



“...proves that brotherhood, love, and strength can help heal the wounds of heartbreak.”
- Joey Moser, Awards Daily



“Powerful, poignant, and profound!”
- Scott Mantz, KTLA-TV

“...sheds light on a vital piece of American history...”
- Matt Fagerholm, RogerEbert.com



“...an exceptional indie war film.”
- Alan Ng, Film Threat

nisei

JONATHAN
TANIGAKI

BRENT
YOSHIDA

A ROANN FILMS PRODUCTION in association with SPARTAN FILM STUDIOS
"NISEI" starring JONATHAN TANIGAKI BRENT YOSHIDA DARIN COOPER
produced by JESSICA OLTHOF NICK MARTINEZ
written and directed by DARREN HARUO RAE

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PRESS KIT
2024

LOGLINE

'Nisei' (2nd generation) follows the journey of two brothers through WWII, Minoru and John Miyasaki, who are stripped of citizenship, imprisoned, but still volunteer to join the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, an all Japanese-American regiment and the most medaled unit in the history of the US military. Torn between country and family, they must face the enemy overseas along with adversity back home.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Title	Nisei
Genre	Action/Drama
Language	English
Country of Production	United States
Director/Screenwriter	Darren Haruo Rae
Cast	Jonathan Tanigaki, Brent Yoshida Shiro Kawai, Darin Cooper
Production Company	Roann Films
Producers	Jessica Olthof, Nick Martinez
Completion	2023
Running Time	20 min 38 sec (including credits)
Screen Ratio	1:85:1
Format	4k 5.1 mix

MORE INFO

Website: niseithefilm.com

Instagram: [@niseithefilm](https://www.instagram.com/niseithefilm)



In the 1920s, my great grandfather immigrated to the Pacific Northwest. Wanting a better life, he left Japan and started a family in America. Little did he know, war was on the horizon and that my family's fate was forever changed.

My grandfather, born and raised in America, was placed in an internment camp along with the rest of my family. Without hesitation, he volunteered for the Army, prepared to sacrifice his life for the very country that betrayed him.

As a kid, I would listen to his stories, not fully comprehending what it meant to be Japanese-American during WWII. It wasn't until I got older that I realized the horrors and sacrifice that an entire generation went through.

THE STORY

Many people don't know about the internment camps. At most, it was a paragraph in a history textbook in school.

My film is not only meant as a reminder of America's atrocities, but also a celebration of the Japanese-American community. To continue to fight, even when everyone has turned their back on you. To be proud of who you are.

I am fortunate to be able to make films for a living, but with that comes great responsibility. My film gives a voice to people that need to be heard. It champions the stories that I grew up with and introduces it to new audiences.

The story is about my family, but it is more than that. It represents the Japanese-American community and shows the world of our bravery and resilience.

- Darren Hauro Rae



AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

(April 2023 - May 2024)

KEY AWARDS

GRAND JURY PRIZE FOR BEST NARRATIVE DRAMATIC SHORT
Cinequest International Film Festival

BEST DRAMA SHORT
Poppy Jasper International Film Festival

AUDIENCE CHOICE FOR BEST DRAMA SHORT
Poppy Jasper International Film Festival

GRAND JURY PRIZE FOR BEST SHORT
Highland Park Film Festival

EMERGING CINEMATOGRAPHER AWARDS
The International Cinematographers Guild
2023 Honoree - Connor Van Bodell

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY
Milan Shorts Film Festival

BEST SOUND
Milan Shorts Film Festival

BEST SHORT
Matrix Film Festival

DIRECTOR'S CHOICE AWARD
Thomas Edison Film Festival

KEY OFFICIAL SELECTIONS

Indy Shorts International Film Festival
LA Shorts International Film Festival
Newport Beach Film Fest
Naples International Film Festival
HollyShorts Film Festival
Cinequest International Film Festival
Catalina Film Festival
Poppy Jasper International Film Festival
Milan Shorts Film Festival
Silicon Valley Asian Pacific FilmFest
Highland Park Film Festival
New York Japan Cinefest
Sante Fe Film Festival
Dam Short Film Festival
Thomas Edison Film Festival
Beloit International Film Festival
Wyoming International Film Festival
Omaha Film Festival
Philadelphia Independent Film Festival
Beaufort International Film Festival
Cinema On The Bayou Film Festival
Lighthouse International Film Festival
Matrix Film Festival
Utah Film Festival
Manhattan Film Festival



