

CULTURE TALK

CELEBRATING ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER CULTURE



VOLUME 1 | ISSUE 8

VOLUME 1:
ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER CULTURE

COVER ARTIST : POLLYANNA



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Pollyanna Dee

Pollyanna Dee is a Filipina visual artist and freelance illustrator based in Manila, Philippines. In lieu of her visual storytelling, her current favorite medium is digital art which allows easy access through segways such as social media and her website. Regarding her educational background, she graduated from the University of the Philippines, majoring in Visual Communication and earning a certificate in Fine Arts. As an artist, she believes in the process of healing and strengthening the mind + body. To her, it is important to serve as a catalyst to bring perspective through her art and platform. Throughout many of her pieces, themes include emotionality, vulnerability, and self-acceptance. The longevity of her strokes and textures represent the authenticity of what it means to be human; we all make mistakes but it is important to learn from them and grow. Elements of blooming petals, sun rays, and bleeding colors are details that become consistent with her art style. Ultimately, Pollyanna's art is up to the eye of the beholder. But one thing is true, that her art presents the beauty of being an Asian artist and how the faces of her works can be influenced by her roots.

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**Culture Talk:
Asian & Pacific
Islander
Culture**

September 2021

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) have become a more unified and recognized group with the continuous boost of AAPI Heritage month this year and optimistically onwards.

The U.S. Census bureau defines a member of the U.S. Asian population as "a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam." For Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders, the Census Bureau stipulates "a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

While there are a lot of diverse cultures and peoples under the umbrella of AAPI, these are only the dictionary definitions of one country. The term AAPI is an ambitious one, seeking to unify an enormous range of people spanning large regions of the world. There are shared stories, of what it is like having heritage from other places, being in immigrant families, and growing up in a world where cultures are fusing. At the same time, the AAPI community is the farthest thing from a monolith.

This issue of Culture Talk highlights AAPI history and culture—the experience of being, the unifying strings, and the vibrant differences.

We explore this issue with the different types of Asian customs and festivals that come along with primary holidays with Aishu Senthil.

Next, Ananyaa Mahajan and Nita Kulkarni offer their thoughtful and realistic experiences as two Indian-American women and how their upbringing at home and at school have changed their perspective.

Third, we have a detailed biography of popular actor, boxer, director-- Dwayne Johnson, and how his background as a Pacific Islander influenced his impact, written by Sanjith Prabhu.

With Quincy Lee, her article discusses the extensive contributions made by traditional Chinese Medicine and how they weave into our modern practices.

Milla Nguyen interviews 5 university students who do not identify as Asian American and how Asian media have influenced their enjoyment of life. Article includes an interview of AAPI author: Lena Nguyen, and her insight on Asian mainstream media.

Maryssa Orta and Milla Nguyen critically review films "Crazy Rich Asians" (2018) and "Minari" (2021) and discuss the portrayal of the Asian community between stereotypes and sentimental messages.

--- Katherine Chou, Anusha Natarajan, & Milla Nguyen



A COLORFUL PHENOMENON:

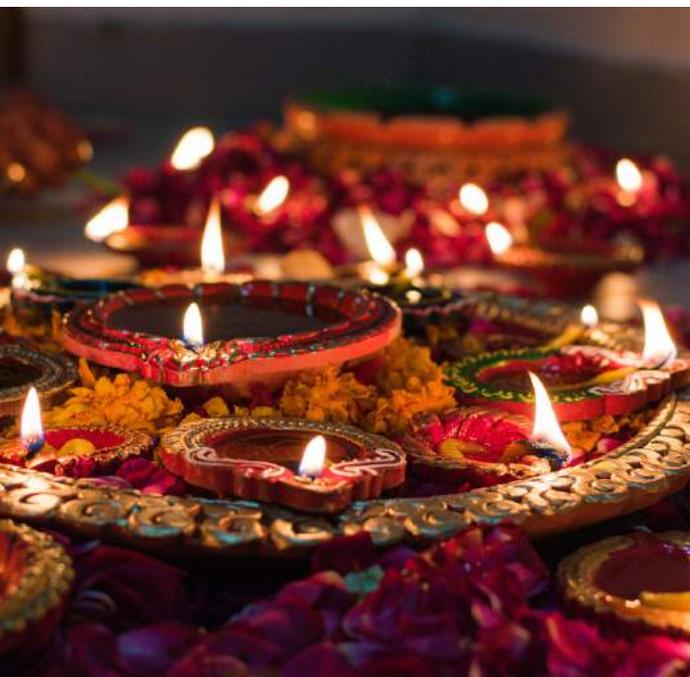
FESTIVALS OF ASIAN CULTURE

BY: AISHU SENTHIL

The AAPI community includes rich and diverse cultural groups that celebrate various customs and holidays. These holidays are steeped in legends and unique traditions, many of which are known widely around the world. Highlighting all of the festivals would be an extremely long list, so this article will be focusing on some of the commonly recognized Asian festivals. My article will also discuss some details and history about these festivals that you might not have heard about.

One popular Asian holiday celebrated by many around the world is **Holi, or the 'Festival of Colors'**. This vibrant and colorful holiday involves the activity of throwing colored powder on each other, and makes for a great celebration with friends and family. It is celebrated around the end of February or early March, and marks the beginning of spring. The origin of Holi revolves around a prince named Prahlada, who worshipped the god Vishnu. However, since his father and aunt opposed his religious faith, they made Prahlada sit in the center of a raging bonfire as punishment for putting faith in Vishnu. Not to fear though, the prince was protected by Vishnu, and Prahlada received no burns. The brightly colored powders thrown on Holi are an homage to Prahlada's flickering bonfire as well as an indication of the bright colors of the upcoming spring.

The Songkran Water festival is another popular and fun festival held in Thailand. It usually takes place from the 13th of April to the 15th of April, and signifies the beginning



of the Thai New Year. To mark the beginning of the festival, houses are thoroughly cleaned as a means of ushering in a year of good luck. Next, people head to pray in a wat (a Buddhist temple), where they also provide food to the monks and get water sprinkled on them as a blessing from the monks. Water plays a vital role in this festival, signifying the cleansing of your sorrows and bad luck from the previous year. The last part of the festival, and perhaps most known around the world, is the giant water fights that take place country-wide. People celebrate by splashing water on each other, tying back to the belief of water cleansing away sorrows to start a new year with a fresh start.

The Chinese New Year is celebrated some time between the end of January and the end of February, and this festival marks the transition from one year into the next. Similar to the Songkran Water festival, one ritualistic event during this festival is cleaning the house thoroughly to usher in the new year. Other popular traditions during this festival include giving children money in a red envelope (called "Lai See" or "Hong Bao") as a symbol of good luck. The event includes bursting firecrackers and parading with a dragon costume and lanterns, all of which stem from the legend that originated this festival. The legend revolves around a monster named Nian (meaning Year), who roamed the Chinese countryside thousands of years ago, attacking villagers at the beginning of every new year. However, the monster was afraid of loud noises, bright lights, and the color red, and these fears were used as advantages by the villagers to chase the monster away every year. Eventually, celebrations customarily adapted to include loud-noised firecrackers, brightly lit lanterns as well as using red envelopes to give money to children and wearing red clothes and decorations.

Gion Matsuri festival in Japan originated from 869 CE. During this time, epidemics were raging and proved to be a largely threatening factor to the Japanese people. To get rid of the epidemics, a "Goryō-e" ritual was held (based on Shinto traditions), and these rituals evolved over time to become the Gion festival. This festival is usually held during the month of July, and involves parades with giant floats and fireworks. It is the highlight of the year in Japan, and is also sometimes called 'The Kimono Festival' due to this event being a time when visitors show off the latest Kimono fashion.

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Nita Kulkarni



BEING: INDIAN AMERICAN WOMEN.

Ananyaa Mahajan

Being a person of color living in America certainly has its struggles and its benefits. Both writers, Ananyaa and Nita, are two Indian American women. This piece is both a love letter and a broken down critique to what it truly means to be a person of Asian descent living in America.

Colorism by Nita Kulkarni

Colorism, according to Oxford language, is defined as “prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group.” As an Indian-American woman with medium-dark skin, I saw colorism everywhere -- in my community, in other countries, and in my own introspection. Colorism is something seen in an overwhelming amount of cultures, and it is something sadly quite universal. As a child, I went to a predominantly White elementary school, yet I never thought I was drastically different from my peers, even though my skin was a darker color. However, I was often told not to go out in the sun too long or else I would tan, and I would always stand out when taking class pictures. Whenever my family would visit India, relatives would compliment others on how beautiful their fair complexion was, whereas I would never receive such praise since my skin was more of a golden beige than an ivory. And for those of my relatives who were darker-skinned than I was, they would recommend skin lightening products. Beauty standards everywhere showed women with gorgeous fair skin being the heroines of the story, worthy of their success.

