

Ms. Susan Uyemura, CEO
(714) 278-4483
suyemura@jalivinglegacy.org

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 2008

“Los Angeles At the Beginning and Today”

Exhibition includes works by local Asian Americans Artists



Photo caption:
Stone Ishimaru standing in front of his exhibit

UCLA’s Powell Library hosted the "Los Angeles at the Beginning and Today" art exhibit that included paintings and photographs depicting Los Angeles in the past and present. The exhibit’s opening night introduced artwork grouped together by theme or geographical areas of the city. This exhibit provided a glance at Los Angeles life through the souls of local artists. The paintings presented various Los Angeles landmarks through history -- some familiar and some not so familiar. These stylized paintings were supplemented by candid photographs that appeared to share in the same inspirations as the paintings.

The photographs were taken by Stone Ishimaru, a second-generation Japanese American born in El Centro, Calif. Interned with other Japanese Americans during World War II, Ishimaru became an official camp photographer. He served as a U.S. Army staff photographer in locations including postwar Japan. Ishimaru graduated in 1955 from the University of Southern California with degrees in education and cinema and television and worked in the Los Angeles school district for 40+ years. Since his retirement, Ishimaru continues to photograph and community service to various organizations. The paintings in the exhibit are by Stone Ishimaru, Samuel Bhang Jr., the late Dr. Eddy Kurushima and Rose Odow.

A second-generation Korean American, Bhang earned his bachelor's degree in design from UCLA in 1959 and did graduate studies at UCLA in the visual arts. He worked as a graphic designer for several companies, then launched his own design firm, which he operated for more than 25 years. His artwork includes paintings, prints and woodcuts.

Kurushima served as the staff artist for a camp newspaper. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1944 and joined the Military Intelligence Service, for which he interrogated Japanese prisoners and translated documents taken from them. Following the war, Kurushima attended Chouinard Art School in Los Angeles, then became a designer for a ceramics company. He has painted throughout his life, and his paintings in this exhibit were commissioned in 1980 for a calendar that was never published. Unfortunately, Dr. Kurushima passed away two weeks ago. His family came to support his widow and show support for their lost family member.

A native of Los Angeles, Odow was interned at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming. After the war, she studied at the University of Denver and at Denver's Kirkland School of Art, then worked as a fashion illustrator for department stores in Denver and L.A. She also studied locally at Chouinard and is currently a teacher in Torrance.

The exhibit was organized by Ishimaru and Rosalyn Shostak Heyman, a professional educator and member of the UCLA Foundation Governors. Admission to the library and the exhibit is free. The Powell Library Building is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed on Sunday and on Sept. 1. The exhibit runs through September 12, 2008.

The attendees ranged in age from college students to community elders. Special guests included: Former District Attorney and now professional photographer – Gil Garcetti, Judge Vincent H. Okamoto and his wife, Mitzi, Los Angeles Deputy Chief Terry Hara and his wife, Gayle, Susan Uyemura, CEO – Japanese American Living Legacy and her husband, Ray, the Yamashita family which included: Junwo “Jim” and his wife, Marian, their children daughter Nancy and husband Howard, brother George and his wife Carol, their sister Meri “Mary” (Yamashita) whose late husband Dr. Eddy Kurushima (one of the featured artists) passed away just two weeks shy of this exhibit opening.

Japanese American Living Legacy is a nonprofit (501c3) organization based out of California State University, Fullerton. All of the board of directors, staff and advisors are volunteers. For more information on Japanese American Living Legacy, please visit their website at www.jalivinglegacy.org or call them at (714) 278-4483.

###