



AN ARCHITECTURAL IMAGINARY OF IDENTITY AND EXCLUSION:
Drawing Out the Legacies of Japanese American Designers After WWII Incarceration

An Architectural Imaginary of Identity and Exclusion incorporates the research, public discourse, exhibitions, and pedagogical initiatives that investigate the legacies of the Japanese American designers, architects, and artists impacted by the Japanese American Incarceration in WWII. The research launched with *Beauty in Enormous Bleakness: The Interned Generation of Japanese American Designers*, a Divided Cities, Mellon-funded collaborative project between architectural designer Kelley Van Dyck Murphy, cultural historian Heidi Aronson Kolk, and architectural historian Lynnette Widder. The project seeks to document the lives and works of Japanese American designers who survived internment, focusing on their vital contributions to the post-war cultural landscape while also acknowledging their lived experiences, including the pressures of assimilation and encounters with bigotry in their professions and adopted homes.

An exhibition, developed from the foundational research project and curated by Murphy and Kolk, placed personal artifacts, archival documents, and storytelling in conversation with architectural sites – evoking concepts of dislocation, erasure, and identity. Along with her research assistant Makio Yamamoto, Murphy created the sixty-foot background collage, building upon her interests in how we use the disciplinary tools of architecture to reveal hidden histories or construct new narratives. The symposium, *Moonscape of the Mind: Japanese American Design after Internment* emerged from the *Beauty in Enormous Bleakness* research project and exhibition, and expanded the scope of the project to encompass a broader range of artists and designers.



This cross-disciplinary symposium brought together scholars from a range of humanities and art/design fields to explore the legacies of the Japanese American WWII Incarceration through an exploration of the connection between material objects and their creators' lived experiences. Scheduled to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the internment period, the conference advanced the work of compiling an edited volume of artifact-focused essays on this subject.

Concurrent to the symposium and exhibition, Murphy began teaching an ongoing series of case-study courses about the work and lives of post-war Japanese American designers. The first course, *Matsumoto Modern*, tasked students with archival research, architectural models, analytical drawings, and narratives on architect George Matsumoto's modern homes while reconciling post-war American domesticity with the experiences of Japanese Americans at Mid-century. The second course in the series, *Of Measurement, of Place, of Situation: The Noguchi Ceiling in St. Louis* explored Isamu Noguchi's lunar landscapes inspired by his incarceration in Poston, specifically his design for the American Stove Company's ceiling in St. Louis.

As a designer and educator, Murphy is dedicated to advancing the conversations around diversity and cultural heritage in architecture and design. While the research projects and pedagogical work aspire to support a more diverse and inclusive architectural history, they also underscore the significance of how race, heritage, and context – cultural, historical, and material - impact the architectural landscape.

Nominee role: Project lead

Kelley Van Dyck Murphy, Assistant Professor of Architecture, Washington University in St. Louis

Beauty in Enormous Bleakness and *Moonscape of the Mind* project co-leads/collaborators:

Heidi Aronson Kolk, Assistant Professor of Art, Washington University in St. Louis

Lynnette Widder, Associate Professor of Professional Practice, Columbia University

Research Assistants:

Gabi Senno, Danielle Ridolphi, Makio Yamamoto, Antonia Aguilar Rosenthal

Collaborators & Funding Sources Expenses:

420 hours of research assistant work, exhibition and symposium printing costs, symposium contributors honorariums and lodging, postage fees for exhibition materials

Student Compensation:

4 students worked as paid research assistants for a total of 420 hours

15 students from the FA22 *Matsumoto Modern* and SP23 *Of Measurement, of Place, of Situation* case study seminars contributed to this project for a 3-credit seminar course.

Supported by:

A Faculty Collaborative Grant from The Divided City: An Urban Humanities Initiative (Mellon Foundation + The Center for the Humanities), HOK, the Sam Fox School for Design & Visual Arts, the College of Architecture, the College of Art, Olin Library (Department of Special Collections), and the American Culture Studies Program, all at Washington University.

BEAUTY IN ENORMOUS BLEAKNESS:

The Interned Generation of Japanese American Designers

Project Description

The Divided City-funded collaborative research project “Beauty in Enormous Bleakness” explores architecture’s relationship to issues of immigration, exclusion, and cultural identity in 20th-century American life, focusing on the design legacies of the mass-incarceration of individuals of Japanese descent during WWII. Through various means—oral histories, site-based research, an exhibition, a podcast series, a symposium, and a publication—the project seeks to document the lives and works of Japanese American designers who survived internment, focusing on their vital contributions to the post-war cultural landscape.

More broadly, the project seeks to document and preserve the histories and experiences of some especially creative members of the interned generation of Japanese Americans, and in so doing, to expand the public imagination for the cultural legacies and inheritances—positive and negative—of the war. Given the ongoing efforts to “decolonize” design, and more broadly, to reckon with racial violence and white supremacy, this project writes an urgently needed new chapter in design and architectural history that acknowledges the signal contributions of Japanese Americans to post-war culture and cultural life – indeed, to the very fabric of American cities.

BACKGROUND

Executive Order 9066

On February 19, 1942, two months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on the grounds of national security. The order effectively authorized the removal of any or all people from military areas “as deemed necessary or desirable.”¹ Over 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent were forced to leave their homes, taking only what they could carry, and relocated and incarcerated in one of ten concentration camps located throughout the United States. More than two-thirds—80,000—of those interned were American born citizens. These Americans were required to leave their homes and businesses, many of them being sold for a fraction of their worth. During this period, Japanese Americans were incarcerated for up to four years, without due process, and housed in tar paper barracks surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards.

As stated by the 1980 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, “...these actions were carried out without adequate security reasons and without any acts of espionage or sabotage documented by the Commission, and were motivated largely by racial prejudice, wartime hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.”²

Washington University in St. Louis

Under the sponsorship of the American Friends Service Committee, The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council worked to resettle Japanese American students in colleges and universities away from the west coast exclusion zones. More than 4,000 students were able to pursue higher education in schools located in the Midwest and East Coast. Among those colleges and universities was Washington University in St. Louis. Thirty students of Japanese descent were accepted between 1941-1942. Remarkably, Washington University was the only school of architecture that allowed the enrollment of Japanese American students during the internment. These architecture students including Gyo Obata, Richard Henmi, George Matsumoto, and Fred Toguchi would go on to make significant contributions to the post-war architectural landscape in the United States.

The first stage of the project focuses on the work of these four architects who relocated from West coast exclusion zones to study at Washington University in St. Louis, and had long and successful careers in locations far from their points of origin. (Two of the four settled permanently in St. Louis, anchored influential firms, and are responsible for much of the most-recognizable and -esteemed mid-to-late-20th-century architecture in the region, including residential and commercial buildings, and large-scale industrial design and landscape architecture projects.)