Colorism by Nita Kulkarni (continued)

It came to a point where I would try to lighten my skin using some natural methods yet some chemical methods. I would avoid going out into the sun -- which is quite difficult in sunny Arizona -- or I would wear coats of sunscreen to avoid getting any darker. I also tried using those sketchy products from India that promised to lighten the skin but in reality left red marks and bumps. All this effort to try to fit a certain beauty standard led to a realization that many people of color can resonate with: someone wants a skin tone like yours and every skin tone deserves equal praise. Colorism can lead to bullying and low self-esteem for the outdated reason that beauty is reserved for fair-skinned individuals. Beauty is diverse. Beauty is a woman with porcelain skin as well as a woman with cocoa skin in equal respect.

Keeping in touch with culture by Ananyaa Mahajan

Growing up in a family of immigrants from India, keeping in touch with my culture growing up wasn't very hard. My mother made Indian

Languages by Ananyaa Mahajan

food for most of our meals and the primary language spoken in our household was Marathi (an Indian language based in Maharashtra, where my family is from). For so many years, I would attend many Indian community functions around holidays and festivals that were important to my family/ friends . At these functions, I'd be surrounded by people like me, who wore clothes like me and talked in the same language as me. We would dance to our Bollywood songs and eat the food we grew up with. At these events, I felt very comfortable and proud to be who I am and that's what I took with me going forward. In terms of assimilation, when children grow into adolescents, there is this common desire to fit into schools along what is referred to as the "American culture". Though for me, I went to a middle school and high school that was predominantly Asian. I figured I wouldn't have to mold myself or hide my love for my culture. This was wrong. As my friends and I entered high school, I was shocked as to how everyone around me was dissociating from whatever cultural background they came from in order to feel some sense of normalcy.

Personally, when I went to the family friend potlucks and the community festivals, everyone around me thought being Indian wasn't cool and wasn't socially acceptable as they got older and became more divisive. They only came to these events because their parents dragged them along. Because of this, I went through a phase where I completely cut out Bollywood music, stopped appreciating the festivals and community gatherings and did whatever I could to make myself look less and less Indian on the outside. Some rare friends at school reminded me to be myself and continue to balance being Indian while also being American. We would bring food our mother's made for us and we wore our half-sarees for culture day. Having people like them by my side only made my confidence soar. There is such a thing as balancing these two identities. Going to college and realizing that no one particularly limited who you could be made me realize that I could live in both worlds. There is such a beauty of embracing where you come from and going to community gatherings where you can be yourself.

When I came back for Ganapthi weekend my freshman year of college, I took a look around and I remembered where I came from. The people in these houses shaped who I am in some way, shape or form, and knowing that alone gave me enough confidence to be proud of who I am. It's a tough journey to get there but at the end of the day, being Indian is an aspect of my life that I wouldn't ever change.

Language is a huge part of our culture. In India, there are 22 official languages and out of all of them, my family speaks Marathi. Marathi is the language primarily spoken in the state of Maharashtra which is the part of India my family is from. Growing up, my first language was Marathi and it is the language that still to this day I fall back on. My mom eventually started a Marathi school in our city along with a few other members of the Marathi community and I was one of the students that attended. I regret to say that I didn't fully appreciate what my mother and her friends were trying to do at the time. Looking back on it, maintaining a second language is incredibly important. At the time I was officially learning, I looked at it as another thing my parents forced me to do and another thing that would potentially look good on a college application but the reality is, when I went to Marathi school I was with people who were like me. They knew the language, they ate similar foods as I did at home, and had similar experiences as me. Language is the entryway into a culture and being in America, it's perfectly clear why my parents and all the other ones who sent their kids to the same school did just that. They didn't want such a primary way to keep in touch with Marathi culture to disappear into the next generation. I'm proud to say now in my college years I've been able to reconnect with Marathi and use it as a way to maintain a connection with my family in India and my grandparents as well.

Food by Nita Kulkarni

Food is an essential part of any culture, as it brings communities together and shows cultural values and intricacies through recipes that have been passed down for generations. As Ananyaa mentioned, Indian communities gather for potlucks to celebrate a holiday or to simply meet and converse. Growing up, I would eat Indian food every day, but as I grew older I strayed away from classic Indian cuisine and explored a variety of others. I am glad to have explored other cuisines, however the motivation behind it was based on insecurity and internal disdain. When I attended a predominantly White school, I rarely brought Indian food to lunch with the fear that someone would make fun of me for eating something different. For example, I once brought something my family calls "Chunmari" which are essentially rice puffs with seasoning. One of my closest friends at the time mentioned it looked like butterfly eggs, and I never brought that dish to school again, instead opting for peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or string cheese.

Now that I have reached a point where I am older and more in touch with my identity as an Indian-American woman, I find comfort in my mother's classic Indian recipes and have found a balance in which recipes I take out with me or save for home. One of my favorite recipes is a peanut butter and mango pickle sandwich. At first glance, some may not think it sounds appetizing, but it combines Indian roots with an American upbringing to create a delicious, mixed recipe.

Conclusion

These 4 spheres are vastly different and yet uniquely intertwined because identity is not in one box. We chose the 4 "boxes" we felt we identified with and chose stories and experiences that we have a strong attachment towards. We hope that at the end of the day, you, our readers, take away that having an identity means having different aspects of yourself to love. For the two of us, culture is a strong component and is something we have to break down in our daily lives. This right here, is what it means to us to be Indian American.

DWAYNE JOHNSON: THE PRIDE OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

By: Sanjith Prabhu



Dwayne Johnson was born in 1972, into a family who was prominent in wrestling, the Anoa'i family. The family is perhaps the most famous group of people of Samoan descent, as they include many WWE Hall of Famers. The family has also created many tag teams (professional wrestling groups that have won world tag team championships.). The family was on his mother's side, as Johnson's maternal grandfather, who had the ring name Peter Maivia. He was blood brothers with Amituana'i Anoa'i, the father of The Wild Samoans' tag team. Dwayne's late father, Rocky Johnson, was also a Hall of Fame wrestler. Yet with all the connections to wrestling, Dwayne preferred football. Dwayne Johnson played at the University of Miami as a defensive lineman on their 1991 Championship Team. He played as a backup defensive lineman in the NFL for four years before going to the Canadian Football League, where he retired just 2 months after joining.

Being a great athlete, and having a history with the sport, Dwyane Johnson decided to pursue wrestling in 1996. He fought in a few tryout matches in early '96 with the World Wrestling Foundation (WWF), which was later called the WWE. He signed a contract with the WWF that year. He made his WWF debut under the ring name of Rocky Maivia, a combination of his father and grandfather's ring names. He was heavily rooted for and in 1997, he won the Intercontinental Championship. However, he began to face backlash from his fans for his character. He then changed his ring name to "The Rock" in 1998, and won the first of many world championships that year. He became very popular in the wrestling game, as he continued to win championships. After his contract was up in 2004, he didn't return to the ring until 2011, when he fought John Cena. Instead he turned his attention to his acting career.

He began acting in 2001, with some of his notable movies in his early career being *The Mummy Returns* (2001), *The Scorpion King* (2002), and *The Rundown* (2003). His first blockbuster box office hit was in *Fast Five* (2011), portraying Luke Hobbs. His biggest year however, was 2013, where he returned as Hobbs in the next installment of the *Fast & Furious* series, and also starred in *Pain & Gain* and *G.I. Joe: Retaliation*. He was named the top-grossing actor of that year by Forbes, bringing in 1.3 billion dollars that year. In the latter parts of the 2010's, he starred in Disney's *Moana* (2016), *Baywatch* (2017), *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* (2017), *Skyscraper* (2018), *Jumanji: The Next Level* (2019).

Both a world champion wrestler, and a premier actor in the 2010s, Dwayne Johnson is one of the most successful hyphenates. In fact, he was on Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People list in both 2016 and 2019. Being as universally loved as he is, he is one of, if not the most popular people of Samoan origin, and the pride of the Pacific Islands.

