to joists with wood strips. Small windows let light into barren rooms barely ten by twenty feet, but they also let in the cold and heat and the ever present dust and sand. Row upon row of those barracks, spare and drab, extended in straight lines that converged where the earth met the sky (Okihiro and Myers 94-95).

In his attention to the ghostly remains and penetrating landscape, Okihiro reconstructs the spaces and places of internment. Serving as witness, the author knows their lingering and palpable effects in the deepest possible way.

Okihiro's interpretation is resonant with the imagery produced by Joan Myers, a fine art photographer who was also deeply triggered by the internment ruins (Okihiro and Myers 14). For their collaborative exhibition and publication project *Whispered Silences: Japanese Americans and World War II* (1996), Myers visited ten internment camps over four years from 1982-1985. She states her artistic intention and personal connection to the subject as follows:

> Though the process has been slow, I have wanted the work to be publicly available. My grandfather, Henry A. Wallace, was vice president in the second Roosevelt administration, in the early forties. Although he had no direct responsibility for the decision to deprive Japanese Americans of their civil rights, I feel in a small way personally accountable. The stories hidden in the concrete remains of the camps and told so movingly by historian Gary Okihiro must be heard. Unless those stories are heard, the unjust detention of all Japanese Americans during World War II could happen to another group of Americans at any time (Okihiro and Myers 15).

Myers produced black-and-white images emphasizing the human impact on the land and the consequences of internment. They focus attention on discarded objects, rubble, and barren landscapes (Figure 23.) The overall treatment of these reveals stillness and disquietude. In comparison with Hayashi's distanced gaze, Myers' conveyance is emotive and textured with regret and compassion.

These reflections recall my own personal journeys through the remote Manzanar Historic Site. In one visit, I took a solitary bicycle ride through parts of the camp, coming across the replica barracks of Block 14 and restored sections of gardens once tended by internees. In these preserved spaces and traces of incarcerated daily life, I deciphered how an attempt to create and maintain a sense of normalcy, dignity, and beauty might overshadow many aspects of the brutal physical, mental, and emotional realities of imprisonment. Other visits included my participation and observation of the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage.

As described earlier, the large public gathering of internment commemoration is both somber and reflective as well as spirited and celebratory. It is set within the northwest corner of the site next to the Ireito Monument. From there, a collective experience of the natural landscape's barrenness and harsh conditions (e.g., high winds, dust clouds, sun exposure.) My own Manzanar reflections are a patchwork of intersecting stories, sensations and emotional reactions. This has greatly shaped my interpretation of Hayashi's panoramic photo collages and how they portray tangible and slippery fragments of internment landscapes, history, and memory.

Tule Lake Relocation Camp, Stockade, Tule Lake, California©, 1992 and Historical Memory

The next example I will analyze from the *American Concentration Camps* series is *Tule Lake Relocation Camp, Stockade, Tule Lake, California©, 1992* (32" high x 59" wide) (Figure 24.) The panoramic photo collage represents a prison building's interior environment in a state of deterioration. When viewed from left to right, the image details emerge to reveal the space's configuration and condition. Delineated by vertical bars positioned within a small opening, there is a holding cell comprised of decaying walls, ceiling, and flooring. At the center of the image, exposed wood framing and chipped concrete remain where a door or gate was likely once installed. The windows in the background frame and call attention to the surrounding natural landscape. If one is standing inside the old prison, it would be impossible to see all the chambers at once. Thus, Hayashi's work reveals more than what would meet the initial eye.

This panoramic photo collage reconfigures the remains of a building that once functioned as a prison within the Tule Lake camp. The 250' x 350' structure, known as "a prison within a prison," lay surrounded by barbed wire, guard towers and floodlights (Okihiro 30). The Tule Lake stockade consolidated the most vocal resisters of the internment. More than 250 men were labeled as "dangerous disloyals," or "no-no boys." They were civil rights protesters who faced twenty-four-hour surveillance under overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, held without charges filed, *habeas corpus* suspended, and legal representation not provided (Takei and Tachibana 30). Hayashi's rendition of a destabilized and transitory space highly magnifies an experience that all internees across the various camps faced—a long waiting period without a determinable end in sight.

A finer detail in the Tule Lake panoramic photo collage appears in the distant background. Twice repeated on the left and right sides of the image, there are darkened window openings that frame the dramatic, protruding, eight-hundred-foot-high "Castle Rock," a land mass comprised of volcanic basalt. The rock is a well-recognized natural landmark in the region, cited often in internment-related art and literature (Cannady). Former Tule Lake prisoners and artists George Tamura (1927-2010) and Jimmy Tsutomu Mirikitani (1920-2012) rendered Castle Rock's symbolic force with much more prominence. Tamura's sumi watercolor paintings were created during his incarceration in 1944.[77] Mirikitani repeated the motif in countless drawings, many of which were completed while he was homeless in New

[77] The photo gallery of George Tamura's work is no longer available on the Tule Lake Unit, National Park Service website.

York during the 1980s and 1990s. Mirikitani's story is the subject of the documentary film *Cats of Mirikitani* (2006) directed by Linda Hattendorf.

Hayashi's work conveys Castle Rock with a profound subtlety, suggesting how the future might best be framed or organized. This symbolic aspect of the internment landscape imparts a sense of freedom, hope, and reflection to several generations. Prior to and during the incarceration period, Castle Rock was a place of leisure where Japanese American families would go snow sledding in the winter months (Cannady). During incarceration, the two anchoring bluffs of Abalone Mountain and Castle Rock provided focal points for *Tuleans*—a nickname for Tule Lake prisoners—within the flat and oppressive region.

When I participated in 2009, the Tule Lake Pilgrimage included a morning group hike up Castle Rock's rugged and slippery terrain. Upon reaching the peak, pilgrims encounter a tall white cross that was erected by Christian Tuleans. From there, they take in a bird's-eye view of the camp's sprawling 26,000 acres once inhabited by a peak population of 18,789 internees.[78] In hindsight, I found the hike to be physically challenging—this within an expansive environment that is also meditative and motivating. In other words, the pilgrimage activity demonstrated how there is potential for triumph over adversity. Thus, while it comes across as a

[78] For exhibitions of the "American Concentration Camps" series, Hayashi typically included an artist statement and text detailing internment history, historical documents, and relocation center data. Hayashi adapted the information from various sources, primarily Niiya (1993), see References for details. See also Takei and Tachibana (2012) who detail the social and physical setting of Tule Lake as a high-security segregation center as well its complexities as political site of resistance.

minute gesture in Hayashi's *Tule Lake* image, Castle Rock is prominent in the narration of the pilgrimage landscape.

The dizzying arrangement of repetitive sections in *Tule Lake Relocation Camp, Stockade, Tule Lake, California*© form an "all-knowing" and "all-seeing" platform for the viewer. The overall image presents a fictitious arrangement emphasizing "panoptic space". Hayashi brings in social and cultural theory, citing Foucault's examination of the *Panopticon*, a disciplinary architectural space conceived by Jeremy Bentham in the late 18th century. Application of this model within institutions of confinement—including prisons, schools, and hospitals—amplifies visibility and regulation. Foucault indicates that the *Panopticon* induces "in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault 201). In this deliberate synthesis of space, ideology, and power, surveillance is constant; order is guaranteed; and hierarchy and control are insurmountable. Throughout the series, Hayashi echoes this effect by positioning the viewer intersubjectively as both prisoner and guard.

Hayashi's extended panoramic photo collage studies of abandoned prisons drive home the draconian human dynamics once at play in now unpopulated spaces. Beyond the *American Concentration Camps* series, these included works situated in Ohio, including the Cincinnati Workhouse (1989), Mansfield Reformatory (1993), and Ohio Penitentiary (1996); in California, the San Francisco Bay's Alcatraz Penitentiary (1989), and Angel Island Immigration Station (1989); and, in Pennsylvania, Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary (1993). Fascinated with these deserted institutions of the American penal system, Hayashi reconfigured the

facility spaces such as cellblocks, a chapel, an infirmary, a power plant, and laundry room. In her view, "prisons were created for behavior correction, for retribution and for deterrence"[79]

The desolate character of most, if not all, of the locations featured in the imagery of *American Concentration Camps* calls to consideration the desert landscape. On physical and psychic levels, the desert landscape is often perceived as an austere, bleak, harsh, and primitive environment. In *The Poetics and Politics of the Desert Landscape and the Construction of America* (2009), Catrin Gersdorf sees the desert as an ideologically charged metaphor for "garden," "orient," "wilderness," or "heterotopia"—alternative approaches that are broad and conflicting. Nineteenth-century American Expansionism approached the remote terrain, its resources, and indigenous tribes as instances of co-optation and imperialist conquest (Gersdorf). The remote solitude of the desert has also been read as wasteland or "national sacrifice zone" (Gersdorf 289). The latter example suggests environmental problems such as landfills, toxic waste dumps, and missile test sites. Isolated American Indian reservations and Japanese American internment camps likewise evoke such disquietude.

Derived from the German term *landschaft,* landscape is commonly understood as a scenic view or human perspective of the land.[80] When the symbolic

[79] Artist statement in "Sakura in Buckeye Country: Japanese Artists in Ohio," 1990 exhibition, Artist Files, Estate of Masumi Hayashi.

[80] See works on symbolic constructions of landscape and identity by Schama (1996), and Cosgrove (1998).

cultural object is approached from multiple vantage points, landscape becomes fraught with contentious social relations. As Cosgrove explains,

> This historical survey of changing meanings and relations between *Landschaft* and landscape reveals a complex and flexible way of describing spatial relations between humans and nature that has acted to frame a variety of social and political contexts. Much of landscape's authority comes precisely from what one writer has called its "duplicity," its capacity to veil historically specific social relations behind the smooth and often aesthetic appearance of "nature" (Cosgrove).[81]

Cosgrove brings into sharp relief an unsettling collision of nature and culture. Nature, through its appealing appearance, can manifest any number of qualities that overshadow the human condition and the circumstances at hand.

More than mere surveys of internment landscapes in ruins, Hayashi's panoramic photo collages present meticulous order and scrutiny of details to confront any potential "duplicity," to borrow Cosgrove's term above. These representations become quite layered, complex, and contradictory. As such, photographic images like Hayashi's can also be imposing and injurious by way of its composed form and selective content. In the article *Absent Images of Memory: Remembering and Reenacting the Japanese Internment* (1997), Sturken recognizes that "camera images can embody and create memories" and "have the capacity through the power of their presence to obliterate other, unphotographed memories" (689). As such, the photographic image extends beyond content alone to trigger remembrance as well as damper it. Sturken further remarks that "forgetting can be produced through the absence of images" (689). As Sturken argues, whatever is

[81] The Landscape and Landschaft Lecture delivered at the "Spatial Turn in History" Symposium German Historical Institute, February 19, 2004, by Denis Cosgrove, University of California, Los Angeles.

made visible and thus accessible via the image can simultaneously eclipse. The author gives nod to the *memory-image*, a mixed form of imagination and visibility (Ricouer 44–55).

Furthermore, Lain perceives problems in the general representation of internment memory and, by extension, Japanese American identity. Lain advocates Hayashi's *American Concentration Camps* as a viable alternative to existing models (i.e., dominant narratives that involve embodied and victimizing narratives.) Lain cites the panoramic photo collages as an "unusual presentation of internment memories" that allows agency to be inserted back into the discourse (231). The author notes how the series — unpeopled, internment landscapes of ruins — proposes "a case for the civic engagement of the object" (Lain 230) and "new practices of remembrance" (Lain 234) unbounded by identity politics.

