

REENA SPAULINGS FINE ART
2228 W 7TH ST, 2ND FLOOR
LOS ANGELES, CA 90057

KEN OKIISHI
A Model Childhood
May 12 – June 16, 2018

Works in the exhibition:

--*A Model Childhood, Honolulu, Hawaii, circa 1940.* A photograph showing the first Boys' Day celebration of the artist's father—a rare document of Sansei (3rd generation) Hiroshima-Japanese culture as it migrated further into American geography and overlaid various cultural forms and habits as they occurred before WWII. (Immediately following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, all Japanese-signified objects were thrown into the ocean by the artist's grandfather as a way of overtly demonstrating "loyalty" to the new order by self-enforcing a pure "American" family identity. They were *not* put into "camp" on the mainland, and he was still able to find employment. His wife, who grew up going back and forth between Japan and Hawaii, and who was from a merchant-class family (i.e. pearl necklace and Parisian fashion mixed with kimonos), was now stuck only in America. It should have been "okay" since she was born in Hawaii, but this newly purified enforcement of strict identity narratives led to chronic mental illness. The grandfather once told his grandson that his Boy Scout leader Silver Beaver Award was his Oscar for "best actor." As a teenager: when he was 12, he pretended to be an 18-year old Chinese man and enlisted in the army for WWI, but his mother saw the documents lying on his bed and stopped him just before he got on the boat for his voyage to Europe; at 16, circa 1920, he ran away from home to Los Angeles, where he worked "all kinds of jobs," some of which he wouldn't even tell his "bad boy" grandson about (this reference refers to one of the artist's older brothers.) The grandfather lived in J-Town, at the Hotel Fedora. He seems to have worn a suit, and had some rather suspicious-looking friends. I know, this is getting confusing. The photograph is printed billboard-size, twice, with part of it cut off.

--A "family history video for insurance purposes," made by the artist's mother, starring the artist's father (who is pictured as a baby in the 1940 photograph from Honolulu, Hawaii). This video documents every object in the Okiishi household circa 2009.

--*A Model Childhood, the mainland (Ames, Iowa), circa 1978-1997.* The entire contents of the artist's childhood, saved in plastic storage bins and cardboard boxes in the Okiishi basement, 2940 Monroe Drive, Ames, Iowa. Driven to Los Angeles in May 2018 by the artist, through a dust storm in Nebraska, the mountains of Colorado and the deserts of Utah, with a stop at the site of the Topaz "relocation camp" (the euphemism used for prison/concentrations camps of American citizen children and their parents of Japanese extraction during WWII). The tradition of pilgrimage to "camp" is not common among Americans of Japanese descent. No one really talks about traumatic history; these things disappear. The artist had the entire basement archive-storage 3D-scanned so that a document of its unadulterated state could be recorded in a point cloud.

--Photographs from the road trip; photographs from the Okiishi basement, taken while walking around in the dark. Thinking about: the potentiality of a truly radical intersectionality (meaning: everything, not just the things that she thinks are significant); how many generations should be tortured by these radical enforcements of new orders before it's time to say goodbye to any American notion of identity; lots of other stuff, such as when I was taught Homer's *Odyssey* as intertext with vision quest narratives in oral tradition in high school, what America looks like when it's not all fucked up, how the food makes bodies become so grotesque, and when my next SoulCycle class will be.

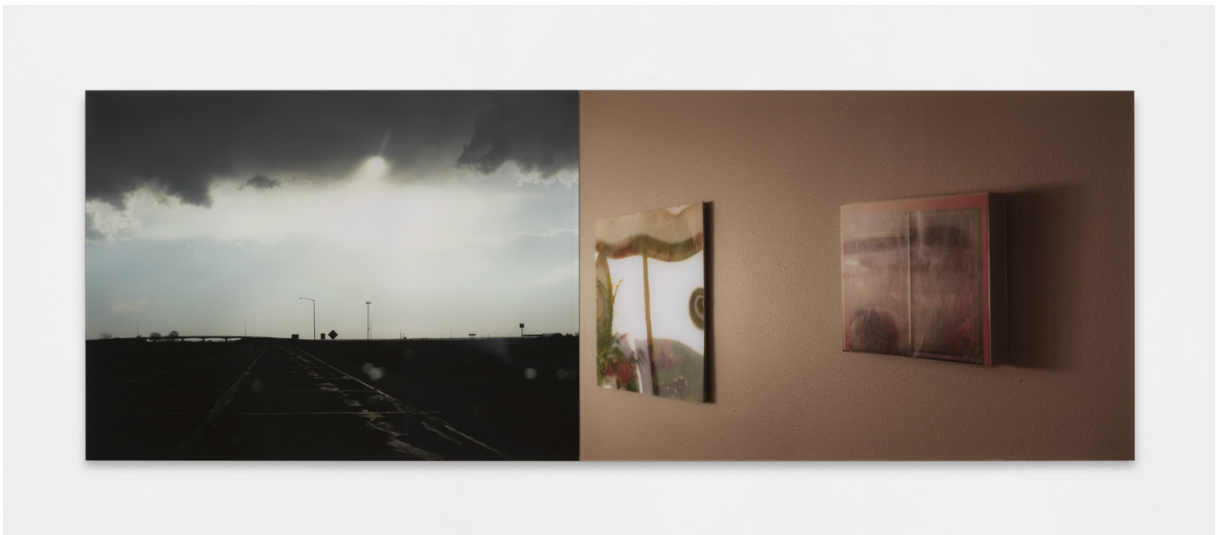
--Frank Ocean, *White Ferrari*, on in the car, both as the end stretching part of exercise class and as what is on in the car when visiting the concentration camp.

