



Curatorial

WITNESS
TO
WARTIME
THE PAINTED DIARY OF
TAKUICHI FUJII

Curated by Barbara Johns, PhD



Above: Self Portrait, 1935

Cover: Minidoka, montage with fence and landmarks

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Witness to Wartime: The Painted Diary of Takuichi Fujii introduces an artist whose work opens a window to historical events, issues, and ideas far greater than the individual. Takuichi Fujii (1891 - 1964) bore witness to his life in America and, most especially, to his experience during World War II. Fujii left a remarkably comprehensive visual record of this important time in American history, and offers a unique perspective on his generation. This stunning body of work sheds light on events that most Americans did not experience, but whose lessons remain salient today.

Takuichi Fujii was fifty years old when war broke out between the United States and Japan. In a climate of increasing fear and racist propaganda, he became one of 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast forced to leave their homes and live in geographically isolated incarceration camps. He and his family, together with most ethnic Japanese from Seattle, were sent first to the Puyallup temporary detention camp on the Washington State Fairgrounds, and in August 1942 were transferred to the Minidoka Relocation Center in southern Idaho.

Confronting such circumstances, Fujii began an illustrated diary that spans the years from his forced removal in May 1942 to the closing of Minidoka in October 1945. In nearly 250 ink drawings ranging from public to intimate views, the diary depicts detailed images of the incarceration camps, and the inmates' daily routines and pastimes. Several times Fujii depicts himself in the act of drawing, a witness to the experience of confinement. He also produced over 130 watercolors that reiterate and expand upon the diary, augmenting those scenes with many new views, as well as other aesthetic and formal considerations of painting. Additionally the wartime work includes several oil paintings and sculptures, notably a carved double portrait of Fujii and his wife.

After the war Fujii moved to Chicago, which became home to a large Japanese American community under the government's resettlement program. He continued to paint, experimenting broadly in abstraction, and toward the end of his life produced a series of boldly gestural black-and-white abstract expressionist paintings. These, and his American realist paintings of the 1930s, frame the wartime work that is his singular legacy and remains relevant today.

OBJECTS

82 objects

(oil paintings, watercolors, ink drawings, books, sculpture, and an interactive digitized visual diary)

SPACE

300 linear ft (91.4 linear m)

PUBLICATION

Barbara Johns, *The Hope of Another Spring*
(Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017)

