



A Play about Japanese American Incarceration and the Afterlife of Historical Trauma

Sunday, February 23, 2020, at 4 p.m.
Joyce J. Camilleri Hall
University of Southern California

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Seamless is a play about the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, and its affect on subsequent generations. It addresses themes including intergenerational trauma, medical racism, and the “model minority” stereotype.
- Seamless was written by USC professor Dorinne Kondo and directed by adjunct lecturer Tim Dang.
- After the play, Kondo will engage in conversation with USC professor Beth Meyerowitz, an expert on PTSD and psychological adjustment among survivors of genocide.



Dorinne Kondo



Tim Dang



Beth Meyerowitz

SEAMLESS

Written by **Dorinne Kondo**

CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION TEAM

Directed by **Tim Dang**

Sound Design by **Jeanne Marie Valleroy**

Fight Choreography by **Andy Lowe**

Stage Manager **Risa Kurosaki**

Presented by USC Visions and Voices: The Arts and Humanities Initiative

Co-sponsored by the USC Shinso Ito Center for Japanese Religions and Culture, USC Shoah Foundation, Department of American Studies and Ethnicity, Department of Anthropology, and Asian Pacific American Student Services

CAST

Diane Kubota: **Jully Lee**

Benjamin Roth: **Demitri Bouzos**

Ken Kubota: **Thomas Winter**

Masako Kubota: **Sarah Hahm**

Kathleen Gogo/Grandma: **Olivia Cordell**

Stage Directions: **Kiana Taylor**

PLAYWRIGHT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Visions and Voices team, particularly Marie-Reine Velez and Daria Yudacufski, and to the creative team—our fearless leader Tim Dang, actors, designers, and production assistants—for helping to advance this play to its next phase. *Seamless* was developed at Moving Arts Theatre’s “Words that Speak” workshop and benefitted from readings at the New York Theatre Workshop and the Lark Play Development Center in New York. This is for Midori and Roy Kondo. Miss you, Mom and Dad.

BIOS

CREATIVE TEAM

Tim Dang is the recipient of the Society of Directors and Choreographers' Zelda Fichandler Award for transforming the regional theatre arts landscape through theatre. He is an LA County Arts Commissioner and is co-chair of the Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative (CEII) for the LA County Department of Arts and Culture. Dang has produced and directed over 100 plays and musicals at East West Players, L.A. Theatre Works, PanAsian Repertory, Perseverance Theatre, Celebration Theater, and Singapore Repertory Theatre. He recently directed *Vietgone* by Qui Nguyen for L.A. Theatre Works.

Dorinne Kondo is Professor of American Studies and Anthropology and former Director of Asian American Studies at the University of Southern California. Her latest book *Worldmaking: Race, Performance and the Work of Creativity* analyzes race and power in the theater industry and includes her play *Seamless*, about the emotional afterlife of Japanese American incarceration. Kondo served as dramaturg for three plays by Anna Deavere Smith, including *Twilight: Los Angeles*, about the 1992 uprisings. Her other books include *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace* and *About Face: Performing Race in Fashion and Theater*.

Beth E. Meyerowitz is a Professor of Psychology and Preventive Medicine at USC and a licensed Clinical Psychologist. Her research and teaching focus on the psychological well-being of individuals who face highly stressful situations, such as cancer and genocide. Her recent research has included investigation of post-traumatic stress and resilience among survivors of the 1994 Rwandan genocide against the Tutsi. She currently is investigating how memory workers and scholars who engage with testimony from genocide survivors experience the challenges and rewards of doing this work.

Andy Lowe founded San Diego's Asian American Repertory Theater, and directed, produced, and designed through 10 seasons and 40 productions as Artistic Director. He is currently the director of casting and production for East West Players. He continues to coach acting, direct plays, musicals, and immersive entertainment, including freelance R&D projects for Walt Disney Imagineering. Having trained in various martial arts, his fight choreography credits include 10 years of performance and choreography with Asian Story Theatre, various film and television credits, and most recently for *Man of God* earning him an Ovation Nomination for Fight Direction.

Risa Kurosaki has been an LA-based stage manager for nine years and is committed to working shows of diverse storytelling. Her credits include the world premiere of *Our So Called Loved Ones*, *Cannibal! The Musical*, *The Four Immigrants* musical concert, *Escape from Godot* and so many more Los Angeles-based productions.

