Kango Takamura paintings LSC.0433

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Kango Takamura was an Issei artist born in Kumamoto-ken, Japan in January of 1895. He immigrated to the United States when he was seventeen years old. Takamura spent ten years in Hawaii and then went to New York after becoming interested in the motion picture industry. After a short stay at the Paramount Studios offices in Long Island he moved to Hollywood. He was working as a photo retoucher for RKO Studios in Los Angeles when Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese Imperial Navy. Takamura was detained by the FBI in 1942 after offering to sell a motion-picture camera to a visiting Japanese general. He was interned at Santa Fe, New Mexico for several months and then moved to a camp at Manzanar, California, where he joined his wife, daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter. He remained at Manzanar with his family until 1945. While at Manzanar, Takamura depicted his surroundings in drawings and watercolors. He also worked as a camp sign-maker at Santa Fe and as curator for a small museum at Manzanar. After the war, he returned to Hollywood and worked at RKO Studios for another twenty-five years before retiring. The collection consists of 77 watercolor paintings produced during World War II while Kango Takamura was detained at the Santa Fe Internment Camp, New Mexico, and the Manzanar Internment Camp, California. Also included are paper mounts and one photographic reproduction of a painting. Stored off-site at SRLF. All requests to access special collections materials must be made in advance through our electronic paging system using the request button located on this page.

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Processing Note
Processed by Laura Ward, October 2003.

Provenance/Source of Acquisition

Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Kango Takamura paintings (Collection 433). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.

UCLA Catalog Record ID
UCLA Catalog Record ID: 4962225

Biography
Kango Takamura was an Issei artist born in Kumamoto-ken, Japan in January of 1895. He immigrated to the United States when he was seventeen years old. Takamura spent ten years in Hawaii and then went to New York after becoming interested in the motion picture industry. After a short stay at the Paramount Studios offices in Long Island he moved to Hollywood. He was working as a photo retoucher for RKO Studios in Los Angeles when Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese Imperial Navy. Takamura was detained by the FBI in 1942 after offering to sell a motion-picture camera to a visiting Japanese general. He was interned at Santa Fe, New Mexico for several months and then moved to a camp at Manzanar, California, where he joined his wife, daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter. He remained at Manzanar with his family until 1945. Takamura was not allowed to take photographs during his stays at Santa Fe and Manzanar but he depicted his surroundings in drawings and watercolors. He also worked as a camp sign-maker at Santa Fe and as curator for a small museum at Manzanar. When Takamura left Manzanar he returned to Hollywood and worked at RKO Studios for another twenty-five years before retiring. Takamura lived in Los Angeles until he passed away in January, 1990 at 94 years old.

Scope and Content
Collection consists of 77 watercolor paintings produced during World War II while Kango Takamura was detained at the Santa Fe Internment Camp, New Mexico, and the Manzanar Internment Camp, California. Also included are paper mounts and one photographic reproduction of a painting.
Organization and Arrangement
Arranged in the following series:
1. Santa Fe.

The series names identify the place where the paintings in each series were produced.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Watercolors.
Japanese American painters -- Archives.
Japanese Americans -- Evacuation and relocation, 1942-1945
Santa Fe Internment Camp (N.M.) -- Pictorial works
Takamura, Kango, 1895-1990 -- Archives
Manzanar War Relocation Center -- Pictorial works

Santa Fe

box 1, folder 1  Our pet hawk died, 1942 May 22.
Physical Description: (21 × 29 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper, matted)
Scope and Contents note
"Our pet hawk died on May 22. The following day Mr. Sato of Chula Vista died. But same
day over 80 of us internees were released."
Unsigned with Japanese characters.

box 1, folder 2  Our guard became a spring baseball fan, n.d.
Physical Description: (21 × 28 cm. Watercolor and pencil on paper, matted)
Scope and Contents note
"Our guard in the watch tower became a spring baseball fan at Santa Fe."
Unsigned with Japanese characters.

box 1, folder 3  At evening I sketched this unusual cloud formation, 1942 May 31.
Physical Description: (25.5 × 37.5 cm. Watercolor on paper, matted)
Scope and Contents note
No caption.
Signed.

box 1, folder 4  Surprised guard on night watch at Santa Fe, n.d.
Physical Description: (27.5 × 42.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on heavy paper)
Scope and Contents note
"His bald pate shined as bright as a full moon."
Unsigned with Japanese characters.
[Also], Pencil and ink sketches of women in kimono verso.

