

IDENTITY. ANCESTRAL MEMORY

SYMPOSIUM

April 24, 2010 1pm-5pm

Coordinated by: Grace Eiko Thomson

Screening of film: ***Watari Dori/Bird of Passage***, by Jesse Nishihata
(1 hour)

Panel Discussion:

Moderated by: Kirsten Emiko McAllister

Panel Members: Roy Miki, Michael Fukushima and the others (TBC)

Connections: Continuity and/or Departure?

In the rush to "post" everything from the nation and history to capitalism and identity, artists, filmmakers, and writers find themselves in often troubling tensions between what to retain from past connections, uneasily talked about in terms of inheritance, legacy, and ancestry, and what to leave behind while engaging with practices and ways of thinking, captured by terms such as diaspora, transnationalism, and commodification. In this session a group of artists, filmmakers, and writers will address these and related tensions through the example of "Japanese Canadians" as a site of social and cultural formations, reflecting on the work of Jesse Nishihata and Roy Kiyooka.

Grace Eiko Thomson (Curator and Coordinator)

Grace Eiko Thomson is currently Past President of the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC). Born in Vancouver to Naturalized Canadian parents, she was 'interned' to the interior of British Columbia, as 'enemy alien', under The War Measures Act invoked by the Government of Canada in 1942, and subsequently re-moved to Manitoba restricted of freedom of movement until 1949 some four years after the end of the War. She has degrees in Fine Arts from the University of Manitoba and graduate studies in Asian and Western art histories from University of British Columbia and University of Leeds, U.K. She was for many years curator of exhibitions and collections, and instructor of contemporary art, in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia and, in the '80s, art advisor to Sanavik Co-operative, Baker Lake, N.W.T More recently (1999-2002), she was Executive Director/Curator of the Japanese Canadian National Museum.

Kirsten Emiko McAllister (Moderator)

Kirsten Emiko McAllister is an Associate Professor in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. She became involved in the community during the early 1990s when she ran the JCCA oral history project, wrote for the Bulletin and Nikkei Voice and co-organised various community events in Vancouver. After leaving Vancouver for Ottawa and then Lancaster, England, her research continued to focus on Japanese Canadian issues. Some of her publications include *_Locating Memory: Photographic Acts_*, a book on photography, memory and place co-edited with Annette Kuhn, *_Terrain of Memory: A Japanese Canadian Memorial_* a book coming out in the Spring of 2010 on the landscape of memory in the Slokan Valley in addition to articles on photographic records of internment camps taken by Japanese Canadians and publications on art projects and more recent cases of political persecution involving refugees seeking asylum in the economic north.

Michael Fukushima (Panelor)

Michael Fukushima has been making films since 1984. He joined the NFB in 1990, directing the Hot Docs-winning animated documentary, *Minoru: memory of exile*. He became an NFB animation producer in 1997, co-creating the NFB's flagship emerging filmmaker program, Hothouse. Fukushima's notable films include the Genie Award winner, *cNote*, by Chris Hinton, two shorts from the Emmy-nominated mobile phone anthology *Art of Seduction*, and *HA'Aki*, by Iriz Pääbo, winner of the 2009 Prix Ars Electronica Golden Nica. He is co-producing Oscar®-nominated Koji Yamamura's next film, Ann Marie Fleming's film based on the illustrated memoir *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*, and is developing a slate of digital media and "arty" short films by a bevy of interesting young and established Canadian creators.