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October 2025

PAFA Showcases Groundbreaking Exhibition on Japanese American Women in Art

Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi, and Miné Okubo

On view October 10, 2025 – January 4, 2026

Philadelphia, PA — The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) presents *Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi, and Miné Okubo*, a groundbreaking exhibition that, for the first time, brings together the work of three pioneering Japanese American artists whose lives and careers redefined what it means to belong in America.

Featuring more than eighty paintings and drawings spanning eight decades, *Pictures of Belonging* offers a powerful lens into the American experience through the art and stories of **Miki Hayakawa (1899–1953)**, **Hisako Hibi (1907–1991)**, and **Miné Okubo (1912–2001)**—artists who persevered through exclusion, war, and displacement while shaping the visual culture of their time.

Curated by **Dr. ShiPu Wang**, the Coats Family Chair in the Arts and Professor of Art History at the University of California, Merced, commissioner of the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, and organized by the **Japanese American National Museum (JANM)** in Los Angeles, *Pictures of Belonging* is traveling to four venues across the United States before its final presentation at JANM in late 2026.

By bringing the exhibition to regions closely tied to the artists' histories—such as **Utah**, where Hibi and Okubo were incarcerated during World War II, and **California**, where all three exhibited before the war—*Pictures of Belonging* leverages the power of place to inspire dialogue, connection, and local engagement through tailored public programming.

“This exhibition invites viewers to rediscover three extraordinary artists and reflect on who has defined American art—and who has been left out,” says Dr. Wang.

About the Artists

Miki Hayakawa (1899–1953)

An Issei artist who emigrated from Nemuro, Hokkaido to California, Miki Hayakawa defied convention by pursuing art professionally. A graduate of the California School of Arts and Crafts and the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute), Hayakawa exhibited widely in California and at the 1939–40 Golden Gate International Exposition. After the issuance of Executive Order 9066, she relocated to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she continued to paint and became a beloved member of the local art community.

Hisako Hibi (1907–1991)

Born in Fukui Prefecture, Japan, Hisako Hibi studied at the California School of Fine Arts, where she met Miki Hayakawa and her future husband, artist Matsusaburo George Hibi. Her work was featured in the Golden Gate International Exposition alongside Hayakawa and Okubo. Incarcerated during World War II at Tanforan and Topaz, Hibi documented daily life through her art and taught painting to fellow incarcerated. After the war, she lived and worked in New York and San Francisco, maintaining a lifelong artistic practice that earned her numerous honors, including a U.S. Congressional tribute and recognition by the City of San Francisco.

Miné Okubo (1912–2001)

Born in Riverside, California, Miné Okubo is best known for her landmark graphic memoir *Citizen 13660* (1946), the first published account of the Japanese American incarceration experience. A UC Berkeley graduate, Okubo exhibited widely before the war and taught art at Tanforan and Topaz during her incarceration. After moving to New York, she built a successful career as an illustrator, contributing to *Time*, *Life*, and *The New York Times*. In 1983, she testified before the U.S. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, and in 1991 received the College Art Association's Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award.

Exhibition Support

Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi, and Miné Okubo is generously supported at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts by the William Penn Foundation, JA Community Foundation, and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation; and the support from the Terra Foundation for American Art and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Exhibition Details

On View: October 10, 2025 – January 4, 2026

Location: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA)
128 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102

Museum Hours:

Thursday–Friday, 10:00 AM–4:00 PM

Saturday–Sunday, 11:00 AM–5:00 PM

Visitor Information and Tickets: www.pafa.org/museum/visit

About PAFA

Founded in 1805, the **Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA)** is America's first art museum and school. A world-renowned institution, PAFA fosters the study of American art and the training of artists while maintaining a diverse collection of paintings, sculpture, and works on paper from the 18th century to today. PAFA's museum and school together provide an environment for learning, critical inquiry, and artistic innovation.

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