

857-1125
#12
13:45
Aug. 29, 1991

Dear MRS. TAKAHASHI,

I thought I would drop a line both to say greetings, and to ask if we may meet at your convenience. We spoke on the phone some time ago about these Japanese-American artists I have been collecting, and researching. Well, I am still at it.

Recently, Mimi Okubo and I spent some time together in New York.

Were you a student of Chiura Obata at U.C. Berkeley? Did you know Miyoko Ito? Later she moved to Chicago... I own several Obata works.

I am hoping very much for some curator to see the value of an exhibition; a retrospective, of works by our Asian-Californian artists.

I have been accumulating art
by these senior artists and am
my own best support. Sometimes
I believe that the art stands
strong on it's own merit, but
talent was not what kept these
artists; for the most part, out of
the mainstream exhibition schedule.

I am submitting a 5000
word essay about senior Chinese-
American artists to the Chinese
Historical Society of America, for
hopeful publication in 1992. I
surely hope they accept it as I
spent alot of time on it. But
who can say?

My best to you madame.

Please call or write if you care to
meet. I'd like to show you photos of
these art works and ~~ask~~ some questions.

415
821-6152

With respect, Michael Brown. 1061

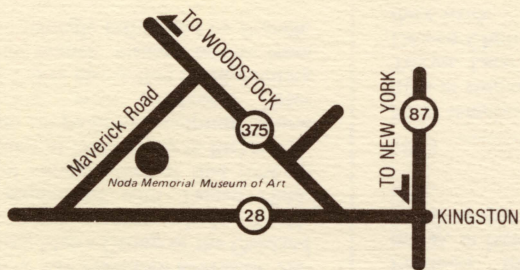
Noda Memorial Museum of Art

Hideo Benjamin Noda, a second generation Japanese American painter, has taught me courage to overcome loneliness and of the importance of human love and trust. He is still very much alive within me.

Located in beautiful Woodstock, a small studio where Noda spent his early years has been chosen as the site of the memorial museum.

I wish to thank very much Mrs. Ruth Shaffer Noda and all the people who enabled to make my dream come true.

Seiichiro Kuboshima
SEIICHIRO KUBOSHIMA



By car:

Take Rt. 87 from New York City, and after Kingston then take Rt. 375 to Maverick Rd. Turn left at the Maverick Rd. Takes about 2 hours.

By bus:

At 42 St., 8 Ave. every one hour bus to Kingston or Woodstock available. If you take bus to Kingston, need car. Takes 15 min.

By limousine:

From JF Kennedy Airport, limousine service available. Reservation only.

Noda Memorial Museum of Art

—a "sister-museum" of Shinano drawing museum in Japan

Box 655, Maverick Rd., Woodstock, New York 12498 U.S.A. Phone(914) 679-8257

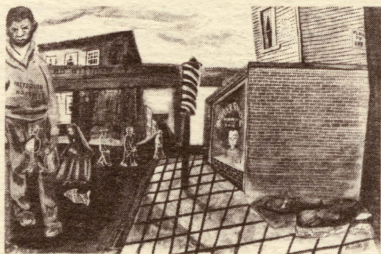


Hideo Benjamin Noda
1908-1939



Noda Memorial Museum of Art

—a "sister-museum" of Shinano drawing museum in Japan



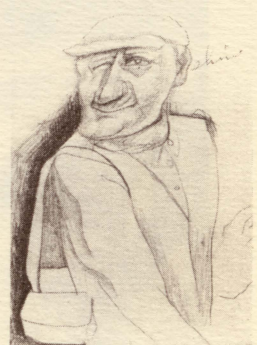
Scottsboro boys 1933



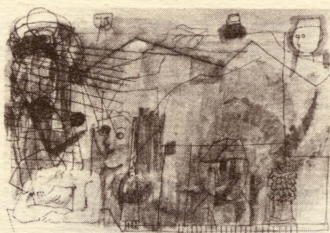
The kiss of Judas about 1937



San Francisco 1937



Shoeshine man of New York
about 1934



Scene year unknown



Woman about 1937

HIDEO BENJAMIN NODA - CHRONOLOGY

1908

Born in Santa Clara, California, a U.S. citizen of Japanese descent; the second child and eldest son of Eitrao and Seki Noda.

1911

Parents want children to be educated in Japan. Take three-year old Hideo and elder sister Toshi back to Kumamoto, father's birthplace; settle children in home of uncle, Tokuji Hatori, and return to the United States.

1921

In March of this year Hideo graduates from Kumamoto Normal School Adjunct Primary School (now Kumamoto University School of Education Adjunct Primary School) at thirteen years of age.

One month later Hideo enters Kumamoto Prefectural Middle School (now Kumamoto High School). Loves painting.

