

paueru gaizette

パウエル街ゼット

7号 2025年 2月

no.7 february 2025

初日の出/hatsuhinode

a zine of the powell street festival society



*As the first light of the new year breaks over the horizon,
Hatsuhinode - the first sunrise of the year - marks a moment to
resolve the previous year.*



天照大神 (Amaterasu Omikami)
the goddess of the sun
Reiko Pleau

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upon review: a summary of 2024

by megan kiyoko wray

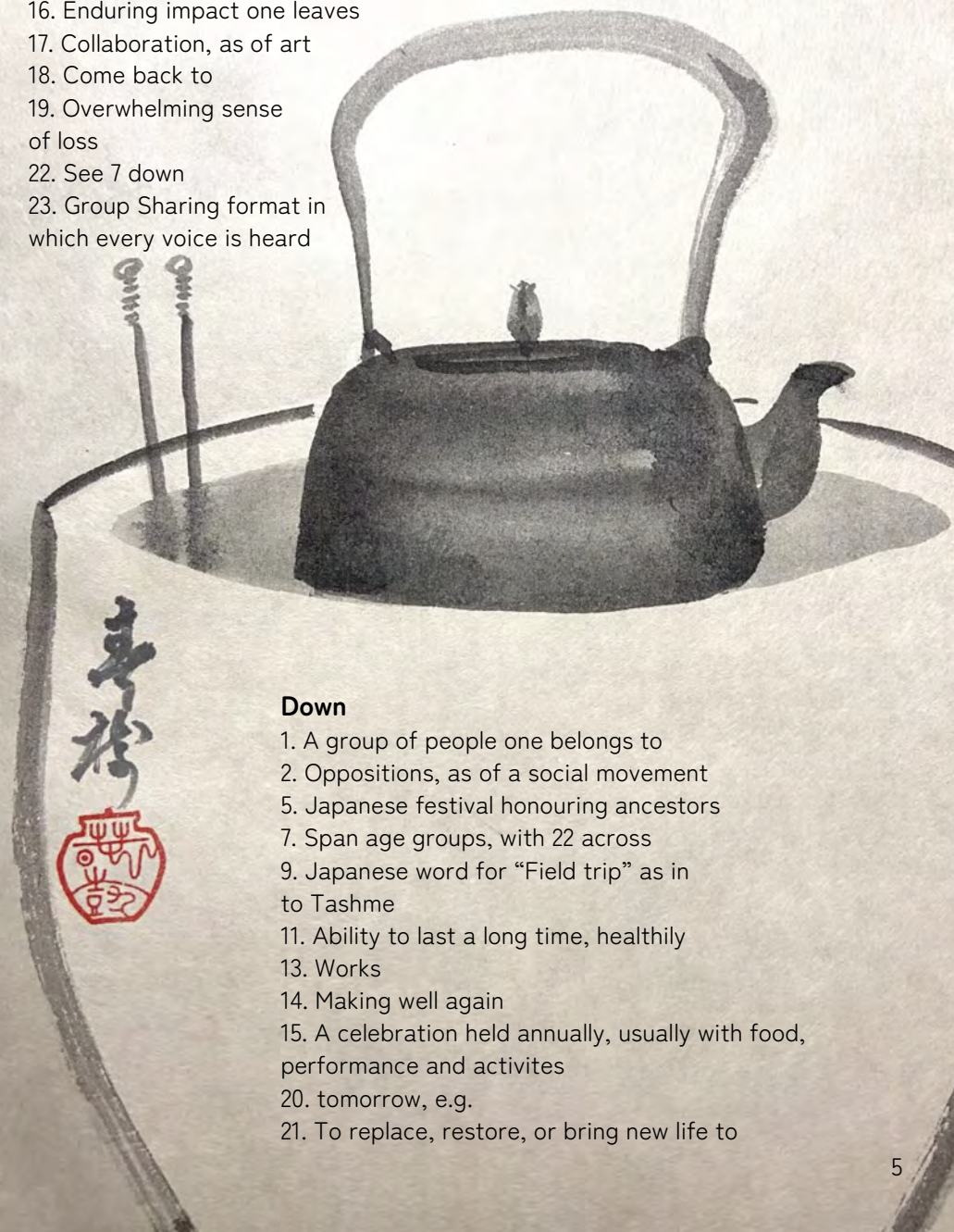


Across

3. To make something last
4. Coal miner's dance
6. Short print publication
8. Ones to respect
10. memories, narratives, accounts, e.g.
12. One who has lived
16. Enduring impact one leaves
17. Collaboration, as of art
18. Come back to
19. Overwhelming sense of loss
22. See 7 down
23. Group Sharing format in which every voice is heard

