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**THE IMPACT OF MUSEUM CURATION ON COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY:
JAPANESE CULTURE AT THE JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM AND
THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY'S JAPANESE GARDENS**

by

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**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ANTHROPOLOGY**

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Introduction:

Japanese and Japanese American communities and identities have fundamentally changed throughout the past few generations in the aftermath of WWII. The immigrant experience has shaped the role these communities play in cities like Los Angeles where the history of immigration is long and fundamental to the creation of the city. Museums and their portrayal of these histories are crucial in shaping the identities of Japanese and Japanese Americans today. In two prominent museums in the LA area, including the Japanese American National Museum, and the Huntington Library, specifically their Japanese Gardens, the representation of Japanese culture is a predominant aspect of the museums' exhibitions. This thesis argues that the histories of these sites, rooted in connections with the Japanese and Japanese American communities they serve, and current exhibitions impact Japanese culture and identity, including those who identify within the community and those who do not.

Museums are fundamental to the preservation of human history and culture. Museums have become one of the most prominent institutions for education, research, and collections that are accessible to the public. A modern museum is more than just a place to house collections and to display them behind glass walls, but is a place for an immersive experience for visitors and can even act as a “community center” (Půček). Museums act as a sort of custodian or caretaker in preserving these communities, ensuring the survival and accurate portrayal of their histories. They provide shared knowledge and cultivate a space for learning and human empathy, and by doing so, become democratic spaces where diverse voices and narratives converge. This thesis will focus on the Los Angeles region as a key site of cultural exchange and the role of community within the museum space. By focusing on a specific ethnic community represented by the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) and the Huntington Library's Japanese

Gardens, this thesis aims to understand the role museums and their exhibitions can play in shaping one's identity, education, and sense of morality.

Both of these sites have grappled with the reality of the Japanese Internment of WWII which ultimately had an impact in the making and shaping of the sites as they exist today. Both of these museums must recognize this difficult history as a part of their narrative while representing Japanese culture in two very distinct ways. On one hand, the JANM is a museum founded in Little Tokyo, a key cultural site for Japanese Americans, and exists to share their history within the community they are located. They share the story of internment as a radical part of the museum's creation and use it as an educational tool within their exhibit space. On the other hand, founded very differently, is the Japanese Gardens at the Huntington Library, created over a hundred years ago, building relationships with different Japanese families and workers who made the garden into what it is today. It is also unique in the sense that it is an entirely immersive experience for the visitor, unlike a stereotypical white-walled museum space, that utilizes botanical and architectural culture to encapsulate its guests (Museum Anthropology). These museums are very different in why and how they were founded, what tools they use to share Japanese culture, and ultimately how they shape their viewers and the public perceptions of the Japanese and Japanese American identity. However, it is useful to see what tactics are most effective in making the museum more than a site of education and research and become a place where communities can flourish.

In this thesis, I first explore the historical context of each museum to understand the unique circumstances that brought about the museum's creation. The histories of the museums are significant in the decisions behind what exhibits they choose to showcase and how they approach and represent the histories and identities of Japan through the exhibition. Then, I

compare the presentation of Japanese culture within each site and what objectives they want to accomplish. For this section, I have chosen to look at two ongoing exhibits at the time of this thesis project from 2023-2024. The first, from JANM, focuses on grappling with Japanese Internment at the forefront of Japanese American identity. The second, a new installation to the Japanese Gardens at the Huntington Library, looks at the construction and implementation of the Japanese Heritage Shoya House and what the Huntington hopes to accomplish with this new addition to the gardens. After I explore the role these exhibits play within their respective museum spaces, I look at the implications of these exhibits on the public. In this thesis, I conducted interviews with staff members from both museum sites, guests who identified with Japanese or Japanese American identity, and guests who did not, and also conducted research through online review platforms. I recruited these interviewees through two main methods. The first was contact to both museum sites through email to get staff who might be interested in being interviewed for my thesis, which makes up about half of my interview data. Secondly, I reached out to my local community members through a survey. To get a broader range of comments on the museum sites, I also researched online forums and review sites to see what others beyond my connections might have to say. I wanted to understand the unique perspectives of different people depending on their level of involvement with the museums might have to say about the impact of the exhibits on their lives. These interviews were productive in gaining insight into curator perspectives on each exhibit's creation and implementation. Talking and researching guest perspectives became a bit more limiting, as I found that most answers were brief or went into tangential themes.

In the deep-rooted American history of immigration, it is important to preserve the often marginalized voices and histories, such as Japanese Internment, that have not been previously put in the spotlight. Histories have often been whitewashed, denying Japanese Americans the right to share their narratives from their perspective. This persistent isolation and separation of different communities and ethnic groups has meant that museums play an even more critical role in bringing people together (Matsumoto). The search for a community and the meaning of one's identity is challenging, especially when there has not existed a safe space for these feelings in marginalized communities to exist before. Museums can bring about a newfound sense of comfort and empathy to those within a culture or beyond it, normalizing the experiences of being human. Through the examples of JANM and the Huntington Library, this thesis argues that museums can be locally embedded cultural processes, where the ideas of identity and community are contested, challenging the authoritative and top-down operations of a museum as a public institution.

Section One: History of the Museum Sites and Their Cultural Significance

In this section, I will be examining the historical context and creation of the two sites of my research paper, the Japanese American National Museum and the Huntington Library's Japanese Garden. To understand the significance of their exhibitions today, we must first understand how these places were created and why they are important to their respective communities. The Japanese American National Museum is located in Little Tokyo, a part of downtown Los Angeles, in comparison to the Huntington Library, which is located further east in San Marino, where the Huntington estate was located before its conversion to a museum. Japanese Americans make up an important part of a vast, multiethnic, and multicultural city. As

we study the history of these sites, it allows us to further examine the purpose of these sites in their respective communities and populations today.

The first site is the Japanese American National Museum (JANM), which was founded in 1985 by the combined efforts of Japanese-American World War II veterans and businessmen from Little Tokyo. Their mission was to preserve and share the history of Japanese Americans. They hoped to achieve this by capturing the stories of Japanese Americans as a fundamental piece of U.S. History. This mission would help share a sense of appreciation for ethnic and cultural diversity in the country, especially in Los Angeles (Kurashige). The veterans originally got this idea out of fear that their stories from the war would not be remembered. They connected with the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum in 1982 to create an exhibition on their experiences, called *Japanese American Soldier* (Little Tokyo Historical Society). When the exhibition was over, the men wanted a permanent home for the collection. They met with Japanese businessman Bruce Kaji, who shared a similar envision for a Japanese-American museum to preserve their history. This aligned perfectly at the same time that discussion was occurring over the construction of Little Tokyo as an LA suburb. These two groups officially connected in 1985 and were able to locate their exhibitions in an old Buddhist Temple, the Hompa Hongwanji, from the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (JANM History). With financial support from the State of California, the real work at the museum could begin.