Jeanne Marie Valleroy is very excited to be working on this project. She has been working as a stage manager for over 10 years and has been doing sound design/programming for the past few years. She has worked in many different theaters. She would like to thank Tim and Dorinne for the opportunity to sound design this reading.

CAST

Jully Lee is the artistic director of COLD TOFU, the nation's first and longest running Asian American improv troupe. This past year, Jully performed in *Aubergine*, *Hannah and the Dread Gazebo*, *Ladies*, and *Tales of Clamor*. Recent TV credits include *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*, *Veep*, *This Is Us*, *The Kominsky Method*, and *Henry Danger*. Jully also appears in feature film *The Illegal* which is currently making its rounds in film festivals. www.jullylee.com

Olivia Cordell is a classically trained actress and writer who has studied at Brown, USC, and the British American Drama Academy in London. Recent stage credits: *An Experiment with an Airpump*, *Written in Stone*, and *Women of Shakespeare*. Digital series: Crypt TV's *Miss Annity*, Totally TV's *The Super Pops*, and Snackable's *Cooking Challenge*. Her most recent writing project, *There's Something Wrong with Nora*, is a horror film currently in preproduction. More at oliviacordell.com/acting; follow @theprincessliv.

Demetri Bouzos is a third year student at SDA with a minor in Cinematic Arts. Bouzos grew up in a big fat Greek family on an alpaca farm in the Bay Area, but is now enjoying the Los Angeles lifestyle. Between his onstage and on-camera acting projects, Bouzos finds time to spend on his hobbies, which mostly consists of watching the Philadelphia Eagles. After graduation, he hopes to act and write professionally in Los Angeles.

Thomas Winter is an undergraduate student at USC pursuing dual degrees in Theater and Economics. At USC, he has recently appeared in SDA productions of *The Cider House Rules* and *Queen Margaret*, and an independent student production of *The Last Five Years*. Winter's grandfather and great-grandfather were incarcerated in internment camps during WWII.

Sarah Yejin Hahm is a director and actor based in Seoul, Los Angeles, and New York. Her multi-cultural background and experience as a classical musician influences much of her experimental art. Recent theatre directing credits include: *Doubles* (Skylight Theatre), *Spring Awakening* (USC), and *Tongues & Savage/Love* (USC). She was most recently seen in *Kentucky* directed by Tim Dang and *Last Night in Town* at Manhattan Repertory Theatre. She is a graduate of the University of Southern California, BA Theatre.

Kiana Taylor is a proud Asian American actress who has appeared in several film and theatre productions. Her most recent credits include *She Kills Monsters*, *Little Women*, and upcoming film *Max and Me*. A graduate from the California School of the Arts High School SGV, she is continuing her training in theatre at USC. Her mission is to continue breaking down race, gender, and sexuality barriers in the entertainment industry through advocacy and empowerment. kianamiataylor@gmail.com.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1850s The first wave of Asian migration to the United States, as Chinese people come to work in the gold mines and on railroads.

1870 The 1870 Naturalization Act puts controls on immigration to the U.S. and excludes Asians from receiving citizenship.

1882 Amid anti-Chinese sentiment, the Chinese Exclusion Act effectively bans immigration from China. There is an increase in Japanese immigration to replace Chinese laborers.

1905 In San Francisco, 67 labor unions form a Japanese and Korean Exclusion League. It is renamed the Asian Exclusion League in 1907 to also target Indian immigrants.

1907–08 The United States enters a “Gentleman’s Agreement” with Japan to slow the flow of Japanese immigration to the United States.

1924 The Immigration Act of 1924 creates national quotas for immigration. All immigrants from Asia are excluded.

1939 Hitler annexes Czechoslovakia and invades Poland; France and Great Britain, then Canada, declare war against Germany. Japan, at war with China, declares itself neutral in the European war. The United States, taking an isolationist stance, also declares itself neutral.

1940 Germany invades Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, and France. Italy joins the war as an ally of Germany. Great Britain, France, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India, and South Africa declare war on Italy. Germany, Italy, and Japan sign a pact to create a new order in Europe and Asia. Italy invades Greece.