CONTACT

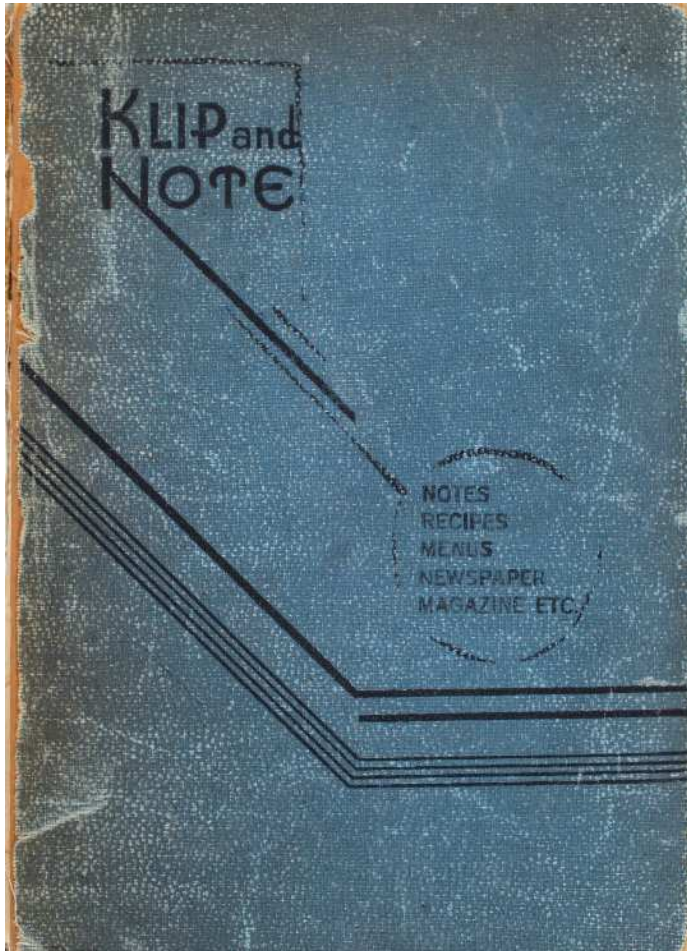
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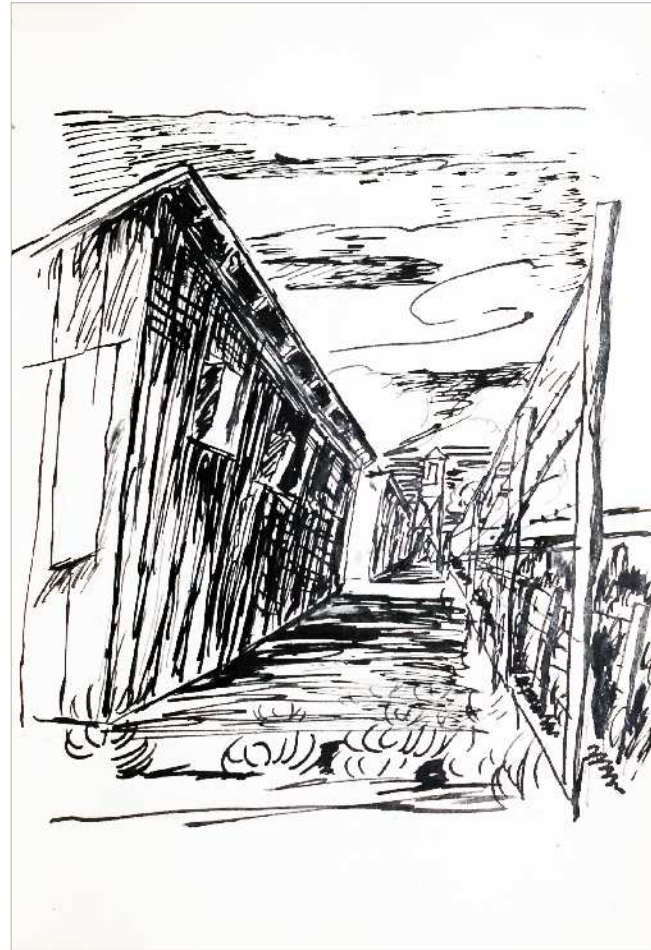
Title unknown (Seattle landscape, steeple of Our Lady of Good Hope), c.1930s



High School Girl, c.1934 - 1935
Oil on canvas, 22 3/4 x 29 in (55.8 x 73.7 cm)



Art Diary, 1942 - 1945
Book, 8 x 5 1/2 in (20.3 x 14 cm)



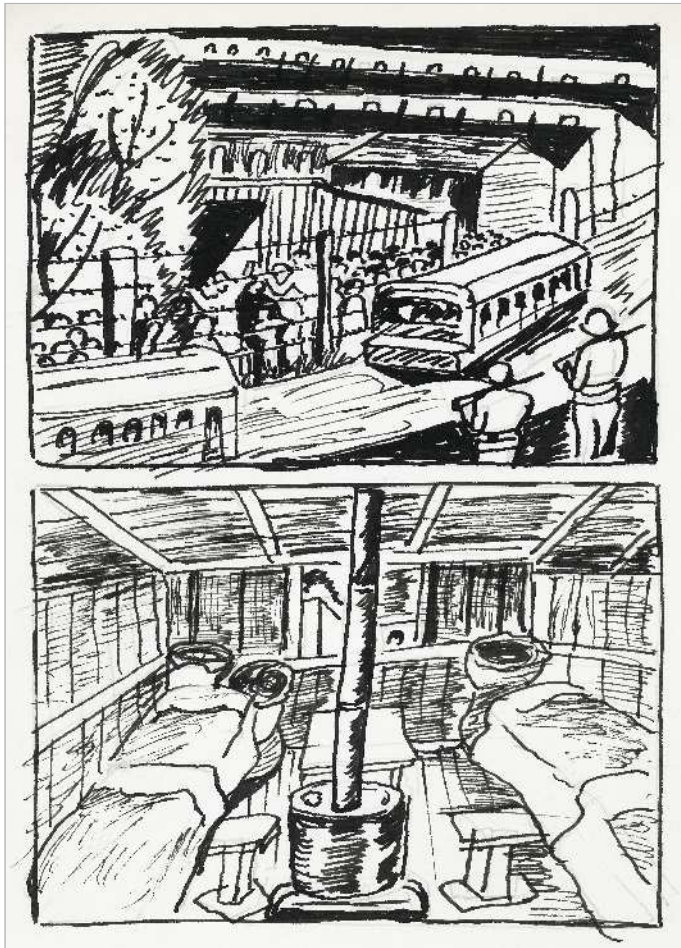
Page from Art Diary, 1942 - 1945
Ink on paper, 8 x 5 1/2 in (20.3 x 14 cm)



