

PRESS RELEASE

We are pleased to announce the release of the new documentary, *Our Mr. Matsura*, produced and directed by Beth Harrington, co-produced by Hatsumi Asaka and Nora Colie.

Our Mr. Matsura is the story of Frank (Sakae) Matsura, the orphaned son of a samurai, who emigrated to Washington State in 1901, eventually settling in remote Okanogan County. There he embedded himself in a community of Native people and newly arrived settlers and immigrants, including miners, ranchers, shopkeepers and cowboys. In short order, he became the region's leading photo-chronicler and, to many, its most beloved citizen. Matsura not only made engaging photographs of people, events and landscapes, but he also revealed facets of himself through scores of unusual self-portraits. Upon his untimely death at the age of 39, he was mourned in the largest funeral anyone in the area had seen to that date. Through his lens, Frank Matsura offered up remarkable retellings of life in the American West and gave people new ways of thinking about themselves. A century later, the people of the county and the Colville Confederated Tribes still have pride and a sense of connection to the work he created.

Five years in the making, *Our Mr. Matsura* includes the thoughts and family memories of a wide array of people from the Colville Confederated Tribes and the small Washington communities of Okanogan, Omak, Conconully, and Brewster, as well as extended family members in Japan and experts from around the world. The film not only celebrates the life of this amazing immigrant photographer, but also the lives of the people who have helped uphold his memory in the century since his death.

To see the *Our Mr. Matsura* trailer and learn more about our film and our production team, please visit ourmrmatsura.com

CONTACT:

Beth Harrington, Beth Harrington Productions/Solid Sender

beth@bethharrington.com

503-260-7020

THE FILMMAKERS

Producer/Director/Writer **Beth Harrington** is an Emmy award-winning independent filmmaker whose work focuses on American culture, history, art, and music. Her film *Welcome to the Club—The Women of Rockabilly* about the pioneering women of rock and roll was honored with a 2003 Grammy nomination and was seen on PBS stations across the country. In 2014, her film *The Winding Stream: The Carters, the Cashes and the Course of Country Music* premiered at SXSW and won numerous festival awards including many Best Documentary laurels, as well as Critics' Picks from both the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice*. Harrington has also worked with public television stations WGBH in Boston and Oregon Public Broadcasting in Portland, producing, directing, researching, and writing shows for local and national broadcast. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Communication from Syracuse

University and a Master's in American Studies from University of Massachusetts-Boston.

Co-Producer **Hatsumi Asaka's** career spans more than 30 years. She has produced programming for dozens of TV series on six national Japanese networks. After graduating from Japan Journalist College, Hatsumi began as a writer and director on some 100 TV shows for Nippon TV, Tokyo Broadcasting System, TV Asahi, and TV Tokyo. She later moved to NYC to serve as program director at TV Japan, later becoming a producer-director for NHK covering news, documentaries and sports. Her New York segments were a staple of NHK's popular morning show "Ohayo Nippon." In more recent years she has produced public affairs shows including NHK's *Star Women*, as well as English-language content for NHK World-Japan. Most recently she served as Associate Producer on the documentary *Tokyo Hula* and as Assistant Technical Director at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Co-Producer **Nora Colie** is a documentary and narrative filmmaker with experience as a director, assistant director and archival researcher. For over a decade she worked with filmmaker Eugene Jarecki on his high-profile films, including *The King* (Sundance, 2018), *The House I Live In* (Grand Jury Award, Sundance, 2012, Peabody Award, 2014), *Reagan* (Sundance, 2011, Emmy Award 2012), and *Why We Fight* (Sundance, Grand Jury Prize, 2005). With Oregon Public Broadcasting she has produced and directed segments for their Oregon Art Beat series. She is a current board member of Northwest Documentary, a non-profit hub for documentary filmmakers. She also is the Managing Director of the POW Film Festival, an annual event showcasing films by women and non-binary directors and is part of Making Earth Cool, a project creating content that encourages people to be better stewards of our planet.

Consulting Producer **Francene Blythe-Lewis** is the Executive Director of Vision Maker Media, empowering Native filmmakers to tell their stories. Prior to joining Vision Maker, she was the Director of Programs for the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, overseeing the strategic development, implementation and evaluation of public programs, outreach and funding opportunities. She has also served at National Geographic and was the Director of their All Roads Film Project, in addition to producing the female filmmaker series *Women Hold Up Half the Sky*. She has a broad background in project management and arts and cultures, having worked for the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage at the Smithsonian Institution, and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian. Francene received her MA in Theater Management at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, and her BA in Theater from Doane College. As a proud Native woman, she is Eastern Band Cherokee and Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota from her father and Navajo from her mother. Francene has received numerous awards and recognition for championing cultural diversity and equity in arts and community leadership.

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This project has been funded through grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, with additional support from the Faerie Godmother Fund of the Oregon Community Fund and many individual donors.

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PRODUCTION TEAM

Our film was largely shot in the Pacific Northwest by this team:

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Asia Brown

ADDITIONAL CINEMATOGRAPHY

Kevin Forrest

SOUND RECORDIST/SOUND DESIGN

Jordan Eusebio

EDITORS

Kyung Lee

Emily Von W Gilbert

CAMERA ASSISTANT

Megan Neil

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Interviews and scenes for the film were also shot in Japan by this production team:

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Naohiro Hashimoto

CAMERA OPERATOR

Akihiko Miyawaki

SOUND RECORDIST

Yusuke Murayama

LIGHTING DIRECTOR

Kenichi Goto

CAMERA ASSISTANT

Shiori Nakashima

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Yuki Yano

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We were also guided by the insight of the following advisors:

ADVISORY TEAM

Laurie Arnold

Director of Native American Studies, Associate Professor of History, Gonzaga University
Member, Colville Confederated Tribes

Julia Dolan

Minor White Curator of Photography at the Portland Art Museum

Maki Fukuoka

Associate Professor, History of Photography, University of Leeds

Michael Holloman

Associate Professor of Art History, Washington State University – Pullman
Member, Colville Confederated Tribes

Daniel Lamberton

Humanities Chair, Walla Walla University

Glen Mimura

Associate Professor of Film and Media Studies and Asian-American Studies, University of California, Irvine

ShiPu Wang

Professor and Coats Family Endowed Chair in the Arts, University of California, Merced

Marie R. Wong

Professor Emerita, Asian American Studies, Urban Planning, Seattle University