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The Displaced View

Midi Onodera, a third generation Japanese Canadian (sansei) living in Ontario, has nineteen issue-oriented films already to her credit. This 52 minute documentary, which she wrote, directed and produced, is a departure from her other themes and is a very personal view of a search for her own heritage. And perhaps the use of the term documentary is inadequate when referring to the style of THE DISPLACED VIEW. It is a montage of interviews, archival footage, still photographs, family scenes and personal reflections occasionally interwoven with unsubtitled Japanese characters.



Midi Onodera (THE DISPLACED VIEW), Caryl Brandt of the National Screen Institute and Andrea Boissonault (PEKUNI: A SOVEREIGN NATION) at the Canadian Television Workshop.

The film traces Onodera's discovery of self as it relates to the history of the first and second generation Japanese Canadians (issei and nansei.) Unlike many of us who are intimately familiar with the history of our own families, for the sansei, much has been left unspoken about the bitter experience in Canada during World War II. Onodera focuses particularly on the role of women as family-unifiers in the B.C. internment camps, to reveal how this sad chapter in Canada's history affected her family.

THE DISPLACED VIEW also relates to her connection/disconnection with her family, particularly with her grandmother, because of Onodera's inability to speak the language of her heritage. Her choice not to subtitle the Japanese in the film is deliberate, because as she comments, "Everyone assumes that because I am Japanese, I can speak Japanese. I wanted the viewer to experience my same sense of frustration."

The production, done on a budget of \$132,000 from various funding sources including the Canada Council, the Toronto Arts Council, Multiculturalism Canada, the Department of the Secretary of State and the Ontario Film Development Corporation, has also had the support of many groups in the Japanese community, whose response has been extremely positive to Onodera's unique statement.