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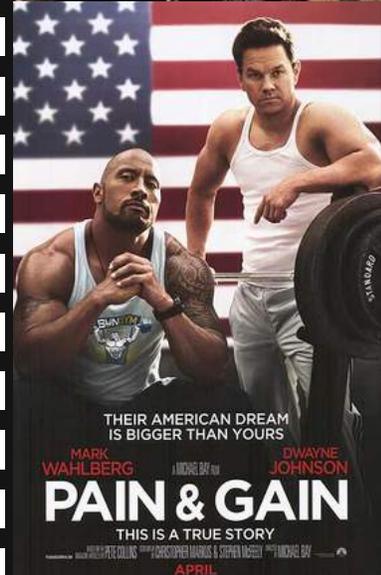
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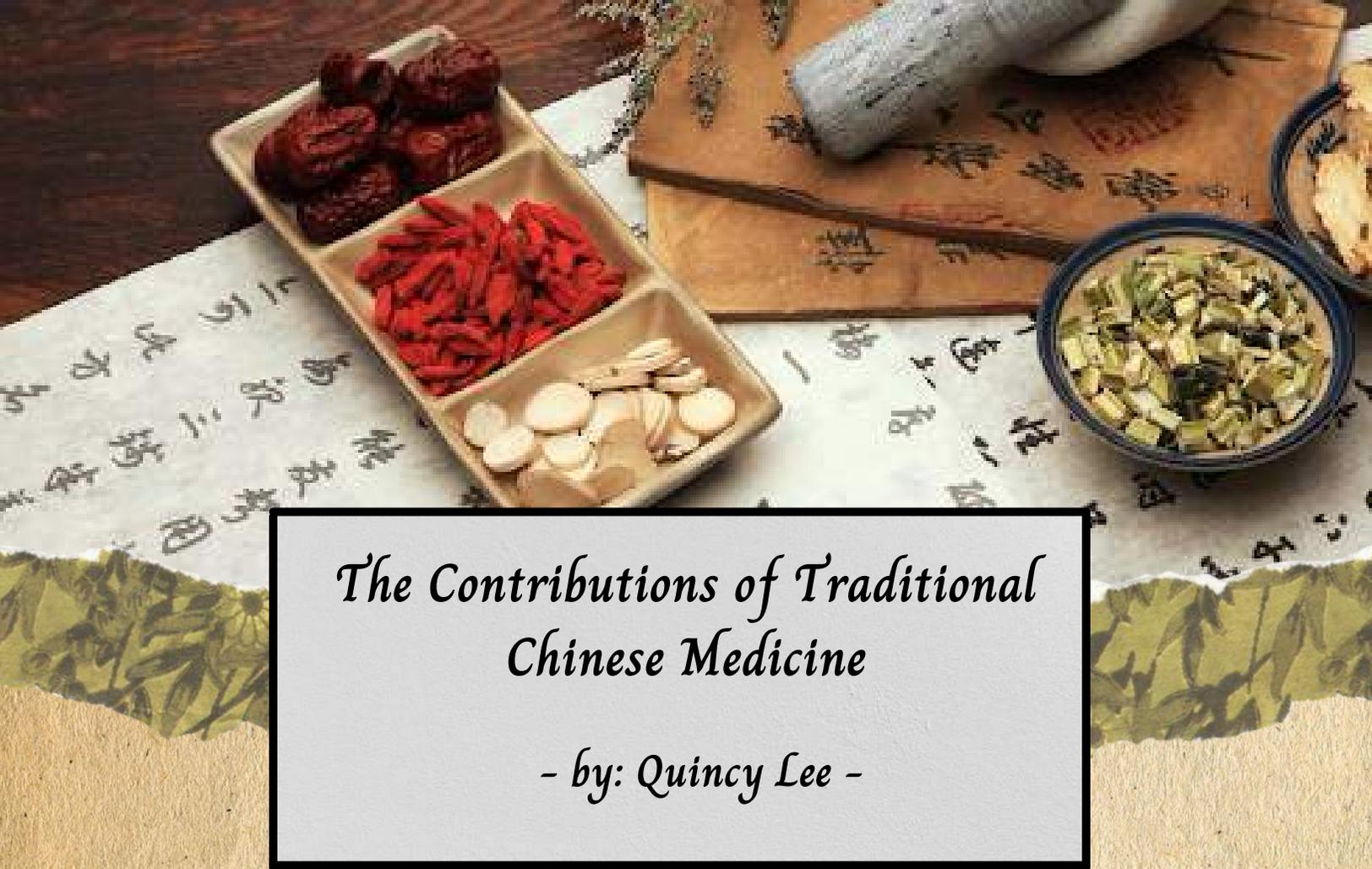
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DIESEL PAUL WALKER DWAYNE JOHNSON
FAST & FURIOUS 6





The Contributions of Traditional Chinese Medicine

- by: Quincy Lee -

Innovation is a collective effort, and it is a reality that has only been achieved through the sharing of multicultural wisdoms. As one of the oldest civilizations in human history, Chinese culture has been at the forefront of several advancements. From the creation of paper to the invention of gunpowder, the Chinese have a reputation for revolutionizing society, a reality that is perhaps best illustrated in their contributions to the study of medicine which has come to be known as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).

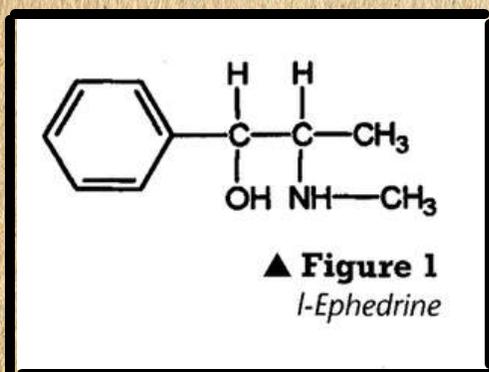
In China, the study of medicine is as ancient as the civilization itself, with evidence of herbal and physical remedies being used among the early tribes of the region some several thousand years ago. Notably, medical ideologies in China were based upon the "Huangdi Neijing", an archaic text on health and disease written by the famous (and semi-mythical) '

Yellow Emperor' of China around 2600 BCE.

These writings established that Traditional Chinese Medicine be grounded in Taoist philosophy, meaning that it draws upon concepts of Yin-Yang as well as the five elements theory. To simplify, TCM centers around the belief that illness is the result of an imbalance between the body and the universe (or the body's environment).

Often trained in the imperial palace, the men who mastered the art of traditional medicine were titled "Yi Shi" and acted as the official practitioners of these methods throughout the early dynasties. I suppose you could say they were known for restoring balance. Traditional Chinese Medicine itself is a versatile system that encompasses a variety of methods and cures, the most famous of which is acupuncture. Acupuncture is a physical technique where needles are inserted into the skin at specific points on the body for pain management.

Historically, this treatment relies on the principle of meridians, or lines which travel through the body to nourish tissues and connect to energy reservoirs. Today, studies of acupuncture suggest that its analgesic effects come from the natural pain killers released by the body upon stimulating the central nervous system. For instance, a newer method of acupuncture known as electroacupuncture (which transfers small amounts of electrical energy through the needles) has been proven in clinical studies to release different kinds of neuropeptides that have the same pain killing effects as opioids.



Centuries of Chinese record keeping have also allowed for the exploration of hundreds of pharmaceutical concoctions. Cannabis, for instance, has been recognized for its effectiveness as an anesthetic for ages, with its applications first recorded by the famous physician Hua T'o who documented boiling parts of the Cannabis plant or mixing it with alcohol to numb patients during surgery. Moreover, Traditional Chinese Medicine also touches upon the anti-phlegmatic effects of Cannabis in some of their ancient writings, expressing that it can help reduce congestion and fluid in

the lungs, as well as function to discharge pus from the body. Indeed, the medicinal potential of Cannabis has been mentioned in the early texts of China dating back as far as 2700 BCE and the Taoist deity, The Hemp Lady 'Maku' was worshipped as the protector of the land where the hemp plants traditionally grew, granting longevity to those who offered her hemp seeds. For those who view Cannabis as a more controversial drug, there exist many other examples of the pharmaceutical findings of TCM.

Ma Huang has been used in China for the treatment of asthmatic conditions for over 5,000 years. In modern times, the compound is known as Ephedra Sinica. In the late 1920s, this compound was identified by Dr. K.K. Chen to contain the active constituent, ephedrine, a drug that is a bronchodilator and therefore effective in treating asthma. It is common practice for medicinal drugs to be isolated from pre-existing remedies so it is no wonder why the extensive list of traditional medicines maintained by the Chinese has proved itself so useful in the hunt for new drugs.