Similarly, Alinder (2009) situates *American Concentration Camps* within the theme of internment memory as well as within the author's invented category "Contemporary Incarceration Photography." Through using this classification, Alinder reveals the imagery as capable of forming "transgenerational links" through its depiction of the "memorial grounds" of internment and their symbolic power (127). The author pays attention to interrelations between the Japanese American *Nisei* and *Sansei*. These relations are frequently characterized as the second-generation *Nisei* bearing shame and silence about their incarceration and the subsequent historical lapse and cultural identity void suffered by their third-generation *Sansei* offspring, many of whom did not experience internment firsthand. Camera images like Hayashi's work "open the gate of memory and reveal a world

that had been obscured, forgotten, and repressed within their families" (Alinder 127). The imagery situates confrontation with the very landscapes of embedded shame that many Japanese Americans collectively experience (and yet distinctly process as individuals.)

Alinder warns that "memory of incarceration itself might vanish if it is not nurtured or remade" (153). Recollection of the internment needs to be sustained, she contends, through new forms of engagement with its history and memory. To this end, Hayashi's creative "renarratization" of internment history and memory opens a door for "transgenerational communication" (Alinder 128). Through this kind of communicative action, a contact zone or dialogic space can materialize (Clifford). A dialogic zone accommodates collective commemoration of internment and social integration of its complexities, i.e., coming to terms with the past in beneficial ways for present and future relations and understandings.

Conclusion: *Manzanar Relocation Camp, Tree View*, 1995 and Cultural Renewal

The final image of my discussion briefly revisits the Manzanar Historic Site through further symbolic reflection of its diachronic environs. Filling in the related historical context, the Manzanar internment camp was largely abandoned and forgotten for nearly three decades after World War II, until its eventual rediscovery by Japanese American activists in 1968 as previously noted. Following the camp's closure, it was almost entirely disassembled with hundreds of barracks sold and relocated to local townspeople, a predominantly white community (Freeman, Higa, and Wiatr). From 1952 through 1992 (the year of its national historic site

designation), the regrowth of native plants allowed the environment to return to its natural condition (Williams).

Thematically tied to regeneration, the image *Manzanar Relocation Camp, Tree View* (Inyo, California© Panoramic Photo Collage with Fuji Crystal Archive prints, 1995, Size: 27" high x 63" wide) features a double vision of a large and aging shade tree (Figure 25.) The tree dominates the composition. Its rough-hewn, gnarled trunk reappears on the left and right edges of the picture plane. Because of the tree's duplication, a full canopy of green leaves spans across the entire panoramic layout, meeting at the top center of the image to form the point of a slight arch framing a penetrating blue sky. In the foreground, medium-sized stones are scattered across the ground and the triangular corner of a concrete pad or foundation remnant juts out from the bottom edge. In the background, trees are spaced out along the horizon line, with one fixed solidly at the center. The Sierra Nevada mountains quietly arise behind them.

In Hayashi's depiction, the tree view commands attention not only because of its scale, but also through its various sections and details. From the tree's connection to earthen ground to its weighty trunk and vibrant branches, it appears to be thriving. The absent presence or void in this image is the mostly barren desert landscape and Manzanar internment camp ruins that would surround this tree. One analytic approach I employ with this image is to overlap it with signifying iconography of the allusive *tree of life*. This recurring trans and crosscultural symbol is rooted in mythologies, spiritualities, and/or religions several identities and movements (e.g., the Bodhi Tree in Buddhism, the Sephirot in Kabbalah, the Celtic

Crann Bethadh, and the Mayan Wacah Chan.) Thus, the *tree of life* as a concept on its own or within a belief system is cited in ancient lore and history, much as it surfaces in contemporary ideas and knowledge (Crews). It is considered by various cultural groups and/or religious or spiritual practitioners to embody an array of noble attributes such as wisdom, protection, bounty, immortality, vigor, youth, redemption, and resurrection (James). Ancestral ties and regeneration are also associated with its sacred and earthbound form. Along these lines, the *tree of life* is deeply rooted below ground, allowing it to flourish and, in turn, purify its surroundings and nourish other living beings.

Manzanar Relocation Camp, Tree View engages a set of ideas that transcend the historic site where its likeness is found. Like the *tree of life*, with its trunk and roots settled in the past-present, Masumi Hayashi's *American Concentration Camps* series of panoramic photo collages are steeped in layered landscapes and their histories. Overall, this significant body of work alerts us to fragments of spaces and places that mark and reconstruct the WWII Japanese American Internment. This is a troubling and urgent reminder. As extended tree branches, the collages ascend and reach outward, pointing towards realization, remembrance, re-envisioning, and renewal.

IV. Reclaiming (Post)Suburban Spaces: Finding the Hispanic Playwrights Project's *California Scenarios* (2001-2002) in Isamu Noguchi's *California Scenario* (1980-1982)

"To be hybrid anticipates the future. This is America, the nation of nationalities." (Noguchi)[82]

Introduction

With racialized and historicized space and place in mind, this chapter primarily focuses on Isamu Noguchi's 1.6-acre abstract sculptural landscape *California Scenario* (1980-1982) as a dynamic setting for cultural engagement and performative action (Figure 26. and Figure 27.) I begin with an illustrative example of this, a theatrical performance. For the 2001-2002 season, the South Coast Repertory Hispanic Playwrights Project launched the *California Scenarios* series of six one-act plays. Comprised of water, stone, and vegetation, Noguchi's expansive work of art served as inspiration for various playwrights who each created original scripts about Latinx identity. The sculptural landscape also functioned as an outdoor stage for the series, with its symbolic space and place located in proximity to the theater in Costa Mesa, Orange County, California.

Luis Alfaro's *The Gardens of Aztlán (An Acto Hecho a Mano)* is one example from *California Scenarios*. The play's title references the Aztec homeland of *Aztlán* in the United States Southwest. The concept of *Aztlán* was reinvigorated during the Chicano civil rights movement (1960s-1980s) to affirm Mexican American identities and strengthen communities (Goldman). The dialogue in the play, however,

[82] This quotation appears in "Self-Internment, 1942," The Noguchi Museum educator's guide about Noguchi's voluntary incarceration at the Poston (Arizona) concentration camp during the World War II Japanese American internment.

ruptures this initial impression of an idyllic and sacred landscape. Featuring an ensemble cast of uniformed male and female food service workers, the group banters on about the region's distinctive character and offerings, including the agricultural and food industries.

In the play's unfolding narrative, a female *tortillera,* or tortilla maker, emerges into the performance space / sculptural landscape from El Torito—an actual Mexican restaurant adjacent to the site during the time of the production (Figure 28.) She is soon joined by other *tortilleras* from Mexican fast food chains La Salsa, Del Taco, and Taco Bell (Figure 29.) A portion of the dialogue between the service workers reveals the landscape as an essential character of the play (Note: the two featured characters converse in *Spanglish*, i.e., combination of Spanish and English languages):

EL GEOFF. Tortillera?

LA KARMINE. Si?

EL GEOFF. Estas okay?

LA KARMINE. Si. Gracias for asking compadre. No mas estoy working here. Here on this rock. I am thinking un poquito.

EL JAVI. Thinking about what, tortillera?

LA KARMINE. Pues, about our future. We'll see, que mas.

Stationed in a resting spot, La Karmine reflects upon "our future," presumably the collective future of Latinx service workers within the region. The rock is a prop and symbolic anchor within *California Scenario's* expanse. It offers respite from workplace demands and a refuge from society's oppressive climate.

The actors physically claim a small space within the setting, with a modicum of irony because they represent the service labor supporting the area. Their social positioning brings forth what simmers beneath its surface: overlapping tensions between myth and reality, nature and culture, work and leisure, and race/ethnicity and space/place. To magnify these pairings, the performance concludes with the cast serving hot tortillas to the audience. This symbolic offering along with an actual Mexican restaurant next to the performance space blurs the boundaries between art and life. Akin to relational aesthetics, the sharing of food humanizes the "other" and helps to connect performer and audience (Bourriaud). I believe that in the bread breaking (i.e., tortilla sharing), there is an implied shared destiny in the action, space, and place.

This overlay of the play *Gardens of Aztlán* with the site *California Scenario* further complicates a place already complex and multilayered. Shirley notes how the play "uses the circular imagery of tortillas and oranges in a riff on the idea of returning full circle to what this area was like before the arrival of the buildings that look down on the garden" (Shirley). In the critic's view, tortillas and oranges are metaphors, offering a complete view of the economic and existential shift from agricultural life to service-based industries in the Orange County region. Within the context of the play and its immediate stage, these narratives of food service labor are literally and symbolically overshadowed by the pair of tall rectangular office towers that loom over and frame *California Scenario*. This proposes yet another suggestive image, a phallic-like white-collar patriarchy overshadowing lower rungs of the social hierarchy. Indeed, this would also eclipse an historical imagination and

cultural memory tied to these "other" societal sectors. Thus, the combined forces of theatrical performance and visual art unleash queries about intersections of space, place, and identity.

Research Questions and Background

For those who visit, view, and engage with *California Scenario* (nicknamed The Noguchi Garden), new possibilities of understanding and enhancing public space and civic life arise. It is a privatized public space positioned at the center of an ordinary commercial complex of offices and restaurants. The "postsuburban" environment of the Orange County and Southern California region surrounds it. To be thrust into this unique site can be rather disconcerting due to the contrasting layers. As such, this overall spatial context is integral to understanding Noguchi's artistic intention and work. I pose several questions in my research:

1) Who envisioned *California Scenario*, how and why? How does the visitor/viewer navigate through it?

2) How does the work's composition relay ideas and narratives about nature and culture relations? And in this sculptural portrayal of landscape, to what extent is the work concerned with accuracy, mythology, and/or imagination?

3) Despite the destabilizing and dislocating forces of contemporary life, how can cultural identity be reclaimed through aspects of space and place (e.g., sculptural landscape)? What new sense of space and place is gained in the process? What impact might this have on civic life and public space?

To address this set of questions, I consider how *California Scenario* interfaces with diverse publics and engages communities in civic dialogue. As a starting assumption for this research, I claim that *California Scenario* facilitates for visitors/viewers a variable, multilayered, and nuanced experience of space, place, and identity. Theatrical plays of *California Scenarios* illustrate such performative action, as seen Alfaro's *Gardens of Aztlán*. The ideas put forth in this example are specifically grounded in the fate of the American working-class and immigrant labor force which becomes that much more precarious by the day. It might serve as a memory of what could have been, aspirations of a redefined, shared history and place.

This chapter puts forward overlapping interpretations of *California Scenario* to develop the central argument. In this, I consider interdisciplinary literature review, field study, archival research, and intertextual analysis. My visual and spatial analysis of the work examines aesthetic form, its immediate and surrounding environment, and its historical and cultural context. Key works in spatial theory and cultural geography theory have profoundly shaped my thinking in this endeavor.[83] I find that the general orientation and theoretical discourse of these thinkers provide me with overlapping maps for navigating through the Noguchi's Garden.

I begin my study examining Isamu Noguchi's biography and artistic background. Selected key aspects of his personal and career trajectory bore influence on *California Scenario*. Next, I discuss the work's details, notably its layout,

[83] Various authors who have impacted my research and thinking on space, place, and identity include Walter Benjamin, Dennis Cosgrove, Mike Davis, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, David Harvey, and Yi-fu Tuan.

complex composition, and related symbolic content. A large part of my visual analysis denotes the site's spatial context—specifically, how it is framed by the corporate park where it is situated and by its wider postsuburban locale. Generally, *California Scenario* contains various forms and subareas that convey a dominant or official narrative concerning nature-culture relations.

I then return to 2001-2002 The Hispanic Playwrights Project's *California Scenarios* series and another one-act play, *Desert Longing or Las Aventureras* written by Anne Garcia-Romero. In this, I deconstruct the integration of visual art with theater to uncover latent messages about cultural identity and the landscape. Thus, I approach the site as complex, multiplicitous, and internally interactive. According to Kristeva, "a permutation of texts, an intertextuality" considers "the space of a text, [its] many utterances taken from other texts intersect with one another and neutralize one another" (Orr 27). In other words, I look to the ways in which *California Scenario* and *California Scenarios* connect and disconnect from one another, through competing and overlapping narratives.