PRESS

- [Variety | Oscar Shortlist Voting Closes: Will 'Barbie,' 'Society of the Snow' and 'Godzilla: Minus One' Move One Step Closer to Nominations?](#)
December 18, 2023
Written By: Clayton Davis
- [Awards Daily | What Might Land On This Year's Short Film Shortlists? December 21, 2023](#)
Written By: Joey Moser
- [Awards Daily | 'Nisei' Shines a Light On Family Ties Bound in a Warzone](#)
November 29, 2023
Written By: Joey Moser
- [Medium | From a Grandfather's WWII Memories to Modern Cinematic Excellence: An Interview with the Writer-Director, and Producer, of Nisei](#)
November 2, 2023
Written By: Gregory Weinkauff
- [The Hollywood Reporter | Events of the Week - HollyShorts FYC November 17, 2023](#)
Written By: Kristen Chuba
- [Film Threat | Nisei Review](#)
November 22, 2023
Written By: Alan Ng
- [Indie Activity | In Conversation With Director Darren Rae On Oscar-Qualifying Short Film Nisei](#)
November 22, 2023
- [Asian Movie Pulse | Short Film Review: Nisei \(2023\) by Darren Haruo Rae](#)
November 1, 2023
Written By: Panos Kotzathanasis

VARIETY

Dec 18, 2023 5:00pm PT

Oscar Shortlist Voting Closes: Will 'Barbie,' 'Society of the Snow' and 'Godzilla: Minus One' Move One Step Closer to Nominations?

Final predictions for 10 shortlist categories that will be announced on Thursday by the Academy

By Clayton Davis ▾

- "The After" (Netflix)
- "Airhostess" (The New Yorker)
- "Eid Mubarak" (Kanopy)
- "Nisei" (Distributor TBD)
- "The Old Young Crow" (Distributor TBD)
- "Shadow Brother Sunday" (Distributor TBD)
- "The Shepherd" (Walt Disney Pictures)
- "A Strange Way of Life" (Sony Pictures Classics)
- "The Stupid Boy" (Authentive Productions)
- "Take Me Home" (Distributor TBD)
- "Troy" (The New Yorker)
- "We Were Meant To" (Distributor TBD)
- "Weathering" (Netflix)
- "Wild Animal" (Backscatter Productions)
- "The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar" (Netflix)

Alternate: "For People in Trouble"

HollyShorts FYC event

Holly^{THE}
REPORTER

Alta Global Media hosted an FYC Best Live Action screening on Wednesday, presented by HollyShorts Film Festival, featuring Darren Harou Rae's *NISEI*, Lloyd Lee Choi's *Closing Dynasty* and Alden Ehrenreich's *Shadow Brother's Sunday*.



Steven Adams, Darren Rae, Lloyd Lee Choi, Alden Ehrenreich, Scott Mantz, Jessica Olthof and Theo Dumont COURTESY OF CHARLIE MINH NGUYEN

SPECIAL SCREENINGS & EVENTS

Annual Emerging Cinematographer Awards (ECA). ECA showcase presented by The International Cinematographers Guild (ICG, IATSE Local 600) | Sunday, Oct. 1 at the Television Academy's Saban Media Center Wolf Theater in North Hollywood

FYC Screening @ The Aster | Moderated by Scott Mantz, KTLA-TV - November 15th

FYC Special Screening @ Delancey Street Theater (San Francisco) | Presented by HollyShorts, Center for Asian American Media (CAAM), One Production Place, Watch Documentaries Now, and Open Your Eyes and Think MF - November 28th, 2023

FYC Special Screening @ The Crescent (LA) | Presented by HollyShorts, Center for Asian American Media (CAAM), One Production Place, Watch Documentaries Now, and Open Your Eyes and Think MF - November 29th, 2023

FYC Special Screening @ Lincoln Center (NYC) | Presented by HollyShorts, Center for Asian American Media (CAAM), One Production Place, Watch Documentaries Now, and Open Your Eyes and Think MF - December 5th, 2023

Films of Remembrance Showcase Presented by Nichi Bei Foundation
The AMC Kabuki 8 theater in San Francisco's Japantown on Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024,
The San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin in San Jose's Japantown on Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024

