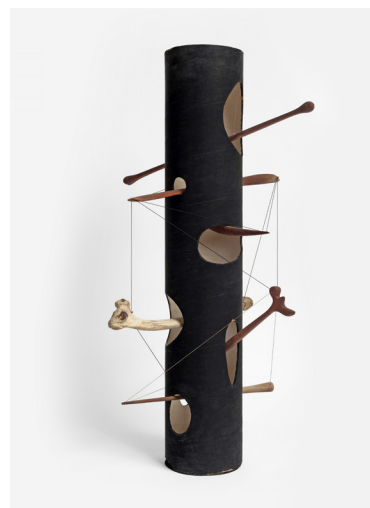
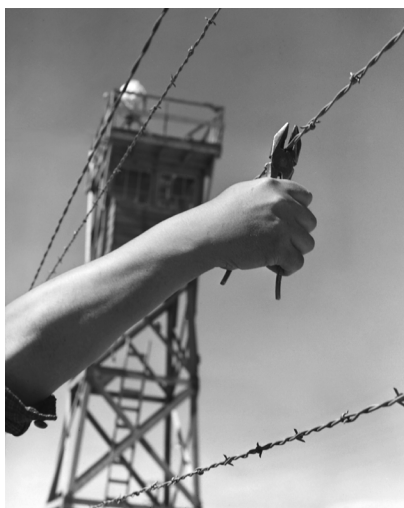


Noguchi Museum Presents
No Monument:
In the Wake of the Japanese American Incarceration

March 16–May 15, 2022



FROM LEFT: Toyo Miyatake, *Untitled (Opening Image from Valediction)*, 1944. Gelatin silver print. 13 3/4 x 10 3/4 in. © Toyo Miyatake Studio Collection.
 Kay Sekimachi, *Ogawa II*, 1969. Nylon monofilament, glass beads, clear plastic tubes. 76 x 10 1/2 x 9 1/2 in. Forrest L. Merrill Collection / © Kay Sekimachi.
 Isamu Noguchi, *Monument to Heroes*, 1943. Cardboard, string, wood, bone. 28 1/4 x 13 3/8 x 9 3/4 in. The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, NY. © INFGM / ARS

New York, NY (March 11, 2022) – The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum presents *No Monument: In the Wake of the Japanese American Incarceration*, a focused, small-scale group exhibition guest curated by Genji Amino with Christina Hiromi Hobbs.

The exhibition is organized to mark the eightieth anniversary of Executive Order 9066 (signed on February 19, 1942) which authorized the forced removal and mass incarceration of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans by the United States government during World War II. Including a selection of works by Japanese American artists, some of whom were incarcerated and others whose lives were shaped indirectly by the widespread impact of the Executive Order, the exhibition represents an array of photographic and sculptural experiments following an event marking the height of anti-Japanese sentiment in the twentieth century.

The exhibition includes a small selection of works made by as yet unidentified Japanese Americans in the concentration camps. These works now reside in the collection of the Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles, and circulate as part of the traveling exhibition and remembrance project *Contested Histories: Art and Artifacts from the Allen Hendershott Eaton Collection*. They are

presented alongside work by Leo Amino (1911–1989), Ruth Asawa (1926–2013), Joseph Goto (1916–1994), Hiromu Kira (1898–1991), Toyo Miyatake (1895–1979), Patrick Nagatani (1945–2017), Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988), Kay Sekimachi (b. 1926) and Toshiko Takaezu (1926–2011).

By gathering together works such as Isamu Noguchi’s haunting wood and bone *Monument to Heroes* (1943), Kay Sekimachi’s ethereal hanging fiber work *Ogawa II* (1969), and Patrick Nagatani’s 1994 photographs of the former sites of Japanese American concentration camps in Utah and Idaho, the exhibition presents a range of approaches to abstraction developed following the era of Japanese American incarceration. Read more: noguchi.org/no-monument

LOCATION

The Noguchi Museum
9-01 33rd Road (at Vernon Boulevard)
Long Island City, NY 11106

Open Weds–Sun, 11 am–6 pm,
by advance reservation: noguchi.org/visit

Media Visits and all Press Inquiries:

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RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAM

Contested Histories: Art and Artifacts from the Allen Hendershott Eaton Collection

April 8, 9, 10, 11 am–6 pm

The Noguchi Museum (Lower Level Studio)

Free admission

Contested Histories: Art and Artifacts from the Allen Hendershott Eaton Collection (janm.org/exhibits/contested-histories) will be presented as a public program, organized by Clement Hanami, the Artistic Director of the Japanese American National Museum.

