

**REDISCOVERING**  
**ASIAN**  
**AMERICAN &**  
**PACIFIC**  
**ISLANDER**  
**ARCHITECTS &**  
**DESIGNERS**

**FINAL REPORT**

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design  
Museum, Smithsonian Asian Pacific  
American Center & Society of  
Architectural Historians Initiative

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Gail Dubrow  
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**SAH-Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum Initiative:**

**Rediscovering Asian American and Pacific Islander**

**Architects & Designers**

Dr. Gail Dubrow  
Dr. Sean H. McPherson  
Dr. Yao-Fen You

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## PROJECT SCOPE

With Federal support from the Asian Pacific American Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, “In Search of Asian American/Pacific Islander Architects and Designers” aims to accelerate the collecting of work by architects and designers of Asian ancestry who helped shape the urban and visual landscape of the United States (1900–present), as part of the museum’s larger commitment to a more inclusive vision of the collection and the stories that surround it – one that includes and appropriately represents the voices and creative visions of women, LGBTQ+, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). A necessary first step for CHSDM to begin documenting the essential contributions of AAPI architects and designers to the built environment in the U.S. is to generate a state-of-the-field report that will function as a roadmap for future areas of research, collection building, and public programming.

The partnership between Cooper Hewitt and the SAH Asian American & Diasporic Architectural History Affiliate Group has recruited contributors to produce topical, state-of-the-field papers on specific aspects of collecting the work of Asian American architects and designers. These funded presentations and papers contribute to the initiative, “In Search of Asian American/Pacific Islander Architects and Designers,” launched in 2021 by Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (CHSDM). As the only museum in the United States dedicated to historical and contemporary design, Cooper Hewitt and its collection play a pivotal role in fostering scholarship and advancing discourse that illuminates the importance of design both historically and in the present day.

Participants discussed preliminary findings in a March 2022 SAH Connects workshop titled “Rediscovering Asian American and Pacific Islander Architects and Designers” that outlined key areas of collecting the papers, material culture, and associated artifacts of Asian American designers and architects. After discussing their preliminary findings that outlined the scope of their studies, contributors highlighted preliminary findings and solicited feedback intended to fill gaps in coverage from members of the SAH Asian American & Diasporic Architectural History affiliate group. This final report, submitted November 30, 2022, and revised March 8, 2023 presents the contributors’ findings. These findings were also summarized and discussed in a March 10, 2023 SAH Connects workshop titled, “Asian American and Pacific Islander Architects and Designers: Findings and Next Steps.”

## Project Directors



**Dr. Yao-Fen You** is Acting Director of the Smithsonian Institution’s Asian Pacific American Center (APAC), as well as Head and Senior Curator of the Product Design and Decorative Arts Department at the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum (CHSDM). In the latter position, You organizes national and international exhibitions, publications and education programs, as well as oversees the development of the department’s collection.

Prior to joining the Cooper Hewitt, she served for ten years as associate curator of European sculpture and decorative arts at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), where she was responsible for the research, display, interpretation, acquisition and publication of the museum’s holdings in European arms and armor, silver, stained glass, textiles, porcelain (British, Chinese Export and German) and sculpture (Netherlandish, Spanish and German). During her tenure, she also made significant acquisitions for the collections across a range of media and helped increase access to the collections by partnering with online databases such as the Gothic Ivories Project, the Index of Christian Art and, most recently, the Rembrandt Database.

From 2004 to 2007, You served as the Theodore Rousseau Post-Doctoral Fellow in European Paintings at the Fogg Art Museum/Harvard Art Museums. She has also held curatorial positions at the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA) in Ann Arbor and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

A frequent author and invited speaker, You has lectured and participated in symposia and panels nationally and internationally. Her published scholarship reflects her diverse expertise in

polychrome sculpture, the history of collecting and art markets, the art of dining, early modern textiles and fashion and Northern European decorative arts. She is committed to collections documentation and researching ownership histories, and was selected to participate in the 2018 German/American Provenance Research Exchange Program (PREP) for Museum Professionals. You holds a PhD and master's degree in the history of art from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and a bachelor's degree in the history of art from the University of California, Berkeley. She is a 2007 graduate of the Attingham Summer School.

Additionally, she serves on committees for the Association of Art Museum Curators (AAMC) and Curators of Dutch and Flemish Art (CODART) and has served on the board of the Historians of Netherlandish Art (HNA). Dr. You is the co-organizer of the SAH-CHSDM collaborative initiative, "In Search of Asian American/Pacific Islander Architects and Designers" that aims to increase the collecting, study and exhibition of Asian American designers and architects.



**Gail Dubrow**, PhD, FSAH is Professor of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Public Affairs & Planning, and History at University of Minnesota (UMN). Dubrow is a social historian of the built environment and cultural landscape in the U.S. and is active in preserving places significant to the history of women, ethnic communities of color, LGBTQ, and other underrepresented groups. Her work has received support from the American Institute of Architects/American Architectural Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Park Service, Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and National Trust for Historic Preservation.

She is the author of many chapters and articles and two award-winning books, *Sento at Sixth and Main*, with Donna Graves, and *Restoring Women's History Through Historic Preservation*, edited with Jennifer Goodman, which won the 2004 Antoinette Forrester Downing Award for best book in historic preservation from the Society of Architectural Historians.

She is currently documenting the lives and careers of the earliest architects of Japanese ancestry to practice in the US. This project has been supported by fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies, the Huntington Library, and the Smithsonian Institution. Dubrow is a co-founder and current co-chair of the SAH Asian American and Diasporic Architectural History Affiliate Group and collaborates with a team assisting the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum to identify and accelerate the acquisition of work by American architects and designers of Asian ancestry.

Most recently, Dubrow founded REPAIR: Disability Heritage Collective, with Laura Leppink and Sarah Pawlicki, which is dedicated to revealing ableist assumptions and accelerating disability justice in historic preservation.



**Lynne Horiuchi, PhD, FSAH** is an independent scholar who received her PhD in 2005 from the University of California at Santa Barbara. She has published numerous articles on the built environments of Japanese American incarceration. Race, space, architecture, and ethics are her theoretical interests crossing over into Asian American studies, art history, vernacular architecture, urban planning, and critical race studies. She has co-edited a volume with Tanu Sankalia, *Urban Reinventions: San Francisco's Treasure Island*, that examines the complete transformations of a man-made island for a world exposition, a military base, and a new neighborhood in San Francisco. She is co-writing with Anoma Pieris a volume on imprisonment during World War II from Singapore to North America, *The Architecture of Confinement: Incarceration Camps of the Pacific War*. She is completing a volume, *Dislocations and Relocations: The Planning, Design, and Construction of Prison Cities*, that interrogates the relationships between architecture and vernacular building and military design and construction. She has received numerous awards including NEH grants and a Civil Liberties Public Education Fellowship and was named a National Endowment for the Arts MacDowell Fellow. She has taught at the University of North Carolina in the Department of Architecture, and at the University of California at Berkeley she has developed and taught a course on race, redevelopment, and gentrification for the Future Histories Lab. She has served on the board of the Rosie the Riveter Trust and numerous other community organizations and committees. She is a long-time member of SAH, participating in conferences, panels, and roundtables, and is currently the co-chair of the SAH Minority Scholars Affiliate Group, a member of both the SAH IDEAS Committee and the SAH Strategic Planning Committee, and Secretary of the SAH Executive Board.





**Sean H. McPherson**, MArch, PhD, is Associate Professor of Art History in the Department of Art & Art History at Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, where he teaches courses in the art and architecture of Asia, Buddhist material and visual culture, and the global history of architecture, as well as directed studies on visual culture and the built environment.

A former architect and carpenter with expertise in Japanese timber-frame construction, McPherson received his MArch (2001) and PhD (2007) in Architectural History from UC Berkeley. His areas of research include the art and architecture of Japanese Shintō shrine festivals, the built environments of Japanese American Buddhism, Asian American cultural landscapes, and issues of equity and accessibility in public higher education. He is the founding Co-Chair of the SAH Asian American & Diasporic Architectural History Affiliate Group, and co-organizer with Dr. Gail Dubrow of the affiliate group's collaboration with the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum initiative, "In Search of Asian American/Pacific Asian American Architects and Designers."

## Contributors



**Edson G. Cabalfin, PhD**, is an educator, architect, designer, curator, and historian. He is the inaugural Associate Dean for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the School of Architecture at Tulane University, where he is also concurrently serving as Director of the Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship Program and Professor of Practice of Design Thinking. He was the Curator of the Philippine Pavilion at the 16<sup>th</sup> Venice Architecture Biennale in 2018.

He received his PhD in History of Architecture and Urban Development from Cornell University in 2012. Under a Fulbright Fellowship, he obtained his Master of Science in Architecture degree from the University of Cincinnati in 2003. Prior to coming to the U.S., he received his professional Bachelor of Science in Architecture and Master of Architecture degrees from the University of the Philippines in 1996 and 2001, respectively.

Edson's research in the last two decades have focused on the interdisciplinary and transnational intersections of architecture history and theory, cultural studies, gender and sexuality studies, postcolonial theory, Southeast Asian studies, spatial justice, public interest design, and heritage conservation. He edited the book "The City Who Had Two Navels: Official Catalogue of the Philippine Pavilion at the 16th Venice Architecture Biennale 2018" and wrote the book "What Kids Should Know About Filipino Architecture." He has written articles, book chapters, and conference papers on topics, such as: queer spaces and sex work in Quezon City; neoliberal urbanism in the Philippines; informal settlements and the capital city; appropriating queering in Philippine spatial practices; architecture, colonialism, and modernity; American-colonial architectural photography in the Philippines; Philippine pavilions in international expositions.



**Sujin Eom**, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Asian Societies, Cultures, and Languages at Dartmouth College. A scholar of architecture and urbanism whose research is anchored in a historical inquiry into race, migration, and the built environment, Eom is currently completing her first book manuscript that situates “Chinatown” as an imaginative and material space within the global history of empire, labor migration, and violence. Eom holds a PhD in architecture from the University of California, Berkeley, with a Designated Emphasis in Global Metropolitan Studies.

Eom's research interests include colonial architecture and urbanism, migration and diaspora, race and racism, Asian American art and architecture, and postcolonial urban theory. Eom's next research project investigates transcontinental flows of architecture and urban form during the Cold War, with an emphasis on urban infrastructure built across East Asian cities.

Eom is the recipient of several awards and fellowships, including the Society of Architectural Historians IDEAS Research Fellowship, the International Planning History Society Best Postgraduate Paper Award, the Japan Foundation Fellowship, the University of California Pacific Rim Research Fellowship, and the Social Science Research Council Grant.



**Priya Jain**, MArch, RA is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture and Associate Director of the Center for Heritage Conservation at Texas A&M University. An architect licensed in both the U.S. and India, she has worked on the reuse and restoration of a diverse range of buildings, including Trinity Church in Boston, the Jewett Arts Center at Wellesley College, St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington DC, the Richardson-Olmsted Complex in Buffalo and Jaisalmer Fort, India.

Her teaching and research focus on twentieth-century South Asian architectural history and preservation within a transnational context. She is particularly interested in exploring how machinations of race and class figure in the marketing, export and adoption of architectural ideas and technologies. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Architectural Education* (JAE), *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* (In Press), *Arris: Journal of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians* and included in the edited book *Heritage Conservation in Postcolonial India: Approaches and Challenges*, amongst others. Priya serves on the Heritage Conservation Committee and the Women in Architecture Affiliate Group of the Society of Architectural Historians and is Field Editor (Architecture) for the Getty Conservation Institute.



**Hongyan Yang, PhD** is a Core Fellow/Visiting Assistant Professor in History, Digital Humanities, Comparative Migration and Ethnic Studies at Boston College. Her interdisciplinary research considers the spatial and material dimensions of Asian American experiences, exploring how Asian immigrants’ culinary traditions, cultural sensibilities, and complex identities invest new meanings to the cultural landscapes in the United States.

As a scholar-activist, her work is driven by a lifelong pursuit to uncover and sustain the cultural resilience of marginalized communities. Her recent research is featured in Vox’s *Missing Chapter* history series and the newly released documentary, *Saving the Far East Cafe*. She is currently working on her first book manuscript *Landscapes of Resistance: Chinese Placemaking across the Pacific*, and directs “Places of Their Own,” an oral history project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and Oral History Association that documents the history of Chinese businesses in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Yang is the recipient of several awards, including the Sophie Coe Prize Honorable Mention in 2017, the Vernacular Architecture Forum Ambassadors Award in 2015, and the American Pacific Coast Geographers Committee Award for Excellence in Area Studies in 2012. She holds a PhD in Architecture in the Buildings-Landscapes-Cultures Program from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

## **Japanese American Architects, Landscape Architects and Designers**

**Dr. Gail Dubrow, University of Minnesota**

**Dr. Sean H. McPherson, Bridgewater State University**

**Dr. Lynne Horiuchi, Independent Scholar**

### **Conceptualizing the History of Architects and Designers of Japanese Ancestry in the US**

The long arc of scholarship on the so-called “Japanese influence” in American art and architectural history, problematic though it is, ensures it is a rich subject to mine for potential new collecting both by the Cooper Hewitt and the Smithsonian collecting units. In contrast to approaches that privilege the interpretation of Japanese aesthetics by clients and consumers of European descent, we focus squarely upon the experiences, perspectives, expertise and contributions of community members and practitioners to the built environment and cultural landscapes of Japanese America. The rich body of scholarship in Asian American history that acknowledges both the persistence of anti-Japanese racism and a long struggle for civil rights on the same basis as white, European immigrants provides new lenses for critically examining standard accounts in American art and architectural history. From the opening of Japan to European and North American interests in the last quarter of the 19th century to contemporary architecture and design, scholarship informed by an understanding of transnational and Japanese American history has made it possible to formulate new agendas for collecting previously unexamined works by a wide of architects and designers of Japanese ancestry. This study principally identifies architects and landscape architects of Japanese ancestry who practiced in the U.S. and its territories. Further study is needed to document the work of interior designers,

practitioners of the decorative arts, graphic designers, and more, and to identify the particular fields in which women made their mark in American architectural and design history.

We emphasize material that will open doors to novel interpretations of American cultural history. As a team focusing on Japanese America, we propose but are in no way wedded to the following chronological framework drawn from the outline of Japanese American architectural history written by Gail Dubrow for the volume *Finding a Path Forward: Asian American Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study*, edited by Franklin Odo and published by the National Park Service.<sup>1</sup> We highly recommend this collaborative work as a base document for identifying elements of the built environment and cultural landscapes associated with Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. Yet we recognize that alternative schema for collecting significant work and framing exhibitions, including thematic approaches that cut across AAPI and other racialized groups, might be critical to consider and essential to the larger goal of addressing gaps within archival and museum collections.

The report is followed by a table consolidating information on architects and designers referenced in this essay.

## **Japonisme**

The earliest chronological theme worth considering as a focus for future collecting is Japonisme, the fashion for all things Japanese, which took root in America during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While the subject is well represented in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, as well as the Elizabeth Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, new scholarship in the

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<sup>1</sup> Franklin Odo, ed. *Finding a Path Forward: Asian American Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2017).

history of art, architecture, theater and related fields points to new interpretations of the Japan craze and a wider range of associated objects worthy of collection. From the classic focus of collecting on ceramics, cloisonné and other art goods, to the periodical literature and associated illustrations that document this period, emerging scholarship highlights the agency of Japanese immigrants in creating these works, as well as aspects of popular culture in which these aesthetic and cultural ideas were represented. We might note in particular here the contributions to promotion and commercialization of Japanese aesthetics by **George T. Marsh** (1857-1932), who employed Japanese garden designers and artists in the design of Japanese buildings and gardens linked to his commercial enterprises in California; the **Deakin Brothers**, proprietors of Deakin Bros. & Company based in Yokohama, Japan, for similar reasons throughout the United States, and Japanese entrepreneurs **Peter Yumeto Kushibiki** (1865-1924) and **Saburo Arai** (1866-1951), who operated concessions at multiple entertainment venues in the U.S. that employed troupes of Japanese artisans and artists in simulated Japanese villages. A small fragment of Marsh's papers, documenting his commercial gardens in California, are held by the Huntington Library, along with collections that document the sale of his Pasadena garden and its transfer to the Henry Huntington estate. The Deakin Brothers' extensive documentation of their "veritable Japanese village," which toured the US, is held by the Oakland Museum. No archive or museum has collected papers or objects associated with Kushibiki & Arai's work, though it was one of the most influential sources of ideas about Japanese people, places and things circulating in the U.S. between 1884 and the 1910s.



## **Community Building: Vernacular Cultural Landscapes of Early Japanese America**

While our recommendations focus on collecting the work of professional architects and designers, it is important to document the contributions of Japanese immigrant carpenters, garden designers and ordinary community members who contributed to building urban and rural settlements, particularly in the earliest period of immigration to Hawai'i and the western region of the continental US. After the significant increase in the 1880s of overwhelmingly male immigration to fill agricultural labor needs in Hawai'i, California and the Pacific Northwest, these workers were initially housed in racially segregated work camps on sugarcane plantations, logging operations and farms. As workers left the sugarcane plantations in Hawai'i in search of work opportunities in urban areas, or immigrated in large numbers to the U.S. West Coast, they established ethnic communities in the face of the juridical and social barriers generated by growing anti-Asian rhetoric and sentiment in the United States. These so-called "Japantowns" (*Nihonmachi*, *Nihonjinmachi*) featured an array of building types, from early rental and modification of existing spaces to the design and construction of purpose-built structures. When women arrived in significant numbers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, annexes, extensions, language schools and other family-oriented buildings and landscapes required professional architects to meet the requirements of zoning and building codes. Scholarly works and preservation surveys provide documentation of a common set of building types that comprised urban and rural settlements of Japanese immigrants.

The work of Japanese shrine and temple carpenters (*miyadaiku*) who practiced mainly in Hawai'i and California merits focused attention. Similarly, examination of culturally and often architecturally distinctive built forms such as bathhouses (*sentō*), cultural halls (*bunka kaikan*) and Japanese language schools (*Nihongo gakkō*) ensures that the collecting agenda attends to the

distinctive cultural contributions of Japanese immigrants to the American built environment. While community repositories may be the best location for the work of vernacular builders, and the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles and the Bishop Museum in Honolulu hold many relevant primary sources and objects, documenting the contributions of vernacular builders is an important conceptual dimension of any project to accelerate the collection of work on Japanese American architecture.

Because the integration of architectural form with landscape design is a distinctive and venerable characteristic of design practice in Japan, and because of the racialized labor climate of the U.S. in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century heyday of Japanese immigration, the work of gardeners and horticulturists is essential to understanding the Japanese American impact upon the built environment of the U.S. Their work can also be seen as a precursor to and a conduit for the pursuit by later Japanese American practitioners of academic training and professional careers in landscape architecture and design. Before the contributions of the Nisei, the pattern in the Issei to Nisei generation often included the Issei parent in an industry that would have provided either fertile soil or a good foundation for pursuit of a professional career by their offspring. This was true not only of Kaneji Domoto, but also of Mai Kitaharu Arbogast, whose father and uncle founded the Kitazawa Seed Company. In the San Francisco Bay Area, the work of the Domoto Nursery led by the brothers **Kanetaro (Tom) Domoto** and **Motonoshi (Henry) Domoto**, as well as the work of the former's son, the architect and landscape architect **Kaneji (Kan) Domoto** (1912-2002) exemplify this progression from entrepreneurial migrant labor to academic certification and professional viability.<sup>2</sup> The contributions of the Issei (first-generation) horticulturalist **Fujitaro Kubota** (1879-1973) in the Seattle Japanese American community, as

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<sup>2</sup> Kaneji Domoto's papers have been scanned by the Denshō Project ([densho.org](http://densho.org)) and are available online.

well as his shared struggles against racial discrimination in land acquisition, internment and postwar rebuilding of his business, echo many of the achievements and travails of the Domoto Brothers in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Because the period of Japanese immigration coincided with the rise of a succession of nativist labor movements on the U.S. West Coast and in Hawai'i, discrimination against both immigrant *miyadaiku* and journeymen carpenters trained largely in the United States limited their employment opportunities outside of ethnic networks and communities. Though these carpenters played integral roles in building the extractive landscape of industrial agriculture in Hawai'i and in California's Central Valley, Nikkei advances in the building trades were countered by whites on the U.S. West Coast by the activism and vigilantism of the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League of 1905 (known from 1908 as the Asiatic Exclusion League), with support from politicians and newspapers. In the more diverse cultural context of Hawai'i, however, where the first organized group of Japanese immigrants to the Kingdom of Hawai'i in 1868 included the carpenter Kakujirō (John) Mitsuhashi (1843-1922), Issei (first-generation) and Nisei (second-generation) workers by the 1920s dominated the profession, and by the 1930 U.S. census comprised well over 75% of carpenters in the islands.<sup>3</sup>

Because of their prominence as multi-faceted spaces of community and markers of cultural identity in different periods of Japanese American history, temples and churches, especially the over one hundred Pure Land Buddhist (*Jōdō shinshū*, or “Shin Buddhist”) structures under the aegis of the Buddhist Mission of North America (renamed “Buddhist Churches of America” during wartime internment in 1944), were foci of *miyadaiku* expertise in at least decorative elements of shrine and temple architecture from the coming to the Kingdom of

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<sup>3</sup> Hisao Goto, et al, “Craft History and the Merging of Tool Traditions: Carpenters of Japanese Ancestry in Hawaii,” in *Hawaiian Journal of History*, (Volume 17, 1983, pp. 156-184), 159.

Hawai'i of the first Shin Buddhist Reverend Soryu Kagai in 1889. Though the armed overthrow of the legitimate Hawaiian ruler Queen Liliuokalani (1838-1917, r. 1891-93) did not occur until 1893, the wealthy American industrialists and missionaries who led that usurpation of national sovereignty had long promoted policies to recruit immigrant labor to meet the needs of the burgeoning sugar industry. Because the most technically demanding examples of wood joinery, structural design and architectural ornament were typically executed by highly-trained *miyadaiku* who were brought from Japan for specific commissions, and because of the difficulty of maintaining apprenticeship practices needed to transmit carpentry skills across generations, the vast majority of carpenters of Japanese descent who emigrated for significant periods to both Hawai'i and the U.S. West Coast were specialists in cabinetmaking, regular residential architecture, or, especially in Hawai'i, boatbuilding.

In the earliest periods of Japanese immigration to the US, and especially in Hawai'i, Shintō shrines and Buddhist temples were key architectural markers of cultural pride and ethnic identity. Significant contributions by highly skilled, immigrant carpenters to Japanese Shintō shrine architecture range from the 1915 collaboration of the *miyadaiku* **Seiichi Tomokiyo**, **Ichisaburo Takata and Ichitaro Takata** on the Maui Jinsha Mission, to the more recent work of the Japan-trained **Tetsuo Kubota** on the 1981 Hawai'i Kotohira Jinsha (Dazaifu Tenmangu) in Honolulu. Though many visible elements of Japanese design in American Shin Buddhist and Shintō worship spaces were largely decorative, notable examples of the use of the *shakkanhō* Japanese measurement system include the 1918 **Hamakua Jodo Mission** by **Umekichi Tanaka** (1859-1936), a carpenter for the Pā'auhau Sugar Plantation Company who had been trained in Japan by his father as a *miyadaiku*.(Figure 1) Tanaka was assisted in carving of the elaborate openwork transoms (*ranma*), Buddhist altar (*butsudan*) and decorative beam ends (*kibana*) by

**Eizuchi Higaki** (1887-1954), a machinist at the same plantation who had been trained as an architectural sculptor (*horishi*) before his immigration to Hawai'i in 1907.<sup>4</sup>

Although most scholarly attention has been devoted to the work of highly-trained *miyadaiku* and *horishi* who worked on shrines and temples, as well as the virtuoso joinery of equally specialized cabinetmakers and boatbuilders, the vast majority of carpenters listed in union registers and sugarcane plantation rosters in Hawai'i were employed in creating the residential housing, company stores, meeting halls and industrial structures that made up the built environment of sugarcane plantations that constituted the world's most productive and technologically advanced industrial agriculture landscapes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The seventeen "camps" originally segregated by ethnicity and national origin that were extant through the 1950s as part of the Hakalau Plantation in Hilo, Hawai'i, included a full range of residential, administrative and commercial structures planned and managed by company officials, but built and modified by the contributions of residents.<sup>5</sup>

Plantations were routinely segregated by race and ethnicity and national origin into separate residential quarters or "camps" consisting of laborers (and their families) of Japanese, Chinese, Filipino and Korean descent. The Portuguese, who originally were field laborers but rose to foreman (*luna*) status, also lived in segregated residential quarters. This racial segregation was a strategic measure by plantation owners to foster division and prevent collaboration among different groups of contract laborers to demand better working conditions. As immigrant workers from Japan moved beyond plantation settings in Hawai'i to establish their own communities amidst discriminatory real estate practices and racial hostility from residents of

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<sup>4</sup>"Influential People," Hamakuajodominion.org, <https://hamakuajodominion.org/influential-people/>. Accessed 7/15/22.

<sup>5</sup> "Hakalau Our Home," <https://www.hakalauhome.com/>, accessed October 15, 2022.

European descent, the work of builders and trained carpenters of Japanese descent was essential to the modification and building of ethnic neighborhoods known as “Japantowns” (*Nihonmachi*, *Nihonjinmachi*). From the late 19<sup>th</sup> through early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, many of these plantation carpenters and other tradesmen migrated in large numbers to the U.S. West Coast, where they made significant contributions to the building of Japantowns in major urban centers. Beginning in Hawai’i in the towns of Hilo on the Big Island (Hawai’i Island), and in Honolulu in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Japanese immigrant communities established communal and single-family residential buildings, spaces for Buddhist, Shintō and Christian worship that often included associated cultural and language education facilities (*Nihongo gakkō*), theaters and other facilities for communal performance and entertainment, and commercial architecture to serve the economic needs of the community. The original Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin (1889), the Taishōji Zen Temple (1916), the 1902 Nichiren Mission that was moved to Hilo in 1965, and other Buddhist temples and Christian churches, storefronts and rooming houses on Mamo Street, the docks and processing facilities of Suisan Fish Market (founded 1907), and the precursors to modern farmers markets for truck farmers to sell their produce were all key elements of the built environment that served the Japanese immigrant community and defined much of the urban core of old Hilo. The widespread destruction of the 1946 and 1960 tsunamis resulted in the rebuilding after the first and replacement after the second natural disaster of the predominantly Japanese American Shinmachi (“new town”) neighborhood with a public memorial park.

Collecting vernacular material culture presents numerous challenges. Though the records of plantation management and financial status have been preserved in the Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association Plantation Archives at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa Library, these documents represent almost exclusively the perspectives of owners and overseers of this

industry. To define a collecting strategy for objects that reveal the lived experiences and perspectives of Asian immigrant laborers, it is necessary to consider the study and preservation of implements such as machetes and images of plantation cultural landscapes, as well as oral histories of plantation workers. Objects such as tools and plantation laborer clothing that are scattered at the Bishop Museum, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, the Lyman Museum in Hilo, Hawai'i and other collections need to be linked in order to understand the full labor history of the sugar industry in Hawai'i.

Notable contributors to the Japanese American cultural landscape on O'ahu include the architect **Hego Fuchino** (1888-1961), who immigrated to Hawai'i in 1905 or 1906. In part because he was largely self-taught as an architect – he studied civil engineering at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa before establishing his own firm – many of his religious buildings on O'ahu are extraordinarily eclectic in style, including the 1931 Makiki Christian Church, modeled upon Edo-period Japanese castle architecture, and the 1932 Jodo Headquarters, which drew heavily upon the fenestration and massing of Mughal architecture.<sup>6</sup> Buildings for the burgeoning Japanese American population included the 1919 Nippon Theater, the 1922 Kaimuki Playhouse, the 1929 Hale'iwa Theater, as well as a number of notable spaces for religious worship. Although the execution of the 1942 Executive Order 9066 spared the vast majority of ordinary citizens of Japanese descent in Hawai'i from incarceration, as a prominent community leader, Fuchino was arrested and interned on the U.S. mainland at facilities in California, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Louisiana, Montana and New Mexico, before returning to Hawai'i in November of

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<sup>6</sup> Don Hibbard, entries on “Jodo Headquarters” and “Makiki Christian Church,” SAH Archipedia, [sah-archipedia.org/buildings/HI-01-OA109](https://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/HI-01-OA109), <https://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/HI-01-OA99>, accessed October 15, 2022.

1945.<sup>7</sup> Because this extended imprisonment occurred at the height of his career, the bulk of his known work was produced during the interwar period.

Because of the economic primacy of agriculture as a source of Japanese American wealth in the western US, many of the Japantowns in California, Washington and Oregon served a dual role as farm service towns and ethnic communities. At its peak in the 1930s, the small town of Penryn, California typified the rural farm service community, with a Buddhist temple, four markets and dry goods stores, two boarding houses, two bars, a dentist's office, barbershop, auto repair garage and pool hall, all owned and operated by proprietors of Japanese descent. This concentration of commercial and community structures made Penryn a cultural magnet for residents of the adjacent towns of Loomis, Newcastle, and Auburn in rural Placer County.<sup>8</sup> Larger California cities situated at the confluence of both rail and water transportation routes for agricultural and other goods served as both farm service towns and centers for multiple ethnic communities. The city of Stockton boasted an economic base and multi-ethnic population of farm laborers sufficient to support numerous religious institutions, boarding houses, commercial structures, and community facilities such as the Nippon Hospital, as well as culturally diverse festivals and entertainment that both reflected and influenced immigrant conceptions of Japanese culture and society.

In major urban centers such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and San Jose, Japantowns became magnets for ethnic migration and socio-economic advancement. While these concentrations of intellectual, cultural and economic capital provided fertile ground for the work of formally trained architects who faced discrimination in their professional careers, they also

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<sup>7</sup> Hawai'i Internee Directory, "Fuchino, Hego." <https://interneedirectory.jcch.com/internee/fuchino-hego>, accessed October 15, 2022.

