

THEN THEY CAME FOR ME.

INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICANS
DURING WWII AND THE DEMISE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

For Immediate Release

Alphawood Gallery announces dynamic FREE public programming this Fall
in conjunction with *Then They Came for Me*

Critically-acclaimed exhibition runs through November 19, 2017

Highlights include:

- *Allegiance*: the Broadway musical on screen
- Appearances by celebrated activists Karen Finley, Cece McDonald & Helen Zia
 - *Chicago Architectural Biennial* tie-ins
- Ongoing on-site programs: *The Big Picture* and Protest Banner Project

(October 3, 2017) Alphawood Gallery (2401 North Halsted Street, Chicago) continues to merge visual arts and activism via its critically-acclaimed exhibition, *Then They Came for Me: Incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and the Demise of Civil Liberties*. Visitors to the Gallery are invited to take part in a variety of social justice-related programs this Fall, ranging from film screenings and live performances, to workshops and hands-on activist activities. *Then They Came for Me*, an exhibition about the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII, continues through November 19, 2017; **the exhibition and all related programs are free and open to the public.**

Following is the programming schedule to date; visit the Gallery website at www.alphawoodgallery.org for most current calendar. All events take place at the Alphawood Gallery unless noted.

FEATURED ONE-TIME EVENTS:

Why the Japanese American Incarceration Matters Today
Public Talk by Tom Ikeda, Executive Director and Founder of Densho

Friday, October 6, 6pm

In 1996, Tom Ikeda founded **Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project**, a nonprofit organization based in Seattle, dedicated to preserving, educating and sharing the story of the World War II-era incarceration of Japanese Americans in order to deepen understandings of American history and inspire action for equity. Ikeda will discuss how the incarceration happened during a time of fear, and how we are seeing similar fears manifest in America today. He will also share how immigration bans, discriminatory laws and imprisonment in an American concentration camp affected his Gold Star Japanese immigrant grandparents. **ASL interpretation provided.* Ikeda will also participate in a **Sharing Stories program Saturday, Oct. 7, at 3pm.**





From Frank Lloyd Wright to Chicago's Jackson Park: The Work of Japanese American Architect Kaneji Domoto
Chicago Architecture Biennial Lecture by Lynnette Widder

Wednesday, October 18, 6pm

In conjunction with the *Chicago Architecture Biennial*, Columbia University Professor **Lynnette Widder** will explore the work of architect and landscape designer **Kaneji Domoto** (1912-2002) in the context of his Japanese American identity. Through personal photographs and documents, Widder tells the story of Domoto's early experiences in his immigrant family's nursery, his fellowship at **Frank Lloyd Wright's** Taliesin West, his WWII incarceration in Colorado and his long, independent practice based in New York. She will consider Domoto's work in relation to Wright's efforts to determine how Japanese architecture would be understood in the context of American architecture and present Domoto's own transforming explorations, including his Usonian homes and his award-winning garden in Chicago's Jackson Park.

CeCe McDonald in Conversation with Precious Brady-Davis

Friday, October 20, 6pm

CeCe McDonald is the subject of the Laverne Cox-produced documentary *Free CeCe!* about McDonald's unjust abuse and incarceration by police and prison systems. McDonald's experience brought national attention to the ongoing state violence against and incarceration of transgender women of color. In an evening of conversation, McDonald is joined by **Precious Brady-Davis**, lauded internationally as an award-winning diversity advocate. She is the Deputy Press Secretary for the Beyond Coal Campaign at Sierra Club for the Midwest region and previously served for three years as the Assistant Director of Diversity Recruitment Initiatives at Columbia College Chicago, where she implemented a campus-wide diversity initiative.

Tina Takemoto's Memoirs of Bjork-Geisha: From Orientalism to Incarceration

Sunday, October 22, 1pm

In this lively presentation, San Francisco-based artist **Tina Takemoto** will humorously reflect on her guerrilla performance art protests against Art World Orientalism. She will also present excerpts from her experimental short films *Looking for Jiro* and *Warning Shot* that explore the lives of gay Japanese American men incarcerated by the U.S. government during World War II. Takemoto combines drag king performance, archival materials and popular music mashups to address the hidden dimensions of same sex intimacy and queer sexuality in Japanese American wartime history as well as the ongoing legacy of state-sanctioned violence. **ASL interpretation provided.* A program of related **Short Films** will follow at 4pm. In addition to Takemoto's two aforementioned films, the screening will include Renee Tajima-Peña's *Skate Manzanar* and Daryn Wakasa's *Seppuku*.

