Bruce & Norman Yonemoto Papers

Finding aid created by Jamie Henricks.
Japanese American National Museum
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Los Angeles, CA 90012
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URL: http://www.janm.org/
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**Finding aid for the Bruce & Norman Yonemoto Papers**

**Collection number: 2002.34**

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**Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Bruce & Norman Yonemoto papers  
**Date:** 1960s-1990s  
**Collection number:** 2002.34  
**Collection Size:** 6.75 linear feet (9 boxes)  
**Repository:** Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, Calif.)  
Los Angeles, California 90012  
**Creator:** Yonemoto, Bruce  
**Creator:** Yonemoto, Norman

**Abstract:** This collection contains papers related to the professional filmmaking of Bruce and Norman Yonemoto, for films between the 1960s and 1990s. The contents are primarily correspondence, press materials, exhibition catalogs and brochures, and screenplays and production notes for videos.

**Physical location:** Japanese American National Museum. 100 North Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

**Access**

By appointment only. Please contact the Collections Management and Access Unit (collections@janm.org). Advanced notice is required.

**Publication Rights**

All requests for permission to publish, reproduce, or quote from materials in this collection must be submitted to the Collections Management and Access Unit at the Japanese American National Museum (collections@janm.org).

**Preferred Citation**


**Acquisition Information**

Acquired in 2000 as a gift of Bruce and Norman Yonemoto.

**Processing Information**

Items arrived primarily in original folders organized and labeled by Bruce and Norman Yonemoto. Folder titles and arrangement was preserved when possible. The collection was processed in 2016 by Jamie Henricks.

**Biographical Note**

Norman Yonemoto was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1946, a year after their father Tak, who was in the Army, married his mother Rosie, who was incarcerated in Tule Lake concentration camp. They returned to California, where Bruce was born in 1949 in San Jose.

Norman moved from the Bay Area to Los Angeles in 1968, where he attended UCLA before concentrating his studies at the American Film Institute Center for Advanced Studies. Bruce received a Bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1972. The following year he went to Japan where he lived for three years while studying at the Sokei Bijitsu Gakko (Sokei Art Institute) in Tokyo. After returning from Japan in 1975, Bruce went on to receive an MFA from the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles.

In 1976 Norman and Bruce embarked on their first collaborative work, an ambitious film project entitled Garage Sale. They formalized their partnership in 1979 when they founded their own company, Kyo-dai Productions. Captivated by what was then a relatively new artistic medium, Bruce and Norman went on to work in video. The brothers played a central role in establishing video as a viable artistic medium.

The Yonemotos' work has been included in numerous exhibitions at major institutions such as the Long Beach Museum of Art; the Santa Monica Museum of Art; the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Screenings of their films and videos have been held at many sites, including the American Film Institute, Los Angeles; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Anthology Film Archives, New York; Pacific Film Archives, Berkeley, California; Kunstverein, Cologne; and the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo. An exhibit at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) was held to celebrate their work in 1999, titled “Memory, Matter and Modern Romance.”
Norman passed away in Los Angeles in 2014, and Bruce is currently a professor and chair of the art department at UC Irvine. They also have two younger brothers, Gerald and Roger.

Information is taken from a biography on the JANM website, Los Angeles Times articles, and the UC Irvine website.

**Scope and Content**

This collection contains papers related to the professional filmmaking of Bruce and Norman Yonemoto, for films between the 1960s and 1990s. The contents are primarily correspondence, press materials, exhibition catalogs and brochures, and screenplays and production notes for videos. Also included are personal biographies and CVs of Bruce and Norman Yonemoto. The majority of the collection is materials related to videos produced by the Yonemotos and video art installations in museums around the world. Some of the videos represented in the collection include Blinky the Friendly Hen, Garage Sale, Green Card: An American Romance, Kappa, Made in Hollywood, and others.

**Arrangement**

Original arrangement was preserved.

**Indexing Terms**

Yonemoto, Bruce
Yonemoto, Norman
Video art