box 2, folder 1  Early birds, 1942 June 8.
Physical Description: (19 × 27.5 cm. Watercolor and pencil on paper)
Scope and Contents note
No caption.
Unsigned.
Santa Fe

box 2, folder 2  
Chow time at the mess hall, 1942 June 8.
- Physical Description: (19 × 30 cm. Watercolor and pencil on paper)
- Scope and Contents note
  No caption.
  Unsigned.

box 2, folder 3  
Relaxing after supper, 1942 June 8.
- Physical Description: (21 × 29 cm. Watercolor and pencil on paper)
- Scope and Contents note
  No caption.
  Unsigned.

box 2, folder 4  
Santa Fe's sunsets were beautiful, n.d.
- Physical Description: (17.5 × 26.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
- Scope and Contents note
  No caption.
  Signed.

box 2, folder 5  
Enjoying the recording music, 1942 June 8.
- Physical Description: (20.5 × 29 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
- Scope and Contents note
  "Mr. Murayama, Mr. Hoshimiya. Enjoying the recording music."
  Unsigned.

box 2, folder 6  
Dawn in the winter, n.d.
- Physical Description: (20.5 × 28.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
- Scope and Contents note
  No caption.
  Unsigned with Japanese characters.

box 2, folder 7  
Santa Fe internment camp, n.d.
- Physical Description: (20 × 29.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
- Scope and Contents note
  "Santa Fe internment camp."
  Signed.

box 2, folder 8  
Panorama of Santa Fe internment center and mount, 1942 April 26.
- Physical Description: (Painting 13 × 25 cm; mount 20 × 28 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper. Mount is card stock and rice paper with ink caption)
- Scope and Contents note
  No caption on painting.
  Signed with Japanese characters. Caption on mount reads: "Panorama of Santa Fe internment center. Drawn on writing paper - with anxiety - during early days when I was not sure that drawings of any kind were permitted."
  Unsigned with Japanese characters.

box 2, folder 9  
Administration office, n.d.
- Physical Description: (19.5 × 28 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
- Scope and Contents note
  "Mr. Ohkado, Mr. Nozaki R., Mr. Kitagawa M."
  Unsigned.
box 2, folder 10  A canteen for the convenience of Santa Fe internee, 1942 June 11.
   Physical Description: (19.5 × 29 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
   Scope and Contents note
   "Mr. Arai, Mr. Funahashi."
   Unsigned.

box 2, folder 11  Sewing room, 1942 June 10.
   Physical Description: (21.5 × 29.5 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper)
   Scope and Contents note
   "Mr. Kamimura, Mr. Kamei, Mr. Kishi."
   Unsigned with Japanese characters.

box 2, folder 12  Barber shop, 1942 June 8.
   Physical Description: (21 × 28.5 cm. Watercolor and pencil on paper)
   No caption.
   Unsigned.

box 2, folder 13  We made wooden clogs, 1942 June 10.
   Physical Description: (21 × 30 cm. Watercolor and pencil on paper)
   No caption.
   Unsigned.

box 2, folder 14  We made tubs, n.d.
   Physical Description: (18.5 × 30 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
   No caption.
   Signed.

box 2, folder 15  An adobe house inside our Santa Fe camp, n.d.
   Physical Description: (17.5 × 29 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
   "An adobe house inside our Santa Fe Camp."
   Signed.

box 2, folder 16  Singing in the mess hall, n.d.
   Physical Description: (21 × 30.5 cm. Watercolor and pencil on paper)
   No caption.
   Signed with Japanese characters.

box 2, folder 17  Our umpire Mr. Higashikuze, n.d.
   Physical Description: (20.5 × 29 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper)
   "Mr. Higashikuze. Our umpire Mr. Higashikuze knew the rules but the players dint it.
   However we all had a good time."
   Signed.
**This was the Santa Fe barrack no.5, 1942.**

Physical Description: (21 × 21.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

"This was the Santa Fe barrack no.5 where I stayed."

Signed.

**A butane tank, 1942 June 8.**

Physical Description: (20.5 × 29.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

"A butane tank was used to strike the gong that summoned us to mess hall. Santa Fe internment camp."