<sup>8</sup>"Placer County," [californiajapantowns.org, https://www.californiajapantowns.org/placer.html](https://www.californiajapantowns.org/placer.html), accessed July 1, 2022.



provided rare opportunities for professional advancement to highly trained builders and carpenters. This was especially so with regard to the construction of community buildings that were emblematic of cultural identity, such as Buddhist temples, language schools (*Nihongo gakkō*), bath houses (*sentō*) and cultural centers such as Nippon Kan Hall in Seattle, as well as grocery stores, laundries and other commercial structures that served the community.

Seattle's Panama Hotel, designed by one of the earliest architects of Japanese ancestry, **Saburo Ozasa (1878-1915)**, exemplified the inclusion of *sentō* bath house facilities within the single-room occupancy hotels that predominated in Japantown. As the oldest surviving example of a Japanese public bath house, Hashidate Yu, originally built in 1910 and designated a National Landmark in 2006, contains a nearly intact bath house structure, from lockers to the men's and women's tubs. This rare extant bathhouse provides a faint echo of the numerous urban *sentō* and rural baths on farmsteads that once dotted the landscape.<sup>9</sup>

Outside of Hawai'i, the architect of record for most Buddhist temples was not a *miyadaiku*, but rather a licensed architect of Caucasian or Japanese descent.<sup>10</sup> The most noted examples of immigrant carpenters in California who established durable practices were the brothers **Shinzaburo Nishiura (1878-1958)** and **Gentaro Nishiura (1883-1953)**, who were trained in Japan by their father in traditional boatbuilding before immigrating first to Hawai'i, and then in 1906 to California.<sup>11</sup> Their commercial work included movie theaters, commercial spaces and other structures that contributed to the economic viability of Japantowns in San Jose and elsewhere in Santa Clara County and the Bay Area. The decorative and structural details of

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<sup>9</sup> Gail Lee Dubrow with Donna Graves. *Sento at Sixth and Main* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Sean H. McPherson, "Hybrid Nativism and Regional Internationalism: The Architecture of Japanese-American Buddhist Churches in the Central Valley," *Vernacular Architecture Newsletter (VAN)*, No. 120, Summer 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Naomi Hirahara, "Master Artisans of San Jose: The Nishiura Brothers," *Discover Nikkei*, <https://discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2014/4/28/master-artisans-san-jose/>, accessed 9/1/23.

the San Jose first Buddhist temple with the architect **K. Taketa** (ca. 1908-1913), and the 1937 San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin - for which the designer of record is the Issei architect **George Gentoku Shimamoto** (1904-1994) - showed the Nishiura brothers' distinctive interpretation of Buddhist temple architecture.

The Japanese government's high regard for the Nishiura brothers was reflected in their selection to oversee construction of the Japanese Pavilion for the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island. Once the fairs ended, buildings designed and constructed by Japanese immigrant carpenters often were repurposed as public amenities, including at Gilroy Hot Springs, Berkeley's Strawberry Canyon, and Sebastopol's Buddhist temple. In the process, vernacular builders and aspiring professionals converted exposition architecture into places of use by and for the Japanese American community. A notable example is the Sho-fu-den, the New York summer home of Issei chemist **Dr. Jokichi Takamine** (1854-1922), built with structures from the 1904 St Louis World's Fair (the Louisiana Purchase Exposition) that were gifted to him by the Japanese imperial family. As Gail Dubrow pointed out in Franklin Odo's study of AAPI historic landmarks, the early trajectory of Japanese American impact upon the U.S. built environment lies at "the crossroads of exposition architecture, immigrant skills in the building trades, Japanese participation in agriculture and the nursery business, the rise of Japanese American communities, and an emerging generation of Nisei environmental design professionals."<sup>12</sup>

Collecting primary sources associated with design professionals often includes sketches, plans and working drawings, as well as artifacts from their practice. Expanding the scope of architecturally oriented collections to incorporate the work of vernacular builders requires

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<sup>12</sup> Franklin Odo, ed. *Finding a Path Forward: Asian American Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2017): 169.

original thinking about the material culture of their work and world, including carpentry tools, shop drawings and the business records associated with their practice, as well as field documentation of the structures they built.

### **Architectural Education, Apprenticeship and Careers of the Earliest Architects of Japanese Ancestry in the United States**

The earliest Japanese immigrants and their children to practice architecture in the United States largely were trained at public universities that had schools of architecture in cities where large numbers of them settled, such as the University of Hawai'i, the University of Washington, the University of Oregon, the University of California, and the University of Southern California. In rare cases, immigrants entered through eastern ports, and studied at Syracuse University, Cornell, or other venues on the East Coast, while other families moved to the East Coast in search of educational opportunities for their children in the face of anti-Asian movements on the West Coast that culminated for Japanese Americans in the internment. Only a few architectural archives have considered it important to collect both the personal and professional papers of the earliest architects of Japanese ancestry educated in the U.S. is advisable because there is no central repository or collection for their work. UC Berkeley's Environmental Design Archives (EDA) which accepted the papers of Kaneji Domoto is distinctive for accepting not just his professional drawings, but also his diary, letters, and family photographs. The Densho collection was unique in not only accepting internment-related materials, but scanning all of his papers, including both personal and professional material from the prewar and postwar periods. The Cooper Hewitt Museum would be well advised to consider family papers being within the scope of collecting the work of architects and designers of Asian descent, and all archives must closely

consider how the normative scope of collecting works by AAPI architects might benefit from information about their families, including both wives and children, who in some cases were quiet partners in the work of architecture, landscape architecture and related environmental design fields. This report also makes the case for including vernacular practitioners who lacked the credentials of architects and landscape architects, though their papers and ephemera are often more difficult to identify and collect. A focus on the attendees and graduates of schools of architecture would be a worthy investment to create an archive of Asian American architectural history. The chronological scope of this collection begins in the last quarter of the 19th century and continues to the present. In cases where papers reside in existing collections, scanning and obtaining permission for shared access might create an archive that consists both of original, primary sources, and of digital material fully accessible to the public. However, the dependence of many archives upon fees such as photo permissions to survive points to the need for a multi-institutional grant to cover lost revenue.

To broaden this category beyond architects, we recommend studying the early educational and professional experience of Issei (first-generation) and Nisei (second-generation) immigrants in landscape architecture, horticulture and other aspects of design education. Accelerating the collection of the personal and professional papers of architects and other design professionals requires close work with descendants, professional associates and clients and community history collections to identify papers that remain in private hands. Once identified, descendants can be better informed about how to conserve the papers privately, or by depositing them in museums, archives and special collections. In any circumstances, these papers could be scanned and made publicly accessible by digital archives such as [Densho.org](http://Densho.org), which already includes several key collections on architects of Japanese ancestry, including the papers of

architects **Iwahiko Tsumanuma (Thomas Rockrise)** (1881-1936), **Kaneji Domoto** (1912-2002) and **Kichio Allen Arai** (1901-1966). Scanning significant collections ensures free public access by digital means. Issues of conservation and preservation of primary sources can then be considered separately, whether retained within a family or firm, or directed to the most appropriate museum, archives, or special collections. Their descendants and associates might be interviewed and additional sources identified as part of the larger project of accelerating collections of primary sources for writing architectural and design histories of Asian America.

### **The Architecture of Community Building**

The construction of Nihonmachi offered the earliest architectural expression of Japanese culture and American realities both in urban areas and smaller rural settlements. Ordinary carpentry skills were needed to build rural farmsteads and maintain agricultural properties. Additionally, skilled carpenters made their mark by building shrines and temples in Hawai'i and the West Coast of the continental US. Soon after the turn of the century, the earliest immigrants entered architecture schools, usually in cities that were centers for Japanese settlement, such as Honolulu, Hilo, Seattle and San Francisco.

Because Seattle was a center for Japanese settlement at the turn of the century, Japanese immigrant **Saburo Ozasa** (1878-1915), who studied at the University of Oregon, found work after graduation there. Because he entered practice when the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was being planned, some of his earliest projects anticipated increased tourism. One of the most notable examples is the 1910 Panama Hotel in Seattle's Nihonmachi, which features the oldest intact example of a Japanese public bathhouse dating to the building's construction. Similarly, **Kichio Allen Arai** (1901-1966) practiced in Seattle's Japanese American community

after graduating from the University of Washington's Department of Architecture in 1925. Among his earliest projects are the Japanese Language School (Nihon Go Gakko), completed ca. 1929, and his major building project, interrupted by forced incarceration, the 1941 Seattle Buddhist Temple.

While West Coast cities, particularly Seattle and San Francisco, became centers of education and practice before 1910, graduates from UC Berkeley and other West Coast cities tended to return to Japan after completing a few projects, including Bunshiro Ito (ca. 1882-?), who after completing his architecture degree at Berkeley in 1914 worked on the official Japanese government pavilion at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915, shortly after which he returned to Japan.

Unexpectedly, New York City became a center for the earliest architects of Japanese ancestry in the United States by 1912 because the city was a magnet for all architects seeking professional opportunities. The attraction was compounded by the rise of anti-alien property laws that spread from California to Oregon and then Washington beginning in 1912. "Go East, young man," was the reason **Iwahiko Tsumanuma** (1881-1936) headed from Japan to Akron, Ohio and then New York. Similarly, **Yasuo Matsui** (1877-1962), who arrived through San Francisco, made his way through a partial education at UC Berkeley to complete an apprenticeship with New York firms that positioned him to become the foremost skyscraper architect of Japanese ancestry in the interwar period, contributing to the design of the 1930 Bank of Manhattan and the 1931 Empire State Building.(Figure 2) These opportunities rarely were available to those who remained on the West Coast.

A second wave of early architects of Japanese ancestry attended American schools of architecture during the period when Beaux-Arts training was waning, including **Kaneji Domoto**

(1912-2002), **Kenneth Nishimoto** (1907-1992) and **Gyo Obata** (1923-2022), as part of the interwar flourishing of Nisei who found paths to enter a cluster of professions, from pharmacy and dentistry to architecture. Urban racial segregation and the birthright citizenship rights of the Nisei in the interwar years created demand as well as a desire within Japanese American communities for trained professionals to serve them. So too, the aspirations of Nisei matched the steady growth of communities, until World War II ended the world they had made.

But until that crisis, Japanese Americans, like other immigrant communities needed architects and others to build the institutions that served families, including hospitals, language school annexes, gymnasias and other core facilities, designed by professionals who understood both their programmatic needs and cultural expectations embedded in built form. A fuller review of the roles of architectural graduates up to World War II is needed to understand the scope and significance of this generation of professionals so deeply impacted by wartime internment. It was not until the postwar period that access to training in American architecture schools extended beyond public research universities on the West Coast, where Japanese American communities were concentrated, to bring the most elite East Coast universities within the reach of more than a handful of individuals of Japanese descent.

In the early days of architectural education in the US, however, not all navigated the path to practice by obtaining a university degree. Some pursued hybrid paths, including through apprenticeship, which was more common in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Perhaps the best examples of mixed career paths are Yasuo Matsui and Kaneji Domoto. The former combined brief stints of formal education, for example, two years at UC Berkeley, with no discernible degree. However, he made his way to become New York City's first skyscraper architect of Japanese ancestry, well before **Minoru Yamasaki** (1912-1986) made his mark on the Manhattan skyline. (Figure 3)

Kaneji Domoto and his peer Kenneth Nishimoto found themselves bored to tears repeatedly drawing Greek and Roman column capitals at UC Berkeley. Domoto attended and left both Berkeley and Stanford before his experiential approach to designing the landscape led him to quit his formal studies and work on a crew with other college-age friends at both the San Francisco and New York World's Fairs. This reliance on community projects during the Great Depression was a common theme among architects of Japanese ancestry, but along the way, Domoto studied with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin. Because he favored a site-specific design approach that was more aligned with affordable housing and other architectural concerns of the New Deal, Nishimoto persuaded his entire family to move with him in the early 1930s to southern California, where he completed his degree at the University of Southern California. These diverse trajectories need to be acknowledged within and across the collections that cover architects of Japanese ancestry prior to World War II. Moreover, because most architects of color had limited cultural capital in comparison to their white, male peers, their careers were not always straightforward. Coincidence and fortuitous opportunity made for complex paths to licensure and professional success. For these reasons, architectural success and recognition cannot be the sole criteria for determining the significance of architects of Japanese ancestry who practiced in the US; a more realistic standard is to select examples of how these individuals navigated the barriers they faced. Concerted efforts among the archives to identify which individuals represent this multiplicity of pathways would help to make the existing representation of architects of Japanese ancestry in American collections more reflective of the diversity of the community.

While New York, Seattle, Honolulu, the San Francisco Bay Region and Southern California emerge as key centers for the rise of Japanese immigrants and their children in



architecture, midwestern cities such as Detroit have yet to be fully examined for the distinctive experiences of those who were educated and practiced there. Nisei designers in the Midwest benefitted from fine architectural programs at the University of Michigan and the Cranbrook Academy of Art, the booming economy of postwar Detroit, and opportunities for training and professional experience at Eliel and Eero Saarinen's flourishing practice. Key among them is Minoru Yamasaki (1912-1986), who was educated in Seattle, and whose early practice was based in New York, but who arrived in Detroit in 1945 at the height of anti-Japanese animus, as well as broader ambivalence about the "enemy abroad and at home" that persisted even long after VJ Day. John Gallagher's 2015 biography *Yamasaki in Detroit*, combined with the Smithsonian's commitment to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the killing of industrial draftsman **Vincent Chin** (1955-1982) in Detroit, provide new opportunities to reexamine parallels and differences in the racialized experience of Yamasaki during the postwar period, and Chin and other Asian Americans in Detroit in the 1980s and today.<sup>13</sup>

Yamasaki earned his architectural degree in 1934 from the University of Washington, then moved to New York, where he first worked at the firm Shreve, Lamb & Harmon. As a contributor to the design of the Empire State Building, he must have known Yasuo Matsui, who served as Associate Architect under the shingle of his own practice, F.H. Dewey & Co. Yamasaki then moved to Detroit in 1945 to work for Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, before founding his own firm in Troy, Michigan, in 1949. Though Yamasaki resisted the pressure to design in Orientalist versions of Japanese style, his experience of a world tour in 1955 and commission to design the American Consulate in Kobe, Japan that same year transformed his

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<sup>13</sup> John Gallagher, *Yamasaki in Detroit: A Search for Serenity* (Wayne State University Press, 2015).

modernist aesthetic in a manner informed in part by his direct experience of Japanese buildings and landscapes.

### **The Crisis of Internment**

The forced incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry during World War II represents a distinctive theme in American history because it involves subjects of mass incarceration, civil injustice, dislocation, dispossession, and resettlement. Authorized by Franklin D. Roosevelt, under Presidential Executive Order 9066 issued on February 19, 1942, the U.S. government incarcerated approximately 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans, including women and children, identified by their bloodline of Japanese ancestry; it was a racialized action. They were removed from the West Coast first to sixteen temporary holding sites, and then to ten semi-permanent sites. The government named the holding sites ‘Assembly Centers,’ and the semi-permanent sites where most of these people were incarcerated in remote rural areas until 1945 ‘Relocation Centers.’ Incarcerated without charges or due process under the rule of law, the internment serves as the historic fulcrum of the dissolution of prewar Japanese American communities. Incarceration and postwar discrimination created many irreversible and irreparable damages to this population.

This entire study of the contributions of architects and designers of Japanese descent needs to be understood within the context of the World War II incarceration and the racialized landscape of postwar America; there were and are very few Japanese Americans untouched by this event. Japanese American architects suffered political, economic and social disenfranchisement, along with forced movement and incarceration; those who had gained a

foothold in the profession had their professional careers ended or recast, often altering or impacting their participation in mid-century modernism.

The event eviscerated the careers of established Issei architects. The Nisei, with their tenuous hold on careers in a white-male-dominated field, emerged from the trauma of losing everything in the incarceration into a hostile, postwar environment. Younger Japanese American architects saw promises for their careers disappear, and their education disrupted; although they did not bear the same degree of emotional or financial burdens, they still had to navigate a hostile American public and a nearly all-white, male profession in the postwar United States. Establishing an office on their own in the two decades after the war was extremely difficult, and generally required a *'hakujin'* white partner. Additionally, pure survival was on their minds at a time when the appointment to a postman's job was considered a demonstration of progress for the Japanese American community.<sup>14</sup> Within the architectural profession, some served at office manager levels. Others developed specialties as corporate teams evolved in the 1960s and 1970s to handle large projects; a significant number floated as independent contractors and journeymen.<sup>15</sup>

There are a number of Japanese American architects who have achieved significant recognition, such as Minoru Yamasaki, Gyo Obata, **Isamu Noguchi** (1904-1988), **George Matsumoto** (1922-2016) and landscape architect **Bob Hideo Sasaki** (1904-1988). As noted elsewhere in this report, Yamasaki, Obata and Sasaki had important, large firms oriented toward corporate projects that were marketed broadly and recognized with major awards. Already recognized as a fine artist before WWII, Noguchi was a major figure in the postwar arts world. For these architects, we have substantial bibliographies associated with hagiographic

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<sup>14</sup> Lynne Horiuchi, personal communication with Paul Nagano, October 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Frank Sata, personal communication, 11 October, 2022.

architectural traditions. With these few exceptions, a considerable number of others with substantial careers have drawn little interest from architectural historians. We have minimal information on the practice of architects who were not partners, but were nevertheless significant designers within firms. Even architects who attained partner status, such as **Kinji Imada** (1927-2005), do not appear to have won significant attention or acclaim in their own right.

Our search for references to Japanese names of individuals who were educated or practiced primarily within the U.S began as initially directed in secondary sources. These designers and architects, however, are not likely to appear in traditional architectural history publications. For example, only two Japanese American architects, Stanley Kamehiro and Minoru Yamasaki, are named in the 1977 architectural guidebook to Southern California, compiled by the noted architectural historians David Gebhard and Robert Winters.<sup>16</sup> Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny's guidebook published in 2007 for the San Francisco Bay area lists eight Japanese American architects.<sup>17</sup> The work to discover others, other than those featured in a small core of publications, involves contacts with individuals and families, primarily in the Japanese American community, as well as library, archival or internet searches and field work.

The work of Japanese American architects needs contextualization within the racial landscape of postwar America. For example, Japanese American building within the camps and architectural work during WWII had been generally vernacular, although some architects participated by creating model barracks or teaching drafting; this period represents a significant lacuna of three and a half years of professional work. Vernacular builders have been identified

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<sup>16</sup> David Gebhard and Robert Winter, *A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1977): 129, 429, 574. Stanley Kamehiro worked with the architects R.E. Coate Jr. and Minoru Yamasaki.

<sup>17</sup> Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny, *An Architectural Guidebook to San Francisco and the Bay Area*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2007.

by Anna Tamura, Gail Dubrow, Lynne Horiuchi, Connie Chiang, Jeffery Burton and others.<sup>18</sup> Burton's work demonstrates the importance of vernacular Japanese American landscape designers, as well as many gardeners or nursery men, especially at Manzanar Relocation Center, designated Manzanar National Historic Site in 1985. Some architects served at office manager level, such as **Yoshito (Yosh) Kuromiya** (1923-2018) for Garrett Eckbo (1910-2000), but he is much better known as a Heart Mountain Fair Play committee member who went to federal prison resisting the draft within the incarceration camps.<sup>19</sup>

The documentation of Japanese American architects needs also to take into account the cultural characteristics of the Japanese living in America, and the Nisei in particular. Harry Kitano, a well-known chronicler of the Nisei Japanese American community, wrote about the “*enryo* syndrome,” in which the deference inferiors would show to superiors was transferred to other situations, “from how to behave toward the white man, to what to do in ambiguous situations, to how to cover moments of confusion, embarrassment, and anxiety.” As part of this syndrome, praise in public was considered in poor taste, except for formal occasions; self-praise and boasting about one's family were also thought unacceptable.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> For discussions of vernacular building in the incarceration camps, see the work of Lynne Horiuchi, “Spatial Jurisdictions, Historical Topographies and Sovereignty at the Leupp Isolation Center,” *Amerasia Journal*, special issue edited by Karen Leong and Myla Carpio, 42:1, 2016; “Dislocations and Relocations: Designing for Prison Cities” *Scapegoat*, vol. 7, Fall/Winter, 2014; Connie Chiang, *Nature behind Barbed Wire: An Environmental History of the Japanese American Incarceration*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 2020.; Kenneth I. Helphand, *Defiant Gardens: Making Gardens in Wartime*, Trinity University Press, San Antonio, TX, 2008; Anna Hosticka Tamura, “Gardens below the Watchtower: Gardens and Meaning in World War II Japanese American Incarceration Camps,” *Landscape Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2004), pp. 1-21; Jeff Burton and Mary Farrell, Creating Beauty behind Barbed Wire: Manzanar's Japanese Gardens, *Journal of the North American Japanese Garden Association*, Issue No. 2, 2015, pp. 50-59; Jeff Burton, *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites*, 17 editions published 1999-2011; *Garden Management Plan: Gardens and Gardeners at Manzanar*, Manzanar National Historic Site, California, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Eric Muller, *Free To Die For Their Country: The Story of the Japanese American Draft Resisters in World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001): 76.

<sup>20</sup> Harry L. Kitano, *Japanese Americans: The Evolution of a Subculture* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976): 124-25.

While the first generation of Nikkei architects in California were deeply affected by World War II incarceration, those who trained in engineering and architecture in Hawai'i had mixed experiences with internment. Some established architects such as **Hego Fuchino** (1888-1961) were arrested and confined to multiple internment camps on the U.S. mainland, while others such as **Ernest Hideo Hara** (1909-2006) passed their licensing exams just before December 7, 1941, and had the opportunity to work as architects during World War II. In Hara's case, it provided continuous employment experience that set him up for success in the postwar period, with projects such as the grand tourist hotels that came to dominate the prime beaches of Waikiki and Hilo Bay.

At least two networks of Japanese American architects have their origins in schools of architecture at UC Berkeley and USC. Kaneji Domoto (1912-2002) began his career in landscape architecture within the Domoto family business, but just before the war had the opportunity to study at Taliesin. This was interrupted by his family's need to assist with the nursery in California. Unfortunately, he was present when the roundup of Japanese and Japanese Americans occurred. The Domoto family spent World War II incarcerated. In the postwar period, Kaneji Domoto and family relocated to Westchester, NY, where he rebuilt his career as an architect and landscape architect.

Several Japanese American architects were associated in the interwar period either with Telesis, a formidable modernist and ideological movement in mid-century American architecture, or with this group's principal members who were associated with UC Berkeley and the San Francisco office of the New Deal Farm Security Administration (FSA) headed by Vernon DeMars (1908-2005) and Garrett Eckbo. The more well-known members of the 1942 Telesis Environmental Research Group included DeMars, Eckbo, Francis Violich (1911-2005),

T.J. (Jack) Kent (1917-98), Geraldine and Mel Scott (1927-1977), Joseph Allen Stein (1912-2001) and others central to the postwar Bay Area and California Modernist movement. Less well-known Japanese American architects included **Siberius Y. Saito** (1908-1980) and **Hachiro Yuasa** (1909-2005), who both worked at the FSA before the war.<sup>21</sup> With the advent of WWII, both were imprisoned in Tanforan Assembly Center and then the Topaz Relocation Center while the FSA Office of Engineering was designing community plans, schools and specifications for all of the Assembly and Relocation Centers – in essence designing prison cities for their former colleagues. On their return to the Bay Area, Saito and Yuasa sorted out their architectural careers, apparently unaided by their former colleagues.<sup>22</sup> Like many other Japanese American colleagues in the postwar period, Saito rebuilt his career by co-founding a firm with a Caucasian partner, partnering with Thomas Flinn to found Flinn Saito Architects in 1948 in Waterloo, Iowa, an area that houses his most significant postwar architectural work.

Frank Sata (b. 1933) is a Los Angeles architect who worked with a core of postwar graduates from the University of Southern California Department of Architecture, including a number of Japanese American architects and his best friend Thomas Whelan Benton (1930-2007), known for his screen-printed political posters and collaborations with Hunter S. Thompson. USC associates provided Sata with a large network of architects with whom he could work collaboratively over the decades of his practice. Both his location as a Japanese American and his constant review of his architectural identity pushed him to prioritize human ontological conditions in his designs. Somewhat anti-establishment, he thinks of his work as providing for

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<sup>21</sup> References to poorly documented architects of Japanese ancestry often can be found in the papers of their white peers, as exemplified in Vernon Demars' accounts of working with Saito.

<sup>22</sup> Lynne Horiuchi, "Architectural Ethics at War: Farm Security Administration Designers and Their Japanese American Colleagues" in *Diversity and Design: Understanding Hidden Consequences*. Beth Tauke, Korydon Smith, and Charles Davis, eds. (London: Routledge, 2015).

his family, which only incidentally involved practicing as an architect. His work on Project Head Start was and is for him an important ethical example of the use of his skills. He opened his own office in the bridge portico (The Bridge) of the historic Pasadena Green Hotel, shown on his 1969 brochure/business card, which he shared with the well-known African American artist, Charles White (1918-1979). His large corpus of work includes specialization in large-scale project management, and numerous major urban planning collaborative projects in southern California. An important source of information about L.A. Japanese American architects, Sata has retained drawings, artifacts, photos and ephemera; he is looking to place his collection with an appropriate institution.

### **Postwar Resettlement and the Rise of Nisei Design Professionals**

A close study of the education, apprenticeship, and careers of architects, landscape architects and other designers of Japanese ancestry in the postwar period points to the long shadow of Japan's status as a wartime enemy, as well its impact on people of Japanese ancestry in the United States. But as American victory through the use of atomic bombs, combined with new global relations that repositioned Japan as an economic and political ally during the American occupation showed, the winds shifted and the defeated foe was soon embraced as a better alternative to increasing fears of Soviet influence in the region, leading to renewed cultural and economic exchange with Japan.

Not all architects and designers who survived forced incarceration continued careers in the field, but their experience merits consideration. Those few individuals who circumvented internment, such as Gyo Obata, who attended Washington University, have been well documented precisely because their education or careers continued throughout a period in which



the majority experienced significant barriers and delayed progress within their career trajectory. By the 1960s, however, the increased entry of Japanese Americans into schools of architecture and landscape architecture widened the range of practitioners whose work is available for collecting, including figures such as **Robert Hanamura** (1929-2020), **George Matsumoto** (1922-2016) and Kaneji Domoto. While celebrated figures such as Gyo Obata and **George Nakashima** (1905-1990) are well covered in existing collections, new approaches that emphasize collecting primary sources from adjacent figures in their circles and family papers point to new possibilities for expanding collections.

A through line between postwar practice of architecture and more recent efforts to preserve historic Japantowns can be found in the father-son pair of **Wayne Yoshito Osaki** (1923-2015) and Paul Osaki. Wayne practiced in the 1950s and saw the decline of San Francisco's Nihonmachi due to forced relocation, neglect and changing demographics during the war and postwar suburbanization. Similarly, after leaving the East Coast and starting his interdisciplinary practice, George T. Rockrise lived in and became concerned about the neglect of Nihonmachi. It was a common experience for Japanese American architects in the 1950s and 1960s to still be living and working in Japantown, but for there to be no active historic preservation movement that incorporated the concerns of Americans of Japanese descent. Decades later, son Paul Osaki would lead the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) and take up the issue of "Preserving California's Japantowns," including the political clout to get funding for a statewide initiative to document prewar Japantowns in California.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Sponsored by the California Japanese American Community Leadership Council (CJACLC), this statewide project to document pre-World War II Japantowns includes material on 43 communities in diverse regions of California. <https://www.californiajapantowns.org/preserving.html>.

In the postwar period, despite the invisibility of many Japanese American practitioners within the increasingly interdisciplinary and collaborative models for design in corporate settings, some engaged actively with the broader social and political trends of the time. Nisei architect **Wayne Yoshito Osaki** (1923-2015) was born and came of age near Sacramento, California, before being interned at Tule Lake until 1946. He relocated with his family to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he earned his architecture degree from UC Berkeley, and began his architectural career in 1951 in San Francisco. Osaki was one of many architects and planners of Japanese ancestry whose concern about the deteriorating conditions of center-city Nihonmachi as a result of WWII motivated them to use their professional skills to advocate for reinvestment in Japantowns during the era of urban renewal. This was true of architects and planners of Japanese ancestry in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle and other West Coast cities. In Wayne Osaki's case, his son Paul continued his legacy as Executive Director of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California by advocating for the preservation of San Francisco's Nihonmachi and supporting a state-wide initiative to Preserve California's Japantowns.<sup>24</sup>

The son of one of the earliest licensed architects of Japanese ancestry George Iwahiko Tsumanuma, **George T. Rockrise** (1916-2000) attended his father's alma mater, Syracuse University before earning his MArch at Columbia University. Unlike many of his fellow Nisei, George Rockrise eluded WWII incarceration by serving in the Canal Zone of Panama. After the war, he relocated to the Bay Area, in 1968 founding the interdisciplinary firm George T. Rockrise and Associates, later retitled ROMA (Rockrise, Odermatt, Mountjoy and Amis). Recognized for his professional skills in architecture, landscape architecture and city planning, Rockrise is credited with numerous civic projects and private commissions on the West Coast.

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<sup>24</sup>The results of this project are accessible at <https://www.californiajapantowns.org/preserving.html>.

## **Landscape Architects and Garden Designers**

Like the turn-of-the-century flourishing of garden designers without academic credentials, such as **Takeo Shiota** (1881-1943), who practiced with Iwahiko Tsumanuma in New York City and the surrounding metropolitan region, the postwar period proved fertile for the education and training of professional landscape architects of Japanese ancestry. Families rooted in the seed, flower, and nursery industries nurtured the entry of Nisei into landscape architecture, horticulture and related professions. While some aspiring professionals in landscape architecture joined their peers at UC Berkeley, those seeking horticultural skills, such as Kaneji Domoto's brother **Toichi Domoto** (1902-2001) took a different path by studying horticulture at the University of Illinois. While scholars might be tempted to limit recognition only to academically trained landscape architects, the pathways through which people of Japanese ancestry found their way to professional school, practice, and licensure in the landscape profession are so varied that future work to accelerate collecting should include landscape design, horticulture and other related fields to fully represent the impact of Japanese immigrants upon the American cultural landscape.