Moxibustion is another defining component of Traditional Chinese Medicine in which dried mugwort, or 'moxa' is burned on particular points of the body. This method can be used indirectly through smoke inhalation, burned directly on the patient's skin, or used in conjunction with acupuncture.

The practice of moxibustion is a form of thermal stimulation which has therapeutic influences on shallow and deep tissues of the skin while also containing pharmacological actions. Tai Chi is also closely associated with the ideologies of TCM, combining certain postures and movements with meditative techniques as a form of exercise. According to the National Institutes of Health, practicing Tai Chi improves an individual's balance and stability with the potential to help those suffering from conditions like fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis, and Parkinson's disease.

Undoubtedly, Traditional Chinese Medicine has played a monumental role in revolutionizing the medical world, so much so that TCM remains a vital part of the Chinese health-care system and is even officially recognized in other East Asian countries. For example, "Kampo" is the study of Traditional Chinese Medicine that began in Japan after its introduction at the beginning of the 7th century and it later evolved into what is now Traditional Japanese Medicine. However, even for pharmaceutical reasons there are some aspects of Traditional Chinese Medicine that should be left in the past.

Components such as tiger bone and rhino horn were once called for in traditional recipes and still create issues of poaching, animal cruelty, and illegal trade for the practitioners of TCM who refuse to change their ways. In some parts of Asia, the cruelty even goes so far as to keep bears in small cages to extract stomach bile that is used by pharmaceutical companies to treat liver ailments.

Nevertheless, if the call for these particular ethical changes is answered, Traditional Chinese Medicine will surely continue to propel the medical field forward.

In traditional Chinese tongue 治愈 (pronounced 'zhìyù') means to heal, a skill that this civilization has certainly mastered. Truly, global advancement is the beauty of a multicultural world. The diverse perspectives and knowledge of differing societies created by globalization allows for the progress of civilization; just as the contributions of Traditional Chinese Medicine have helped pioneer modern healthcare.

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THE INTERLUDE:

PHOENIX

TOKYO

RIND STUDIO

MICAH RIND

MICAH RIND IS AN ARIZONA-BASED PHOTOGRAPHER, EDITOR, AND MEDIA CREATOR. DURING THE SUMMER OF 2019, RIND EMBARKED ON AN INDEPENDENT TRIP TO TOKYO, JAPAN. THERE, SHE UTILIZED PHOTOGRAPHY TO TELL STORIES, IMMERSE IN THE CULTURE, AND CONNECT WITH THE LOCALS. FIND HER WORK ON INSTAGRAM + TWITTER @RINDSTUDIO. OR, EMAIL FOR INQUIRIES: MICAH@RINDSTUDIO.COM











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WHAT DOES ASIAN MAINSTREAM MEDIA & POP CULTURE MEAN TO US?

BY: MILLA NGUYEN

Along with the other articles I've written, I think that this must be one of the more intriguing topics to dive into. However, I will be covering my own thoughts, opinions, and observations. This written piece is in no way representative of the Asian/Pacific Islander community or any of the Culture Talk members/ editors who are in the AAPI community. All interviewees' verbal or written statements have not been altered or changed for the purpose of this dialogue, and therefore are accurately quoted.

Let's jump right in. When I was in my pre-teenager years, I never fully understood or acknowledged why culture or heritage was important. I never cared for traditions and I desired other things in the world. But as I am older and still growing in my young 20s/ university student life, I have grown a fond appreciation for my family's stories.

I want to be honest here. A couple of years ago, I never thought that my colleagues and I would be creating an all student-run organization and actually utilizing my love for writing to not only tell my story, but other's stories too. As Nita Kulkarni and Ananyaa Mahajan state in their article "Being Indian-American Women", they discuss the debate: "What is my Asian Heritage?" or "Am I American enough?". I too, struggled with this in school, facing isolation and hardship. Thankfully, I had a better grasp of my identity towards senior year of high school and onwards into university. I reflected back and was thankful for how I grew up. I started social media late. I liked to watch cartoons in the morning at age 16. I had never tried the "bad stuff". And rather than trying to become someone who was desperate of fitting in, I became confident of my agency and what I

was passionate about. So, I will begin with food. Personally, when I was younger, I didn't acquire a want for Vietnamese food. When my parents would go to Phở restaurants (Phở: traditional bowl of soup that contains meat, bone broth, mint, and other spices), I would opt for McDonalds or some American dish. Another dish served at my home is a dish called "Chả giò" which is a Vietnamese-style egg roll that contains pork, mushrooms, jicama is sealed with an egg wash and deep-fried. I only cared to taste it when I reached my older teen years. I watched the way my grandmother, mother, and my aunts would take hours to cook for my large family. They used their fingers to delicately fold these dishes, and it made them all the more delicious. It took me time to fully appreciate family recipes that have connected generations prior.

In terms of dress, "áo dài" is the traditional Vietnamese dress that can be seen at weddings, gatherings, etc. The set collar and the silk sleeves seemed to be so different from what other girls' wore/ wished to wear at school dances. When I saw relatives in such dresses, I didn't think much of it. Now, as a fashion design and film major, I can say that Asian dress has inspired my own designs and my own fashion influences. Garments such as áo dài, Japanese Kimonos, and traditional Chinese dresses exemplify fashion craftsmanship of other cultures rather than just that of American dress.

Getting into multi-media, I didn't just grow up viewing and consuming Vietnamese media but Asian pop culture. All throughout middle school and high school, I watched various Anime shows and Korean dramas. Unfortunately, people who didn't give it a try instantly called it "nerdy material" due to the fact stories weren't always told in English.

And it caused me to be ashamed about consuming such media. Years later, things such as K-pop, Japanese-rock, Manga/ light novels, animated video games, Asian films, and Asian streetwear fashion caused a boom in Asian representation. People of all cultures transitioned the material into a popular trend. It is a phenomenon that caused mainstream Asian media to become more widely accepted. and popular on social media. For example, I have fond memories of watching animes such as "Fairy Tail", "Attack on Titan", and cartoons such as "Avatar: The Last Airbender". From then until now, many steps have been made to continue the rising popularity of Asian media. Upon the Hollywood films such as "Crazy Rich Asians", "Parasite", "Train to Busan", "Marvel: Shangchi & The Legend of the Ten Rings" being released, many people have started to recognize that the Asian community has their own arsenal of artists, creators, and consumers.

The conclusion that I have drawn from this is that as the world continues to change, childhoods and media consumption (influential in adolescence) should be cherished. With the vast growth of social media, superficiality, and fear of trying new things, it is important to remember your roots - no matter where you come from.

In the second half of this article, I would like to say that I had an eye-opening opportunity to interview 5 of my university colleagues, who are not only good friends, but also some of the people I have worked on creative projects with: whether that be: film, photography, writing, etc. I also had the chance to interview an AAPI author as well.

The purpose of this section is to understand how people around us (people who don't identify of Asian descent and how their recognition of Asian media has influenced their lives).

Interviewee 1: Micah Rind (she/her)

Race/ Ethnicity: Native American - Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Major: Film/Media Production

1. As someone who does not identify as Asian or of Pacific Islander descent, why is Asian media important to you? How does it inspire your interests?

Asian media is important to me because although media can never properly illustrate the depths of any given culture, it can however provide a glimpse what matters to that culture. When one engages with culturally centered media a certain vulnerability is opened up. One has the opportunity to discover what makes this culture laugh, what makes them cry, what makes them get up and dance, there's something uniquely intimate about this inside look, and then feeling these emotions yourself. In 2019, I had the opportunity to take a solo photography trip to Japan where I was able to pursue a deeper understanding of Japanese culture. Through my photography, I worked to highlight the cultural aspects that are often overlooked by many foreigners' skewed view of Japan. To me, the most important aspect of culture is the people that it consists of, which is why my work centers around that.

2. What does understanding or being interested in a culture that is not your own teach you more about diversity/enjoyment of life?

As children, we often "other" cultures that are different from our own, and it is my hope that as we age we learn to cease this limited way of thinking and realize that a culture is not just some "other" group of the world, rather it's a community of humans who have just experienced life differently, aren't you the least bit curious about their experience? Understanding a culture means meeting people where they're at. It's learning more about our brothers and sisters on this earth and what matters to them. Diversity is a beautiful thing, it can open your eyes so some of the most wonderful experiences and help foster new ways of thinking.

I encourage those interested in dipping their toes into Asian culture to actively seek out authentic restaurants and music. If your interest and desire to learn is pure, then your pursuits will be some of the most rewarding experiences.