Signed in pencil.

**June 1942, 1942 June / May 23.**

Physical Description: (19.5 × 29.5 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper)

Scope and Contents note

"June 1942. Ending months of uncertainty, we were released from Santa Fe internment camp to return to our families at relocation centers. Everyone cheered as we left camp. Now there was hope we would return home."

Unsigned with Japanese characters.

**Strange cloud, n.d.**

Physical Description: (36 × 25.5 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper)

Scope and Contents note

No caption.

Unsigned.

[Also], copy print with identical dimensions.

**We stopped briefly at a small town, 1942 June 15.**

Physical Description: (20.5 × 28.5 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper)

Scope and Contents note

"We stopped briefly at a small town - Needles, they said. To our pleasant surprise, Japanese workers brought us boxes of food."

Unsigned.

**Mojave, California, 1942 June 15.**

Physical Description: (19.5 × 27 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper)

Scope and Contents note

"Mojave, Calif. We waited for our bus here for seven long hours in a desert windstorm - after we disembarked from the train."

Unsigned with Japanese characters.

**Original mounts and titles, n.d.**

Physical Description: (Paper)

**Our roommates in barracks no. five, n.d.**

Physical Description: (38.9 × 57.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper, matted. Source of title noted in pencil verso)

Scope and Contents note

"Mr. Okaski, Mr. Sugiyama, Mr. Tsuyuki, Mr. Hagio, Mr. Yamamoto, Mr. Tanaka, Mr. Hatori, Mr. Yamada, Mr. Musashi, Mr. Takamura."

Unsigned.
Manzanar

box 1, folder 5  

**Making rice cakes, 1942 December 31.**
  Physical Description: (21 × 28.5 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper, matted)  
  Scope and Contents note  
  "Making rice cakes (mochi-tsuki). New Year custom. No 2 kitchen."
  Unsigned.

box 1, folder 6  

**Mr. Hirozawa, n.d.**
  Physical Description: (27 × 34 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper, matted)  
  Scope and Contents note  
  "Mr. Hirozawa. The chemists work incessantly in search of a better method of extracting rubber. Here a chemist is preparing latex from guayule."
  Signed.

box 1, folder 7  

**Some characteristics of guayule strains, n.d.**
  Physical Description: (19.5 × 25 cm. Watercolor (?) and ink on paper, matted)  
  Scope and Contents note  
  "Some characteristics of guayule strains."
  Unsigned.

box 1, folder 8  

**First successful growing of guayule, 1942 October 19.**
  Physical Description: (20 × 28.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper, matted)  
  Scope and Contents note  
  "The first successful growing of -- guayule rubber plant cuttings."
  Signed.

box 1, folder 9  

**Progress after one year, 1943 May 14.**
  Physical Description: (22 × 32 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper and inset black and white photograph, matted)  
  Scope and Contents note  
  "Progress after one year. The mess hall line."
  With inset photo caption: "Wall painting by Takamura."
  Signed.

box 1, folder 10  

**Mr. Akaboshi, 1943.**
  Physical Description: (25.5 × 36 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper, matted)  
  Scope and Contents note  
  "Rooted cuttings are transplanted to milk cartons and then to the field. Transplanting is done carefully and speedily by hand of the experimenters. Mr. Akaboshi."
  Signed.

box 1, folder 11  

**Manzanar High School commencement of 1944, [1944].**
  Physical Description: (23.5 × 41.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)  
  Scope and Contents note  
  "Manzanar High School commencement of 1944. Our democratic country has people representing all nation[s] -- Mr. Ralph P. Merritt."
  Unsigned with Japanese characters.
box 1, folder 12  
**Untitled view of camp street, [1944?].**

Physical Description: (24.5 × 39 cm. Watercolor on paper)

Scope and Contents note

No caption.

Signed.

box 3, folder 3  
**Keeping the camp clean and tidy, n.d.**

Physical Description: (37.5 × 51 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

No caption.

Unsigned with Japanese characters.

box 1, folder 13  
**A huge blender, n.d.**

Physical Description: (37 × 27.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

"A huge blender speedily stirring gallons of water mixed with chopped guayule, forces rubber out of the wood. This is a mechanical method which has been proved most efficient in extracting rubber from guayule shrubs."

