

# THEN THEY CAME FOR ME.

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

For Immediate Release

## Alphawood Gallery announces summer programs supporting social justice issues raised by *Then They Came for Me* exhibition Exhibition runs June 29-November 19, 2017

(June 26, 2017) In support of its first original exhibition - *Then They Came for Me: Incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and the Demise of Civil Liberties* - the Alphawood Gallery (2401 North Halsted Street, Chicago) proudly announces a robust summer of social justice-related programming, both on-site at the Gallery and off-site, courtesy of supporting organizations around the city. *Then They Came for Me*, an exhibition about the incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII, opens Thursday, June 29, and continues through November 19, 2017; the exhibition is free and open to the public.

Following is an initial list of programming – special one-time-only events plus ongoing programming at the Gallery – intending to answer questions about this troubling time – and surely raise additional ones. **All events are free, unless noted.** For an updated calendar, please visit: [www.alphawoodgallery.org](http://www.alphawoodgallery.org).

### Special events @ Alphawood Gallery, June – August 2017

#### **Art, Now. Act, Now: Know Your Rights**

OPENING NIGHT: Thursday, June 29, 6-8pm

History is ringing louder than ever - we must remember our stories and relearn our rights. Join *Art, Now. Act, Now.* for a night of performances, teach-ins, and calls to action by Chicago artists, educators, and community organizers. Hear about the events that led to this moment in Illinois immigration history, experience powerful performances from Chicago-based Asian-American artists, and learn how - and why - to act through mini-Know Your Rights talks on protests, legislation, and immigration enforcement. Speakers include renowned political activist and commentator **Don Washington**, Illinois State Representative **Will Guzzardi** and Logan Square immigration and refugee rights activist **Anthony Quezado** plus performances by comedian **Meg Indurti**, storytelling with **Owais Ahmed**, poetry from **Payal Kumar**, music from **Sen Morimoto** and taiko from **Ho Etsu Taiko**.

#### **Sharing Stories, with Jean Mishima & Yuki Hiyama**

Saturday, July 1, 3-4pm

**Jean Mishima**, President of the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, was six years old when she and her family were forced to leave their home in California and relocate to an incarceration camp 600 miles away in Gila River, Arizona. Jean is joined by **Yuki Hiyama**, who, along with her family, were placed at





the Manzanar War Relocation Center where a total of 11,070 people were incarcerated between 1942-1945. As an ongoing program, Sharing Stories creates a space within the exhibition for dialogue and community. Visitors are invited to come to the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**Rightlessness: From Japanese Incarceration to the Muslim Ban** (panel)

Saturday, July 8, 12-1:30pm

Led by American Studies scholar **Dr. A. Naomi Paik** (University of Illinois - Chicago), this panel will address connections between Japanese American incarceration and the continuous history of vilification, imprisonment, and exclusion of targeted peoples. Panelists will include speakers **Ryan Yokota** (Japanese American Service Committee), **Ninaj Raoul** (Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees) and **Muhammad Sankari** (Arab American Action Network) with a performance from **Axis Lab**.

**Full Spectrum Features Presents *Hidden Histories*** (film)

Wednesday, July 19, 6-8pm

***Hidden Histories*** is a touring program of five short narrative films about Japanese American incarceration during WWII. Each film tells a personal story dramatizing a different period of this history, starting from Executive Order 9066 (which authorized the confinement sites) to the present-day legacy for younger generations. ***Hidden Histories*** commemorates an important chapter in our nation's history, and pays tribute to the 120,000 Americans who suffered the indignity and untold losses of this unjustified incarceration. A post-screening discussion will follow.

**Victory Gardens Theater Presents *Behind the Fence*, a two-play series:**

***Question 27, Question 28***

Wednesday, August 2, 7:30pm

NOTE LOCATION: Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Avenue, Chicago

***Question 27, Question 28*** by playwright and Victory Gardens Theater Artistic Director Chay Yew tells the story of the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans from the West Coast and its aftermath through the voices of a variety of Japanese American and non-Japanese American women. All of the play's lines come from "interviews, transcripts and testimonials" by women who lived through that experience. The cast includes four characters, three Asian and one Caucasian, who read the lines, with the real-life figure from whose testimony they come from first identified. Among the many women whose words are used are Yuri Kochiyama, Monica Sone, Mary Tsukamoto, Yoshiko Uchida, and many others, including some non-Japanese Americans such as teacher Eleanor Gerard Sekerak and Eleanor Roosevelt. The cast includes **Kirsten Fitzgerald, Emily Kuroda, Jeanne Sakata, and Tamlyn Tomita**. A special exhibition tour will take place at 6pm will take place at Alphawood Gallery prior to the performance.



### ***Hold These Truths***

Thursday, August 3, 6pm

@ Alphawood Gallery

Playwright and actor **Jeanne Sakata** will perform and read from her play *Hold These Truths*, a biographical play about Gordon Hirabayashi, a Japanese American resister. During WWII in Seattle, University of Washington student Gordon Hirabayashi fights the U.S. government's orders to forcibly remove and mass incarcerate all people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast. As he struggles to reconcile his country's betrayal with his passionate belief in the U.S. Constitution, Hirabayashi begins a 50-year journey toward a greater understanding of America's triumphs---and a confrontation with its failures. In May 2012, President Barack Obama posthumously awarded Gordon Hirabayashi the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. The performance will be followed by a Q&A with the artists and directors of both *Behind the Fence* productions.