For this study, I conducted field research at *California Scenario* and South Coast Repertory, in Costa Mesa, California; The Laguna Beach Art Museum in Laguna Beach, California; and The Noguchi Museum, Long Island City (Queens), New York. These research experiences are detailed as this discussion unfolds. Furthermore, my overall effort builds upon my prior contributions to the growing body of Isamu Noguchi scholarship. First, my Museum Studies master's thesis titled "Grasping the Earth—Isamu Noguchi's Museums: Reflections on Grounded Locality of Space and Place" incorporated field research that I conducted in the United States and Japan

(Gavino). Second, as an archives research intern, I prepared a museum history chronology for The Noguchi Museum in New York, resulting in a public web resource.[84]

These substantive research projects prompted my further pursuit of Noguchi's art and how it relates to space, place, and cultural identity in socially conscious ways. Through artistic and written expressions, Noguchi keenly observed human experiences within geographically diverse natural and cultural environments. His extensive studies of various spaces and places, from ancient historical sites to mundane locations, demonstrate the breadth of his commitment. I find myself especially drawn to how some of his artistic explorations are concerned with public/civic engagement and social justice matters. In upcoming sections, I share how I understand how these ideas interlink with *California Scenario*.

Apart from these scholarly insights and methods, I also bring to this study a lingering curiosity about civic life and public space. Growing up in the suburbs bordering Orange County, I intimately get how strip malls, billboard signage, highways and roadways pervade the cultural landscape. The requisite car culture is integral to daily life under these circumstances. As such, my own perspective is often framed from the vantage point of being in a moving vehicle, glimpsing through windows and mirrors, to make some sense of my surroundings. The scenes imprinted in my own memory are not unlike Ed Ruscha's versions of the built environments of the City of Los Angeles, pop art imagery that is repetitive, orderly,

[84] See "Museum Timeline, History, Museum." *The Noguchi Museum*, 31 October 2018, https://www.noguchi.org/museum/history.

cool, distant, and certainly far removed from the natural world. In my case, and adding to a multisensory experience of contemporary vistas, even the smells and sounds of the cityscape are dampened by rolled up windows and the running of the car's air conditioning.

Throughout densely populated areas of Southern California, it is increasingly difficult to find contrast between urban and suburban environments (e.g., "edge cities"). For example, the lack of boundary demarcation occurs on any number of levels. For individuals, how do they know their spaces? How would they describe and feel them? How would they contrast these spaces to other spaces? The environs people take passage through and translate are at once psychological, social, cultural, political, physical, and environmental (Tuan). By in large, these quasi urban spaces are decentralized, with few discernable natural or cultural landmarks (other than unimaginative malls, freeway morass, cloned gas stations, etc.) In terms of cultural homogeneity, sprawling intertwined settlements makes one area look akin to another, even when separated by hundreds of miles. There is no easy geographic escape.

Thus, as a standout, it is precisely because of a marked aesthetic contrast to these cultural landscapes that I am drawn to Noguchi's *California Scenario*. It offers new possibilities of enhancing and engaging with public space and civic life. To that end, I now examine three interrelated dimensions as they pertain to the work: selections from Isamu Noguchi's biography and background; *California Scenario*'s conceptualization, creation, and regional context; and reinterpretation of the site through the Hispanic Playwrights Project' *California Scenarios* series.

Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988): Selected Biography and Artistic Background

The aim of this section is to illuminate the personal background and artistic development of Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988) leading up to how *California Scenario* became a major work of his late career, created in the last decade of his life. Through form and content, *California Scenario* encapsulates the artist's in-depth study of space and place in addition to his global outlook. To remain focused on the subject and research questions, I do not offer here a chronological biography, nor do I lay out a survey of the artist's body of work. Rather, I explicate how Noguchi engaged with specific aspects of his own cultural identity and knowledge to advance his artistic practice and career. As a large part of his effort, I suggest that he explored various cultures and geographies. *California Scenario* is a significant sculptural landscape reflective of these dynamic experiences and insights.

Noguchi was born in 1904 in Los Angeles, California, to Yonejiro Noguchi, a Japanese poet, and Leonie Gilmour, an American teacher and translator of Irish, French, and Cherokee ancestry (Herrera 10). Noguchi's parents were unmarried. His mother primarily raised him in Japan, while his father spent time with him only on rare occasion. In 1918, Noguchi returned to the United States as an adolescent where he enrolled in the Interlaken School in Rolling Prairie, Indiana in the Midwest. There, he adopted the Americanized name Sam Gilmour. As an adult, he came to self-identified as "Eurasian" (Noguchi), acutely aware of his mixed race background and cultural differences in relation to those around him. In the span of his lifetime, Noguchi developed a strong individuality that was nonetheless largely influenced by family, friends, artist and intellectual circles. His exposure to diverse

cultures in multiple locations around the world also had significant impact on his personal and artistic identity.

Asian American art and artists face marginalization with relative frequency within art history and the artworld. Noguchi is a notable exception. He is known as an American midcentury artist who attained significant recognition and success throughout his career. His body of work has been classified through nation-based art-historical labels such as "American modern art" and, more recently, "Asian American modern art." When these categories are used as identifiers in racialized art historical projects, they point to a myriad of ways in which an individual or group can be constructed, perceived, interpreted, treated, and limited.

From around the 1910s to 1960s, American Modernism evolved to engage social, artistic, and intellectual ideas of the modern industrial age. Through assorted cultural expressions, it sometimes offered a harsh critique of modern life. Often it did this by examining the social world and its relations with nature, technology and underlying ideological framings. American modern art reflected this outlook through subject matter, new artistic techniques, and other innovations. Groundbreaking styles of abstract art, dada, and surrealism from Europe served as its main influences. Since the 1920s, Noguchi and his work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions of American Modernism. Yet despite this attention, the artist has been notably omitted from major survey texts like Foster et al.'s *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (2011).

For Noguchi, his artistic training was initially grounded in traditional approaches and techniques as an academic sculptor. Based in a Manhattan studio in

New York from 1924-1927, he found early success completing portrait bust commissions for an established, and often well-known clientele. A pivotal shift in his artistic practice occurred in Paris, France from 1927-1929. In 1927, Noguchi learned new techniques during a five-month apprenticeship with the prominent sculptor Constantin Brancusi. This significantly awakened him to a new set of ideas that surfaced through his abstract and minimal treatment of sculpture and space. He also experimented with biomorphic forms and surrealism. This took place in his own Paris studio until 1929 before he returned to New York. Noguchi's completed his final portrait in 1950. Subsequently, he turned to a range of mediums and disciplines, including sculpture, drawing, ceramics, garden and landscape design, set design, and industrial design.

In addition to exhibitions, numerous examples of the artist's work are held in major institutional collections featuring modern art, including The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum (New York and Japan), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Several scholars and curators have produced monographs and exhibition catalogs featuring his work and collaborations.[85] A recent publication, Hayden Herrera's *Listening to Stone* (2016), expands upon Noguchi's rich biography, his extensive body of individual works and projects, his dynamic relations and collaborations, and his global journeys.

[85] There are numerous examples, including work by Bruce Altshuler, Dore Ashton, Masayo Duus, Amy Lyford, Marc Treib, Bert Winther-Tamaki, Amy Wolf, Bonnie Rychlak, and Shoji Sadao.

Paying heed to his mixed race background, some authors and curators have cast Noguchi and his work within an "East meets West" framework and aesthetic that merges Asian and Western approaches and sensibilities. While there is some potential for productive crosscultural dialogues in this dual mode, more likely it obscures subtle aspects of and restrict complex engagement with the artist and his work. In fact, the "East meets West" trope is a totalizing cliché carrying severe political and sociological consequences (Said). As Edward Said makes clear, the East/West dichotomy provides a medium and a context for an uneven, lopsided exchange. For Said—who considers this broad picture in terms of the conceptual structure of *Orientalism,* or the Western interpretive gaze on the production of non-Western culture—this dichotomy rests on "a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (e.g., Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (e.g., the Orient, the East, 'them')" (Said 45-46). Mutuality does not characterize the interplay of East and West; rather, it is difference in power that is defining. Thus, the meaning of Noguchi's personal and artistic identity becomes distorted when analyzed through the narrow East/West construct.

Winther-Tamaki pioneered examination of Noguchi's complex intersections of his artistic practice and identity, while Amy Lyford expanded the discourse through study of Noguchi's engagement of community, collaboration, and social relevance of art. Both authors have each argued that the notion of "East meets West" elides the more complex notions of Noguchi's identity and his engagement with multiple cultural and geographic spheres. That racialized structure "East meets West" becomes murkier with Noguchi's own internal cosmopolitan sense as a global

citizen. Noguchi was peripatetic and culturally curious throughout his artistic career. He lived, studied, trained, and produced work throughout North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. His various studios and work sites were in California, Arizona, New York, Paris, Mexico City, Japan, and Italy.

As Lyford explains, Noguchi's artwork and multiethnic identity proved to be inextricable: "Often that stereotype of identity was taken as the locus of his art's content; the identity of his white colleagues in New York, whose race was invisible and whose ethnic identity did not seem to matter, took no similar toll on the interpretation of their works" (Lyford 162). Lyford frames how Noguchi's art was evaluated through a different set of criteria than his counterparts' works. Noguchi faced racial bias in the artworld, and this undermined his career. With artistic recognition and financial success, Noguchi was able to traverse these boundaries to a certain extent. Yet considering his mixed race background, Noguchi's "Asianness" prevailed in the eyes of such critics. Even though his work was included in the Museum of Modern Art exhibition *Fourteen Americans* (1946), the artworld would persist in perceiving and interpreting his identity and background in reductionist ways.

During periods of various length, from childhood to adulthood, Noguchi's lived experiences greatly overlapped with his Japanese cultural heritage. Many aspects of traditional Japanese art and culture, including garden design, deeply influenced but did not overbear his overall work. Noguchi's related knowledge base and self-awareness of his own positioning is rather astute: "The art of stone in a Japanese garden is that of placement. Its ideal does not deviate from that of nature…

But I am also a sculptor of the West. I place my mark and do not hide" (Narita et al.) While acknowledging how cultural knowledge and cultural difference arise within his own identity outlook, it doesn't steer him in one direction nor another, but rather in a productive interchange of ideas. Noguchi asserts how his individualistic nature sharpens his work.

Other personal and historical contexts of Noguchi's life in the twentieth century witnessed an implicit and uncomfortable rupture within social expectations of identity. For instance, his completion of *Death (Lynched Figure)* in 1934 attests to his ongoing concern about race and civil liberties (Figure 30.) The bronze sculpture depicts an abstract human-like figure with a rounded head and angular, gnarled limbs. A rope around the neck suspends the figure from an open metal frame. As a portraitist in his early career, Noguchi carefully examined the human form, gestures, and expressions. Yet this work holds back any individualized characteristics to produce a sense of anonymity. The horrific bodily form symbolizes something larger than any one person, the racial terror lynching of pre–Civil Rights era African American victims.

In another exploration of racial injustice, Noguchi endured a profound experience that politicized his affiliation with Japanese Americans. Sympathizing with the victims of World War II Japanese American internment (1942-1945), Noguchi submitted himself to voluntary incarceration at the Poston War Relocation Center in Arizona in 1942 (Lyford). At Poston, Noguchi intended to organize an arts guild and produce work. However, he attracted minimal support from fellow prisoners, received unwanted attention because of his celebrity, and found the living

conditions unbearable. These various factors, amongst others, thwarted his plans. He left Poston after six months. The exhibition "Self-Interned, 1942: Noguchi in Poston War Relocation Center" (January 18, 2017 - January 28, 2018) at The Noguchi Museum and Noguchi's 1942 unpublished essay for *Reader's Digest*, "I Become a Nisei," written during his time in the Poston internment camp, both detail this significant period.