The JANM officially opened to the public in 1992. The museum had dedicated itself to documenting and presenting the Japanese-American experience from the perspective of those who lived it. Its first few exhibitions were critical in the creation of the museum's purpose for the community. With art and culture at the core of the museum, the first exhibition that opened was called *The View from Within: Japanese American Art from the Internment Camps, 1942-1945*.

This first exhibit left a huge impression on the community, and Japanese people at large, and even the Japanese Emperor and Empress visited the museum. This led to the creation of similar exhibitions, like *America's Concentration Camps: Remembering the Japanese-American Experience*, which upon opening brought in huge numbers of visitors, including a large number of formerly incarcerated people (JANM History). The exhibition encouraged guests to interact with pieces of the camp, such as large-scale maps and information sheets. They also showed home-edited footage of the barracks recovered from the Heart Mountain camp in Wyoming by staff and volunteers displayed in a nearby parking lot. Ultimately, these exhibitions reached a wider audience than even Los Angeles. These exhibitions traveled nationally and even internationally, inspiring groups of other Japanese-Americans to start preserving their stories too.

The museum was growing in popularity and in size, so in 1999 the JANM opened a new building dubbed “The Pavilion”. This new building provided more public spaces for exhibitions and workspaces for collections behind the scenes. At this time, JANM premiered its core Japanese-American history exhibition, *Common Ground: The Heart of Community*, which includes rare artifacts and photographs, art installations, historic movie footage, a scale model of the Manzanar Internment Camp in California, and fragments of the barracks from the Heart Mountain Camp in Wyoming (JANM History). This building expansion allowed the museum to accept traveling exhibitions from other institutions, which was key to bringing in a variety of collections and perspectives. On-site events continued to be a priority for the museum, making initiatives towards accessibility and collaboration with other groups. Events such as workshops, plenaries, and presentations have connected the Little Tokyo community as well as Japanese-Americans altogether.

The second site is the Huntington Library's Japanese Gardens. The Japanese Garden is made up of three distinct types of gardens. The first is the pond-and-stream garden, which was implemented in 1912, the second is the dry garden, created in 1968, and the last is the tea garden, designed in 2012. Over more than 100 years, the Japanese Gardens at the Huntington Library have undergone many changes, and even more are being added to the space today (The Huntington). The arrival of the first garden helped transform the then-private estate into an elegant country place, where the vast collection of art, books, and plants attested to the wealth and prominence of the patrons.

The inspiration for creating such a unique cultural site came from the World's Fair, beginning in 1876 with the premiere of bonsai, stone lanterns, and bronze cranes displayed in the Japanese Bazaar at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia (Li). The World's Fair is an international exposition of the industrial, scientific, technological, and artistic achievements of participating nations, and when Japan was first allowed into this predominantly European fair, many, including Huntington, were in awe of the mysticism and exoticism that the Japanese Bazaar provided against the traditional European style. This influenced wealthy fairgoers to commission Japanese gardens for their estates. In the summer of 1903, architect G.T. Marsh began construction of a Japanese Garden in Pasadena. A big part of this garden was a hilltop house. It was originally crafted in Japan but disassembled, shipped to LA, and rebuilt there. However, by 1911, the Japanese Tea Garden was in economic trouble, and the entire garden was purchased by Henry E. Huntington to relocate to his private estate, even though it was unusual for a single buyer to purchase an entire garden, plants, ornaments, and structures in their entirety. Henry E. Huntington was nephew to Collins P. Huntington (1821-1900), the founder of the Southern Pacific and Central Pacific railroads. Henry E. Huntington took over as president of the

Pacific Electric Railway and became a major landowner in the Southern California area (The Huntington). After purchasing the Marsh Japanese Tea Garden, Huntington began constructing his Japanese garden to expand on the one he purchased in September 1911. Huntington began to envision his estate as far more than just land.

The Huntington estate was opened to the public in 1927. A few different Japanese families tended to the gardens as their caretakers, including the Kawai and Goto families. Due to WWII and the caretakers being sent to the internment camps, much of the garden fell into disarray, even being referred to as the “Oriental Garden” for some time (Li). After the conclusion of the war, however, efforts to restore the gardens to their former glory were put into place. Its beauty and popular appeal would lead to the creation of the dry garden and the tea garden in the years to come with improvements, restorations, and new exhibits being installed today. There are a few fundamental components of the contemporary Japanese Garden at the Huntington Library (The Huntington). All-encompassing and representing many different aspects of Japanese culture and tradition, the Japanese Garden includes a Japanese house, the same hilltop house that was made in 1904 and purchased by Huntington in 1911, a ceremonial teahouse, called the Seifu-an, or the Arbor of the Pure Breeze, the Zen court, bonsai collection, and the Suiseki Court (The Huntington).

The Japanese house is made up of several Japanese kinds of wood, which have paneled doors that can be opened or closed, allowing inhabitants to enjoy the gardens around them. The house has been restored since it was first installed and is now one of the finest examples of traditional 20th-century Japanese architecture in the U.S. The ceremonial teahouse, the Seifu-an, was built in Kyoto in the 1960s and was donated to the Huntington by the Pasadena Buddhist Temple. The teahouse is located within a traditionally landscaped tea garden and provides a

setting for traditional tea ceremony practices to take place. The Zen court is modeled after a contained landscape that would have resided within temple gardens in Japan. There are patterns raked into gravel around rock formations that symbolize water, space, and movement, linking landscape art and architecture to Buddhism, one of the two key religions in Japan (Dumbarton Oaks). The Bonzai collection has amassed hundreds of trees since 1990 and serves as another place of cultural practice and preservation of the art of bonsai creation (The Huntington). These trees represent one's internal healing through harmony, peace, and balance in the Buddhist craft of bonsai making. The last is the Suiseki Court, where visitors are invited to touch a series of viewing stones, an ancient Japanese art form. Through these many different types of landscape, art, and architectural representations, the Japanese Gardens at the Huntington Library preserve, protect, and share the many diverse parts of Japanese culture.