Allegiance: The Broadway Musical on Screen

Sunday, October 22, 6pm * At Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Avenue

An important story told with great resonance and intimacy, the Broadway musical ***Allegiance*** illuminates one of American history's lesser known chapters as it tells the story of Sam Kimura (**George Takei**), transported back nearly six decades to when his younger self (**Telly Leung** of *Godspell*, "Glee") and his sister Kei (Tony Award®-winner **Lea Salonga** of *Miss Saigon*, *Mulan*) fought to stay connected to their heritage, their family and themselves after Japanese Americans were wrongfully imprisoned during World War II. Running time is 2 hours and 58 minutes. *Tickets are free, but registration is required. Click [here](#) for tickets.*



Adachi Taiko Interactive Performance + Discussion

Wednesday, October 25, 6pm

Adachi Taiko presents an all women-led interactive taiko performance in which the audience will be invited to participate in drumming sequences. The ensemble includes founder **Patti Adachi**, **Tina Adachi** (founder of Angel Island Theatre Company), **Aurora Adachi-Winter** and **Miwa Shimokogawa**. The performance will be followed by a discussion around the Adachi family history and its relationship to the incarceration in U.S. concentration camps as well as the intergenerational, political and historical impacts of taiko within Japanese American communities. *ASL interpretation provided.

Franny Choi's Family Style

Sunday, October 29, 4pm

Franny Choi's play *Family Style* is set in the year 2035 in post-Trump America. Boston is underwater, Muslim Americans are being herded into prison camps, and the deportation-industrial complex is in full swing. In a small Northeastern city, a chosen family of queer and trans people of color is surviving the apocalypse, one potluck at a time. Together, they navigate love, eat papaya salad and confront the difficult choice to flee to safety or to stay and fight. This program is a live reading of the play. Choi is the author of *Floating, Brilliant, Gone* (Write Bloody, 2014) and the forthcoming chapbook *Death by Sex Machine* (Sibling Rivalry Press). *ASL interpretation provided.

Neo-Futurists Present *The Infinite Wrench*

Wednesday, November 1, 6pm

One of the most highly-regarded experimental theater companies in the country, Chicago's **Neo-Futurists** will perform a special version of *The Infinite Wrench*, inspired by the themes of *Then They Came for Me*. *The Infinite Wrench* is a mechanism that unleashes a barrage of two-minute plays for a live audience. Each play offers something different—some are funny, others profound. Some are elegant, disgusting, topical, irrelevant, terrifying or put to song. All of the plays are truthful and tackle the here-and-now, inspired by the lived experiences of the performers. *ASL interpretation provided.

First Floor Theater Presents Dipika Guha's *The Art of Gaman*

Sunday, November 5, 4pm

Dipika Guha's play *The Art of Gaman* focuses on Tomomi, an immigrant from Japan during WWII and the incarceration of Japanese Americans. It traces her history and self-discovery over a sixty-year period in New York and Florida, exposing the lengths to which she'll go to keep parts of herself hidden and tucked away. She "endures the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity", or *gaman*. This program is a workshop presentation and the Chicago premiere. *ASL interpretation provided.

Karen Finley's *Welcome Home: Creative Resistance, Belonging and Safe Spaces*

Sunday, November 12, 1pm

Following the model of her remarkable artist workshop and public performance during Alphawood Gallery's past exhibition *Art AIDS America*, renowned performance artist **Karen Finley** returns. As a counternarrative to the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans explored in *Then They Came for Me*, Finley will guide invited local artists in the development of performances or rituals that create alternative spaces and dynamics offering shelter, acceptance and justice. The artistic focus will explore the questions: How do artists respond to our urgent social concerns? Where do we begin or end and sustain our practice in these times? How do we participate in creative resistance and keep a sense of agency? The results of this workshop will be shared at a





public performance on November 12. Finley recently performed as part of Bruce Yonemoto's critically acclaimed political film *Far East of Eden* paralleling the Japanese American incarceration camps with today's political climate.

Hate Crimes: From Vincent Chin to the Present Panel Discussion

Saturday, November 18, 1pm

It has been 35 years since the murder of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American (mistakenly identified as Japanese) who was killed in Detroit in 1982 at the height of the Japan-bashing era of the 1970s and 80s. This case outraged and galvanized the Asian American community to mobilize, fundraise and mount a legal case, spurring greater political participation and a stronger sense of Asian American identity. Issues of racial animosity and xenophobia have continued to resonate among many communities, not only since the events of 9/11, but also today. Featuring renowned Asian American and LGBTQ activist and author **Helen Zia**, who played an instrumental role in organizing around the Vincent Chin case, this panel will be moderated by **Dr. Ryan Masaaki Yokota** (Japanese American Service Committee) and include additional community members in a discussion of the legacy of Vincent Chin's murder and how to organize to safeguard our civil and human rights.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

SHARING STORIES: Saturdays at 3pm, **Sharing Stories** creates a space for dialogue and community. Visitors are invited to come to the 2nd floor lounge area to listen to personal stories and to ask questions, share their own experiences or just join the group to learn more about the Japanese American Incarceration camps. Remaining storytellers include: **Tom Ikeda** (Oct. 7), **Jon Masuo Yamashiro** (Oct. 14), **Anne Shimojima** (Oct. 21), **Roy Wesley** (Oct. 28), **Karen Su + Yuki Llewellyn** (Nov. 4), TBA (Nov. 11) and **Chieko Kimura + Atsumi Ozawa** (Nov. 18).