Space, Place, and Identity

Regarding *California Scenario*, my claim is that its significance lies partly in its facilitations of identity formation through ideations of space and place. Getting further at that nexus requires me to grapple with how Noguchi himself approached its elements and configuration in relation to social issues and cultural identity concerns. Noguchi often considered these aspects in his artwork and his own writings. Significant examples of the latter are compiled in *Isamu Noguchi: Essays and Conversations* (1994), his autobiographical tome *A Sculptor's World* (1968/2004/2015), and The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum catalogue (1987). As noted in *Essays and Conversations*, common topics of his written reflections include sculpture, gardens and landscapes, theater and dance, Japan, and his mentors and collaborators.

In an essay titled "Towards a Reintegration of the Arts" (1949), Noguchi considers how one's surroundings structure reality, imagination, and the psyche:

> Our reaction to physical environment may be represented as a series of hazy but continuous aesthetic judgements. Such judgments affect even the control of our emotions, bringing order out of chaos, a myth out of the world, a sense of belonging out of our loneliness (Noguchi et al. 31).

Noguchi suggests that humanity's perception of space might bear not only on the social world but also on an individual. In the deciphering and navigating process, we begin to understand ourselves and our sense of space and place. This provides a spatial framework for the formation of identity, developing a platform for personal and cultural group narratives.

Noguchi further engages space, place, and identity by exploring intersections of nature and culture. These are musings which foreshadow his creation of *California Scenario*. For example, his essay titled "New Stone Gardens" (1964) probes the issue of "nature and non-nature." Noguchi surmises that "there will come other gardens to correspond to our changing concepts of reality: disturbing and unbeautiful gardens to awaken us to a new awareness of our solitude. Can it be that nature is no longer real for us or, in any case, out of scale?" (Noguchi et al. 66). Humankind's shifting relationship with the natural world is, for Noguchi, of paramount importance. The transformation of environments from their original state may have a destabilizing and alienating effect. In this, nature becomes less and less recognizable. This would be a continual process of disconnection, thus triggering an estrangement from layerings of histories and memories related to that landscape or site.

Moreover, the artist's sensitivity about space and place is an admixture of his singular vision, collaborative experiences, and expansive worldview. This receptiveness is the engine that drove his artistic process in much of his work, including *California Scenario*. As Winther-Tamaki notes, Noguchi approached his work with a commitment to "particular cultural locales, each sedimented with

various national and other symbolic associations through historical processes in which Noguchi was a participant" (Winther-Tamaki 117). Thus, quite intensively, Noguchi parsed out the complex layers to create complementary and engaged work rather than imposing a discordant aesthetic or set of ideas. Winther-Tamaki further contends that Noguchi was a "maker of place" as opposed to merely a "sculptor of space," thus eliciting "the specific localized matrix of rituals of social identification" (Winther-Tamaki 117). In this regard, placemaking as artmaking is a robust act taking place at various and simultaneous levels. Spaces, places, and their boundaries are infused with specific factors that constitute identity formation.

Alongside his writings, Noguchi's artistic work shines light on spatial play and placemaking as a creative act, cultivating a spatial sensibility in both imagined and grounded ways. Two prominent examples are the unrealized large-scale projects *Play Mountain* (1933) and *Sculpture to be Seen from Mars* (1947) (Figure 31.)[86] Both presaged the land and environmental art movement of the 1960s and 1970s. While the former work firmly grounds itself as a sculptural peak planted in the bounds of the earth, the latter is an earthen work that translates into a conceivable image of the planet within the cosmos. These unreal non-sites are intended to have universal appeal in which the human condition is examined in relation to nature and the cosmos. *California Scenario*'s similar theme of nature and culture relations falls into less expansive territory by covering ground in a local and regional sense.

[86] Note the latter work as follows: Isamu Noguchi, *Model for Sculpture to be Seen from Mars,* 1947 (no longer extant), sand, © The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, NY. The work is not included in the List of Illustrations because the image is unavailable.

Noguchi greatly explored modernist ideas of space and place in locations around the world, as manifested in the travel photographs he published and exhibited. A Bollingen Foundation fellowship sponsored this substantial and long-term project from 1949 to 1956, enabling him to travel to and study "sites of leisure" in England, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Nepal, Japan, and other countries.[87] The set of journeys exposed him to prehistoric and ancient places of wide-ranging functional and mythical qualities. He visited gardens, temples, and revered places such as Stonehenge, Machu Picchu, Angkor Wat, Ryoanji, and the pyramids of Giza. Noguchi observed some of the daily rites and performance rituals associated with these places.[88] His overall exposure to global landmarks, cultures, and histories manifests throughout his subsequent creations, and especially *California Scenario*.

In addition, Noguchi's imaginations of space and place also surface in his New York-based collaborations with avant-garde dancer and choreographer Martha Graham (1935-1960s). In 1929, Noguchi met Graham through his sister Ailes Gilmour, a dancer in Graham's company during the early 1930s (Herrera 107). Within the theatrical stage, he integrated dance movement with symbolic space and place for productions such as *Frontier* (1935), *Appalachian Spring* (1944) and *Embattled Garden* (1958). Noguchi's work captures the essence or spirit of the dance, which is, essentially, the power and momentum of the human body. Within

[87] See examinations of this significant period of Noguchi's artistic development and personal journey by Winther-Tamaki (2001), Herrera (2015), and the exhibition listed below.
[88] These aspects are detailed through Noguchi's photographs in the exhibition "Noguchi: The Bollingen Journey 1949–1956" (January 30-April 19, 2009), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY.

and outside the boundaries of the stage, the performers and audience members alike in their very actions complete the scene. The space of the theater becomes enlivened by its participants, who create an intimate sense of "place." This recalls how *California Scenario* lays out performative space for human interaction and expression.

Lastly, Noguchi's record of public placemaking ranges from institutional to corporate to civic spaces. His partnership with architecture firm Skidmore Owings Merrill is reflected in *The Garden (Pyramid, Sun, and Cube)*, 1963, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University (New Haven, CT) and *Sunken Garden*, 1961-1964, Chase Manhattan Bank Plaza (New York, NY) (Figure 32.) These two sites are bounded and impenetrable, demanding viewers to peer into the spaces rather than to experience them from within. In contrast, the Philip A. Hart Plaza in Detroit, Michigan offers a synergistic pairing, balancing geometric form and massive scale; the space is utilized for community celebrations, gatherings, and performances (Figure 33.) In similar vein, the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center Plaza (1980-1983) situated in the Little Tokyo neighborhood of Los Angeles, California, is a one-acre site for seasonal festivals and taiko drumming (Figure 34.) In each of these place-based creations, there is symbolic engagement with their immediate surroundings. How these sites each engage communities in public spaces, bringing together identity and space offer worthy comparisons for *California Scenario*.

In sum, Noguchi's selected writings and artwork are concerned with complex understandings of how space, place, and identity come together and can be

expressed. His overall artistic outlook and approach reveals his deep concern for placemaking. Incorporated within this is his close examination of the subtle layerings and complexities of human experiences within environments. As noted, Noguchi proposed in his writings how spatial awareness and engagement connects with cognitive processes in tangible and existential ways. This range of ideas become realized through his body of work. From these foundations, this discussion now develops the details and my analysis of the *California Scenario* site.

California Scenario (1980-82): An Overview

California Scenario (1980-82), as a late career work for Noguchi, was a culmination of his wide-ranging commitments and careful reflections on space, place, and identity. In his approach to its aesthetic form and symbolic concepts, Noguchi aimed for meditative and transcendent appeal for visitors to the site, as suggested by his model (Figure 35.) Across 1.6 acres, there are several abstract and geometric sculptural forms, pathways, and open spaces that altogether suggest themes of nature and culture. It unfolds as a sprawling landscape primarily comprised of water, stone, and vegetation. In reiteration of my argument, the work has much potential for embedded ideas of landscape and identity to surface, rupturing any dominant or official narratives. This permits a redefinition of space and place and manifestations of new or marginalized identity claims. In the following, I first consider *California Scenario*'s general form, its official narrative and symbolisms, and greater spatial/cultural context before getting to the core of this argument.

California Scenario may facilitate either a potent or a perplexing interface, depending on the level of discernment by the visitor/viewer. In other words, the abstract nature of the overall composition and its various elements challenges ready translation. Seven sculptural forms are spread across the site. They are individually named *Forest Walk*, *Water Source*, *Water Use*, *Desert Land*, *Land Use*, *Spirit of the Lima Bean*, and *Energy Fountain* (see below for further details.) As the title and subtitles imply, "California" and its physical environment and natural resources comprise the central subject of the work. The site's immense scale requires traversing a great deal of ground to experience it in its entirety, making the aesthetic encounter an active and not a passive one. The visitor/viewer finds no clear focal point to rest one's eyes upon nor a direct pathway to follow. Thus, to move about the landscape, the visitor/viewer must make a conscious set of decisions on where to head. Going at a slow and meandering pace, some visitors/viewers might find the experience to be like a moving meditation likened to an experience within a garden or temple grounds.

California Scenario is centrally positioned within the Pacific Plaza corporate park in Costa Mesa, Orange County, California. It is a gated and privatized public space, open and free to the public from 8 AM to midnight daily. The immediate community of office and service workers, in addition to visitors, use the site as place to relax or as a passageway through different areas of the complex. It is accessed from various points; there are five exterior passageways in addition to the entryways of office buildings, restaurants, and a parking garage. *California Scenario* is alternatively referred to as the "Noguchi Garden," and it is further described as a

sculpture garden or sculptural landscape. Being part of Costa Mesa's Theater & Arts District and nearby other public art installations, it is also marketed by the city as a cultural destination and noted as a landmark.[89]

The visitor/viewer can learn about the Noguchi garden through onsite informational kiosks located at the main entrances.[90] The interpretive text panels advance the following "official" narrative: "*California Scenario*, an abstract metaphor of California's diverse natural environment, is one of Noguchi's significant contributions to landscape architecture." This description prepares the visitor/viewer for what lies ahead—an encounter with the various abstract forms, their symbolic aspects, and Noguchi's unique imprint.

The same interpretive panel fills in details of the site's seven sculptural elements:

(1) *Forest Walk*
Visitors pass a patch of California redwoods to evoke one of California's salient *Characteristics* (Figure 36.)

(2) Spirit of the Lima Bean
Twelve-foot-high granite boulders, indicative of the land, once used as a lima bean farm. [footnote: Originally, it was entitled Source of Life and was later renamed to honor the Segerstrom family] (Figure 37.)

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[89] Overall, the City of Costa Mesa city planning is extensive, well-documented, and closely tied to philanthropic efforts of the Segerstrom family. This includes investments in the community's cultural scene, such as the Segerstrom Center for the Arts, public art, and performing arts. In relation to *California Scenario*, see "Community Design Element, Costa Mesa General Plan," p. 16 (See References.)

[90] Generally, the City of Costa Mesa city planning is focused on establishing and maintaining a "high-quality" mixed-use area of "internationally recognized architectural and sculptural achievements as well as premier cultural institutions," as detailed in in the "Costa Mesa Theater & Arts District Plan" (2008), p. 5. The *California Scenario* signage design and placement is part of these efforts, noted in the plan on p. 15 (See References.)

(3) Water Use
A granite wedge symbolizing the end of the California Scenario stream (Figure 26. and Figure 27.)

(4) Desert Land
Symmetrical mound planted with a variety of cacti, agave and other desert plants (Figure 38.)

(5) Water Source
A thirty-foot-high sandstone triangle functions as the beginning of the stream (Figure 26.)