Section Two: Museum Curation of Japanese Culture

In this section, I will discuss the curation process of the Japanese American National Museum and the Huntington Library's Japanese Gardens. I analyze two exhibitions that represent the museums' portrayal of Japanese art and architecture. These include the *Common Ground* exhibition at the JANM and the newly created Japanese Heritage Shoya House at the Huntington Library. But first, to understand the museum curatorial processes of these two sites, we must examine what it means to conduct anthropology within the museum space. Woodrow's work, *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, suggests four aspects of identity formation as they emerge in museum community relations (Woodrow 30). First, identities are "defined by the content and form of the public-culture events, such as exhibitions and performances," and the second is that identities are "subjectively experienced by people

participating in public culture, often in ways conditioned by their other identities and experiences.” These two features are important when understanding the impact an exhibition can have on one’s identity, the formation of their identity, and their perception and understanding of others’ identities.

By identifying these key features of identity, we can assess the issues in museum-community relations. Museumgoers usually come to exhibitions with certain preconceived notions about the content of the museum. Exhibition makers have a similar issue, they too have identities that include their professional standing and commitments to their community. “As privileged agents of civil society, museums have a fundamental obligation to take sides in the struggle over identity (and indeed cannot avoid it). This struggle is essential to the life of civil society” (Woodrow 25). Museums have a key role in shaping the perception of identity, but they also have to keep their biases in check, whether they are or are not a part of the culture they represent in the exhibition. Now that we have identified the importance of identity in the creation of a museum, let’s look at the different principles necessary to create an institution that can represent identities and cultures accurately, respectfully, and meaningfully. To have a well-rounded and balanced museum that truly makes an impact on the community it serves takes three principles: collaboration with other museums, the sharing of authority, and audiences that represent diverse backgrounds (Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections, and Collaboration).

The first key principle is the collaboration of museums. This includes collaboration between museums and, more importantly, between the museum and the community it serves. The purpose of a museum anthropologically, is “a non-profit, permanent institution in the *service of society and its development*, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches,

communicates, and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for education, study, and enjoyment” (Golding 20). If we set this as our basis for a museum's role for humanity, we must look at how a museum provides knowledge to the public. Museums have a critical role in being one of the most dominant (or only) ways that the general population learns about a new subject, and in doing so, they must assist the public in drawing connections between history and contemporary implications. Stimulating this dialogue on pressing social issues and promoting humanitarian and democratic values are primary functions that the museum must serve (Golding 21). Museums must counter the perception that cultures are fixed, separated, and bounded, but rather stress the dynamic nature of cultural change and the permeable borderlands between and within cultures by working alongside the community the museum serves. By doing so, these museums create a sense of unity and promote democracy and mutual understanding, which in turn creates the possibility of a more peaceful world.

For museums to counter these cultural perceptions, it is key that museums offer control and authority to the minority communities whose perspectives they wish to share. Previously, museums operated on a “one-way” process, whereby objects and information entered into the museum system and were researched by the institution. However, a “two-way” system involves a dialogue process where “information about historical artifacts is now being returned to source communities” (Museums and Communities), allowing community members to work “with museums and are now recording their perspective on the continuing meaning of artifacts” (Golding 99). A mutually beneficial relationship is born by including these new perspectives in the museum. The museum benefits by having a more accurate and representative exhibit that better educates the general public, and the minority community feels they have played an active role in the narrative the museum is exhibiting on their behalf.

The last component of an impactful cultural museum is the idea of diversity and audiences. After involving the community and giving them an active role in creating their narrative, the last principle must include the collaborative space that is born when a multitude of people come together and work on a shared project. This process is known as the understanding of the museum within the context of cultural politics, and acknowledging the museum's influence to negotiate cultural borderlands and create new contact zones where identities, collections, people, and objects can discover new possibilities for personal and social life, and through this, for democracy (Golding). It can be a revolutionary approach to understanding museum anthropology by emphasizing a museum's potential educational opportunities for its visitors.

In applying these three principles to museum practices, a new purpose for museums and curation is born and provides a way greater significance to these spaces for whole new groups of people. "Art, history, and ethnography displays, even natural-history exhibitions, are all involved in defining the identities of communities—or in denying them identity. Every one of these museum events and places are part of public culture, which can be shown to take on a large part of the responsibility of defining civil society" (Woodrow 28). We must examine how two very different institutions, one, the JANM, which centers Japanese American lived experiences, and the other, the Huntington Library's Japanese Gardens, which aims to convey various aspects of Japanese culture to a primarily American audience, exemplify these principles, and how that shapes their audience's perceptions of the exhibitions they display on Japanese culture within their communities.

The example analyzed in this thesis of the curatorial process by the Japanese American National Museum is their exhibit called *Common Ground*. This exhibition tackles the difficult and rooted history of Japanese and Japanese Americans during and post-WWII, especially concerning internment. This exhibit chronologically portrays Japanese immigration through internment and how it affected Nikkei (Japanese immigrants), including Issei (first-generation immigrants) and Nisei (second-generation immigrants), to America. This is especially relevant to JANM's location in Little Tokyo and Los Angeles, where there was and still is a high concentration of immigrants, their descendants, and family members. The Japanese American National Museum aims "to promote understanding and appreciation of America's ethnic and cultural diversity by sharing the Japanese American experience" (Japanese American National Museum). In this section, I explore how their mission is implemented in *Common Ground*.

The opening of the Japanese American National Museum in 1992 was significant for more than just the 850,000 Japanese-Americans living in the US, but also for Americans of every ethnicity. JANM provides a key story of incarceration, which serves as a sober reminder of a cultural experience that must never happen again (Kikamura-Yano 1). The JANM places the Japanese-American experience within the context of American history, which allows a sense of relatability and enrichment for a global audience. The museum is constantly striving to improve the understanding and appreciation of cultural and ethnic diversity. The ongoing exhibition, *Common Ground: The Heart of Community* displays a collection of hundreds of documents, objects, and photographs from 130 years of Japanese-American history. This exhibition includes key features such as barracks from Heart Mountain, a World War II internment camp in Wyoming, to everyday items enshrined in glass cases. These items are then memorialized

through short, thirty-second videos by Japanese heritage volunteers who share their personal stories related to the artifacts (Golding 23).