1941 Germany invades the Soviet Union.

DECEMBER 7, 1941 Japan attacks Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

DECEMBER 8, 1941 The United States declares war on Japan. Germany and Italy declare war on the United States.

FEBRUARY 19, 1942 U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, which authorizes the removal of anyone from military areas as deemed “necessary or desirable” by military commanders.

1942 The U.S. military defines much of the U.S. West Coast as a military area. Over the next few months, more than 110,000 Japanese Americans are relocated to internment camps created by the U.S. military. They live in camps for two and a half years.

DECEMBER 17, 1944 U.S. Public Proclamation No. 21 declares that, effective January 2, 1945, Japanese American “evacuees” can leave the camps.

1988 U.S. President Ronald Reagan signs the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, giving each survivor of the Japanese American internment \$20,000 and an apology.

TERMS

Civilian Exclusion Orders: A series of directives issued by General John L. DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command of the U.S. military, from late March to August 1942. The orders directed the exclusion of “all persons of Japanese ancestry, including aliens and non-aliens” from designated areas on the West Coast (where most Japanese Americans lived). The orders were posted and published in newspapers with the large headline, “Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry.”

Executive Order 9066: An executive order issued by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942. It granted the U.S. military the power to exclude “any and all persons” from military areas. The order did not mention any specific ethnic or social group, but it was quickly applied to the Japanese American population on the West Coast.

War Relocation Authority: A U.S. government agency established in 1942 to “Take all people of Japanese descent into custody, surround them with troops, prevent them from buying land, and return them to their former homes at the close of the war.”

Xenophobia: Fear and hatred of strangers, or of anyone or anything that is foreign.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- What does the play’s title, *Seamless*, refer to?
- Are there elders in your family who experienced a traumatic historic event? How did it shape who they are today? Have you been able to talk with them about it?
- Have you been affected by things that happened to people in your family before you were born? How so?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- Japanese American Cultural and Community Center www.jacc.org
- Japanese American National Museum | www.janm.org
- Artists at Play | artistsatplayla.blogspot.com
- Manzanar National Historic Site | www.nps.gov/manz



PTSD

Post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, is a disorder that develops after someone has experienced or witnessed a shocking, scary, or dangerous event. This might be the experience of war, rape, incarceration, the sudden and unexpected death of a loved one, or any other traumatic experience. Almost everyone has some reaction to trauma. Some recover from those initial reactions within weeks or months; others experience symptoms over longer periods, and this is diagnosed as PTSD. PTSD symptoms include flashbacks, avoidance of thoughts or feelings about the traumatic event, being easily startled, and having angry outbursts. An estimated 1 in 11 people will experience PTSD in their lifetime. It can happen to anyone, at any age. Women are twice as likely as men to have PTSD.

THE “MODEL MINORITY” MYTH

The “model minority” myth is based on stereotypes of Asian Americans as being especially high achieving. It is used to pit Asian Americans against other minority ethnic groups in the U.S., sometimes as part of an argument that there is no need for systemic change to address racism, ethnic bias, and racial inequities. “Like all stereotypes, the model minority myth erases differences among individuals,” writes Sarah-Soonling Blackburn on the website *Teaching Tolerance*. Blackburn goes on to explain the multiple problems with the “model minority” myth: It hides the diversity among Asian cultures, pits different groups of people of color and immigrant communities against each other, frames Asian Americans as perpetual outsiders in U.S. culture, and, for many people, creates a harmful pressure to fit into the stereotype.

INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

An emerging line of research is looking at how the experience of trauma is passed along from one generation to the next. This can include collective traumas like living through a war or trauma at the household or family level like cycles of domestic violence. The group that has been most studied so far is Ashkenazi Jews, as researchers have looked at the effects of elders’ experiences of the Holocaust on younger generations. The field is still new, and research is just beginning to be published about intergenerational trauma in other groups—from the children of war veterans to the effects of generations of experience of racism.

