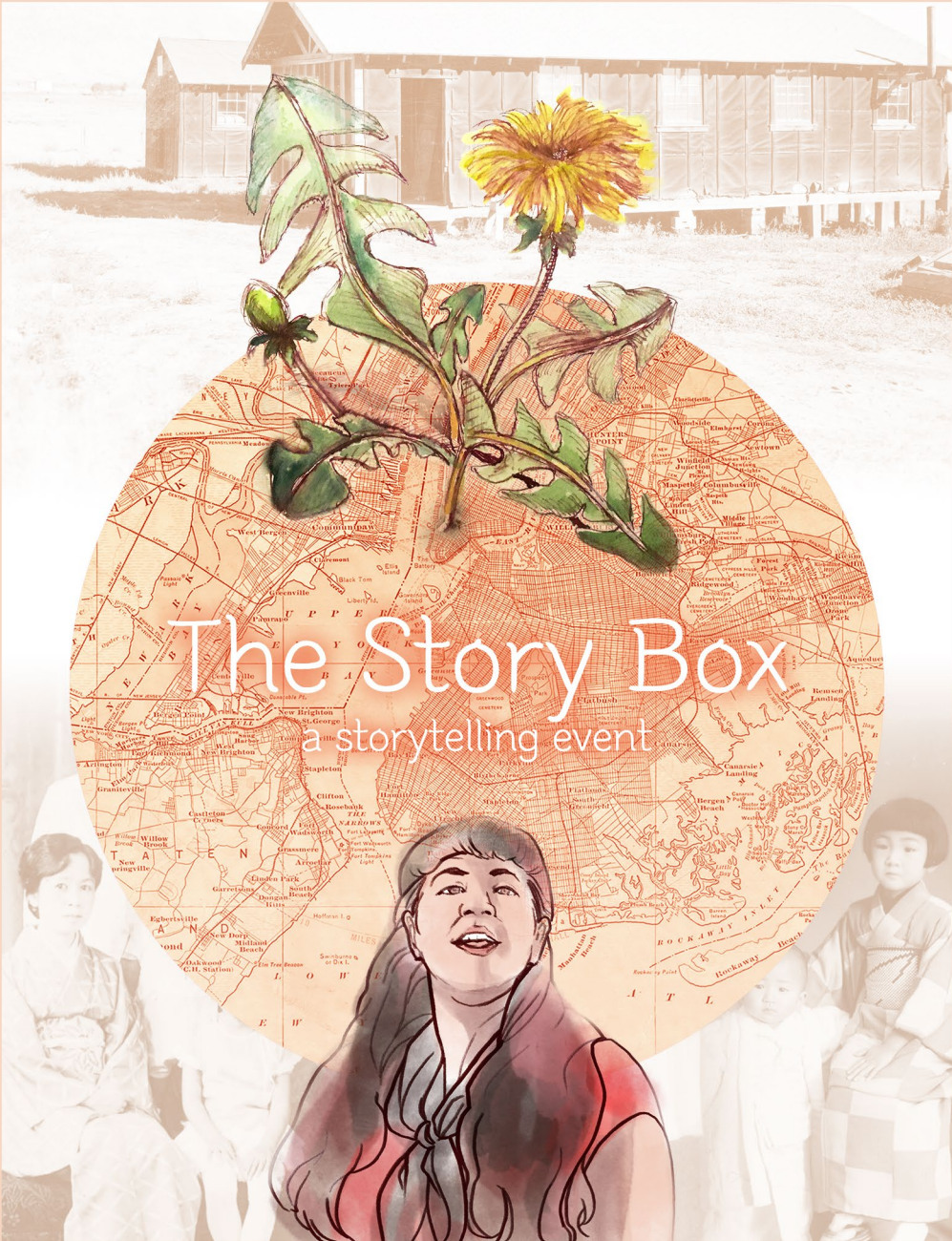


HERE Presents



DIGITAL PROGRAM – SCROLL TO CONTINUE



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Click on any section below to jump to the page.

**SHOW INFO**

**ARTIST'S NOTE**

**BIOS**

**RESIDENCY PROGRAM**

**HERE STAFF**

**FUNDING**

**MEMBERSHIP**

**SURVEY**

**FOLLOW US**



# ARTIST'S NOTE

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Growing up biracial Japanese/American in America was often a confusing experience for me as a child.