Our investigation gives special attention to

- the effects of detention on the artistic and personal lives of these four;
- the long-term significance of being educated in segregated cities with their own long histories of racial tensions;
- the pressures of assimilation—both during the war, in the Armed Forces, and after the war, in the communities where they built their careers; and
- the impact of their Japanese American political and cultural advocacy, including their involvement in the Japanese American Citizens League, and redress efforts starting in the 1980s.

¹ Executive Order 9066, February 19, 1942; General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives.

² Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* (Seattle: University of Washington Press and Washington D.C.: Civil Liberties Public Education Fund, 1997), 459.

The Beauty in Enormous Bleakness research project encompasses several distinct but mutually-informing activities:

- **Historical and ethnographic research**, including by means of oral histories
- **Analysis of the four architects' careers and activities**, with attention to impactful projects and their cultural meanings, past and present.
- **Collection of artifacts and stories** associated with the lives and achievements of the interned generation of Japanese Americans, and especially this cadre of WUSTL students.
- **Development of a website** which presents the designers' stories as well as information about the symposium, exhibition, and research project.
- **Production of a podcast series** focusing on sites associated with these figures. The series begins in St. Louis, with sites that loom large in their own and/or the public imagination: the Priory Chapel and Lambert International Airport buildings; the Japanese Garden at the Missouri Botanical Gardens; the “flying saucer” Council Plaza building on Grand Blvd.; and WUSTL's Steinberg Hall, designed by Fumihiko Maki of the College of Architecture.
- **Presentation of research at regional and national conferences**, including the Annual Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians Conference in Memphis, Tennessee where we presented “The Hidden Histories of Internment: Uncovering the Legacies of Japanese-American Designers at Mid-Century,” a paper that describes the driving questions and interpretative strategies pursued for Beauty in Enormous Bleakness (November 2-5, 2022).
- **Design and installation of a physical exhibition** of artifacts associated with Gyo Obata, Richard Henmi, George Matsumoto, and Fred Toguchi and their careers—material objects, drawings, photographs, oral histories, etc. (Thomas Gallery, Olin Library January 17-July 9, 2023) **and an accompanying pamphlet and catalog essay** (published in both digital/print versions) documenting the contents of this exhibition, and arguments about their broader significance.
- **A Spring 2023 Symposium** which coincided with the 80th anniversary of the students arrival to WashU, and earliest experiences in their adopted communities (April 2023).
- **An edited volume**—a collection of scholarly object-focused chapters written by attendees of the SP23 Symposium with reflective contributions from descendants.

BEAUTY IN ENORMOUS BLEAKNESS:
The Design Legacies of the Interned Generation of Japanese Americans

Exhibition in Thomas Gallery
Olin Library, Washington University in St. Louis
January 2023-July 2023

Exhibition Description:

The Beauty in Enormous Bleakness: The Design Legacy of the Interned Generation of Japanese Americans explores architecture's relationship to issues of immigration, exclusion, and cultural identity in 20th-century America. The exhibition does this through a multi-layered investigation of the lives of Japanese-American designers who survived WWII internment and made vital contributions to the post-war architecture and design landscape of the United States.

Among these designers were four architects: Gyo Obata, Richard Henmi, George Matsumoto, and Fred Toguchi. These designers relocated from West coast exclusion zones to study at Washington University in St. Louis, the only school of architecture to allow students of Japanese heritage to enroll. The project seeks to document and preserve the histories and experiences of some incredibly creative members of the interned generation of Japanese Americans and, in so doing, to expand the public imagination of the cultural legacies and inheritances—positive and negative—of the war.

Given the ongoing efforts to “decolonize” design and reckon with racial violence and white supremacy, this project writes an urgently needed new chapter in design and architectural history that acknowledges the signal contributions of Japanese Americans to post-war culture and cultural life.

The exhibition was organized by Kelley Van Dyck Murphy and Heidi Aronson Kolk in collaboration with Lynnette Widder. Special thanks to Makio Yamamoto, Gabi Senno, and Rod Henmi.

Designing the Exhibition

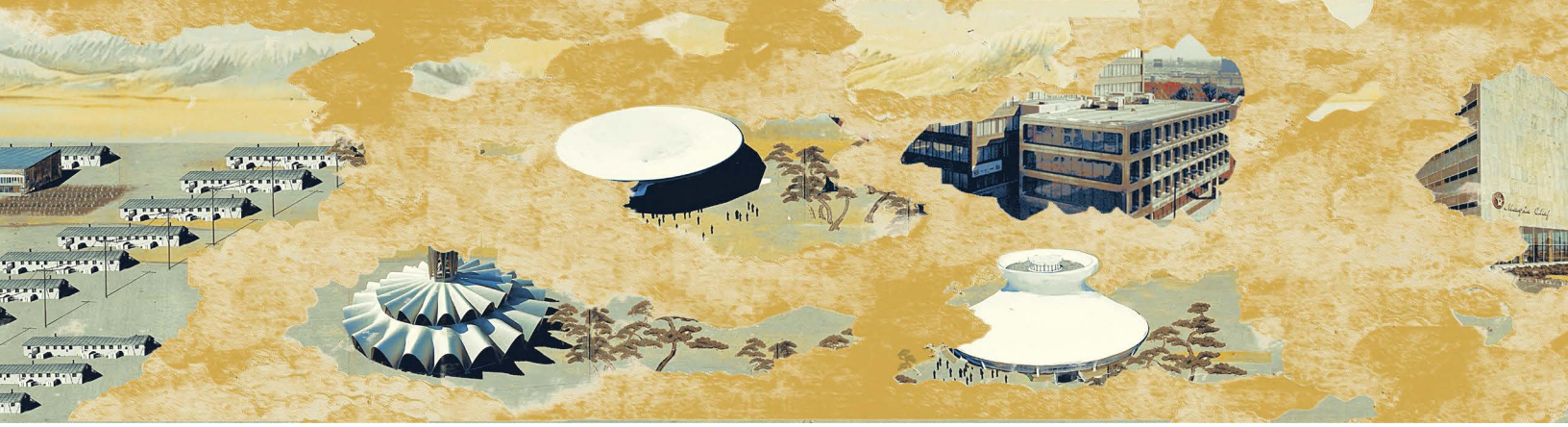
In the exhibition, a variety of physical objects—photographs, drawings, architectural models and other 3-D artifacts, as well as snippets of oral histories and personal correspondence—provide layers of visual information. These items correspond to the locations found on the exhibition's background collage, but also in the lives, experiences, and the memories of the designers in question.