Fusano and Takuichi Fujii, c.1943-1945
Wood sculpture, 8 1/4 x 3 x 3 in (left) and 9 x 4 x 3 1/4 in (right)



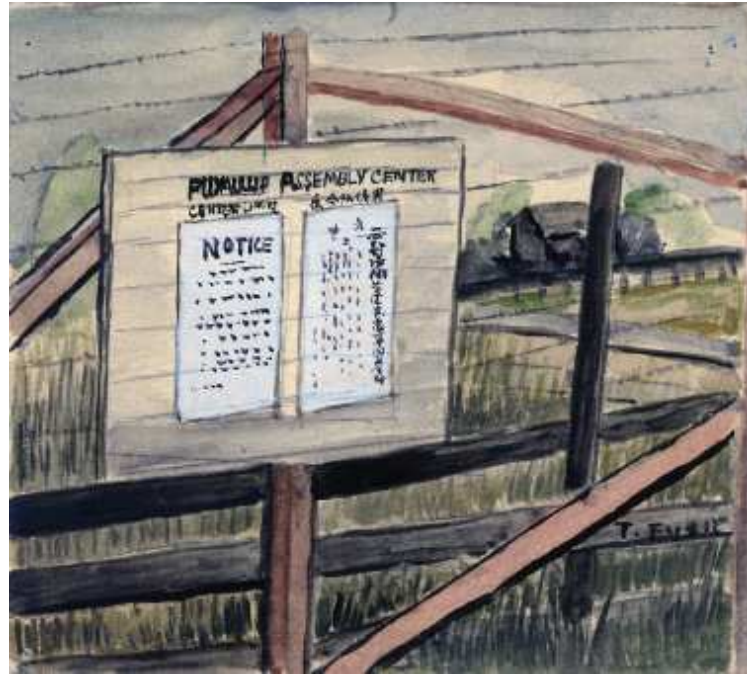
Seattle in wartime
Ink on paperboard, 10 3/4 x 8 in (27.3 x 20.3 cm)



Arriving at Puyallup temporary detention camp
Ink on paper, 7 1/4 x 5 1/2 in (18.4 x 14 cm)



Puyallup, man standing outside barracks
Watercolor on paper, 14 x 9 3/4 in (35.6 x 24.8 cm)



Puyallup, orders from General DeWitt (1 of 4 versions)
Watercolor on paper, 4 3/4 x 5 3/4 in (12.1 x 14.6 cm)



Puyallup, orders from General DeWitt (1 of 4 versions)
Watercolor on paper, 4 3/4 x 6 inches (12.1 x 15.2 cm)



Puyallup, "This was the front gate. It was strictly guarded."
Watercolor on paper, 7 x 10 in (17.8 x 25.4 cm)