On the one hand, my imagination was filled with an alternate universe of magical folktales, colorful traditional clothes, and kawaii kitties. On the other hand, the admission of this knowledge often triggered feelings of shame and isolation. Shame for not being blond, not being like everyone else, and not really "belonging;" and isolation because being Japanese/American made me aware that I was never really seen as an American in America, nor really seen as Japanese in Japan. I was always on the outside of culture looking in...hoping to one day find a place I belonged.

I like to imagine that this feeling of being an observer of culture is what led me to the theater; to the building of my own small community, in which I might fit in.

Like my heritage, my artistic journey has been one of mixing several distinct lineages. Whether through movement, playmaking, or storytelling, my work is about exploring perspectives of individuals who find themselves on the outside of American culture due to their race. In this way, my work seeks to explore the question of who gets to be an American, and problematize the definition of the American Dream.

The idea for *The Story Box* began when I was asked to write a piece to celebrate the centennial of Women's Suffrage that expressed my experience as a Japanese/American Woman. This request created a crisis in me...was it possible to talk about Japanese/American identity without having a personal family history of Incarceration during WW2???



I brought this idea to my long-time artistic collaborator, Kristin Marting, and together we began a development process that has taken us through the Trump administration's scapegoating of immigrants, the discovery of children in cages at our borders, the murder of George Floyd, the rise in Asian Hate, and the massacre of six Asian women in Atlanta.

This play is the apotheosis of all these things. It is my attempt to understand how it has felt to grow up as an Asian American in our country. It is my investigation to see myself as part of an intergenerational odyssey of immigration. It is the record of my personal journey of grief...grief over the loss of my father, and over the loss of idealism that my color is not a liability to my safety and success in America. *The Story Box* is my small attempt to move through Kubler Ross's five stages to find, if not acceptance, my own expression of agency.

Kristin and I believe that the massacre that happened in Atlanta amidst this tidal wave of Asian hate is asking us all to reclaim our definition of how we see ourselves and others as Americans. Are we a land still steeped in the Yellow Peril, or are we a land of liberty for we the people?

Suzi Takahashi  
September 2021





**HERE** presents

# The Story Box

Written and Performed by **Suzi Takahashi**  
Developed with and Directed by **Kristin Marting**  
Composed by **Michaela Gomez**

Set and Costume Design **Jian Jung**  
Sound Design **Drew Weinstein**  
Production Manager **Ayumu "Poe" Saegusa**  
Stage Manager **Sarah Grant**  
Assistant Director **Elyse Durand**

*The Story Box* is produced by **HERE** and has been developed with support from Alfred University, Bethany Arts Community, Bristol Valley Theatre and National Park of Women's Rights. It is co-presented with Japan Society, Bronx Academy of Art and Dance, and NYC Economic Development Corporation and through partnerships with Asian American Arts Alliance, Chocolate Factory, Flushing Town Hall, National Lighthouse Museum, Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island Arts, and Target Margin Theater. Additional support provided by The Venturous Theatre Fund of the Tides Foundation; the New York State Council on the Arts; and GREEN / ARTS LIVE NYC. GREEN / ARTS LIVE NYC is made possible with support from New York Community Trust and Con Edison's Arts Al Fresco Series, administered by City Parks Foundation in collaboration with the Horticultural Society of New York, New Yorkers for Culture & Arts, NYC Department of Transportation, OpenCultureWORKS, and Street Lab.



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Special thanks to Kiana Amber Wu, Gabbie Bellesteros, Laurie Birrittella, Rebecca Chan, Rachel Chau, Pam Eng, Abby Gampel, Rebecca Weaver Hamm, Kim Ima, Yana Landowne, Abigail Lewis, David Lyons, Robert Lyons, Leeda Marting, Mariana Newhard, Jessica Pelletier, Paul Pinto, Rosa, Lucious Seo, David Shane, Elaine Takahashi, Jason Wang, Pai Wang, Aileen Wu, Yiqing Zhao, Elena Zucker, the amazing HERE staff, and the people who took time to share their stories.

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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HERE pays respect to the Munsee Lenape ancestors past, present, and future. We acknowledge that *The Story Box*, HERE, and our performance partner venues are situated on the Lenape island of Manhattan (Mannahatta) and more broadly in Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland. We invite you to join us in acknowledging this, as well as our shared responsibility to make good of this time and for each of us to consider our roles in reconciliation, decolonization, and ally-ship.