1926

Graduates from Kumamoto High School at eighteen years of age in March of this year. Travels alone to United States in order to prevent his U.S. citizenship from expiring. (At this point in his life Noda is supposed to have aspired to become an architect.) Enters high school in Piedmont, a suburb of Oakland, California. Boards with several other classmates from Japan at 163 Pleasant Valley Rd. in Piedmont area.

Begins study of oil painting with Lillian Sonnenschein, a first head of Piedmont High School's Art Department.

1929

Salutatorian of his graduating class at Piedmont High School. (While still in school wins third prize in National Art Contest.)

At twenty-one years of age enters California School of Fine arts (now San Francisco Art Institute). Becomes acquainted with Takeo Terada, one of a dozen or so Japanese students at the institute, the beginning of a close, lifelong friendship.

Rents small house on Fillmore Street in San Francisco which had been photography studio. Shares with Terada. Devotes himself to painting. Does household chores for American families to earn wherewithal to buy art supplies. Keeps in shape by practicing Judo at San Francisco Kodokan. Active in Young Men's Group of the Oakland Buddhist congregation (Judo Sect). Becomes acquainted with Taigan Hata, president of congregation at that time. Is frequent guest at Hata home in Richmond, CA. Studies oil painting, sculpture, mural painting etc. with Professor Peter Stackpole. Takes instruction in oil painting from Arnold Branch, visiting lecturer from New York. Strongly influenced by Branch.

1930

This year Mexican artist Diego Rivera produces murals for north wall of art gallery at California School of Fine Arts. Noda, now twenty-two years of age, gets training in fresco technique from Rivera at this time. Both Branch and Rivera recognize Noda's ability.

1931

At age of twenty-three Noda interrupts studies at California School of Fine Arts. Journeys to New York via Panama Canal at invitation of Arnold Branch, Professor at Art Student's League in New York.

Takes up residence in Woodstock, artists' colony in northern New York State.

Devotes self to study of mural painting and tempera techniques, under tutelage of Professor Arnold Branch.

Becomes acquainted with Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Eugene Speicher Grosz and others at Woodstock.

Meets Ruth blonde American girl, two years younger than himself. Marries her after lightning courtship.

1932

Awarded Woodstock Art Prize at age of twenty-four.

Comes into contact with surrealism at exhibits of work of Max Ernst and of Salvador Dali held at Julian Levy Studio in New York.

Returns to California. Resides at 1034 Peralta Ave. in San Francisco, CA. Exhibits work at show held by San Francisco Art Association. Awarded the Maria Stone Prize.

1933

Exhibits at Chicago Institute of Fine Arts. Exhibits at San Francisco Japanese Art League Show together with Takeo Terada and other Japanese painter-friends.



Two children in a baby buggy 1933

1934

Twenty-six years of age, again goes to New York.

Exhibits at the Independent Show and American Group Show.

Reviews of his work in fine arts publications "The Arts" and "Creative Art" bring him wider recognitions as painter.

Again encounters Diego Rivera. Rivera is working on three murals in New York's Rockefeller Center. Noda assists him. Absorbs Rivera's concepts of how to produce murals on grand scale.

Becomes member of New York Muralists' League.

Exhibits his work at Whitney Art Museum's National Art Show in New York by invitation.

Produces "IMIN-Immigrants" a W.P.A. mural, in New York.

In Fall of this year goes to Japan for second time.

1935

Now twenty-seven years of age. At first lives in studio rented in Nakano section of Tokyo. Later this year moves to atelier in Den-en Chofu, where he continues to produce work.

In May holds a one-man show at the gallery on Ginza, Tokyo.

In the fall Noda makes his debut in the world of Japanese painting with showing of two of his works "KIRO-The Road Home", and "YUME-Dreams" at twenty-second annual Nika Art Exhibit.

In November collaborates with Takeo Terada on mural for Bar Cotton Club, Ginza Nana Chome. (destroyed by fire during World War II).

Collaborates on publication of special issue devoted to murals in art periodical "Atelier".

1936

Twenty-eight years of age. In August of this year returns to New York. Meets di Chirico at Julian Levy Gallery in New York.

1937

Returns to California from New York. Now twenty-nine years of age. Accepts commission to produce mural for his alma mater Piedmont High School for two hundred dollars. (* this time of the year the tuition of Columbia University was \$400) Produces mural, theme of which is school life at Piedmont High School.



Woman about 1937

In September of this year travels to Europe and on to Japan once again. Lives in Tokyo — in artist's colony in Toshima-Ku.

In December at second annual Shinseisaku Ha Kyokai (New Wave Art Association organized in 1936 by Genichiro Inokuma, Ryohei Koiso and others) exhibit, Noda shows "Circus", "HYOJO-on the ice", "TOKAI-Big City", "SUKEITO O SURU SHOJO-Young girl skating" etc. Becomes member of Shinseisaku Ha Kyokai.