The collaged image that serves as the backdrop to the exhibition is a kind of imaginary landscape that represents both eastern and western artistic traditions, and draws upon a diverse array of visual sources. The configuration and visual logic of the landscape is inspired by paintings in Ukiyo-e tradition—in particular, *Scenes in and Around the Capital* (17th or 18th century), a pair of six-panel folding screens depicting many of the most prominent sites in Kyoto. The drawing also engages a tradition of panoramic mapping popular in the late nineteenth century—St. Louis's most-famous being Compton and Dry's *Pictorial St. Louis, the great metropolis of the Mississippi valley; a topographical survey drawn in perspective A.D. 1875* (1876). The color palette chosen—ochres, browns, greens, and pale blues—are colors often found in mid-century modern interiors as represented in architectural drawings and brochures, while the dithered halftone patterning recalls mid-century modern lifestyle magazines such as *Women's Day* and *Better Homes & Gardens*.

Like the panoramic map, the collage records identifiable geographical and architectural details and encourages close looking and identification of landmarks. But as with *Scenes in and around Kyoto*, a surreal quality is introduced by the presence of multiple and converging perspectives. As one scans the landscape horizontally—west to east—one moves from a desertscape and rows of prison camps to the iconic architectural and landscape works by Obata, Henmi, and other Japanese American designers linked to St. Louis. By bringing together material landscape and cultural memory, we seek to show how they are entwined, juxtaposing past and present, remote and close-by, seen and unseen.

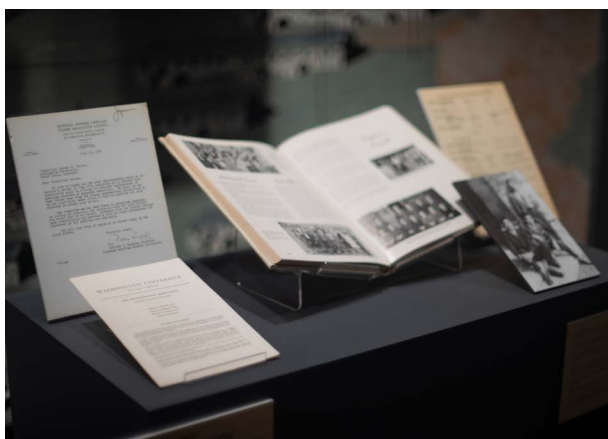
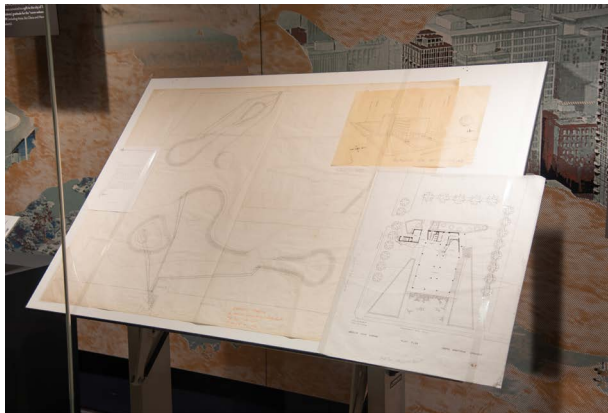


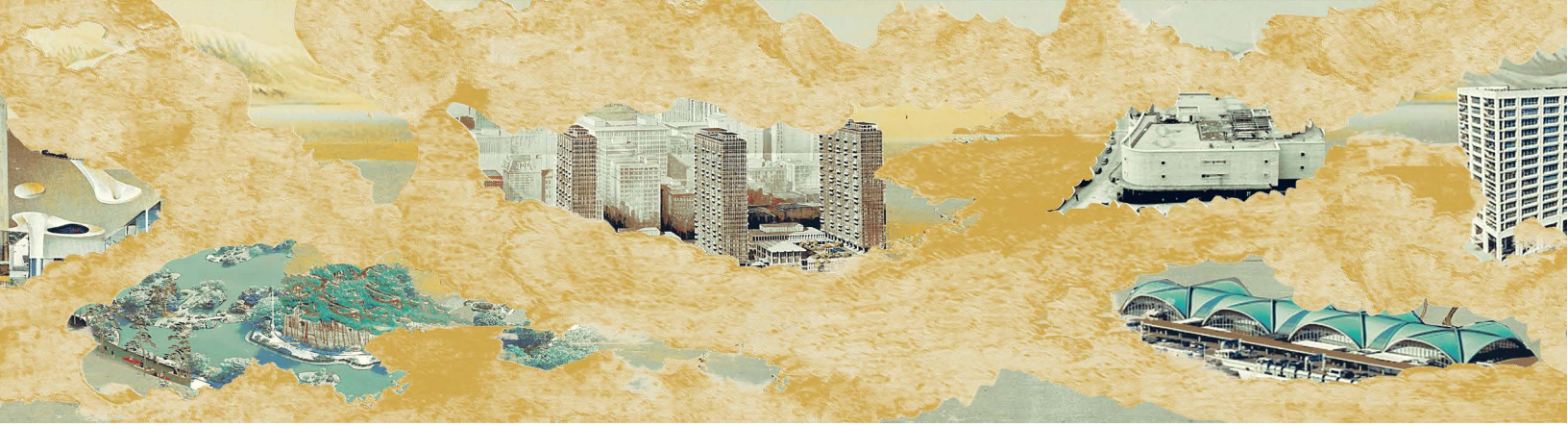




What did it mean for individuals who endured the radical dislocation of incarceration to resettle so far from their points of origin, in relatively conservative, racially divided Midwestern and southeastern cities? What did “reentry” look like in these places, which had relatively small populations of Japanese American communities, and small design communities?

“Beauty in Enormous Bleakness” aims to advance the work of recovering the hidden histories and suppressed pasts, and more specifically, to bring them into view alongside the recognizable features of the post-war cultural landscape, and more specifically, the accomplishments of Gyo Obata, Richard Henmi, George Matsumoto, and Fred Toguchi. The exhibition does this through imaginative re-engagement with the built environment, as well as the traditional archives—oral histories, architectural drawings, press coverage, family photographs, and more, which it seeks to animate through storytelling.





BEAUTY IN ENORMOUS BLEAKNESS:

The Design Legacies of the Interned Generation of Japanese Americans

Curated by: Kelley Van Dyck Murphy & Heidi Aronson Koik
with Lynette Widdler & Gabriela Naomi Cohen Sarno

"If I hadn't gone to that kind of place, I wouldn't have realized the beauty that exists in enormous bleakness."

- Chiura Obata (1885-1975)

Beauty in Enormous Bleakness explores architecture's relationship to immigration and cultural identity in 20th-century American life, focusing on the design lives and works of four Japanese American architects: George Matsuno, George Washington University in St. Louis, and Tad Terasaki—who left the exhibition recently to explore the future in plain sight.