# ARTISTIC TEAM

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**SUZI TAKAHASHI** (Writer/Performer) is a biracial, Japanese/American theater creator, director, actor, and educator. She holds a BA in Theatre from Barnard College, an MA in Performance Studies from NYU-Tisch, and an MFA in Directing from Stony Brook Southampton. Suzi trained with the SITI Company. Suzi is part of the faculty at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting where she teaches Movement and directs. Recently, she was named Director of the Stella Adler Studio's AAPI Artist's Initiative. Suzi also teaches Asian Theater at NYU-Tisch. Previously, she has taught theater at: The Actor's Studio, Pace University (IPE), Swarthmore College, The City College of New York, and Hunter College. As an actor, she has performed for artists like: Taylor Mac, Richard Foreman, Richard Schechner, Kristin Marting, and Phil Soltanoff. Suzi was a three-year member of the Williamstown Theater Festival's "Non-Eq" company, and has toured nationally and internationally. As a theater maker, Suzi has collaboratively created fifteen original works. She was a two-time HARP Artist-in-Residence at HERE with the international women's performance ensemble she co-founded, Ex.Pgirl (2002-10). Also, she was an Emerging Artist Directing Fellow at the New York Theater Workshop. Suzi has won numerous grants for her original works, which mostly explore Asian American women's identity. She was the recipient of the 2009 Innovative Theater Award for Best Director. [suzitakahashi.com](http://suzitakahashi.com)

**KRISTIN MARTING** (Director) is a director of hybrid work based in NYC. She has constructed 30 works for the stage (9 original hybrid works, 7 opera-theatre and music-theatre works, 9 adaptations of novels & short stories and 5 classic plays), most recently *Looking at You* with Kamala Sankaram and Rob Handel. Other recent projects include *Silent Voices* at BAM, *IDIOT* with Robert Lyons; *Bombay Rickey*, an opera cabaret also in PROTOTYPE; *Trade Practices*, an immersive theatrical experience where the audience determines value. She also directed *Sounding* and *Dead Tech* (collaborative works adapted from Ibsen), both of which received prestigious MAP Fund awards. She was recently named a [nytheatre.com](http://nytheatre.com) Person of the Decade for outstanding contribution, a Leader to Watch by Art Table and honored with a BAX10 Award. As Founding Artistic Director of HERE, she cultivates artists and programs all events for two performance spaces for an annual audience of 30,000. She co-created and co-curates HARP, HERE's Artist Residency Program. Kristin is also co-director of PROTOTYPE: opera theatre now, an annual festival of contemporary opera-theatre and music theatre works, which she co-founded with Beth Morrison and Kim Whitener.

**MICHAELA GOMEZ** (Composer/Performer) is a New York City based musician who has toured extensively with the band Hazmat Modine. She has been featured on the albums *Leave Your Sleep* (Natalie Merchant), *American Music for Gypsy Souls* (Bill Barrett), and *Bahamut* (Hazmat Modine), as well as on the soundtrack for the Academy Award nominated documentary, *Pina*. Michaela is a graduate of The School of The Art Institute of Chicago and The New York Studio School where she studied visual art. Michaela was a student of music with Michael Longo.

**JIAN JUNG** (Set and Costume Designer) is a New York based designer. Her works have been acclaimed as 'innovative,' 'inventive,' 'genius' and 'spectacular' by major press such as *The New York Times*, *LA Times*, and *Time Out*. Jung received the Edith Lutyens & Norman Bel Geddes Design Enhancement Award for Aya Ogawa's *Ludic Proxy*, and was nominated for a Henry Hewes Design Award for Haruna Lee's *Suicide Forest*. Her design was exhibited in the Prague Quadrennial 2015. Her theater work has been in Classic Stage Company, The Kitchen, The Bushwick Starr, The Flea, Abrons Arts Center, Theatre Row, ART/NY, and Soho Rep, and internationally in Venezuela, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Korea. Her opera work has been in Lincoln Center Juilliard School, Long Beach Opera (CA), and Huntington Theater (Boston). Jung received an MFA in Theater Design from New York University, and an MFA in Environmental Design from Ewha Women's University in Korea.  
[jianjung.com](http://jianjung.com)