Interviewee 2: Quincy Lee (she/her)

Race/Ethnicity: Irish/Caucasian

Major: Nursing

1. As someone who does not identify as Asian or of Pacific Islander descent, why is Asian media important to you? How does it inspire your interests?

In my opinion, Asian media is an important component to embracing globalization. It's a big, beautiful world that we live in so I feel as though access to foreign media grants us the opportunity to explore the cultures of other nations from the comfort of our own couch.

Asian media has given me a glimpse into the trends, interests, and norms of Asian cultures and inspired me to take interest in things I might have never considered as a White individual living in a Western culture, like traditional Eastern medicine.

2. What does understanding or being interested in a culture that is not your own teach you more about diversity/enjoyment of life?

Understanding and taking interest in another culture allows individuals to access a whole new world of ideas, traditions, and art. When you come to understand the different lives people lead, and respect that their social norms deserve just as much respect as your own, you come to see how culture adds flavor to a world that would be very bland otherwise. Trust me when I say that only joy and laughter comes from watching other cultures poke fun of how often Americans hug.

As per recommendations.. for the hopeless romantics out there, I highly recommend picking up a Korean drama series or Japanese anime movie; "Mr. Sunshine", "Your Name", "A Silent Voice", "Come and Hug Me", and "Moonlight Drawn by Clouds" are all excellent choices.

Interviewee 3: Dylan Tate (he/him)

Race/Ethnicity: Black / African-American

Major: Film/ Media Production

1.As someone who does not identify as Asian or of Pacific Islander descent, why is Asian media important to you?

I think that Asian media does have some level of importance to me, even though I may not initially realize it. I think that Asian media is important to me because a lot of the pop culture that has come from Asia, whether it be anime, old Kung-fu movies, philosophies and even clothing have all molded my personality and sense of character in some way. Asian media has blended with, and inspired me to think of new and creative ways to express my own self.

2. What does understanding or being interested in a culture that is not your own teach you more about diversity/enjoyment of life?

I think that gaining a deeper understanding of another culture helps embellish a bit of "flavor" and "color" into a person's sense of self, whether they are Black White, Asian etc.. With that internalization, comes a newfound awareness of the self and an awareness of that culture. Thus, one's horizons will be broadened and they will become more open-minded to the notion that people live their lives in different, yet equally valuable ways. I recommend that people look at entertainment that is influenced by Asian culture, if not inherently so. I would recommend stories, specifically, television, movies and video games (or a book if you so choose) because I feel as if they are able to combine different forms of media, such as music, visual presentation etc. in order to communicate and flesh out those stories.

Interviewee 4: Me-Line Guerrero (they/ them)

Race/ Ethnicity: Hispanic/ Latinx

Major: Film/Media Production

1.As someone who does not identify as Asian or of Pacific Islander descent, why is Asian media important to you?

Asian media is important to me because I believe media is a form of expressing oneself and to see that cultural expression being consumed by others is a great way to bring awareness to other parts of the world. Asian media in particular has had an incredible influence on western media in turn, especially in the film and tv industry. Asian media has inspired me to write stories that center on themes of family, honor, self fulfillment, and self worth.

2. What does understanding or being interested in a culture that is not your own teach you more about diversity/enjoyment of life?

Being interested in a culture that isn't my own makes me realize that different people from different backgrounds view life differently than I do. They may find happiness or peace in a way that I had not thought of before. By exposing myself to different cultures, I can find the beauty in their way of life just as I see the beauty in mine. As a filmmaker, I have to immediately recommend nearly everything ever made by the legendary filmmaker, Akira Kurosawa, whose films have created the basis for much of the whose films have created the basis for much of

the western world's most popular films and television. I am also a big fan of the anime Naruto and the band Asian Kung-Fu Generation.

Interviewee 5: Maryssa Orta (she/ they)

Race/ Ethnicity: Hispanic/ Latinx

Major: English, minor in film

1.As someone who does not identify as Asian or of Pacific Islander descent, why is Asian media important to you?

Asian media is important because it allows for me to get insight into an experience I will never have. As an avid reader, I'm always looking for an unfamiliar experience. It's important to consume media that is unfamiliar to gain insight into how others live and what they believe. Sticking to familiar media would limit one's world view, so it's important to branch out always.

2. What does understanding or being interested in a culture that is not your own teach you more about diversity/enjoyment of life?

Being interested in a culture that isn't my own teaches me that while our experiences are different, we're all still human. We all have different stories and traditions that make us, us. Diversity allows others to appreciate and embrace the differences of humankind. I recommend people watch some Park Chan-Wook movies. He's one of my favorite directors and has made one of my favorite movies, "The Handmaiden"

I also recommend reading work by Ocean Vuong (who writes poetry) and has a beautifully written novel, "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous". It focuses on a letter written by a Vietnamese American to his mother who cannot read. Another book to read would be "The Song Poet" by Kao Kalia Yang which tells the history of the author's father as a Hmong song poet. Lastly, "Nana" by Ai Yazawa which is a manga- turned- anime that hasn't left my mind since I watched it. This is honestly scratching the surface of Asian/Pacific Islander media I want others to check out.

Interviewee 6: Celeste Zuniga (she/her)

Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic/ Mexican

Major: Philosophy and Justice Studies

1.As someone who does not identify as Asian or of Pacific Islander descent, why is Asian media important to you?

Asian media is important to me because it gives me access to different cultures that I would otherwise not have, and this includes Southeast and Eastern Asian cultures in addition to Pacific Islanders. I also believe that being given information about the Eastern part of the world and its philosophies are extremely valuable because they are very much in contrast to Western ways of living, especially when it comes to family and community life.

Interviewee 6: Celeste Zuniga (she/her)

Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic/ Mexican

Major: Philosophy and Justice Studies

1.As someone who does not identify as Asian or of Pacific Islander descent, why is Asian media important to you?

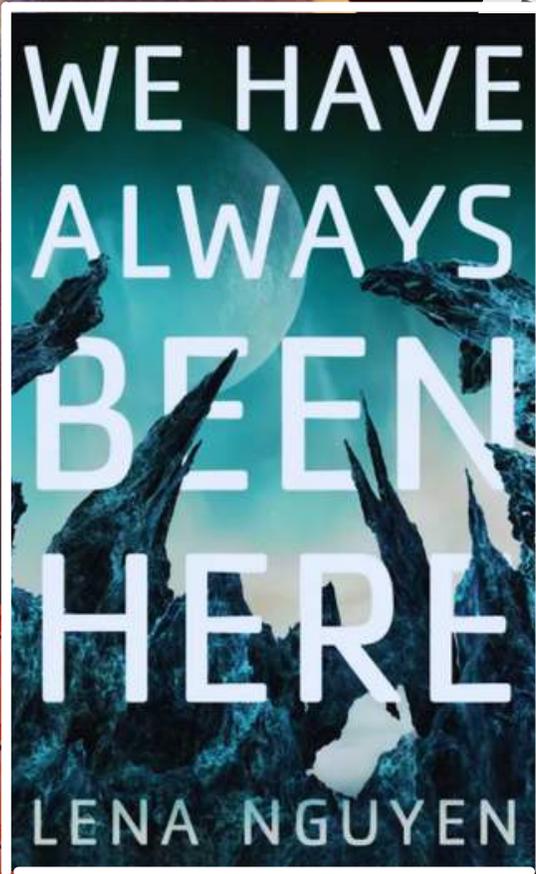
Asian media is important to me because it gives me access to different cultures that I would otherwise not have, and this includes Southeast and Eastern Asian cultures in addition to Pacific Islanders. I also believe that being given information about the Eastern part of the world and its philosophies are extremely valuable because they are very much in contrast to Western ways of living, especially when it comes to family and community life.

2. What does understanding or being interested in a culture that is not your own teach you more about diversity/enjoyment of life?

To be understanding or interested in a culture that is not your own in itself is teaching you about diversity. Diversity comes in many forms so when you are interested in a culture that is not your own, it is easier to accept people and things that are different which allows you to be open-minded and in turn, learn more effectively and have more opportunities. I believe this

translates over to allowing you to enjoy life more because you are able to have an easier time with accepting things that you are not used to and also have more things to appreciate.

There is one movie I really enjoy, although I am not sure how genuine and positive the representation it provides for East Asian women; the film is called "Memoirs of a Geisha", and is based on a book and is a nice tale about the struggles women are subjected to and how they navigate it. Another one of my favorite books is called "China Dolls" which is about the treatment of East Asian women in the U.S. during WWII and is a beautiful tale about friendship and resilience. Another great book is called "Joy Luck Club" and is about four different women and their daughters, which also covers the struggles that East Asian women in the U.S. endure various hardships.