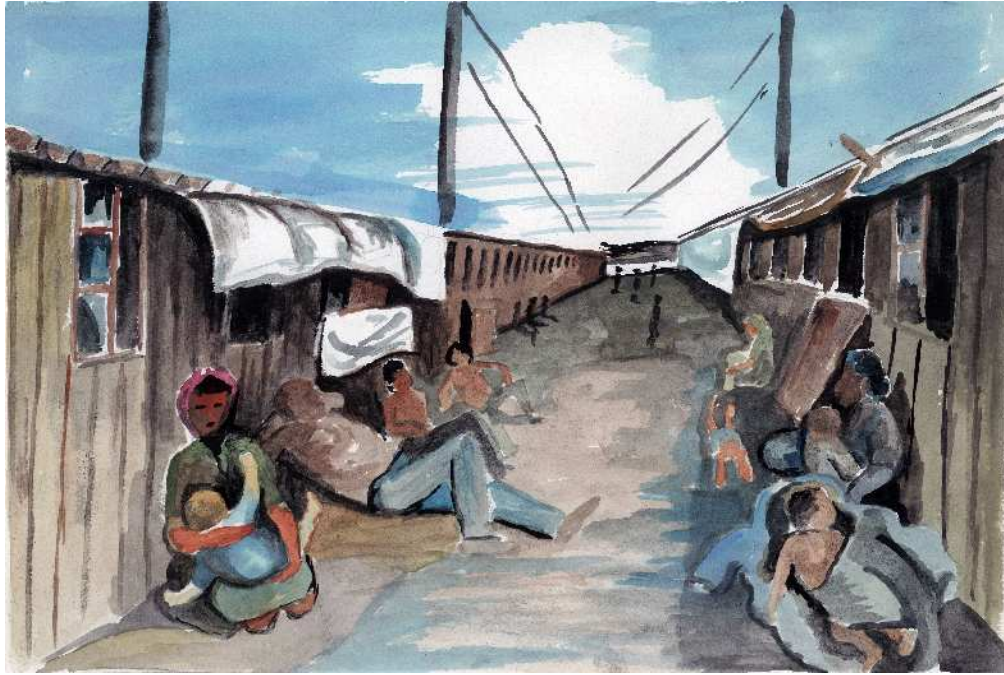
Puyallup, north side looking toward front gate
Watercolor on paper, 4 x 6 in (10.2 x 15.2 cm)



Puyallup, laundry after rain
Watercolor on paper, 10 1/2 x 14 1/2 in (26.7 x 36.8 cm)



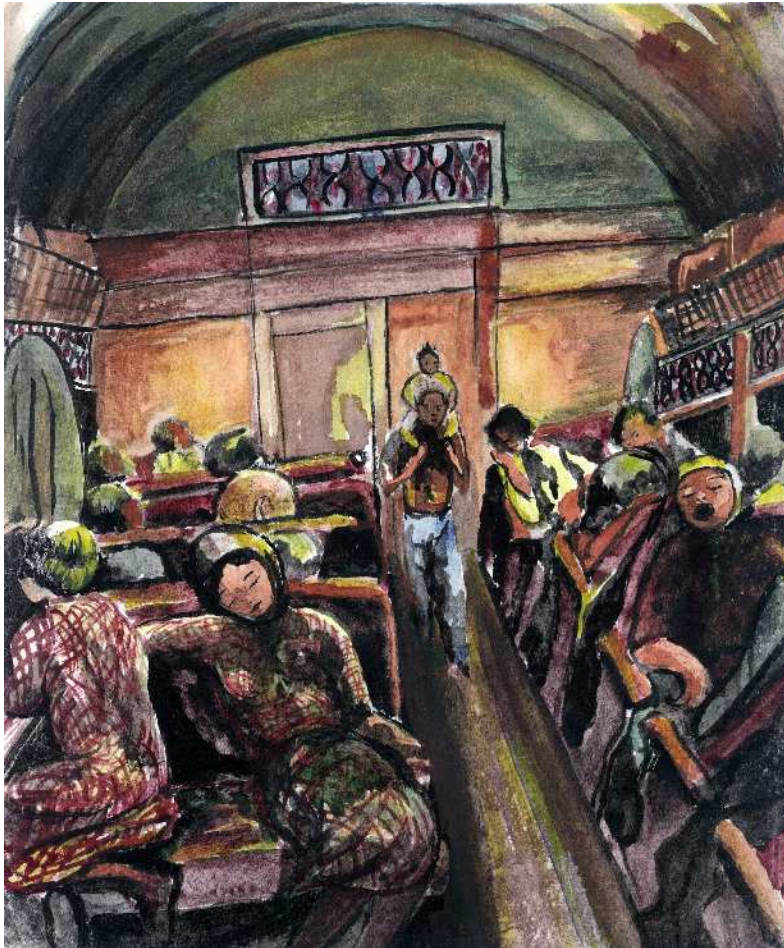
Puyallup, back of camp
Watercolor on paper, 4 x 6 1/2 in (10.2 x 16.5 cm)