(6) Land Use
Consisting of an eight-foot-high knoll, topped with a simple form of Sierra white granite (Figure 39.)

(7) *Energy Fountain*
Embodies California energy. The fountain is twelve-feet-high and twenty-five feet in diameter and made of granite bricks and stainless steel. (Figure 40.)

(Source: Signage at Entrances to *California Scenario*, Pacific Arts Plaza, Costa Mesa, CA)

This descriptive listing delineates a literal and conceptual map to follow the cues from the abstract geometric and organic forms of the sculptural landscape. The experience relays messages that can be straightforward, while others are contradictory. In a general sense, geometric forms are legible and rational. Abstract forms are reductive and thus can be open-ended in their readability. Organic materials are immediately recognizable and familiar, yet as natural elements, they can seem untamed and unpredictable. The most prevalent material found throughout the site is stone, signifying durability and timelessness. The flowing water is easily discernible and entices the five senses (e.g., sight, sound, smell, taste, touch.) Water is symbolically deemed refreshing, fluid, transparent, and mutable. Metal, because of its sheen and rigidity, exudes strength and impenetrability. The

summation of these various qualities found within *California Scenario* reveals nature and culture in interplay.

California Scenario's symbolism is made most explicit in *Water Use*, *Water Source* and *Land Use*, and *Energy Fountain*. Each of these forms flags nature as a resource to be harnessed and consumed. For example, *Water Source* is triangular form, thirty feet high, with a fountain-like feature. The sculpture symbolizes a mountain where water flows from its peak downward, along the triangle's hypotenuse, to a curvilinear "stream" at ground-level. The stream then connects to the low pyramid of *Water Use*. Likely inspiration for these interconnected forms is revealed in Noguchi's travel photographs of the astronomical observatories of the Maharajah Sawai Jai Singh II in Delhi (c. 1724) and Jaipur (c. 1734), India, from one of his Bollingen Foundation journeys (Figure 41.) The observatories themselves are large spatial environments consisting of complex layouts of geometric forms made of stone.

By extension, art historian Kirk Savage (1999) focuses on one section of the Noguchi Garden, *Spirit of the Lima Bean* (Figure 37.) This freestanding stack of boulders serves as a tribute to the site's patron, Henry T. Segerstrom (1923-2015), whose family were lima bean farmers turned real estate developers in Orange County. The boulders symbolically reference the enduring and timeless family legacy. Along these lines, Savage further describes the work as a memorial that "could easily stand as an emblem for a whole school of thought that sees modern collective memory as a phenomenon of rupture and loss" (Savage). On one hand, the author suggests, the public could benefit from this reflective and heroic platform

honoring the region's history and fertile offerings. Yet, he further conjectures, "if the lima bean lives in spirit in this garden, the nearby farms that once produced actual lima beans are long gone, victims of a relentless process of displacement in which Noguchi's own work participates" (Savage). Savage expresses an alternative view in which *Spirit of the Lima Bean, a*nd therefore *California Scenario* as a whole, is held ironically accountable for the environmental shift and subsequent disquietude brought about by modern "progress."

From these notions of cultural loss (i.e., history and memory), another puzzle of space and place surfaces. Landscape architect Marc Treib (1999) considers physical and psychological challenges of *California Scenario*. Notably, Treib recognizes the site's dysfunction and discomfort for the visitor/viewer because of a lack of shaded areas; the plantings offer ornamental appeal rather than functionality. The author finds *California Scenario'*s "collective aesthetic power" in its relational forms and areas (34). This gestalt, he believes, conveys a journey of discovery and appreciation for the visitor/viewer. For Treib, *California Scenario* emerges as a transformative field, a space and place where cultural value and identity intertwine.

Architect Ana Maria Torres (2000) interprets *California Scenario* through what she designates are theatrical and literary undertones. Citing Jorge Luis Borges's "The Garden of Forking Paths," Torres claims that, "Noguchi conceived a labyrinth of symbols, an image of the universe and its relation with time" (Torres 214–15). *California Scenario,* she contends, "presents every object, both cultural and natural, within a web of symbols. Each symbol, in turn, is altered in the course of

time" (Torres 214–15). In Torres's view, time and space are established as the central concepts of the work. This is reflective of a more expansive realm where the passing of time, or history, is challenged by space, represented by the maze-like labyrinth. This perceived pathway is replete with symbolic markers, making the journey an uneasy and complicated one.

I find these various perspectives of Savage, Treib, and Torres to intersect with Huyssen's study of space and cultural memory. Huyssen posits that architectural projects, monuments, and sculptures *act upon* a city's social and cultural landscape. Concurrently, these civic markers—configurations of space as well as constructions of place—recede into backdrop while also punctuating the daily scene. They offer points of reflection. Some narrate the past, whether as a commemoration of a significant event or as a tribute to some personage. As Huyssen argues, "urban palimpsests" are the lived spaces continually in the making; they are texts that are "written, rewritten, and erased" (Huyssen 51). As such, they are sites consisting of multiple layers of memory that engage us while ultimately defining our identities and positions in the world. Yet in this, there are determinations about what or who should be made visible, which indicates how politics come into play. The decisionmaking process crosses socio-economic power structures, reflecting more than merely aesthetic decisions.

Examining *California Scenario* at length makes perceptible its merging with social, economic, and cultural dynamics of the immediate surroundings and larger region. The project initially took root in 1979, when real estate developer Segerstrom approached Noguchi to create a fountain for a new office park. The

commercial development included the construction of three office towers for Prudential Insurance with open outdoor space encompassed by the buildings. Segerstrom initiated contact with Noguchi after seeing an image of his work at the Philip A. Hart Plaza in Detroit, Michigan (Figure 33.) According to architect Shoji Sadao, a longtime collaborator, Noguchi rarely worked with developers. *California Scenario* was to become his first and only commercial project. He sensed that his vision would be supported by Segerstrom and realized through a mutually supportive artist-patron relationship ("Connector – Henry Segerstrom"). After his first visit to the Costa Mesa site, the artist proposed a much more ambitious project, which evolved into the 1.6-acre sculptural landscape that exists today ("Connector – Henry Segerstrom"). Through their verbal and written exchanges, Segerstrom became convinced of the "purity" of Noguchi's ideas and the likely significance of his work to the state of California ("Connector – Henry Segerstrom"). The patron believed that *California Scenario* could civically and culturally enrich the local community.[91]

Noguchi had expressed to Segerstrom how *California Scenario* would be a "wonderful theater." Because of their discussion, a lighting system was configured to illuminate the entire garden at night. Another meticulous detail involves *Energy Fountain*; to tone down the fountain's splashing effect, the water flow is controlled.[92] Similarly manipulated is the stream connecting *Water Source* and *Water Use*.[93]

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[91] Exhibition audio tour, *California Scenario: The Courage of Imagination*, Laguna Art Museum, 2011.
[92] Exhibition audio tour, *California Scenario: The Courage of Imagination*, Laguna Art Museum, 2011.
[93] *California Scenario* project files, Archives, The Noguchi Museum.

These various special effects of "nature" rely on culture and technology to create a theatrical scene. As it is often the case with large-scale public art commissions, the artist counts on a collaborative team—comprised of patrons, sponsors, suppliers, contractors, and designers—to help develop the project. The realization and installation of the work involves complex logistics as well as negotiation of the site's parameters and material limitations.

Forest Walk and *Desert Land* invite viewers to engage with simulated landscape views (Figure 36. and Figure 38.) Imaginative, small-scale configurations of types of California spaces, these works stand in for the actual vast wilderness outside of the state's urban and suburban centers. *Forest Walk* consists of upright, towering trees organized around a rectilinear pathway and a grassy knoll. A bench positioned at the apex of the pathway offers a place to sit. *Desert Land*, on the other hand, is a gravel mound covered with plantings and stones. This is space is set up to be viewed from a distance rather than to be immersed within it. Each of the sections conveys a sense of nature's offerings relative to human scale and activity.

Through the guise of the seven sculptural components melded together, an imaginary ecosystem materializes. In this, the presentation of California's landscape and narrative of intone aesthetic accord and harmony. Every "object" falls neatly in place, and the finer points come across as a polished veneer. Seemingly, the visitor/viewer is enabled to freely move about within this pristine environment. Yet what is the true nature of experiencing a semblance of nature in this way?

Noguchi's wood and plasticine model provides a *tabula rasa* initial impression of the site (Figure 35.) The model displays how the forms interconnect

and how the open spaces and pathways between them facilitate movement throughout the work. Yet, upon closer inspection, the composition lacks a fixed focal point, allowing the viewer's eyes to dance around unsettled. Congruity and dissonance appear at once, creating a dynamic and unstable sensation. This occurs not only because of *California Scenario*'s intrinsic qualities, but also because of an extrinsic condition, the larger spatial context's less-than-full disclosure in the model.

A documentary film directed by Michael Rich, *A Sense of Place: The Environments of Isamu Noguchi* (1982) discloses some of the behind-the-scenes activities and conversations that occurred during *California Scenario*'s construction. It also reveals Noguchi's insights on nature, culture, and technology. In one scene, Noguchi appears before a construction crew with heavy equipment to direct the placement of some massive boulders. He also expresses concern about their height placement and leveling. In the film's voiceover, Noguchi asserts that "how sculptors work" is a matter of "wrestling with [desert rocks], trying to find how they might come to life . . . in that spot in relation to each other and to it itself, which is a way to place it, so it becomes integral to the rest of the rocks" (Rich). His reflections demonstrate the irony of how representing nature is, in fact, a set of artistic choices and a controlled process—by making the stones "come to life" and defying how nature organically unfolds under actual circumstances.

In these steps of creation, Noguchi's approach mirrors human intervention in landscapes. The intended outcome doesn't necessarily fall into place as expected, especially as users negotiate the terrain. The artist sees *California Scenario's* potential for the visitor/viewer, yet he cannot guarantee their ultimate choices on

how to engage with what lies before them. Noguchi states in the film, "I'm not responsible for how it's used. I hope that it will have the influence on people who use it, that's all I can say. I hope it will be a place that people come to escape from the world that surrounds them...In fact, that's the purpose of a garden, is it not?" (Rich).

The artist discerns how the work has a life of its own beyond the creator and the work itself. Yet *California Scenario*'s impact on its users cannot be so accurately gauged. The identity claims with which individuals or groups approach the site shape their level of engagement and mode of deciphering. Herein lies the crux and the tensions of the work emerging from the combined voice of the artist, the evolving contexts, and its active users. The work exceeds its official narrative of the California landscape because, ultimately, multiple viewpoints enter the mix for interpretation.

The office complex surrounding *California Scenario* includes a parking garage, two thirteen-story glass-box office towers and an assortment of restaurant establishments. The parking garage plays a crucial function within the site. Its massive and solid white plastered wall creates a strong horizontal backdrop on one side, like a blank canvas. This alludes to how walls are used as a framing device within Japanese Zen gardens, a concept familiar to Noguchi from his time spent traveling, studying, and working in Japan. The parking garage walls and the office towers convey solid borders integral to the composition. Not only do they guide the visual and spatial experience; they also suggest the permeability of the boundaries between *California Scenario* and its surroundings. During my own site visits, I have

noticed how the wall frames and brings the frequent clear blue sky into the composition, and the structure blocks the view and noise coming from the Interstate 405 Freeway not too far beyond it.