Inspirations, Asian Media, and a Debut Novel

BY: MILLA NGUYEN

Biography: Lena is a writer of speculative fiction and fantasy. She was raised in Phoenix, Arizona and has studied writing all over the world--- including at Stanford, Brown, Harvard, and UCLA. Lena is excited to announce the publication of her forthcoming science fiction thriller, "WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HERE" which is published by DAW Books & Penguin Random House. It is available world-wide online and in-stores now.

[Question 1: Even though the ethnicities and races of your characters are up for reader interpretation, it is clear that some names seem to be of Asian descent, why choose these names?]

My novel takes place on a spaceship, and the majority of the spaceship's crew is of Asian descent, though this is only ever signaled through their names (the protagonist's name is Grace Park, and her crewmates have surnames like Kisaragi, Xu, Ma, Chanur, and Sagara). I'm an AAPI author, so it was important for me to have a large number of AAPI characters present within the cast.

~~~~~

non

*Interviewing  
Lena Nguyen,  
AAP& author  
& game creator*

~~~~~

However, I deliberately did not have anyone in the book point out or comment on the "Asian-ness" of the characters because, in my imagining, they exist in a future environment where such diversity is so normalized and common that it doesn't warrant any commentary or noteworthiness in any way. It's just accepted. That's an ideal future to me, so I wanted to portray that in my book.

[Question 2: As an AAPI author, what media inspires you throughout growing up and your skills as a story teller with this novel?]:

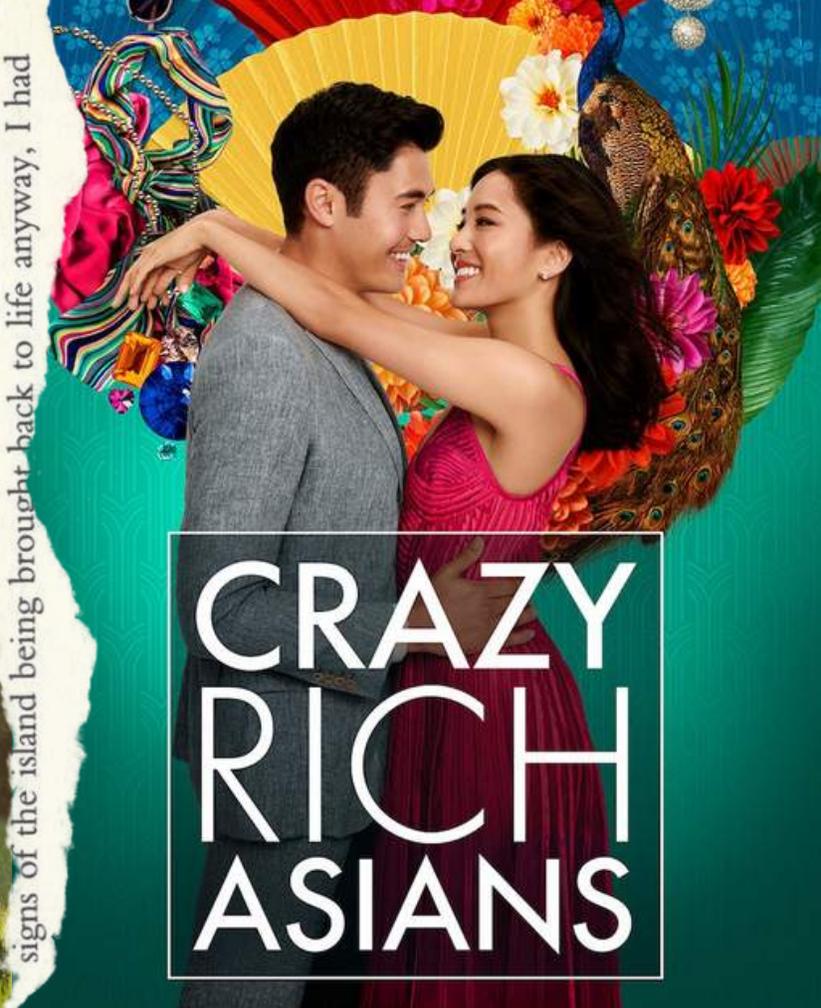
While I don't believe these media sources influenced much of my writing for this particular novel, I do believe much of my inspiration for other works—especially fantasy and apocalyptic fiction—stems from my heavy consumption of anime, wuxia films, JRPGs, and video games growing up. A dark fantasy game I'm developing draws heavy inspiration from the martial arts, mysticism, and culture depicted in wuxia classics like "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and samurai films like "Seven Samurai", as well as various anime series and aesthetics.

[Question 3: For those who haven't read it yet, in your own words, how would you describe the novel? And, where can people find your work?]:

My website is lena-nguyen.com and you can find me on Twitter at [@reallenanguyen](https://twitter.com/reallenanguyen). My book can be found at <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/651810/we-have-always-been-here-by-lena-nguyen/> and can be described as a cross between "I, Robot and Alien". It's a science fiction thriller that follows a psychologist, Grace Park, as she journeys on a spaceship headed to an alien planet to see if it's viable for human colonization. Once they land on the planet, Park begins to realize that the crewmembers around her are suffering from similar delusions, nightmares, and sleepwalking episodes. To make things worse, the androids aboard the ship are acting strangely, refusing orders and exhibiting bizarre habits, and communications to the outside world are mysteriously cut off, meaning she's trapped on this ship with no way out and no way to call for help. Park has to race to uncover the mysteries behind this plague overtaking her ship and the people around her... before it begins to infect her mind, too.

Information here:
[@reallenanguyen](https://twitter.com/reallenanguyen) via Twitter
<https://www.lena-nguyen.com/>
<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/651810/we-have-always-been-here-by-lena-nguyen/>

MINARI



...the island being brought back to life anyway, I had

CRAZY RICH ASIANS

FILM REVIEWS:

"MINARI" & "CRAZY RICH ASIANS"

CRITQUED BY
MARYSSA ORTA AND
MILLA NGUYEN
(contains spoilers)

"Minari" (2021) by Maryssa Orta

"Minari", a movie directed by Lee Isaac Chung, released last year, tells the story about a family that moves to Arkansas to live the American dream. Of course, along the way the family experiences hardships that prevent them from achieving the "American Dream." Many Asian immigrants come to America in hopes of finding this "American Dream." Though it's very unlikely to happen. Asian immigrants can face hardships due to their race, culture shock, and financial failures. This is something that is really common and can keep families in a cycle of poverty.

In the movie, "Minari", Jacob (played by Steven Yeun) has the dream of growing a successful farm with his family. His family faces these financial hardships and culture shock as the movie plays on. This movie gives its audience a great insight into the life of Korean immigrants and the hardships they may face.

This movie is important as it shows just that. There is no definite plot of this movie, but it does a great job at highlighting the Korean immigrant experience in Arkansas, which is a topic that has not been explored much in films.

However, the movie's main message is that no matter what obstacles the family may go through, they always have each other. This is also important to show a Korean American family who sticks together through thick and thin as it opposes the usual stereotypes shown in films such as strict Asian parents or overly-ambitious/ studious children. The family, despite the ups and downs, cget through dire situations (ex: Exhaustion, poverty, failure, sacrifice, and life/death).

"Minari", is an important movie that highlights the Korean American immigrant experience in the south. It's important to show Asian immigrants in unique positions and to show them as people with genuine goals and emotions. Representation allows for people to tell their stories, for others to relate and find comfort or solace in, and to allow others not a part of a group of people to understand experiences they will never go through and develop empathy for.

"Crazy Rich Asians" (2018) by Milla Nguyen

The film "Crazy Rich Asians" was directed by Jon M. Chu and was based on the novel of the same name, written by Kevin Kwan. As an overview, the



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story follows Rachel Chu (played by Constance Wu) an Asian American in her late 20s who is an NYU professor living in New York City. The second protagonist is Nick Young (played by Henry Golding) who lives his life as Rachel's boyfriend (posing himself as middle-class and from a humble upbringing). That is until Rachel and Nick are invited to Colin Khoo's wedding in Singapore where Rachel discovers that her boyfriend is the son of Singapore's richest family as he is set to inherit his family's business empire. Rachel is thrown into this world of elitist, rich-class Asians. Along the way, the audience meets Astrid Leong (Gemma Chan), Peik Lin (Awkwafina), Mr. Goh (Ken Jeong), Colin Khoo (Chris Pang), Eleanor Young (Michelle Yeoh), and more. Suddenly, Rachel finds herself in the midst of Singapore's social caste, expensive weddings, and wealthy parties. This lifestyle is contrasted to her life as a daughter of a single immigrant mother who had endured domestic violence. Obstacles that Rachel encounter include family gossip, ostracization, and social sabotage.

