



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Roger Shimomura: Minidoka on my Mind October 2 - December 31, 2009

MAM Members and Donors Reception with Roger Shimomura,
October 1, 5 PM

Distinguished Artists Lecture: Roger Shimomura, October 1, 7 PM

Artist Reception and Gallery Talk, October 2, 5-8 PM

Artini: Minidoka on my Mind featuring pianist Lydia Brown,
October 15, 5:30-9 PM

Cats of Mirikatani: Film, November 1 & 8, 1-2 PM

Missoula, MT / August 13, 2009 / Missoula Art Museum (MAM)/Roger Shimomura's paintings and prints, including this series, Minidoka on My Mind, address social and political issues of Asian America, and have most often been inspired by diaries kept by his late immigrant grandmother that span the 56 years of her life. Minidoka on My Mind is the fourth major painting series generated by Shimomura based on the World War II internment experience. Shimomura states,

"It is the culmination of years of my perusing images culled from books, magazines, government publications, personal recollections, and the internet. The result of this search has been a visual distillation of tar paper barracks, barbed wire, and desolate landscapes, which are inhabited by muted occupants standing in line to eat and to clean, quietly interacting, contemplating their fate...and to wait."

In Minidoka on My Mind, Shimomura challenges our notions of history and uses images rooted in popular culture to thrust us headlong into the racial conflicts of World War II, a time that witnessed the unjust imprisonment of

approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans. In this body of work, Shimomura presents us with richly designed and seamlessly executed paintings that convey the emotions associated with the internment experience; emotions associated with innocent imprisonment within a country unwilling to address institutional racism. What also comes through is the resilience of the human spirit and a recommitment to never forget internment camps such as Minidoka so they never happen again.

The name Minidoka is of Dakota Sioux origin meaning "a fountain or spring of water." Minidoka was first used in 1883 as a name for a Union Pacific, Oregon Short Line spur in the middle of the Snake River Plain which later became the site of a watering station. However, The Minidoka National Historic Site is in Jerome County, Idaho, northeast of Twin Falls and just north of Eden, in an area known as Hunt. Under provisions of President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, all persons of Japanese ancestry were ousted from the West Coast of the United States. Minidoka housed more than 9,000 Japanese Americans, predominantly from Oregon, Washington and Alaska. The remote high desert site was selected for the Minidoka War Relocation Center lasting from 1942-45, and is one of ten camps at which Japanese Americans, both citizens and resident aliens, were interned during World War II. Notably, 60% of the Japanese imprisoned were American citizens. Fort Missoula, just outside the town of Missoula, MT also served as a site for a War Relocation Center under this executive provision.

Through *Minidoka on My Mind*, we can reach for and gain insight into our past, and by sharing and revisiting these stories, we garner a more accurate version of our history. Ominously, Shimomura writes, "I offer this exhibition as a metaphor for the threat posed by current times, and as a warning and reminder that during international crises our government seems to consistently lose its memory regarding past mistakes."

Shimomura was raised in Seattle, earned his B.A. from the University of Washington in Seattle, and his M.F.A. from Syracuse University in New York. He taught at the School of Fine Arts at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, KS in 1969, and has recently retired. He has had over 125 solo exhibitions nationally.

This exhibition will be the educational foundation for the Fifth Grade Art Experience, co-sponsored with a grant from the Art Associates of Missoula. Additional funding comes from the Wide World of Travel and the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula. MAMbers Reception sponsored by NewWest.net.

Contact: For more information please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406-728-0447, visit the MAM website at www.missoulaartmuseum.org or contact Stephen Glueckert, Exhibitions Curator, stevegl@missoulaartmuseum.org, 406.728.0447 x226

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About MAM: FREE EXPRESSION / FREE ADMISSION. MAM educates, challenges and inspires the community through contemporary art. MAM preserves our emerging cultural heritage through the development and conservation of its art collection. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Gallery Hours: Wednesday - Friday 12-6 PM, Saturday-Sunday 10AM-3PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.

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