

~~SHIKATA GANAI~~

A solo exhibition by

Devon Tsuno

February 8th through May 17th, 2020

THE TELLING OF A STORY MAY
UNFOLD SLOWLY, OVER
GENERATIONS, BECOMING A
COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVOR THAT
ARRIVES AT A RIGHT MOMENT, OR AN
URGENT ONE.



About Devon....



Devon Tsuno is an LA-native. His spray paint and acrylic paintings, art books, community projects and print installations focus on native vs non-native plants, water, labor, public space and Japanese American history. Tsuno's long-term interests in the LA landscape has been central to his recent work with the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, The Music Center, Theodore Payne Foundation, and the Under The Sun Foundation. Tsuno is a 2017 Santa Fe Art Institute Water Rights Artist-In-Residence, is the 2016 SPART Community Grantee and was awarded a 2014 California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Art.

Tsuno has exhibited extensively in the US and abroad at the Hammer Museum Venice Beach Biennial, Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art, Current: LA Water Public Art Triennial, Candlewood Arts Festival, DENK Gallery, U.S. Embassy in New Zealand, and Gallery Lara in Tokyo. His work has been featured in Artillery Magazine, X-TRA Journal, and Notes on Looking. He received an MFA from Claremont Graduate University in 2005 and a BFA from California State University Long Beach in 2003. Tsuno is currently an Assistant Professor of Art at California State University Dominguez Hills and founder/co-director of the CSUDH PRAXIS art engagement program.

An Essay for ~~SHIKATA GA NAI~~ by Ana Iwataki



Issei First-generation Japanese immigrant

Nisei Second-generation

Sansei Third-generation

Yonsei Fourth-generation

~~*Shikata ga nai*~~ It cannot be helped.

To yonsei, like Devon Tsuno, shikata ga nai is synonymous with camp. We learned to call it camp—the noun not modified by internment or incarceration or concentration—just camp. To our issei and nisei elders, camp couldn't be helped. Post-camp, the sansei navigated between their parents' intense desire to assimilate and the radical awakenings of the 60s and 70s.

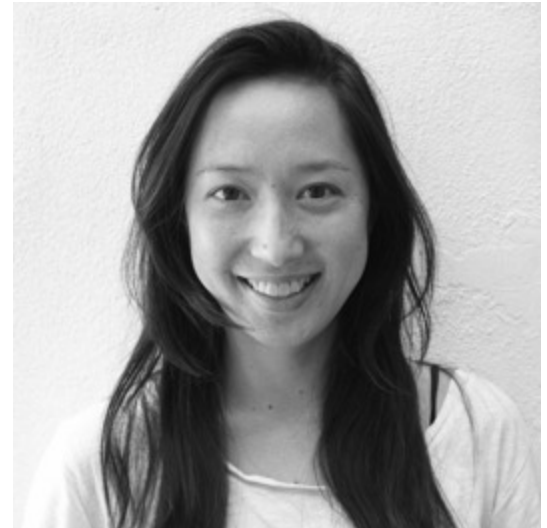
Shikata ga nai is a yonsei story, a Los Angeles story, indissociable from the complexities of intergenerational and collective trauma, fences and cages, gentrification, displacement, water and labor politics, and how and where we choose to live.

Previous and ongoing work bears witness to Devon's long-term engagement with Los Angeles and its waterways, the xenophobia hidden in rhetoric about native and non-native plants, changing geographies, and the precarity of various human and non-human ecosystems that make up his hometown. In *Shikata ga nai*, his mode of storytelling extends outwards and backwards in geography and time, with lush, layered, hard-edged, spray-painted images of plant life seen through dust and haze. Desert plants of Topaz, Utah, where Devon's paternal family was incarcerated during World War II, commingle with the last surviving azaleas his maternal grandfather planted as a gardener to the stars in Beverly Hills. Their colors are those of heatstroke, hot winds, and stubborn life. A series of artist's books superimposes portraits of family members (his great-aunt Chiye, for example, the last living member of his family who was at Topaz) over some of the defining landscapes of their lives. Many of the images in the exhibition were taken during Devon's recent trip to Topaz, an experience that, among other things, gifted him with the archive of writings of incarcerated teenagers also found in the books.

Plants adapt and intermingle to survive; plant diversity enriches the soil. This is a Japanese-American story, recounted with some specificity, and an Angeleno story, shared in solidarity. Our histories and our fates are inextricably, beautifully, decisively entangled with those of our neighbors, our waters, and our land.

Ana Iwataki

Curator, Writer, and Translator based in Los Angeles



Installation Shots

by Elon Schoenholz

~~SHIKATA GANAI~~















Available Works in

~~SHIKATA GANAI~~

90210 Labor (Azalea 5)
2020
Spray paint and acrylic on canvas
30x40in



Block 37-10-E (Topaz 2)
2020
Spray paint and acrylic on canvas
16x20in



90210 Labor (Azalea 1)

2020

Spray paint and acrylic on canvas

16x20in



90210 Labor (Azalea 2)

2020

Spray paint and acrylic on canvas

16x20in



Block 37-10-E (Topaz 1)
2020
Spray paint and acrylic on canvas
16x20in



90210 Labor (Azalea 3)

2020

Spray paint and acrylic on canvas

16x20in



90210 Labor (Azalea 4)
2020
Spray paint and acrylic on canvas
36x48in



90210 Labor (Azalea 6)
2020
Spray paint and acrylic on canvas
30x40in



Shikata Ga Nai (Chiye 1), 2020
archival inkjet on Hahnemühle paper cover
11 x 17 in, 228 page artist's book
Essay by Ana Iwataki
Archival materials courtesy of the Topaz Museum



Shikata-Ga-Nai (Chiye 2), 2020
archival inkjet on Hahnemühle paper cover
11 x 17 in, 228 page artist's book
Essay by Ana Iwataki
Archival materials courtesy of the Topaz Museum



Shikata-Ga-Nai (Chiye 3), 2020
archival inkjet on Hahnemühle paper cover
11 x 17 in, 228 page artist's book
Essay by Ana Iwataki
Archival materials courtesy of the Topaz Museum



Shikata Ga Nai (Kiyoko 1), 2020
archival inkjet on Hahnemühle paper cover
11 x 17 in, 228 page artist's book
Essay by Ana Iwataki
Archival materials courtesy of the Topaz Museum



Shikata Ga Nai (Kiyoko 3), 2020
archival inkjet on Hahnemühle paper cover
11 x 17 in, 228 page artist's book
Essay by Ana Iwataki
Archival materials courtesy of the Topaz Museum



Shikata Ga Nai (Kiyoko 2), 2020
archival inkjet on Hahnemühle paper cover
11 x 17 in, 228 page artist's book
Essay by Ana Iwataki
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