The University of California Berkeley produced some of the earliest landscape architects of Japanese ancestry because this public university was located in a center of Japanese settlement, where Japanese immigrants and their children had a significant presence in the nursery and flower industries. Wealth accrued by Issei allowed Nisei to attend college. Kaneji Domoto attended Berkeley's landscape architecture program, but later chose apprenticeship as his path, briefly attending Taliesin on the way to practice both architecture and landscape architecture. **Saichiro Kawakita** (1917-2008) became Berkeley's first landscape architecture graduate in 1941, right before the attack on Pearl Harbor and forced incarceration. **Donald**

**Shunji Akamatsu** (1920-1949), whose father was a gardener, **Michinori Richard Inouye** (1919-1978) and **Motoyuki Takahashi** (1919-2020) all missed graduation with the class of 1942 because of internment. Inouye eventually pursued a career in the health profession, while the entry of his peers into landscape design was significantly hobbled by incarceration and their lost university certification.

Because the timing of Nisei entry into landscape architecture occurred later than in architecture, the educations of those who began their studies just prior to World War II at UC Berkeley, the University of Washington, and other West Coast institutions located in the military exclusion zone often were interrupted or derailed. **Kinji Imada** (1927-2005) wrote to Harvard and Yale requesting admission to architecture school. Yale denied him, saving space for white veterans returning to school under the GI Bill. He subsequently gained admission to Harvard, but lingering anti-Japanese sentiment in the postwar period complicated the path to practice and delayed professional success for many in the design professions in the postwar period.

Wartime confinement at internment camps such as Manzanar created sites for the resurgence of traditional cultural activities such as garden design, shrine carpentry and seasonal festivals.<sup>25</sup> Architects, gardeners and those who had worked in the nursery industry or agriculture left their imprint upon the carceral landscape during this period of forced confinement. Some left camp early to work in the Midwest and East Coast in the nursery and floral industries, while others gained release to attend school. Those who served in the 442nd Infantry Regiment or the Military Intelligence Service were later able to use their service as a portal for postwar education through the GI Bill. Once the education and graduation of landscape architects resumed with the 1947 graduation from UC Berkeley of **Masaharu Kimura** (1921-1992), the field opened to a

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<sup>25</sup> Lynne Horiuchi, "Inventing Homelands in Japanese American Concentration Camps," in *Commemoration and the American City*, eds. David W. Gobel and E. G. Daves Rossell (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013).

greater number of Japanese Americans, including women. Before the contributions of Issei, the pattern in Issei to Nisei generation often includes the Issei parent in an industry that would have provided either fertile soil or a good foundation for a professional career. So this was not only true of Kaneji Domoto, but also Mai Arbegast, whose father and uncle founded Kitazawa Seed Company. **Mai Haru Kitazawa Arbegast** (1922-2012), who grew up in the seed industry as the daughter and niece of the founders of the Kitazawa Seed Company, stands out among them.<sup>26</sup> Her graduate degrees from Cornell and Berkeley undergirded a career that included teaching and practice in the Bay Area. **Bob Hideo Sasaki** (1919-2000), whose education was disrupted while studying at UC Berkeley, completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois in 1946, earned a graduate degree at Harvard in 1948, and led Sasaki Associates from 1953 onward. Sasaki built the firm into one of the largest U.S. multidisciplinary design firms in the world, while influencing a generation of students through his teaching position at Harvard's Graduate School of Design.

The long career of the emigré landscape architect **Nagao Sakurai** (1896-1973) spans major prewar and postwar developments in landscape architectural practice in the United States. As the first landscape architecture graduate of the Imperial University in Tokyo, Sakurai was already a noted landscape architect when he came to the U.S. as part of the Japanese delegation to design the Japan Exhibit at the 1939 Golden Gate and New York International Expositions. Sakurai is a rare example of a notable Japanese designer who did important work in the U.S. in the prewar period, before returning in the postwar period to establish a thriving practice in Southern California from the 1950s until his death in 1973.

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<sup>26</sup> Founded in 1917 in San Jose, the Kitazawa Seed Company was recently sold to True Leaf Market based in Salt Lake City, UT.

Sakurai's landscape projects for many Japanese gardens on the West Coast include private commissions, such as the 1961 Shikyeon garden in Los Angeles, later opened for public access as the Ethel Guiberson/Hannah Carter Japanese Garden. Sakurai's success both reflected and contributed to the rehabilitation of Japan in the postwar period, as the former Pacific foe was refashioned into an ally in the Cold War. Both the federal government and non-governmental entities, such as the Japan Society, used cultural initiatives as forms of diplomacy that rebuilt economic and political ties between the U.S. and Japan. These moves paved the way for architectural projects that brought Japanese corporations onto American soil; Japanese department stores such as Takashimaya and airlines such as Japan Air Lines (JAL) established a visible presence in major cities such as New York and Los Angeles. One direct consequence was that American architects of Japanese ancestry frequently were hired to work on related architectural and landscape projects.

The political rehabilitation of Japan in the U.S. effectively destigmatized iconography that had become targets of hate during the war, such as *torii* gates, stone lanterns, upturned roof eaves and blossoming cherry trees. Architects and landscape architects led the way in reintegrating Japanese aesthetics into American commercial, residential and garden design. Born in San Francisco, **Robert Kazuo Murase** (1938-2005) was interned at Topaz, Utah before returning to his family's landscape contracting business in California after the war. After earning his MLA in 1963 from UC Berkeley, followed by an internship in San Francisco with Halprin & Associates, and his first position at Royston, Hanamoto, Alley, and Abey, Murase moved his family in 1967 to Japan, where he lived and maintained a design practice for nine years. Murase's long sojourn in Japan was motivated not only by a deep interest in the study of traditional methods for composing stones and water in garden design, but also by his

disillusionment with the racism and social ferment of the contemporary United States. After returning to the U.S., he taught at the University of Oregon at Eugene's Department of Landscape Architecture before in 1980 joining the major design firm EDAW in Portland, Oregon, where in 1982 he formed Murase Associates, whose Seattle office opened in 1989. His approximately 50 major design awards led to FASLA (Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects) recognition in 1994, and designation as an Honorary Member of the Seattle Chapter of the AIA. Among his most notable projects are the 1990 Japanese American Historical Plaza in Portland, Oregon (Figure 4), and landscape commissions at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, and the Sumitomo Museum in Kyoto, Japan. This literal and artistic return to Japan by Japanese Americans trained in modernist design modes contributed to the reincorporation of Japanese aesthetics into modernist architectural and landscape aesthetics.

Among the best-documented and most well-recognized American artists and landscape architects of Japanese ancestry is **Isamu Noguchi** (1904-1988). Born in Los Angeles, Noguchi apprenticed to sculptor Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941) after high school and attended Columbia University as a premedical student. Dropping out, he began his art career in New York, traveled to Europe and entered the art scene during the 1920s, before returning to New York principally as a sculptor. Noguchi is particularly relevant to the Cooper Hewitt collections for his early industrial design, particularly the Zenith Radio Nurse, which is the original baby monitor, as well as a fountain built of auto parts for the Ford Motor Company's exhibit at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair. He co-founded and led the anti-fascist "Nisei Writers and Artists Mobilization for Democracy" to fight the internment of Japanese Americans, and was voluntarily interned at Poston in 1942, where he designed numerous amenities without success in getting the WRA to

implement them.<sup>27</sup> His return to New York marked the resumption of his career as a sculptor, and in the postwar period he produced furniture designs for Herman Miller, many of which remain in production today. Noguchi's work with Japanese architect Tange Kenzo (1913-2005) at the Hiroshima Peace Park (1950-52) speaks to an era when restored relations between the U.S. and Japan found expression in peace parks, monuments and memorials that often became important professional opportunities for artists and architects of Japanese ancestry. His prominence from the 1950s onward produced opportunities for large-scale works, sets and costumes for theater, and great public recognition from the 1960s through the 1980s.

In 1985 in Long Island City, New York Noguchi established what is today the Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, which displays and preserves his work. Among his most notable works are his iconic coffee table (1944), gardens for UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (1956-58), a sunken garden for the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (1960-64), Noguchi Plaza and its signature sculpture "To the Issei" in Los Angeles (1980-83), and many other sculpture gardens in the U.S. and Europe.

Shinji Nakagawa (b. 1939) embodies the American reengagement with both an economically ascendant Japan and Japanese aesthetics in the late 20th century. He also exemplifies broader professional trends toward interdisciplinary collaboration in the design professions. Born in Southern California in 1939 before internment at Manzanar and Tule Lake, California, Nakagawa served in the U.S. Marine Corps and Reserves for seven years before earning his BSLA from Cal-Poly Pomona in 1967. He joined Cortland Paul/Arthur Beggs and Associates in 1966, before in 1974 forming Peridian Group, Inc., becoming President and CEO of Peridian International in 1985, and serving from 1993-1995 as founding executive director in

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<sup>27</sup> Greg Robinson, "Isamu Noguchi," densho.org. <https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Isamu%20Noguchi>, accessed September 8, 2022.



Singapore of Peridian Asia. Nakagawa's large-scale work for transnational corporate and overseas government clients in the 1980s and 1990s embodied the global trend toward interdisciplinary, collaborative practice. Architectural patronage was built on the rising economic power of the so-called "Tiger Economies" that drove construction and development in Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan. Architects of Japanese ancestry in Hawai'i, Northern and Southern California often built their practices on initiatives based in Asia, including hotel and resort development, the automobile industry and banking. These decades witnessed the rise of flexible, transnational architectural practices. Architects of Japanese ancestry often built portfolios of projects both in the U.S. and abroad.

In conclusion, the postwar period was a complicated and highly significant time for Japanese American design professionals. Wartime incarceration disrupted the arc of many professional careers in architecture, landscape architecture and related fields. Efforts to resume architectural education were hindered by discriminatory "veterans' preferences" and lingering anti-Japanese sentiment, even as Nisei ambitions were raised by relocation that expanded the geography of Japanese America to include cities such as Chicago, Minneapolis, New York and Boston. However, by the mid-1950s those who had completed their education before the war began to resume active practices in locations such as Waterloo, Iowa and Westchester, New York, where few Japanese Americans had worked before. Others attending architecture school for the first time, or seeking advanced degrees were admitted to elite schools such as MIT, Yale, Cornell and Harvard.

Movements for racial justice grew to include the concerns of Asian Americans, including the call for redress for Japanese American internment. As Japanese American architects entered practice, some found themselves engaged in the struggle to end racial segregation in their

communities. Kaneji Domoto's civic activism included a fight to end segregation in public pools in Westchester, as well as giving testimony before the 1980 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. So too, the movement for Pan-Asian solidarity engaged the energies of activists who rallied against the war in Vietnam and other forms of injustice rooted in America's long history of anti-Asian racism. The condition of Japantowns which were so affected by wartime relocation as well as the liquidation of Nikkei assets during World War II became a focus of community organizing. Protests against the destruction of the International Hotel, which threatened to leave its largely Filipino, elderly male residents homeless, galvanized Pan-Asian concern about the precarity of elders, directing new attention to the preservation of AAPI cultural resources. The late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed the rise of state and local studies to document and preserve AAPI cultural resources in historic sites of settlement such as Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles, as well as the suburbs and rural environments surrounding them. The posters, broadsides and other ephemera of protest in that era merit collecting as an expression of grassroots concerns and the rise of Asian American activism that forged bonds of political solidarity across AAPI groups, and with social justice movements led by other racial and ethnic minority groups. This is particularly relevant to the Cooper Hewitt because its scope includes graphic design, and the Museum's aspirations for the future include greater acknowledgment of the political movements that affected women and racial minority populations whose art is poorly represented in their existing collections.

The wider theme of Japanese-inflected Modernism might also be a focus for the Cooper Hewitt Museum's accelerated collecting program, since the Modern Movement embraced Japanese architecture as one of its purported progenitors. Mainstream architectural histories have canonized the contributions of MoMA figures Philip Johnson (1906-2005) and Arthur Drexler

(1925-1987) to the postwar revival of interest in Japanese architecture. Celebrated Modernist designs for wealthy patrons, such as Philip Johnson's [Blanchette Ferry Hooker] Rockefeller Guest House (1949-50) in Midtown Manhattan, which incorporated ideas garnered from his tour of Japan for the MoMA exhibit, combined with the development of postwar architectural credos and manifestos, point to the value of reexamining the icons of modern architecture created by white American architects to rationalize the principles of Modernism. Though Johnson's work was certainly influential, preliminary evidence suggests that architects and landscape architects of Japanese ancestry played a greater role than has previously been understood in creating Japanese-inflected houses and gardens, as well as building bridges to Japan that included tours to educate their professional peers about the formerly reviled, enemy nation. New focus on the place of Japanese aesthetics in the work of architects and landscape architects of Japanese ancestry who practiced in the postwar period will recenter these neglected designers in new histories of Mid-century Modernism.

The political rehabilitation of Japan after the 1951 Treaty of San Francisco, and the efforts by Japanese corporations to establish a physical presence in the United States in subsequent decades created new employment opportunities for architects, landscape architects and other designers of Japanese ancestry. Kenneth Nishimoto in the Pasadena area and Kaneji Domoto in New York integrated Japanese aesthetics into what were otherwise modernist projects. This category is ripe for collecting because their papers rarely have been placed in archives. Close work with the families and associates of these architects is needed to cultivate relationships that promote the conservation of their papers and related objects.

## **Principal Collections**

Public research universities that include schools of architecture and landscape architecture have been diligent about collecting the works of designers of Japanese ancestry. These collections include the University of Washington, UC Berkeley, and the University of Southern California. UCLA contains special collections relevant to the work of Japanese immigrant carpenters in the archives of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA). Notable architects such as Gyo Obata are well published, and their works for the Smithsonian, such as the Air and Space Museum, and Smithsonian affiliates such as the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) merit collection. Drawings and other materials related to the work of vernacular builders and architects have attracted less curatorial and scholarly attention. Many of these materials exist today within the informal collections of major buildings they worked on, especially Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, as well as within the aforementioned archives of the BCA, now housed at UCLA. Unfortunately, these latter materials remain uncatalogued after their transfer to UCLA from the BCA and JANM, making them difficult for scholars to access.

## **Collecting the Papers of Architects and Designers of Japanese Ancestry in America**

The most significant weakness of our study lies in the paucity of women architects and design professionals in architecture-related fields less hostile to women, such as interior design, graphic design and landscape architecture. Because women practitioners faced not only gender but also racial discrimination in their quest for professional success in architectural design, many female graduates of schools of architecture at Cornell and other major universities followed truncated professional trajectories even in periods and in major urban areas where male practitioners of Japanese descent were relatively numerous in design offices. Because of their

greater access to design fields outside of architecture, it is suggested that further study is merited of women of Japanese descent in the fields of textile, product and graphic design, all of which are included in the Cooper Hewitt's categories for the Women in Design collection. Moreover, the work produced by contemporary graphic designers of Japanese ancestry, such as John Maeda (b. 1966) merit additional research.

The broader subject of pan-Asian social movements also merits closer attention because it cuts across many of the categories in this study and connects to common causes and deep geographic, economic and historic differences across Asian America and its diasporae in the post-1965 era. Protest art, especially graphic design, from the West Coast-based social justice movements organized by and for Asian Americans starting in the late 1960s and continuing to the present, was often created in solidarity with other anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and racial justice movements. Small collectives, linked to print shops and DIY protest art constitute an under-collected area in design museums that might intersect in productive ways with broader Smithsonian collecting agendas with regard to street art and LGBTQ representation.

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## Illustrations



**Figure 1.** Umekichi Tanaka (1859-1936). *Hamakua Jodo Mission*, near Pā'auhau, Hawai'i. 1916. Photo by Augie Salbosa. From BUS/[SAH Archipedia](#).



**Figure 2.** Yasuo Matsui (1877-1962) and others for Shreve, Lamb & Harmon. *Empire State Building*, 1931. New York, NY. Library of Congress.



**Figure 3.** Minoru Yamasaki (1912-1986). *World Trade Center*. New York, NY. By Jeffmock - Own work, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2188597>.



**Figure 4.** Robert Murase (1938-2005). *Japanese American Historical Plaza*. Portland, Oregon. Aerial view of central crossing. Dedicated August 3, 1990. Courtesy of Scott Murase.



## **Chinese American Architects and Designers**

**Hongyan Yang**  
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### **Overview and Scope**

The goal of the project is to document the important contributions of Chinese American architects and designers in California to Asian American communities as well as American vernacular landscapes and designs since 1950. Educated in American Mid-century Modernism, the generation of newly empowered Chinese American architects nevertheless grew up in the shadow of the Chinese Exclusion Era (1882-1943). The experiences of racial exclusion and marginalization shaped their political advocacy for Asian American communities, while also motivating them on pragmatic grounds to appeal to a mainstream audience in their designs. Their contributions to American design history within and beyond Asian American communities in various arenas—such as architecture, interior design, furniture design, architectural photography, and graphic designs— remain largely unrecognized.

Some Chinese American architects actively sought to support the Chinese American community by visually redefining commercial spaces in Chinatowns with a form of Chinese eclectic modern design that paid visual homage to their Chinese heritage. These designs helped facilitate services for the Chinese American community, members of which were often denied access to mainstream institutions. Others designed and built homes for the rapidly growing, middle-class, Chinese American and other families in exclusively white suburbs by overcoming racially restrictive covenants to bring Modernism into America's postwar suburbs. In addition, many Chinese American architects undertook international projects in countries such as China through the hospitality industry. All these heterogeneous experiences of individual architects

speak to the complexity of Chinese American identity formation, allowing us to ask what it meant to be Asian American in design professions at various historical moments.

### **Sources and Methods for Identifying and Documenting AAPI Architects and Designers**

To identify Chinese American architects relevant to this project, the first phase identified architects of Chinese descent and related projects in the *AIA Historical Directory of American Architects, 1857-1978* and *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1970 Multiple Property Submission (MPS)* provided by the California Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Out of more than 140 California-based architects of Chinese descent, my collaborator Dr. Sujin Eom and I identified approximately thirty whose solid business records indicate their active architectural presence in California and beyond. These listings provided the foundation to explore the works of architects of Chinese descent who practiced from 1950 to the present.

During the second phase of this project, I broadened the study to consider gender issues in the design professions, and expanded coverage beyond architecture to include interior design, furniture design, graphic design, and other fields. In an effort to locate personal collections of architectural drawings, plans, and family papers to be acquired as permanent collections at the Smithsonian, I draw on a community-centered approach—utilizing my extensive Chinese American networks in San Francisco and Los Angeles—to identify relevant architects, designers and their descendants. Although time-consuming and dependent heavily on local Chinese American communities, the process of community outreach is imperative because the descendants of Chinese American architects and designers often hold family papers and architectural records but are in need of support for professional documentation and conservation. Through the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, we can help conserve these valuable

records and educate the public about Chinese American architects and designers in California, whose great impacts on American cultural landscapes still resonate with us today. As part of the 2012 “Breaking Ground: Chinese American Architects in Los Angeles (1945-1980)” exhibition at the Chinese American Museum, several individuals provided essential support during my community outreach in Los Angeles, including Suellen Cheng (former Executive Director of the Chinese American Museum in Los Angeles), Michael Truong (current Executive Director of the Chinese American Museum in Los Angeles), and Eugene Moy (President of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California). Through their help, I was able to connect with the families and descendants of pioneering Chinese American architects and designers in Los Angeles, such as **Eugene Choy** (1912-1991), **Helen Fong** (1927-2005), **Roger Hong** (1941-2006), **Gilbert Leong** (1911-1996), **Charles Wong** (1929-2019), **Gin Wong** (1922-2017), and **Choy Wy** (1901-98).

In conjunction with this effort, I have also conducted extensive searches in online obituaries, Yellow Pages listings, LinkedIn, and Facebook to track down the contact information of some Chinese American architects or their descendants. This research, along with community outreach allowed me to connect with the families and descendants of Chinese American architects that primarily practiced in the San Francisco Bay Area, including **Lun Chan** (1927-2011) and his wife **Eva Chan** (b. 1928), **Clement Chen Jr.** (1929-88), **Robert Fan, Sr.** (1893-1979) and his son **Robert Fan, Jr.** (1930-2016), **David Fong** (b. 1944), and **Chiu Lin Tse-Chan** (b. 1936). Only two of these architects are women, Eva Chan and Chiu Lin Tse-Chan, who to my delightful surprise were identified by their family and colleague, respectively. Compared with the relatively well-preserved records of their Los Angeles counterparts in archives such as the Huntington Library and community organizations such as the Chinese American Museum

and Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, Chinese American architects and designers in the San Francisco Bay Area are represented primarily in the holdings of the Environmental Design Archives at the College of Environmental Design (CED) at UC Berkeley. For example, during my July visit to Clement Chen III in San Mateo, the son of Clement Chen Jr., he indicated that many project files and family papers have been disposed of due to office location changes and a lack of institutional support in preserving these materials. In addition, Brian Choy, an architectural photographer and a surviving son of **Philip Choy** (1926-2017), also shared with me that many of his father's project files were destroyed in a fire in his San Francisco office. To redress this historical imbalance, I encourage the Cooper Hewitt to prioritize the conservation of the work of Chinese American architects and designers in the San Francisco Bay Area, which has been much less appreciated and preserved compared to the work of their counterparts in Southern California. In addition to the community-centered approach, I also conducted searches in architectural and popular magazines such as *Architectural Forum*, *Life*, and *Ebony*, which contained limited information pertinent to the project, illuminating the default Whiteness that undergirds the design history commonly studied in the United States.<sup>28</sup>

Overall, drawing on my extensive Chinese American networks in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles and online searches of the family descendants, I compiled a list of thirty architects and designers of Chinese descent for acquisition. Because the twelve living individuals range in age from 67 to 101 years old, conducting oral history interviews should be a high priority. The expanded scope in the second phase of the project includes individuals from various design professions, including architecture, interior design, furniture design, architectural photography and graphic design.

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<sup>28</sup> Kristina Wilson, *Mid-Century Modernism and the American Body: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Power in Design* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 3.

## Framework for Organizing Key Findings about the History of Architects and Designers of Chinese Descent

The history of architects of Chinese descent has begun to receive scholarly attention in recent years. However, existing studies primarily focus on the first-generation Chinese architects who were educated in the Beaux-Arts educational culture of American architecture schools in the 1920s.<sup>29</sup> As noted by scholars, many of these architects chose or were compelled after graduation by exclusion laws to return to China, contributing there to the development of modern or eclectic architecture, and the establishment of schools of architecture. Although these architects are beyond the scope of this project, it is important to acknowledge that related family papers and files reside primarily outside the United States, in places such as Tsinghua University in Beijing.<sup>30</sup> For acquisition purposes, this project focuses primarily on architects and designers of Chinese descent who settled in California, allowing for better chances for accessing and acquiring their papers from their descendants.<sup>31</sup> I have organized the selected architects and designers into three chronological groups that correspond to different significant periods in Chinese American history: pioneer Chinese American architects and designers (born before 1930), middle-generation Chinese American architects and designers (born 1930-1945) and new-generation Chinese American architects and designers (born after 1945).

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<sup>29</sup> Jeffrey W. Cody and Nancy S. Steinhardt, eds., *Chinese Architecture and the Beaux-Arts* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011); Nancy Steinhardt, "Chinese Comes to Europe, Europe Comes to China, Chinese Students Come to the United States," in *Chinese Architecture: A History*, by Nancy Steinhardt (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 314–33.

<sup>30</sup> Some are archived at the University of Pennsylvania.

<sup>31</sup> Municipal and archives in China in general are not open to foreign nationals therefore will be not suit the need of this particular project that focuses on acquisition.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Pioneers

The first-generation architects and designers of Chinese descent, many educated on the East Coast at institutions such as the University of Pennsylvania and MIT, mostly chose to return to China, where they contributed to defining what Modernism meant there.<sup>32</sup> One architect identified in my research on California was Robert Fan, Jr., who was born in Shanghai in 1930 to Robert Fan, Sr. (Fan Wenzhao 范文照 in Chinese), a well-known Shanghai architect who graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1921 and designed many city landmarks of Shanghai, including the Shanghai Concert Hall (1930), the Chinese YMCA (1931), and the Majestic Theatre (1941). After the Communist ascendance in 1949, Robert Fan, Jr. fled China in 1952 to attend the Harvard Graduate School of Design, graduating in 1956. He married fellow architect and Harvard alum Doreen Young and settled in San Francisco in 1963. Like many other pioneer Chinese American designers who were racial minorities in their professions, Robert, Jr. worked for architecture firms operated by whites before starting his own practice in 1978. Maureen Fan, their surviving daughter and family historian, is writing their family history based on family archives, although early projects by Robert, Sr. are located in China.

Given the existence of discriminatory laws, this small group of pioneer Chinese American architects, including Robert Fan, Jr., Lun Chan, Eva Chan, Helen Fong, Gin Wong, Charles Wong, and Choy Wy, mostly began with institutional and commercial projects, at least well into the early 1950s. The Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943) and the California Alien Land Laws of 1913 and 1920 prevented Chinese immigrants ineligible to citizenship (and from 1920

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<sup>32</sup> Tingbao Yang, "China's Modern Architecture in the Twentieth Century," in *Chinese Architecture and the Beaux-Arts*, ed. Jeffrey W. Cody and Nancy S. Steinhardt (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 153–68.

also their U.S. citizen children) from owning land. The Alien Land Laws remained in effect until 1956.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, racial zoning was enforced by the Federal Housing Administration and Veteran Administration; private racial covenants lasted into the 1960s.<sup>34</sup> As a result, after establishing their own practices, Chinese American architects rarely found few if any opportunities to design residences for Asian American clients before 1960. One architect that challenged the racial covenants that prevented nonwhites from settling into white suburbs was Eugene Choy, who built his own home in Silver Lake. His son Barton Choy shared with me, My father was a determined pioneer when building the family home in a LA suburb burdened with restrictive covenants. While the restrictions were not at all unusual, his solution was a door-to-door introduction and personal request to build his home. He was also unable to acquire traditional financing, but built with family-pooled funds. Then he asked the bank(s) that rejected him to visit the completed house, whereupon they asked him “how much do you need?”<sup>35</sup>

Similar to Eugene Choy, architect **Roger Lee** (1920-1981) led the way in Northern California. His own residence in Berkeley (1949) was named “America’s Best Small Houses, 1949.” In 1957, the London Architectural Review recognized him as one of the 40 U.S. architects who have “made personal contributions to American Architecture.”<sup>36</sup> These groundbreaking efforts of pioneer Chinese American architects opened the door for other nonwhite families to settle in exclusively white suburbs in the following decades. By the late 1950s, Chinese American architects commonly engaged in residential projects for diverse clients. For example, architect **Samuel Y. Dun (Shun Yo Dung, 1923-2017)** designed a Mid-Century Modern residence for Jim Lim Wong in 1963 in the Silver Lake neighborhood. Architect Roger Hong also designed his family residence in 1968 in the Los Feliz Estates, featuring ample windows, an open floor plan,

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<sup>33</sup> Franklin Odo, ed., “California Alien Land Law (a.k.a. Webb Act), August 10, 1913,” in *The Columbia Documentary History of the Asian American Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 160–61.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (New York: Liveright, 2017).

<sup>35</sup> Barton Choy in discussion with the author, October 2022.

<sup>36</sup> “Roger Lee Collection, 1949-1968 Finding Aids,” Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley, [https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf6t1nb2j4/entire\\_text/](https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf6t1nb2j4/entire_text/).

and Japanese-influenced, post-and-beam construction. Charles Wong, who designed many homes that feature flat roofs and pools in the Ladera Heights and Windsor Hills areas of Los Angeles for the white developer Homer Valentine in the 1960s, later became a successful developer in his own right.<sup>37</sup>

In San Francisco, in and beyond the existing Chinatown built by European American architects in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fire, many Chinese American architects found their niche first in the hospitality industry. For example, Lun Chan designed the famous Mandarin Restaurant San Francisco opened by culinary icon Cecelia Chiang in 1968, and the Trader Vic's Restaurant in Emeryville in 1972, the latter of which allowed him to build other Trader Vic's Restaurants in France, Germany, Asia and the Middle East.<sup>38</sup> Clement Chen, Jr., after winning the design competition for the Holiday Inn (today's Hilton) in San Francisco's Chinatown, of which the Chinese Cultural and Trade Center was a part, also went on to build Holiday Inns across the globe and hotels for other chains, such as Sheraton and Hilton. Other architects were more involved in designing or redesigning Chinese restaurants, using eclectic Chinese modern design to elevate the status of these restaurants. For example, Chinese American architect and historian Philip P. Choy designed numerous Chinese restaurants in the Bay Area in the 1960s and 1970s while leading the Asian American Movement and teaching the first Chinese American history course at San Francisco State University.<sup>39</sup> **Worley Wong** (1912-85), whose family were Chinese American leaders who helped rebuild San Francisco's Chinatown in 1906, designed the Empress of China Restaurant (1967).

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<sup>37</sup> Dan Steinbrocker, "Homer Valentine: Famous Windsor Hills and Ladera Heights Home Builder," accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.laderaheightsnews.com/valentine-homes.html>.

<sup>38</sup> Erik Chan and Eva Chan in discussion with the author, October 2022.

<sup>39</sup> Brian Choy in discussion with the author, July 2020.