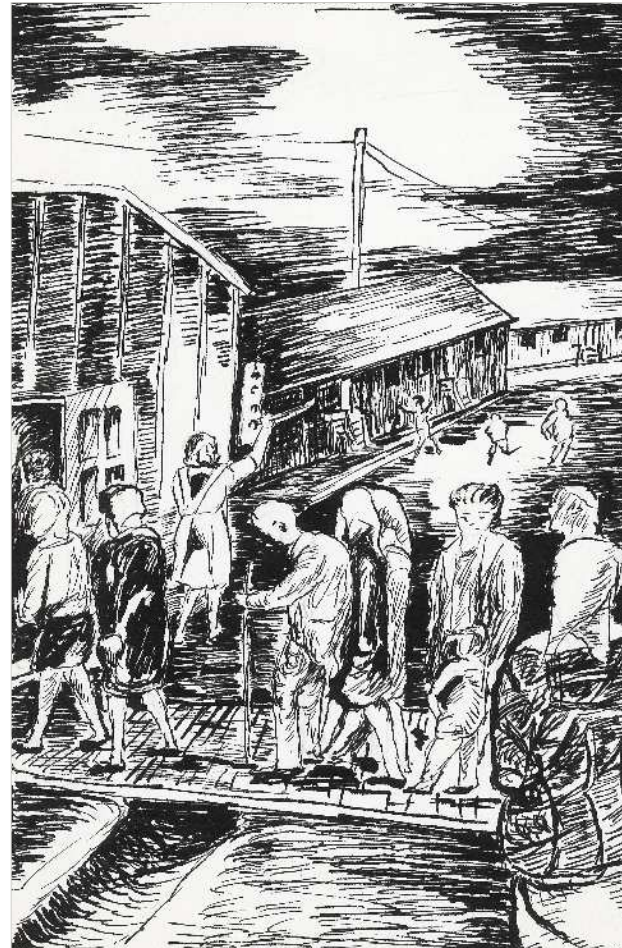
Puyallup, outside in summer
Watercolor on paper, 7 x 10 in (17.8 x 25.4 cm)



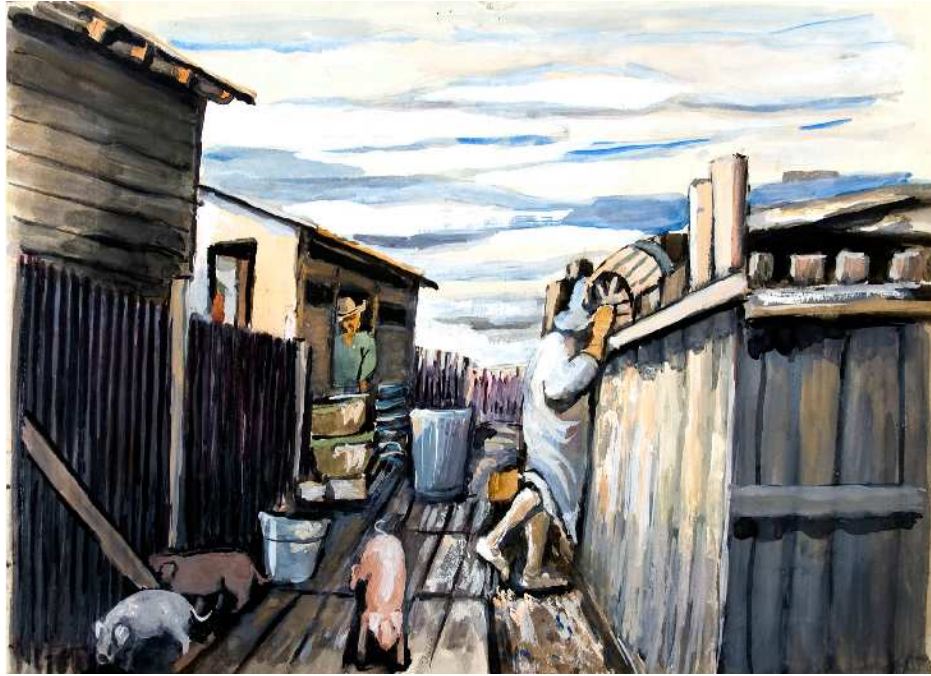
Puyallup, boys playing marbles
Watercolor on paper, 6 3/4 x 9 3/4 in (17.2 x 24.8 cm)



