

EMILY HANAKO MOMOHARA

www.ehmomohara.com

The Camps

My parents taught me that being Japanese American was a source of pride. I'm sure my grandparents also believed this in 1941, when the United States entered war with Japan. However, painful memories and shame make it difficult for those interned to discuss their experience. The United States Government took away their freedom and put them in war camps for three to five years, based solely on race, essentially, placing a false guilt and conviction on their Japanese heritage.

My visits to seven incarceration camps and one justice department camp enhanced my respect and admiration for my *Nikkei* community's patriotism and emotional endurance. In light of current world violence and the resulting fear and anger in our country, I feel it is even more important to remember the past. I make art in hopes to challenge the way war and ethnicity are viewed.