



Smithsonian
*Donald W. Reynolds Center for
American Art and Portraiture*
National Portrait Gallery

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Media website: <http://newsdesk.si.edu>
Press preview: Aug. 9; 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Press tour with artists: Sept. 16; 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**“Portraiture Now: Asian American Portraits of Encounter” Opens
At the National Portrait Gallery Aug. 12**

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program have collaborated to mount the Smithsonian’s first major showcase of contemporary Asian American portraiture. Through the work of seven artists from across the country and around the world, the exhibition offers thought-provoking interpretations of the Asian American experience and representations against and beyond the stereotypes that have obscured the complexity of being Asian in America. The exhibition is open Aug. 12 through Oct. 14, 2012.

“The ‘Portraiture Now’ exhibition series showcases innovative trends in portraiture,” said Martin Sullivan, director of the National Portrait Gallery. “‘Portraiture Now: Asian American Portraits of Encounter,’ is a provocative and pathbreaking show that affirms the complex realities of Asian identity in today’s culture.”

“These exceptional works are portals into the souls of the American experience, world cultures and their intersections,” said Konrad Ng, director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program. “‘Asian American Portraits of Encounter’ provides engaging points of view that will enrich the understanding of Asian Pacific America.”

This group of artists represents a diverse cross-section of Asian American experiences and demonstrates, in microcosm, the nuances inherent to the Asian American experience. Roger Shimomura is a third-generation American of Japanese descent who has spent his career fighting stereotypes through his art. Shizu Saldamando was born in San Francisco and blends references to youth culture in Southern California with nods to both her Japanese and Mexican heritage. Other

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artists use concepts of diaspora, migration and transnationalism to expand the meaning of their Asian American identity. Some are artists from Asia who work in the U.S., like Satomi Shirai, who moved to New York from Japan, and Hye Yeon Nam, who came to the U.S. from Korea to study art. Zhang Chun Hong has spent the past year in her native China, but makes her home in Lawrence, Kan. Artists such as CYJO travel back and forth from Asia to America; her Kyopo Project focuses on the international community of Koreans living abroad. Tam Tran’s family relocated to Memphis, Tenn., from Vietnam during the early 1990s.

Lead support for the exhibition, publication and related programs is provided by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and the Rebecca Houser Westcott Fund for “Portraiture Now.” Additional support is provided by Andrew S. Ree and the Joh Foundation.

In-kind support is provided by Korean Air Cargo.

The National Portrait Gallery curators for this exhibition are Brandon Brame Fortune, Anne Collins Goodyear, Frank H. Goodyear III, Lauren Johnson, Rebecca Kasemeyer, Wendy Wick Reaves, Ann M. Shumard and David C. Ward.

The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program

The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program provides vision, leadership and support for Asian and Pacific Islander American initiatives and works to better reflect their contributions to the American experience, world culture and the understanding of the planet and the natural world throughout Smithsonian collections, research, exhibitions, outreach and education programs.

www.apa.si.edu.

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery

The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery tells the history of America through the individuals who have shaped its culture. Through the visual arts, performing arts and new media, the Portrait Gallery portrays poets and presidents, visionaries and villains, actors and activists whose lives tell the American story.

The National Portrait Gallery is part of the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture at Eighth and F streets N.W., Washington, D.C. Website: npg.si.edu. Smithsonian information: (202) 633-1000; (202) 633-5285 (TTY).

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