The Abbey Church

1963. Gyo Obata/Helmuth, Obata, & Kassabaum

The Abbey Church, designed as a place of worship for the Benedictine monks of the Saint Louis Abbey, consists of three successive tiers of thin cast-in-place concrete parabolic arches that rise above a circular plan. A ball tower with a central skylight illuminates the choir below. Translucent wall panels provide the interior with consistent soft white light, creating an atmosphere of meditative serenity within the monastic church.



Photo: T. H. Abel, "Abel, Photograph of interior of the Abbey Church at St. Louis Priory. Courtesy of Helmut Obata Group."

The Flying Saucer

1960. Richard Hennel/Schwartz & Van Hoken

Originally built as a Phillips 66 gas station, the Saucer is situated at the center of the mixed-use redevelopment project, Council Plaza. The Google-style building consists of four tapered columns supporting a hyperbolic paraboloid, hence the "Flying Saucer" nickname. Over the years, the building has been home to various restaurants and a coffee shop. In 2009, Hennel was able to see the building's adaptive reuse sparked by a grass-roots preservation campaign.



The "Flying Saucer" 2022. Courtesy of Art Institute

The Planetarium

1962. Gyo Obata/Helmuth, Obata, & Kassabaum

Located in St. Louis's Forest Park, the James S. McDonnell Planetarium's hyperbolic paraboloid shape, formed from thin-shelled concrete, suggests the string of comets in space. The building holds a projection dome where over 9,000 stars can be cast. The planetarium, now part of the Saint Louis Science Center campus, is held in a huge well-bow every year for Christmas—a tradition started as a gift by Washington University architecture students.



Planetarium Photograph, 2016. Courtesy of the Saint Louis Science Center Archives

The Magic Chef Ceiling

1966. Lema Nagata

The Magic Chef Ceiling was commissioned by St. Louis-based architect Horii Aronson to design the lobby ceiling, one of a series of lunar landscapes whose undulating forms were influenced by the barren desert landscape Nagata experienced during his incarceration at the Fuzhou Internment Center. Only recently uncovered in 2016, in what is now a 60-room hotel facility, the Magic Chef ceiling is the only lunar landscape extant today.



Courtesy of the Horii Aronson Collection of Washington University Special Collections

The Japanese Garden

1972. Kazuo Kawano

In 1972, members of the local chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) approached the Missouri Botanical Garden about incorporating a new Japanese Garden in its installation. Encompassing over 14 acres, Setawa-en or "garden of pure, clear harmony and peace," takes shape in the style of a strolling garden with a lake, carefully designed waterfalls, bridges and islands.



Photograph of Japanese Garden, from A Forest of Missouri Botanical Garden. Courtesy of Peter Breen

Mansion House

1964. Richard Hennel/Schwartz & Van Hoken

Designed as a high-rise residential development overlooking the soon-to-be constructed Gateway Arch, the Mansion House superblock consisted of three apartment towers, four commercial buildings, a chapel, an office building and a parking garage. Garden spaces sited atop the garage featured swimming pools, a putting green, and a sculpture garden, all of which no longer exist.



Photo: T. H. Abel, "Abel, Photograph of construction site at Mansion House. Courtesy of Helmut Obata Group."

Lambe

1957. Minoru Yamasaki

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Photo: J. Lambert

American Zinc

1967. Gyo Obata/Helmuth, Obata, & Kassabaum

The innovative design of the American Zinc building incorporates a Viareggio Pass, suspending the building on two steel beams, allowing for an open floor plan free of columns. The building is clad in brushed stainless steel, reflecting zinc and the nearby Gateway Arch. The building, originally designed as the headquarters and office space for the American Zinc Company, is now part of the Drury Hotel Plaza.



Lindell Terrace

1965. Gyo Obata/Helmuth, Obata, & Kassabaum

The fifteen-story Lindell Terrace condominium tower is one of a series of high-rises that stretch along Lindell Boulevard in the city's Central West End. The innovative clad tower with large floor-to-ceiling windows, was designed as a modern luxury apartment building that "combined the elegance of a home with the 'residence of an apartment'."



Famous Barr

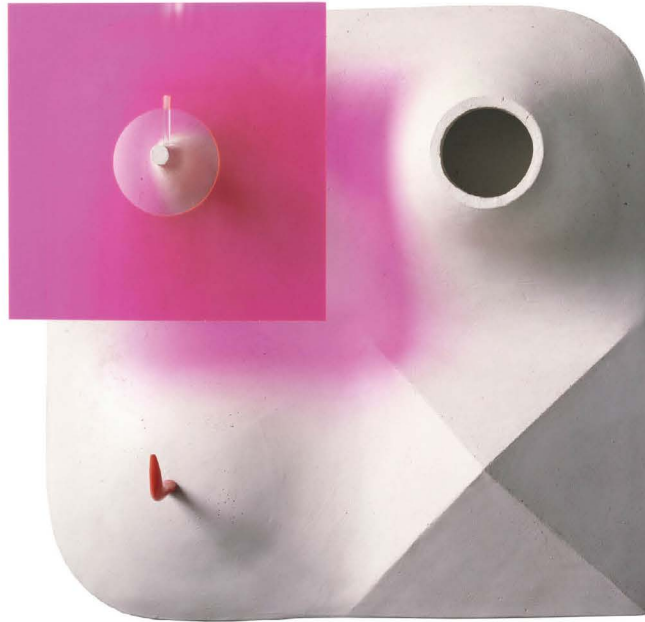
1948. Richard Hennel/Schwartz & Van Hoken

The building once served as the 1 of the St. Louis-based department Famous Barr, and is now known University's West Campus and is composed of an elegant curved facade punctured by small arched windows, the design mimics the Boulevard connecting University



Moonscape of the Mind:

Japanese American Design after Internment



Isamu Noguchi, "My Arizona," New York, 1943. The Noguchi Museum Archives, 00071.
©The Noguchi Museum / ARS

"The memory of Arizona was like that of the moon...a moonscape of the mind...Not given the actual space of freedom, one makes its equivalent--an illusion within the confines of a room or a box--where imagination may roam, to the further limits of possibility and to the moon and beyond."

-- Isamu Noguchi, *A Sculptor's World*

**April 14-15
2023**

Washington University in St. Louis

MOONSCAPE OF THE MIND: Japanese American Design after Internment

Symposium at Washington University in St. Louis
April 14-15, 2023

Emerging out of the “Beauty in Enormous Bleakness” research project and exhibition, and expanding the scope of the project to encompass a broader range of artists and designers, was the *Moonscape of the Mind Symposium*. This cross-disciplinary symposium brought together scholars from a range of humanities and art/design fields to explore the hidden legacies of internment—“hidden,” that is, in plain sight, in the rich landscapes of mid-century American design and culture. Scheduled to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the internment period, the conference advanced the work of compiling an edited volume of artifact-focused essays on this subject.

