Bibliography for Painting Seattle: Kamekichi Tokita and Kenjiro Nomura

Prepared by Audrey Chen, Intern and Jie Pan, Associate Librarian of McCaw Foundation Library


Barbara Jones, curator of the current exhibition, examines Tokita’s art and life, particularly as they were revealed through his wartime diary.


This book looks at works of art created during the watershed period in American history that is the Great Depression. The creative output of artists across the nation was not dampened by contemporary hardships and deprivations; on the contrary, the massive social and economic turbulence moved them to create singular works of art that eloquently chronicle the spirit of the times.


This catalogue attempts a visual survey of over a hundred reproductions of some the most illustrative American realist works. The subcategories of this genre came to include American Scene paintings, a style we see reflected in the works of Tokita and Nomura.


The American Scene movement lasted only a decade, but it was a one that saw tumultuous changes in the American landscape. Baigell’s book looks at the movement as articulated in the works of compelling artists of the time such as Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton.


In his insightful analysis on the art of the two nations during the immediate post-war years, Bert Winther-Tamaki investigates the collision of art, nationalism and politics in the realm of visual culture.
Art of the Pacific Northwest: From the 1930s to the Present. National Collection of Fine Arts (U.S.)
Washington: Published for the National Collection of Fine Arts by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974. N 6528 W3 N2

The regional characteristics and sensibilities of Pacific Northwestern art from the 30s to the 70s are surveyed in this exhibition catalogue, which focuses particular attention on Seattle and Portland.


Martha Kingsbury’s essay chronicles the historical and social conditions of the region in the 1930s, an overview that provides an accessible and contextualized look at the art of the time.


Taking a multi-disciplinary approach, the editors have produced an exceedingly comprehensive resource on Asian American artists, their works and the historical developments that should be useful for both art historians and interested amateurs alike.


This concise survey of the Japanese American community in Seattle spans over a hundred years, richly illustrated with photographs and first-person narratives.


This book accompanies the eponymous exhibit at the Wing Luke Asian Musuem, which frames the history of Japanese Americans in Seattle through their experiences before and after their internment during World War II.


This book provides a fascinating visual journey through Henry Sugimoto’s life as an issei Japanese American artist, who, like Tokita and Nomura, was incarcerated at the internment camps during WWI.


This brief, but important, catalogue was published on the occasion of the first public exhibition to showcase the (then) newly discovered works made by Nomura at the Minidoka internment camp in Idaho. The paintings and drawings are not merely documentary; indeed, Nomura’s depictions of life within the camp are imbued with a painter’s eye for detail and a masterful grasp of forms and colors. His paintings of this period invite us to question the uneasy relationship
that exists within the realms of history, ethnicity and art. More specifically, they raise the issue of whether one can speak to the existence of a "Japanese American aesthetic."


In the 1970s, Roger Shimomura, who was an internee at Minidoka, made an eponymous series of six large canvases that took the "camp experience" as its main theme. The works combined the aesthetics of 19th century Japanese woodblock prints with the Pop Art styles of the 1960s, as shown in Figure 1 (above, right).


This catalogue investigates anew the four artists widely regarded as the leaders of the "Northwest School". Through a close examination of their interactions and achievements, curators Conkelton and Landau demonstrate the diversity and range of stylistic influences that informed the work of the four artists.


A visual survey of how artists have captured the distinctive light, sights and sounds of the Pacific Northwest; an essay by Jonathon Raban provides the chronological and social context through which to view the diversity of approaches and styles.


Like Tokita and Nomura, Horiuchi became one of the foremost Japanese American artists in the Pacific Northwest. A catalogue for the retrospective exhibition of Horiuchi’s work held at the Yamanashi Prefectural Museum of Art in 2003. The scope of the selected works selected is diverse, ranging from the earliest to his late works; among other things, they invite us to consider the manner in which his art melds the sensibilities of both his adopted and native lands.


This compelling exhibition catalogue looks at Horiuchi’s life through a thorough examination of his life and art. In particular, author Barbara Johns (curator of the eponymous exhibition as well as SAAM’s current Painting Seattle) provides a fascinating discussion of his post-war works. During this time, he began his works in collage, many of which blend influences from his memories of Wyoming, his life in post-war Seattle, and his visits to Japan.

Mark Tobey, one of the luminaries of the Seattle art scene both before and after the Second World War, developed his distinctive style through the inspiration he gleaned from his life and travels in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.


Amongst other things, William Cumming’s memoir details the birth of the Northwest School and how their art was shaped by the social, political and economic realities of the 30s.

**Some work of the Group of Twelve, Seattle, Washington.** Group of Twelve (Group of Artists). Seattle, WA: [Printed by Frank McCaffrey at his Dogwood Press, 1937. ND 235 S4

The Group of Twelve artists are introduced with a short paragraph in each artist’s own voice.


This slim volume examines the works of pioneer Asian American artists and considers “their collective influences and their rich individual visions”.

**Turning Shadows into Light: Art and Culture of the Northwest’s Early Asian/Pacific Community.** Tsutakawa, Mayumi. Seattle: Young Pine Press, 1982. F 899 S4 T8

This collection of writing, artwork, photographs and literature brings to life the richly textured cultural and artistic life of Asian Americans in the Northwest at the turn of the century.


This is an exhibition catalogue of the paintings, drawings, sculptures and prints made by Japanese American artists at the internment camps from 1942 to 1945. As explained by curator Karin M. Higa, the works do not merely record the experiences of the internees but also allow us to see how those experiences were “filtered through creativity”.