Signed.

box 1, folder 14  
**Mr. Nishimura, n.d.**

Physical Description: (26.5 × 36.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

"Mr. Nishimura. Analysis of the plant extracts is one of many research works which are carried out by the chemists. Here a chemist is working with a special apparatus for the determination of nitrogen."

Signed.

box 1, folder 15  
**Easter sunrise service, 1944 April 9.**

Physical Description: (36 × 50.5 cm. Watercolor on paper)

Scope and Contents note

"Easter sunrise service."

Signed.

box 1, folder 16  
**Saturday afternoon looking south from block 8, 1943 May.**

Physical Description: (31.5 × 50.5 cm. Watercolor on paper)

Scope and Contents note

No caption.

Signed.

box 1, folder 17  
**Mr. Hata, 1943.**

Physical Description: (26.5 × 37 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

"Propagation of plants by cutting method has been succeeded for the first time. Guayule cuttings are treated with a phytohormone before setting in a flat."

Signed.

box 2, folder 24  
**Home sweet home, 1942 June 16.**

Physical Description: (21 × 28 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

"Home sweet home for men coming home to Manzanar from [feet] furlough."

Unsigned with Japanese characters.
First impression of Manzanar, 1942 June.

Physical Description: (21.5 × 29 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
Scope and Contents note
"First impression of Manzanar."
Unsigned with Japanese characters.

I visited Dr. Carter today, 1942 October 8.

Physical Description: (21.5 × 29.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
Scope and Contents note
"I visited Dr. Carter today because school has opened and I am to make drawings of class scenes. It seemed a hundred people were rushing in and out of her office. All over her desk; the telephone rang all the time."
Unsigned.

Its nap time, n.d.

Physical Description: (22 × 28.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
Scope and Contents note
"It's nap time, but there's more noise than rest. The youngsters wriggle around, won't lie still. The teachers look exhausted. The scam in the foreground turns around: 'Hiya popa, watcha doin?' Rest time in the nursery class."
Signed.

Children in the classroom, n.d.

Physical Description: (20 × 29 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
Scope and Contents note
No caption.
Signed.

Teacher, I know, n.d.

Physical Description: (22 × 26.5 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper)
Scope and Contents note
"'Teacher, I know - ' At the other end of the same barrack. First graders of Miss Joh sit awkwardly about the mess table. A question has just been asked. Little Hiroshi, on the end slowly lifts his hand 'Teacher, I know.'"
Signed.

Did you ever see such individual dress attire?, n.d.

Physical Description: (21 cm × 28 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
Scope and Contents note
"Did you ever see such individual dress attire? This is a high school gym class I ran into on the dusty field next to block 7. Facing each other in a circle, they would clap their hands, say something, laugh. Off in the corner another class came dashing by in a cloud of dust. But school is wonderful."
Unsigned.

A cooking class, 1942.

Physical Description: (22 × 30 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)
Scope and Contents note
"A cooking class. What vitamins do potatoes have? Miss Smith teaches her girls in what used to be the kitchen of mess hall 7."
Signed.
box 2, folder 32  
**Gee, that Angleworm's my name, n.d.**  
Physical Description: (22.5 × 29.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"'Gee, that angleworm's my name.' said Haruo, slouched over the classroom steps as Mr. Lamphere showed his shorthand pupils how to write their name in the Gregg manner."  
Signed.

box 2, folder 33  
**The boys in the woodcarving class, n.d.**  
Physical Description: (21.5 × 29 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"The boys in the woodcarving class of Mr. Bouche were being praised for their good work that day. The teacher was kept very busy showing his pupils how to hold the chisel."  
Signed.

box 2, folder 34  
**Manzanar High School, 1942 October 8.**  
Physical Description: (21 × 29 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"Manzanar High School. Studies took on great importance in these barrack classrooms. This was a day before the week-end holiday."  
Signed.

box 2, folder 35  
**Roll call is taken, 1942 October 8.**  
Physical Description: (21.5 × 28 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"Roll call is taken. This was first day of school he study hall. Converted from a former mess hall, resounded with laughter as Mr. Vanderjagt aide would call a name and a squeaky soprano would respond 'Here,' only to be followed by an off-pitch bass 'Heah.'"  
Unsigned.

box 2, folder 36  
**Students hurry to the classes, 1943 Feb.**  
Physical Description: (20 × 30.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"Students hurry to the classes as the bell rings on this foggy morning."  
Signed.