The office buildings are encased with mirrored facades that literally reflect the sculpture garden (Figure 39. and Figure 40.) This "looking-glass" effect has at least two ramifications. First, the views of the site are at once expanded and distorted in the reflection. This adds another dimension to the visual engagement in which the mirroring can come across as a destabilizing force. Second, there is a barrier between inside the buildings and outside in the garden. Passersby see only their own reflection and the reflection of the site. This inability to see through into the building interiors introduces yet another layer to the experience, a social tension coming from the subtle sensation of being under watch or surveillance.[94]

Up to this point, my examination of *California Scenario* reveals how its "official" narratives about nature/culture relations are shared and reinforced. When the visitor/viewer actively engages with the site and its surroundings, the cultural value of the work becomes clearer. Its various sculptural forms and related symbolic content relay its layered dimensions and details. Grasping these aspects of the work in their entirety, inside and outside of its spatial frame, is indeed a complex process of engagement. Ideally, what can be understood are a sense of space and place, its historical and cultural contexts, and community life and civic relations. The next

[94] This recalls Foucault's take on the *Panopticon*—see Chapter 3 for extended discussion of this concept.

section steps outside of the immediate site of California Scenario to examine how it is framed by an interlinked and broader spatial context.

A "Postsuburban" Landscape

California Scenario's spatial/geographic context thematically joins together nature-culture relations, landscape, and identity. The site itself in connection with the office complex of which it is part and its regional surroundings offers fertile, reflective ground. According to Kling, Olin, and Poster (1995), Orange County itself epitomizes what they name "postsuburban" spatial organization. This consists of a multicentered sprawl of shopping centers, industrial parks, and amusement parks, without distinctive architectural features or clear transitions between municipalities. Residential tracts are too distanced from these multiple sites of work and leisure. The region relies heavily on ground transportation—and with that comes an extensive hardscape of concrete parking lots, thoroughfares, and highways. Like *California Scenario*, any semblance of nature is tamed and contained within the postsuburban landscape.

In *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (1992), Sorkin notes that "suburban cities" in regions such as Orange County, California, are "vast, virtually undifferentiated territory" and a "non-place urban realm" (Sorkin xii). These territories' city-like structures, infrastructures, and regulations, while functional, convey blandness, monotony, and repetitiveness. They lack "the vital, not quite disciplined formal and social mix that gives cities life" (Sorkin xii). Sorkin suggests that a dearth of spatial and cultural diversity penetrates the psyche, obscuring various publics across gender and sexuality, race/ethnicity,

and class. Heterogeneity and alienation from identity persist on many levels—psychological, spiritual, cultural, spatial and physical. This almost utter vacuity of multilayered diverse expression lends, if not defines, an essential patina to this kind of civic space and place.

To this analysis, Sorkin adds contemplation on spatiality itself: "What's missing in this city is not a matter of any particular building or place; it's the spaces in between, the connection that make sense of forms" (Sorkin xii). The "spaces in between" are usually those relegated to the background of daily life. In this nod to Michel de Certeau, a potential antidote to the emptiness of postsuburban life lies in the overlooked margins of the city. City spaces might include benches and bus stops, passageways and parking lots, thresholds and thoroughfares, and unlikely cultural markers. Personal and shared histories embed these in-between spaces with a sense of the real and the imagined. At first glance, the gestalt of this monotonous postsuburban built environment seems to eclipse the inherent cultural differences within the existing population. This sameness can be inferred not only from physical landscapes but also through social and cultural dimensions. Yet, for all that its critics dwell upon, postsuburban space and place can be enriched by those interstices in which alternative narratives potentially lie.

These postsuburban ideas and themes can be grounded in and examined through what lies beyond *California Scenario*. Less than a block away from the site runs a pedestrian overpass that crosses a major thoroughfare and continues along a vast parking lot. This walkway connects to an expansive shopping mall known as South Coast Plaza, developed by the Segerstrom family in 1967. The shopping mall

is a significant commercial hub and leisure destination, deemed as "upscale," "luxury," and "world class" in public relations literature. One of the largest shopping malls in Southern California, its square footage hovers at 2.8 million square feet ("About South Coast Plaza"). A high sales volume complements the heavy foot traffic of 22 million visitors each year ("About South Coast Plaza"). In effect, the mall constitutes a quasi-public space.

Within an expanded framework of postsuburban landscape and identity, the work's theme of nature-culture relations competes with materialism and consumption. While a trip to the shopping mall involves absorbing a typically busy indoor shopping spectacle, a visit to the Noguchi Garden invites quiet open-air contemplation of landscape (e.g., natural and built environment). The journeys are simulacra of one another. According to Baudrillard, the passive consumption of culture is cause for disconnect, alienation, and malaise (Baudrillard). The critical shift toward consumer culture has grave consequence on how human beings relate to the planet, the environment, and to one another. These shifts, it would seem, also develop a sense cultural desire and belonging. The postsuburban canvas offers to satisfy a multitude of contemporary lifestyle aspirations, promising access to pristine spaces and places, immersion in organized infrastructure, and attainment of material comforts.

If *California Scenario* can indeed facilitate social and cultural connections, then the sculpture garden can be looked on as a respite within Orange County's postsuburbia. Noguchi's work then can be understood as a utopic vision in the face of a growing dystopia. *California Scenario* sits within a larger landscape previously

occupied by lima bean fields before commercial developments and residential tracts sprouted. *Spirit of the Lima Bean* embodies this ideological tension. As previously mentioned, it is an abstract, largescale, and symbolic sculpture of several stacked boulders carefully fitting together like a puzzle (Figure 37.) Because of the tension set into the form itself, the work exudes mystery and vitality. What it offers is an uplifting and symbolic tribute both to the area's agricultural roots and to its patronage.

In the 1960s, the Segerstrom family, established lima bean farmers, began to convert their agricultural holdings to commercial real estate. Their acquisitions grew to include the corporate office park where the Noguchi Garden lies, a performing arts complex, and a major shopping mall. Noguchi named *Spirit of the Lima Bean* to commemorate the local crop and the prominent local family. Henry Segerstrom, a real estate mogul and major arts philanthropist, made an indelible mark on Orange County's cultural landscape. Segerstrom pursued Noguchi and requested a fountain design. Upon visiting the location, Noguchi approached it with "placemaking" in mind and envisioned a largescale project beyond the initial request.

The 2010 exhibition *California Scenario: The Courage of Imagination,* organized by The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum and Foundation lent further insight on the collaborative relations between Noguchi and Segerstrom.[95] In the exhibition, print ephemera, correspondence, color photographs, and video footage, related how the sculpture garden came to fruition. It also featured a new model of

[95] The exhibition traveled to the Laguna Beach Art Museum in 2011.

the work, commissioned by Elizabeth Segerstrom. The exhibition content and purpose elucidate how the work is very much a product of the Segerstrom family's wealth and patriarchy—characteristics that most often drive and dominate the artworld.

Beneath this main storyline for *California Scenario* lies another, less transparent layer. *Spirit of the Lima Bean*, in nuanced ways, allows an alternative narrative to surface. The work traverses two distinct locales that share land and labor themes. The first, and most apparent, is the Orange County regional landscape. While cattle ranches were prevalent throughout Southern California from the 1820s to 1860s, commercial growing operations only emerged by the late nineteenth century, through the influence of the California missions. Alongside lima bean fields were substantial acreage of avocado and citrus groves, livestock, and nursery products (Kerr). This type of economy grew to rely upon foreign labor, such as Asian farm workers and Mexican *braceros* (1943-1964).[96]

Through its interlocked boulders, *Spirit of the Lima Bean* and its embedded ideas of space and place form a palimpsest. Thus, local history and memory becomes fixed in stone whereas, all around the work, relations between nature and culture are everchanging. These lingering traces of past official and unofficial narratives reveal recurrent connections to local and global landscapes. Present-day Asian and

[96] This is noted in the "Work" section of *Immigrant Lives in the OC and Beyond*, Exhibit in the UC Irvine Langson Library Muriel Ansley Reynolds Exhibit Gallery, Curated by Daniel C. Tsang Social Sciences Data Librarian and Bibliographer for Political Science, Economics, and Asian American Studies, 2009 (See References.)

Latino immigrant local populations have had profound impact with the Orange County region with strengthening economic and political power.[97]

Moreover, global connections between land and labor also come across in the very material of *Spirit of the Lima Bean*. Noguchi sourced the boulders from Shikoku Island, Japan, where he completed the sculpture at his studio in the village of Mure. Originally, Noguchi had inquired about obtaining large stones from Joshua Tree National Park. The National Park Service replied to his letter and denied his request.[98] Thus, another, multidimensional subtext running through the artistic choices embedded in the sculpture is that the work is made in Japan. Noguchi's Mure studio, now the Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum Japan, is situated within a scenic landscape overlooking the Seto Inland Sea, near the port city of Takamatsu in the Kagawa Prefecture. The area today is increasingly suburban, although it was once a traditional stonecutter's village surrounded by stone quarries. Local laborers carried out the sourcing, transporting, and cutting stone for a variety of applications.[99]

Approached through this alternate lens of local/global land and labor themes, *Spirit of the Lima Bean* encapsulates the whole of *California Scenario's* official narrative of nature/culture relations. The references to land use and natural

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[97] This is found in the "Demographics" and "Policy" sections of the exhibition *Immigrant Lives in the OC and Beyond*, Exhibit in the UC Irvine Langson Library Muriel Ansley Reynolds Exhibit Gallery, Curated by Daniel C. Tsang Social Sciences Data Librarian and Bibliographer for Political Science, Economics, and Asian American Studies, 2009 (See References.)

[98] *California Scenario* project files (c. 1980-1982), Isamu Noguchi Artist Archives, The Noguchi Museum, Long Island City, New York.

[99] This reference comes from my 2005 visit to the Takamatsu City Stone Museum Mure, Mure-cho, Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture.

resources offer a globalized and transnational sense of space, place, and artisanship. Dominant historical narratives interlinked with postsuburban development and alienation obscure marginalized groups and their stories. *California Scenario* and its larger spatial context are culpable for this, yet these can also be viewed as "connectors" that bridge past with present and identity with public space.

Hispanic Playwrights Project's *California Scenarios* (2001-2002)

Racialized landscapes and race relations underlie American experiences. Connecting this outlook to this study returns the discussion to how *California Scenario* morphed into a stage for a theatrical performance. Earlier in the chapter this was briefly explored in my discussion of Luis Alfaro's *The Gardens of Aztlán (An Acto Hecho a Mano)*. Alfaro's play was staged during the 2001 and 2002 summer seasons of the Hispanic Playwrights Project's *California Scenarios* series for South Coast Repertory. The series consisted of one-act plays by various playwrights narrating contemporary perspectives of Latinx identity, as well as Southern California Latinx history. The Noguchi Garden was transformed into a central character of California's lived experiences and spaces, and new and variegated meanings of the work emerged.

The dialogue of *The Gardens of Aztlán (An Acto Hecho a Mano)* addresses issues of race, labor, and class in the twenty-first century postsuburban California landscape. Another play from the series, Anne Garcia-Romero's *Desert Longing or Las Aventureras*, looks back to the nineteenth century in rural California to relate possibilities of love, romance, and gender relations. The setting is described as follows: "1850s. Los Angeles. A desert clearing with sandstone rock floor and four

small cactus trees. Night." (Alfaro, page unknown). The plot centers on four women of different classes and ages who await a twilight rendezvous with the daring bandit Tiburcio Vasquez (Figure 42.) The women are not initially aware of one another, "but they're soon tripping over each other under the stars, waiting for Vasquez as if he were a more romantic precursor to Godot" (Shirley). The play unfolds within the section of *California Scenario* named *Desert Land* (Symmetrical mound planted with a variety of cacti, agave and other desert plants) (Figure 38.)

In *Desert Longing or Las Aventureras,* the play's melodramatic plot and simulated desert setting collide. With comedic tension, the female characters anticipate Vasquez's arrival. In the following excerpt, Elena and Luisa reflect upon their own existence in relation to the landscape (Figure 43.):

ELENA. My life is like this spike-covered, succulent, solitary tree. I exist in the desert of society, but inside me is a fertile existence waiting to bloom.

