



Emily Hanako Momohara

---

EHMomohara@yahoo.com • www.ehmomohara.com

## Koden

*Koden*: n. Condolence money traditionally given to bereaving families in Japanese culture. A Buddhist practice of compassion.

The *Koden* series is a new and in-progress body of work. After seven deaths of friends or family in the last year, I have begun to contemplate bereavement and legacy in a new way. The experiences I shared with those who have passed away are still a part of my own identity. In a way, they live on in everyone touched by them. The *Koden* project is my way of giving something from myself to all of us who have lost someone close to us.

Through the use of shadows and funeral home settings, I create self-portraits that represent haunting aspects of those who have passed on. Several of those who have died recently were members of my family and Japanese American community, and added to my Japanese American upbringing. As with many of us, culture and tradition falls away as the older generations leave us. Some of the shadows are taken directly from family photos and some are metaphors for an experience. In addition, two young people who have passed away this year have inspired my patriotism through one's service in Iraq and one's activism for social justice. Their dignity and strength is present in the shadows.