The symposium was organized by Kelley Van Dyck Murphy, Heidi Aronson Kolk, and Lynnette Widder. Special thanks to research assistant, Gabi Senno.

SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

In May 1942, Isamu Noguchi voluntarily entered Poston, one of ten euphemistically-named ‘Internment Centers’ authorized by Executive Order 9066. Not long after, the sculptor made *My Arizona* (1943), one of a series of abstract lunar landscapes created in response to his experiences in the desert. The sculpture features a hot pink acrylic plane hovering over a white desert landscape, its fluorescent cast glowing hotly over the abstracted forms of conical mounds and valleys below.

Noguchi’s work speaks to the powerful connections between material objects and their creators’ lived experiences of trauma—including the physical places and broader cultural landscapes in which they occurred. Likewise, the artist’s evocative description of his “memory of Arizona”—which he later described as a “moonscape of the mind”—speaks to the problem of remembering when one is denied “the actual space of freedom” in which to imagine. The problem can become even more acute, and far-reaching, when a community of memory never quite forms, as happened for many survivors.

Drawing inspiration from Noguchi, *Moonscape of the Mind* explores the hidden legacies of the Japanese American incarceration—“hidden,” that is, in plain sight, in the rich and complex landscapes of mid-century American culture. Survivors of internment created some of the architectural, artistic and design hallmarks of mid-century cultural life, embraced as “American,” “democratic,” and definitively “modern” in all senses. Yet their authors’ experiences as citizen-detainees were rarely acknowledged in that post-war world, even by the survivors themselves. The broader history of incarceration has been marginalized, and is “marked” by [long] silences and strategic forgetting.”¹

This symposium asks what singular objects of art and design might teach us about those experiences, and the broader impacts and significance of incarceration. How have such works given expression to the central conflicts of identity and exclusion experienced by the Japanese American community during the war, and helped their creators to navigate between hopelessness and action? What new meanings did they take on in a post-war period of “rebuilding” and “re-integration,” shaping social identities, and carrying (or perhaps suppressing) collective memory? And how can they help us think in new ways about the ongoing legacies of incarceration and racial exclusion decades later?

1 Sturken, Marita, “Absent Images of Memory: Remember and Reenacting the Japanese Internment,” *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, ed. T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 33-49.

FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2023

KUEHNER COURT, WEIL HALL, SAM FOX SCHOOL

4:00 p.m. - Welcome: Kelley Van Dyck Murphy, Heidi Aronson Kolk, and Lynnette Widder

4:10 p.m. - Opening Remarks: Heather Woofert, Director of the College of Architecture and Graduate School of Architecture & Urban Design, and the Sam and Marilyn Fox Professor, Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis

4:20 p.m. - Keynote Address: “Moonscapes of the Mind: In-Between Space”: Ken Tadashi Oshima, Professor of Architecture, University of Washington-Seattle

THOMAS GALLERY, OLIN LIBRARY

5:45 p.m. - Beauty in Enormous Bleakness Exhibition Opening + Reception

SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 2023

KUEHNER COURT, WEIL HALL, SAM FOX SCHOOL

Session I: The Architectural Scale

Although architecture may be constrained by parameters far more powerful than those of personal expression, the work of the most well-known Japanese American architect of the post-war period, Minoru Yamasaki, made much of its expressive capacity. Papers in this session will raise questions about potential correlations between Yamasaki’s architectural decisions and questions of Japanese identity, whether through his clientele, his own encounters with his parents’ country of origin or his response to mass housing. For Isamu Noguchi, on the other hand, as this session’s fourth paper describes, the experience of voluntary incarceration in the Poston camp prompted work at territorial scales, expanding upon the more personally expressive scale of sculpture in which he had dealt until then.

Introduction to Session I: Lynnette Widder, Associate Professor of Professional Practice, Columbia University

“Confinement, Agency and Design: Minoru Yamasaki and Pruitt-Igoe”

Michael Allen, Senior Lecturer, Sam Fox School

“Isamu Noguchi and the Heart of the City”

Eric Mumford, Rebecca and John Voyles Professor of Architecture, Sam Fox School

“Minoru Yamasaki & the legacy of the World Trade Center”

Justin Beal (independent scholar / artist): ‘Minoru Yamasaki & the legacy of the World Trade Center’

“Between Two Worlds: Minoru Yamasaki’s Japanese Cultural and Trade Center”

Dale Gyure, Interim Chair of Architecture and Professor, Lawrence Technological University

Session II: The Object Scale

There is much documentation of how vernacular traditions were shared during incarceration. Papers in this session consider how such practices, and camp life, impacted artists who emerged from the experience of incarceration, and might have translated into the work of personal or community memory. At stake is the work of four artists working in textile, paper, wood and photography. Whether destined for the gallery, the world of commercial art, or the lifeworld of one of the camps, these works not only testify to the complexities of incarceration and postwar life, but give voice to such things as hope, faith, longing, grief, identity and community.

Introduction to Session II: Heidi Aronson Kolk, Assistant Professor, College of Art, Sam Fox School

‘Kay Sekimachi’s Ogawa II’

Christina Hiromi Hobbs, Stanford University

“A Cross for Wakasa-San: Funerary Paper Flowers and Grief as Resistance”

Elissa Yukikko Weichbrodt, Associate Professor of Art, Covenant College

“Learning Is Empowering: A Story Behind George Nakashima’s Odakyu Cabinet”

Sanae Nakatani, Associate Professor, Tokyo Metropolitan University

“Keeping the Calendar: Essential Elements of Tets Yamashita’s Photography”

Mari Yamashita de Moya, Independent artist

Session III: The Scale of Civic Action

Art making in the framework of activism, whether through publishing, public art or participatory engagement, was a vital part of post-incarceration production. This session describes how both better-established media – mural painting and sculpture – as well as more novel artistic practices – critical ethnography and the kitchen table as archive – operated as a site of civic action or resistance in the hands of four Japanese American artists in the era following incarceration.