In Los Angeles, some Chinese American architects dedicated themselves to building community spaces in Los Angeles' New Chinatown, expanding on the leading role local Chinese American merchants played in designing and building the area in the late 1930s.<sup>40</sup> The most notable Chinese American architects include **Eugene Choy**, **Gilbert Leong**, **Hai Chuen Tan** (b. 1921), and **Richard Layne Tom** (1927-2014). Among them, Gilbert Leong was the first Chinese American to graduate from the University of Southern California with an architecture degree. Integrating Chinese architectural motifs with modern construction methods, Leong and other Chinese American architects further announced the cultural distinctiveness of Los Angeles's Chinatown through its built environment. Early community projects include the buildings of the 1947 Chinese United Methodist Church and the 1951 First Chinese Baptist Church by Gilbert Leong, as well as the 1951 Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association by Eugene Choy. In addition, Leong helped co-found the East West Bank in 1973, which had a lasting impact on the growth of Chinese businesses that were mostly shut out of business loans from mainstream banks at the time. Besides architecture, in 1954 the furniture designer **Danny Ho Fong** (1915-92) started Tropi-Cal Company (now Fong Brothers Company), his wrought-iron and rattan furniture business, and achieved great success by designing furnishings adapted to the leisured lifestyle of Southern California and marketed to the American middle class by employing both traditional Chinese and modern American materials.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to these male architects, Helen Fong excelled as one of the earliest female Chinese American designers in California. As both a racial minority and a woman, despite graduating in 1949 from the School of Architecture at UC Berkeley, Fong started off working

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<sup>40</sup> Josi Ward, "Dreams of Oriental Romance: Reinventing Chinatown in 1930s Los Angeles," *Buildings & Landscapes* 20, no. 1 (March 1, 2013): 19–42.

<sup>41</sup> Lawrence Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 9.

as Eugene Choy's secretary at his office in Los Angeles, learning about the business by typing contracts, handling payments, and organizing catalogs of building materials.<sup>42</sup> In 1951, she joined the architectural firm Louis Armet and Eldon Davis as a junior draftsman. Fong was instrumental in the development of Googie architecture, the futuristic, kitschy style whose popularity in the United States extended from the immediate postwar period to the early 1970s.<sup>43</sup> Fong's fellow UC Berkeley alumna **Eva Low Chan** (b. 1928) began her career as only the second employee after Terry Tong (1921-2016) at Campbell & Wong Associates, a firm co-founded by Worley Wong.<sup>44</sup> Graduating in 1951 as one of only eight women in the school of architecture, Chan designed some residences in the Bay Area, which was rather unusual at the time, considering that most Chinese American architects were primarily engaged in institutional and commercial projects. Her success in residential commissions may be attributable in part to the fact that as a white male, John Carden Campbell (1914-96), Worley Wong's partner in the firm, was able to engage the firm in residential projects. Although Eva Chan discontinued her practice at Campbell & Wong around 1959 to fulfill her family obligations, she continued to support her husband Lun Chan and the two of them worked on some of the projects together.<sup>45</sup>

### **Middle-Generation Chinese American Architects and Designers**

Though the middle-generation Chinese American architects and designers mostly entered practice after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, they nevertheless experienced the bamboo ceiling in their respective professions. As a result, like their pioneer generation

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<sup>42</sup> Elaine Woo, "Obituaries; Helen Liu Fong, 78; Architect Created Futuristic Designs for Coffee Shops," *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 2005.

<sup>43</sup> Chinese American Museum, *Breaking Ground: Chinese American Architects in Los Angeles (1945-1980)* (Los Angeles: Chinese American Museum, 2012), 38-46.

<sup>44</sup> Terry Tong's papers are held at the Environmental Design Archives (EDA), UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design (CED).

<sup>45</sup> Eva Low Chan in discussion with the author, October 2022.

predecessors in the late 1940s to early 1960s, most middle-generation Chinese American architects eventually chose to establish their own practices from the late 1970s to the early 1980s. Many of the middle generation are still living, providing ample opportunity to acquire their works, and to interview them to more fully understand their lived experiences.

Some Chinese American architects and designers from this middle generation engaged in practices that contributed to elevating the Chinese American community. For example, Roger Hong, one of the two sons of You Chong Hong and Mable Hong, both of whom were influential in the development of Los Angeles' New Chinatown in the 1930s, was actively involved in efforts to revitalize the same area in the 1980s and 2000s.<sup>46</sup> This turn toward community development projects stood in sharp contrast to his early oeuvre from the 1960s, which focused primarily on commercial projects, for reasons noted above.<sup>47</sup> **Miller Yee Fong** (b. 1941), son of Danny Ho Fong and a classmate at the USC School of Architecture with Roger Hong, continued his family's wrought-iron and rattan furniture business. Compared to his father, his architectural and furniture designs demonstrate more of an influence from Southern California Modernist architects such as Donald C. Hensman (1924-2002), who taught at USC from 1952 to 1963.<sup>48</sup>

In San Francisco, **James Chao** (b. 1940) and **Gordon Chong** (b. 1943) have also been longstanding advocates for the Asian American community. Chao began as a draftsman in San Francisco in 1966 and became a member and director of real estate and construction for The Straw Hat Restaurant Corporation. He formed his private practice in 1987, although not much has been published and documented in this regard. In 2017, he was named a Lifetime Achiever

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<sup>46</sup> Y.C. Hong Papers, Box Y10, Folder 9, The Huntington Library, Pasadena, California; Author interview with Nowland Hong, May 2020.

<sup>47</sup> "Roger S. Hong Collection Finding Aids," The Huntington Library, accessed March 11, 2023, [http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/huntington/arcoll/hong\\_roger.pdf](http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/huntington/arcoll/hong_roger.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> Miller Fong in discussion with the author, October 2022.

by Marquis Who's Who in the field of architecture. Throughout his lifetime, he supported several Asian American organizations, such as the Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association and the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco.<sup>49</sup> Chong, a third-generation Hawaiian of Chinese heritage, was the first Asian American to head the American Institute of Architects, serving as AIA President in 2001-2002.<sup>50</sup> His practice encompasses urban design, architecture, interior design, environmental graphics, strategic consulting and research. He is best known for his design with Renzo Piano of the California Academy of Sciences (2005-2008) and the Yee Fow Museum, a cultural and educational center in Sacramento.<sup>51</sup> In addition, David Fong and Chiu Lin Tse-Chan, both of whom were influenced mainly by iconic Modernist architects such as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, co-founded Fong & Chan Architects in San Francisco in 1982, and have been engaged in various institutional projects, with a current focus on the healthcare facilities.<sup>52</sup>

In this generation, female Chinese American architects were still a minority among minorities. Only after the passing of the War Brides Act of 1945 did Chinese women begin to enter the U.S. in significant numbers.<sup>53</sup> In addition to **Chiu Lin Tse-Chan**, another identified female architect is **Yvonne Yuen-Han Chen** (b. 1939). Chen, despite having attended prestigious institutions such as the University of Hong Kong, MIT, and UC Berkeley, started as a plan checker engineer in Santa Barbara's Planning and Development Department before opening

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<sup>49</sup> "James Min-Tzu Chao Named a Lifetime Achiever by Marquis Who's Who," accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.24-7pressrelease.com/press-release/443873/james-min-tzu-chao-named-a-lifetime-achiever-by-marquis-whos-who>.

<sup>50</sup> "Gordon Hing Quon Chong (Architect)," Pacific Coast Architecture Database, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/723/>.

<sup>51</sup> "Yee Fow Museum Project, Sacramento, CA," Pacific Coast Architecture Database, accessed March 11, 2023. <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/22147/>.

<sup>52</sup> David Fong in discussion with the author, October 2022.

<sup>53</sup> Din et al., *Chinese American Historic Context Statement*, 53. San Francisco Planning Department, San Francisco, CA.

her own practice in 1980.<sup>54</sup> Additional research and fieldwork is needed to better understand their lives and identify their largely unstudied professional work.

Though best-known as an architectural photographer of Modernist buildings in North America and Asia, **Wayne Thom** (b. 1933) also worked as a furniture and graphic designer who designed office stationery and publicity brochures for architectural firms.<sup>55</sup> His works are archived in the Special Collections of the University of Southern California.

### **New-Generation Chinese American Architects and Designers**

With their practices established since the late 1980s, the new generation of Chinese American architects and designers embraced opportunities opened to them by the increasing acceptance of Chinese Americans in the United States. Although they are not the primary focus of this project, it is still important to collect the important voices and projects of this newer generation, whose active practices increase the likelihood of preserving their works. The individuals who have been identified include the architects **Victoria Fong and Gene Fong**, and the architectural photographer **Brian Choy**, all residing and practicing in the San Francisco Bay Area.

### **Location of Existing Collections**

The report identified the locations of thirty architects and designers of Chinese descent in the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas. A few collections have been acquired by major institutions in the San Francisco Bay Area and Southern California, including Stanford

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<sup>54</sup> “Yvonne Yuen-Han Chen,” accessed March 11, 2023, [https://prabook.com/web/yvonne\\_yuen-han.chen/604763](https://prabook.com/web/yvonne_yuen-han.chen/604763).

<sup>55</sup> Michael Q. Hooks, Kirsten Mandt, and Sue Luftschein, “Finding Aid for the Wayne Thom Photographer Negatives, Photographs, and Other Material,” accessed March 11, 2023, <http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/usc/spcoll/6105thom.pdf>.

University, UC Berkeley, USC and The Huntington Library, all of which contain physical collections with digital access limited mainly to interested researchers rather than the general public. In addition, this report identifies private collections residing in design firms and family descendants. These collections should be prioritized for collection by the Cooper Hewitt because of the greater likelihood of permanent acquisition that may best preserve private collections that might otherwise be dispersed or lost over time. The following section examines the most valuable and endangered family and company archives to acquire. The Appendix provides detailed information on archival collections and pertinent institutions, as well as the locations of extant private archives.

Additional fieldwork in California will determine in greater detail the extant archives in private hands. In this case, a general acquisition plan by the Cooper Hewitt and other Smithsonian collecting arms that explains the future of these private collections after acquisition would be very helpful in the negotiation process. For example, family descendants might be interested in working with the museums to digitize their collections to make them available to the public, while still retaining the original files. During community outreach for this project, many families expressed a desire for more detailed information about the acquisition process.

### **Priorities for Future Collecting and Action**

Through a broad survey of Chinese American architects and designers in California and community outreach in San Francisco and Los Angeles, I identified the following individuals, corporations, and families' papers and projects as the most important and imperative to be acquired by the Cooper Hewitt and other Smithsonian collecting units. My main criteria for **selection** include the significance of their works in shaping their respective design fields, the precarity of their collections, the likelihood of acquisition as permanent collections rather than as

temporary loans from other archives and museums, and the inclusiveness of the acquisition. I was able to interview nearly all these individuals, or their professional partners and members of their immediate families to gain a more in-depth understanding of their lives and practices.

### **Lun Chan (1927-2011) and Eva Low Chan (b. 1928)**

Lun Chan was born in San Francisco to a traveling herbalist and spent his childhood in different parts of the nation. After service in the intelligence department of the U.S. Air Force, he returned to the west coast to complete his M.Arch at UC Berkeley in 1951.<sup>56</sup> Like many of his Chinese American peers, Lun started by working for firms operated by whites, in his case, John Carl Warnecke and Associates. During his time with the firm, the major project that he was involved with was the Hawai'i State Capitol. The project was the largest architectural project ever undertaken in Hawai'i at the time and it was the first state capitol to be designed in a modern architectural style, featuring a 180-foot-wide central courtyard, and using forty, 60-foot-tall columns and water to symbolize the palm trees and ocean of Hawai'i.<sup>57</sup> Before the completion of the project in 1969, he joined with Morton Rader (1926-1978), his partner from John Carl Warnecke and Associates' San Francisco office, to open their private practice in 1961. In the following two decades, they took on projects ranging from campuses, healthcare facilities, restaurants, and residences.<sup>58</sup> After Rader's death in 1978, the firm became Lun Chan Associates.

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<sup>56</sup> Erik Chan, "Lun Chan Obituary," accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/sfgate/name/lun-chan-obituary?id=10126320>.

<sup>57</sup> Katie Stephens, "The Hawaii State Capitol," Docomomo-US, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.docomomo-us.org/news/the-hawaii-state-capitol>.

<sup>58</sup> Lun Chan and Morton Rader, *Chan Rader Associates, 1961-1975*, 1975. Chan Family Collection, Orinda, CA.

In addition to large-scale projects, they were heavily involved in the hospitality industry, including many Chinese restaurants, which was likely an influence by Lun Chan. They designed the famous Mandarin Restaurant in Ghirardelli Square (1968) and Beverly Hills (1975), and many Polynesian-themed Trader Vic's Restaurants and Señor Pico Restaurants in the 1960s and 1970s. According to Eva Low Chan, Lun Chan's wife, the very first Trader Vic's Restaurant Chan designed was its headquarters in Emeryville, California, which led as a springboard to his later design of around thirty other Trader Vic's restaurants worldwide.<sup>59</sup> This is significant because Tiki design, though created by Hollywood set designers in the early twentieth century, was expressed in built form by the 1950s primarily by Tiki-inspired Chinese restaurants, at least in Los Angeles.<sup>60</sup> These restaurants were popularized by novels and movies such as *South Pacific*, and capitalized on the interests of many returned GIs who first experienced Polynesian and Asian culture during WWII. However, the critical role Chinese American architects such as Lun Chan played in shaping the Tiki style of restaurants has been largely overlooked. As a GI during WWII, Lun Chan likely observed the opportunity to integrate Tiki culture into his architectural practice, which contributed to defining a kitschy alternative to the rather stark architecture of mainstream Modernism. Martin Cate, author of *Struggler's Cove, Exotic Cocktails, Rum, and the Cult of Tiki* explained, "During the 1950s, it was an escape from the relentless push of both modernism and the hard-driving American work ethic."<sup>61</sup> Evoking the architectural traditions from various Pacific Islander cultures, tiki architecture features steep A-frame roofing, tropical décor, carved wooden statues, and plenty of employment of bamboo in

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<sup>59</sup> Eva Low Chan in discussion with the author, October 2022.

<sup>60</sup> Hadley Meares, "How Chinese Restaurants Shaped Tiki Culture In LA," *LAist*, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://laist.com/news/la-history/las-chinese-restaurants-tiki-culture-crucial-role?fbclid=IwAR1ItHJrtPg4gMgUbZlistmY0F5Askc13peYDgNuNIJHy-hMWKpmaoIh5s>.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*



the interior as seen in the Trader Vic's Restaurant in Emeryville (Figure 1) and the Mandarin Restaurant in Ghirardelli Square of San Francisco (Figure 2). Many of these original project files still reside in the Chan Family Collection in Orinda, California, including a portfolio (Figure 3) that was mailed to me by Lun Chan's son, Erik Chan, who continued his father's practice. It would also be meaningful to include the works and oral history of the 94-year-old Eva Low Chan to thoroughly understand the lives of this group of pioneer Chinese American architects.

### **Clement Chen, Jr. (1929-1988)**

Born in Shanghai in 1928, Clement Chen, Jr. came to the United States in 1949 to study at Sewanee before transferring to Rensselaer Polytechnic University in Troy, New York. As the first architect allowed a joint international venture in the People's Republic of China for his 1982 Jianguo Hotel in Beijing, Chen is one of the most underappreciated Chinese American architects. His wife June Chen, who is still living, documented the life of Clement Chen in an unpublished memoir, "A Chronicle of His Life and Times." Their son, Clement Chen III, holds many of Chen's original drawings and models, such as the Holiday Inn in Palo Alto (1973), the Pasadena Sheraton (1975), and historical images related to his best-known work, the Beijing Jianguo Hotel noted above.

As recounted by his wife, Chen's journey was closely associated with the lived experiences of Chinese Americans. Though he could not study naval architecture that was limited to American citizens, Chen was able to attend college using the Boxer Rebellion funds made available to Chinese students by the U.S. government. In 1951, his architectural education at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute included "Site Planning and Landscape Architecture, Structural Engineering, Seismology, Specification Writing, Strength of Materials, Codes,

Professional Ethics in Architecture, and Construction Management.” After returning to the Bay Area in 1954, he first worked for Youritan Construction Company in Menlo Park, a firm founded by S.T. Tan, whom Clement could communicate with in Shanghainese. In the 1950s, with the exception of established national firms, most architectural practices hired their personnel as contractors rather than full-time employees. Chen worked for as many as twelve different firms between 1954 and 1959, experiencing a variety of assignments, and learning how to obtain commissions.<sup>62</sup>

Chen also worked under esteemed architects such as Leslie Nichols (1894-1969) and William Wurster (1895-1973), who were particularly inspirational for his practice. As a disciple of Bernard Maybeck (1862-1957), Wurster introduced Clement to the use of wood frame construction and shingles typical of regional modernism, as opposed to European modernist architecture’s common use of steel and glass.<sup>63</sup> The idea was incorporated into the design of his own home and the neighboring home of the Kobayashi family in San Carlos in 1943, which received a Merit Award from the Federal Housing Administration for overcoming the challenge of the steep terrain the homes sat on.<sup>64</sup> The homes used wood frame construction, shingles, and Japanese *shōji* at the entrance. In addition, Chen was also influenced by Nichols’s idea of water in landscape design, a feature he incorporated into his design of the Holiday Inn in Palo Alto and the Beijing Jianguo Hotel.<sup>65</sup>

Chen became most successful when he was awarded the project to build the Holiday Inn in San Francisco’s Chinatown and set aside the third floor of the building to house the Chinese

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<sup>62</sup> June Chen, “A Chronicle of His Life and Times” (unpublished manuscript, 2015), typescript, Chen Family Archive, San Mateo, CA.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> “Architect’s Steep Challenge,” *San Francisco Examiner*, October 22, 1964.

<sup>65</sup> Chen, “A Chronicle of His Life and Times.”

Cultural and Trade Center with an annual rent of one dollar. His original competition entry remains in the Chen Family collection (Figure 4). Although it appears to be quite different from the built project, Chen engaged in a diligent effort to deliver on his promises to the Chinese American community, working with San Francisco's Redevelopment Agency, the Holiday Inn, Justice Investors, Evon Garage Corporation, John Carl Warnecke & Associates, and Alexander Calhoun. He also earned equity interest in the project and many others, helping the Holiday Inn to expand franchises in California, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong.<sup>66</sup>

In 1972, President Nixon's visit to China changed the diplomatic relations between the two countries, which opened new opportunities for Chen. In 1977, at the Holiday Inn in Palo Alto designed by Chen (Figure 5), he received a group of Chinese International Travel Service Bureau staff on a tour to major U.S. cities to study the hospitality industry. Chen personally received the group and was able to communicate with them in Chinese. A few years later, the group informed him of an opportunity to build a hotel in Beijing. In 1982, he helped build the Jianguo Hotel, which he held 49% in common stock. His design was carefully integrated with the local built environment, while incorporating modern materials. As noted by his wife June, Chen "felt the design should not include too many innovations. It should not be so luxurious that would bring shame and too drastic a contrast to what was already built in town." He later hired the Peninsula Hotel Group in Hong Kong to manage the hotel. The hotel was also able to purchase Toyota cars with foreign plates that excused the vehicles from gasoline rationing in China. The hotel became a favorite place among foreign diplomats. Similar in some ways to Lun Chan, Chen was able to undertake many hotel projects through international corporations. This shared experience demonstrates the agency of pioneer Chinese American architects. Despite

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

facing the challenges of finding private clients, they were successful in their endeavors to find opportunities elsewhere.

### **Philip P. Choy (1926-2017) and Brian Choy (b. 1955)**

As a third-generation San Franciscan, Philip Choy grew up in Chinatown. His youth in the Chinese Exclusion Era and the discrimination he faced while working in architectural firms after earning his architecture degree from UC Berkeley shaped his relentless effort to preserve Chinese American history and heritage. With the noted historian and community activist Him Mark Lai (1925-2009), Choy in 1969 co-taught the first Chinese American history course at San Francisco State University. The syllabus was designed based on door-to-door oral histories with communities, as there was little written history that included the experiences of the Chinese in America.<sup>67</sup> He supported the Chinese Historical Society of America's (CHSA) acquisition of the YWCA building, making it the permanent home for the museum in 2001 and served as CHSA's Board President intermittently from 1969 to 1997 for three terms.<sup>68</sup>

Compared with his roles as a historian, author, and teacher, his architectural works have not received much attention for historic preservation. For example, the *Philip P. Choy Papers* in Stanford's Special Collections include mostly his materials on Chinese American history, rather than his architectural papers, some of which remain in the Choy Family Collection.<sup>69</sup> After hitting the bamboo ceiling, Choy established his own practice. Some of his earlier projects include the Chevron Station in San Francisco's Chinatown (1966) and Ming's Restaurant in Palo

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<sup>67</sup> Brian Choy in discussion with the author, July 2020.

<sup>68</sup> Chinese Historical Society of America, "Remembering Phil Choy (1926-2017)," accessed March 11, 2023, <https://chsa.org/news-press/remembering-phil-choy-1926-2017/>.

<sup>69</sup> I first came across these files during my dissertation fieldwork in 2020 when I visited his son's house, which was also designed by Philip Choy.

Alto (1969).<sup>70</sup> He later hired Ed Hardin as a consulting architecture before they co-founded Choy & Hardin Associates in 1972. In the following years, he designed many Chinese restaurants and residences in the San Francisco Bay Area. Choy's strong Chinese American identity and his American architectural education at UC Berkeley encouraged designs that integrated his American architectural education with his Chinese heritage. His Chinese eclectic designs were particularly popular among Chinese restaurant owners. For example, Ming's Restaurant in Palo Alto won the 1969 Award of Special Distinction for Superlative Achievement-Total Design. The original architectural renderings (Figure 6) and professional photography taken by Philip Molten of Marin County remain in the Family Collection housed in Oakland.

Choy was also known for his preservation effort to prevent San Francisco's Chinatown from erosion by new development. In the late 1980s, Choy served on the San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and submitted a proposal to designate Chinatown as a local historic district.<sup>71</sup> Although the effort did not succeed in the end due to conflicts with business owners' commercial interests, the process cultivated important documentation of the historic fabric of San Francisco Chinatown both through writing and his son Brian Choy's architectural photography (Figure 7). Hundreds of negatives and prints of San Francisco's Chinatown are still in the Choy Family Collection. When asked about acquiring these valuable negatives, Brian Choy expressed surprise that anyone would think the materials were important. If museums or archives cannot preserve these important artifacts, it is difficult to imagine their future. For this reason, I propose the Choy Family Collection as one of the top collecting priorities.

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<sup>70</sup> According to Brian Choy, his father had a loose partnership with Dave Arnold, Tom Potts, Ted Siddoway, and a few others before establishing a partnership with Ed Hardin. Brian Choy in discussion with author, December 2022.

<sup>71</sup> Chuo Li, "The Politics and Heritage of Race and Space in San Francisco's Chinatown," in *On Location: Heritage Cities and Sites*, ed. D Fairchild Ruggles (New York: Springer, 2012), 37–59.

## **David Fong (b. 1944) & Chiu Lin Tse-Chan (b. 1936)**

David Fong, FAIA, FARA, LEEP AP, was born in Sacramento. Interested in art and sculpture since the third grade, Fong completed his architectural education at UC Berkeley. Like his predecessors in the pioneer generation of Chinese American architects, as a middle-generation practitioner Fong worked for major international firms such as Anshen & Allen Architects and SOM before establishing his firm with Chiu Lin Tse-Chan, FAIA, LEED AP, whom he knew through working at Anshen & Allen. After growing up in Zhanjiang, Guangdong Province, Chiu Lin Tse-Chan left China during the turbulent era of the Cultural Revolution and arrived in the United States in 1968. In contrast to the few practicing American architects of Chinese descent, Tse-Chan was a self-taught practitioner who lacked a formal education in architecture. Mies van der Rohe was a shared inspiration for both practitioners, but Tse-Chan also admired the work of Santiago Calatrava (b. 1951), while Fong gravitated more towards the work of Le Corbusier. As minorities working in large firms, Fong and Tse-Chan shared a strong belief in the value of hard work, but they nevertheless hit the bamboo ceiling like their predecessors in the pioneer generation. Tse-Chan, though she was offered 20% of the ownership of Anshen & Allen, made the decision to leave the company to pursue the freedom to pioneer the computerization of architectural design as early as the 1970s. Fong and Tse-Chan decided to join forces to establish their own practice in which they were determined to continue engaging in design, while also managing their medium-sized firm.<sup>72</sup>

Before establishing Fong & Chan Architects (FCA) in 1982, Tse-Chan and Fong (Figure 8) interviewed for the San Francisco International Airport's master plan, programming, and conceptual design of the South Terminal (Terminal One) and Passenger Boarding Gates A, B,

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<sup>72</sup> David Fong in discussion with the author, October 2022.

and C, which entailed the renovation of approximately one million square feet at an estimated construction cost of \$150 million. Howard Friedman, the special consultant in charge of architect selection for the project, who was also a professor of architecture and chairman of the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley, had already interviewed many well-established architectural firms, so Tse-Chan and Fong believed their chances of being selected for the project to be slim. Much to their surprise, they successfully landed the sizable project, which was a daunting task for any architectural firm to undertake, let alone two individuals. David and Chiu Lin consequently established Fong & Chan Architects (FCA) with four guiding principles: create excellent architecture, serve the clients, give back to the community, and elevate the status of architects in society. These founding principals have contributed to 529 education plans for children of their employees, and established scholarships and endowments at UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design (CED) and at the California College of the Arts (CCA) in San Francisco. In addition to completing multimillion-dollar projects within and beyond the United States, the firm has contributed to community service for both the younger generation and the profession at large. In recent years, the firm has specialized in designing healthcare facilities, including the project in which they take the greater pride, the 2020 Masterplan and design of the California Northstate University Hospital and Medical Campus in Sacramento.<sup>73</sup> The trajectories of these two middle-generation individuals and their firms connect us across generations to the shared challenges and successes of pioneer architects of Chinese descent. As a firm that is still in operation, the extensive papers and materials they hold would be important additions to the Cooper Hewitt.

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<sup>73</sup> David G. Fong, "Fong & Chan Architects" (unpublished manuscript, 2022), typescript. Fong & Chan Architects Archive, San Francisco, CA.

## **Helen Fong (1927-2005)**

As one of the four practitioners featured in the 2012 *Breaking Ground: Chinese American Architects in Los Angeles (1945-1980)* exhibition at the Chinese American Museum in Los Angeles, Helen Fong's works are the only ones that have not been formally acquired by any museums and archives and remain in the possession of Armet Davis Newlove Architects. Fong's early assignment for Louis Armet and Eldon Davis—the Clock Restaurant in Westchester (1955)—became the firm's first Googie-style project (Figure 9). The style, as a part of the Modernist architectural form popularized in the postwar era, broke free from the confining strict horizontal and vertical lines to feature boomerang angles and jarring lines that incorporated bright neon lights, vinyl, and newly developed plastics. Her design of the cocktail lounge inside the Holiday Bowl (1958) paid tribute to the Japanese American community, featuring a three-dimensional map of Japan on the ceiling that was made with refrigeration cork and lined with gold foil edges. Although many Googie projects that Fong worked on have been demolished, the style has become an important icon of vernacular architecture in Southern California and other parts of the country.<sup>74</sup> In addition, a family friend recently informed me of a sibling of Helen Fong living in Bakersfield, California, who might be a resource in terms of collecting additional family papers related to her life and career. Unsurprisingly, as a fellow member of the very small circle of female Chinese American architects, Eva Low Chan certainly remembers Helen Fong.

## **Danny Ho Fong (1915-1992) and Miller Ho Fong (b. 1941)**

Danny Ho Fong and Muey Fong settled in Los Angeles in 1936. They ran a curio shop at 17th and Figueroa Streets in downtown Los Angeles, which later became the Fong Brothers

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<sup>74</sup> Chinese American Museum. *Breaking Ground: Chinese American Architects in Los Angeles (1945-1980)* (Los Angeles: Chinese American Museum, 2012).



Company. Embracing the postwar optimism and prosperity that came along with people's trust in new technology and design, the Fongs founded their wrought-iron and rattan furniture company Tropi-Cal in 1954.<sup>75</sup> They started by selling their furniture to department stores, such as Bloomingdales and Lord & Taylor, before expanding their business to hotels and individual consumers.<sup>76</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s, Tropi-Cal's extensive coverage in major newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Chicago Daily Tribune* contributed to the branding of California design nationwide. A 1958 *Los Angeles Times* article noted that furnishings of California design were "directed by use, grow out of common need and are restricted by an increasing desire on the part of Americans for straightforward design and honest fabrication," principles that align closely with the functionality and simplicity of Mid-Century Modernist design. One exhibit at the Pasadena Art Museum featured the rattan low table and matching stools designed by Danny Ho Fong, which was referred to as typical of the works of local designers that "adapted the California way of life," blending with "indoor and outdoor settings."<sup>77</sup> The table and stools, employing woven rattan and steel framing, effectively merged natural and modern materials. A 1971 article in *Better Homes and Gardens*, "What's New in Casual Furniture," also included the lounge chair designed by Danny Ho Fong with a price tag of \$500, the most expensive item among all furnishings included.<sup>78</sup> What was even more interesting was that all the furnishings were manufactured in a Hong Kong factory. As Miller humorously described, "The furnishings cost \$0.50 to make in Hong Kong and was marked as \$299 in *LA Times*'s home magazines."

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<sup>75</sup> Alice T. Friedman, *American Glamour and the Evolution of Modern Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 226

<sup>76</sup> Miller Fong in discussion with the author, October 2022.

<sup>77</sup> Maxine Bartlett, "On Exhibit, California's Bright New Designs," *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 1958.

<sup>78</sup> "What's New in Casual Furniture," *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, 49, no. 6 (June 1971): 72.

This transnational venture not only facilitated the family's business success, but also contributed to shaping the Mid-Century Modern designs epitomized by Los Angeles. Danny Ho Fong's 1966 Wave Chaise is in the permanent collection of The Museum of Modern Art.

Danny Ho Fong and Muey Fong's son, Miller Fong, followed in the footsteps of his parents. He became an industrial designer and architect after attending the University of Southern California. His first known furniture design is the Bo Hing (gentle wind) dining group and bar stool made with rattan and metal, which appeared at the Los Angeles Home Furnishing Mart in 1964.<sup>79</sup> His best-known work is the Lotus Chair (1968), first shown in the Pasadena Art Museum and then at the California Exposition in Sacramento (Figure 10).<sup>80</sup> One Lotus Chair is now in the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Modern Art. Miller ran the family business until his retirement; Fong Bros. Co. is now run by his nephew. Because of the continuity of private ownership, there is great potential to acquire both furniture and design papers from the Fong family.

