

SWIM GALLERY

509 Ellis
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Press Release

For more information contact:

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Visual exhibition – **MAYA FUJI, “FUJIMURA TOBACCO SHOP”**
solo exhibition of. paintings

Dates of Exhibition: November 18, 2022 – January 7, 2023

Opening Reception: November 18, 6-8pm

Gallery Hours: Wednesday and Saturday by appointment between 12 and 5pm
Telephone **415 . 340 2690**

Address: 509 Ellis Street @ Leavenworth, SF CA 94109

Website www.luggagestoregalleriesf.org; and www.swimgallery.com

Swim Gallery is honored to present a new body of work by Maya Fuji, “*Fujimura Tobacco Shop*,” a collection of large scale paintings created in remembrance and honor of the artist’s Japanese grandmother’s legacy and to Fuji’s Japanese identity.

Fuji's grandmother ran a small tobacco shop out of her house in Kanazawa. Fuji has fond memories of visiting her home during summers as a child. The shop was a hub for neighborhood residents and was a relic of old-school community gathering spots.

Sadly, the house caught fire a few years ago and no longer exists. The Shop lives only in Fuji's memory now, and is a painful reminder of loss and a source of grief. Fuji feels the grief is also connected to being an issei. Fuji's grandmother was the primary connection to her Japanese identity

In *Fujimura Tobacco Shop*, Fuji creates paintings utilizing visual memory fragments of her home, often blending moments spanning over years.

THE ARTIST: Fuji was Born in Japan and raised in the California Bay Area, Maya Fuji is inspired by both her cultural heritage and the exploration of the liminal space she lives in as an issei (first-generation) mixed-race woman in the United States. She is fascinated by traditional Japanese mythology and folklore, as well as Shōwa and Heisei-era subcultures, and expands on these themes within the context of her personal experiences.

A recurring theme in Fuji's work is the exploration of that which forms our sense of identity, and how that shift during one's lifetime due to generations of living abroad.

Imbuing the complexity of being multicultural, multinational, and multiracial is central to her works, as her paintings contrast the nostalgia of childhood memories with underlying feelings of being a foreigner simultaneously navigating Japanese and American communities. She illuminates self-discovery through narration and investigation of the otherness she has felt throughout her life, and uses it as a catalyst to reconnect with and reclaim space within her heritage.

For more info see: Maya Fuji. at www.mayafuji.com, www.luggagestoregallerysf.org, www.swimgallery.com

SWIM GALLERY is run by SF based artist Yarrow Slaps, and Auguste Somers of Los Angeles. It is located at the original venue of The 509 Cultural Center at 509 Ellis Street in the Tenderloin.

Swim was founded in 2008 as a curated blog/magazine/traveling exhibition combining art, fashion and music. Swim became a project of the Luggage Store/509 Cultural Center in 2018 with a physical space at 509 Ellis Street.

SWIM is dedicated to cultural/gender/economic/ethnic equity. SWIM identifies and presents diverse, talented and mostly young emerging BIPOC artists, many of whom are showing their work for the first time or are very early on in their artistic lives.