Down

1. A group of people one belongs to
2. Oppositions, as of a social movement
5. Japanese festival honouring ancestors
7. Span age groups, with 22 across
9. Japanese word for "Field trip" as in to Tashme
11. Ability to last a long time, healthily
13. Works
14. Making well again
15. A celebration held annually, usually with food, performance and activities
20. tomorrow, e.g.
21. To replace, restore, or bring new life to





Summer of a 1000 Obons

- farewell KOKO Sushi

Kyle 八ヶ代



In the summer of 2024, I helped Kikiai Collaborative organize an Obon festival in Tashme, BC—the site of the largest Japanese Canadian internment camp during WWII. The event, held in late August, capped a summer of Obon festivals we attended, including ones at Steveston Buddhist Temple, Maple Ridge, and (arguably) Powell Street Festival. Among our group, we danced so much bon odori that I jokingly started calling it The Summer of 1000 Obons (though it was closer to four or five). Many of these festivals were likely one-offs as they were funded by the semi-reparations handed down from the BC government for projects that had to be completed in 2024.



After a day planning in Tashme, we returned to Vancouver and stopped at my favorite restaurant, KOKO Sushi on Hastings Street. Opened in 1982, KOKO was one of Vancouver's oldest sushi restaurants and a beloved institution among Japanese Canadians. Its traditional tatami booths, the Great Wave of Kanagawa behind the bar, kimonos worn by waitresses, and the warm, thick-walled mugs of steaming green tea made it feel distinct and rooted in JC history. But that day, the waitress delivered heartbreaking news: KOKO would be closing as the chef and his wife were retiring. With their children in other careers, there was no one to continue the legacy.



That same year, other cherished Abbotsford based JC sushi restaurants from my childhood that I would visit with my grandfather, like Seh-Mi and Sui Sha Ya, also closed. This coincided with the loss of JC pillars from my life like my Auntie Sandy, who hosted Oshogatsu dinners of my childhood, and Grace Eiko Thomson, who helped paved the way for our modern JC community to exist.

As businesses close, community hubs and representation disappear, but more importantly money stops flowing into the community. In a larger context, there's not just generational turnover happening—it's the dawning of a new era. Family businesses are disappearing, replaced by corporations and asset management firms, funneling wealth out of the middle class as we sink deeper into the billionaire oligarchic era of western capitalism. A lot of big words at the end of this short essay but my point is this: without 6 institutions and leaders the power of our communities diminish.

glossary of entanglement

a montage of embrace

megan kiyoko wray

beams flicker through leaves
 a promise of tomorrows
 dashi steam facial
 drumbeat, drumbeat, flower, flower
 yellowed paper, tattered seams
 third from left. could it be you?
 enshrined, elected, inscribed
 steal back the haney farm
 your name? last name? family name?
 gulls swarm, geese above the barn,
 the geta, clip clop. clip clop
 barefeet. you walked here

we are worth four thousand words.



Sumi-e Paintings
by Jane Momoyo Azuma



Summer of a 1000 obons continued:

Ironically, there are still probably more Japanese restaurants now in Vancouver than there ever have been. My hope is that the flurry of 2024 programming will inspire unity and renewal in our community as we navigate this uncertain future.

Please visit jcplaceandmemory.com and look forward to the anthology collection of other writings about Japanese Canadian Place and Memory





Divination Card - Cindy Mochizuki

I didn't know that it was what I needed most: Japanese Canadian matriarchs. See them now, fingers pointing or fists raised, beating the air. Diminutive figures with passionate voices, challenging authority and speaking uncomfortable truths. Grace, Jean, Mary, Joy, and Esther are amongst them. Might I find the courage to grow old with such honesty, grace and fortitude?

- Emiko Morita

Upon getting to know Grace over almost 30 years, I am still remembering many interesting, sometimes noisy discussions - the noisy ones usually ending with mutual reassurance that true friends respect differences of opinion! I appreciated Grace's voice on matters, her humour, compassion, interest in others, unwavering stance against racism, her sense of justice, and generous support when she assessed someone had experienced unfairness. I still miss the telephone discussions, the talk when going for a walk and her willingness to be present when I asked for her thoughts on matters. I often said to her, "Grace you are one of a kind". She truly was.