**DREW WEINSTEIN** (Sound Designer) (he/him) is a multi-disciplinary theatre and sound artist. He is currently pursuing an MFA in composition and experimental sound practice at California Institute of the Arts. Before school, Drew lived in New York where he created original works for venues including HERE, JACK, Theatre Row, The Brick, The Hive, Jersey City Theater Center, and LEIMAY's SOAK. As a designer and composer, Drew worked with companies including the Oye Group, HERE, LEIMAY, The Brick, Refracted Theatre, Quantum Theater (Pittsburgh PA), Sacramento Ballet (CA), Convergence Theatre, Target Margin Theater, Corkscrew Theater Festival, and Taragano Theatre. His designs have been heard at venues including the Public Theater's Under the Radar Festival, Signature Theatre Center, BRIC, Abrons Arts Center, The Performing Garage, Long Island University, Triskelion Arts, Anacostia Arts Center (Washington DC), Plays & Players (Philadelphia PA), the Producers Club, and Cider Mill Playhouse, among others.

**AYUMU "POE" SAEGUSA** (Production Manager) started his career in 2000 in Tokyo. He moved into NYC in 2005 and became the Resident Lighting Designer at HERE. He also works as a Freelance lighting designer for various types of shows from NY Fringe festival to Lincoln



Center. Additionally, He works as production manager in the USA and Internationally. His Clients include Tokyo Metropolitan theater, Japan Society, NHK (Japan BroadCast corporation), FCI, Shochiku, Yoshimoto, HERE and many others. He founded Creative Machine Stage Lighting in 2017. [creativemachine.lighting](http://creativemachine.lighting)

**SARAH GRANT** (Stage Manager) is thrilled to be working with HERE! Off-Broadway: *Seven Deadly Sins* (Tectonic Theater Project). A.R.T. New York: *Alma Baya* (Untitled Theater Company #61). Production stage manager at Sabrina's Encore Productions: *A Chorus Line*, *Into the Woods*, *Miss Saigon*, *Annie JR*, *Aladdin JR*, *The Lion King JR*.

**ELYSE DURAND** (Assistant Director) is a New York City-based theatre-maker and stand-up comedian actively compiling instruments for her one-person band. She recently graduated from California State University, Northridge with a degree in theatre. Credits include: assistant director/dramaturg for Nilo Cruz's *Lorca in a Green Dress* and co-director for Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*. Her senior thesis explored innovations in comedic conventions for expressing empathy, vulnerability and intimacy in mediated stand-up comedy, but it was really an elaborate ruse to speak at length about her favorite comedians. She is the recipient of university and state-wide research prizes for her preliminary work on an original concept album, based on the legacy of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. She is the host of a music and comedy variety show, entitled *Fret Not*, performed at The Tank! For updates on artistic pursuits and upcoming shows, follow her IG: [@isthatelysedurand](https://www.instagram.com/isthatelysedurand)

# RESOURCE LIST

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## FOR AAPI COMMUNITY:

### **Asian Americans Advancing Justice and Hollaback:**

Bystander Intervention Training

[ihollaback.org/bystanderintervention/](http://ihollaback.org/bystanderintervention/)

### **Stop AAPI Hate:**

Report Hate Crimes, Resources, Bystander Intervention, and More

[caasf.org/stop-aapi-hate/](http://caasf.org/stop-aapi-hate/)

### **Movement Hub:**

Site Devoted to Amplifying Various National Organizations

[movementhub.org](http://movementhub.org)

### **Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists:**

[caata.net](http://caata.net)

### **National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association:**

Provides training and mental health especially to the AAPI communities

[naapimha.org](http://naapimha.org)

### **Asian Mental Health Collective:**

Offers international and crisis hotlines

[asianmhc.org](http://asianmhc.org)

### **Sunshine Behavioral Health:**

Provides educational content, research, and programs to help improve mental health

[sunshinebehavioralhealth.com/resources/mental-health-issues-facing-the-asian-american-community/](http://sunshinebehavioralhealth.com/resources/mental-health-issues-facing-the-asian-american-community/)

### **National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance:**

Builds and develops leadership in local LGBTQ+ AAPI organizations

[ngapia.org](http://ngapia.org)

### **Asian American Resource Center:**

Classes and a re-housing program for AAPI

[aarcatl.org](http://aarcatl.org)

## FOR AAPI COMMUNITY AND ALLIES:

### **NYC Mayor's Toolkit**

For Addressing Anti-Asian Bias, Discrimination, and Hate  
[nyc.gov/site/cchr/community/stop-asian-hate.page](https://nyc.gov/site/cchr/community/stop-asian-hate.page)

### **Doc-series:**

Asian Americans PBS  
[pbs.org/show/asian-americans/](https://pbs.org/show/asian-americans/)

