

Action & Discussion

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

Bellevue Arts Commission

1E-109 or Zoom, 4:30 pm

Commission Staff Contact: 425.452.4064

Acquisition of Emerging Radiance Farmhouse by Michelle Kumata and Tani Ikeda

At today's meeting, staff will present a proposed acquisition to the Bellevue Art Collection of *Emerging Radiance* by Artist Michelle Kumata and Creative Director Tani Ikeda.

Motion: A motion to recommend approving the acquisition of the artwork *Emerging Radiance* by artists Michelle Kumata and Tani Ikeda and include the artwork in the Bellevue Public Art Collection.

BELLEVUE ART COLLECTION'S MISSION

The City of Bellevue seeks to be a vital platform for cultural exchange and creative inspiration. The City turns to living artists to enrich the collective experience of Bellevue's public places through permanent commissions and a growing collection of moveable artworks funded through the Public Art Program. A segment of the collection is devoted to artworks that raise the discourse on the defining aspects of Bellevue's civic life, exploring the diverse identities of our residents, converging cultures, international connections, technological currents and interplay between nature and the urban experience that make Bellevue's environment unique. Bellevue's art collection helps document the dynamic moments and complexities of Bellevue's cultural life and is an important resource for future generations.

BACKGROUND

Throughout the history of the Bellevue Art Collection, the Arts Commission has voted to acquire artwork based on various reasons including aesthetics of the work, relevance to the collection, availability of sites for the work, artist's resume, and others.

ABOUT THE ARTWORK

This project honors the untold stories of Japanese American farmers who lived in Bellevue, WA from 1920 to 1942. These farmers transformed unusable land into a thriving and prosperous community before being forcibly uprooted and incarcerated, along with 120,000 other Japanese Americans, during WWII.

Artist Michelle Kumata and Creative Director Tani Ikeda have created a mural and immersive, augmented reality, storytelling experience that honors the lesser-known story of the Bellevue Japanese American farmers using Spark AR (Augmented Reality) Instagram filters that let viewers hear the actual voices of the farmers, courtesy of interviews from the Densho oral history archive of Japanese American farmers from Bellevue.



Emerging Radiance on display at the Bellevue Arts Museum

This artwork aims to educate the public about the history of the land in Bellevue and the forgotten stories of Japanese Americans who were taken from their homes and incarcerated based on their ethnicity. This project serves as a model of resilient storytelling that reconnects us to our history through the land.

