



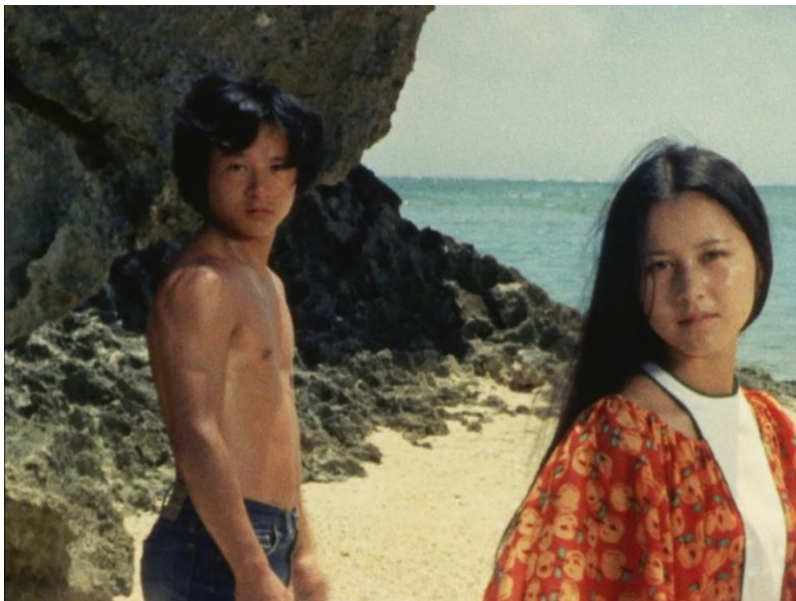
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**JAPAN SOCIETY ANNOUNCES UNPRECEDENTED YEAR-LONG
COMMEMORATION OF OKINAWA**

**OKINAWA IN FOCUS:
REVISITING THE ARCHIPELAGO 50 YEARS AFTER ITS REVERSION TO JAPAN**



Film still from *Paradise View* by Go Takamine featured in *Visions of Okinawa: Cinematic Reflections*

NEW YORK, NY (May 12, 2022)—Japan Society announces [*Okinawa in Focus: Revisiting the Archipelago 50 Years After Its Reversion to Japan*](#), a multi-faceted, year-long programming series exploring the fascinating history and culture of this unique archipelago and its people. This first-of-its-kind commemoration spotlights Okinawa’s rich culture and society through dynamic performances and presentations across various platforms, including dance, film, photography, video, lectures, and panel discussions.

Japan Society is commemorating the 50th anniversary of Okinawa’s reversion to Japan to foster a greater understanding and appreciation for Okinawa’s native people, culture, and critical geopolitical significance. An array of offerings will present diverse perspectives on the modern

complexities of the Okinawan-Japan relationship, including the voices of Okinawan leaders and artists. In addition, programming will also offer high-level thought leader panel discussions and expert webinars, which explore Okinawa's pivotal geopolitical role in U.S.-Japan relations and security in the Asia Pacific region.

"Many people in the United States are unaware that Okinawa has its own distinct culture, languages, and history," says **Joshua Walker**, President, and CEO of Japan Society. "With *Okinawa in Focus*, we want to elevate a multitude of perspectives, including the voices of Okinawans, to explore diverse aspects of the islands' culture - from art and history to Okinawa's role in very current and relevant geopolitical debates."

"I'm thrilled to be a part of the Japan Society's commemoration of Okinawa," says Japanese American author **Akemi Johnson**. "Fifty years after the end of the U.S. occupation of the islands, Okinawa still hosts dozens of U.S. military bases, though many Americans know little about the place. I hope this important initiative raises awareness of the decades-long U.S. military presence and sparks conversations about whether these bases are necessary."

Highlights of upcoming programming for *Okinawa in Focus* include:

May 13, 2022-June 3, 2022 Film Series (in person and online)

[Visions of Okinawa: Cinematic Reflections](#)

2022 marks 50 years since the reversion of Okinawa back to Japan. Focusing on films made around the time of or dealing with the reversion, this series broaches topics of identity, colonialism, the American occupation, race and more by presenting diverse and complicated visions of the territory from mainland filmmakers, native Okinawans, and documentarians.

June 8, 2022 Thought Leader Webinar (see [here](#) as updates become available)

The Okinawa & U.S.-Japan Security Alliance in Critical Times

Okinawa has been playing a crucial role in U.S.-Japan security relations, serving both Japanese and American strategic interests. Due to the island's geo-strategic location, Okinawa is host to a significant number of U.S. military bases in Japan to maintain peace and security in the region. What is Okinawa's role in the U.S.-Japan security relationship? Will it remain a strategically important hub? In this discussion, U.S.-Japan security experts discuss the current geopolitical situation, Okinawa's significance today, and its future role in U.S.-Japan relations.

Masaaki Gabe (Former Professor, University of the Ryukyus and Okinawan native)

Sheila Smith (John E. Merow Senior Fellow for Asia-Pacific Studies, Council on Foreign Relations)

[Okinawa Photography Gallery Exhibition \(Oct-Dec\)](#) (see [here](#) as updates become available)

In the fall of 2022, gallery exhibitions will include works by two Okinawan women (Mao Ishikawa and Chikako Yamashiro) as well as pieces from the Yanbaru Art Festival, a traveling show that originated in Okinawa. The gallery exhibition will capture the voice that emerges from Okinawa.

Author Talks About Okinawa

Writers Akemi Johnson (*Night in the American Village: Women in the Shadow of U.S. Military Bases in Okinawa*) and Elizabeth Miki Brina (*Speak, Okinawa*) will address the issue of children born in Okinawa whose fathers are men from the U.S. military bases.

All performances and events are open to the public and tickets will be available [here](#).

Educating Youth on Okinawa

Japan Society will also be sharing its Okinawa programming with youth across the U.S. to broaden their understanding of this region of the world, through its teacher training programs in New York, NY, Los Angeles, CA, and Houston, TX, as well as its work with New York school partners and its Children's Day celebration, May 8.

About Japan Society

Japan Society is the premier organization connecting Japanese arts, culture, business, and society with audiences in New York and around the world. The Japan Society is inspired by the Japanese concept of *kizuna* (絆)—forging deep connections to bind people together – and is committed to telling the story of Japan while strengthening connections within New York City and building new bridges beyond. In over 100 years of work, The Japan Society has inspired generations by establishing itself as a pioneer in supporting international exchanges in arts and culture, business, and policy, as well as education between Japan and the U.S. Through convening important conversations on topics that bind our two countries together, The Japan Society hopes to champion the next generation of innovative creators, promote mutual understanding, and serve as a trusted guide for people everywhere who seek to more fully appreciate the rich complexities and abundance of Japan.

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