While the official introduction of the museum does not make it explicit, one of the main curators of this exhibit stated that they identify the museum as an ethnographic one, with an occasional focus on art. The exhibits orient their visitors around the history of the internees. *Common Ground* is more about the common stories that most people share. It is intended to teach visitors about why they should care about the history that is presented so it does not repeat itself. The curator described the phenomenon of the internment camps which they hoped to convey as the question of national security and civil liberty, something she says is still an issue today. The narrative presented in the exhibition shows the preexisting sentiment against Japanese immigration which ultimately led to World War II being an excuse for internment. She hopes that *Common Ground* showcases that “civil liberties require protecting and defending,” and feels strongly that this story is representative of why we must defend these fundamental rights. The exhibit shows what can happen when civil liberties are not protected and defended, leading to drastic consequences that have lasting impacts for generations. It highlights how the changes in Japanese and Japanese American identity impacted community building before and after the incarceration.

In my field research, I explored the museum and the tools they use to help visitors understand their messages. The first thing I noticed was the vast amount of photos. These were both professional and amateur, including famous works such as Dorothea Lange’s images of the Manzanar camps and family photos of people in their homes. It was very impactful to see these two things set side by side, whereas normally only one of the two would have been considered “worthy” enough to be put up in a museum behind glass walls. The second tool is the use of

objects. These objects again were not what one would initially expect from a museum, but this also goes against the concept of a stereotypical art museum. These pieces would have been something significant to their owners, but seen as average or even insignificant to the regular eye. The inclusion of these objects highlights the importance of everyday experiences. These were objects that helped the internees survive their circumstances, whether it was a simple pad of paper and some pencils or a mug to hold tea. One part of the exhibit that was extra interesting was a section of the floor that had been removed, and what was in its place was sand covered by glass. The sand was sectioned off in a grid shape and each of the nine squares was labeled with a different camp name. Inside were different objects that were found at the ruins of the campsites after they had been destroyed after the war or were donated by former internees to the museum. These objects without this context would seem insignificant, but a broken plate or a doll became key representations of the dreadful circumstances universally faced at the camps, preserved with the same care as a famous work of art behind glass, but was something that the visitor could walk on top of, to envelop a person into the lived experiences of the internees. This representation was an artwork called “Relics from Camp” by artist Kristine Aono.

The JANM does not view objects as specimens or are trying to be representative of a famous person or an epitome of a collection. Rather, objects are looked at as lived-in stories. They intend to show that everyday objects have value, objects tell the stories of people. Most of the collection at the JANM has been donated. However, before acquiring an item, it is thoroughly researched to see if it fits well with the rest of the museum’s collection. The amount of items is largely from the Los Angeles area, mainly due to the location of the museum, but also due to the large population of Japanese and Japanese-Americans that have or still reside in the area. The exhibit shows the connected experiences of internees despite being relocated hundreds

of miles away from home and their desperation and strength to preserve what was important to them. Even the everyday objects became luxuries that not everyone could afford. The Japanese American community was founded by this challenging history of war and enforced movement across the West Coast and became a unifying experience throughout the generations. By collecting these objects and displaying them in *Common Ground*, exhibits become about what one looks at.

JANM has implemented strategies that allow them to embrace a museum centered on community perspectives and identities. The JANM, through exhibits such as *Common Ground*, has given a voice to the unheard, like former internees, and helped begin the conversation about the changes a culture and a group of people take over generations and countries. America is multicultural and multiethnic, and it is key that museums do not represent the country as a monolith, but rather embrace our “magnificent diversity, [to] forever re-vision the American experience” (Kikamura-Yano, 2007). The kinds of exhibits like *Common Ground* allow for narratives to be reframed and give the storytelling voice back to the people who lived through the internment experience. The museum claims to be built in a conscious effort to establish a visual marker as well as a symbol of Japanese-American heritage that was so crucially made by stories of immigration and incarceration (Takaragawa 37). Due to the dissipation of a centralized community for Japanese-Americans and the washing of their stories, the JANM positions itself as the place where those stories can be collected, saved, and shared, through the form of physical objects and visual displays that people can see and relate to.

Museums can create human understanding through the narratives they portray. JANM, through the interpretation of the past, builds bridges among and between ethnic and cultural groups for the future by bringing people together to tell the challenging stories of their lives.

JANM describes how they create their exhibits as a “mutual/reciprocal education process—in which participants have a voice, knowledge is shared, and decisions are democratic—rather than a hierarchical model. In the documentation, interpretation, and presentation of experiences, community-based voices and perspectives are prioritized” (Kikamura-Yano 208). JANM is actively pursuing working with voices whose stories are representative of the history that JANM shares in their exhibitions, especially histories so rooted in tragedy and racism such as Japanese Internment.

Unfortunately, for many years the narrative of internment had been erased or misrepresented, so the first act of community-building is a repatriation of the history that has been lost. To recover these stories, *Common Ground* highlights unheard voices from the victims and their families themselves which allows for empathy among people who may not identify as a part of the Japanese and Japanese-American culture. Ethnic museums can serve to break down culturally homogeneous population narratives and earn a place for minority communities in mainstream America (Fujitani 101). *Common Ground* allows for a space to reflect, one which had not been given to anyone before, the museum “generates products that reflect collaborations within a specific community but also beyond it; it generates products that represent collaborations in terms of content but also a process—a process that seeks to define and build a sense of community” (Kikamura-Yano 209). The curation of *Common Ground* clearly shows the intention of a reflective space that takes into account a variety of perspectives, especially highlighting those that had been marginalized for many years. In doing so, JANM creates a pensive space in which everyone—those who are Japanese and Japanese American or not—can form a shared narrative.

At the Huntington Library, the Japanese Garden is a major attraction for a variety of visitors, whether or not they share a Japanese identity. The Japanese Garden is composed of a few different major sections, including an original structure acquired by Huntington himself, a ceremonial tea house, the zen court, a bonsai collection, and the most recent addition, the Japanese Heritage Shoya House. In this section, we will explore the creation of the Shoya House and its impact on the library space as a whole. The Shoya House represents an example where the Huntington Library has implemented a new exhibit into their longstanding garden, much of which has been unchanged since Henry Huntington created the space. With knowledge of implementations of cultural gardens, within a learning institution such as the Huntington, we can use the Japanese Heritage Shoya House as a viewpoint to look at the effectiveness of gardens as sites of meaningful cultural and educational exchange.