1938

Thirty years of age. In April of this year Noda holds show at Nichido Gallery on the Ginza, Tokyo which receives favorable comment.

In May wife Ruth comes to Japan via Europe.

In August Noda and wife vacation at Lake Nojiri in Nagano Prefecture. Stay at Sakamotoya Inn in Kurohime, are joined by Kazu Wakita and Shigehiko Ishikawa.

It is here, on second floor of Sakamotoya Inn that Noda paints his final picture "NO-JIRI NO HANA-Flowers in Nojiri" on a small No. 4 canvas brought along by Kazu Wakita. Noda has trouble with eyes. Tapes lids open so he can continue to paint.

Toward end of August wife Ruth goes back to New York.

In September Noda goes to Tokyo for fulltime medical treatment, but condition worsens.

In December admitted to Imperial University Hospital (now Tokyo University Hospital) for examination. Diagnosis: brain tumor.

1939

In January of 1939 Noda undergoes surgery. Operation is unsuccessful. He is discharged from hospital on January tenth. Moves to home of elder sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Ataru Tomioka.

At quarter past seven on the morning of February 12, 1939, watched over by his close relatives and by his parents who have journeyed from Kumamoto, Hideo Noda, painter, breathes his last. His is thirty years of age.

Unaware of her husband's passing, wife Ruth prepares to rejoin him in Japan. Prior to departure she pays visit to home of Taigan Hata in Richmond, CA. Learns of husband's death. Abandons plan to go to Japan.

Noda's parents take ashes of son back to Kumamoto where Hideo Noda had spent boyhood. Hideo Noda is buried at Udo-Gun, Shiranui-Mura, Aza-Eino, Nihonmatsu. (Grave marker of natural stone erected some years late by wife Ruth.)

In January, the New York Times lamented Noda's untimely death in a special Art Section.

In November of 1939, a memorial exhibit of Noda's work is displayed in a special room at fourth annual Shinseisaku Ha Kyokai Show in Japan.

In December Shun Chokai publishes "NODA HIDEO SAKUHIN SHU-memories of Hideo Noda's works" cover designed by Ryoehi Koiso and deposit to the New York Public Library through the efforts of Iwao Uchida, Kei Sato, Yasushi Santa, Kazu Wakita and other printer-friend of Noda's.

noda

Memorial Museum of Art WOODSTOCK



Hideo Benjamin Noda
1908 - 1939



Located in beautiful Woodstock, a small studio where Noda spent his early years has been chosen as the site of the memorial museum.

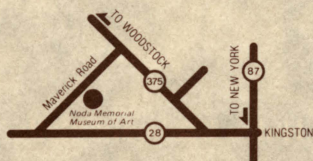
HIDEO BENJAMIN NODA

Hideo Benjamin Noda was born in Santa Clara, California, as a U.S. citizen of Japanese descent.

After graduated from high schools both in Japan and U.S., he entered California School of Fine Arts (now San Francisco Art Institute) at age of 21. At age of 23, Noda took up residence in Woodstock, artists' colony in New York. Awarded many prizes between the period of 1932—1938.

At age of 29, Noda had trouble with eyes by brain tumor. In January of 1939, Noda underwent surgery. Operation was unsuccessful.

On February 12, 1939, Hideo Benjamin Noda died as age of 30. New York Times and many painter friends lamented Noda's untimely death in a special art section.



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By limousine:

From JF Kennedy Airport, limousine service available. Reservation only.

Admission \$5.00 (W/Coffee or Tea)

Please taste a cup of coffee or tea in the very special 1760's house.

Young Artist, Hideo Benjamin Noda lived and enjoyed the house in 1930's.

Please enjoy feeling of 1930's art.

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Collector in Search of California Asian Artists

By MARGARET SCHULZE
Hokubei Mainichi

"Hisako Hibi calls me an archaeologist," laughs Michael Brown, a private art collector who is currently working on a 50-year retrospective of Asian artists in California.

While he may not be getting dirty, Brown has been doing plenty of digging during the past year to find the Japanese, Chinese and Filipino artists whose works he's become so fond of.

He is about halfway through his project of collecting watercolors and other paintings, dating from 1920 to 1965, of known and unknown artists. Soon he will begin contacting curators with the idea of putting together an exhibit to tour California.

"The focus is first the artistic viewpoint. And, as a matter of fact, it's an Asian heritage viewpoint of California," explains Brown.

"Not many people have an opportunity to see these things, and I'm happy to be able to show that. They weren't, and they still aren't, in the mainstream exhibition schedule."

Brown's search for these works takes him from auctions to garage sales. Other people are always on the lookout for him and he's put ads in newspapers for pre-1960 works by Asian American artists.