San Jose JAACL Presents | Nisei Short Film Screening - September 17th, 2024

Q & A WITH FILMMAKER DARREN HARUO RAE

1. IS THERE ANY TYPE OF MESSAGE OR EMOTION THAT YOU HOPE THE VIEWER TAKES AWAY FROM WATCHING THIS FILM?

I hope when people watch our film, they will feel a sense of pride. That even through adversity, good people can still prevail. It is important to look at these stories of the past and learn from them. Understanding the past means we won't make the same mistakes in the future

2. WERE THERE ANY CHALLENGES IN MAKING THIS PROJECT?

Our film is a period piece, so right away there were a lot of logistical challenges. Finding a 1940s bus, locations, WWII uniforms, and period-correct weapons was ambitious to fit within our small budget. It was our responsibility to put in the effort and research to justly portray this time period and community to the best of our abilities, with the resources we had.

3. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START MAKING FILMS?

My inspiration to make films came from my father. He had a huge laserdisc collection when I was a kid and some of my fondest memories are of us sitting down and watching movies. He taught me the importance of storytelling and the power a film can hold. It wasn't just watching to escape, it was a way to challenge myself, to ask hard questions, and to face unpleasant truths. Now, as a filmmaker, I hope to channel the same values and morals that he taught me from the first time I sat down to watch a film.



T E A M



DARREN HARUO RAE

Writer + Director

Instagram: @darrenhvae

Darren Haruo Rae, a Japanese-American producer/director based in Los Angeles, co-founded the boutique production company Roann Films.

Rae's directorial debut, *Park Arcadia*, garnered Best Screenplay at the 2014 International Film Festival Cinematic Arts in Los Angeles. His latest film, *Nisei*, inspired by his Japanese-American grandfather's WWII experiences in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, earned Best Drama and Audience Choice at the 2023 Poppy Jasper Film Festival and continues its festival circuit, screening at Indy Shorts by Heartland Film, LA Shorts International Film Festival, HollyShorts Film Festival, and Cinequest Film Festival.

Currently, Rae is the series producer for the MasterClass G.O.A.T. Original Series and is producing the feature film *Surrender*, starring Andrea Bang. *Surrender* was selected as one of Film Independent's Fast Track fellowship program's top 10 narrative fiction features and is slated for production in 2023.



JESSICA OLT Hof

Producer

Instagram: @jessicaolthof

Jessica Olthof, a versatile producer based in Los Angeles, began her career as a camera assistant before transitioning to the production space and ultimately producing. In the past five years, she has coordinated over ten feature films, including *Palm Springs*, starring Andy Samberg and JK Simmons, and *The Starling*, directed by Ted Melfi and featuring Melissa McCarthy, Chris O'Dowd, and Kevin Kline. Her portfolio also includes *LA Units for Next Goal Wins*, *The Banker*, *Voyagers*, *Molly's Game*, and *Greenland*.

In 2023, Olthof produced the award-winning short film *Nisei*, which claimed Best Drama & Audience Choice at the Poppy Jasper Film Festival and screened at Indy Shorts by Heartland Film, LA Shorts International Film Festival, HollyShorts Film Festival, and Cinequest Film Festival. She is currently producing her first feature film, *Surrender*, starring Andrea Bang from *Kim's Convenience*, with support from Film Independent and The Gotham Film & Media Institute. A passionate advocate for gender equality in the industry, Jessica is an active member of Women in Film.

T E A M



NICK MARTINEZ

Producer

Instagram: @nickmartinez00

Nick Martinez began his career producing independent features in the Bay Area. He produced twelve feature films that received distribution on Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hulu.

After moving to Los Angeles, Martinez has been directing narrative films and commercials. His ability to combine high-end action with serious drama recently won him "Best Direction" at Los Angeles Indie Film Festival for his film "American Muscle." His latest work is an adaptation of John Steinbeck's "Breakfast" from the Long Valley. His commercial clients include Cisco Systems, Airbnb, Uplift, and Western Digital.



BARNABY DALLAS

Executive Producer

Instagram: @barnabydallas

Barnaby Dallas is the Director of Production for Film and Theatre at San José State University, the Director of Film Production for Spartan Film Studios. He also teaches screenwriting and story development for DreamWorks Animation and is a consultant with Nine Yards Entertainment.