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<sup>79</sup> "Miller Fong Makes Debut as Designer," *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1964.

<sup>80</sup> "Eye on Living: California Contemporaries," *Town & Country* 122, no. 4550 (1968): 42–43.

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## Illustrations

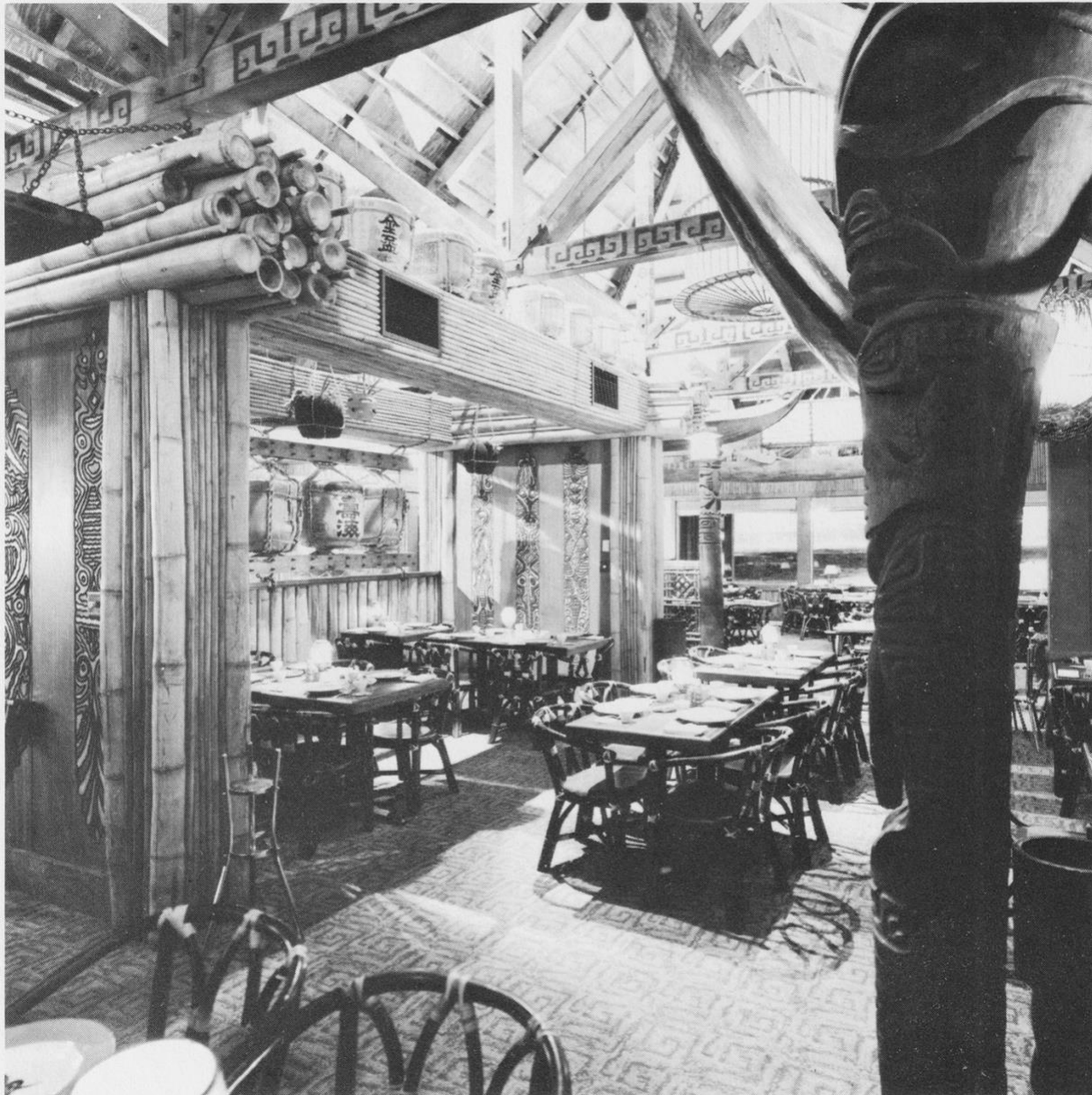


Figure 1. Trader Vic's Restaurant, Emeryville, 1972 (Chan Family Collection)



Figure 2. Mandarin Restaurant, San Francisco, 1968 (Chan Family Collection)



Figure 3. Portfolio of Chan Rader Associates, 1961-1975 (Chan Family Collection)



Figure 4. Competition entry of the Holiday Inn, San Francisco (Chen Family Collection)





Figure 5. Architectural model of Holiday Inn, Palo Alto (Chen Family Collection)

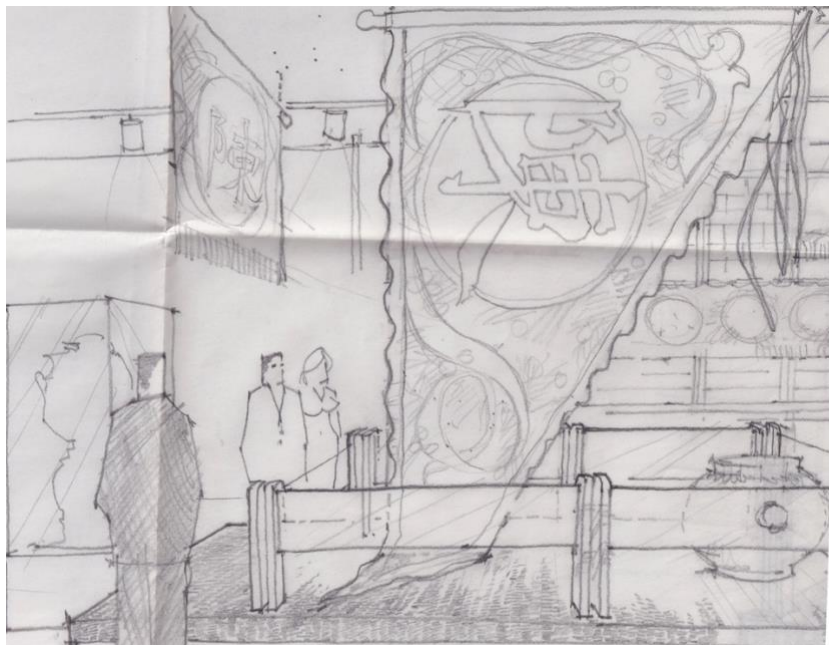


Figure 6. Architectural Rendering of Ming's Restaurant, Palo Alto (Choy Family Collection)



Figure 7. Negatives of San Francisco's Chinatown (Choy Family Collection)



Figure 8. David Fong and Chiu Lin Tse-Chan, 1982-1987 (Fong & Chan Architects)

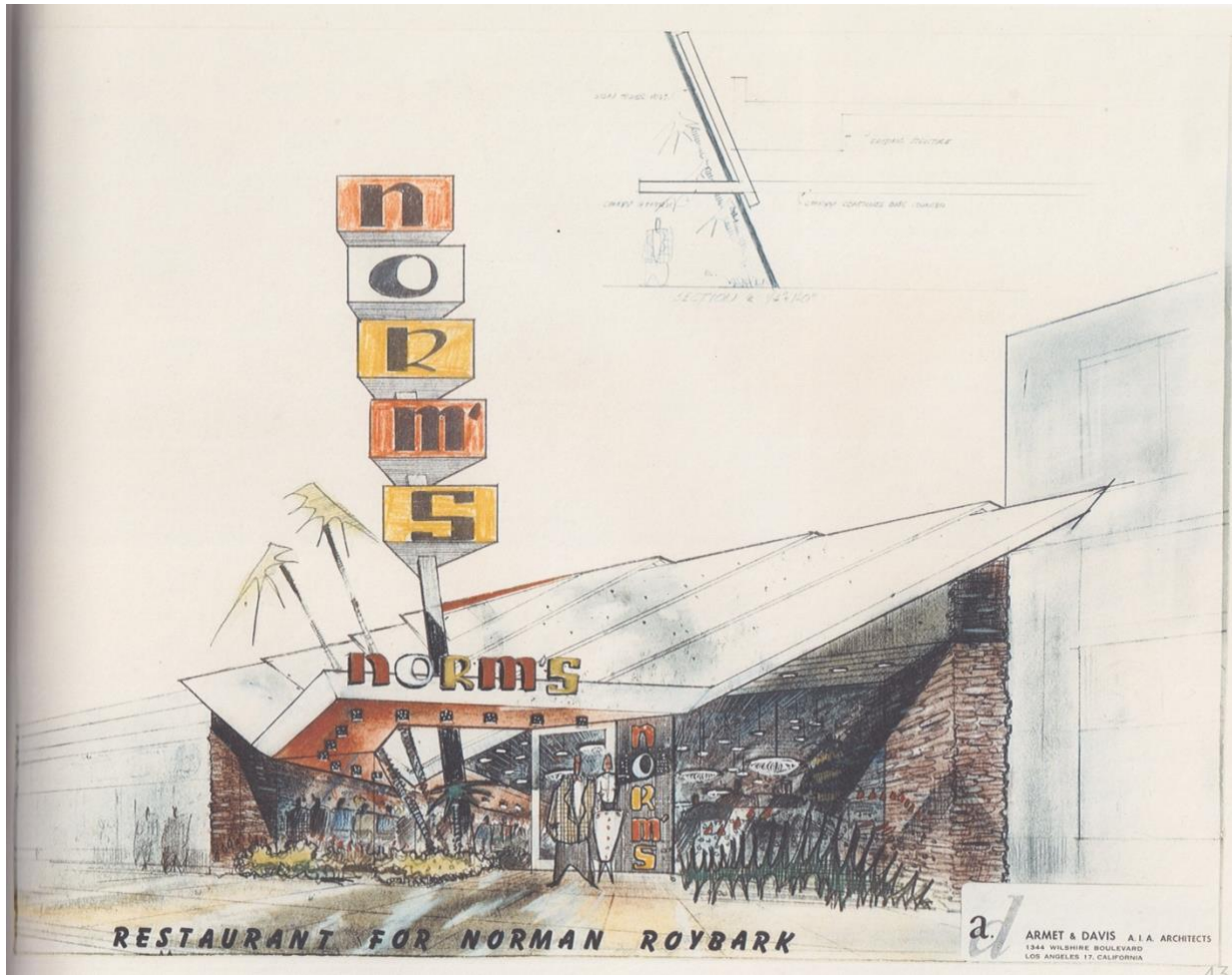


Figure 9. An early rendering of Norm's before the restaurant's iconic signage was developed (Armet Davis Newlove Architects)

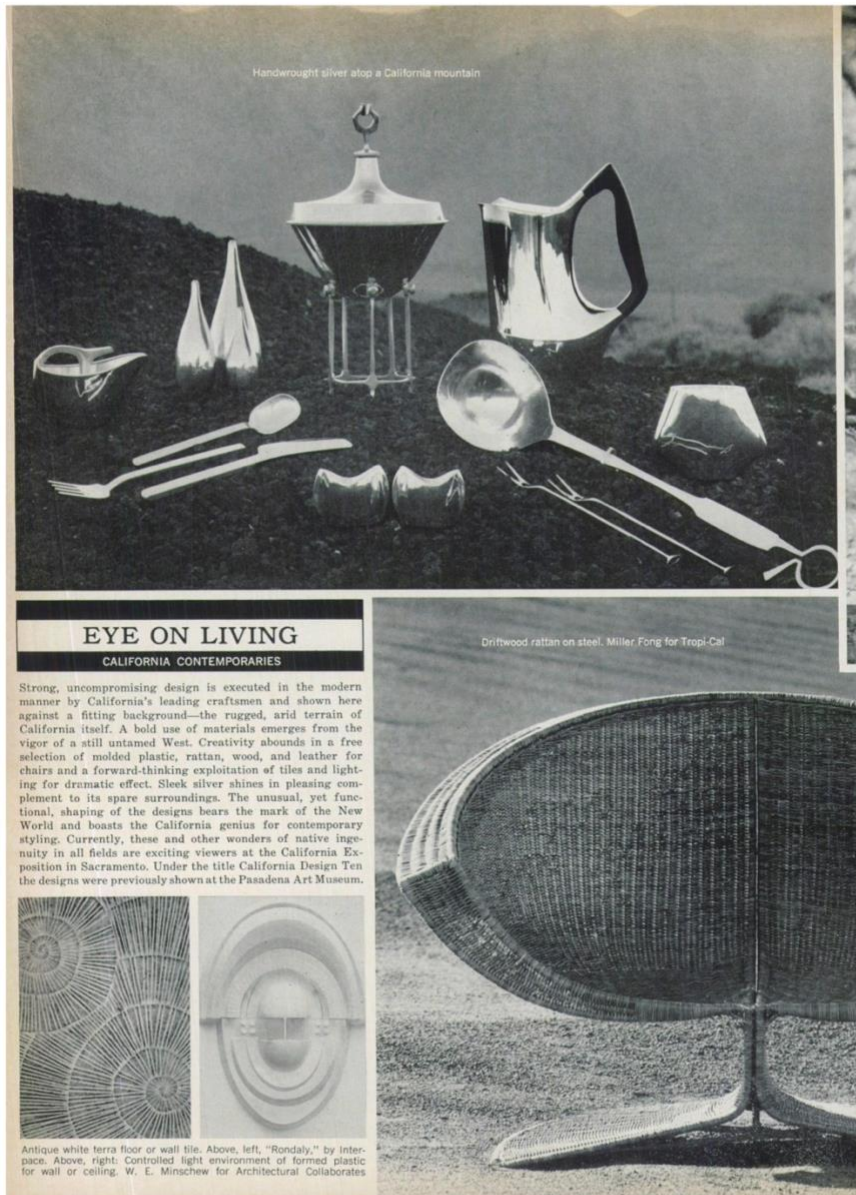


Figure 10. Lotus Chair by Miller Fong (“Eye on Living” in *Town & Country*, Sep 1968)

## South Asian American Architects & Designers

Priya Jain, AIA  
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### Sources and Methods for Identifying and Documenting AAPI Architects and Designers

For the purposes of identifying South Asian American architects and designers, this report relied primarily on the *American Institute of Architects (AIA) Historical Directory of American Architects*<sup>81</sup>, which includes listing (name, first year of membership, state of membership) of all national-level AIA members from 1857 up to 1978. Other national-level surveys that were consulted include the *AIA College of Fellows Directory*, that includes all AIA members elevated to Fellow status from 1857 to 2022, and co-authored publications such as the co-authored volume *That Exceptional One: Women in American Architecture 1888–1988*.<sup>82</sup> Though these national surveys do not include information on ethnicity and country of origin, individuals were identified based on their names as likely being of South Asian descent. This information was further corroborated and supplemented by additional research into state-level AIA publications, newspaper accounts, magazine articles and websites, as mentioned in the “Reference Sources for Individual Architects and Designers” section in the Bibliography.

South Asia is a broad term that typically refers to eight countries in the southern region of Asia, namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri

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<sup>81</sup> The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects, <https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/overview?homepageId=20644018> (accessed January 15, 2022).

<sup>82</sup> The AIA College of Fellows, <https://www.aia.org/college-of-fellows> . “That Exceptional One: Women in American Architecture 1888–1988.” The American Architectural Foundation, 1988, 36. [https://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2018-03/Archives\\_ThatExceptionalOneWomenAmericanArchitecture1888-1988compressed\\_1988.pdf](https://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2018-03/Archives_ThatExceptionalOneWomenAmericanArchitecture1888-1988compressed_1988.pdf)

Lanka. Despite sharing some climatic, socio-cultural and political similarities, each of these eight countries also features remarkable differences and diversity, including distinct patterns of immigration to the United States. Recognizing this diversity, the time constraints of the current project, and the limitations of author expertise, this report focused primarily on Indian Americans, with some overlap with Pakistan and Bangladesh because of the close linkages among these three nation's political and cultural histories. The report is also limited to South Asian American architects, and does not include information pertaining to other allied and distinct design fields, such as interiors, landscape, furniture, sculpture, graphics, printmaking, fashion, etc.

### **Framework for Organizing Key Findings about the History of Architects and Designers of South Asian Descent**

In order to better understand the history of South Asians in the United States, and their placemaking and architectural design contributions, this section will provide a brief chronological discussion as context to the following section on “Key Findings.” It is organized in the following categories:

- a) 1899 – 1946: Early South Asian Migrants: Laborers, Traders and Religious Men
- b) 1947 – 1964: South Asians as Citizens, Students and Entrepreneurs
- c) 1965 – Present: Skilled Labor and South Asian Identity

#### *1899 – 1946: Early South Asian Migrants: Laborers, Traders and Religious Men*

Early accounts of South Asian immigration to the United States can be traced to 1899, when farm workers from an agricultural region in India and present-day Pakistan known as

Punjab, landed in California. They formed part of a longer pattern of Asian labor migration Korea to the American West Coast that started in the middle of the nineteenth century from countries such as China, Japan and. Often referred to as “Pioneering Punjabis,” they worked on railroads as well as on farms mainly in the Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Imperial Valleys in California, but also throughout western North America. While they faced rising anti-Asian hostility in the years leading up to the Asian “Barred Zone” Immigration Act of 1917, some Punjabis were able to transition from farm laborers to landowners. Since these Punjabi men were prohibited to bring their wives and families from India, or to marry white women, most married women of Mexican ancestry, leading to a bi-ethnic Punjabi-Mexican community. The passage of Alien Land Laws in the western states further diminished the ability of South Asian immigrants to own property, and the Immigration Act of 1924 stopped all naturalized citizenship for Asian immigrants. Between 1924 and 1946, most South Asians entered the U.S. illegally, either through Mexico, or by slipping away from ships docked on the East and West Coast ports. The history of these early Punjabi immigrants has been the subject of some detailed studies, including a recently constituted archive at the University of California Davis.<sup>83</sup>

A second group of South Asian migration in this time period has been traced to New York, and from there to other cities such as New Orleans, Baltimore and Detroit. These were primarily Muslim seamen and traders from present-day Bangladesh and India who jumped ship and built clandestine networks that stretched from the northeastern waterfront across the industrial Midwest. Working in factories, restaurants and shops, they became part of some of America’s most iconic neighborhoods of color, from Tremé in New Orleans to Detroit’s Black Bottom, from West Baltimore to Harlem. Many started families with Creole, Puerto Rican, and

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<sup>83</sup> Pioneering Punjabis Digital Archive, University of California, Davis. <https://pioneeringpunjabis.ucdavis.edu/>

African American women. Their little-known history has also been the subject of a recent book and documentary.<sup>84</sup>

Two other themes within early migration and diaspora that emerge are Indian spiritual movements and the support for India's independence movement in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In terms of the former, one of the earliest Indian religious monks to have gained popularity in the United States was Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), whose teachings inspired various Vedanta Societies in New York, San Francisco and Boston from 1894–1900. The San Francisco Vedanta Temple built in 1905 is widely regarded as the “first Hindu temple in the West.” However, owing to the immense popularity of Vedanta teachings within the white American population, both the architecture as well as the patronage of the building is of a more hybrid nature.<sup>85</sup> The focus of the nationalist movement in the United States was also in San Francisco, where a group of Indian freedom fighters known as the *Gadar Party* remained active from 1913 to 1917. These activists were drawn both from the Punjabi immigrants in California and the workers on the East Coast, as well as Indian visitors hoping to rally American support against British colonizers. The base of operations was Gadar Ashram, an existing 19<sup>th</sup>-century building in San Francisco that the group used.<sup>86</sup>

While remarkable from a historical and socio-cultural standpoint, all these accounts of early South Asian migration to the U.S. have only limited documentation about the spatial place-making by these communities. This is partly because most early migrants had limited resources

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<sup>84</sup> Vivek Bald, *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015). Also see Vivek Bald, Alaudin Ullah, Susannah Ludwig, *In Search of Bengali Harlem*, documentary, 2022, 84 min., Color & b/w, <http://bengaliharlem.com/thedocumentary/>

<sup>85</sup> Arijit Sen, “Architecture and World Making: Production of Sacred Space In San Francisco's Vedanta Temple,” *South Asian History and Culture*, 2, no. 1, (2010): 76-102. Arijit Sen, “Interpreting the Architectural Facade of the Vedanta Temple, San Francisco,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 47, no. 4 (Winter 2013): 207-243.

<sup>86</sup> See discussion in “Key Findings” of how this building was redesigned and built in 1975 as Gadar Memorial Hall by South Asian American architect Virender N. Puri, and is currently (as of 2022) slated for demolition to be built back in its c. 1913 appearance.



and could not own land. The farm and factory workers are reported to have lived in temporary sheds and boarding houses in “foreign” parts of cities. Apart from the homes, camps, shops and other everyday places these groups occupied were more visible religious spaces, such as temples, mosques and gurudwaras that played an important social role in the community. Though some of these structures are known, such as the 1912 Stockton Gurudwara, now a California State landmark, and the 1947 Sacramento Mosque, limited information exists about any specific architects or designers. These early sites instead offer examples of more complex vernacular architectural production, highlighting the role of not just professionals, but also community members as benefactors, patrons and designers.

#### *1947 – 1964: South Asians as Citizens, Students and Entrepreneurs*

The passage of the Luce-Celler Act in 1946 restarted a process of legal immigration from South Asia, though at a very limited scale—a quota of 100 immigrants were allowed from India (and 100 each from the newly independent Pakistan, Burma and Sri Lanka), including those that were already in the country. These immigrants were now allowed to naturalize as American citizens, own property and petition for entry of immediate family members from abroad. In the Post World War II era, America had emerged as a new global military, economic, political and social leader. Despite its growing popularity and America’s rising cold-war diplomacy interests in India, the low immigration quotas ensured that very few Indians (less than 7000 between 1948-65) actually migrated to the United States. Many of these came as students, some on scholarships by the Indian government, to study at American universities. Lured by the promise of nation-building in the years after India’s independence from British rule in 1947, most of these students returned after completing their studies. There is limited data on the numbers,

specialties and locations of these students, although some recent books, such as Ross Bassett's 2016 study *The Technological Indian*, which charts the history of Indian students at MIT from the late 1800s to the 1960s, have begun to shed light on this under-researched period in Indian immigration.<sup>87</sup>

The establishment and growth of architecture and town planning as professional disciplines in independent India meant that there were also a few Indian architecture students in this cohort— like the famous Indian architect **Achyut Kanvinde** (1916-2002), who travelled to study at Harvard in the 1940s on a scholarship sponsored by the Indian government<sup>88</sup>, and **Durga Bajpai**, the son of a diplomat who studied at MIT around the same time. Kanvinde and Bajpai, like many others, returned after completing their education, yet some, like the Bangladeshi structural engineer and architect, **Fazlur Rahman Khan** (1929-82) stayed. Khan came to America in the early 1950s on a Fulbright scholarship to study at the University of Illinois. He went on to design iconic skyscrapers, like the Sears Tower in Chicago, as an eventual partner at SOM Architects. Khan is the subject of numerous articles, two books and an ongoing documentary about his life.<sup>89</sup> Apart from Fazlur Khan though, few other South Asian American architects and building engineers from this era are well known. Khan's papers are archived at the Art Institute of Chicago.<sup>90</sup>

Outside of professional designers, the wider built impact of the South Asian American community continued, albeit modestly, owing to their low numbers until 1965. In the 1940s and

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<sup>87</sup> Ross Bassett, *The Technological Indian* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

<sup>88</sup> Sanjay Kanvinde, Tanuja Kanvinde, *Achyut Kanvinde- Akar* (New Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2016).

<sup>89</sup> Yasmin Sabina Khan, *Engineering Architecture: The Vision of Fazlur R. Khan* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2004); and Mir Ali, *Art of the Skyscraper: The Genius of Fazlur Khan* (Rizzoli, 2001), and Laila Kazmi, *Reaching New Heights: Fazlur Rahman Khan and the Skyscraper*, documentary (under production), <https://www.frkdocumentary.com/>.

<sup>90</sup> Fazlur R. Khan Collection, Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago. <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/262278/fazlur-r-khan-collection>

50s, Indians from the region of Gujarat, many of whom had been living in East Africa and Britain since the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, started immigrating to the United States in search of better prospects. With an entrepreneurial flair, and also as a means to obtain permanent visas through investment, they started buying low-budget American motels in the San Francisco region. Despite the fact that the period of 1940-60 is least researched in Indian American history, some recent efforts such as Pawan Dhingra's 2012 book *Life Behind the Lobby*, and the 2014 Smithsonian *Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation* exhibit have begun to highlight the role of these Gujarati entrepreneurs on the American mid-century landscape.<sup>91</sup>

#### 1965 – Present: Skilled Labor and Identity

The passage of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act led to major changes in the pattern of South Asian migration. The quotas for each country were significantly increased and visas were given in seven categories (including occupation, family relatives and refugees). The first waves of South Asian immigrants came under the occupational preferences; they were urban, highly educated professionals migrating in family units and hailed from many different parts of India beyond the ethnic regions of Punjab, Bengal and Gujarat that had historically dominated immigration from South Asia. From 1965 until the mid-1990s, long-term immigration from India averaged about 40,000 people per year. From 1995 onward, it increased significantly, reaching a high of about 90,000 immigrants in the year 2000. The beginning of the 21st century marked another big change—the emergence of the Information Technology industry in India led to increased migration to the United States In terms of the concentration of South Asian

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<sup>91</sup> Pawan Dhingra, *Life Behind the Lobby: Indian American Motel Owner and the American Dream* (California: Stanford University Press, 2012). Also see, Chirag Bhakta, “The Arch Motel Project” in *Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation*, Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, 2014.  
<https://smithsonianapa.org/beyondbollywood/>

immigrants within the U.S., while New York and California continued to rank highest, other states such as Illinois in the mid-west and Texas and Georgia in the south also became popular. While concentrated in large, urban metropolitan areas, South Asian immigrants also inhabited rural parts of the country, primarily as physicians, motel owners, etc.

In line with trends for other professionals, the period after 1965 offers the maximum increase in the numbers of South Asian American architects and designers (See Table in Appendix). In fact, the first South Asian American architect in the AIA Historical Directory, appears to be **B.N. Sudindranath**, who joined as an unlicensed Associate Member from Detroit, Michigan in 1960. His application was sponsored by two full AIA members, Bruno Leon and Ronald Topolewski, likely his employers. Little information exists on Sudindranath and it is likely that he moved back to India. The next South Asian American architect that appears in the AIA Directory is **Firoz Rustom Mistry** (b. 1927), who joined as a full member in 1969. Rustom hailed from Bombay, India and studied under Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin West in the 1950s, later moving to New York City to work with another renowned architect, Edward Durrell Stone (1902-1978). The numbers of South Asian American architects increased slowly, though steadily, throughout the 1970s, with almost 58 individuals identified up to 1978 and listed in the Table in the Appendix.

Starting in the 1980s, many architects (often with engineers of the same ethnicity) also organized themselves in professional organizations to share resources and lobby against local regulations that discriminated against immigrants, such as the *Society of Indo-American Engineers & Architects*, the *American Association of Bangladeshi Engineers and Architects* in the New York tri-state area, and the *Asian American Architects/Engineers Association* on the West Coast.

In addition to growth in the numbers of professional architects and designers since 1965, the architectural production by the growing South Asian community at large, in the form of home building, community and religious buildings, cultural institutions and shops and restaurants has also flourished. While place-making in this realm extends across diverse building types and authors (architects, engineers, contractors, benefactors, religious and community leaders, homemakers, shopkeepers, restaurant owners, etc.), many, including especially religious institutions, have involved the growing cohort of professional South Asian American architects in the communities where these buildings were built.

### **Key Findings**

As laid out in the chronological discussion above, architectural production by the South Asian American community extends from professionally trained architects and engineers all the way to builders, craftspeople women, children, laborers and others. While these “non-architects” and “non-designers” are important to telling the story of South American place-making, this report will focus on professionally trained architects, a category that has not been studied before, and also one that offers the best opportunities for individual collecting for the purposes of this project. Since these architects immigrated to the U.S. in the post-1965 era, the report will focus on that time period.

As one looks at this group, a few overarching trends and themes can be observed. Most, though not all of these architects, moved here originally for higher education and better job prospects in the U.S. compared to a slowing post-independence economy in India in the 1970s, then decided to settle permanently. They started by working either for the U.S. government or for private American architectural firms for the first decade or so, making their way up to middle

and senior leadership positions. Many then proceeded to establish their own offices and architectural practices. Some such architects are **Oru Bose** (b. 1944), who after studying at Pratt University, and working for the Hudson River Valley Development Commission, the New York State Urban Development Corporation, Disney, and HKS (now HOK) Architects, formed his own firm, Bose International Architecture & Planning in Orlando, Florida in 1976. Consistent with experience in large-scale projects and urban master planning leading up to 1976, Bose International (now MTDI Group) focused on large institutional projects throughout the U.S., and even expanded to overseas locations in India, Poland, the Middle East, China and elsewhere. Similarly, **Pravin R. Desai** (b. 1942), who immigrated from India to Hawai'i at the age of fifteen, first started working at the architecture firm of Hogan, Chapman, Cobeen and Weitz, Inc. in Honolulu, before being named Principal in 1977. In 1983 the firm was renamed Chapman Desai Sakata, Inc. Desai designed many important buildings in the area, including the 2007 Bishop Museum Science Adventure Center in Honolulu. **Satish Dhingra** (1938-2017), worked for local firms in Boston after graduating from MIT in 1967, before in 1976 forming his own practice focused on transportation and aviation buildings. Dhingra in the 1970s also served as advisor to the Indian Government on airport design. Other architects who stand out are **Avinash Gupta** (1946-2015), who specialized in the design of medical facilities, and retired in 2011 as Executive Vice-President and Director of Architecture at Post, Buckley, Schuh and Jernigan (PBSJ Corp., now Atkins) in Miami, Florida; and **Gajinder Singh**, who was an Associate at Edward Larrabee Barnes Associates in New York City from 1968–1993 and worked on multiple buildings at the campus of Indiana University, amongst other significant projects.