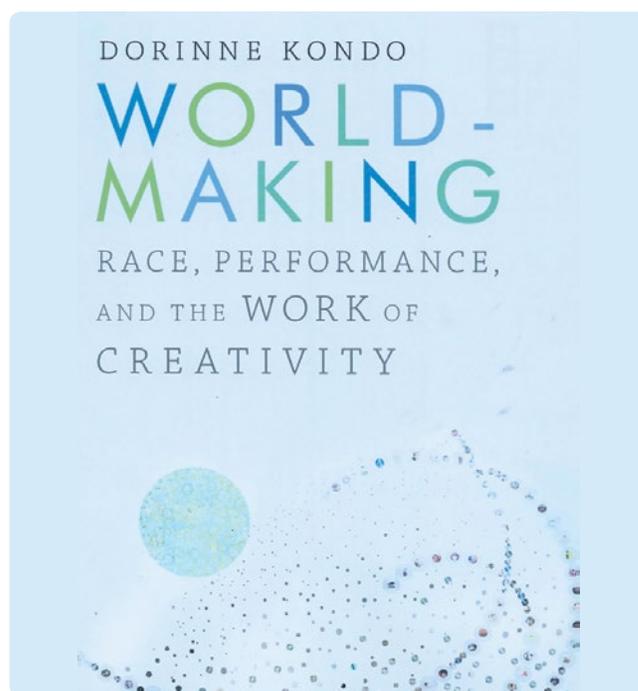
“Survey information found former internees had a 2.1 greater risk of cardiovascular disease, cardiovascular mortality, and premature death than did a non-interned counterpart. California Nisei-age individuals, the proxy for internment, died 1.6 years earlier than Hawaiians who represented non-interned status. I concluded traumatic stress has lifelong consequences even in the presence of efficacious coping strategies.”—Gwendolyn M. Jensen, “The Experience of Injustice: Health Consequences of the Japanese American Internment”

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

ALVARO QUEZADA of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this evening’s event. Those with a call number (e.g., books) are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g. e-books, journals, and databases) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Kondo, Dorinne. *Worldmaking: Race, Performance and the Work of Creativity*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2018.
E-BOOK
- Kondo, Dorrine. *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2009.
E-BOOK



- ◉ Jasmine, Alinder. *Moving Images: Photography and the Japanese American Incarceration*. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009.

ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: D769.8 A6 A64 2009

- ◉ Chow, Rey. *Entanglements, or Transmedial Thinking about Capture*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 2012.

DOHENY MEMORIAL LIBRARY: GN357 C446 2012

RECOMMENDED JOURNAL ARTICLES

- ◉ Akamatsu, Norma. "As a Japanese American . . ." *Family Process* 41, no. 1 (May 2004): 9–11.
- ◉ Dundes Renteln, Alison. "A Psychohistorical Analysis of the Japanese American Internment." *Human Rights Quarterly* 17, no. 4 (November 1995): 618–48.
- ◉ Nagata, Donna K., Jackie H. J. Kim, Teresa U. Nguyen. "Processing Cultural Trauma: Intergenerational Effects of the Japanese American Incarceration." *Journal of Social Issues* 71, no.2 (June 2015): 356–70.
- ◉ Nagata, Donna K. "Long-term Effects of Internment During Early Childhood on Third-generation Japanese Americans." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 69, no.1 (January 1999): 19–29.
- ◉ Ng, Lauren C., Naphtal Ahishakiye, Donald E. Miller, Beth Meyerowitz. "Narrative Characteristics of Genocide Testimonies Predict Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms Years Later." *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* 7, no.3, (May 2015): 303–11.

Recommended Databases

- ◉ PsycARTICLES
Includes full-text articles from journals published by the American Psychological Association, the APA Educational Publishing Foundation, the Canadian Psychological Association, and Hogrefe & Huber.
- ◉ SAGE eReference
Features a full-text collection of more than eighty online specialized encyclopedias in the social sciences, including communications, gender studies, social work, history, and psychology.
- ◉ Social Sciences Citation Index
A multidisciplinary database with searchable author abstracts, covering 1,700 journals spanning 50 disciplines, as well as individually selected items from more than 3,300 of the world's leading scientific and technical journals.
- ◉ America: History & Life with Full Text
A definitive index to articles and other literature (books, dissertations, book reviews) covering the history and culture of the United States and Canada, from the fifteenth century to the present. Indexes nearly 1,800 journals from the 1860s to the present, state and local history publications, and selected articles from scholarly journals in the social sciences and humanities.

