

BeHere / 1942

A New Lens on the Japanese American Incarceration

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STUDENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

How is our understanding of history influenced by the images we see and the people who create them? Join artist Masaki Fujihata in exploring this question through images of Japanese Americans reporting for their incarceration during WWII.

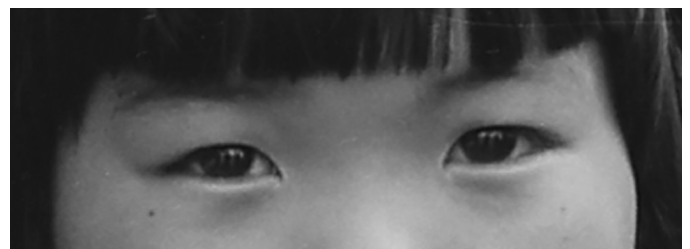
Eyes and Reflections

During WWII, the United States government falsely claimed that Japanese Americans were wartime enemies and ordered their removal from the West Coast. They reported to designated locations, including one just across the street from where the museum is today, to board buses or trains bound for camps where they were incarcerated. Government officials hired photographers to document their experience. Japanese Americans were not allowed to bring cameras with them.

 **What do the images in this exhibit reveal about who is experiencing this moment in history and who is witnessing it?**

 **If you were going through a difficult or unjust experience, would you want it documented and shared? Why or why not?**

 **What do you think Japanese Americans would have photographed if they had been allowed to bring cameras with them?**



FRONT IMAGES

TOP: Dorothea Lange, Hayward, California, May 1942. Courtesy National Archives, photo no. 537509. | BOTTOM: Detail of top image.

BACK IMAGES

TOP LEFT: Russell Lee, Photographers document the forced removal of Japanese Americans at the train bound for Owens Valley, Los Angeles, California, 1942. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black and White Negatives. | TOP RIGHT: Dorothea Lange, San Francisco, April 1942. Courtesy National Archives, photo no. 536457. | BOTTOM: Artist unknown, Painting of St. Martin of Tours (detail), 18th century Mexico. Oil on canvas. Museum Purchase, H69.231.8.

L.A. Train Station

Join a scene recreating the documentation of Japanese Americans boarding a train in Los Angeles in 1942. Consider the role and impact of the photographer and the camera within the scene.



How does it feel to step into this historical moment?



How has modern technology changed our documentation and understanding of events today? What has remained the same since the 1940s?



Mrs. Nakamoto's Story

Find this photo of Mrs. Nakamoto and read her story on the wall. By smiling for the camera, she took some control of the story this photograph tells.



How can the way people present themselves for a camera differ from reality?



Reflections and Connections

Images are used to represent stories in history, on social media, in the news, and across the Oakland Museum of California. As you visit other galleries at the Museum, choose an image showing a moment in history and consider:



Who do you think created this image?



Whose experience and perspective is made visible and whose is not?



How could cropping or editing this image change the story it tells?



You can find the 18th-century painting pictured here in the *Spanish Claim This Land* section of the Gallery of California History.

Learning and sharing people's stories is empowering. For more ways to take action, take a card as you exit the *BeHere / 1942: A New Lens on Japanese American Incarceration* exhibition.