

Janm



JAPANESE AMERICAN
NATIONAL MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 5, 2023

CONTACT: mediarelations@janm.org
213.830.5690

About the Frank H. Watase Media Arts Center

LOS ANGELES, CA – A program of the Japanese American National Museum, **The Frank H. Watase Media Arts Center (MAC)** is an Emmy-award-winning production company that tells the stories of Japanese Americans, both historical and present day, and promotes thoughtful exploration of America's pluralistic society through an innovative program of media documentation and preservation, production, and presentation. The Watase Media Arts Center has been home to groundbreaking filmmakers including **Robert A. Nakamura, John Esaki, Justin Lin, Akira Boch**, and current MAC Director, **Tadashi Nakamura**, and continues to develop the next generation of community storytellers.

Films by MAC and affiliated filmmakers regularly appear on the festival circuit. Earlier this year, ***Benkyodo: The Last Manju Shop in J-town***, a short film by past and present MAC Directors Akira Boch and Tadashi Nakamura about the legendary San Francisco manju shop, premiered at CAAMFest, the world's largest showcase for new Asian American and Asian film, and was screened at the Austin Asian American Film Festival. It will have its Los Angeles premiere at JANM on September 10, 2023. MAC's short documentary ***Sincerely Miné Okubo*** screened at the Chicago Asian American Showcase and the Seattle Asian American Film Festival. Other notable recent productions include the feature documentary, ***Masters of Modern Design***, a co-production with KCET for the series ARTBOUND, for which MAC received an LA-area Emmy Award in 2020.

MAC is currently in production on a documentary film about the impact of the Santa Anita temporary detention center on **Nobuko Miyamoto**, the artist, performer, and activist. The film will offer—for the first time—a record of conditions at Santa Anita and, by telling the first-hand story of one extraordinary Japanese American woman and her family, will demonstrate the power that the wartime incarceration had to spark creativity and empathy in survivors' lives. The film will premiere in 2024.

MAC was founded in 1997 by renowned Asian American filmmakers Robert Nakamura and **Karen Ishizuka** (parents of its current director Tadashi Nakamura). Its long legacy of filmmaking includes ***Toyo Miyatake: Infinite Shades of Gray*** (2001), a MAC-produced film on the noted Issei photographer of the Manzanar incarceration camp which was screened at the Sundance Film Festival and nationally on PBS, and the 2004 film ***9066 to 9/11***, which draws parallels between the treatment of Japanese Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the

treatment of Arab Americans and Muslims after 9/11. *9066 to 9/11* is still used in universities and other forums to discuss discrimination against minority communities in the US.

Part of the Media Arts Center's work is recording video life history interviews with second and third generation Japanese Americans, in an effort to preserve the memories of those who experienced incarceration and its aftermath. The recordings are made available to family members and researchers.

A wide selection of MAC's video productions are available on the Watase Media Arts Center Productions playlist at youtube.com/@janmdotorg.

###

About the Japanese American National Museum (JANM)

Established in 1985, **JANM** promotes understanding and appreciation of America's ethnic and cultural diversity by sharing the Japanese American experience. Located in the historic Little Tokyo district of downtown Los Angeles, **JANM** is a center for civil rights, ensuring that the hard-fought lessons of the World War II incarceration are not forgotten. A Smithsonian Affiliate and one of America's Cultural Treasures, **JANM** is a hybrid institution that straddles traditional museum categories. **JANM** is a center for the arts as well as history. It provides a voice for Japanese Americans and a forum that enables all people to explore their own heritage and culture. Since opening to the public in 1992, **JANM** has presented over 100 exhibitions onsite while traveling 40 exhibits to venues such as the Smithsonian Institution and the Ellis Island Museum in the United States, and to several leading cultural museums in Japan and South America. **JANM** is open on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday–Sunday from 11 a.m.–5 p.m. and on Thursday from 12 p.m.–8 p.m. **JANM** is free every third Thursday of the month. On all other Thursdays, **JANM** is free from 5 p.m.–8 p.m. For more information, visit janm.org or follow us on social media @jamuseum.