### **Larycia Hawkins Public Talk + Panel Discussion**

Wednesday, August 16, 6pm

Former Wheaton College professor Larycia Hawkins, subject of [The New York Times Magazine story](#): "The Professor Wore a Hijab in Solidarity - Then Lost Her Job," offers a public talk and panel discussion on solidarity and resistance with Muslim Americans.

### **Janice Tanaka's *Who's Gonna Pay For These Donuts, Anyways?* with presentation by Dr. Donna Nagata** (film)

Wednesday, August 30, 6pm

This experimental documentary chronicles **Janice Tanaka's** 50-year personal search for a father she has not seen since she was three years old. As a young man, the FBI arrested him for opposing the incarceration and diagnosed him as schizophrenic with paranoid tendencies. Tanaka finally finds him in a halfway house for the chronically mentally ill in Los Angeles's skid row. **Dr. Donna Nagata** (Professor at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and Author of *Legacy of Injustice: Exploring the Cross-Generational Impact of the Japanese American Internment*) offers a post-screening conversation on the long-term psychosocial consequences of the World War II incarceration among Japanese Americans.

### **Ongoing Programs @ Alphawood Gallery**

#### **DAILY SCREENING OF *AND THEN THEY CAME FOR US***

*And Then They Came For Us*, a new documentary by co-directors **Ken Schneider** and **Abby Ginzberg**, will be screened daily at 2pm in the Alphawood Gallery 2<sup>nd</sup> floor screening room. 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.



### **TAKE ACTION ROOM**

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. Alphawood Gallery will provide information and services related to legal aid, refugee and immigration services, voting rights, healthcare access, employment rights and more. Featured partner organizations will offer an ongoing schedule of activities including “Know Your Rights” trainings, educational workshops and organizing toolkits. Organizations include **For The People Artist Collective, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights** and **Community Activism Law Alliance** among others.

### **WEEKLY PUBLIC TOURS**

Wednesdays and Saturdays at 1pm, Thursdays at 6:30 pm

Guided public tours are free and no advance reservation is required. Tours will depart from the front desk and last approximately one hour.

### **ORAL HISTORY PROJECT – TELL YOUR STORY!**

The Oral History Studio is a private space within the gallery where visitors are invited to record their personal stories or reflections. An Alphawood Gallery staff member is available to interview visitors who are willing to share their histories and thoughts related to the themes and questions posed by *Then They Came for Me*. 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 encouraged, by contacting Anna Takada at [atakada@alphawood.org](mailto:atakada@alphawood.org). Sessions may vary in length. Once recordings are processed, they will be archived and, if individual permission is granted, potentially made public on the Alphawood Gallery website.

### **SHARING STORIES**

Saturdays, 3-4pm

SHARING STORIES creates a space within the exhibition for dialogue and community. Visitors are invited to come to the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

### **Special events OFF SITE**

#### **Bold Disobedience**

Now through September 2

Weinberg/Newton Gallery, 300 W. Superior Street, Chicago

Weinberg/Newton Gallery presents a group exhibition in collaboration with Mikva Challenge. Selected by a council of twelve student curators, this collection of works will communicate myriad ways youths participate in civic action today in America.



## States of Incarceration

Now through August 12

Jane Addams Hull House Museum, 800 S. Halsted Street, Chicago

Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, in collaboration with DePaul University and a New School-led coalition of 500 university students and formerly incarcerated individuals from 20 cities, create the first national traveling multi-media exhibition and coordinated public dialogue to explore the history and future of mass incarceration in the United States

## Virtue of the Vicious

July 16 – October 22

Hyde Park Art Center, 5020 S. Cornell Avenue, Chicago

An examination of the current political climate from the perspective of eight contemporary American artists. Curated by Hyde Park Art Center's Director of Exhibitions & Residency Programs **Allison Peters Quinn**, the exhibition presents photography, sculpture, painting and video by **Paul Stephen Benjamin, Kevin Blake, Jasmine Clark, Eric J. Garcia** in collaboration with **Luis Mayorga, Michelle Hartney, Jay Turner Frey Seawell** and **El Coyote Cojo** (Emilio Rojas and Adela Goldbard). Patriotism manifests itself in the American landscape and culture in obvious and covert ways. Artists participating in the exhibition examine the pride, loyalty, ownership, discrimination and fierceness that simultaneously characterize this conflicted allegiance in the current political climate through their artwork.

## 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. Executive Order 9066, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, set in motion the forced removal and imprisonment of all people of Japanese ancestry living on or near the West Coast. During this 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the executive order, we look back at this shameful past to learn lessons for our present and future in the face of new challenges encouraged by fearmongering and racism at the highest levels of government.

*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 documenting the eviction of Japanese Americans from their homes and their subsequent lives in incarceration camps. Lange and others were hired by the U.S. government's War Relocation Authority (WRA) to record the "evacuation" and "internment" process. In addition to the WRA photographers, the exhibition presents views of the incarceration by Japanese American artists **Toyo Miyatake** and **Miné Okubo**. Images by Miyatake, a professional photographer who was incarcerated at the Manzanar Relocation Center, reveal details of the camps that were prohibited in WRA photography, such as



barbed wire and guard towers, shown alongside his illuminating images of the imprisoned residents' daily lives. Similarly, pages from Miné Okubo's remarkable illustrated memoir *Citizen 13660* document her own incarceration experience with poignant drawings and forthright text.

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. Highlights include ID cards and tags, anti-Japanese propaganda, suitcases, diaries, handmade furniture, wood carvings and other works of art, high school yearbooks and newsletters produced by camp inmates, military accoutrements, indefinite leave clearances, materials related to resettlement in Chicago and eventual redress and reparation. 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](http://www.alphawoodgallery.org) as well as on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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Photos available [HERE](#).





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