South Asian American architects who sustained their own practices took on a variety of small and medium-scale work as well, including residences, senior living facilities, K-12 schools

and most importantly, cultural projects from the local South Asian American community, such as the design of temples and mosques. Since the early days of South Asian American community life, religious institutions such as temples, mosques, gurudwaras and Indian churches have served an important role. They represent attempts by the diaspora to not only express their cultural identity architecturally, but to create a socio-cultural hub for community life. Their architectural production represents the contributions of both professional architects and the larger community that raise funds, secure land, oversee construction and later additions.

These culturally expressive works of architecture often included South Asian American architects as both design advisors and architects of record. For the 1978 Sri Meenakshi Temple in Houston, University of Houston Professor **Ranjit K. Banerji** collaborated with the noted Tamil Nadu traditional Hindu temple architect (*sthāpati*) Sattanatha Muthiah Ganapathi (1931-2017) and Purushottam Naidu, Commissioner of Religious Endowment of Andhra Pradesh. Ganapathi and Naidu also advised on the construction of the 1981 Malibu Hindu Temple, the largest Hindu temple on the U.S. West Coast.<sup>92</sup> **Barun K. Basu** (b. 1941) designed the Hindu Temple Society of North America in Flushing, Queens, NY in 1977, believed to be the second-oldest, purpose-built Hindu Temple in the United States. **Khatija Asif Ali Hashmy** (b. 1943), a female architect with the Chicago Park District, was also the designer of buildings on the campus of the Islamic Foundation in Villa Park, Illinois, one of the largest mosques in the United States.

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<sup>92</sup>“Meenakshi Amman Temple in America.” <https://www.dinamalar.com/nri/details.asp?id=421&lang=en>. “Sri Meenakshi Temple, Pearland – The 40-year History.” <https://menonlifetimethoughts.com/2020/12/19/sri-meenakshi-temple-pearland-the-40-year-history/>. Mazumdar, Shampa and Sanjoy Mazumdar. “Hindu Temple Building in Southern California: A Study of Immigrant Religion.” *Journal of Ritual Studies* Vol. 20, No. 2 (2006), pp. 43-57.

Others like **Uday Purushe** (b. 1944), is credited with designing the 2001 Shree Swaminarayan Temple Complex in Secaucus, New Jersey; and **Virender Puri** (b. 1942) was the architect of the 1975 renovation in San Francisco of the Gadar Memorial Hall, a monument that commemorates the Gadarites, a South Asian American political group founded in San Francisco in 1913 to advocate for Indian independence from British imperial rule. After independence, the building was gifted in 1949 to the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, which still uses the structure for national festivals and other official events.<sup>93</sup>

South Asian architects have also held important roles working for the U.S. Government, such as **Jagdish K. Pathela** (b. 1941) who was a Construction Executive with the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, and worked on U.S. Embassies in the Middle east and India. Others with federal positions include **Shiv K. Sangar** (1936-2020), who worked for the U.S. Navy Public Works Division from 1981–2006 on the San Francisco and Great Lakes Naval Air Stations, and **Haren Premji Dhokai** (b. 1942), who was employed as an architect with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Washington DC from the 1980s–2014 and worked, amongst other buildings, on the restoration of the Jamie L. Whitten / U.S. Department of Agriculture Administration Building in the 1990s. While these architects, who worked for important government agencies, made substantial impacts on the American built environment, their contributions are harder to trace because they worked within public administrative as opposed to private settings.

South Asian American architects listed in the AIA Directory in the 1970s also worked for public universities in the design and planning departments, as well as in academic and faculty roles. Some examples here are **Vinod Madhukar Ghoting** (b. 1945), who was the Director of

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<sup>93</sup>“Gadar Memorial Hall,” <https://www.cgisf.gov.in/page/gadar-memorial-hall/>. Accessed March 6, 2023.



Capital Design & Construction at Virginia Tech University from 2005–2008 after stints at Washington State University and the University of Maryland, **Rabindra Narayan Mukerjea**, who was the Director of Strategic Planning & Assessment and Professor at Purdue University from 2001–2013, and was awarded one of the highest University honors for his contributions. Others figures with major profiles in higher education include **Rajesh Sehgal**, Professor of Architecture at Tuskegee University in Alabama from 1970–2021, and **Ranjit K. Banerji**, Professor in Architecture at the University of Houston from 1960–1990.

Last but not the least, an important category in the survey of South Asian American architects is that of women architects. Of the 61 architects identified in the Table in the Appendix, only 3 were listed in the AIA Historical Directory (up to 1978). The first of these, to join as an Associate Member (not licensed) in 1972 in Iowa was **Pramod Lata Sarin**, who was also the first female Associate Member state-wide of the AIA Iowa Chapter. However, beyond the fact that she joined the AIA in 1972 and was active professionally from 1962-1992, no detailed information exists about Sarin’s architectural career.<sup>94</sup> The second South Asian female architect, becoming an Associate Member from Illinois in 1973 and a licensed, full member from 1981 was **Purnima Gupta** (b. 1946), who after a brief stint working for private firms and then as a Staff Architect for North Carolina State University, left architecture altogether. Finally, **Achla Bahal Madan** (b. 1944) became a licensed, full member of the AIA from New York in 1975, and worked for a number of private firms in Massachusetts until 1994. This report also includes three additional South Asian American women architects listed in the 1988 publication *That Exceptional One: Women in American Architecture 1888–1988* by the American Architectural

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<sup>94</sup> “Pramod Lata V. Sarin.” Beverley Willis Architecture Foundation. <https://dna.bwaf.org/architect/sarin-pramod-lata-v>. Accessed March 6, 2023.

Foundation. These are **Khatija Asif Ali Hashmy** (b. 1943, mentioned above), who was an architect with the Chicago Park District, and also the designer of mosques/buildings by the Islamic Foundation in Villa Park, Illinois; **Madhu Kerwell Gresla** (b. 1958), currently Principal of Gresla Architects in Chicago, and previously Vice President at prominent firms such as Cannon Design and Pratt Design Studio. Finally, the report also looked at the *AIA College of Fellows Directory* that includes all AIA members elevated to FAIA status from 1857 to 2022. Fellowship is awarded to architects who have made significant contributions to the profession and who exemplify architectural excellence. Only 3% of AIA members have this distinction. This database reveals that until 2022, roughly sixteen architects of South Asian origin have been awarded this status. Of these only three are women. In order to identify the most exemplary South Asian American Women Architects, the report includes these three women, although their period of operation is a bit more recent than other architects included in the report. **Gita Dev** (b. 1942), elevated to Fellow in 1992, was Principal at Marquis Associates in San Francisco from 1978 until she left in 1996 to establish her own practice, Dev Architects in Woodside, California. Dev has also chaired the AIA National Housing Committee and her significant projects include Windsor High School & Middle School in Windsor, California, built in the 1990s. **Kalavati Somvanshi**, who was appointed FAIA in 2017, was a Project Architect with Ennead Architects in New York; her significant work includes the American Museum of Natural History, and the Rose Center for Earth and Space in New York City completed in 2000. The third and final Fellow up to 2022 is **Umayal Ramanathan** (b. 1962), an alumna of the University of Michigan, and currently Principal at Shepley Bulfinch Architects in Boston. Ramanathan is known for her design of healthcare facilities, including the John R. Oishei Children's Hospital in Buffalo, New York, completed in 2018. The careers of these South Asian American women architects allow us

to engage with issues of gender, patriarchal cultural traditions, and immigrant identity, thus offering rich material for discourse and analysis.

### **Location of Existing Collections**

This report represents the first attempt at identifying in a comprehensive manner the history and careers of South Asian American architects. Apart from Fazlur Rahman Khan, who was professionally trained as a structural engineer rather than an architect, and whose collection is archived at the Art Institute of Chicago, the papers and drawings of no other architects identified here have yet been collected. Articles from some are in private collections, such as an engraved wood panel created and gifted by **Firoz Rustom Mistry** to his mentor Frank Lloyd Wright as a Christmas card. Academic institutes such as Taliesin and universities where these architects studied might have minimal records on student work. For architects that were employed by government agencies and universities, material may be present in the institutional records and archives, though none have been specifically identified. This leaves the work done in private practice, either for other firms or their own practices by the architects identified here. This work has not yet been collected and most likely exists within prominent firms, such as Edward Durrell Stone & Associates, where architects such as **Firoz Rustom Mistry** and **Kalavanti Somvanshi** worked, or Edward L. Barnes Architects, where **Gajinder Singh** worked as an Associate. A majority of the architects mentioned here worked at some point in their careers for private firms in which specific contributions and authorship can be difficult to trace in collaborative projects where another architect often was the principal. In some other cases, where the South Asian American architect was the owner and Principal, records may be more easily traceable and credited, such as **Oru Bose**, **Pravin Desai** and others. While none of this material

has yet been collected, because many architects are still living or recently deceased, it is likely that drawings, papers and other records still survive. The following section will attempt to summarize key collection priorities within the broad themes identified in ‘Section 4. Key Findings.’

### **Priorities for Future Collecting and Action**

This section identifies the most significant and fitting prospects for future collecting within the material presented above. For additional details about the individuals, refer to the Table in the Appendix and specific sources for each architect in the Bibliography.

The first category refers to early South Asian American architects (those who became AIA members before 1978) who stand out by virtue of the volume and/or significance of their projects and practice. The recommended list here includes (in order of priority):

- a) Desai, Pravin Ranchodji
- b) Mistry, Firoz Rustom
- c) Basu, Barun Kumar
- d) Bose, A. Oru

Another theme discussed above was to focus on collecting based on building type (i.e., religious architecture) as opposed to individual. In this case the work of the following individuals, as it pertains to the design of significant South Asian American religious/cultural buildings may be relevant (in order of priority):

- a) Basu, Barun Kumar (Hindu Temple Society of North America, Flushing, Queens, NY 1977)
- b) Banerji, Ranjit K. (Sri Meenakshi Temple in Houston, 1978)
- c) Hashmy, Khatija Asif Ali (Islamic Foundation in Villa Park, IL, 1990s)

d) Purushe, Uday P. (Shree Swaminarayan Temple Complex, Secaucus, NJ, 2001)

The final category, and the one recommended for greatest consideration is that of South Asian American women architects. Here, the 3 women identified as Fellows of the American Institute of Architects, are recommended for collection (in order of priority):

- a) Dev, Gita
- b) Somvanshi, Kalavati
- c) Ramanathan, Umayal

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## Illustrations



Figure 1. Bishop Museum Science Adventure Center, Honolulu, HI, 2007. Architect: Pravin R. Desai.



Figure 2. The Hindu Temple Society of North America, also known as Ganesh Temple, Flushing, Queens, NY, 1977. Architect: Barun Kumar Basu





Figure 3. Sri Meenakshi Devasthanam Temple, Houston, TX, 1978. Architect: Ranjit Banerji.



Figure 4. Shree Swaminarayan Temple Complex, Secaucus, NJ, 2001. Architect: Uday Purushe



Figure 5. Islamic Foundation Mosque, Villa Park, IL, 1990s. Architect: Khatija Asif Ali Hashmy.



Figure 6. Windsor High School, Windsor, CA, 1990s. Architect: Gita Dev



Figure 7. American Museum of Natural History, Rose Center for Earth and Space, New York City, NY, 2000. Project Architect: Kalavati Somvanshi. Firm: Ennead Architects.



Figure 8. John R. Oishei Children's Hospital Buffalo, NY, 2018. Project Architect: Umayal Ramanathan. Firm: Shepley Bulfinch.

## **Korean American Architects and Designers**

**Sujin Eom**  
**Dartmouth College**

**Sean H. McPherson**  
**Bridgewater State University**

### **Overview and Scope**

Bringing together discussions from Asian American Art History, Asian American Studies (and Korean American Studies in particular), and the history of modern architecture in the United States, this project has sought to collect and document the works of Korean American architects from midcentury to the present. This project has been informed by Susette Min's provocation on the term "Asian American art." In her 2018 monograph *Unnamable*, Min calls into question the ways in which Asian American art has been used to refer simply to "art created by an artist of Asian American descent" with "some kind of 'Asian-looking' motif, design, or symbol" (Min 2018, 1). Building upon Min's call to rethink "the categorical imperatives" of Asian American art beyond a historical recovery, this project likewise questions what it means to rediscover Korean American architects and architecture. Who are these Korean American architects to be rediscovered? Why do they need to be made visible? How can we define "Korean Americans," and by extension Korean American architects? Where should the boundary be drawn? How can we conceptualize Korean America in the field of architecture? We propose to critically engage with the term Korean American architects by avoiding reductive categorizations of Asian Americanness and instead foregrounding the historical conditions under which Korean American architects have emerged. We also want to take note of intergenerational differences, especially between first-generation and second-generation Korean Americans, and the ways in which they came to redefine categories imposed on their work and identity. With an

emphasis on the historical conditions that have shaped the Korean diaspora across the Pacific—from Japanese colonialism and the Korean War to Cold War exchange programs and immigration reform—the project sheds light on Korean American architects whose careers have intersected with transformative moments for the built landscape of Korean America.

Since our last roundtable presentation in March and submission of the interim report in July, the goal of the project has been revised in three ways. First, we have identified and analyzed Korean American architects who moved to the United States under Japanese colonial rule, or those who in the aftermath of the Korean War received architectural education here, and thereafter established themselves as modernist architects. Second, the project has considered the cohort of architects who were educated under the Cold War climate. Architects **Kyu Sung Woo** (b. 1941), **Tai Soo Kim** (b. 1936) and **Jong Soung Kimm** (b. 1935) were among this group of people who moved to the U.S. in the 1960s for postgraduate architectural education and thereby straddled the two countries. We take note of the significant space of Los Angeles for the Korean diaspora before and after the riots in 1992. The Los Angeles riots in 1992 (also known as *sa-i-gu*; April 29th) were a pivotal moment not only for the Korean American community at large, but also for Korean American architects, who came to rethink the role of architecture and community space in a time of social tension. These architects include **David Hyun** (1917-2012), who had long been an advocate for the Korean American community in LA, and **Ki Suh Park** (1932-2013), a key figure in the Rebuild LA project after the riots.

Last but not least, we have focused on second-generation (or “1.5-generation”) architects and designers of Korean ancestry who came of age in the United States.<sup>95</sup> In contrast to the

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<sup>95</sup> The term “1.5 Generation” refers most commonly to Korean immigrants who moved to the U.S. as children or adolescents. See Mary Yu Danico, *The 1.5 Generation: Becoming Korean American in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

previous generation of Korean architects, this new cohort of architects and designers has striven to redefine what it means to be an artist of color in contemporary American society, where Korean Americans are considered among the ethnic groups who have achieved the highest level of assimilation and “honorary whiteness.” This ambiguous designation is not necessarily a negative concept. Instead, their robustly intersectional inquiry into identity and belonging has led to experimentations with innovative materials and media in their respective work. This has not only facilitated cross-disciplinary conversations in the field of architecture, but also helped to interrogate disciplinary norms. The new generation of architects and designers include **Mikyong Kim** (b. 1967), **Alice Kimm** (b. 1964) and **Soo Sunny Park** (b. 1975), who will be discussed below in greater detail.

### **Sources and Methods for Identifying and Documenting AAPI Architects and Designers**

Given the paucity of secondary sources on architects of Korean ancestry, we first examined the American Institute of Architects’ historical directory of American Architects, published between 1857 and 1978, and identified approximately forty individuals according to Korean cultural conventions for surnames and given names. These forty individuals included Ki Suh Park, Jong Soung Kimm, Tai Soo Kim, **Chong Wan Kim** (b. 1938), Kyu Sung Woo, David Kyun Hyun (d.o.b. unknown), and **Ik Poong Kim** (b. 1945). Taking into account the availability of their business records and relevance to the thematic scope of our project, the focus has been placed on the architects whose migration trajectories and work have intersected with important moments in the history of the Korean diaspora in the United States.

Upon further consultation with experts of Korean architecture, including Professor Hyung Min Pai of Seoul City University, Professor Dongmin Park of Dankook University, and

Professor Bong Hee Jeon of Seoul National University, we have acquired information about other American architects of Korean descent. These include Mikyoung Kim, a second-generation landscape architect of Korean descent (and a daughter of architect Tai Soo Kim) whose urban design firm is based in Boston, and Alice Kimm, a second-generation Korean American architect in Los Angeles and daughter of architect Jong Soung Kimm. We additionally reached out to Soo Sunny Park, a 1.5-generation Korean American artist and Professor of Studio Art at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire.

Site visits to offices and residences of the architects and in-person interviews have supplemented our inquiry into their work. The offices and residences we have visited include the 2008 Putney Mountain House, a residence in Vermont designed by Kyu Sung Woo for his own family, and the offices of Mikyoung Kim Design (MYKD) in Boston, MA, and Tai Soo Kim Partners (TSKP) in Hartford, CT. When we were unable to execute in-person visits or interviews, we exchanged email correspondence with the architects and made extensive use of secondary sources of information, such as media interviews. Additionally, we consulted materials housed at the archives of the University of Southern California East Asian Library in the summer of 2022, which currently holds 26 boxes of papers and materials concerning the life and work of David Hyun, the David Hyun Collection at the Special Collections of the Center for Korean Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, as well as newspaper articles accessible at the Los Angeles Times Archives.



## **Framework for Organizing Key Findings about the History of Architects and Designers of Korean Descent**

Our key findings are organized both chronologically and thematically. “Part I. Colonial Exile” deals with architects whose emigration to the United States was shaped under the influence of American Christianity and Japanese colonial occupation of Korea (1910-1945). We sought to identify Korean American architects who had moved to the United States under Japanese colonial rule (David Hyun) or in the aftermath of the Korean War (Ki Suh Park). Considering the relative absence of architectural education among Korean students, the migration of these “colonial exiles” was not necessarily driven by a desire to pursue a career in architecture, in distinction from members of the Cold War migration, as will be discussed in the following paragraph. Notable in this phase of migration is the geographic and symbolic location of Hawai’i and California in the early formation of Korean America. Not only did these places serve as political, economic, and social hubs for anticolonial activism outside of Korea, but they also were (and still are) sites of prominent architectural schools, such as the University of Southern California and UC Berkeley, where the first generation of Korean Americans earned undergraduate degrees in architecture.

“Part II. The Long Sixties” looks at architects of Korean descent who moved to the United States for the explicit purpose of receiving postgraduate architectural education under the aegis of Cold War cultural exchange programs. These programs between Asia and the United States during the Cold War, notably as the Minnesota Project, enabled the emergence of American-educated Korean architects who replaced the previous generation of Japanese-educated practitioners.<sup>96</sup> Architects Tai Soo Kim, Kyu Sung Woo, and Jong Soung Kimm were

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<sup>96</sup> The Minnesota Project, formally known as the Seoul National University Cooperative Project, refers to an aid program initiated by the US government for postwar recovery of South Korea between 1954 and 1962. In the

among this cohort of international students who moved to the U.S. in the 1960s to attend architecture schools on the East Coast, notably Harvard, Yale, and Columbia. The 1960s proved to be the critical moment in the Cold War relationship between the United States and South Korea, but at the same time, the decade also marked a crucial moment in the history of Asian America. These years witnessed the explosive growth of Asian American social movements influenced by anti-imperial, anti-war, Black Power, and civil rights activism, which gave birth to the term “Asian American,” coined by Japanese American scholar and activist Yuji Ichioka. The 1965 Immigration Act (or Hart-Celler Act) further opened the door to people of Asian descent whose immigration had previously been blocked by the national quota system imposed through the 1924 Immigration Act (or Johnson-Reed Act). This legislation was particularly significant for the visibility of Koreans in the demographic composition of Asian America, which had largely consisted of people of Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino descent. The first-generation architects who came to the U.S. from Korea in this transformative decade have strategically divided their architectural practice between the two countries, thereby playing a crucial role in the field of modern architecture both in Korea and the United States.

“Part III. Unsettled Boundaries” introduces second-generation (or 1.5-generation) architects and designers of Korean descent. The title “Unsettled Boundaries” not only refers to the changing meaning of Korean Americanness among this new generation of architects and designers, but also indicates the boundary-crossing nature of their artwork and architecture.

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aftermath of the Korean War (1950-1953), Seoul National University (SNU) agreed to receive educational and technical support from the University of Minnesota with financial and administrative aid from the State Department of the United States. The Project provided SNU with substantial assistance with repair and construction of campus buildings, equipment and book purchases, and faculty exchanges in the fields of engineering (including architecture), medicine, agriculture and public administration. See Dongmin Park, “The Minnesota Project: Rebuilding Seoul National University’s Architectural Engineering Department and the Formation of US-Oriented Architectural Academia.” *Journal of the Architectural Institute of Korea Planning & Design* 34:9, 117-128, 2018.

Though some of them are not architects by training, they nevertheless pose questions that urge us to rethink the boundaries between architecture and other disciplines. Mikyoung Kim was originally educated as a concert pianist, but later studied sculpture and landscape architecture after her musical career was curtailed by tendinitis. Kim's award-winning landscape architecture and urban design projects illuminate her cross-disciplinary inquiry into the intersections of natural and built environments and the confluence of art and science, thereby redefining and expanding the discipline of landscape architecture. Likewise, Soo Sunny Park is particularly noted for her innovative use of "boundary materials" that invite us to rethink the lines drawn among mediums, disciplines, and temporality. Park's experimentation with ephemeral features of light provides implications for contemporary architectural practice.

## **Key Findings**

### **Part I. Colonial Exile**

Japanese colonial occupation of Korea (1910-1945) left much to be desired when it came to architectural education. Due to the lack of formal employment opportunities for ethnic Koreans under Japanese colonial rule, the modern term "architect" seemed reserved only for the Japanese. It was not for the purpose of study that **David Hyun** (1917-2012) moved to the United States in 1924, but the fact that he came to establish himself as the first Korean American *architect* indicates his significant position in the transpacific history of Asian American architecture. Not only was he included in the seemingly impossible category of *Korean* architects in this early phase, but he was also among the first architects of Asian ancestry to open an architectural office in downtown Los Angeles.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> According to an interview with David Hyun, at the time he opened his architectural office in 1953, there was no substantial market or clientele for a Korean architect due to the small Korean population (approximately 500) in Los Angeles.

Born in 1917 in Seoul under Japanese colonial rule, David Hyun fled to Shanghai with his family after his father, Reverend Soon Hyun (1880-1968), joined the March First Movement in 1919, the largest nationwide anti-colonial movement in Korea. After living for five years in Shanghai, where Rev. Hyun served as a cabinet member of the Korean Provisional Government-in-exile, the Hyun family moved to Hawai'i on May 26, 1924, when David Hyun was seven years old. After growing up on the island of Kaua'i and graduating from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa on O'ahu, Hyun moved to Los Angeles in 1947 and attended the USC School of Architecture. In 1953, Hyun founded his own architectural firm, David Hyun and Associates, in Los Angeles.

Having previously worked with modernist architect Richard Neutra (1892-1970), Hyun came to design numerous modernist residences in southern California throughout the 1950s and 1960s, thereby contributing to the flourishing of Mid-century Modern architecture on the West Coast.<sup>98</sup> Among these works is the McTernan House, which was built in 1960 for prominent civil rights attorney John T. McTernan (1910-2005) in Los Feliz, California. The two-story, single-family house demonstrates characteristic features of Mid-century Modern residential architecture, including a Japanese-influenced garden design; this work's historical significance was recognized with its designation in 2014 as Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument (No. 1065). His own Hyun Residence, a house completed in 1993 for the architect and his artist wife Mary Ham Hyun (1914-2011) in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles, is among the examples of West Coast Mid-century Modern architecture with Korean architectural motifs. His contribution to Mid-century Modern architecture can also be found in "Googie" architecture, an

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Angeles. Two other architects of Asian ancestry active during this time were both Chinese, who lived off of commissions from the local Chinese community. This led Hyun to find his major clientele in the white community.

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/casa-perfect-los-angeles>

architectural style applied to both commercial and residential buildings in California. Googie architecture is known for its postwar modern and futuristic approach to form, featuring cantilevered roofs and boomerang angles, enlivened with bright colors, lighting typography and signage. In addition to Hyun's other futuristic residential projects in southern California, the 1961 Kite Coffee Shop in Los Angeles signifies the postwar prosperity and affluence which characterized American visual culture at midcentury.

Beginning in the late 1970s, Hyun's architectural firm became involved in the development and planning projects of several ethnic enclaves, including the 1980 Japanese Village Plaza in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, which helped revitalize the district as a thriving urban community in the early 1980s. Hyun's other cross-ethnic projects include the 1982 Ching Young Village Shopping Center in Hanalei, on the Hawaiian island of Kaua'i. Originally built and established in 1906 as the Ching Young Store by a Chinese immigrant named Ching Yuk Hom, it was converted into a modern retail center in the early 1980s to meet the increasing needs of the growing tourist economy in Hawai'i.<sup>99</sup> Hyun also drafted plans for the Korean American community in Los Angeles called "Korea City," yet it was never realized. The David Hyun papers and materials at the USC East Asia Library indicate his active involvement in the making and remaking of LA Koreatown.

The first Korean American architect to be named to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects in 1986 was **Ki Suh Park** (1932-2013). Born in 1932 in colonial Korea, Park worked as a translator for the U.S. Joint Advisory Command in Busan during the Korean War. He later wrote a letter to American newspapers seeking sponsorship for his study. In his letter titled "Korean Student Seeks a Sponsor" published in the Los Angeles

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<sup>99</sup> <https://chingyoungvillage.com/family-history>

Times on May 5, 1952, Park introduced himself as the son of a farmer raised under the influence of Presbyterian Christianity who had been accepted into UC Berkeley's pre-architecture curriculum for the Fall semester of 1952. After this letter, several people offered scholarship support for him to help immigrate to the United States. Park studied architecture at UC Berkeley and MIT, before beginning his professional career at Gruen Associates in Los Angeles in 1961. During his years at Gruen, Park oversaw a number of landmark Los Angeles projects, including the expansion of the Los Angeles Convention Center, the planning and design of the 105 Freeway, the Koreatown Plaza and the Segerstrom Concert Hall. Among his most interesting works is the Rebuild LA Project, a revitalization project undertaken after the LA riots of 1992.

## **Part II. The Long Sixties**

The second group of Korean American architects is distinctive from the aforementioned group of architects in terms of their primary motivation to move to the United States for architectural education. **Tai Soo Kim**, FAIA (b. 1936), is a founder of Tai Soo Kim Partners, an architectural firm based in Hartford, Connecticut. Born in 1936 in Harbin, Manchuria during the period of Japanese colonial rule, Kim graduated from the Department of Architectural Engineering at Seoul National University (SNU) in 1960. By the time he attended SNU, the architecture department had undergone significant changes after the Minnesota Project. Under the influence of US-educated architecture faculty, as well as the increasing exposure to US-based architectural practice and education, Kim learned of the work of Louis Khan (1901-1974) from an issue of the architectural journal *Progressive Architecture* which his father had sent him while working in the U.S. as a visiting professor. In the hope of studying with Khan, Kim moved to the U.S. in 1961 to attend the Yale School of Architecture. However, because Khan had already left

Yale for the University of Pennsylvania, Kim ended up studying with other modernist architects such as Philip Johnson (1906-2005). His years at Yale opened up a unique path for Kim as an architect. Rather than pursuing a form of architecture based on a Western culture that he himself was not familiar with, he began to harness as sources of inspiration his own personal memories and heritage, such as elements of Korean landscapes. Having worked briefly at Philip Johnson's architectural office in New York City after graduation, Kim co-founded the Hartford Design Group in 1970, which was later renamed Tai Soo Kim Partners and further shortened to TSKP Studio.

Straddling two cultures, TSKP maintained its architectural practice both in Hartford, Connecticut, and Seoul, South Korea. Architecture critic Thomas Fisher once described Tai Soo Kim as an architect "working in two worlds."<sup>100</sup> These two worlds not only refer to the two different countries where he has practiced architecture, but also signal the two intellectual traditions of modern architecture, rationalism and empiricism, which encapsulates Kim's dialectical approach to design. As a modernist architect dealing with cultural differences both in New England and Seoul, Kim and his architectural firm have responded to local conditions and constraints without compromising the clarity and practicality of modernist architecture. While his conservative clients in New England public institutions place an emphasis on local tradition and context, the Korean counterparts tend to attach more weight to an individual architect's capability. Kim's architectural work has been a process of navigating such differences in client expectations and cultural contexts.

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<sup>100</sup> Thomas Fisher, "Working in Two Worlds." *Progressive Architecture*. September 1994.

The 1978 Kim Residence, the architect's own house located in West Hartford, Connecticut, became a turning point for his architectural work. Consisting of less than 2,000 square feet, the house proves that a building need not be large to feel spacious, open, and bright. Working only with minimum-size, boxy architectural shapes, Kim was able to demonstrate his architectural languages emphasizing practicality and simplicity. Since this work, Kim's architectural practice has largely transitioned from private residences to public institutional buildings as he acquired a considerable reputation among local and national media. Middlebury Elementary School (1982, Middlebury, CT) represents an early example of his architectural approach to rural New England during this period. Designed to create a small-scale building comfortable for kindergarten through fourth-grade students, the school features a simple, rectangular block subdivided into smaller spaces, yet its gable-roofed interior space and red-brick screen walls correspond to the surrounding architectural vernacular of rural New England. The 1991 Student Athletic Center at Miss Porter School in Farmington, CT, is another example of Kim's creative use of a simple, boxy form to accommodate the program of a sports facility, while integrating the form to harmonize with the character of surrounding campus buildings. This design dialectic between rationalism and empiricism continues to define the more recent work of Kim and his partners, such as the 2002 Ross Commons at Middlebury College, the 2009 Rogers International Baccalaureate Environmental Magnet School in Stamford, Connecticut, and the 2002 U.S. Embassy in Tunis, Tunisia.