- Judy Hanazawa

Tributes to Grace Eiko Thomson

I don't have a specific memory of Grace. But when I would see her once a year at the festival, conversations would pick up as if no time had passed.

- Michael Ouchi

Grace Eiko Thomson was first and foremost a near and dear friend to me. To the Japanese Canadian community, she was an elder, artist, activist and a mentor to many.

Since her passing, I have found it very difficult to express the grief and sadness at the huge loss of a comrade who shared her life stories with me. She educated me and in doing so I learned how to navigate my life on how to survive within and without the Japanese Canadian community and the world at large.

What I loved about Grace was her tenacity and passion to "fight the good fight" and she did not back down.

We used to joke that we were the "troublemakers" in the community and that we would not win a popularity contest, but we would exit this world happy because we were true to ourselves and we both had similar political views to fight against the many injustices in this world.

Her dogged determination to speak the truth was what I admired and respected the most.

- Lily Shinde

一期一会 | once in a lifetime encounter
Yoriko Gillard

新年の
募る絆に
君想ふ

しんねんの
つのるきずなに
きみおもう



Shichimi togarashi

Carolyn Nakagawa

Grace translated her mother:

"I know two English names: Grace and Lily.

And you're not a Lily."

Grace was salt.

She was spice. She was sparkle.

She was a woman with opinions

and attachments. She wanted the world to know

what she knew. She had her own dreams

and believed in mine. She will have a hundred new names now:

delight

memory truth conviction kindness

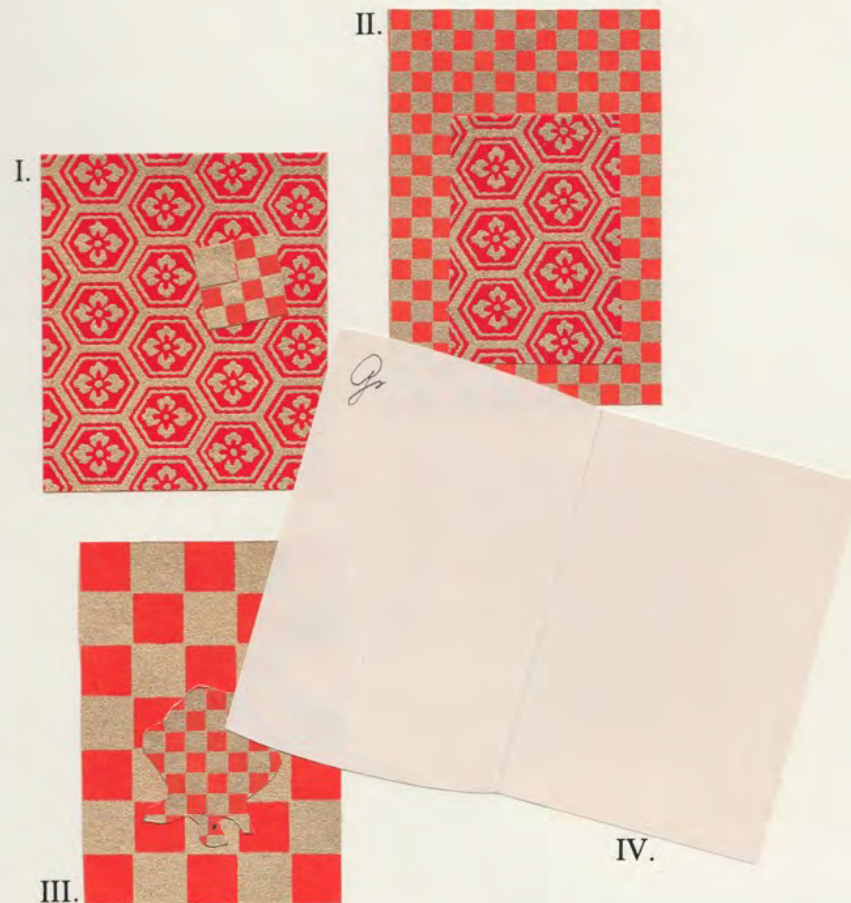
sencha tabi chagayu shichimi togarashi

apple pie manju kizuna



I've been thinking about how Grace got her English name, and the Buddhist tradition of giving a person a new name when they die. I was told it was so that the person wouldn't be called back to earth when their living name was spoken. Recently I wrote a poem about community, and without realizing it I had written "Grace" right at its centre. Although the Buddhist tradition might frown on this, I quite like the idea that I could call on Grace in this way, and through my memories of her, now that she's on a different plane. - Carolyn