The curatorial process of the Shoya House begins with the collaboration between the Japanese people and the Huntington staff. The Yokoi family, current residents of Los Angeles, began this process by initiating the donation of their ancestral home, formerly located in Marugame, Japan. The home provides a “glimpse into rural life some 300 years ago” (Japanese Heritage Shoya House), however, the creation of this exhibition was no easy feat. This involved the moving of a 300-year-old home of about 3000 square feet from Japan to Los Angeles, a journey of about 6000 miles. The Huntington uses the home to give visitors insight into “Japanese culture and history, as well as traditional architectural, agricultural, and sustainability practices” (Sustained by Tradition). The Yokoi family were village administrators, known as shoya, and their house served as a local town hall, village square, and collection center for goods, such as crops from farmers. The family was in charge of managing and organizing the community, and their home stands as a testimony to the services they provided to their

community. In the Huntington's recreation of this lifestyle, using the home as a basis for the exhibition, visitors also get to explore the botanical elements from the Seto Inland Sea area where the Yokoi often collected rocks and other natural items. In this reconstruction, the walled garden includes a dry streambed, koi pond, stone bridge and lanterns, and a hand washing basin (Sustained by Tradition). These elements add to the immersive experience that the Shoya House exhibition provides, which allows visitors to transcend time and step foot into the former lives of the Yokoi family.

While originally the house was planned to become a museum, in partnering with the Huntington, the Yokoi family found it most intriguing that the house would become a place of learning for architects, scholars, and the general public combined. The family wanted to preserve the educational values that were instilled throughout the generations, and in donating the house to the Huntington's care, they felt the home would be of most value and use to the community. The Huntington plans on using the home for lectures and seminars. The exhibit, which opened in October of 2023, also represents the large scope and strategy of an elaborate process of moving a large home from one country to another, including the process of disassembling and reassembling multiple times along the way. The home also represents a community of skilled people coming together to make it happen, including people with a variety of unique tools and skill sets, many of which have gone undervalued in recent years, such as artisans, craftsmen, and woodworkers. The president of the Huntington, Karen R. Lawrence, added "We are deeply indebted to Yohko and Akira Yokoi, whose donation to The Huntington will preserve an important aspect of Japanese cultural heritage. In giving their historic family home to The Huntington, the Yokois are providing us with the opportunity to let Huntington visitors experience a garden and home as they were traditionally inhabited throughout Japan" (Sustained

Through Tradition). The creation of the Shoya House brought together many different people and plans to bring the new exhibit to life at the Huntington.

The Shoya House, however, does face similar challenges as other gardens at the Huntington, like how they address race and class. Some scholarly research has been done on the cultural implications of the Chinese Gardens at the Huntington and some of the findings I find apply to both gardens. The Shoya House should be noted as not what the average person in the town of Marugame experienced. The people who lived in the home were town leaders, of the high class and therefore lived in more luxury than most. The family was also privileged enough to make frequent trips back to Japan to maintain and preserve their home, as well as to even have the opportunity to donate it to the Huntington centuries after it was first constructed. While it does provide a very unique and even special insight into Japanese culture, it is still a limited view, a view of privilege. This is not the first time that the Huntington has been cited as a place of privilege, especially concerning race, where people of color have been minorities in Huntington spaces. In Hondagneu-Sotelo's analysis of the Chinese Gardens, they noted that their study participants felt that they could feel pride in their cultural heritage being represented in a previously white-dominated community, but this was only applicable to elite Chinese and Chinese American families, "At the upper ends of the class spectrum, wealthy and highly educated Chinese American immigrants and transnational business elites have influenced the material culture of the Huntington Gardens by contributing to a Chinese-style garden in what was previously a Eurocentric space. This is a marked departure from the recent past of exclusions of Chinese people and built environments in California. The garden signals the integration of Chinese elite resources and cultural traditions into an elite botanical garden" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 162).

Hondagneu-Sotelo's work allows us to see that the representation of cultures at the Huntington can be somewhat limited. While, on one hand, it is great that some members of other cultures are feeling included in a previously exclusive space, this is not true cultural representation. Picking and choosing what parts of the culture to represent, like only what is most aesthetically pleasing or what provides an immersive and exciting experience, does not mean that the Huntington can claim to be culturally representative of the Japanese people. Rather, the narrative must shift to show that the Shoya House is representative of one family's lived experiences, one that is representative of the privileged families who had opportunities and could invest in things like a beautiful garden and hire skilled artisans to build their home. The Shoya House provides a starting point for a way more inclusive Japanese and Japanese American cultural narrative to be shared at the Huntington, including communication and inclusion of works from other families of different lived experiences and class statuses.

The Shoya House is still a new exhibition, with doors being open to the public for not even a year yet. In the coming years, I am curious to see the community's reaction and the further developments the Huntington adds to the space. The question of cultural heritage is certainly challenging, and the Huntington has taken on a big project. The opening of the exhibit is only stage one in the Huntington's attempt to become a site of educational and cultural exchange, and the Shoya House does provide them the opportunity to do so. However, cultural representation must not be for the dominant society. While the Shoya House may provide a "new source of social relevance, revenue, and the appeal of multicultural legitimacy" (Hondagneu-Sotelo) as the Chinese Garden once provided the Huntington, it must go beyond that. Cultural representation is not just about symbols. What I mean by this is that while aspects of the Japanese Gardens, such as the bonsai garden or moon bridge, might be beautiful and

awe-inspiring to look at, one does not gain educational knowledge or appreciate the talent and skills to create these pieces without more. Rather than just showing the viewer these beautiful pieces of craftsmanship that would have been purchased or commissioned by elite members of Japanese society, the Huntington must also show the creative process, lifestyle, and people who are behind the shining centerpieces of the garden. While this history might not be as pretty, it makes the museum feel like a real lived experience and not a fake or crafted experience that beautifies the harsh realities of life. Someone walking through the Shoya House would not know the complex story of moving the house to the Huntington, the same way they might not understand the implications and history of why cultural practices exist, such as the significance behind bonsai growing or suiseki (viewing) stones.