PRINCIPAL CAST



JONATHAN TANIGAKI

Role: Minoru Miyasaki

Instagram: @jonathantanigaki

Jonathan Tanigaki is a talented Japanese-Taiwanese-American actor hailing from New Jersey. He's appeared on the hit series "NCIS: Hawaii" as well as feature films to be released in 2023 & 2024: "The Afterworld Game," "Camera," "Deadly Dild," and "Transfer." He can be seen in the riveting Japanese documentary film "8:15," which takes us on an eye-opening journey through the survivors of the atomic bomb attack in Hiroshima. Jonathan's versatility extends to voice acting, where his talent can be heard in popular shows like Netflix's "Money Heist," "Single's Inferno," and "Alchemy of Souls."

Apart from his acting endeavors, Jonathan is also well-versed in various forms of dance, including ballet, tap, and jazz, martial arts, adding a dynamic element to his artistic repertoire.



BRENT YOSHIDA

Role: John Miyasaki

Instagram: @brentyoshida

Brent Yoshida is an actor who believes in finding our greatest strength within our pain. This is rooted in cultural upbringing with multiple family members being incarcerated in Japanese Concentration Camps. That same perseverance led to 8 theatrical projects in 6 months (pre-SAG strike); many involving stunts, firearms, or motorcycles. He plays edgy character, Lee, in the Season 4 Premiere of Starz "Powerbook 2: Ghost" & has dynamic supporting roles in three 2024 Indie feature films: "A Warrior's Soul", "Bird of Paradise" and "The Long Game". Yoshida is lead in the thriller short "Hazard Pay" and has voiceover roles in Netflix's "The Summit of the Gods", "The Journalist" and more. He is a magnetic actor and former USC Football Special Teams starter with a heart for the community.

PRINCIPAL CAST



SHIRO KAWAI

Role: Jinkichi Miyasaki

Instagram: @shiro.kawai

Shiro Kawai is an actor from Tokyo, Japan, and has appeared in films including 'Go For Broke', 'Running for Grace', and 'Under the Blood-Red Sun', as well as the TV show 'Hawaii Five-O'. He has also performed in local theatres in Honolulu, HI. Trained with Scott Rogers (Scott Rogers Studios), Brian Mulligan (HB Studio), and Nicholas Gianforti (Pacific Playhouse).

Aside from acting, he is an accomplished software engineer and has worked as a senior programmer for 'Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within'. He has a Ph.D. in Engineering from the University of Tokyo.



DARIN COOPER

Role: M.P. Tony

Instagram: @darincooper_official

Darin Cooper was born in the rural town of Oakley, Kansas. He attended Fort Hays State University before transferring as a senior and graduating from Kansas State University with a Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree. He immediately moved to Los Angeles and began a career in graphic design. Bored with working in offices, Cooper attended a commercial workshop and quickly picked up an agent. Not able to get off for auditions he quit designing and became a bartender on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica for most of the 1990's. From 1993-1997 he diligently studied with the legendary acting teacher, Larry Moss. He has been working consistently since his first role on J.A.G. as a young Terry O'Quinn and in film such as Gone Girl, Ford v. Ferrari, and The Social Network.

KEY PRODUCTION CREDITS

CREW

written and directed by DARREN HARUO RAE
 produced by JESSICA OLTHOF & NICK MARTINEZ
 executive producer BARNABY DALLAS
 director of photography CONNOR BODELL
 production designers ANDREA BECHERT & JOHN YORK
 original score by YUICHIRO "SIXTWO" OKU
 edited by CALEB WHEELER
 costume designer RACHEL DAGDAGAN
 sound design by NICK BOZZONE
 hair and makeup ELIZABETH FOX & JOSIE RODRIGUEZ

CAST

Minoru Miyasaki JONATHAN TANIGAKI
 John Miyasaki BRENT YOSHIDA
 Jinkichi Miyasaki SHIRO KAWAI
 Jimmy Tanaka JABEZ SKY ARMODIA
 Kenny Amano ALFRED HSING
 Sgt. Kenji Suzuki JASON JIA
 Nakamura JASON LOY
 Private Hall MATT MCTIGHE
 Harry Miyasaki HUDSON NARUO
 Little Girl MILA SHELTER
 M.P Tony DARIN COOPER
 Bus Driver MATT KAUFMAN

CONTACT

For press inquiries please contact:

Producer
 Jessica Olthof
jessica@roannfilms.com

SUPPORT



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 F I L M S