As a fellow Japanese Canadian student of art history, I am honoured to be in the possession of several books on art and critical theory that Grace was giving away before she moved back to Winnipeg. I was in awe when I found out she had used her Redress money to pursue a Master's degree under Griselda Pollock, who is a major influence in feminist art history and gender studies based in the UK. The four books I've depicted in this origami paper collage are only a selection of the paperback gems from Grace that now sit on my bookshelves.



Four books from Grace

Reiko Pleau

Grace Eiko Thomson rescues Art Auction event

left to right: Zainub Verjee, Sayuri Katayama,
Kiko Hirano, Grace Eiko Thomson

Spearheaded by PSF board member Zainub Verjee who had been the Executive Director of Western Front for years, we embarked on a spring art auction event as a fundraiser for the Powell Street Festival. We gathered beautiful and significant works from local Asian and Indigenous artists including Haruko Okano, Yuxweluptan Lawrence Paul, Mas Funo, Roy Kiyooka, Michael Speier, Laiwan, Paul Wong, Miyuki Shinkai, Sherry Jamal and many others. Our venue was the Heritage Hall, our performers were Takeo Yamashiro and Minoru Sumimoto, we had hors d'oeuvres and everything was set to go.

BUT.... we didn't realize until that day the restrictions with the heritage building making the installation very difficult. How were we going to accomplish this without touching the walls?? Zainub, who knew Grace Eiko Thomson from working together at Women in Focus (feminist gallery and media arts centre), reached out to her for her expertise.

Grace was fantastic, fast and expertly dealt with the problem, advising us and installing the art just in time for the event!! Thanks Grace, that was a close call.

Kage - PSFS board member
1994-1999



Funny enough, we always got caught up laughing, talking and crying that we didn't have many photos together, but I thought this one was really really cute. She bought me that t-shirt that day

- Taitania

The following is a shortened version of a letter sent when I was president of the GJVCCA, in April 2019 to the Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre. Through our GJVCCA board decision at the time, we were seeking NNMCC support to establish a public commemoration of Grace Thomson as the Year 2000 inaugural Curator/Director of the then Japanese Canadian National Museum. Our letter demonstrated immense regard for Grace, her creativity, her professionalism, her lived experience, and her enduring dedication to the establishment of a Japanese Canadian Museum offering research, collections, archival content and more, so that the stories of Japanese Canadians would be preserved and shared nationally and beyond.

- Judy Hanazawa

April ##, 2019

Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre

Attention: Roger Lemire, Executive Director
Sherri Kajiwarra, Director | Curator

Dear Mr. Lemire and Ms. Kajiwarra:

Re: Grace Eiko Thomson

In 1998, Grace was consulted and happily offered hundreds of hours to research requirements of a museum which would uphold a national standard. She accepted the role as the Museum's first Executive Director | Curator, working in a part time position and volunteering additional hours, to develop and launch the museum. She curated the Inaugural Exhibition which opened September 22, 2000. Grace had and continues to have a passionate focus upon the development of the Museum because she so clearly recognizes it as an institution belonging to Japanese Canadians. She recognizes the privilege given through Redress - to finally establish a national Japanese Canadian museum. The support from Redress was to ensure a permanent place for sharing the stories of Japanese Canadians not only within the local community but throughout Canada and the world. She recognizes it as a legacy museum.

We have also considered Grace Thomson's own history with the Museum and recognize her significant and unique role which resulted in its successful launch in 2000. Grace worked diligently and at times without pay, to develop a museum of the highest calibre so that the public could be offered a comprehensive education about *our history and our people*.

(Omission here of section providing Grace's biographical chronology)

Commemorating Grace Thomson – A Summary

Grace was the inaugural Curator | Director of the national museum who continues to this day, in her 86th year, to assist the museum as well as other institutions, organizations and programs by voluntarily contributing her time, unique knowledge and abilities. Because of her continuing intent through her work, to offer a deeper understanding about who Japanese Canadians are, her ongoing support for the development and well-being of our community, her lived experience, personal and professional knowledge and skill in presenting the history and culture of Japanese Canadians, the Greater Vancouver JCCA feels she needs to be specifically acknowledged for her singular place in relation to the identity, establishment, ongoing development and well-being of the museum.