The Huntington strives to create an immersive experience for their visitors. Their main goal for the Shoya House was sustainability, which was something they argued affected everyone. I was able to receive a copy of their creative brief, essentially, the document that stated their goals and guide for what they hoped to accomplish with this new project. The Japanese Heritage Shoya House, described on the Huntington Website, provides an opportunity to “experience a restored home and agricultural compound from 18th-century Japan that provides a glimpse into rural life some 300 years ago. Built around 1700, this 3,000-square-foot residence served as the center of village life in Marugame, Japan” (Japanese Heritage Shoya House). I find this an interesting opening line to their website, as it does not include any of their listed goals on the creative brief. The library claims that their main goal in the project is to “represent the collective wisdom of traditional Japanese building techniques and sustainable agricultural practices and lifestyles that developed in harmony with nature, and which can inform the way we think about sustainability today” (Shoya House Creative Brief). They then continue to list the

main themes of the project, which include sustainability and community. Yet with my conversations with curators, there was no conversation about community, community-building, or the Japanese community that this project is representing. They claim that they are showcasing the building techniques but fail to include the cultural heritage and importance of including Japanese people as a target audience of the exhibit, rather than just listing “general visitors” as the people the project will audience.

Gardens have the potential to be places of cultural exchange. The Portland Japanese Garden, in contrast, was deemed the finest Japanese public garden in the United States in 2013 by *The Journal of Japanese Gardening*. Already this garden is far more accessible as it is free to attend for the public, unlike the Huntington’s ticket price of a whopping \$25 per adult. In scholarly research of the garden, author David Bell noted how gardens have the opportunity to be truly immersive learning spaces, as they do without the stereotypical white-walled museum traditions, “Japanese-style gardens in Portland, Oregon, provide places for learning about aesthetics and between cultures, and for maintaining constructs of cultural identity. It builds on the belief that gardens can function as a place of learning, as museum collections and curatorial constructions of culturally significant knowledge, and as artworks. As learning sites, these Portland gardens function as places where visitors can enjoy aesthetically rich somatic experiences while learning about intercultural histories, and the narratives of Japanese-American settlement and internal migrations during the twentieth century. As museums, they can mediate learning between cultures, and present the present and past” (Bell 262).

The main message here is that the gardens can be enriching. While many, including both visitors and staff, find the Huntington Library’s gardens to be aesthetically pleasing and a relaxing place to visit, they could also serve a greater purpose to their extended community, or

“general audience.” Japanese, Japanese-Americans, and people who do not identify as a part of that community can come together in the mutual learning and understanding that such an exhibition as the Japanese Shoya House could provide. While it is a beautiful structure, it fails to address the question of culture and art representation and covers it through the guise of demonstrating sustainability practices. In the gardens in Portland, Oregon, studied by Bell, the author describes the garden as a place for personal and community growth to flourish. They are representative of the lived experiences that Japanese immigrants went through to become a part of the American community, something that the JANM addresses but the Huntington Library ignores, “As growing, evolving phenomena, these gardens are themselves appropriate metaphors for the changing ‘seasons’ of Nikkei community migrations – the border crossing transitions of the 1940s and beyond. As such, they invite visitors to explore, learn about, or even – for older Oregon citizens – remember earlier experiences of place, belonging, movement, dispossession, border-crossing, and change. If those memories echo the pain, loss, and trauma of transitions in crisis, their significance today extends beyond immediate agendas of reparation. They do commemorate these events, but they also invite reflection on transitions themselves as more fluid, and more sustained, community experiences” (Bell 281).

These museum spaces can't ignore the deeply rooted history of oppression and subjugation faced by the Japanese people living in America. While the JANM embraces this as a part of their history and builds a community off of a shared story of struggle, it seems the Huntington Library struggles with the representation of more than just one kind of Japanese and Japanese American. I argue that it is key to cultural understanding to represent why the cultural phenomena exist in the first place and to recognize the people who went into creating the art that the garden preserves.

Section Three: Museum Formation of Identity and Community

In this section, I will discuss the importance of museum outreach, to assess the public's perception of the museum, such as how they view Japanese art and culture before and after visiting. Museum outreach can drastically impact museum visitors and the surrounding communities' experiences with the material the museum showcases. First, I will examine three aspects of museum outreach as fundamental and necessary components of creating an impactful and successful museum space.

A museum is at its most successful when it develops a mutually beneficial relationship with the community that surrounds it. The space, physically and metaphorically, that a museum takes up can be interpreted as well as transformed into not only a limited space for a small perspective but for a wide array of audiences. Museums have complex relationships as institutions with their community and have not always been mutually beneficial. Rather than perceiving the community's needs and resources at the museum, it would be more beneficial to work with the community themselves to identify their needs and interests. As Bobick describes in *Engaging Communities through Civic Engagement in Art Museum Education*, museums have a history of representing privileged voices, “some groups are misrepresented or left out of museums entirely through the objects and stories museums choose to share in exhibitions and programming” (Bobick xx). To change the framework of representation, museums cannot assume the community's needs but must engage with them directly to highlight their voices in their programming.

The second principle is the operation of museum education programs and their impact on the perspective of visitors. The content that the museum curates is key in creating a productive

space of cultural collaboration, and rather than just serving one specific group of people, it can become a transformative space to highlight underrepresented voices. In the book *Contemporary Curating and Museum Education*, the authors describe the field of education and learning in exhibits and museums as “increasingly ceased to understand itself solely as a service but is recognizing and realizing its potential as an autonomous practice of cultural production at the intersections of knowledge transfer, cultural education work, artistic-performative processes and sometimes also activism. From this perspective, education and outreach work evolves into a critical practice which interrogates, expands and alters exhibitions and institutions” (*Contemporary Curating and Museum Education*, 2). Outreach and involvement from those directly involved and whose perspectives are the ones being represented must coincide with the work of the curators to get the most accurate, but also most ethical, depiction of a culture of historical narrative.

Museums must orient themselves as educational sites for society, which means a shifting mindset in whose stories are shared within the museum space. It has become evident globally that it is of utmost importance to highlight undervalued and minority perspectives, who have previously not been given the space to share their stories in a museum before. The JANM and Huntington Library both have curated a space that showcases Japanese and Japanese-American cultural talents, but it must be considered who developed these curations and whether or not they took into consideration the people who created these cultural artifacts. “Since the beginning of the professionalization of museum work, curation and education have stood in a hierarchical relationship to one another, whereby curation comes first, and education then does its best to smoothly communicate the content of the former to the largest possible audience...Museums are oriented toward society and their users. They present themselves as sites of knowledge exchange

and as the stage of a participation-based linking of history with the present” (The Editors 1). The purpose of a museum is not supposed to be self-serving. Rather, museums serve society, to better educate and communicate knowledge, that often represents people, to others.