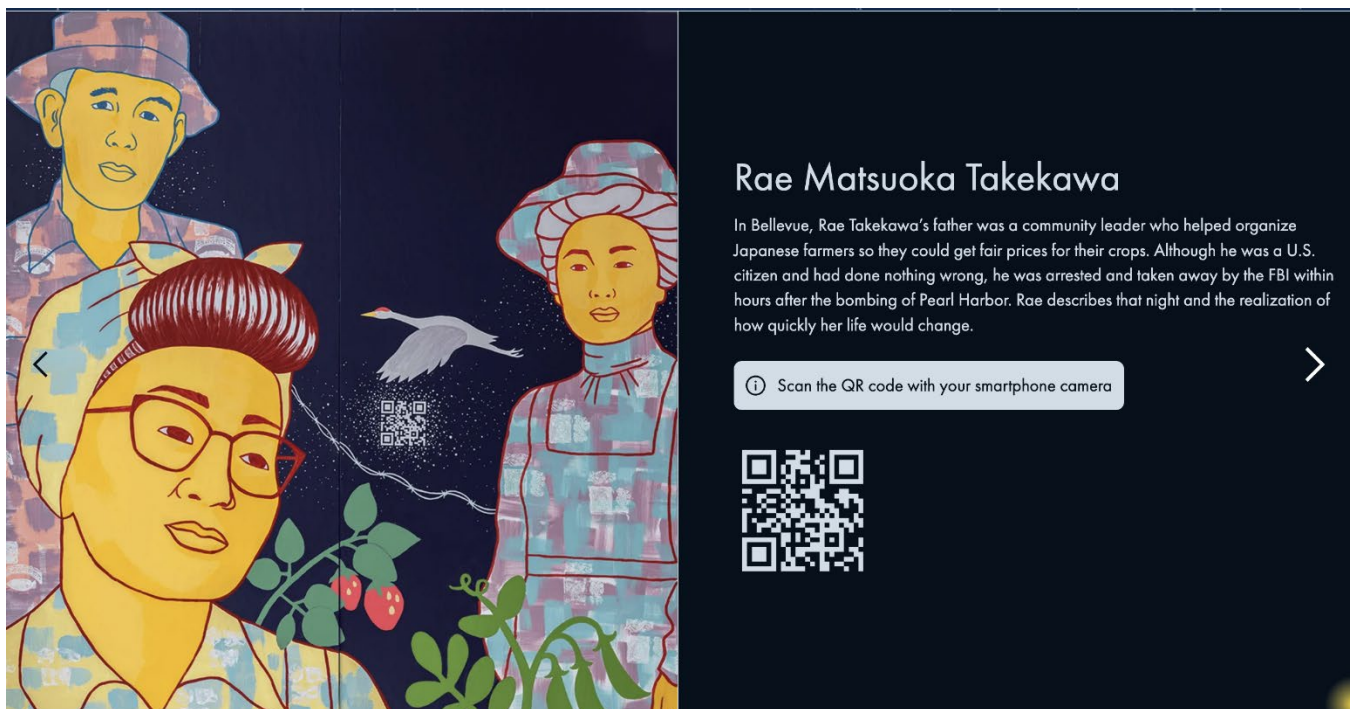
The dimensions of the farmhouse are 10' x 10' x 13.5' tall. When displayed as a farmhouse it requires a 40' x 40' footprint for the best AR experience and a preferred height of 18' minimum. The panels of the farmhouse can also be removed to be displayed on a wall with French cleats, which are included.

CRITICAL ACCLAIM

Emerging Radiance debuted at the Bellevue Arts Museum February 3 – March 13, 2022, where it received substantial press and glowing reviews, and doubled Museum attendance. It has also been recently featured at the “Augment Seattle” immersive art festival in South Lake Union.

The creation of *Emerging Radiance*, and the stories of Bellevue’s Japanese American farmers are featured in director Tani Ikeda’s documentary, “Day of Remembrance: 80th Anniversary Virtual Program Honoring the Nikkei Famers of Bellevue” (Available online: <https://www.emergingradiance.co/>).

Emerging Radiance also won the 2022 Tribeca A Award for Best Immersive Project.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

From the *Emerging Radiance* website:

Michelle Kumata is a 3.5 generation Japanese American artist influenced by heritage, identity and legacy. Her current work focuses on sharing Nikkei stories with a wider audience as a way to stake our place, inform, engage, inspire, and connect.

Tani Ikeda is a 4th generation Japanese American Emmy award-winning documentary director and augmented reality artist. She is a Sundance Fellow, Tribeca grantee, and Stanford artist in residence. Her work is a love letter to the resilience of her elders and future generations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the commission move to acquire *Emerging Radiance* from the artists. Staff's review of the artwork, the Bellevue-specific nature of the story, and the artists' qualifications demonstrate that accepting this artwork into the collection would be a public benefit. This review is based on, but not limited to, the following elements:

- **Aesthetic Quality:** this artwork is high quality and consistent with the level of expertise exhibited by other works in the collection.
- **Relevance of the artwork to the collection's mission:** this artwork explores themes that are relevant to current events in the region and across the nation. Underlying themes are consistent with Council's commitment to diversity as a strength.
- **Relevant of the artwork's story to Bellevue:** this artwork specifically tells the important story of Bellevue's Nikkei farmers, their incarceration, and resilience.
- **Critical Acclaim:** this artwork has received many honors in a very short timeframe and will elevate the overall profile of the collection.
- **Available Budget:** funding for the artwork will be made available from the City Manager's budget and will not impact the Public Art CIP budget.

NEXT STEPS

- Purchase agreement
- Site analysis for locations options
- Schedule of installation

STAFF CONTACT

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