The GJVCCA asks the Museum and Cultural Centre to establish a permanent recognition to honour Grace Thomson, the founding Director | Curator of the national museum. Her personal story is central to the museum's mandate and purpose. She has demonstrated enduring dedication to the museum's intended work since its inauguration in 2000. We have received the endorsement from the Powell Street Festival Society regarding this request. We ask you to recognize Grace Thomson's contributions through a publicly displayed permanent commemoration and dedication, as we are certain you are aware of what a special and unique resource Grace has been and continues to be for the museum as well as for all Japanese Canadians.

The GJVCCA would appreciate a timely response to this request.
In gratitude,

Judy Hanazawa, President
Greater Vancouver JCCA



Check out Norm Masaji Ibuki's
post on [Discover Nikkei](#) about Grace



Grace's favourite pie recipes

Pies

APPLE PIE

8 or 9 apples	1 tsp. cinnamon
$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. nutmeg
1 c. sugar	2 tbsp. butter
2 tbsp. flour	

Pare apples and slice thin; add sugar mixed with flour, salt and spices. Fill unbaked pie shell. Dot with butter. Adjust with top crust. Bake in hot oven 450° for 10 mins., reduce to 350° for 40 mins. If desired grated lemon rind or orange rind may be added to apples. A nice change is to brush top crust with slightly beaten egg white and sprinkle generously with sugar before baking.

BLUEBERRY PIE

1 pkg. frozen blueberries	salt
$\frac{3}{4}$ c. water	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cinnamon
$\frac{1}{2}$ c. sugar	2 tbsp. cornstarch
2 tbsp. lemon juice	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. water

Reserve $\frac{1}{2}$ c. blueberries. Cook remaining blueberries with water, sugar, lemon juice, salt and cinnamon. Add cornstarch mixed with water. Boil till no taste of cornstarch remains. Cool. Put $\frac{1}{2}$ c. blueberries in baked shell and cover with cooked berry mixture. Top with flavored whipped cream garnished with crushed nuts.

Ida Switzer

EASY CHEESE PIE

Soften one 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese; blend in $\frac{2}{3}$ c. sweetened condensed milk, 1 tsp. grated lemon peel, and 3 tbsp. lemon juice. Whip $\frac{1}{2}$ c. cream; fold into cheese mixture. Pour in graham wafer crust and chill until firm.

LEMON MERINGUE

baked pie shell	$1\frac{1}{2}$ c. sugar
5 egg yolks	salt
$\frac{3}{4}$ c. lemon juice	$1\frac{1}{4}$ c. boiling water
3 tbsp. lemon rind	5 egg whites
5 tbsp. flour	

Beat yolks till foamy, add 1 c. sugar, flour, salt, beat until smooth. Pour in juice and rind. Add boiling water. Cook over boiling water till thick. Pour into baked shell. Make meringue with the 5 egg whites beaten with $\frac{1}{2}$ c. sugar. Pile on top of lemon filling being sure to seal in the edges so meringue won't shrink.

Reva Reganstreiff

OUR ADVERTISERS MADE THIS BOOK POSSIBLE.

Pies

FRESH STRAWBERRY PIE

Wash and hull $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarts fresh strawberries. Reserve half the best looking ones. Mash the rest. Add 1 c. sugar and 3 tbsp. cornstarch. Mix well and cook for 5 mins., stirring constantly until thickened and clear. Stir in 2 tbsp. lemon juice. Cool. Add remaining berries saving 4 or 5 large ones for garnish. Pour into a baked pie shell or a graham wafer shell. Chill. Serve with whipped cream garnished with the remaining berries.

PARFAIT PIE

Dissolve 1 pkg. strawberry jello in $1\frac{1}{4}$ c. boiling water. Stir in 1 brick vanilla or strawberry ice cream. Stir until dissolved. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 pkg. thawed fresh frozen strawberries. This filling can be poured over a graham wafer crust. Dress up with sweetened whipped cream. Can also be spooned into sherbet glasses or into individual molds.