Furthermore, I will discuss the similarities and differences in relation my life as an Asian American. First off, I may be biased but I can definitely agree that "Crazy Rich Asians" blew my expectations away. Before seeing it in the theater, I had my skeptics. I believed that the portrayal of the Asian community would circle back to the stereotype of the foolish, nerdy, parent-pleasing characters that have been present in mainstream media all the time. Surely, I was pleasantly surprised and therefore this film had become one of my favorites.



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One similarity that I noticed in Scene 1 was when we're introduced to the lifestyle of Rachel Chu and Nick Young. I can relate in the sense that I live a "average" life as a student with a routine. The course of which this is thrown off by Nick asking Rachel to meet his family for the first time in Singapore without telling her about his actual background. As Rachel and Nick are conversing in a New York café, two radio hosts who are wearing fur coats and clutching designer hand bags, alert all of Singapore's most public figures of Nick's secret relationship in the US. Word breaks out to Nick's mother, a character portrayed as a cold and strict Asian woman; people begin to speculate if Rachel is Nick's special lover. Fast forwarding into the later scenes, there is an open dialogue and theme of the idea of family. Eleanor Young (Nick's mother) (played by Michelle Yeoh) rests her hand on Rachel's chin, telling her that Asian families tend to understand the meaning of sacrifice while American people do not.

In my experience, my family has never made this distinction between Asians and Asian Americans, however, the idea of familial sacrifice has is surely present in my life. My own parents, being Vietnamese immigrants had come to the United States during the war in order to raise my sister and I with a better life: speaking English, going to American school, etc. The idea that an individual sometimes must sacrifice specific ambitions in order to fulfill for their children was not only a common theme in the story but through many Asian immigrant families.

Speaking of family values, Eleanor Young (Nick's mother) discusses her squabble with Ah Ma, her husband's mother and Nick's grandmother. Eleanor begins to tell Rachel about how Ah Ma is the head of the family, and her decisions reign supreme over everyone else's. Within my family, my grandmother on my mom's side takes a similar role in that she has important say in all family matters. Rachel, Peik Lin (Rachel's best friend/ college roommate), and Nick attend Ah Ma's "Tan Hua" party. One character describes that the Youngs of Singapore throw parties for anything because they have the luxury to-- even in this case, to view the Tan Hua (flowers) to bloom.

Though, I can confirm I have never been to a flower blooming party before but I can also say that my grandmother keeps a Tan Hua flower tree in her home. In Vietnam, flowers like Tan Huas and Hoa Sens (Lotus flowers) represent beauty and good health.

As the film begins to unravel, Rachel and Nick attend Colin and Araminta's wedding (equivalent to the Met Gala here), Rachel continues to face isolation from the wealthy class. The transitions starts to unfold during the midpoint where Nick's mother is extremely adamant to the idea of her son marrying someone who isn't to par with her family.

The main conflict is trying to earn Eleanor Young's approval though it proves difficult. Rachel is faced with the guilt that Nick's family looks down on her and her mother, which causes a rift in their relationship.

This leads me to discuss the social workings of dating norms and "rules" that Asian families may have (but I will not generalize all Asian families). Every family differs, including mine, but some people can find that some Asian parents will tend to be guarded and protective of their children in that they believe no can truly deserve them. A part of Eleanor Young's development is that she must move past this and accept that Nick's happiness is more important due to the idea of love. So, after convincing, Eleanor Young gives the final green light for her son to propose to Rachel. And when the pair do reconcile, they become engaged. The film ends on a happy note.

Getting into the major meat of my opinion, I find that I have come to appreciate Hollywood's progressiveness in moving past stereotypes of colored people. As per example, the portrayal that Latinx people are viewed as cartel chauffeurs or that Black people must act gangster-like. Audiences must see past this and recognize that while media is a strong influencer, it is not final confirmation that an entire community is a monolith. In this case, not all Asians look the same or speak the same language. Not all Asian parents act the same. In this case, the idea that Asian people for the first time in 25 years in film can be portrayed as elite socialite deities is incredible. They are not their Caucasian counterparts. For example in the film, the characters' personalities vary. As Nick Young describes his family members to Rachel, he speaks of them highly. He mentions that Astrid Leong, his closest cousin, is a fashion icon, the

top-of-her-class at Oxford, and is her own reincarnation of Audrey Hepburn. His cousin, Eddie Cheng owns a finance empire in Hong Kong. His other cousin, Alistair Cheng, is one of the biggest Shanghai-based film directors. And moreover, he describes his mother, father, and their arsenal of rich friends as they are described as "Singapore's royalty".

According to Google, the film grossed: Crazy Rich Asians grossed \$174.5 million in the United States and Canada, and \$64 million elsewhere, for a worldwide gross of \$239 million, against a production budget of \$30 million. In October 2018, it became the highest-grossing romantic comedy of the last 10 years, and the 6th-highest-grossing ever." (Wikipedia & Google). After the premiere, students at school around me had spoken about how much they loved it or how mainstream it became on social media. The fact that the writers, directors, musicians, crew, and cast were of Asian descent continued to propel the idea that the Asian community/ Asian countries have their own slew of creatives, makers, and intelligent socialites.

Ultimately, this film undermined the entire stereotype that the Asian community's portrayal is meant to stick as nerdy, anti-social, and not capable of gaining a love interest/ agency. The film felt refreshing and made me excited for more similar to it.

Here are links to some material that I recommend:
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/16085481-crazy-rich-asians>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g01YnqH-2ek>

SEPTEMBER 2021

ASIAN CONNECTIVITY: A GALLERY



Shela Yu

Shela Yu is a Chinese- American multi-disciplinary artist born and raised in Mesa, Arizona. Throughout her upbringing, she integrated many parts of herself in connection to her brother and parents. For example, she appreciates classical music, rock, and martial arts training because of her family.

Afterwards, within her 20s and early 30s, she felt a creative call to the arts and began to start her practice for real. She closed her bodywork business and began to delve deeper into her passion until it led her to ventures around Arizona and beyond.

Shela Yu utilizes her art to not only connect with the community but take action for it. She had a pivotal role during the year of 2020-2021 amidst a pandemic, social change, and the rise of the AAPI Phoenix community. Many of her murals line the streets of Phoenix -- the transformation from a blank wall, surrounded by gravel and litter into something beautiful. During the first Phoenix Anti-Asian Hate crimes vigil, she helped to honor the victims that passed away in Atlanta, Georgia due to Anti-Asian hate crimes. A common theme in her work can include the stability of the mind and soul, and how that can lead to a deeper identity under the surface. She adds Asian-inspired details such as tight lines, symbols, and feline-like features/ animals. Moreover, Shela Yu continues to create a warm community by being open-minded and the continuous promotion of self-growth.

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**Culture Talk:
Asian & Pacific
Islander
Culture**

Asian Connectivity: A Gallery

- 1 Shela Yu (@shellshaker)
- 2 Pollyanna Dee (@pollyanna.d.art)
- 3 Justin (@hungryartistny)
- 4 Sam Llanes (@sammakesamess)
- 5 Tiffany Chen (@tiffanychenart)
- 6 Art of Maku (@makuwapu)
- 7 Harsha Ann (@harshannart)
- 8 Loe Lee (@byloeelee)
- 9 Shar Tuiasoa (@punkyaloha)