Train to Minidoka
Watercolor on paper, 6 1/2 x 5 1/4 in (16.5 x 13.3 cm)



Minidoka, line at mess hall
Ink on paper, 7.5 x 5 in (19 x 12.7 cm)



Minidoka, hog farm
Watercolor on paper, 10 x 13 1/2 in (25.4 x 34.3 cm)



Minidoka, landscape with bones and snake
Watercolor on paper, 10 1/2 x 14 1/2 in (26.7 x 36.8 cm)



Minidoka, Block 19 "seen from the place where I live"
Watercolor on paper, 6 1/2 x 5 in (16.5 x 12.7 cm)



Minidoka, transformer and pump house
Watercolor on paper, 14 x 10 in (35.6 x 25.4 cm)



Minidoka, Fujii and wife surprised by a rattlesnake
Watercolor on paper, 5 x 6 1/4 in (12.7 x 15.9 cm)



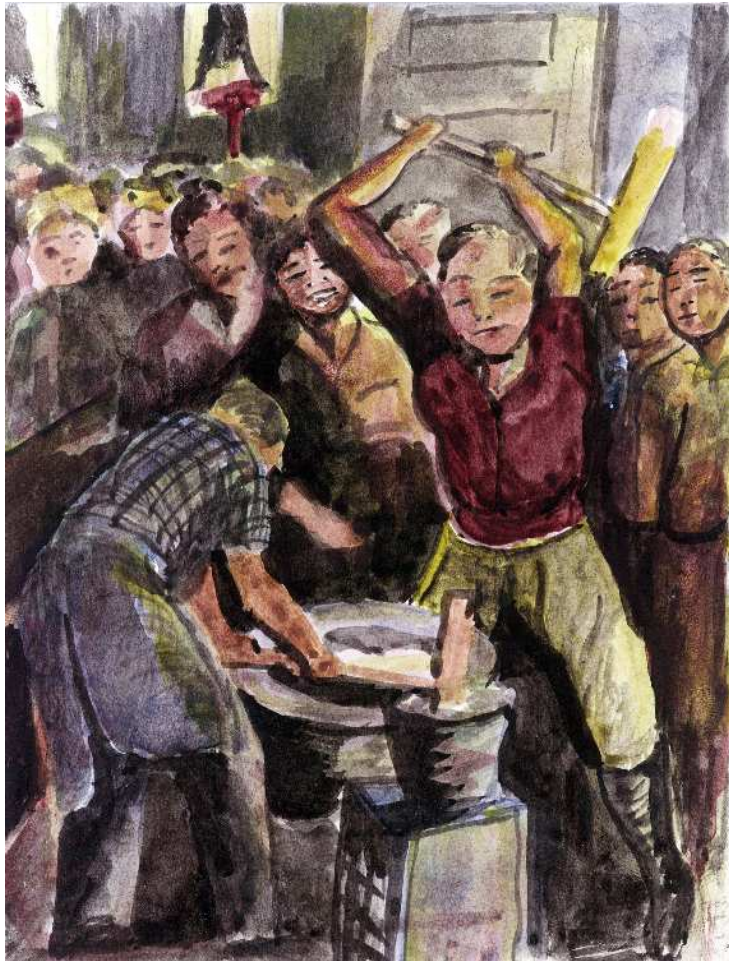
Minidoka, sandstorm
Watercolor on paper, 10 1/2 x 14 1/2 in (26.7 x 36.8 cm)



Minidoka, guard tower at back entrance
Watercolor on paper, 10 x 14 in (25.4 x 35.6 cm)



Minidoka, barracks in Block 17
Watercolor on paper, 10 1/2 x 14 3/4 in (26.7 x 37.5 cm)