box 2, folder 37  
**Approximately 200 students graduated, 1943 July 3.**  
Physical Description: (22 × 30.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"Approximately 200 students graduated at second Manzanar High School commencement."  
Signed.

box 2, folder 38  
**More Mochi at Manzanar, n.d.**  
Physical Description: (18.5 × 27 cm. Watercolor, pencil, and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
No caption.  
Signed with Japanese characters.
box 2, folder 39  
**Making rice cakes, n.d.**  
Physical Description: (21 × 28.5 cm. Watercolor and pencil on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"Making rice cakes. New Year custom."  
Unsigned.

box 2, folder 40  
**Pounding the Mochi, n.d.**  
Physical Description: (21.5 × 28 cm. Watercolor, pencil, and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
No caption.  
Signed with Japanese characters.

box 2, folder 41  
**Mochi-Tsuki, n.d.**  
Physical Description: (20.5 × 28 cm. Watercolor, pencil, and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"Mochi-Tsuki."  
Signed with Japanese characters.

box 2, folder 42  
**Mochi-Tsuki, Making rice cakes, n.d.**  
Physical Description: (19.5 × 25.5 cm. Watercolor, pencil, and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"Mochi-Tsuki. Making rice cakes. New Year custom."  
Signed.

box 2, folder 43  
**Clothing allowance, 1942 October 12.**  
Physical Description: (19 × 28.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"Clothing allowance."  
Unsigned with Japanese characters.

box 2, folder 44  
**Bainbridge people, 1942 February 24.**  
Physical Description: (21.5 × 30 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"Bainbridge people bidding farewell as they leave for Minnedoka relocation camp."  
Unsigned.

box 2, folder 45  
**Residents installed plaster boards, 1942 November 1.**  
Physical Description: (19.5 × 29 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
"Residents installed plaster boards inside barracks. This was the room of Mr. and Mrs. Kurahashi."  
Signed.

box 2, folder 46  
**At leisure on New Year's afternoon, 1943 January 1.**  
Physical Description: (22 × 34.5 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper)  
Scope and Contents note  
No caption.  
Signed.
Manzanar

She is knitting. He is carving, 1943 February 18.

Physical Description: (19 × 27 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper)

Scope and Contents note

“She is knitting. He is carving wood. They enjoy their hobbies.”

Signed.

Snow in January 1944, 1944 January 6.

Physical Description: (21.5 × 30.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

“Snow in January 1944, block 35 at Manzanar.”

Signed.

Oil for the barracks, 1944 February 22.

Physical Description: (22 × 33 cm. Watercolor on paper)

Scope and Contents note

No caption.

Unsigned.

The residents transformed dusty semi-arid land, 1942 October 26.

Physical Description: (20 × 29 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

“The residents transformed dusty semi-arid land into green truck forms, growing vegetable crops of all kinds. I sketched this scene of workers harvesting large, ripe, sweet watermelons.”

Unsigned.

Manzanar farm, 1942 October 26.

Physical Description: (17 × 28.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

“Manzanar Farm.”

Signed.

Farm workers, 1942 October 26.

Physical Description: (22 × 28.5 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

“Farm workers harvest a crop of Manzanar grown okra.”

Unsigned.

Guayule shrub and leaf types, n.d.

Physical Description: (20 × 25 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

“Guayule shrub and leaf types. Some of the leaf types can be used to distinguish one strain from another.”

Unsigned.

A biologist hybridizes, n.d.

Physical Description: (24 × 35 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper)

Scope and Contents note

“A biologist hybridizes Guayule trying to produce plants superior in quality than those existing now.”

Signed.
After the rain an abandoned baby cart, 1945 October 30.

Physical Description: (22.5 × 35 cm. Watercolor on paper)

Scope and Contents note
No caption.
Signed.

The Manzanar auditorium, 1944 May 24.

Physical Description: (16 × 29.5 cm. Watercolor, ink, and pencil on paper)

Scope and Contents note
"The Manzanar auditorium and community hall nears completion."
Unsigned.

Original mounts and titles, n.d.

Physical Description: (Paper)

Untitled winter landscape, n.d.

Physical Description: (38.5 × 51 cm. Watercolor and ink on paper, matted)

Scope and Contents note
No caption.
Unsigned with Japanese characters.