THE BIG PICTURE: *The Big Picture* is a new, ongoing rotating program of still and moving images projected on the large, state-of-the-art LED screen in the Alphawood Gallery central atrium. Taking advantage of its high resolution and powerful scale, content will provide new narratives and broaden the subject of the exhibition, connecting the WWII incarceration with today's concerns about racism, xenophobia and immigration. The series begins with pioneering filmmaker **Robert A. Nakamura's** award-winning documentary *Something Strong Within*, featuring rarely seen film footage of the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII taken by the inmates of the camps themselves. The 38-minute film will be looped continuously.

On Thursdays starting October 5, *The Big Picture* will feature images of artwork by Chicago-based artist **Aram Han Sifuentes**, whose interactive *Protest Banner Lending Library Workshops* will take place every Thursday from 2-5pm in the Take Action Room. Two bodies of Han Sifuentes' work will be shown on screen: a selection of handmade protest banners that visitors are encouraged to borrow for actual demonstrations and marches and a group of embroidered civics questions from the *U.S. Citizenship Test Sampler* project. The week of October 11, in conjunction with his participation in the exhibition and the *Sharing Stories* program on October 14, we will feature 50 images from **Jon Masuo Yamashiro's** recent photographic series "Artifacts – The Road to Manzanar," for which he visited the sites of all ten of the former camps with his two young children. For the duration of the exhibition, new images will be added to the rotation; please visit often and check the Gallery website or call the Gallery for the most updated information on *The Big Picture*.



BOOK PUBLICATION: Kevin J. Miyazaki's *A Guide to Modern Camp Homes*. In conjunction with the **Chicago Architecture Biennial**, Alphawood Gallery has printed a limited edition of *A Guide to Modern Camp Homes*, a book by Milwaukee-based artist Kevin J. Miyazaki. Both fictional and factual, the book gets to the heart of Miyazaki's question, "what was it like for members of my family, and for the larger Japanese American community, to be uprooted from what they knew as their safe, personal space—their home—and moved to empty, dusty, communal rooms smelling of freshly cut wood?" The book's structure is inspired by *The Book of Modern Homes*, published by Sears, Roebuck and Company in 1940, serving as both a reference to the idealized American home of the period and a vehicle to describe the specific living conditions and institutional racism experienced by Japanese Americans. **Limited copies of the book are available for a \$5 donation that supports the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) of Chicago.**

TAKE ACTION ROOM EVENTS: The Take Action space at Alphawood Gallery is dedicated to advocacy. Resources and materials are available to encourage visitors to reflect and TAKE ACTION toward creating change.

Aram Han Sifuentes' Protest Banner Lending Library Workshops, Thursdays, Oct. 5 – Nov. 16, 2-5pm. Artist **Aram Han Sifuentes' Protest Banner Lending Library** is a communal sewing space to support one another's voices, an opportunity to gain banner-making skills and a place to borrow handmade banners to use in protests. The public is invited to design, fabricate and borrow banners. All materials provided.

Black & Pink Chicago: Letter Writing Meetup, Wednesday, Oct. 11, 6-8pm; Sunday, Oct. 22, 1-4pm; and Wednesday, Nov. 8, 6-8pm. Interested in becoming a pen pal to an LGBTQ-identified person in prison? Alphawood Gallery partners with [Black & Pink](#) to provide dedicated time and space to write notes or ask questions about Black & Pink's ongoing letter-writing project. Participants learn more about the pen pal process, expectations, resources, do's and don'ts and get matched with a pen pal. Black & Pink Chicago is an open family of LGBTQ prisoners and "free world" allies who support one another.

Community Activism Law Alliance (CALA): Immigration Legal Clinic, Thursdays, Oct. 19 and Nov. 9, 4-7pm Alphawood Gallery partners with the Community Activism Law Alliance (CALA) to provide free confidential immigration screenings that will assess each participant's potential risks or concerns. Attorneys will offer consultations, outlining available options and advising on future steps. Depending on the client's situation and eligibility, CALA may offer additional legal services or referrals. CALA is a nonprofit organization that unites lawyers and activists in a collaborative pursuit for justice by leveraging legal services to benefit the most marginalized communities and individuals.