Minidoka, pounding mochi
Watercolor on paper, 6 1/4 x 4 1/2 in (15.9 x 11.4 cm)



Minidoka, birds and snake
Watercolor on paper, 14 1/2 x 10 1/2 in (36.8 x 26.7 cm)



Minidoka, INS officers
Watercolor on paper, 12 x 8 in (30.5 x 20.3 cm)



Minidoka, working in the radish field
Watercolor on paper, 6 1/4 x 5 in (15.9 x 12.7 cm)



Minidoka, drawing by flashlight
Watercolor on paper, 14 3/4 x 10 1/2 in (37.5 x 26.7 cm)



Minidoka, looking through barrack doorway
Watercolor on paper, 14 x 10 in (35.6 x 25.4 cm)



Minidoka, barbed wire fence around Block 24
Watercolor on paper, 13 1/2 x 10 in (34.3 x 25.4 cm)



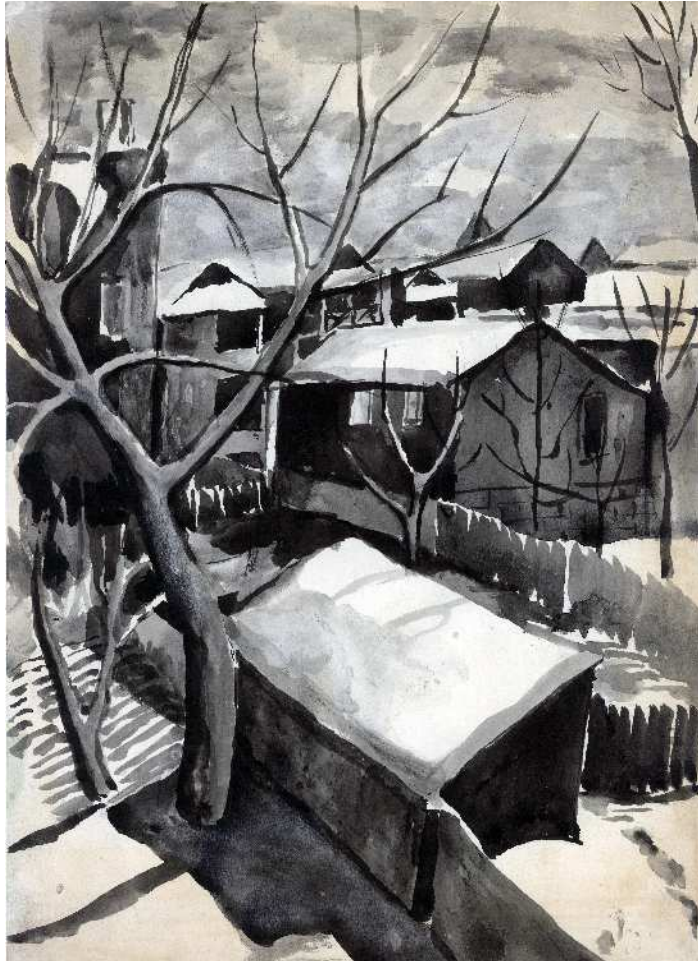
Minidoka, grieving women
Ink on paper, 11 x 8 1/2 in (27.9 x 21.6 cm)



Seattle, King Street - Victory over Japan Day Celebration, 1945
Watercolor and ink on paper, 12 x 9 in (30.5 x 22.9 cm)



Abstraction with checkerboard, c.1940s - 1950s
Watercolor on paper, 11 x 9 in (27.9 x 22.9 cm)



Chicago, backyard in winter, c.1950s
Watercolor on paper, 14 x 10 in (35.6 x 25.4 cm)



Chicago, backyard in summer, c.1950s
Watercolor on paper, 14 x 10 in (35.6 x 25.4 cm)



Black and white abstraction, c.1960s
Enamel on canvas, 24 x 36 in (61 x 91.4 cm)



Minidoka, mess hall abstraction, ink on paper, 6 1/4 x 7 1/2 in (15.9 x 19 cm)

The exhibition Witness to Wartime: The Painted Diary of Takuichi Fujii is organized and traveled by **Curatorial Exhibitions**, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating opportunities for access, outreach and education in the visual arts.