Introduction to Session III: Kelley Van Dyck Murphy, Assistant Professor, College of Architecture, Sam Fox School

“Yuri Kochiyama’s Kitchen Table”

Lisa Beyeler-Yvarra, Yale University

“Glass, Paper, Ground: Paul Horiuchi’s Seattle Mural”

Andrew Wasserman, Professorial Lecturer, American University

“Citizen 13600: Decolonizing Architectural Ethnography”

Aki Ishida, Associate Professor of Architecture, Virginia Tech

“Shinkichi Tajiri: Made in America”

Marin Sullivan, Independent scholar

MATSUMOTO MODERN

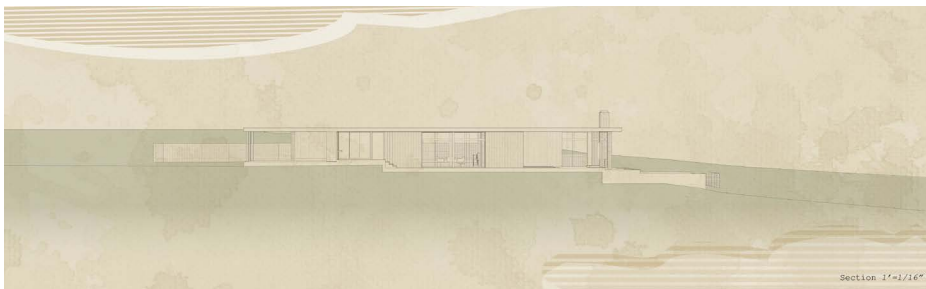
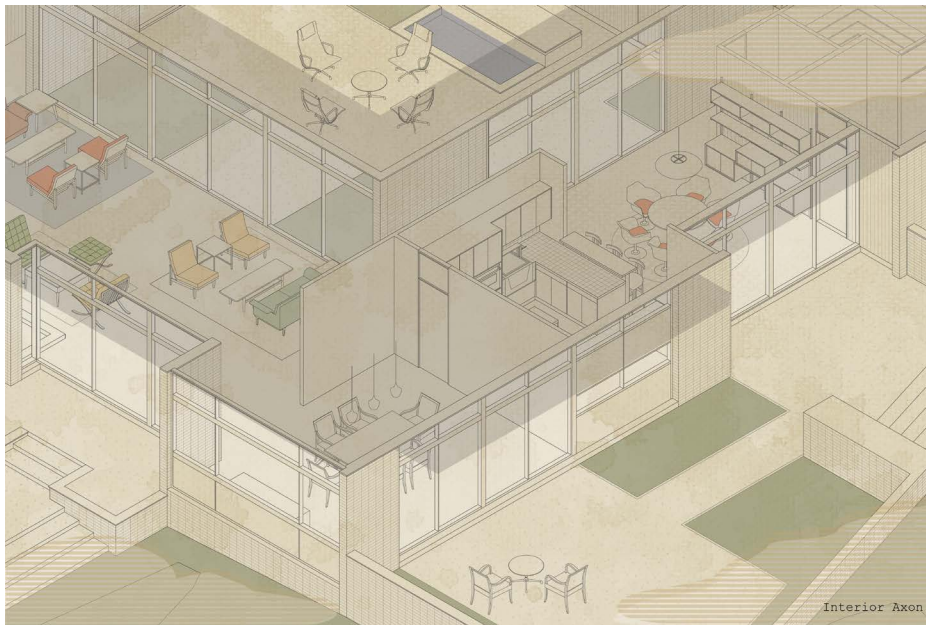
Fall 2022 History/Theory Case Studies Course
Taught by Kelley Van Dyck Murphy
College of Architecture and Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Design
Washington University in St. Louis

Course Description:

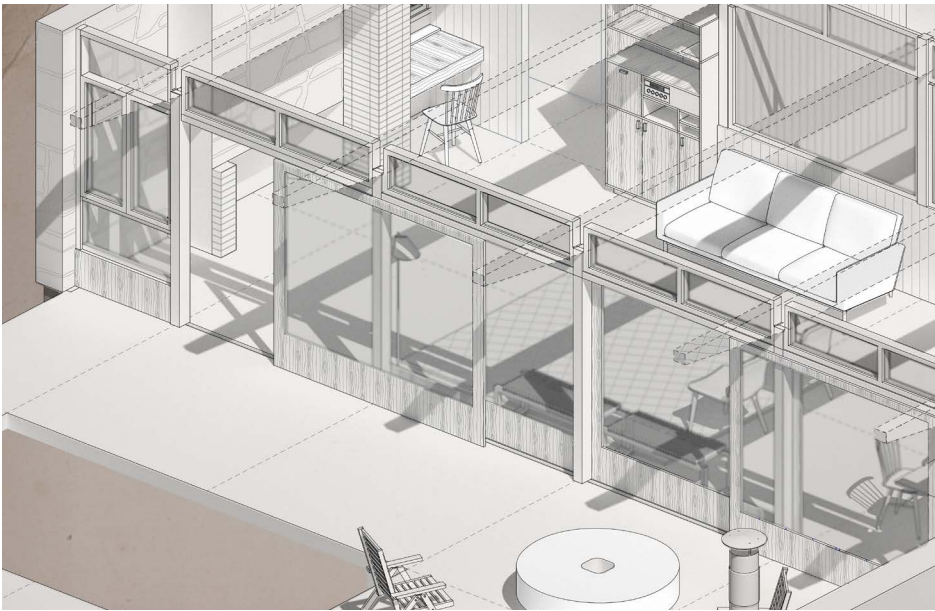
Between 1948-1961, the Japanese American architect George Matsumoto designed over thirty award winning residences in North Carolina. The houses – demonstration homes for General Electric and Westinghouse, vacation houses sponsored by Woman's Day and the Douglas Fir Plywood Association, and homes for clients interested in new ideas in architecture - served as prototypes for domestic living inspired by postwar logics of mass production. The experimental homes provided opportunities to challenge norms and amplify particular design aspects through focused investigations of the potential of new materials, innovative construction systems, or provocative formal capabilities. Like the more well-known Art and Architecture magazine's Case Study House Program on the west coast, Matsumoto's houses aspired to be functional, beautiful and affordable while also providing a model for modern American domesticity.

Students in this case studies course undertook archival research for selected George Matsumoto designed modern homes throughout the semester. Course work included experimental analytical drawings, archival research and writing, reading discussions and written responses, physical models, and other representations of residential work by Matsumoto. Throughout the course students participated in reading discussions of texts by Matsumoto, Isamu Noguchi and other Asian American authors, listened to George Matsumoto's oral history recordings, and looked to historical and contemporary representational models for their work.