LUISA. You cannot have him.

ELENA. Yesterday, in his jail cell, when I brought him Tia Nachita's tamales, he promised to be mine.

LUISA. That must have been before he talked to me when I brought him Tia Nachita's empanadas.

ELENA. Ay, I want to tear the branch off this cactus and remove each needle one by one. And after the twenty fifth needle is removed, I want to shove each one into my heart. I rather die than watch you run off with him, sobre caballo, galloping across the California wilderness.

A sense of space and place emerges from this unexpected competition between two women over a shared lover. The character Elena interacts with *Desert Land*, using the vernacular and ontology of landscape to share her feelings and anxieties. In this, she displaces her heightened emotional state onto the prickly cactus plant and barren environs. The force of nature is a palpable conduit for Elena's tortured longing and her potential for invigoration. An undated photo still of the play positions the actors—two women wearing white tiered dresses and colorful shawls—on a gravel mound surrounded by succulents, cacti, and other foliage, announcing this as the ideal setting and situation for the characters' deep, unrequited yearning for love. *Desert Land* and, by extension, *California Scenario*, become steeped with Latinx history, identity, and imagination. This example thus manifests essential ingredients of placemaking.[100]

With attention paid to the varied cultural landscape of Latinx identity, Hispanic Playwrights Project's *California Scenarios* within Noguchi's *California Scenario* serves to ground race and public space dynamics. This transmogrification gets to the heart of art in public spaces, taking on new meanings. Uniting performing arts and visual art in this way constitutes a unique space for dialogue and creative acts of resistance. Those participants who continue this process do so through their own emotional, psychological, social, and cultural identities. Approached through a socially conscious lens, this cultural work assuages the oppressions of marginalized groups.

[100] See, for example, Michael Rios et al.'s *Diálogos: Placemaking in Latino Communities* (2012).

Conclusion

The evolving nature of Noguchi's *California Scenario* becomes clearer. Whether it functions as an individual, social, and/or theatrical stage, what is certain is how the artist has laid down the requisite elements for experiential malleability. By design, this sculptural landscape affords an open-ended space for human action and interaction. Considering how Noguchi understood the potential of space and place, it is only fair to ponder to what extent he intended *California Scenario* as a continuing site for individual and collective expression—both in general and within the context of California's complex histories and identities.

One clue to this is to recap some of the tropes of his personal biography and journey, that is, from having a storied mixed race/multiethnic Asian American background and transnational upbringing. It also takes delving into the various strands of his global artistic engagement to further appreciate his context for artmaking. His artistic trajectory included much professional success and artworld recognition despite his grappling with large and oppressive forces of society. This included overcoming societal expectations and challenging social injustices. From being born in California to completing one of his final large-scale projects there, I surmise that Noguchi's realization of *California Scenario* partly addressed the puzzles of his own hybrid identity and integrated them into the interiority of his artistic intention and process. I see that by sculpting space and place—and its history and memory—Noguchi paralleled larger shared concerns of various publics who have affixed themselves to local, national, and global ways of being and interaction.

Overall, *California Scenario* as a sculptural landscape or garden, reveals aspects of the historical past, present day realities, and future aspirations. As I have argued all along, recursive identity claims by its visitors/viewers take shape in this nuanced and layered setting, a mundane office complex in postsuburban Orange County, California. Overall, Noguchi sought to create modernist work with universal appeal and common ground in quasi-public space. The resulting site includes within it room for ideological tension, paving the way for many publics, diverse voices, and embedded narratives to be seen, heard, and expanded upon. Reflecting on this artwork through its layers can equip the visitor/viewer with spatial tools and cues to perform invaluable socio-cultural critique.

As Noguchi himself noted, the purpose of a garden is to both to escape and reflect; and in that space as it calls forth California and its peopled *scenarios*, rich, novel interpreting possibilities do, in fact, abound. A traditional approach to such art objects, through official narratives, gives way to approaches more fully utilizing historical, social, and cultural contextual-interpretive filters. The latter, especially through comprehending space and place as context, uncovers unofficial narratives that surface in a grounded and meditative ways.

As one final example of such contextual-interpretive critique, I note, within *California Scenario*, a curved bench that faces into much of the site. In terms of function, the bench is a suitable stop for relaxation and social interaction. It also offers an apt position for discerning the inner world of the sculpture garden. Imagination can be cultivated with memories recalled, sorted through, restored, and/or created. In my own visits to the site, however, I often have found the bench

to be empty. With the absence of presence, on one hand, there would seem to be a missing link to the art and its experience. When the bench happens to be occupied, perhaps it fulfills that function of wondering, gazing, and reflectively contemplating, and so forth—but only when the situation calls for it. These moments in time are not forced. The emptiness is rather like a beckoning, and therein lies its strength. The bench helps complete the picture that we wander into. When it is initially empty, it is an open invitation, and, paradoxically, much more so.

California Scenario remains enmeshed in the constant flux and dispersion of Orange County's postsuburban, multicentered environment marked by an entanglement of roads and highways; residential communities adhering along class, ethnic, and racial lines; more ethnically heterogeneous shopping malls; commercial complexes; and vast parking lots. Here lies a contemporary American landscape readily found and reconstituted across the nation. Public spaces have become rarefied, as are public rituals such as taking a moment to sit on a bench. Amid this landscape of perpetual change, the empty bench signifies remembering, forgetting, and creating. The transitory nature of this space in place is the key to reflecting on *California Scenario*. The bench becomes a prop in the garden's theater, helping us consider our own place within historical, geographic, placemaking, and racialized scenarios and structures.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research

"Human beings become reflexive agents capable of effective action only when they are sustained 'in place' through social and historical connections and disconnections…this is the work of culture…taking up discourses of the present and the past" (Clifford 96).

Overview

In this conclusion, I present several ideas for final reflection: a brief restatement of my dissertation purpose and methods, case study summaries and reflections, and future research recommendations. My dissertation has examined work by Asian American artists in California (1970s-2000s) that relate ideas about race and public space. The backdrop of my approach considered how recent directions in late twentieth century American art history address such cultural production or fall short in their sights. Consequently, my endeavor intended to enlarge the subfield of Asian American art, extending earlier efforts by pioneering scholars and curators Karin Higa, Margo Machida, Alice Yang and several others.

To accomplish this task, my dissertation presented three case studies that highlighted salient issues of space, place, and identity. The chapters featured Kearny Street Workshop posters and urban ethnic communities (1970s), Masumi Hayashi's *American Concentration Camps* panoramic photo collage series and pilgrimage landscapes (1990s), and Isamu Noguchi's sculptural landscape *California Scenario* and postsuburbia (1980s). Throughout this dissertation, I have maintained that these selected artists and their work are robust enough to greatly ascertain ways to understand public/racialized life and civic action.

Dissertation Purpose and Methods

The background of my study draws from three leading assumptions in the field of art history. First, there is a consensus that works of art are cultural artifacts (Davis). In this, art objects transmit a range of impressions, ideas, and arguments about what has transpired in society and culture and what is possible in terms of social and cultural transformation. Second, visual artists can imagine and help promulgate reflective, knowledge-building journeys for individual viewers and wider audiences (Davis). Along these lines, artwork that sheds light on race and public space, whether intentionally or not, creates an opportunity for reflection, critique, and dialogue on aesthetics and politics. Third, widely circulated and/or accessible works of art can engage diverse publics as viewers and audiences (Clifford). I claim for this analytic space the necessity of being increasingly attuned to intersections of identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, religion, geography, and other socio-cultural markers.)

As the overarching framework for this dissertation, "race and public space" encapsulates various social and cultural intersections that can be examined through a work of art. I have approached race as a social construct shaped by large historical forces, political agendas and policies, and daily social practices and attitudes (Omi and Winant). Race remains at the forefront of public and civic life as it is a central determinant for access to quality social and cultural resources (e.g., housing, health, education, economic opportunities, etc.) Casting a light upon society's group and structural tensions is one of the many social and political functions of art.

Throughout the duration of my study, I have questioned how a work of art reveals various and intersecting strands of identity, and prioritized race to that end.

To further my study, I combined these notions of race with spatiality, and specifically to public space. I consider public space to be a complex and contested arena with limitations on access, opinionmaking, and cultural expression; diverse inhabitants and multiple dimensions comprise its intersecting folds.[101] The extent to which overlapping and competing meanings and narratives are integrated and processed in space and place lead my investigation (Rogoff). Consequently, I selected works of art with the ability to address these underlying social and political frictions, making them visible in nuanced or overt ways.

In my overall project, I have found an inherent contradiction in working within and around the subfield of Asian American art. While my research agenda was to elevate awareness and understanding of selected artists and their work, I also questioned when artwork is examined through circumscribed boundaries of identity (e.g., race and ethnicity), what are the epistemic limitations in that? At the same time, how can critical and inclusive analysis of the art be encouraged? My telling of diverse Asian American biographies, collective histories, and shared group experiences to develop art analysis paved the way to exploring complex cultural understandings within American landscapes and beyond. In this process, I linked the artwork of this study with broad themes. These themes, often shared with other racial and cultural groups, included U.S. historical social and cultural relations,

[101] Appadurai (1996), Fraser (1990), and Warner (2002) are significant contributors to the discourse on diasporic, transnational, inclusive, and democratic public spheres.

immigration, social and cultural activism, urban life and gentrification, history and memory of war, labor, nature-culture relations, and suburban / postsuburban environments.

This dissertation acknowledges how these simultaneous strands of identity, are near or at the surface of the artwork and larger social, cultural, and environmental contexts. That is why my discussion began with notions of race and ethnicity as a primary lens for analysis. With that backdrop, I have attempted to decipher meaning of the art objects and their reception to begin formulating crosscultural connections, between Asian Americans and other racial groups. In those acts of translation and decoding, I find that environmental contexts, notably what I have referred to as "space and place" or "spatial context", reveal just how identities are grounded and potentially overlap. My concern extended to how public space can be considered as shared, collective space. Briefly, I now share the specifics of each case summary.

Summaries of Case Studies

The concepts of art history, race, public space, and researcher reflexivity laid out in the introduction well set the tone for my investigation of the first case study about Kearny Street Workshop (KSW). I paid close attention to its early history during its founding years from 1972-1977 and its graphic arts poster production. I found that during this period, a core group of Chinese American artists developed grassroots community arts for San Francisco's Chinatown and Manilatown neighborhoods. Their mission and goals reflected the Asian American Movement and overall social and cultural activism of the era and region. It was

through artwork, documentary photography, literature, workshops, programs, events, and exhibitions, that artists and participants found opportunity to reshape and affirm their identities and communities.

By no small extension, Kearny Street Workshop's placemaking efforts and activities shed light on social and cultural concerns pertaining to Asian Americans and collective identity formation. Their livelihoods, daily struggles, and celebrations are portrayed in several posters. Pertinent issues included cultural awareness, identity empowerment, youth services, senior housing, and gentrification. Combining image and text, the posters envisioned new public images of and for Asian Americans that circulated around the city and San Francisco Bay Area region. These posters served as counter-images that contradicted mainstream and popular media, defying racial/ethnic stereotypes and celebrating multifaceted identities. As such, the poster medium on the whole mirrors how identity claims emerge as a political process conditioned by societal structures of power and knowledge.

By recording the "first voices" of KSW leaders and participants through oral interviews, I found that I was equipped to explore how reflexivity raises opportunities and problems of methodological intersubjectivity. In this, I as the researcher, encountered aspects of how my own autobiography and philosophical orientation intersected with what I learned from the research subjects and archival materials. My questions and interactions with research subjects mutually shaped how the story was selectively shared. Moreover, the feedback I received from my subjects provided me with insights about myself as researcher and

writer, which further deepened my analysis in terms of what ignites community life and social and cultural activism.