When he does find a painting he likes, he tries to get in touch with the artist. Most people have been very receptive, he says, although they're often surprised that a Caucasian collector is interested in their work.

Hibi, an Issei artist who is still active in the community, was relatively easy to locate.

There are artists for whom, aside from a painting, there is no record. Chee Chin S. Chung Lee, one of the first Chinese students to go to the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute), Charles Morimoto and Kay Matsuburo are all artists Brown has not been able to locate; no one seems to know what happened to them.

"Just by seeing one example sometimes, you know their works would be beautiful, but where are they? Where is the family? It's like a dead end, a lot of these trails," he says.

More often, though, Brown does find the artists, and they usually send him a resume of where they were educated and where they have exhibited. Most of them, he feels, would like to be exhibited more.

Still, "not everyone's like that," Brown adds. "One fellow, I won't mention who, wrote back saying he didn't care to be exhibited next to unknown artists, Oriental or otherwise."

Brown acknowledges that "that's his prerogative," but is still determined to find that man's work. "I told him one way or the other, he's going to be in my exhibit because I like his work."

Brown readily admits that he loves the searching that this project involves. Sometimes he

finds a painting that an artist had thought was lost.

Takeo Terada, one of the artists who painted the murals in Coit Tower, is now living in Japan. He didn't think any of his works from the 1930s had survived, but Brown found a painting.

"I'm a good investigator," he says. "I think I missed my calling. I should have been a private detective."

Along with a lot of artwork, Brown has also collected a lot of historical notes and some interesting stories. He found that before World War II, many of the public schools were segregated, but the art schools were not. Many Asian parents sent their children to California School of Fine Art and Oakland College of Arts and Crafts.

"They attended the same schools, many times, with the same instructors as the 'plein air' artists in California, the well known, highly collectible Caucasian artists," Brown notes.

Asian artists also had their works shown alongside those of their white contemporaries. Brown fondly tells the story of 10-year-old Wa Ming Ching, a woodblock print artist whose work hung in the Brooklyn Museum between paintings by Winslow Homer and James Whistler.

"You must have been like Michael Jackson," Brown told the artist, now aged 75.

There are also unfortunate stories of Japanese American artists who lost most of their work during World War II. Since they couldn't be taken to camp, paintings were often left in the care of a friend or neighbor. For many Nikkei it was several years before they returned to California, and often the paintings were gone.

He recalls hearing from Madeleine Sugimoto, daughter of the late Henry Sugimoto, that "there was a gallery out here that had many of Henry's paintings, and the place went belly up and they weren't around to get their things. They lost 50 to 100 paintings."

The artists lived or worked in California at some point in their careers. Brown describes most of the work as occidental, although he notes that "there are traces of Orientalism."

When the artists were young and working in their classes, they kept abreast of the current trends and what was going on in Paris.

"They all experimented. You

could see different phases in their careers. If the trend lasted 10 years, you could see its influence in many of the artworks," Brown states.

"But they were always exploring and creating, and trying to get this incredible beauty that they had stuck inside them out."

Most of the artists Brown has tracked down have become part of an extended family — people he writes, calls and visits regularly. He's also put some artists in touch with peers that they haven't communicated with in years. And artists have also led Brown to other artists.

Frequently asked if he'd found anything by Wing Kwong-Tse, Brown felt that this was an artist that many of the others admired and wanted him to find.

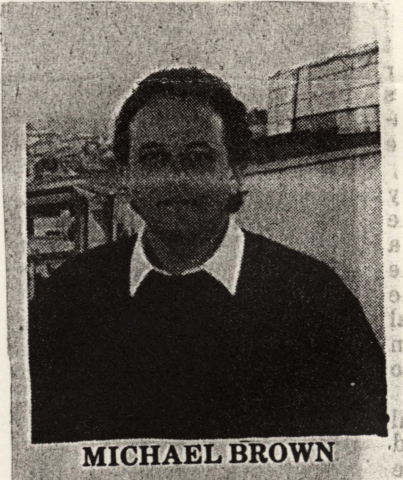
Brown found him in a convalescent hospital paralyzed from the waist down. He has nothing left, Brown says. "He gave everything away." But Brown visits him every couple of weeks and brings the sports page at Wing's request.

"He told me he has wonderful dreams still," Brown says with a smile. "Beautiful, wonderful dreams."

Brown hopes to have perhaps 35 artists represented with 80 works in the exhibit. When the finished product is on display, he says, he'd like to be someplace in a little corridor of a museum, watching people to see what they stop and look at.

"The doors will be open to the public, and maybe they'll go away with a different point of view, or an extended point of view. Then I'll know I did my job."

Anyone with information about California Asian artists may contact Brown at (415) 821-6152.



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