Anabelle Gurevitch

STORY BOOK TARTS

1 c. sugar	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. evaporated milk
2 tbsp. butter	1 c. nuts
2 eggs	1 c. currants
2 tbsp. lemon juice	

Fill unbaked tart shells with mixture and bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

Harriet Barret

PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS.



a handmade book/paper sculpture created using watercolour, ink, pencil drawings by Angela May, text from Rita Wong's *perpetual* (Nightwood Editions, 2015), relief prints with stamps carved by Meris Ngan Colby, among other mixed-media materials by Erica Isomura



Adventures with Grace & Lots of Name Dropping

Vivien Nishi

"Here's \$100.00 dollars" said Midge Ayukawa, "I feel bad for you." I had clocked up \$140.00 worth of speed violations on the RCMP radar on the Coquihalla. This topped off an internment camp tour with our two community historians Dr Midge Ayukawa and Grace Eiko Thomson, year 2000. We visited New Denver and the former site of Lemon Creek.

"Here's a \$50.00 food coupon from Save-On Foods" said Harue Kanemitsu, Reiki master and permaculture practitioner. We were on the planning committee organized by Grace who had just moved back to BC from Saskatchewan and was tasked with organizing a conference of JC artists - Tsudoi, 1998. The message on the answering machine "You don't know me, but..."



	Government of Canada	Gouvernement du Canada	DDMMYYYY
PAY <u>Saburo Nishi</u>		OR BEARER	
SUM OF			
Acc. No.			
Please Sign Above			
569890 12345678906 1234			

"Here's my government cheque" crowed my dad Saburo, I had listed him along with Grace, Midge, and Kimino (my Mom) as historical advisors on Linda Ohama's NFB production Obaachan's Garden. (Still streaming off the NFB website from year 2000) Grace advised with the mochi pounding sequence and kept the mochi turner's hands safe from harm. I learned how to top sugar beets, light a coal oil lamp and how to catch a loose canary in a boathouse.

Of the many adventures I had with Grace they seem to always lead me back to JC history, art making and family ties. She was the same generation as my parents and could commiserate with Saburo about the forced removal from the BC coast and the merits of Doestovsky and Tolstoy. With my mother Kimino, they could discuss the Japanese classics - The Kojiki, and artists - Shoji Hamada, Shiko Munakata comfortably in Japanese.

To end with the younger generation, "Here's your shinkansen ticket to Tokyo" said Grace, as we waited in Toyohashi Station with her daughter-in-law Mary to attend a 2016 art gallery opening of artist Cindy Mochizuki, curated by Makiko Hara, and visiting curator Naomi Sawada. We spent the afternoon in The Ginza district, home to the most expensive real estate in Japan - lots of brand name dropping and NOT shopping.



The Asahi Baseball group, sportswriter Mr. Norio Goto, the Japanese Immigration Studies Group, and connections to academics Mona Oikawa, Andrea Geiger, Ann Sunahara Gomer (some of who/whom I have not met but was encouraged to read their books) Grace moved in many circles and through her grace and openness I felt movement from our historical Japanese-Canadian status of marginalized 'outsider' to becoming a lynchpin in new communities of connection and shared interests, a trajectory shared with the Powell St Festival.

Last memories - 2022. "Here's your tickets to see Chaka Khan and Patti Labelle at the PNE", I said to Grace and her son David (from Japan). Groovy times with the Queen of Funk and the Godmother of Soul. Legendary! Let the festivities roll onward in the park.



28 DEC 2024

Dear Grace,

Just wanted to say again how grateful I am for your bright energy, sharp intellect, and inspiring, no-nonsense, tell-it-like-it-is righteousness. How lucky am I to have known you and worked alongside such a fearless woman warrior who always spoke out against injustice, who valued and shared her own artistic endeavours, creativity, and powerful written and spoken words, and who always reminded us of the crucial need to know our history and to build community to hold it all.

Thanks to all of your contributions and support, the DTES Community Land Trust continues its pursuit of community ownership of SROs like Keefer Rooms for deeply affordable housing for low-income tenants. And we are working on the 49th Annual Powell Street Festival in Pauera Grai where you first lived as a little girl. We miss you so much.

Love,
Kathy



Most of our life is luck in my opinion.

advice from grace

You're young. I'm sorry to say your heart may be broken again and again...