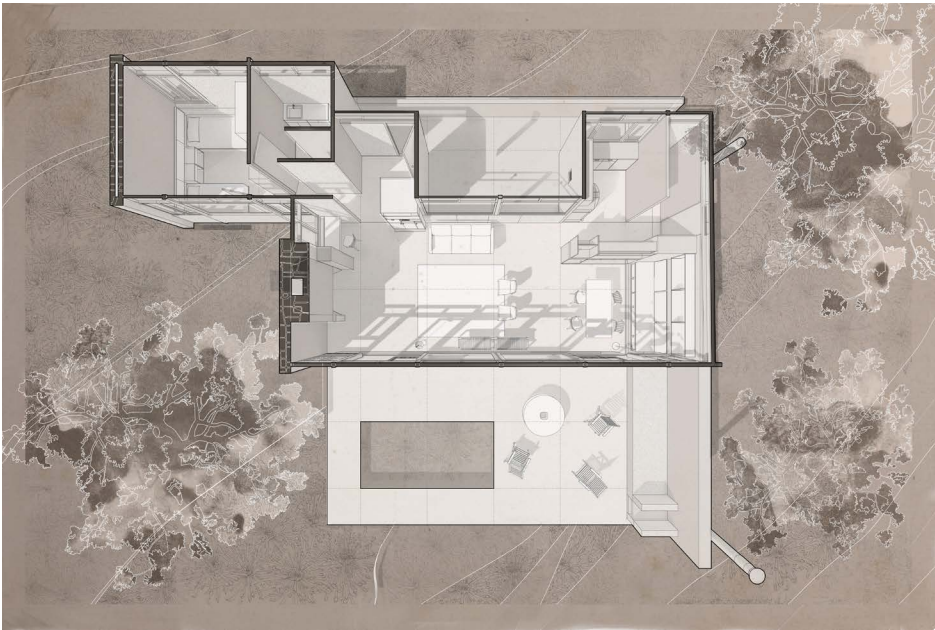
Examples of student work:



Thrower House I
Greensboro, North Carolina
Architect: George Matsumoto
Representation by Ella Matthews



Poole Lake House
Raleigh, North Carolina
Architect: George Matsumoto
Representation by Mathilde Lossada



Douglas Fir Plywood Association Vacation Home
Architect: George Matsumoto
Representation by David Yi

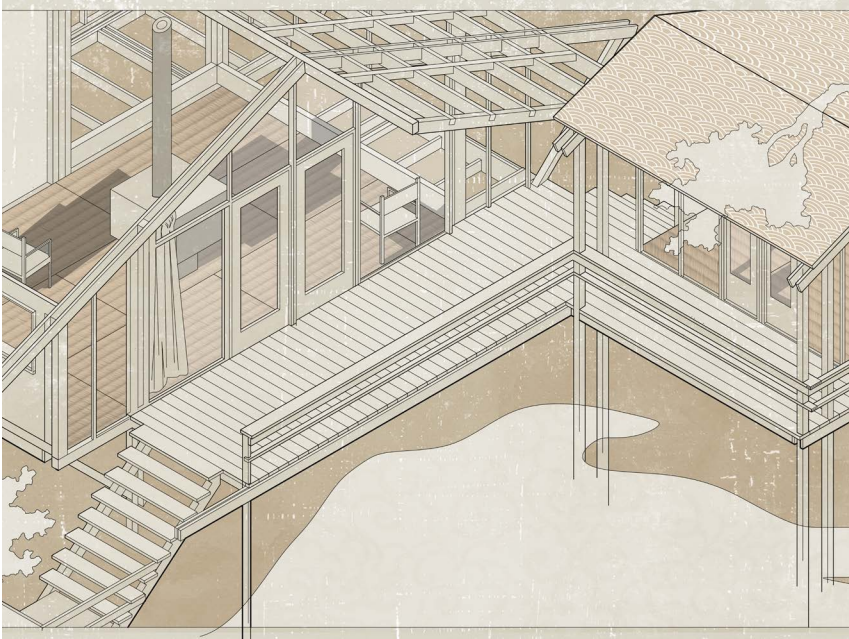


Poland-Defeo House
Raleigh, North Carolina
Architect: George Matsumoto
Representation by Alex Lyu



Lipmann House
Richmond, Virginia
Architect: George Matsumoto
Representation by Kaiti Burger





Douglas Fir Plywood Association Vacation Home
 Architect: George Matsumoto
 Representation by David Yi



George and Kimi Matsumoto House
 Raleigh, North Carolina
 Architect: George Matsumoto
 Representation by Jacob Greengo



OF MEASUREMENT, OF PLACE, OF SITUATION: The Noguchi Ceiling in St. Louis

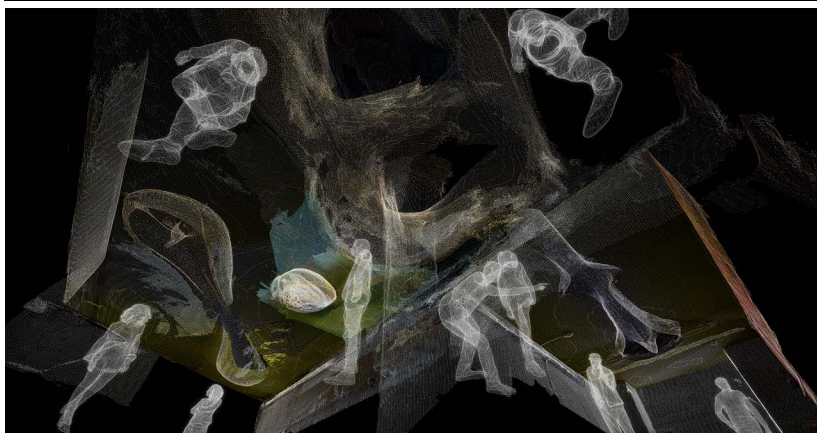
Spring 2023 History/Theory Case Studies Course
Taught by Kelley Van Dyck Murphy
College of Architecture and Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Design
Washington University in St. Louis

Course Description:

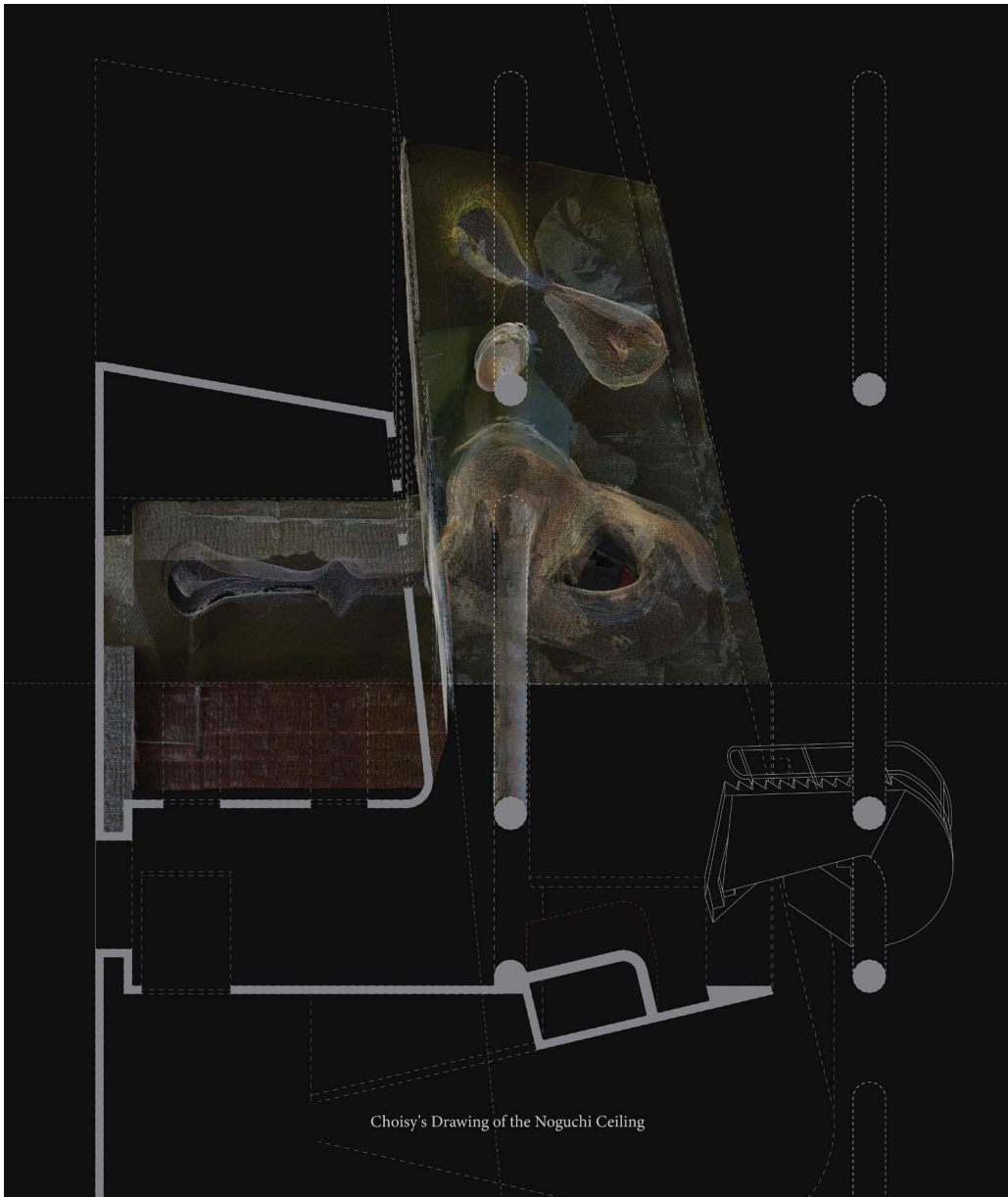
In 1946, local architect Harris Armstrong commissioned the Japanese American sculptor Isamu Noguchi to design a sculptural lobby ceiling in the American Stove Company headquarters building in St. Louis. Noguchi's ceiling was one of three built lunar landscapes inspired by his incarceration at the Poston Internment Center, which he voluntarily entered in 1942. Noguchi created dozens of plaster models of lunar landscapes; however, only three were built—a ceiling in the Time and Life Building in New York, the interior wall of the SS Argentina Ocean Liner, and the American Stove Company ceiling in St. Louis. The American Stove ceiling, though only recently uncovered in 2016, is the only lunar landscape still in existence today. The earlier models, often misunderstood as sculptures, were proposals for spaces meant to be inhabited.

The spatial complexity of the ceiling is difficult to capture through traditional architectural representation. The few existing drawings are minimal and flat. In photographs, the ceiling curves away from the viewer in a way that is impossible to capture in its entirety. Working collectively, students in the course utilized 3D laser scanning technology to capture efficient and highly detailed imagery of the Noguchi ceiling. The resulting point cloud model was used to create various digital and physical representations of the project. To provide context for the American Stove ceiling design, students individually analyzed selected models of Noguchi's realized and unbuilt work in tandem with a discussion of texts by Noguchi and others that explore his life and career.

Examples of student work:

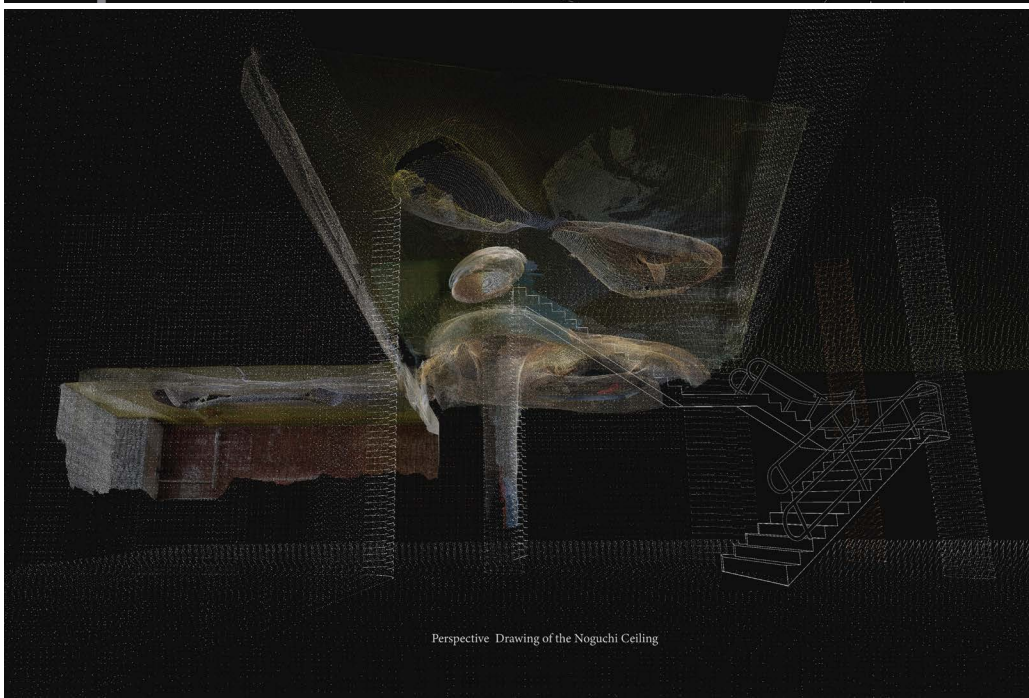


American Stove Company
Lobby Ceiling
St. Louis, Missouri
Designer: Isamu Noguchi
Representation by Andrew Foster



Choisy's Drawing of the Noguchi Ceiling

American Stove Company
Lobby Ceiling
St. Louis, Missouri
Designer: Isamu Noguchi
Representation by Chuchu Qi



Perspective Drawing of the Noguchi Ceiling