The employment of these three principles that define the purpose of museum outreach, a mutually beneficial relationship with the community, understanding the role of a museum as a site of cultural production, and orienting their curation to the education of society, is necessary for the JANM and Huntington Library to employ so Japanese and Japanese American communities and their perspectives are adequately involved. As well, we will understand how the community, whether guests, local members, or society at large, view or even appreciate Japanese art and architecture after viewing the museum spaces.

Based on these principles, I will assess JANM’s engagement with its visitors and analyze the way JANM creates its museum community. I argue that the JANM’s engagement with the visitors led to the way they manage and present the content in the exhibition. JANM demonstrates how a museum’s active collaboration eventually enhances its perspective on the Japanese and Japanese-American identity and lived experience. The *Common Ground* exhibit is an excellent example of how this process is implemented. The museum tackles the sharing of two different narratives, the first is paying a tribute to the iconic Japanese American figures who have helped shape our society, but the second, and equally as important, is shining a light on the forced removal and incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast following Japan’s bombing of Pearl Harbor (Bricker, “Japanese American National Museum Review & Tips”). It is even more challenging because they must also convey a difficult message that the public often forgets, that the actions of a country’s leaders do not represent the entire country’s

identity or beliefs, whether that be Japanese people in Japan, Japanese people in America, or descendants of Japanese immigrants in America. This is a very relevant message in today's political context that the museum also has to grapple with.

In challenging the “conspiracy of silence” (Takaragawa, 45) that suppressed the discussion of American concentration camps for forty years, JANM shifted the focus onto different, unheard perspectives. The JANM relies heavily on docents who share and exchange experiences of Japanese America with visitors and change the dominant frames of asserting authority. Exhibits in the JANM bring to the forefront what has been suppressed in popular media in the lives of many immigrants and reveal interconnections in history, increasing awareness and shared empathy through lived experiences and commonalities. Displaying objects from internees’ time in the internment camps, such as everyday items that can resonate with the everyday person in average lives, encourages the audience to reconsider their history by strategically giving these objects their agency. As described by the museum’s exhibition catalog, “the presence of the Museum, the history and symbolism of its location and buildings, the accessibility of its documents, and the historical artifacts in its halls are the basis for social redefinition. They are vehicles for identities to forge themselves, after the fact, into a community” (Takaragawa, 45). It is meaningful that it is expressed clearly within the exhibit that it intends to bring forth underrepresented voices and cause people to rethink their understanding of Japanese internment but also one another. Through the representation of ethnic minorities in museum spaces, different stories can be told that contrast the popular narrative of the US through a “cleansed and heroic” (Fujitani 110) narrative. This social change is key to creating better relationships and a greater sense of mutual empathy for lived experiences.

This does not mean the museum is without criticism. In a review article about JANM written for the online publication entitled, *Travel Caffeine*, author Tom Bricker described his experience at the JANM as the following: “While the Japanese American National Museum has its share of ‘fun’ and ‘cool’ displays, the tone here is much more solemn and the experience more sobering” (Bricker). The author describes the feeling many visitors have of an expectation of fun and cool representations of Japanese art and culture, but in turn, come face to face with the harsh realities and historical responsibilities of the internment camps in JANM’s exhibits. People may contest the histories displayed by the JANM as there is still a large stigma and inaccuracies that surround the understanding of the Japanese incarceration camps. Also, because it is a shameful part of America’s history, some visitors may not want to accept it as a part of our shared past as Americans today. In one of the exhibit curator’s experiences, Takaragawa noted that:

“Some visitors challenged the Museum’s representations on other grounds. Two, for example, acknowledged the existence of the Internment but felt obliged to give it a rather horrific defense: they said that Japanese-Americans ‘had it good’ compared to Jews in Nazi death camps” (Takaragawa 44).

Takaragawa is revealing that visitors find the US violation of Japan surprising and unexpected. History focuses on the inexcusable violence and dominance of imperial Japan as well as its responsibility in WWII, overshadowing the same violence committed by the US against Japanese people living within its borders. Some criticism of the exhibit is rooted in a problematic comparison of the Japanese and Japanese American internment experience in the US to Jewish experiences in Nazi concentration camps. These mixed reactions disrupt a visitor’s expected experience at JANM and instead force them to grapple with a far sobering, educational,

and challenging reality. JANM stays resilient in its goal to achieve mutual understanding and education for all on a challenging discussion of Japanese internment camps and how that has shaped the Japanese American identity, as well as the political landscape for America as a country post WWII. Because the JANM is showcasing an exhibit of underrepresented voices, it allows for the beginning of the process of destigmatizing the discussion of the internment camps so that a conversation can begin. By centralizing the Japanese American experience and ethnography at the center of the exhibit rather than purely historical facts and data, the human and lived experience can be better seen and understood, with the goal leading to empathy of the stories shared and heard. Finding common ground between everyone, regardless of identity, using the Japanese American experience of incarceration as a tool for mutual connection and understanding creates the feeling that people are more alike than different, often sharing the same aspirations and love of their community.

The Huntington Library represents Japanese culture and history in a very different way. The inspiration and motives behind creating and maintaining the gardens are key to understanding how identity is perceived by visitors in these spaces. Rather, instead of forefronting what visitors want the gardens to represent, the museum is very set on the preservation of the Huntington legacy. In the creation of the Showa House, the director of the botanical gardens, James Folsom, recruited architects, artisans, and horticulturalists from around the US and Japan to restore the landscape, saying, ““The greatest challenge was resolving the issues of our history and future—how to preserve Henry Huntington’s imprint without constraining more than necessary our aesthetic and programmatic goals”” (Schmidt). Henry Huntington’s dream Japanese garden was the aspiration for envisioning a new form of garden as

a museum. Folsom discusses the issue of the history and future of the museum, but it seems rather stuck in the past, idealizing Huntington's imagination of the Japanese garden rather than what community members would want in the garden themselves.