This is Ken Okiishi's first exhibition in Los Angeles and his third exhibition at Reena Spaulings Fine Art. Okiishi has had recent solo exhibitions at the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Arbeiterkammer Wien, Vienna; Fundació Gaspar, Barcelona; Take Ninagawa, Tokyo; Mehringdamm 72, Berlin; and Alex Zachary, New York. His work has been included in institutional group exhibitions at The Centre Pompidou, Paris; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Fridericianum, Kassel; Serralves Museum, Porto; Arnolfini, Bristol; White Columns, NY; and Artists Space, New York. His writing has appeared in Artforum, May, Bidoun, Triple Canopy, and The Brooklyn Rail, and a book on his work was recently published by Sternberg Press (*The Very Quick of the Word*, 2014). Okiishi is visiting faculty in the Department of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University.











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Ken Okiishi

2-channel documentation - top shows video that is projected and bottom shows detail views of the installation:

<https://vimeo.com/270166443>

password: model

"Family history video for insurance purposes" playing on small monitor at front of installation:

<https://vimeo.com/270184951>

password: model

A Model Childhood,, 2018

HD video, DV family history video for insurance purposes, data point cloud generated by 3D scan and one car load of personal effects transported from Okiishi family basement, 2940 Monroe Drive, Ames, Iowa

dimensions variable

unique

KO/I 3

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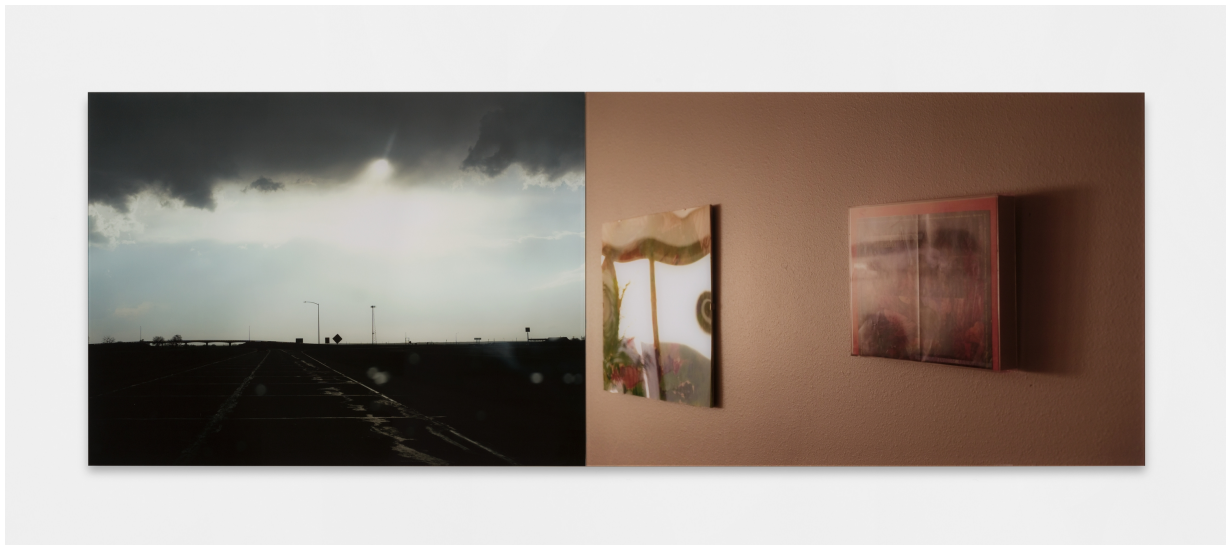
Ken Okiishi

A Model Childhood, Honolulu, Hawaii circa 1940,
2018

Waterproof solvent ink on vinyl
304.8 x 635 cm ; 120 x 250 in

unique
KO/P 39

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Ken Okiishi

***A Model Childhood 1*, 2018**

HP latex print mounted on sintra and acrylic

30 x 40 in left panel, 30 x 45 in right panel

2 + 1 AP

KO/PH 33/1

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Ken Okiishi

A Model Childhood 2, 2018

HP latex print mounted on sintra and acrylic
30 x 44.99 in left panel, 30 x 40 in right panel
2 + 1 AP
KO/PH 34/1

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Ken Okiishi

***A Model Childhood 3*, 2018**

HP latex print mounted on sintra and acrylic
30 x 44.97 in left panel, 30 x 40 in right panel

2 + 1 AP

KO/PH 35/1

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Ken Okiishi

***Angel*, 2018**

PLA 3D print

76.2 x 27.94 x 22.86 cm ; 30 x 11 x 9 in

3 + 1 AP

KO/S 3/1

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Ken Okiishi

***Wings*, 2018**

PLA 3D print

40.64 x 30.48 x 2.54 cm ; 16 x 12 x 1 in

3 + 1 AP

KO/S 4/1