Complementing the exhibition *No Monument: In the Wake of Japanese American Incarceration*, the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) brings its pop-up display of the Allen Hendershott Eaton Collection to The Noguchi Museum for one weekend. The collection of art and craft objects created by Japanese Americans while incarcerated in American concentration camps during World War II was transferred to JANM in 2015. The display includes physical and digital representations of every item in the collection that in their own way reveal a history of the Japanese American experience. *Contested Histories* is intended to “crowd source” as much information about each object so that JANM’s efforts to preserve and catalog the collection can be as complete as possible. Camp survivors and their family members and friends will be encouraged to share with JANM information they know or remember about the objects, including who is depicted in the many

photographs, most of which were shot by photographers working for the War Relocation Authority. Presentations about the collection will be offered throughout the day. noguchi.org/events

Admission to *Contested Histories* is free, but must be scheduled in advance. Tickets include admission to The Noguchi Museum and the *No Monument* special exhibition. A limited number of walk-up tickets will be available based on museum capacity. Members of the Japanese American community will be given priority reservations by RSVP to education@noguchi.org.

SUPPORT / ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This exhibition would not have been possible without the generous support of the Japanese American National Museum, which has graciously loaned works from *Contested Histories: Art and Artifacts from the Allen Hendershott Eaton Collection*, and has organized a program in conjunction with *No Monument*. The curators owe their gratitude to the Estate of Leo Amino, the Estate of Ruth Asawa, the Estate of Joseph Goto, the Estate of Hiromu Kira, the Estate of Patrick Nagatani, the Toyo Miyatake Studio, and the Toshiko Takaezu Studio, as well as to Dennis Reed, Forrest L. Merrill, Andrew Smith Gallery, and Jonathan Laib at David Zwirner Gallery.

Exhibitions at The Noguchi Museum are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council and from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature.

Contested Histories: Art and Artifacts from the Allen Hendershott Eaton Collection was funded, in part, by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program. Additional support was provided by George and Brad Takei, the Earle K. & Katherine F. (Muto) Moore Foundation, and Richard Sakai. The material in this pop-up display is based upon work assisted by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

CURATOR BIOS

Genji Amino is a writer and curator based in New York. They are a 2021 *Emerge-Surface-Be* fellow at the Poetry Project and recently the curator of *Leo Amino: The Visible and the Invisible* at David Zwirner Gallery.

Christina Hiromi Hobbs is a fourth-generation Japanese American writer and curator from the Bay Area currently researching the role of studio and vernacular photography in contesting official histories of the Japanese American incarceration.

ABOUT THE NOGUCHI MUSEUM

Founded in 1985 by category-defying artist Isamu Noguchi (1904–1988), The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum (now known as The Noguchi Museum) in Queens, New York, was the first museum in the United States to be established, designed, and installed by a living artist to show their own work. Itself widely viewed as among the artist’s greatest achievements and holding the world’s largest collection of his works, the Museum features open air and indoor galleries in a repurposed 1920s industrial building and a serene outdoor sculpture garden. Since its founding, it has served as an international hub for Noguchi research and appreciation. In addition to managing the artist’s archives and catalogue raisonné, the Museum exhibits a comprehensive selection of Noguchi’s material culture, from sculpture, models, and drawings to his personal possessions. Provocative installations drawn from the permanent collection, together with diverse special exhibitions and collaborations with contemporary practitioners across disciplines, offer a multifaceted view of Noguchi’s art and illuminate his enduring influence as an innovator.

noguchi.org | [@noguchimuseum](https://www.instagram.com/noguchimuseum)