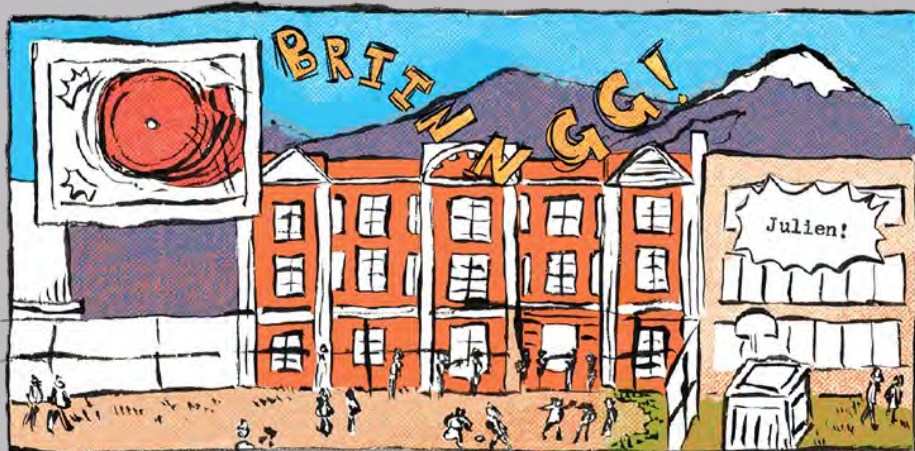
many things we don't have control over, except to be true to yourself.

may 8 2020

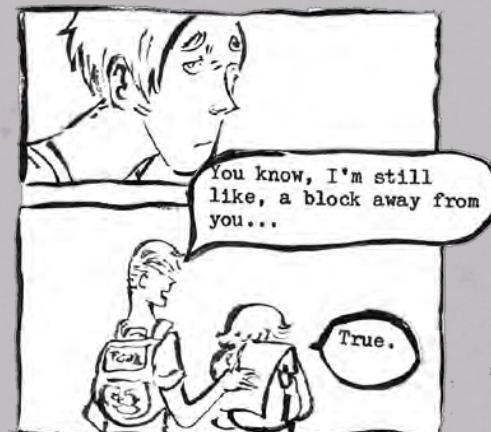
*I pulled this thread out
of my pouring wound,*



*and soon I saw the
sun as more golden.*



SUSHI 224
ELLA
TANI



Let's Talk – Artist Talk

Four *Paueru Gaizette* editors and artists attended *Eyes Locked: Hunter and Prey*, a conversation between artists Louise Noguchi and Midi Onodera in October 2024. This dialogue explored what it means to be a Japanese Canadian (JC) artist through the lens of Noguchi's practice. The following response blends personal reflections with insights drawn from the artist talk.



Noguchi and Onodera both attended the Ontario College of Art (OCA) during the late 70s and early 80s, yet they never spoke until invited to converse at this artist talk. Perhaps this reflects the broader context of the time. "If you did see another JC or Asian Canadian ... you would kind of avoid them, because it was a very modernist time" Noguchi reflected on

her time at OCA. Onodera expressed that she was "more comfortable being one of, rather than one of many." In the modernist era, labels were seen as limits to uniqueness rather than facets of uniqueness.

Ella: As a current visual arts student, I feel conflicted about accepting identity labels. I understand the importance of embracing the label "Japanese/Chinese-Canadian artist," but it feels unjust that racialized people must accept these labels while white artists are not obligated. Like Noguchi, I'm uncomfortable labeling myself because, as a third-generation Canadian, I don't feel I can authentically represent these cultures or explore their themes in my work. Contrasting Noguchi and Onodera's time, the art world today encourages racialized artists to explore identity in their work. In our visual arts class, it's a running joke that if we have no good ideas for a project to turn to our cultural identity and our white teacher will appreciate it.

Beyond that there was an expectation to assimilate, growing up Onodera's mom ingrained in her—"you need to assimilate, you need to be better than anyone else, you need to be capable of surviving."

Sachi: When did "Japanese Canadian" become an identity that one could lean into? Assimilating is the opposite of being proud of one's identity. One could say that the late 70s and 80s were the start of a pivotal shift for the Japanese Canadian community. Events like the Powell Street Festival (1977) and the redress settlement (1988) happened as a generation of Sansei were coming of age and seeking justice for elders who had experienced interment. These efforts helped build Japanese Canadian identity, beyond an identity that felt like a uniform defined more by what one couldn't be: loud, subversive, creative, rebellious.

