



Renee Tajima-Peña BIOGRAPHY

Renee Tajima-Peña is an Academy Award-nominated filmmaker whose work focuses on Asian Americans, communities of color, immigration, gender, and social justice. She is the series producer of *Asian Americans*, the 5-hour docuseries on the Asian American experience that aired on PBS in May 2020. The first-ever television history of its kind, *Asian Americans* encompasses a national engagement initiative, curriculum and website, in addition to the television broadcast. In 2021, she co-founded and co-executive produced the MAY 19 PROJECT, a social media campaign that amplifies the legacy of interracial solidarity.

Her previous films include *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, *My America...or Honk if You Love Buddha*, *The Best Hotel on Skid Row*, *Labor Women*, *Skate Manzanar*, *The New Americans*, *Calavera Highway*, and *No Más Bebés*. Her films have screened at the Cannes Film Festival, New Directors/New Films, Hong Kong Film Festival, SXSW, Sundance Film Festival, and the Whitney Biennial. She has been awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship, USA Broad Fellowship, Alpert Award in the Arts for Film/Video, a Peabody and a Dupont-Columbia Award.

She also produces online media projects that explore the history of Japanese American incarceration and resistance. She is founding producer of the **Nikkei Democracy Project**, a creative collective that uses video, art, and social media to capture the power of the Japanese American imprisonment story and expose current threats to the Constitutional rights of targeted Americans. Her multi-media curriculum project, *Building History 3.0*, produced with support of the National Parks Service and California Civil Liberties Education Program, is an interactive exploration of Japanese American World War II incarceration using the Minecraft online construction game.

Tajima-Peña has been deeply involved in the Asian American and independent film community as an activist, writer and filmmaker. She was the director and first paid staff-person of the New York-based media arts center, Asian Cine-Vision, and she was involved in the founding of the Center for Asian American Media (formerly National Asian American Telecommunications Association), the Independent Television Service, and A-Doc/Asian American Documentary Network, and served as the first Filmmaker-in-Residence at the International Documentary Association. As a writer, she was a film critic for *The Village Voice*, a cultural commentator for National Public Radio and editor of *Bridge: Asian American Perspectives*. Renee is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Documentary Branch.

In 2005 Tajima-Peña launched the Graduate Program in Social Documentation at the University of California at Santa Cruz. She currently teaches social documentary at UCLA, where she is a professor of Asian American Studies, the director of the Center for EthnoCommunications and holds an endowed chair in Japanese American Studies.