### **Article:**

"The long, ugly history of anti-Asian racism and violence in the U.S."  
[washingtonpost.com/history/2021/03/18/history-anti-asian-violence-racism/](https://washingtonpost.com/history/2021/03/18/history-anti-asian-violence-racism/)

### **Podcast:**

'Self Evident: Asian America's Stories':  
[selfevidentshow.com](https://selfevidentshow.com)



# HERE ARTIST RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Through the HERE Artist Residency Program (HARP), HERE commissions and develops new hybrid works over a 2-to-3 year period. As part of the HERE community of artists and audiences, our resident artists show works-in-progress, develop workshop productions, and mount full-scale productions. For 2021–22, HERE supports the following artists and projects:

**Gelsey Bell**

*m:nij*

**Shayok Misha Chowdhury**

*Rheology*

**Ximena Garnica & Shige Moriya | LEIMAY**

*A Meal*

**Grace Galu & Baba Israel | Soul Inscribed**

*Cannabis! A Theatrical Concert*

**Maiko Kikuchi & Spencer Townley-Lott**

*9000 Paper Balloons*

**Minor Theater**

*Marie It's Time*

**Normandy Sherwood**

*Psychic Self Defense*

**Sachiyo Takahashi & gamin**

*The Emotions*

**Imani Uzuri**

*Songs of Sanctuary of the Black Madonna*

**Nia Ostrow Witherspoon**

*Priestess of Twerk*

CULTUREMART 2019 (Paula Court)

## HERE & BACK

HERE & Back encompasses projects produced by HERE and helmed by established artists with deep connections to HERE. For audiences, HERE & Back provides the chance to experience daring performances by high-profile multidisciplinary artists in our intimate spaces; for the artists, HERE remains a special home for their work and a space open to risk-taking. For 2021–22, the following artists are developing HERE & Back projects:

**Taylor Mac, Resident Playwright**

*The Hang*

**Kristin Marting & Suzi Takahashi**

*The Story Box*



# HERE STAFF

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Kristin Marting

PRODUCING DIRECTOR

Meredith Lynsey Schade

DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Brenna C. Thomas

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HERE is extremely grateful for the support and encouragement of the following group of foundations, corporations, government agencies, elected officials, and dedicated individuals. We would not be HERE without you.

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HERE'S programming is made possible with Public Funds from: National Endowment for the Arts; New York State Council on the Arts; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; the Offices of the Mayor of New York, Speaker Corey Johnson, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, New York State Assembly Member Deborah J. Glick, and State Senator Brad M. Hoylman. We are extremely grateful for the support and advocacy of all of our dedicated elected officials: Senator Charles E. Schumer, Senator Kirsten R. Gillibrand, Representative Jerrold L. Nadler, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Mayor Bill de Blasio, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer and the Cultural Affairs Committee of the City Council, State Assembly Member Deborah J. Glick, and State Senator Brad M. Hoylman.

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HERE, in partnership with Resident Playwright Taylor Mac, is a participant in the Mellon Foundation's National Playwright Residency Program administered in partnership with HowlRound.

**PROTOTYPE: Opera | Theatre | Now** receives major funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and other leadership support from the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. Additional support is provided by The Amphion Foundation, BMI Foundation, Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, Fresh Sound Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, Francis Goellet Charitable Lead Trusts, Antonia & Vladimir Kulaev Cultural Heritage Fund, Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation, OPERA America, The Reed Foundation, and The Ted Snowdon Foundation. Additional support is provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

**HERE is extremely grateful to the many generous individuals who support our programming!** (includes donors as of 8/6/21)

## A NOTE ABOUT THE NEW STRUCTURE OF OUR DONOR LIST:

Community-Centric Fundraising is a fundraising practice that is grounded in equity; it calls on all non-profits to bring principles of racial and economic justice into our development strategies. As one small step towards aligning HERE with this model, we have removed giving levels from our donor list. We hope to celebrate and raise up all of our supporters no matter the size of their contribution and recognize the generosity of our community as a whole. We would like to thank the team of Community-Centric Fundraising for their leadership and their call to action; more information on CCF can be found on their [website](#).

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Jim Fulbright	Dennis Haseley	Mary & Gregory Juedes	Blythe Levitt
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& Joseph Gallo	Shirley Hatcher	Kristy Kannappell	Erika Lin
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& David Bernstein	Kelly Hayes Micozzi	Marji Karlin	David & Ana Linder
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