Noguchi spent much of her career exploring the violent theme of hunter and hunted while avoiding the label of a Japanese Canadian artist. In this image by Ella Tani, inspired by Noguchi's *Hunters, They Can Kill* (1984-1985) and *Crack* (2000), Japanese heritage and its symbolism are intertwined, suggesting that Noguchi's ancestry was always silently hunting her, ever present without her intention.



Dee: Noguchi reflects in these works that there is a level of violence the artist must employ to feed and birth new ideas. However, during this period, she was dissuaded from identifying as a Japanese Canadian artist, influenced by modernist attitudes and assimilationist pressures in Settler-Colonial Canadian society. What violence did Noguchi endure due to a lack of cultural representation? What violence exists in being silent while so much of one's existence is fabricated as a public nuisance?

Noguchi now embraces her JC heritage in her work, explicitly exploring JC themes, but this wasn't always the case. Onodera opened the talk with a striking statement: "I feel like I'm on enemy territory whenever I'm in BC, like I'm unwanted and being hunted." Noguchi echoed this sentiment, sharing her apprehension during early visits to BC. She knew her father's former address, but fear prevented her from visiting. She feels this less so now and has started to seek out her parents' past places when in BC.

Olivia: This struck a personal chord and forced me to consider if I've lived my entire life on enemy territory, haunted by ancestral trauma. My family remained in BC settling in Hope because it was the default option for them after interment. Perhaps I cannot notice I'm on enemy territory because it's all I've ever known. From my own experiences with trauma, I've seen the power of leaving behind painful places. For those too close to the trauma—immersed in it—it may be impossible to gain the perspective needed to heal, and without any distance, life becomes a perpetual trauma response. But with too much distance, there may be no need to confront the pain. Maybe BC doesn't feel like enemy territory to me because, over generations, our community has confronted these wounds. I'm surrounded by a community that celebrates our JC identity, thanks to the work of our elders.

COLOUR ME!



and tag us

@tadaimaproduactions @ellitearu

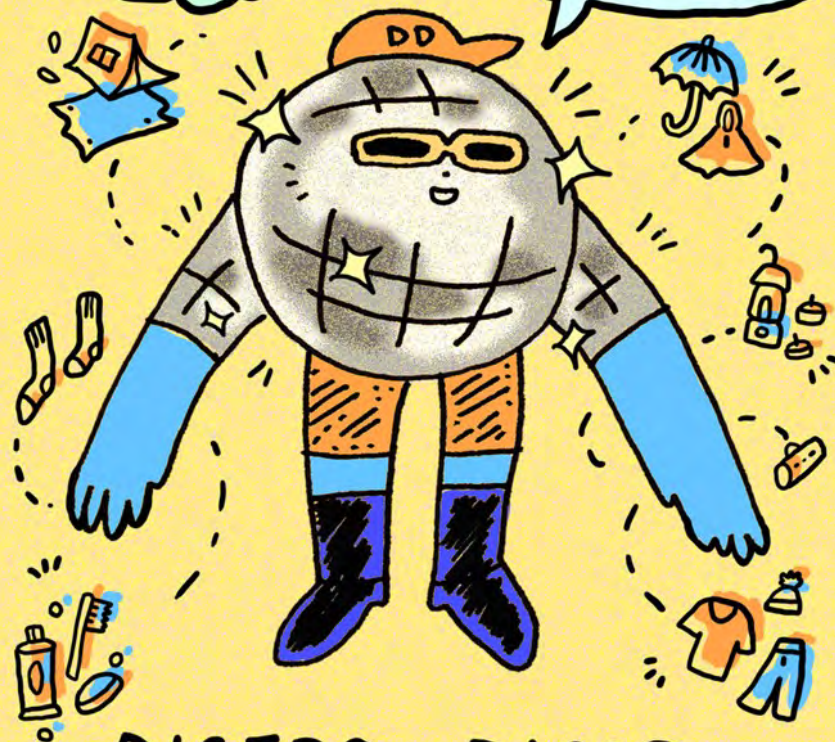
Across 3. Preserve 4. Tankobushi 6. Zine 8. Elders 10. Stories 12. Survivor
16. Legacy 17. Cocreation 18. Return 19. Grief 22. Generational 23. Circle
Down 1. Community 2. Resistance 5. Obon 7. Inter 9. Ensoku 11. Sustainable
13. Projects 14. Healing 15. Festival 20. Future 21. Renew

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