**Kyu Sung Woo**, FAIA (b. 1941), is the founder of Kyu Sung Woo Architects, Inc. Born in Seoul in 1941, Kyu Sung Woo received his undergraduate architectural education at Seoul National University, before coming to the United States in 1967, where he earned a Master of Architecture degree at Columbia University in 1968, and a Master of Architecture in Urban



Design at Harvard University in 1970. After graduation, he worked with Josep Lluís Sert, with whom he had studied with at Harvard, at Sert, Jackson & Associates in Cambridge. Later on, Woo served as senior urban designer for the Mayor's Office of Midtown Planning and Development in New York City. In 1978, Woo began his private practice, which later became Woo and Williams. Since the establishment of his own architectural firm in 1990, Woo has designed numerous buildings both in the United States and South Korea, including the 2015 Asian Cultural Complex in Gwangju, Korea, the 1988 Olympic Village in Seoul, the 2007 Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland, Kansas, the 1992 Whanki Museum in Seoul and the 1998 Arts of Korea Gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, as well as student housing complexes at Harvard, Northeastern, Bennington and Amherst.

As his career both in architecture and urban design suggests, Woo's architectural work features the unique intersection between urban fabric and individual buildings. Harvard University Graduate Student Housing (2008, Cambridge, MA), a six-story housing complex on the Charles River, epitomizes his careful approach to the complexity of local "context." While working within a multiplicity of constraints and conditions, from materials to adjacent buildings, Woo had to respond to the "site" innovatively as the project was subject to intense public scrutiny from the beginning. For instance, his consideration for the local context, especially for Harvard's relationship to the river, is reflected through the creative use of Harvard's traditional red brick on the southwest corner of the building.

Architectural historian Stanford Anderson (1934-2016), a longtime friend of Woo and his family, describes Woo's architecture as the work created through "precision" and "proper workmanship."<sup>101</sup> Woo's passion for precision manifests itself through his skillful mediation

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<sup>101</sup> Stanford Anderson. "The Elegance and Generosity of an Architect." *Kyu Sung Woo: 1999-2009*. (Seoul: Space, 2010), p. 6-15.

between detail and site. Woo's two residential projects in strikingly different contexts demonstrate this motivation in his design approach. The 1990 Woo House in Cambridge, Massachusetts was designed for the architect's family, including his pianist wife and two children. The urban residence offers a place of seclusion and privacy within a quiet yet highly dense neighborhood. The house is characteristically introverted, opening itself towards a two-story living space that serves as the focal point of family life. Within the limited site, the urban residence nevertheless provides a dynamic sense of space for circulation, while fulfilling the everyday demands of the family. The 2007 Putney Mountain House in Putney, Vermont, built as a vacation house for his family, serves the opposite purpose. Located on the southwestern slope of Putney Mountain in rural Vermont, the house looks outward in visual correspondence with deep vistas of surrounding valleys and mountains. The voluminous geometric masses on the extensive site are carefully coordinated with precise detailing in openings and materials.

### **Part III. Unsettled Boundaries**

**Alice Kimm**, FAIA (b. 1964), is a co-founder and principal of John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects (JFAK), a Los Angeles-based architectural firm founded in 1996. A daughter of the first-generation Korean American architect Jong Soung Kimm (b. 1935), Alice Kimm was born and raised in Chicago. Kimm received a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Cornell University in 1986 and a Master of Architecture from Harvard University in 1990. With over 30 years of experience in the field of architecture, Kimm is the winner of numerous honors, including the 2017 Rudy Bruner Silver Medal for Urban Excellence. From its inception, JFAK

has experimented with a multitude of materials, from polycarbonate to LEDs, while grappling in substantive ways with historical and current social justice issues and community concerns.

Based in Los Angeles, JFAK has actively engaged with several complex issues facing the city, from underprivileged towns of the city and minority communities to homelessness. LA Design Center (2003, Los Angeles, CA), located in the heart of South LA, speaks to JFAK's engagement with the city and its rich yet fragmented history. It was an adaptive reuse project conceived by furniture manufacturer Francisco and Alba Pinedo, who had grown up in South LA and wanted to turn the dilapidated warehouses into a public space in the hope of giving the space back to the community. This particular neighborhood also held a symbolic status as it was among the areas, along with the adjacent Koreatown, that suffered the most from the LA riots in 1992 following the acquittal of the LAPD officers for the brutal beating of motorist Rodney King. While keeping intact the existing facade and structure, which would not only document the rich history of the neighborhood, but also address its identity as a growing center for young furniture design and fabrication companies, JFAK added a layer of iridescent polycarbonate sheets to make the building look flexible, open-ended, and inclusive of the community. **Koreatown Gateway** (2017, Los Angeles, CA) is another example that illuminates Kimm's strong and active involvement in the rich history of a city whose multiracial identity has always manifested itself in and through the built environment. The project was presented as a new urban gateway in the center of Koreatown, another storied neighborhood in LA. While the project makes a pronounced reference to Korean cultural traditions, through its visual plays upon Korean *hangul* characters and architectural forms embellished with the traditional color scheme known as *dancheong*, Kimm and her design team approached the project as one that would simultaneously re-envision "boundaries" of the neighborhood that have always been in constant flux, as well as

interrogate the intersection at which the project was located, both physically and metaphorically. This monument reflects how Koreatown has evolved into a residential and commercial space inhabited by people of diverse racial and national backgrounds after the LA riots in 1992. The extensive use of LED technology as a crucial element of the project further highlights what the second-generation Korean American architect envisioned as a new Koreatown, that is, a place that references rich cultural traditions in a highly abstracted and contemporary form.<sup>102</sup> Kimm's recent work also includes projects addressing issues of homelessness in LA, with her characteristic integration of technology and socio-political advocacy. Listen In (2020, Los Angeles, CA) is a public sound art installation that seeks to promote public awareness of homelessness through a mobile and highly interactive array of wind chimes supported on slender steel tube tripods. She co-founded a nonprofit organization called Open Source *Homelessness Initiative* (OSHI) that seeks to "tackle homelessness with digital innovation."<sup>103</sup>

**Mikyung Kim** (b. 1967) is a landscape architect, and founder and design director of Mikyung Kim Design (MYKD), an international, woman-owned, landscape architecture firm based in Boston. Born in 1967 to architect Tai Soo Kim and his wife, Kim pursued a career as a concert pianist until her early 20s, when she developed tendinitis. After graduating from Oberlin College, Kim earned a Master's degree from Harvard Graduate School of Design. Established in 1994, MYKD has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the prestigious Cooper Hewitt National Design Award in 2018, a recognition of the ways in which her work has redefined the discipline of landscape architecture.

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<sup>102</sup> The project has received multiple awards within the "unbuilt category," which means it has yet to be realized in a physical form due in large part to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to an interview with the architect, however, the project has recently received approvals to move forward and will likely be built by the time of the 2028 Summer Olympics to be held in Los Angeles.

<sup>103</sup> "Open Source Homelessness Initiative (OSHI) is Live." <https://www.jfak.net/news/open-source-homeless-initiative-oshi-is-live/> (Accessed March 3, 2023).

Her landscape design features what she terms restorative landscapes, places that are restorative and regenerative. Through the employment of scientific elements to create a healing environment, MYKD has built numerous urban parks and hospital gardens, while addressing the most pressing, contemporary environmental and health related issues. By redefining the function of hospital gardens as “healing gardens,” Kim’s design creates contemplative space through the use of natural elements, from plant material to water, that screen space and sound.

MYKD has produced a multiplicity of work in landscape architecture and urban design. **Crown Sky Garden** (2012, Chicago, IL) at the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital provides ample space for play, contemplation, and healing. **Boston Children’s Hospital Rooftop Healing Garden** (2018, Boston, MA) is another testament to her artful weaving of landscape architecture and sculpture to create regenerative space. Situated on the eleventh floor of the hospital’s main building, the garden likewise offers refuge for children, their families, and the staff who care for them. Beyond hospital gardens, MYKD has also engaged with the recreation of public space. Located between the university campus and the train station, the **University of North Carolina Charlotte Nexus Project** (2018, Charlotte, NC) serves as an entry plaza to the LYNX Blue Line public transit system. It is a perfect encapsulation of her cross-boundary approach to the intersection of sculpture and landscape design.

**Soo Sunny Park** (b. 1975) is a sculptor and installation artist based in Lebanon, New Hampshire, and Professor of Studio Art at Dartmouth College. Born in Seoul, Park moved to the United States at the age of ten and grew up in Marietta, Georgia and Orlando, Florida. Park has earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting and sculpture from the Columbus College of Art and Design and a Master of Fine Arts in sculpture from the Cranbrook Academy of Art. Park is widely recognized for her sculptural light installations, which have been exhibited at art

institutions such as the North Carolina Museum of Art, NC, the Rice Gallery in Houston, Texas, and the New Britain Museum of American Art in New Britain, Connecticut. Park has experimented with what she terms “boundary materials”—fencing, plastic, glass, sheetrock—to explore and expand liminal spaces between inside and outside, sculpture and drawing, vision and perception, and light and shadow. Light occupies an important place in her work. According to Park, light is not merely a medium through which form is made legible, but the very constituent of the work of art. Park’s treatment of light as a sculptural material reflects the boundary-crossing nature of her work, which explores interstitial spaces by pushing the lines conventionally drawn between sculpture, installation, and drawing.

Park’s installation **Unwoven Light** (2013, Houston, TX) at the Rice Gallery showcases her ongoing investigation of light’s potential as a critical structural element in sculpture and its ephemeral qualities in the perception of architectural space. Park employs a chain link fence, plexiglass, natural and artificial light in a way that allows viewers to restructure the space as they approach it. Fences and panes of glass are used as porous boundaries. Her recent work includes an installation project **Expanded Present** (2021, Washington, DC) at the Smithsonian’s Arts and Industries Building on the National Mall. Through the use of iridescent materials and undulating curves, the 50-foot-tall installation creates the feel of an ethereal portal as if it is floating in space. Park’s use of “boundary materials,” such as fencing, metal studs and dichroic glass, makes the light reflect different colors depending on weather, time of day, and the spot from which it is approached. This installation encapsulates Park’s artwork that has contemplated the shifting meanings of threshold and liminal space: the present is an ever-changing space between the past and future.

## **Location of Existing Collections**

With the exception of David Hyun, the other Korean American architects and artists introduced here are still actively running their architectural offices or practicing their artwork. These architects and artists have responded positively to our inquiries about the possibility of collaboration. The bulk of materials for Tai Soo Kim's architectural work is located at his architectural firm, TSKP Studio, in Hartford, Connecticut. These include architectural models, sketches, and photographs. Architect Kyu Sung Woo holds the majority of his architectural materials within his own residences and warehouses in the Boston area. MYKD has the materials for the following projects, in addition to the aforementioned ones: 1) Crown Sky Garden: photographs, sketches; 2) Farrar Pond Garden: photographs, models; 3) Project Ripple: stone study models, photographs; 4) Nexus: models, photographs. Regarding the work of Alice Kimm, concept studies, 3d computer models, drawings, diagrams, and sketches for all of the projects listed in Table 1 are currently housed at her architectural firm, JFAK. Soo Sunny Park holds the majority of materials in her New Hampshire studio.

The bulk of architectural materials pertaining to David Hyun have been donated to the archives of the USC East Asian Library, with a smaller collection of material on the architect and the broader Hyun family held at the Center for Korean Studies archives at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. However, the significance and historical weight of David Hyun as a California-based Mid-century Modernist architect cannot be overemphasized. The David Hyun collection currently includes materials concerning his architectural practice, such as David Hyun Associates, Inc. portfolio, professional resumes, maps of his Silver Lake residence, floor plans, blueprints, and negatives for the Japanese Village Plaza, photographs of his other architectural projects, and the plan for the Korean American Museum, meeting minutes, and correspondence

between 1992 and 1999. Additionally, the library houses Hyun's original drawings and paintings, as well as copies of his essays published in local newspapers.

### **Priorities for Future Collecting and Action**

The Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian (<https://www.aaa.si.edu>) largely lack archival materials and papers concerning Korean American artists, with a few meaningful exceptions such as the landscape photographer Johsel Namkung (1919-2013), multimedia and interdisciplinary artist Gala Porras-Kim (b. 1984), and jewelry designer Chunghi Choo (b. 1938). The Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum currently holds a limited number of works by artists and designers of Korean ancestry, such as jewelry designer Chunghi Choo (b. 1938), furniture designer Byung Hoon Choi (b. 1952), fashion designer Jean Yu (b. 1970), and textile artist Christina Kim (b. 1957). Despite the outstanding achievements of individual artists, these collections have no representation of architects of Korean descent, falling far short of their vibrant presence in and outstanding contributions to the field of modern architecture in the United States.

This absence rather presents itself as an ample opportunity for the Cooper Hewitt and the other Smithsonian units to collect, document and exhibit the work of architects and designers of Korean ancestry. We recommend that priorities for future collecting should be placed on material that has the greatest potential to increase public awareness of the rich history of Korean American architects, and to bring new ideas to research and teaching of American cultural history. Among the key areas for potential collection concerning Korean American architects and designers are 1) papers and materials concerning the first Korean American architect David Hyun; 2) family residences designed by first-generation architects of Korean ancestry; 3)



materials and papers concerning community-based efforts to build the first Korean American museums and rebuild LA Koreatown; 4) works by second-generation architects and designers.

First, the historical value of David Hyun as the first Korean American architect in California cannot be overstated both in the fields of modern architecture and Asian American history. We strongly recommend that the Smithsonian, especially the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian, collaborate with the USC library for the acquisition of his papers and materials, especially with respect to his architectural contributions to Mid-century Modern architecture as well as Asian American cultural history. Of particular note is the McTernan House, originally built in 1960 for attorney John T. McTernan in Los Feliz, CA, and later designated as the Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument for its outstanding historical value as an example of Mid-century Modern residential architecture. This not only represents the architectural significance of Hyun's work but also serves as a tremendously meaningful testament to the Cold War history of Asian Americans whose lives were thrown into turmoil by the excesses of anti-communism. In the heated era of McCarthyism during the 1950s, Hyun underwent several deportation hearings due to his involvement in the Communist Party. Hyun's design of the McTernan house was not a coincidence. McTernan had long maintained a law partnership with attorney Ben Margolis (1910-1999), who defended not only the Hollywood Ten but also David Hyun.

Second, while accommodating the practical needs of multi-generational family members and responding to local contexts and constraints, first-generation Korean American architects have come to terms with transpacific aspects of architectural languages in the design of their own homes. The Kim Residence marked a turning point in Tai Soo Kim's architectural career, as he was able to find his own architectural languages through the design of a house for his own family

in his adopted country. Likewise, Kyu Sung Woo's family residences in Massachusetts and Vermont exhibit the modernist architect's creative responses to local contexts, while encompassing details of spatial elements of traditional Korean housing in the consideration of their visual and spatial relationships with outdoor spaces. Meanwhile, the Hyun House in Silver Lake makes a more explicit statement of architectural motifs from traditional Korean architecture, while adding a sizzling layer to the Mid-century Modern architectural landscape in southern California.

The third area for potential collecting pertains to materials and papers concerning the construction of a new Korean American museum to replace the 1991 Korean American National Museum in Los Angeles. Given the historical significance of Los Angeles for Korean Americans, there has long been a community-based attempt to materialize the first Korean American museum in the city since the 1990s. While the initial plan has until recently encountered several obstacles, the delayed project itself tells a great deal about the internal tensions and competing aspirations of the Korean American community, as evidenced by the David Hyun papers at USC as well as JFAK's concept studies regarding the new Korean American museum.

Last but not least, works by second-generation Korean American architects and designers demonstrate the changing topography of American architecture and art. Alice Kimm and her design team's architectural projects, from the LA Design Center to the Koreatown Gateway, should expand the scope of Smithsonian collections regarding the public role of architecture in the history of U.S. race relations. The Koreatown Gateway project won the 2020 A+D Design Award for the On the Screen category, and its sketches and diagrams hold particularly important values to be considered for acquisition by the Cooper Hewitt Museum because they demonstrate

the processes of design thinking by which elements of Korean temple architecture are abstracted into contemporary forms in a way that makes them legible even to viewers unfamiliar with the formal and spatial grammar of traditional Korean architecture.

Some of these second-generation designers and artists are not architects by training, but their works nonetheless provide insightful perspectives upon the shape of contemporary architecture and urbanism in the United States. The examples include Mikyoung Kim's healing gardens and Soo Sunny Park's sculpture work. For instance, restorative gardens, as conceptualized by Mikyoung Kim, invite us to rethink the potentially regenerative functions of public space at a time in which there is growing awareness of the importance of contact with nature and fellow citizens to promote public health and mental wellbeing. Likewise, Soo Sunny Park's installation works capture the crux of her artwork that interrogates boundary materials, thereby initiating a transmedial conversation on architectural space. Given the recently growing interest in the role of the built environment in addressing racial injustice, the work of architects and designers of Korean ancestry will garner great attention from architects, artists, researchers and the general public.

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- Interview with Mikyoung Kim, October 1, 2022.
- Interview with Kyu Sung Woo, October 15, 2022.

## Illustrations



Figure 1. David Hyun, McTernan House, Los Feliz, CA, 1960. By Michael J. Locke – Own work, Public Domain, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:McTernan\\_House,\\_David\\_Hyun\\_Architect\\_1960\\_\(2\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:McTernan_House,_David_Hyun_Architect_1960_(2).jpg)

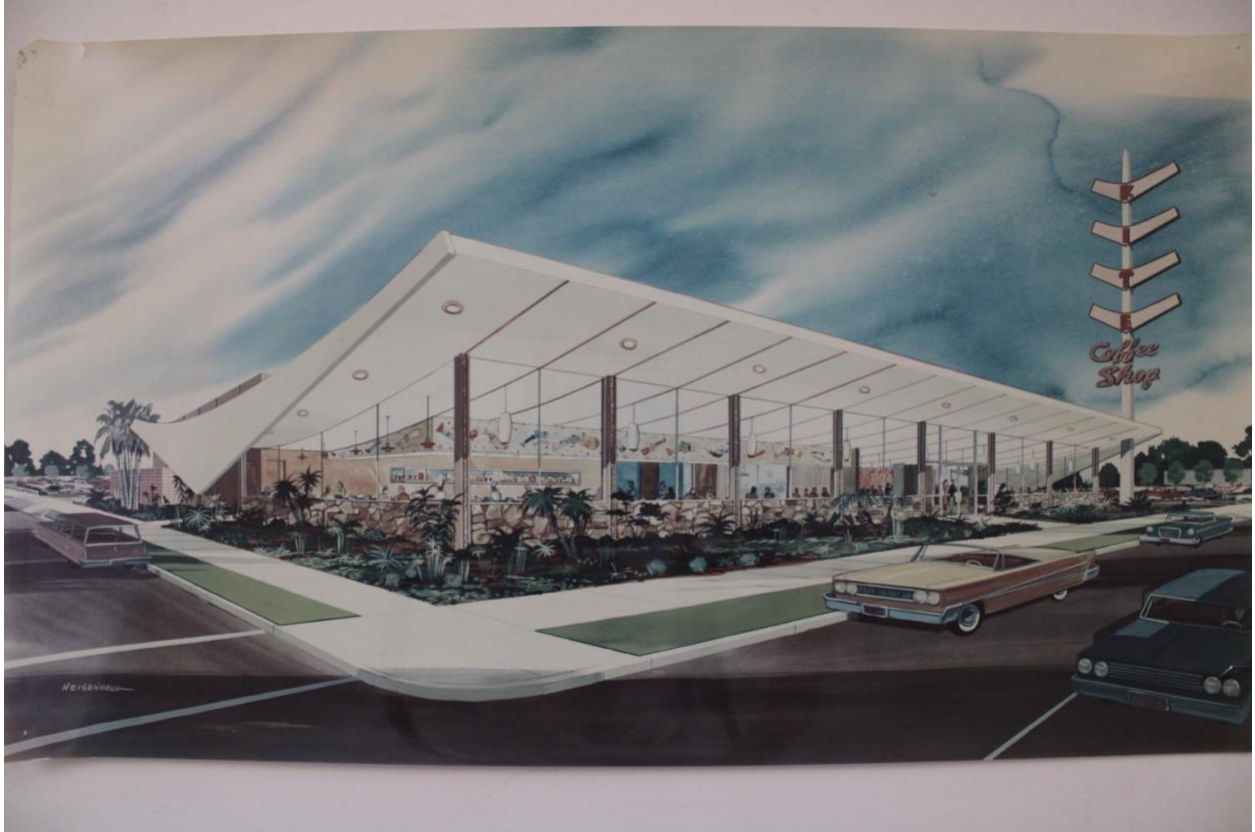


Figure 2. David Hyun, Kite Coffee Shop, Los Angeles, CA (David Hyun Papers)



Figure 3. Mikyoung Kim (MYKD), Boston Children's Hospital Rooftop Healing Garden, Boston, MA, 2018 (Mikyoung Kim Design)



Figure 4. Tai Soo Kim, Kim Residence, Hartford, CT, 1978 (TSKP Studio)





Figure 5. Tai Soo Kim, Student Athletic Center at Miss Porter School, Farmington, CT, 1991 (TSKP Studio)

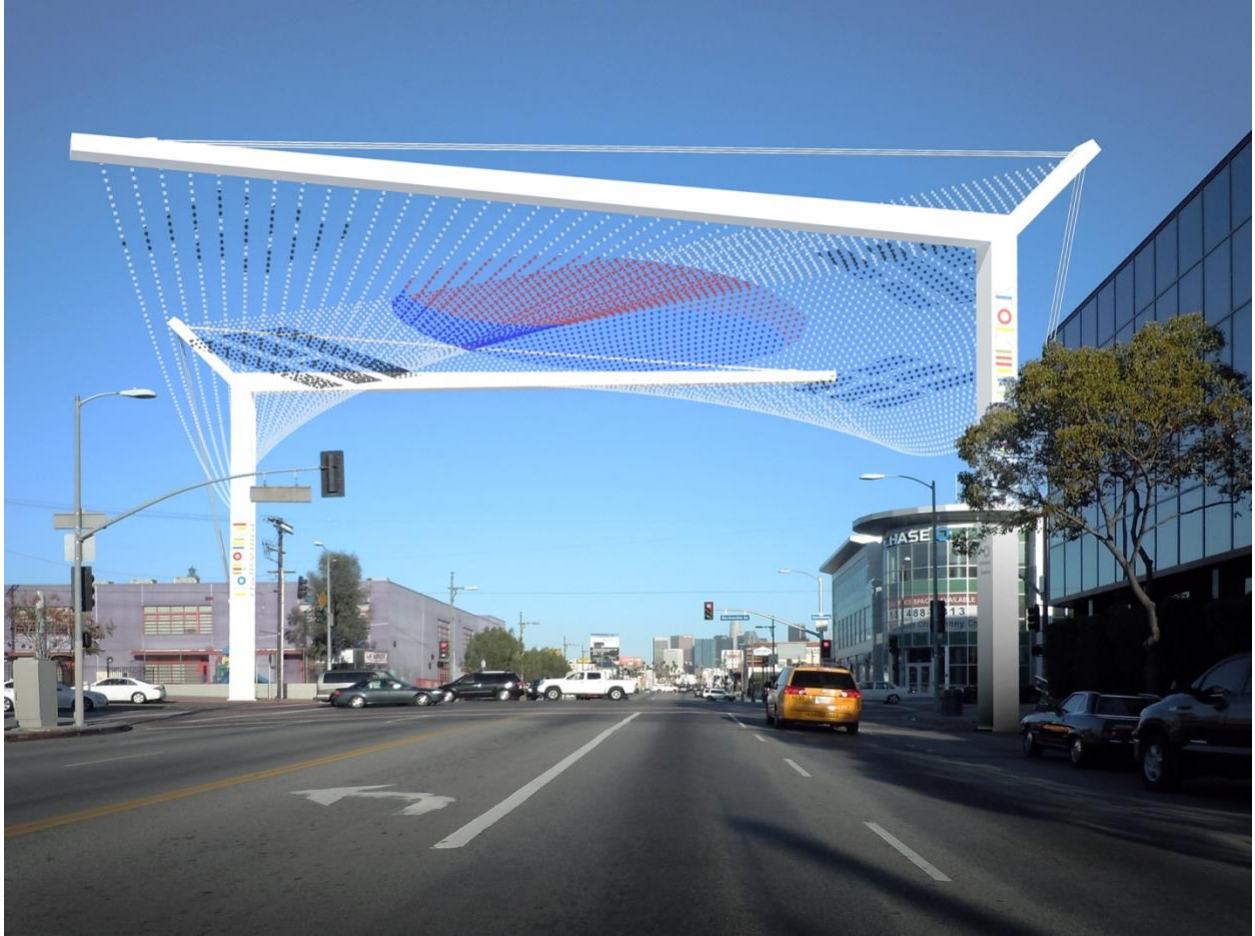


Figure 6. Alice Kimm (JFAK), Koreatown Gateway, Los Angeles, CA, 2017 (JFAK Architects)



Figure 7. Alice Kimm (JFAK), Listen In, Los Angeles, CA, 2020 (JFAK Architects)



Figure 8. Kyu Sung Woo, Putney Mountain House, Putney, VT, 2007 (Kyu Sung Woo Architects)

## **Filipino-American Architects and Designers**

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### **Overview and Scope**

The Philippines and the United States have had a long-standing relationship that was solidified when the Philippines became a colony of the United States after the Spanish-American War of 1898. In the field of architecture and design, this transnational relationship between the two countries is reflected in American architects practicing in the Philippines and then Filipino architects studying in the U.S. before World War II. Since the Philippines became independent from the U.S. in 1946, the cross-cultural exchanges and connections between the two countries have continually evolved, especially in the fields of architecture and design.

This exploratory paper aims to identify key architects and designers of Filipino descent who practiced in the United States in the twentieth century. Three groups of Filipino architects and designers are investigated: Filipinos who were sent to the U.S. to study architecture during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including **Carlos Barretto** (act. early 20<sup>th</sup> c.), **Tomas Mapua** (1888-1965), **Juan Arellano** (1888-1960), **Antonio Toledo** (1889-1972) and **Juan Nakpil** (1899-1986); Filipino architects who designed Philippine Pavilions at U.S. World's Fairs, such as **Luis Araneta** (1916-1984) for Seattle in 1962 and **Otilio Arellano** (1916-1981) for New York in 1964; five Filipino-American designers coming from different design fields who have emerged after the 1960s, including the architect and interior designer **Daniel Romualdez** (b. 1960), the furniture designer **Kenneth Cobonpue** (b. 1968), the fashion designer Josie Natori (b. 1947), the costume and set designer Eduardo Sicangco (b. 1953) and the graphic designer Lucille Tenazas (b. 1953).

Some of the themes that could be explored in the future include the impact of architecture and design education, transnational design practices and manufacturing, the creation of professional design communities, cross-cultural diasporic exchange, and professional interconnections. Furthermore, the paper will also forward suggestions on collecting materials and identifying repositories of contemporary Filipino American architects and designers from the later part of the twentieth century.

### **Sources and Methods for Identifying and Documenting AAPI Architects and Designers**

Archival research is the primary method used for this paper. Primary sources coming from books, newspapers, magazine, both print and online sources were utilized. Secondary sources include books, encyclopedia, and anthologies, also coming from print and online sources. Some of the materials were sourced from Philippine libraries and archives, such as the University of the Philippines, the National Archives, and the Department of Public Works and Highways. Online sources ranged from public libraries, such as the New York Public Library, the Queens Public Library, the Seattle Municipal Archives, the Seattle Public Library and universities such as the University of Washington and Columbia University.

In terms of methodological issues, access to personal archives is still limited. While interviewing the living designers would definitely be useful, unfortunately no interviews were conducted for this study. Interviews could be done in the next phase of the project.

In terms of the temporal scope, the project covers primarily the twentieth century, with focus on the pre-World War II/independence (1900-1946) and the Post-World War II/post-independence (1946 to present) periods. With regards to the geographical scope, the research

covers Filipino and Filipino-American designers who practiced in the Philippines and in the United States. Within the U.S., the study is concentrated on designers practicing on the West Coast and the East Coast. While this study does not have representation outside the West and East Coasts, there are possibilities for expanding the study in the future to cover the Midwest and Southern states, especially places with historically high concentrations of Filipino residents.

In terms of forms of professional practice covered in this study, architecture was the primary focus for the early twentieth century periods. However, for the post-independence period, the range of disciplines included the fields of architecture, interior design, graphic design, production/set and costume design and fashion design.

### **Framework for Organizing Key Findings about the History of Architects and Designers of Filipino Descent**

The research is organized under two both chronological thematic frameworks. The first framework organizes the designers under three periods: American-colonial period (1900-1946); Early post-independence period (1946-1960s); Late 20<sup>th</sup> century to today (1960s to present). This chronological framework connects to the historical eras of the Philippines as viewed through the lens of colonialism.<sup>104</sup> The Philippines was a Spanish colony from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to 1898, and then came under American colonial rule from 1898 to 1946. The period after World War II is considered the post-independence period when the Philippines gained its sovereignty. In this sense, the relationship of Filipino designers with the United States is inextricably intertwined with the process of colonization, the ways in which colonial powers imposed their own order and control over the colonized. Moreover, this process of colonization is clearly manifested in

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<sup>104</sup> Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*, (Manila; The Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1978)

architecture and design: through the imposition of order upon the built environment and designed objects; through design education; through professional tutelage and apprenticeship; through the control and extraction of raw materials for use in designed objects and buildings, etc. Looking at the post-colonial period, design and architecture would then be enmeshed with processes of decolonization, or how to dismantle institutions and systems of colonialism.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, this framework also looks at how neocolonialism, the perpetuation and reinforcement into the present of new forms of colonial domination, is embedded within design and architecture today, and how we must pay attention to forms of resistance to these modes of modern-day oppression.<sup>106</sup>

For the second approach, a more thematic and transhistorical framework can be applied. This approach includes the intersection of the Filipino designers across time with thematic threads linking them. Amongst these three groups of Filipino American architects and designers, some of the overall themes that can be explored include transnational design practice between the Philippines and the United States, cross-cultural diasporic exchange, and the connections and relationships between architecture and design education in the Philippines and the United States, and transnational manufacturing. Again, because of the Philippines being a former colony of the U.S., there is a strong relationship between how Filipinos were sent to the U.S. to study, how the design education in the Philippines has long been deeply influenced by American institutions, and how some of these designers employ Filipino artisans and craftsmen in the Philippines to produce in the Philippines goods that are then imported to the U.S. Lastly, the study explores the professional intersections amongst Filipino architects and designers through different associations and organizations. All in all, this paper highlights the intersections between the

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<sup>105</sup> Anousha Khandwala, "What does it mean to decolonize design: Dismantling History 101," in *AIGA Eye on Design*; accessed through <https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/what-does-it-mean-to-decolonize-design/>

<sup>106</sup> Renato Constantino, *Neocolonial Identity and Counter Consciousness: Essays on Cultural Decolonization*, (White Plains, NJ: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1978)



designers, and then also the relationship between the Philippines and the United States as it impacts the practice and production of architecture and design in the United States.