This also continues the legacy that the Huntington Library and the botanical gardens are a place of tourism and luxury for the upper classes. The Huntington is often compared to other highly regarded institutions like the Met and the Art Institute of Chicago in terms of prestige and knowledge, in literature like tour magazines. The institutions are similar to universities in terms of the depth and levels of scholarship, housing a very impressive collection of books and art, while avoiding the opportunity for students and academics access to these collections readily and widely (Allen). In a conversation with a few classmates and professors who had struggled to gain research access at the Huntington, I found that requiring the highest level of security in their collection vaults and not easily allowing the public or academics research opportunities is another issue that contributes to the Huntington's stigma of elitism. This does not diminish the beauty and awe of a spectacular garden or collection but provokes a criticism of who the Huntington deems worthy of accessing these spaces. This contributes to how the community perceives important themes portrayed at the Huntington, like Japanese architecture and garden creation, without being granted permission to understand the cultural significance behind these spaces, because they aren't readily available within the gardens themselves and it takes a high level of effort and reputation to enter behind the scenes. The aura of exclusivity is a key part of the Huntington's identity.

Many online travel and review site reviewers comment that the Library grounds are peaceful and serene spaces, where people relax, wander, peruse the shop and collections, and stay awhile. The gardens do show the numerous amount of meticulous care and effort in

preserving these spaces, although, that is mainly what people's first impression is of these gardens, having nothing to do with the actual significance behind the existence of them. While some guests are content with the library, art museum, and gardens being only that, others are left with a feeling of wanting more and also disheartened by the sour taste left in their mouths around the egotistical air they feel at the Huntington. Some even described the Huntington as an Instagram destination, with the Japanese and Chinese gardens in a picture-perfect state, while other gardens deemed less Instagram-worthy left neglected and messy, such as the desert landscape. In an article written for the National Review by Brian Allen, he found that visitors described their experience at the Huntington as not an educational opportunity but purely a tourist excursion, which Allen described as "a bit of fairy-tale weirdness surrounding the Huntington, a bit of Hollywood make-believe." These kinds of experiences undermine any educational opportunities at the Huntington through visitors only recognizing the Huntington as a location for taking photos and relaxing strolls. This is not inherently a bad thing, but it leaves the Huntington to face a dichotomy between two reputations and challenges them with which one to present at the forefront of their museum and why visitors should visit them.

The Huntington lacks a direct focus, which means it fails to perfect the narrative of any one culture. By doing the extravagant and attempting to represent it all to look cool, they fail to master the depiction of any culture and leave the rest to be neglected. Before the implementation of the other gardens, the Huntington originally was English-designed and felt aristocratic, described as "charming, yes, but like a World's Fair pavilion or a 200-acre time capsule" (Allen). Even before Huntington decided to incorporate other cultural spaces, the Huntington felt out of place in Southern California. Furthermore, the snobbish attitude of the library gave it a distinct feeling of exclusion, similar to many institutions and museums in their earlier histories, where

only a select few, often who had to be invited at the request of the owner of the collection, to visit. By comparing the Huntington to a World's Fair, which as we know, was a place Huntington drew inspiration for the Japanese Gardens, continues the problematic nature of the social class barriers that the Huntington has come to represent.

The beauty of the Huntington does not overcome the challenges the museum faces in inclusivity and authenticity. While the Japanese Gardens have been highlighted as one of the most spectacular features that the library has to offer, it does not deliver on the cultural representation from which it draws. The Japanese Gardens become belittled into a spectacle for viewing rather than a place of cultural appreciation, beyond admiring the beauty and craftsmanship of caring for the landscape. The garden feels like it is meant to impress rather than educate, showing off the Huntington's assets rather than using them for the benefit of the public beyond the showcase. There is a lack of connections being made between the garden, its creation, and its creators. Without this personification of the garden, viewers lose a connection to identity, whether that be seeing their own culture represented or truly appreciating the significance of garden architecture in another.

Conclusion:

This thesis explored two museums as a site of sociocultural processes of interaction. In this regard, museums are beyond static public facilities, yet dynamic sites for sociocultural processes. The JANM and the Huntington Library are long-standing institutions that represent different cultures within their walls. They have to properly educate, facilitate discussion, and increase empathy through the exhibits they curate. These museums must take responsibility for the difficult histories that encompass the narratives they share about Japanese culture.

At the JANM, I found that the community's voices are heard in the creation of their exhibits. I looked at how their exhibit, *Common Ground*, tells a compelling story of human empathy through the lens of the experiences of Japanese and Japanese American internees. The JANM materializes a community of members who share memories of struggles and conflicts through the portrayal of everyday life in objects, pictures, and memorabilia which creates relatability, empathy, and the experiences of social processes. Through this powerful exhibit, I found that museums do not solely have to be a space for fine art or pristine objects that represent histories in their entirety. It is important to highlight voices that are often misrepresented or unheard of, like the tumultuous past of US internment camps, and how that has shaped the lives of the Japanese community in Little Tokyo. JANM breaks the barriers of what it means to be a museum and what curation could become.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Huntington Library's Japanese Gardens offers a different insight into the Japanese community, culture, and identity. They grapple with the representation of culture through history and what it means to be a beautiful garden. They portray these ideas as symbols rather than conversation starters. There is no description of history or spaces where elements of culture shown at the Huntington can be explained or appreciated, such as the contexts behind why tea houses, bonsai, and moon bridges are significant for Japanese and Japanese Americans. I believe that the Huntington still follows the classical ideal of a museum, where "fine art" and beautiful gardens take precedence over the building of a community and the full incorporation of Japanese culture and history in their garden space. However, I think they allow more people to appreciate the time and effort it takes to cultivate such a complex garden and amaze people with the architectural feats of the garden, which is a first step to people better understanding one another.

Museums have many different plates to juggle, a fine line between following what the community wants, what the staff and board members want, and what the donors want. A museum can be many different things to many different people, and in a way, that can be a beautiful thing in and of itself. However, museums must practice what they preach. The JANM has put their community's voices at the top of their priority list, listening to their needs and demands and shaping their programming after them, like reclaiming the narrative of Japanese Internment for those who experienced it as internees. The Huntington relies more on the idea of Japanese aesthetics and has stylized their gardens around these perceptions. Museums, to make the most meaningful difference in the world, must listen to their internal and external voices. Further research could address the issues of the public opinion of Japanese culture before and after visiting each museum. Similar studies should be done in all museum spaces to better understand representation by and in the museum for a broader understanding of cultural processes. Museums must use their authority and important status as educational and cultural bearers of knowledge to break the stereotypes of what a museum can look like, fostering communities of minority voices and ethnic identity, whether through art history, architecture, botanical, cultural, historical, or anthropologically based.

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