Indeed, gathering oral histories is "at heart a deeply social practice connecting past and present, and at times, connecting narrative to action" (Shopes and Hamilton *viii*). Historical retelling is a shared, intersubjective experience, what Margo Machida defines as a process of "oral hermeneutics." Reconstructing the past is a complex dialogic act between oral historians and interview participants (Machida 9). Within art history and community arts research, the interview process allows interviewees not only to share individual points of view on collective artmaking, but also more readily to access the *zeitgeist* of times past and present. What interviewees perceive to be of relevance today is inherently tied to how they structured their past within milieus at that time—and how they actively reconstruct their past today. Experiences of time, space/spatiality, and identity are interwoven into a fabric that should be overlaid with oral history data. From standpoint of the interviewee, there are at least two major time streams of reflective memorymaking and analysis—what *was* and what *is*.

Another aspect of this dissertation research has paid attention to how artists, scholars, and activists can find the means and impetus for deep historical reflection. A related concept is the dialogic contact zone, centered on the facilitation of shared and diverse experiences through exhibition communication (Bennett). To this end, the second case study considered the value of personal and collective notions of space, place, and identity in artmaking and audience reception. I found consonance for these ideas in my research on Masumi Hayashi's *American Concentration Camps*

series of panoramic photo collages (1990-1999) and their connection to pilgrimage landscapes. These images depict the physical remains of ten World War II Japanese American internment sites scattered throughout remote areas of the Western and Southern United States. Hayashi poignantly fulfills the role of storyteller, having been born at the Gila River Relocation Camp in Arizona in 1945; the artist herself and her family were internment victims.

My analysis of Hayashi's abstract images notes how the compositions are gridded and layered landscapes. In this, the images facilitate an overall experience of processing and coming to terms with internment history and memory. The three images I chose to closely examine feature two former internment sites located in California: Manzanar National Historic Site and Tule Lake Segregation Center. They disclose various combinations of built and natural environments, largely abandoned and unpeopled. In nuanced ways, the images convey embedded narratives combining themes of racial/ethnic identity, public space, and internment history and memory. By representing these significant spaces and places, Hayashi illuminates the value of engaging public historic sites and pilgrimage landscapes in current discourse about American civil liberties. This innovative engagement with internment ruins further suggest how a visual artist as cultural worker can emerge as an agent of profound social reflection and social change.

Through the panoramic photo collages, the artist intention was to offer great potential to connect World War II Japanese American internment victims, their descendants, civil liberties advocates, and general audiences. In my research, I have documented how Hayashi's artistic work was generated through personal

contemplation on her Japanese American family experiences and internment history. In appreciating the scope of her opus, it took Hayashi intensive research, community outreach, and fieldwork at the ten internment sites to complete the series over a ten-year period. Hayashi's landscape reconfigurations can now be recognized as an introspective retelling of internment histories for present and future generations.

I think of public space as one microcosm of the theater of daily life. The many stages where these social acts occur have a shifting and complex ensemble. This is characterized through a broad range of social roles, actors, social masks and costumes, cultural props and symbolic forms, foreground and background settings. I address this set of ideas about art as social narrative through my third and final case study on Isamu Noguchi's *California Scenario* (1980-82), a sculptural landscape made of water, stone, and plantings. As noted, it is a commissioned semi-public space covering 1.6 acres within a corporate park complex in Costa Mesa, Orange County, California. Through seven symbolic sculptural forms positioned across the site, I find that Noguchi's work foregrounds nature and culture relations. The work requires visitors/viewers to actively move throughout the landscape to experience it in its entirety. Participants further distill its layers to interpret its historical, cultural, and spatial contexts.

Within *California Scenario*, Noguchi integrated his own dynamic life experiences and artistic insights developed throughout much of the twentieth century. As such, my study first explored selected aspects of the artist's biography, including his mixed race Asian American ancestry and training, to enrich

comprehension of his artistic intention and process. Throughout his career, Noguchi developed a global outlook and transnational artistic practice. I was able to decipher this in some of the elements, treatment of space and place, and interactive quality of *California Scenario*. Thus, I found complex notions of cultural identity to infuse the work, and sometimes in quite unexpected ways.

California Scenario utilizes geometric and organic sculptural forms to represent an abstraction of California's physical landscape. Symbolically, it engages both the state's natural resources and regional history. Nature-culture relations surface as the dominant or official narrative of the work, yet embedded marginalized or unofficial narratives come up, too. My overall analysis especially emphasized the latter. I explained how this derives, in part, from Noguchi's thoughtful considerations of race and social injustice; space, place, and identity; and public and civic engagement. My focus on one sculptural form, *Spirit of the Lima Bean*, and my intertextual analysis of South Coast Repertory Hispanic Playwrights Project of one-act plays *California Scenarios* (2001-2002) permitted this kind of exploration.

Underneath *California Scenario's* pristine veneer, there is an important inquiry to be made about the relationship between the work's aesthetic form and its public and civic implications. Considering which "publics" inhabit that space and under what circumstances was necessary and central to that inquiry. Accordingly, I decoded the surrounding postsuburban environment of commercial and housing developments, freeways and roadways, and related human condition. This allowed me to demonstrate how *California Scenario* and its official narrative about

nature/culture relations cannot be extricated from its postsuburban spatial context. In turn, this recognition of space and place aspects connects to a fuller spectrum of how identities are formed in the public realm. This part of my discussion was grounded in instructive examples of civic responsibility: understanding the historical past; cultural diversity in contemporary society; and related social roles, attitudes, and circumstances.

I am motivated to continue this research on multicultural intersections and interactions of identity(ies) and community beyond the scope of this dissertation. The work of Asian American artists in my study both frame and facilitate a sense of space, place, and civic engagement akin to "Third Space" ways (Bhabha). From my framework of race and public space, many permutations of cultural diversity, social interaction, and space/place have been and can be furthered. For example, a recent publication *War Baby/Love Child: Mixed Race Asian American Art* (2013) explores *miscegenating discourses* for envisioning "'Third Space' possibilities contained in contemporary Asian American art history and mixed race representations" (Kina and Dariotis 6). It features biracial, multiracial, hapa, mestizo, and transracial adoptee artists of Asian ancestry who integrate hybrid notions of racial formation and transgress space/place physical and ideological boundaries. I am drawn to such art historical research lines which combine cultural theory and field research reflective of demographic changes within an evolving world. This kind of cultural work marries itself to fluid configurations of identity and politicized representations.

Recommendations for Future Research

Altogether, my concluding reflections upon the three case studies of Kearny Street Workshop, Masumi Hayashi's *American Concentration Camps* series, and Isamu Noguchi's *California Scenario*, solidify the significance of this dissertation on Asian American art. My exploration of race and public space shows how it is a malleable and contested framework in several ways. While my selections of Asian American works of art provided evidence of how identities form in diverse and complex ways, the identity lens can certainly be redirected towards other racial/ethnic groups at their various intersections. Because of its wide-ranging terrain, the state of California yielded different types of spaces and places to examine, from urban cities to remote historic sites to postsuburban complexes. Spatial context, in general, can be further approached through other combinations that span local, regional, and global spheres.

By design, I have found my work within and outside of these existing case studies to remain incomplete and unsettled. In terms of my growing research agenda, there are more comparative strands and tangential ideas to follow beyond this dissertation -- and through larger studies, notably in publications I plan to write and exhibitions I likewise would like to curate. Ways that this research can be expanded by myself and others include the following:

1) Kearny Street Workshop community arts artistic production during the 1970s also included murals and documentary photographs. Further examination of this work would enlarge historical research of the Asian American Movement and its related cultural production. For example, Jim Dong, with assistance from Nancy

Hom, created a portable mural titled *The Struggle for Low Income Housing aka Victory to the I-Hotel* (1976), Acrylic on plywood, Size: 14 x 24 ft. (Figure 44.) Dong, Hom, and other KSW artists organized and executed largescale public murals for the International Hotel (I-Hotel) facade (and other locations in San Francisco's Chinatown/Manilatown.) After the I-Hotel eviction struggle, the murals were destroyed when the building was demolished in 1981. The images are recorded in documentary photographs taken by Kearny Street Workshop leaders and participants (Figure 9.) At this stage, I have reviewed photographs of related work and other subjects by Zand Gee, Bob Hsiang, Jerry Jew, and Leland Wong. Additional starting points for this research include literature review of publications by Margo Machida and Kearny Street Workshop.

2) To develop further insights on space, place, and identity in relation to biographical and theoretical art history research, I encourage future research to examine Masumi Hayashi's panoramic photo collages and shift towards work she created in Los Angeles, California. After the World War II Japanese American internment, the Hayashi family settled in the South Los Angeles region, where her parents ran a neighborhood store called Village Park. She moved soon after the 1965 Watts Rebellion, a period of civil unrest in an area then largely populated by African Americans.

Although she was based in Florida and Ohio during her artistic training and career, Hayashi would often return to Los Angeles. For her *Cityworks* series of panoramic photo collages, she created two works, *L.A. Downtown, Los Angeles, CA*, 1987, 29" x 69", and *Watts Towers, Los Angeles, CA*, 1987, 28" x 69" (Figure 45. and Figure 46.) I

suggest future efforts include field study of the depicted locations in Los Angeles, biographical examination of the years leading up to the *American Concentration Camps* series through archival research and interviews, and theoretical analysis of the urban context of the selected images. That line of proposed research would continue with the Masumi Hayashi Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio, for archival research and artwork access.

3) An expansion of my study of Isamu Noguchi's *California Scenario* could include a comparison with Franco American artist Niki de St. Phalle's *Queen Califia's Magical Circle* (2000-2003), a sculpture garden in Escondido, California (Figure 47.) It is a public space with limited access hours, located within 12 acres of the Iris Sankey Arboretum in Kit Carson Park. Currently under restoration, the garden contains nine largescale symbolic sculptures mostly made of brightly colored mosaic tile. Integrated in this space are also a maze, "snake" wall, bench seating, and plantings. The inspiration is California and its mythology, history, and culture. Queen Califia, the central figure of the work, is known as a mythical leader of a bountiful California. The work is further influenced by Native American, Pre-Columbian, and Mexican art. During my past site visits to St. Phalle's sculpture garden, I began to consider nature-culture relations within the work, its multicultural engagement, and larger spatial context of the desert valley where it is located. Further archival research would occur at the Niki Charitable Art Foundation in Santee, California.

4) Lastly, I recommend a new case study focusing upon the artwork of Mail Order Brides/M.O.B., a Filipina American feminist art collective. Artists Reanne "Immaculata" Estrada, Eliza "Neneng" Barrios, and Jenifer "Baby" Wofford

collaborate on photographic work and performance art in dialogue with themes of gender, identity, and culture.

The Mail Order Brides/M.O.B. installation titled *Home is Where the **Art Is* (1999) for the "Museum Pieces" exhibition at the de Young Museum in San Francisco, California, questioned, "*Why are museums so cold, so uninviting and formal?*" ("Home is Where the **Art Is") (Figure 48.) Within a vibrantly decorated and interactive space, museum visitors encountered the artists in live performance to begin to address this inquiry. This study could address intersectional identities in a more pronounced way and expand the notion of public space to include the art museum as a *contact zone* (Clifford). I suggest that the research be approached through literature review, artist interviews, and museum archives.

Final Reflection

While I have included extensive acknowledgements in the beginning of the dissertation, because of the cross epistemic and multidisciplinary influence of my dissertation committee at the University of California, Santa Barbara, I also include here a tremendous debt of gratitude for their recognition of the importance of this kind of research. My final thoughts lie in recognizing the tremendous creative power of artists of the Asian diaspora working in California and beyond. Their artwork remaps and imagines anew shared spaces and places. I believe that these cultural processes are necessary for the sustaining *kapwa* (spirit of community) and inclusion of multivocal and transcultured publics.

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