

## PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT For Immediate Release

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### JCCCNC Announces the Opening Show of The Waribashi Project: San Francisco

*San Francisco (August 22, 2005)* – The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by artist Donna Keiko Ozawa in "The Waribashi Project", an environmental art project in San Francisco's Japantown. The show opens on September 10<sup>th</sup> and continues through October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The opening reception will be held on Saturday, September 10, 2005, 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., with an opportunity to meet the artist. The show will be located in a first floor storefront in the Kinokuniya Building of the Japantown Center, 1581 Webster Street SF, CA 94115.

Ozawa has been collecting, washing and drying used waribashi—disposable chopsticks— from Japantown restaurants for the past few months. She will use over 180,000 of them to create a site-specific installation in a vacant space in the Japantown Mall donated by Kinokuniya.

Why chopsticks? Ozawa wants to draw attention to the impact of widespread cultural habits upon the environment. Disposable chopsticks are thrown out in the hundreds of billions every year. Japan and China together consume over 40 million trees a

year in chopsticks alone. Northwestern and Canadian forests are being cut for chopstick production that sometimes results in 85% waste. Ozawa's project reveals the mass of chopstick garbage from tens of thousands of customers that have eaten at 12 Japantown restaurants in just 8 weeks.



**Donna Ozawa dries the last of the chopsticks collected from Japantown restaurants.**



Paul Osaki, Executive Director of JCCCNC, comments, *"I am grateful for the participation of the Japantown restaurants. We are hoping they don't see this as the end of chopstick collection, but rather, as the beginning of exploring other solutions to environmental issues such as composting chopsticks and food waste, using washable utensils and recycling bottles and cans at their*

*place of business."* The Waribashi Project is working with the San Francisco Department of Environment and the Golden Gate Disposal Company who can provide technical assistance and answers about the ease and speed at which restaurants can begin these programs. Ozawa has already taken steps to help reduce the use of waribashi on the consumer side by selling "Carry your own chopsticks" sets available for \$5/set at the JCCCNC.

The Waribashi Project 's opening reception will be held on Saturday, September 10, from 3-6 pm. Admission is free. Public programs will also be held throughout September and October including art talks, ecology and arts workshops and a catalog release at the closing reception. For more information, call the 415.567.5505 or visit [www.waribashi.org](http://www.waribashi.org)

The project's schedule of events:

- **September 10th, Saturday, 3-6 pm**, Exhibition Opening & Reception, Kinokuniya Building, First Floor, 1581 Webster Street, SF
- **September 24th, Saturday, 3-4:30 pm** Artist Talk at JCCCNC, 1840 Sutter Street, SF
- **October 1st, Saturday, 1-4 pm**, Hands-on Workshop: "The Ecology of Chopsticks and other Disposables," Crissy Field Center, 608 Mason @ Halleck in the Presidio.
- **October 8th, Saturday, 2-3:30 pm**, Artist Talk at Crissy Field Center
- **October 15th, Saturday, 1-3 pm**, Hands-on Arts Workshop, Crissy Field Center.
- **October 22nd, Saturday, 3-6 pm**, Closing Reception and Project Catalog Release party, Kinokuniya Building, First Floor, 1581 Webster Street, SF

### About Donna Ozawa

Donna Keiko Ozawa is a visual artist and musician. Born and raised in San Francisco's Japantown, Ozawa is a third generation Japanese American. In her earlier career as a social service provider and community activist, in 1988, she co-founded LYRIC, the Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center in San Francisco, now the largest gay youth organization in the country. Ozawa earned her Master of Fine Art degree in 1997 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work is primarily sculpture and installation which include kinetic and viewer-activated sculpture, politically-inspired work

and art with recycled materials. Ozawa maintains a studio in Oakland, CA, and has shown her artwork in Northern California, Chicago, Baltimore, and Tokyo, Japan.

### **About JCCCNC**

Envisioned by the Japanese American community, JCCCNC will be an everlasting foundation of our Japanese American ancestry, cultural heritage, histories and traditions. The JCCCNC strives to meet the evolving needs of the Japanese American community through programs, affordable services and facility usage. The JCCCNC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community center based in San Francisco.