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CURATORS' STATEMENT

By Genji Amino and Christina Hiromi Hobbs

On the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the issuance of Executive Order 9066, which effectively authorized the incarceration of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans by the United States government, *No Monument* responds to the ambivalent status of commemoration and memorialization of historical trauma in light of the silences, refusals, studies, and dreams that persist in its wake. Recalling this period of the censure of Japanese American civil liberties and the disavowal of state violence in the name of military necessity, *No Monument* attends to the alternative orders of memory called for by artists who observe unrecorded histories and imagine unprecedented visions for the future. Given that sculpture and photography have historically been understood in relation to notions of monument and document, *No Monument* returns to these same media in order to reconsider what it means to represent and remember the legacy of the incarceration for Japanese American art across the United States.

In collaboration with the estates of several of the featured artists and the Japanese American National Museum, the exhibition takes as its point of departure the exceptional heterogeneity of Japanese American wartime experience, gathering together works by artists living on the West Coast who were incarcerated following the Executive Order, those living in Hawaii under martial law after Pearl Harbor, and those on the East Coast who protested the incarceration while living under threat but not confinement. The exhibition presents works that have been celebrated alongside those that have been overlooked, those of the professionally trained alongside those of the self-taught, and those elevated as fine art alongside those historically relegated to craft or design.

Rather than considering the historical record of the incarceration as a documentary resource for the monumentalization of a racialized figure—a testament to suffering and resilience in the face of dispossession, exclusion, and containment¹—*No Monument* organizes a vital archive of artistic experiment that embraces an unorthodox abstraction, imagining modes of address that elude memorialization. In the place of a romance of resistance or the pathos of sacrifice, the exhibition offers a reflection on what it means to remember an event rendered unnamable by official narratives and unspeakable by collective trauma. If at midcentury the notion of the monument offered a paradigm through which to reckon with the prospect of the “end of man”² threatened by nuclear apocalypse, the secondary effects of this monumental figuration had implications for Japanese Americans living out the containment and surveillance that sustained imaginaries of military detente and “total war.” Exploring unrecognized affinities among artists working in this period, *No Monument* looks to Japanese American artists who took up alternative vocabularies for remembrance and speculation in the face of an experience of modernity not as impending threat but as an ongoing state of emergency.

Those rendered out of sight and out of time by the incarceration, forbidden by law to reproduce the space of the camps through photography, turned to other means of marking time³ in order to redress the censure of the critique of state-sanctioned violence and dispossession at the level of the means of representation. With their foreseeable futures foreclosed by displacement and the trauma of their immediate past made inaccessible by national consensus, Japanese Americans addressed their works to an uninhabitable present in order to make it livable. These practices of survival were so bound up with the time and space of the incarceration that they were often abandoned in the transition to resettlement following the war, leaving little behind for the historical record. The small number of photographs by Japanese Americans who found ways to defy the camera ban speaks similarly to an urgent recording of an unreliable present, providing an antidote to the romantic monumentalization of Japanese American sacrifice in the widely circulated camp photographs of Ansel Adams.

Japanese Americans living outside the militarized zones established by the Executive Order, even if they avoided confinement, could not avoid their implication in this era of anti-Japanese sentiment and the peculiar temporalities it implied for aesthetic and political action and redress. The alternatives to monumentalism featured in this exhibition, produced both by those who were incarcerated and those whose lives were shaped indirectly by the widespread impact of the Executive Order, speak to the legacies of these histories through their embrace of materials, orders of scale, and compositional strategies that evoke questions of contingency, mutability, and transparency. These inquiries into the parameters of the visible and the limits of representational capture, undertaken by artists negotiating the proscription of their legal, social and civic recognition, shed light on the latent memory and speculative potential conveyed by the art produced in the wake of the incarceration.

1 Emily Roxworthy, *The Spectacle of Japanese American Trauma: Racial Performativity and World War II* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008).

2 Robert Slifkin, *The New Monuments and the End of Man: U.S. Sculpture between War and Peace, 1945-1975* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

3 Nicole Fleetwood, *Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2020).

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