Mitigating Evidence: Shifting the Narrative About Criminalized Youth Workshop, Wednesday, Nov. 8, 6pm How do you individually and collectively interrupt the stereotypes and fears of incarcerated, court-involved and criminalized youth? This session will explore the *Mitigating Evidence* strategies designed by **Free Write Arts & Literacy**, a Chicago-based organization with 18 years of experience engaging incarcerated and court-involved youth in art making, literacy skill building and post-incarceration employment. The effects of unconstitutional policing strategies and the School-To-Prison Pipeline on Chicago's most vulnerable young people will also be explored.



WEEKLY PUBLIC TOURS: Guided tours of the exhibition are free and offered to the public on a weekly basis, Wednesday and Saturday at 1:00 pm, Thursday at 6:30 pm. No advance reservation is required, and tours depart from the front desk and last approximately one hour.

ASL Tours, Sundays, Oct. 15 and Nov. 12, 2pm

Alphawood Gallery offers tours in **American Sign Language (ASL)**. Please note there is no English interpretation. There will be a copy-signer present to mirror and clarify communication for the group. Due to the advanced content involved, this tour is not recommended for beginner ASL students.

Japanese Language Tour, Sunday, Oct. 22, 11:30am

Alphawood Gallery offers a Japanese language tour led by DePaul Professor **Nobuko Chikamatsu-Chandler**. Please note there is no English language interpretation on this tour.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT: The Oral History Studio is a private space within the gallery where visitors are invited to record their personal stories or reflections. Equipped with state-of-the-art audio and video recording equipment, the studio is available by walk-in (during scheduled hours) or by appointment. Advance appointments are recommended and can be scheduled by contacting Anna Takada at atakada@alphawood.org or completing the form [here](#).

HOURLY SCREENINGS OF *AND THEN THEY CAME FOR US*: *And Then They Came For Us*, a recent 45-minute documentary by **Ken Schneider** and **Abby Ginzberg**, is screened at the top of each hour the Gallery is open in the Alphawood Gallery 2nd floor theater. The film portrays the human face of ethnic roundups, registries, incarceration and deportation through a moving historical look at the forced incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. Schneider and Ginzberg utilize a wealth of photographs by Dorothea Lange and Ansel Adams, including many on display at the Gallery, to reveal the heartbreaking reality of this time in history, and makes explicit connections between the Japanese American incarceration story and current concerns with regard to the treatment of Muslims and Muslim Americans. Interviews include actor **George Takei** (*Star Trek*), who was incarcerated along with his family and recently visited the Gallery.

THE EXHIBITION

Alphawood Gallery has partnered with the Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) to produce the Gallery's first original exhibition, *Then They Came for Me: Incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and the Demise of Civil Liberties*. This exhibition examines a dark episode in U.S. history when, in the name of national security, the government incarcerated 120,000 citizens and legal residents during World War II without due process or other constitutional protections to which they were entitled.

Then They Came for Me presents this historical event from multiple perspectives. Drawing upon the powerful images culled from the book *Un-American: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II* by Chicago-based photo historians Richard Cahan and Michael Williams, the exhibition features works by renowned American photographers **Dorothea Lange**, **Ansel Adams** and others hired by the U.S. government's War Relocation Authority in addition to views of the incarceration by Japanese American artists **Toyo Miyatake** and **Miné Okubo**.





The JASC and a number of collectors from the Chicago area have generously lent art, objects, documents and other historical materials that provide glimpses into the personal experiences of those who were incarcerated. Plus, specially compiled video testimonies by former inmates, their family members and community leaders are installed throughout the exhibition.

Then They Came for Me was organized by Alphawood Gallery in collaboration with the Japanese American Service Committee.

ABOUT ALPHAWOOD FOUNDATION CHICAGO

Alphawood Foundation Chicago is a grant-making private foundation working for an equitable, just and humane society. It awards grants to more than 200 organizations annually, primarily in the areas of the arts and arts education, advocacy, architecture and preservation, domestic violence prevention, the environment, promotion and protection of the rights of LGBT citizens and people living with HIV/AIDS, and other human and civil rights.

ABOUT ALPHAWOOD GALLERY

Alphawood Gallery is supported by Alphawood Foundation Chicago. It was created to serve as a venue for exhibitions furthering the Foundation's charitable mission. The 12,000-square-foot space first served this purpose for the Chicago presentation of the groundbreaking national touring exhibition, *Art AIDS America*, which was on display from December 1, 2016 to April 2, 2017. Alphawood Gallery is open Wednesdays and Thursdays from 11am-8pm, and Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11am-6pm. Admission to Alphawood Gallery is free and open to the public.

The Gallery is conveniently located at 2401 North Halsted Street in Chicago near the CTA Fullerton 'L' stop, as well as several CTA bus routes. Limited free parking is available in an adjacent parking lot, along with more plentiful metered street parking and garage parking nearby.

For more information and updates on *Then They Came for Me*, please visit us at www.alphawoodgallery.org as well as on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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Photos available [HERE](#).

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