## **Key Findings**

### **Filipinos sent to the U.S. to study architecture**

This first set of architects from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century represent the First Generation of Filipino architects who studied architecture in the United States. Mostly under the scholarship program sponsored by the U.S. Insular government in the Philippines, also known as the *pensionado* program, these architects went to the U.S. to study architecture and later returned to the country to serve in the Bureau of Public Works. These architects were shaped with the *Beaux Arts* academic training that was dominant during that period, furthering the influence of Euro-North American thinking in architecture. The rise of Neoclassical civic architecture in the Philippines coincided with the dominance of Neoclassical architecture in the U.S.<sup>107</sup> The influence of the Art Deco style of the 1920s and 1930s also later became evident in public and private architecture in the Philippines.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, as these architects worked under the Bureau of Public Works, they were under continuous colonial tutelage as government workers furthering the infrastructure agenda of the colonial government. Their architectural training continued in the Philippines under the supervision of American Consulting Architects such as William Parsons (1872-1939) and Ralph Harrington Doane (1886-1941).<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Andrew N. Rebori, "The Work of William E Parsons in the Philippine Islands, Part 1," in *Architectural Record*, 41(4) (1917): 305-324; Andrew N. Rebori, "The Work of William E Parsons in the Philippine Islands, Part 2," in *Architectural Record*, 41(5) (1917): 423-434.

<sup>108</sup> For a longer discussion, see Edson Cabalfin, "Art Deco Filipino: Power, Politics, and Ideology in Philippine Art Deco Architectures, 1928-1941." Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Cincinnati, 2003.

<sup>109</sup> Thomas Hines, "American Modernism in the Philippines: The Forgotten Architecture of William Parsons," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 32(4) (December 1973): 316-326; Gerard Lico, *Arkitekturang Pilipino: A History of Architecture and the Built Environment in the Philippines*, (Quezon City: Arc Lico International Services Corporation, 2021), 389-392, 405-407

## **Carlos Barreto**

First recipient of the scholarship program sponsored by the U.S. colonial Insular government in the Philippines. He graduated from Drexel Institute in Philadelphia in 1907 with a degree in architecture. Later, he returned to the Philippines and worked under the Bureau of Public Works from 1908 to 1913, and again in 1917. He was known to have designed the temporary structures for the Manila Carnival in 1922, 1935, and 1936. There is limited knowledge and materials on his life and works.<sup>110</sup>

## **Tomas Mapua (1888-1965)**

Tomas Mapua is considered to be the first registered architect in the Philippines. He studied at Cornell University and received an architecture degree in 1911. He worked from 1918 to 1927 for the Bureau of Public works, where he served as supervising architect. After leaving government service, he co-founded the Mapua-Yuchianco-Tiaoque Construction Works, Inc. He established the Mapua Institute of Technology in Manila in 1925, the first professional school for architecture and engineering in the country. Mapua was also the first chairperson of the Board of Examiners for Architects. He co-founded the Philippine Architect's Society, the precursor to the Philippine Institute of Architects, one of the first major professional organization for architects in the country.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Gerard Lico, *Arkitekturang Pilipino: A History of Architecture and the Built Environment in the Philippines*, pp. 390-391.

<sup>111</sup> Gerard Lico, *Arkitekturang Pilipino: A History of Architecture and the Built Environment in the Philippines*, p. 400; Nicanor Tiongson, ed. *Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Encyclopedia of Philippine Arts [CD-ROM]*, (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994).

He designed important architectural projects under the Bureau of Public Works, including the Nurses' Home at the Philippine General Hospital (1922), the Samar Provincial Capitol Building (1930), the Cebu Normal School (1924), Laoag Normal School and Pier 7 at the Port of Manila, among others. He also designed private commissions, such as the St. La Salle Hall of De La Salle University (1924).<sup>112</sup>

### **Juan Arellano (1888-1960)**

Considered as one of the most important architects during the American colonial period, Juan Arellano studied architecture at Drexel Institute in Philadelphia in 1906, graduating in 1912. He later pursued a postgraduate course in architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and the Beaux Arts School in New York. After returning from the U.S., he worked together with his brother Arcadio Arellano (1872-1920) on projects such as the Gota de Leche and Casino Español. He worked for the Bureau of Public Works after doing private practice.<sup>113</sup>

Among Arellano's significant contributions to Philippine architecture are major Neoclassical buildings such as the Legislative Building (1926), Jones Bridge (1921), the Manila Post Office (1931), Villamor Hall at the University of the Philippines – Manila, the Chamber of Commerce Building, and the Art Deco style of the Rizal Memorial Stadium (1934). He also initiated the master plan for the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman. Arellano was also a noted and accomplished Impressionist painter.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Gerard Lico, *Arkitekturang Pilipino: A History of Architecture and the Built Environment in the Philippines*, 400-402

<sup>113</sup> Gerard Lico, *Arkitekturang Pilipino: A History of Architecture and the Built Environment in the Philippines*, 424-433.

<sup>114</sup> Winand Klassen, *Architecture in the Philippines: Filipino Building in a Cross-Cultural Context*, (Cebu City: University of San Carlos Press, 1986), 172-173, 175-177.

### **Antonio Toledo (1889-1972)**

Toledo was sent to the U.S. under the sponsorship of the Insular government in 1904 to study architecture at Ohio State University, where he received an architecture degree in 1911. He returned to the Philippines and started working for the Bureau of Public Works in 1911. He was later promoted as Superintendent Architect and subsequently as Consulting Architect in 1938 until his retirement in 1954.<sup>115</sup>

Toledo was responsible for important Neoclassical architecture during the American colonial period, including the City Hall of Manila (1941), the Department of Agriculture and Commerce Building (1939), the Department of Finance Building (1939), the Leyte Provincial Capitol Building (with Ralph Harrington Doane, 1917), the Cebu Provincial Capitol Building (1937) and the Manila Customs House (1937).

### **Juan Nakpil (1899-1986)**

Juan Nakpil first studied Civil Engineering at the University of the Philippines but later transferred to the University of Kansas and received a degree in architecture in 1922. He studied at the Fontainebleau School of Art in 1925 and went back to the U.S. to study at Harvard University, where he received his Master's degree in Architecture in 1926. Upon his return to the Philippines in 1926, he commenced working for the Bureau of Public Works. After World War II, he served as Consulting Architect of the Philippine War Damage Commission.<sup>116</sup>

After working for the government, he later returned to private practice and produced some of the major Art Deco architecture in the Philippines. Some of his foremost works include

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<sup>115</sup> Gerard Lico, *Arkitekturang Pilipino: A History of Architecture and the Built Environment in the Philippines*, 396-399.

<sup>116</sup> Winand Klassen, *Architecture in the Philippines: Filipino Building in a Cross-Cultural Context*, 179-180.

the Manila Jockey Club (1936), the Capitol Theater (1935), the Nakpil-Bautista Pylon at North Cemetery (late 1930s), the Eucharistic Monument (1939), and the Quezon Institute (1938). Nakpil also designed the Administration Building and Library Buildings at the University of the Philippines – Diliman campus (1950s), the Security Bank and Trust Building (1954) and the Social Security System Headquarters (1965).<sup>117</sup>

### **Filipino architects designing Philippine Pavilions in the U.S.**

The second group focuses on Filipino architects who have designed Philippine Pavilions shown at U.S. World's Fairs or Expositions. Designed as temporary structures that nevertheless create lasting imagery about a country at an international exhibition, the Philippine Pavilions constructed an idea of the nation for an American audience. Luis Araneta and Otilio Arellano's work on Philippine Pavilions at post-World War II World's Fairs in the U.S. exemplifies the interaction between architecture and the construction of national identity of the Philippines. (Figure 1) The Philippine Pavilions illustrate the intertwined relationship between architecture, nationalism, tourism, diplomacy, and commerce.<sup>118</sup>

### **Luis Araneta (1916-1984)**

Luis Araneta graduated with an architecture degree from the University of Santo Tomas in 1939. He designed several important post-independence buildings such as the Manila Doctors Hospital (1959), Makati Medical Center (1960), the Botica Boie Building (1959), People's Bank

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<sup>117</sup> Gerard Lico, *Arkitekturang Pilipino: A History of Architecture and the Built Environment in the Philippines*, 438-439.

<sup>118</sup> For a longer discussion, see Edson Cabalfin, "Nation as Spectacle: Identity Politics in the Architectures of Philippine Displays in International Expositions, 1887-1998," Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 2012.

and Trust Company (1959) and the Stella Maris College (1968).<sup>119</sup> He designed the Philippine Pavilion at the Seattle World's Fair in 1962 and concurrently served as the Commissioner General of the Philippine Commission to the fair.<sup>120</sup>

### **Otilio Arellano (1916-1981)**

Otilio Arellano Designed the Philippine Pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1964.<sup>121</sup> He served as Chief Architect of the 1953 Philippine International Fair and designed the Art Deco-inspired entry gateway. He also renovated the Metropolitan Theater of Manila in 1978, the 1931 work of his uncle Juan Arellano.<sup>122</sup>

### **Post-1960s Filipino Designers Practicing in the U.S.**

The third category considered here exemplifies the role of Filipino designers in contributing to design and architecture in the U.S. during the post-1960s period. The designers in this group practice a wider set of disciplines: architecture, interior design, graphic design, production design/set design and fashion design. These Filipino designers emerged in the period after World War II as more Filipinos emigrated to the U.S. While not all of them became American citizens, they nevertheless impacted design and architecture in the U.S. These designers highlight the continuing relationship between the Philippines and the United States in the postcolonial period.

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<sup>119</sup> "The Representative Works of Luis Araneta" in *Design Magazine*, 5(4), (April 1959):15-28.

<sup>120</sup> "1962 Seattle's World's Fair," in *Philippine Architecture and Building Journal*, 2(3), (1962): 31

<sup>121</sup> "Philippine Pavilion at the New York World's Fair 1964-1965," *Philippine Architecture and Building Journal*, 3(2), (1963)

<sup>122</sup> Margot Baterina, "An Impressive Building to Speak of the People's Growing Cultural Consciousness," *Philippine Panorama Magazine*, (December 3, 1978), 24-25; Cornelio Balmaceda, "World Fair in Asia," in *Souvenir Program of the Philippines International Fair*, (February 1<sup>st</sup> to April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1953), Manila.

**Kenneth Cobonpue** (born 1968, Cebu City, Philippines)

Regarded as one of the leading furniture designers in the Philippines, Kenneth Coponbue's work has been featured in high-profile interior design projects all over the world. He studied Industrial Design at the Pratt Institute in New York City and Furniture Marketing and Production at the Export-Akademie Baden-Württemberg in Reutlingen, Germany. Clients have included Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, Queen Sophia of Spain, and Queen Rhaniah of Jordan, among others. His furniture pieces have appeared in films such as *Oceans 13*, the television show *CSI*, and music videos for Maroon 5.

His work has been recognized through the Japan Good Design Awards, the Design for Asia Award of Hong Kong, the grand prize at the Singapore International Design Competition, the American Society of Interior Design (ASID) Top Pick selection, and the French Coup de Coeur award. In 2014, he was named the Designer of the Year during the inaugural edition of *Maison et Objet Asia* in Singapore. He was also named as one of the Philippines' Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) in 2003 for his achievements in design. *TIME Magazine* has called him "rattan's first virtuoso" in 2007.<sup>123</sup>

**Josie Natori** (born 1947, Manila, Philippines)

Josie Natori is a women's wear fashion designer based in New York. She attended Manhattanville College in New York in 1964 to study economics. After graduation, she worked in corporate finance in the stock brokerage and investment bank of Bache & Co. She later

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<sup>123</sup> Kenneth Coponbue, Profile, accessed through <http://www.kennethcobonpue.com/profile/>; "Kenneth Coponbue" <https://www.tatlerasia.com/people/kenneth-cobonpue>; "Kenneth Coponbue: Designs on Nature," Open Innovation Network, accessed through <https://web.archive.org/web/20140728205259/http://oustrup.com/kenneth-cobonpue>; Kristin Tablang, "Spotlight on Award Winning Filipino Furniture Designer Kenneth Coponbue," *Forbes Magazine*, January 18, 2015, accessed through <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kristintablang/2015/01/18/filipino-luxury-furniture-designer-kenneth-cobonpue/?sh=739421e21909>

worked for Merrill Lynch and became the first female Vice President in corporate Finance. She shifted from finance to fashion in 1977, when she established her eponymous fashion label. The fashion lifestyle brand since then has been selling women's clothing, including high-end lingerie, nightwear, loungewear, ready-to-wear, and recently including perfume, accessories, home, and men's wear. Most of her products are manufactured in the Philippines, employing Filipino embroiderers and artisans. Her label has been carried by Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus, Bloomingdales, Nordstrom, Neiman Marcus, Macy's and others.

She received several awards, including in 2007 the Order of Lakandula Award, the highest award given to a civilian by the Republic of the Philippines. Natori received the "Peopling of America Award" from the Statue of Liberty Ellis Island Foundation also in 2007. In 2012, Yahoo named Natori as a "self-made immigrant millionaire." Natori is a member of the Council of Fashion Designers of America. She also sits on the board of the Asian Cultural Council and the Fashion and Design Council of the Philippines.<sup>124</sup>

**Daniel Romualdez** (born 1960, Manila, Philippines)

Daniel Rodriguez is a well-known architect and interior designer. He is the son of former Philippine ambassador Benjamin Trinidad Romualdez and nephew of former First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos. He moved to New York and studied at Yale and Columbia University. He worked for Thierry Despont and Robert A.M. Stern before setting up his own office in 1993. His architecture firm is currently based in New York City.

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<sup>124</sup> FIT Archive on Demand: Josie Natori, Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, 2017, accessed through: <https://archiveondemand.fitnyc.edu/items/show/917>; Council of Fashion Designers of America, accessed through <https://cfda.com/members/profile/josie-natori>; "Natori Celebrates 30 Years at Breakneck Speed." New York Sun, October 4, 2007, accessed through <https://www.nysun.com/article/business-natori-celebrates-30-years-at-breakneck-pace>



His design works have been featured in *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, *Architectural Digest*, and other prominent magazines and publications. He was on the AD100 list of world's best interior designers and was featured in Phaidon's "*By Design: The World's Best Contemporary Designers*" (2021).<sup>125</sup> His high-profile clients include Tory Burch, Diane Von Furstenberg, Daphne Guinness, Aerin Lauder and Anh Duong.<sup>126</sup>

**Eduardo Sicangco** (born 1953, Bacolod, Negros Occidental, Philippines)

Eduardo Sicangco is a costume, set and production designer and educator. He has a long career designing sets and costumes for various productions in opera, theater, ballet, film and television, among others. He is currently Assistant Professor for Stage Design at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. He previously taught at New York University – Tisch School of the Arts. His education includes a Master of Fine Arts in Stage Design, New York University – Tisch School of the Arts and a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication, Ateneo de Manila University. He worked under the tutelage of Philippine National Artist Salvador Bernal and award-winning set designer Oliver Smith.

He has designed for countless productions, including the New York City Opera, the Virginia Opera, Ringling Brothers & Bailey Circus, Ballet Philippines, American Ballroom Theater, Radio City Music Hall, the Houston Grand Opera, the American Music Theater and the

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<sup>125</sup> Daniel Romualdez, *Tatler Asia*, accessed through: <https://www.tatlerasia.com/people/daniel-romualdez>; Hamish Bowles, "The Quiet American: Daniel Romualdez's Connecticut Home," *Vogue*, October 19, 2012, accessed through <https://www.vogue.com/article/the-quiet-american-daniel-romauldez-connecticut-home>

<sup>126</sup> James Reginato, "Fashion Trendsetter Daphne Guinness's Eclectic New York City Apartment," *Architectural Digest*, March 2011, accessed through <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/in-her-fashion-article>; Julie L. Belcove, "See How Artist Anh Duong Renovated Her Rustic Hamptons Beach House," *Architectural Digest*, December 5, 2016, accessed through <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/in-her-fashion-article>; Samuel Cochran, "Step Inside Tory Burch's Refined Manhattan Office," *Architectural Digest*, January 13, 2017, accessed through <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/tory-burch-manhattan-office-article>; "2014 AD100: Daniel Romualdez Architects," accessed through <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/daniel-romualdez-architects-interior-design-ad100-profile>

Kennedy Center, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Dollywood Entertainment, Disney on Ice and Royal Caribbean International. He was also featured in the book “*Costume Design: Techniques of Modern Masters*” by Lynn Peckal (1993). In 2008, he was honored with a career retrospective exhibit at the Ayala Museum in Makati City, Philippines.<sup>127</sup>

**Lucille Tenazas** (b. 1953, Manila, Philippines)

Lucille Tenazas is a multi-awarded graphic design and educator. She established her own design firm “Tenazas Design” in 1982 in New York and was later based in San Francisco. She currently serves as the Henry Wolf Professor in the School of Art, Media and Technology at Parsons The New School for Design in New York City. She obtained an MFA in Design from the Cranbrook Academy of Art and studied at the California College of the Arts. She previously taught at the California College of the Arts, where she was the founding Chair of the MFA program. Her work was featured in a retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 2003.

Her many clients include the San Francisco International Airport, the Neue Galerie Museum for German and Austrian Art, the Stanford University Museum, the University of California at Berkeley, the National Endowment for the Arts, the San Francisco Symphony, the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, Princeton Architectural Press and Rizzoli International Chronicle Books. She served from 1996 to 1998 as the national president of the American Institute for Graphic Arts (AIGA), the national professional organization of designers. Her work

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<sup>127</sup> Eduardo Sicangco, University of Carolina School of the Arts, <https://www.unca.edu/faculty-staff/eduardo-sicangco.aspx>; Anna Sobrepeña, “New York Based Stage Designer creates ‘Swan Lake’ from 5,000 sheets of gold leaf,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 27, 2019, accessed through <https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/343981/new-york-based-stage-designer-creates-swan-lake-from-5000-sheets-of-gold-leaf/>; Eduardo Sicangco, World Costume Design, [http://www.worldcostumedesign.com/curated\\_exhibit/united\\_states\\_exhibit/eduardo\\_sicangco.html](http://www.worldcostumedesign.com/curated_exhibit/united_states_exhibit/eduardo_sicangco.html)

was featured in a retrospective at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 2003. She received the National Design Award for Communication Design from the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in 2002.<sup>128</sup>

### **Location of Existing Collections**

The collection of materials from these three sets of architects and designers offers different possibilities and sources. For the first group, materials can be found from the archives of the schools from where they graduated, including Drexel Institute (now University), Cornell University, the Ohio State University, the University of Kansas and Harvard University. Major buildings designed and built under the Bureau of Public Works are housed in the Department of Public Works and Highways Archives. For the second group, artifacts might be found in the collections of the public libraries of New York and Seattle, together with the University of Washington, where materials from the 1962 Seattle and 1964 New York World's Fairs are housed. Additionally, the family archives of Otilio Arellano and Luis Araneta are in Manila. Plans for these Philippine Pavilions might be held in the Department of Public Works and Highways Archives and the Arellano and Araneta family archives in Manila. For the third group, materials might potentially be sourced from the collections of the individual designers, some of whom are based in New York (Rodriguez, Tenazas, Natori) in the U.S., while others are in Bacolod (Sicangco) and Cebu (Cobonpue) in the Philippines. The San Francisco Museum of

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<sup>128</sup> Lucille Tenazas, Faculty Profile, Parsons New School of Design, accessed through <https://www.newschool.edu/parsons/faculty/lucille-tenazas/>; Teal Triggs, "Lucille Tenazas: Layers of Language" in *Eye Magazine*, (Summer 1995), accessed through <https://www.eyemagazine.com/feature/article/lucille-tenazas-extract>; Tenazas Design, <https://tenazasdesign.com/>; "Artists: Lucille Tenazas," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, accessed through [https://www.sfmoma.org/artist/Lucille\\_Tenazas/](https://www.sfmoma.org/artist/Lucille_Tenazas/); "Lucille Tenazas is a Class of Her Own," in *Adobo Magazine*, July 23, 2018, accessed through, <https://www.adobomagazine.com/the-magazine/lucille-tenazas-is-a-class-of-her-own/>

Modern Art and the Cooper Hewitt hold some of Tenazas' work (Figure 2). While collections of the Public Libraries of New York and Seattle are accessible to the public, most of the family and personal archives are not.

Digital collections of the various public libraries also extend access to out-of-state researchers. Photographs of the Philippine Pavilion at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair are available through the Werner Lenggenhager Photograph Collection (1950-1984) in the Seattle Public Library, the Seattle Municipal Archives and the Museum of History and Industry of the University of Washington Libraries.<sup>129</sup> There are some ephemera and photographs of the Philippine Pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair also available at the Columbia University Avery Architectural and Art Library, the Queens Public Library, and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.<sup>130</sup> Other private websites also include some digital collections, such as the website of the "1964/1965 New York World's Fair."<sup>131</sup> Reuters Historical Collection has a film about the Philippine Pavilion at the 1964 NY World's Fair.<sup>132</sup>

Some challenges related to collecting include access to adequate documentation about the works of the designers, since most data and collections are held in private archives. Since some

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<sup>129</sup> Werner Lenggenhager Photograph Collection, 1950-1984, Seattle Public Library, accessed through <https://seattle.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S30C3027384>; "Century 21 World's Fair," Seattle Municipal Archives, accessed through <https://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/digital-document-libraries/century-21-worlds-fair>; "The Philippine Pavilion in the International Mall, Seattle World's Fair, 1962," Museum of History and Industry, University of Washington Libraries, accessed through <https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imlsmohai/id/4740/>

<sup>130</sup> "The Philippine Pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair," Columbia University Libraries - Avery Architectural and Fine Art Libraries, accessed through <https://dlc.library.columbia.edu/durst/cul:zs7h44j16x>; "Philippine Pavilion 1964-1965 New York World's Fair," accessed through <http://digitalarchives.queenslibrary.org/browse/philippine-pavilion-1964-1965-new-york-worlds-fair>; "1964 World's Fair in Photos," New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, accessed through <https://www.nycgovparks.org/highlights/fmcp-worlds-fairs/1964-photos>

<sup>131</sup> "Philippines," "1964/1965 New York World's Fair," accessed through <http://www.nywf64.com/philip01.shtml>; "Philippines," "1964-1965 New York World's Fair," worldfairphotos.com, accessed through <https://www.worldsfairphotos.com/nywf64/philippines.htm>;

<sup>132</sup> "USA: Philippines Pavilion at New York World's Fair 1964." British Pathe - Reuters Historical Collection. <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/VLVA3BN8QGLI9JQ5TXX2CJIU8TOME-USA-PHILIPPINES-PAVILION-AT-NEW-YORK-WORLDS-FAIR/query/Storeys>

designers have not been identified before, there may not have been efforts to systematically document their works. Other challenges are related to whether the private family collections are willing to donate/sell parts of their collections. Regarding digital collections, questions would include how potential sharing and collaboration with Cooper Hewitt can be institutionalized.

### **Priorities for Future Collecting and Action**

Based on this research, two sets of priorities are proposed for collecting. The priorities are based on strength of connection with Cooper-Hewitt's collecting agenda, significance of the designers to increasing diversity of designers, and access to collections.

*First priority:* Five Filipino designers in the post-1960s era. These designers are the most significant to the goal of diversifying the collection agenda of the Cooper-Hewitt as the Filipino designers represent a wide range of disciplines and fields, beyond architecture. The designers are still alive and therefore can be interviewed later and are more accessible for documentation purposes. Their collections are still privately held and therefore also offer more possibilities for acquisitions. Other sources of materials, such as their student work, can potentially be found in university archives, such as the Pratt Institute, Columbia University, Yale University, the California College of the Arts, Cranbrook Academy of Art and others.

*Second priority:* Architects of Philippine Pavilions in U.S. expositions. The materials related to the Philippine Pavilions are mostly held by public institutions in the U.S. that may be open to sharing of resources between public museums. The materials may be in the form of ephemera (such as photographs, postcards, photobooks, souvenir items), newspaper and magazine articles, committee and public reports, among others, as these exhibition buildings no

longer exist. The Bureau of International Expositions Library in Paris, France also holds one of the most extensive collections related to international expositions and world's fairs.

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## Illustrations

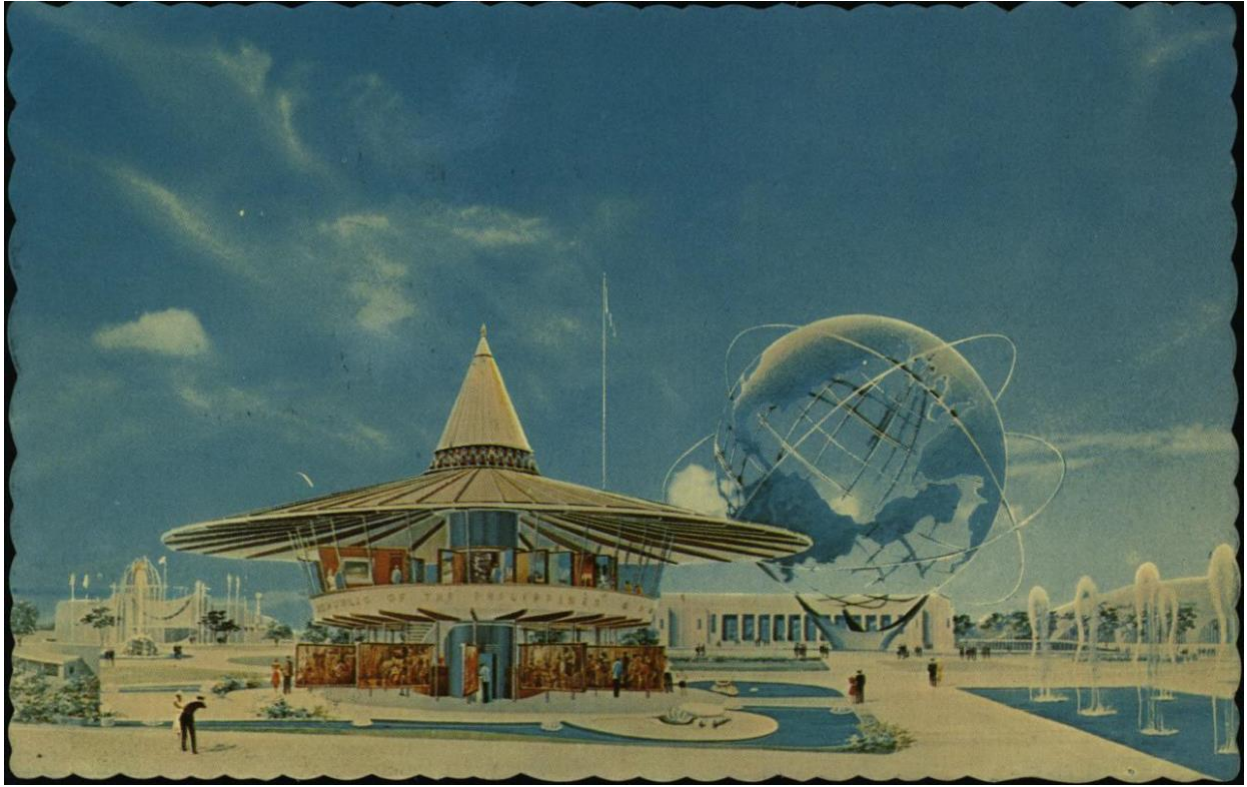


Figure 1: Otilio Arellano (1916-1981). *The Philippine Pavilion, New York World's Fair 1964-1965*. **Postcard.** [Avery Classics Collection](#), Seymour B. Durst Old York Library Collection, Box no. 49, Item no. 371.

**IDEAS COMPETITION**

# Open to all who have vision toward the future.

**San Francisco** is one of the world's most beautiful cities. It is a city known for its fine-grained buildings covering the hillsides, as well as grand urban-scaled planning elements which organize the city on a larger scale.

Yet, prominently visible to all who visit, the waterfront poorly represents San Francisco to the world in its current condition. With the decline of San Francisco as a major port, many of the old uses of the waterfront are gone, while new ones have yet to **emerge**. The recent demolition of the earthquake damaged Embarcadero Freeway, the elevated roadway which severed the city from its waterfront, has created an historic moment of opportunity to develop a **magnificent new waterfront edge**, reuniting the city with the bay. These factors call for **bold and comprehensive** planning.

Seeking to act as a **catalyst** for the ongoing public planning and development efforts, Center for Critical Architecture/2AES is sponsoring this architecture/urban design competition. It is a call for ideas that are at once visionary yet contain the seeds of implementation. The competition and subsequent exhibition are intended to generate **enthusiasm, creative and inspirational proposals, and an spirit of optimism and collaboration** that will carry San Francisco proudly into the next century.

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 Allen Chinoy  
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**THE CHALLENGE**

- 1 **Develop** a set of ideas which organize the waterfront zone—the Embarcadero Boulevard and adjacent land and pier properties.
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**January 30, 1993** Entry submissions due

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**FALL 1992**  
**VISION SAN FRANCISCO EMBARCADERO WATERFRONT COMPETITION**

Figure 2: Lucille Tenazas (American, born Philippines, 1953). *San Francisco Embarcadero Waterfront Competition, 1993*; poster, offset lithograph on white paper; 58.4 x 91.4 cm (23 x 36 in. ); Gift of Lucille Tenazas; 1995-171-3.