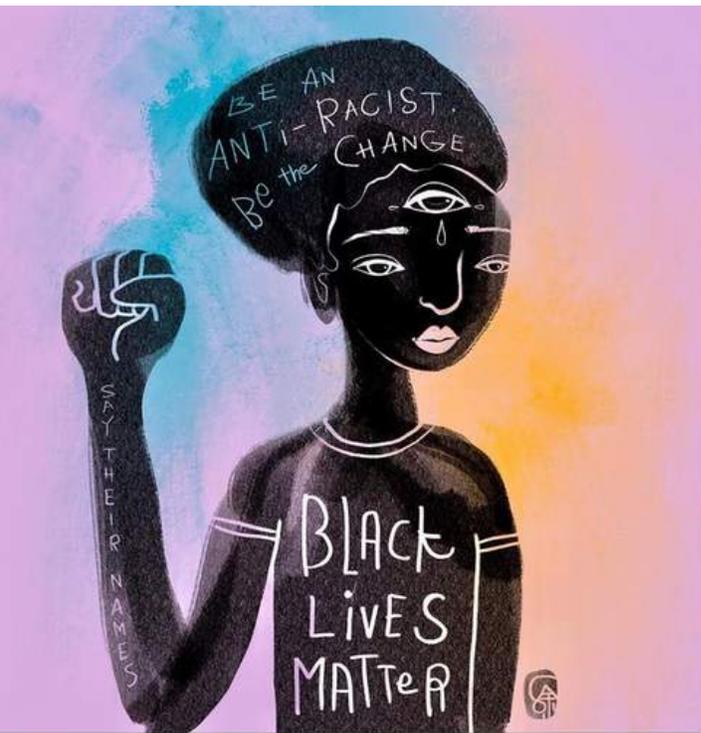


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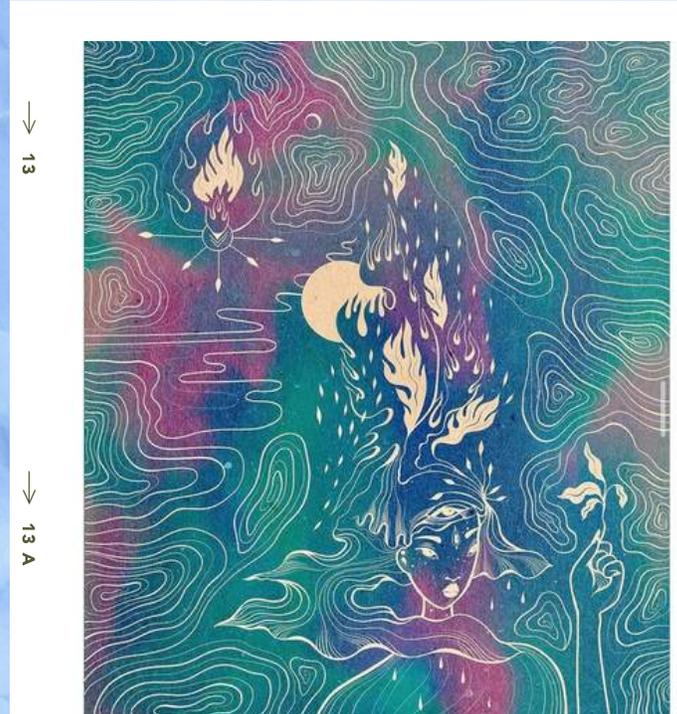
Shela Yu

@shellshaker



FILM NEGATIVE

FILM NEGATIVE



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FILM NEGATIVE

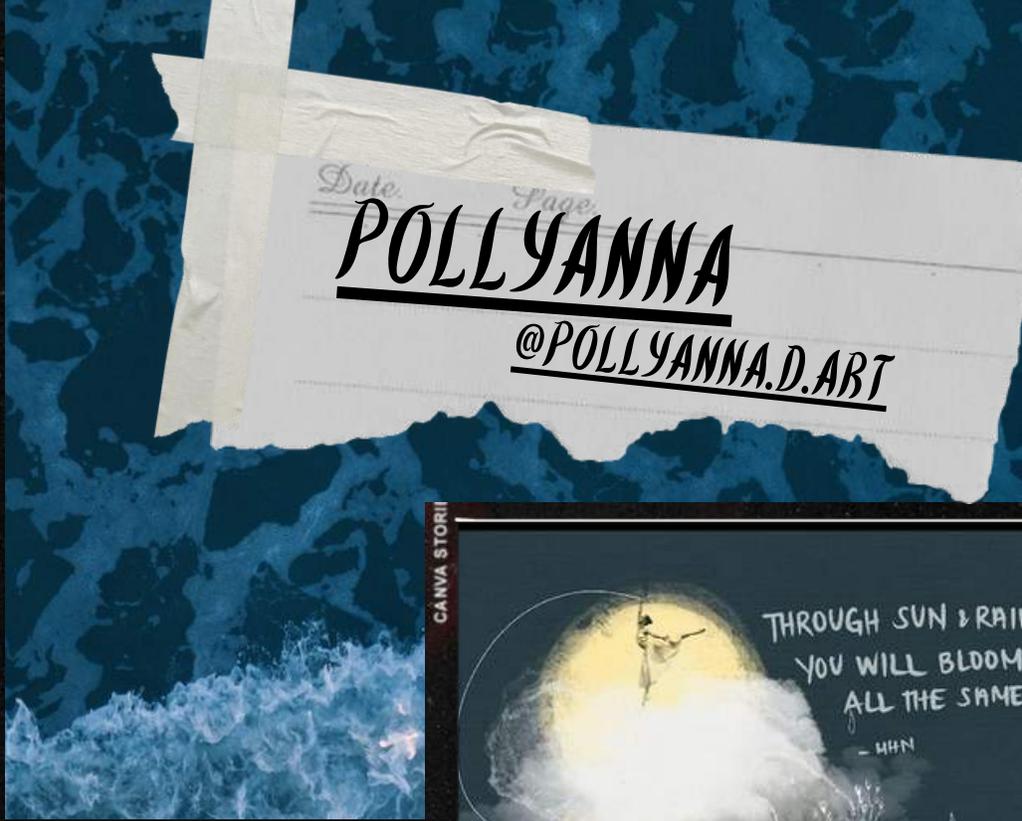
FILM NEGATIVE

Shela Yu is a Chinese-American multi-disciplinary artist born and raised in Mesa, Arizona. She is known for her murals, digital paintings, and Asian-inspired details that connect to the mind, body, and soul.



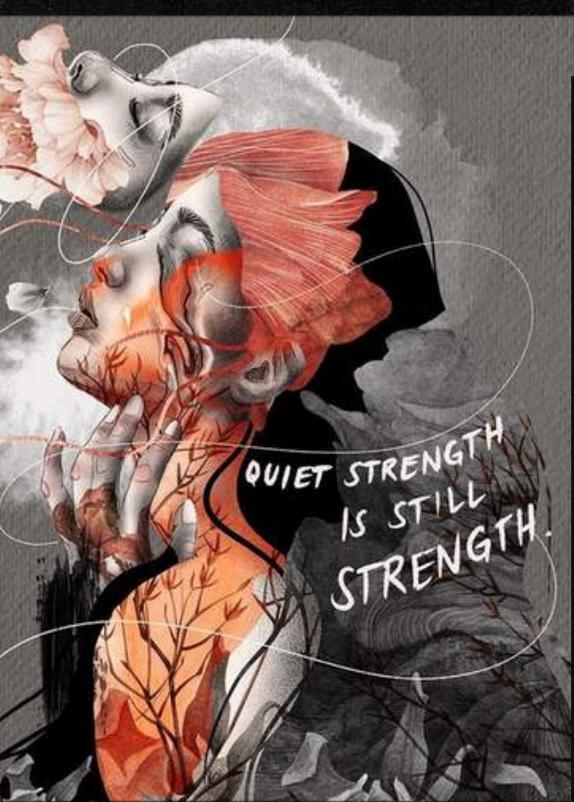


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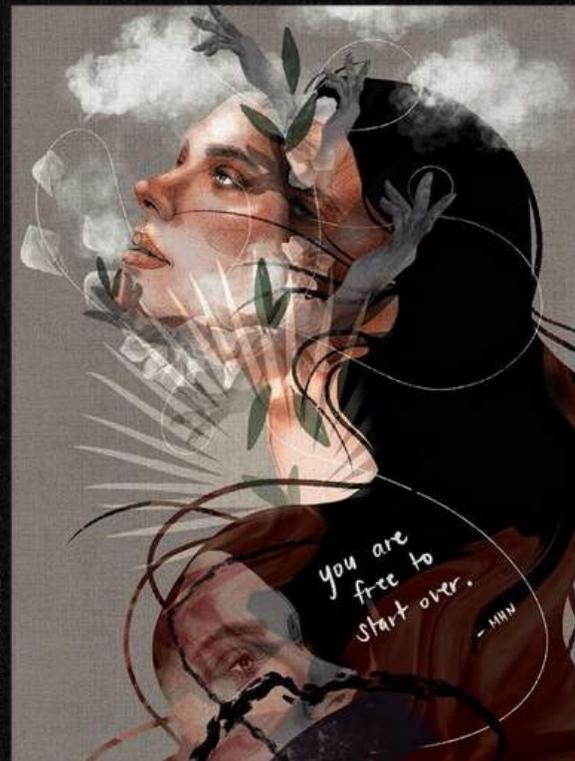


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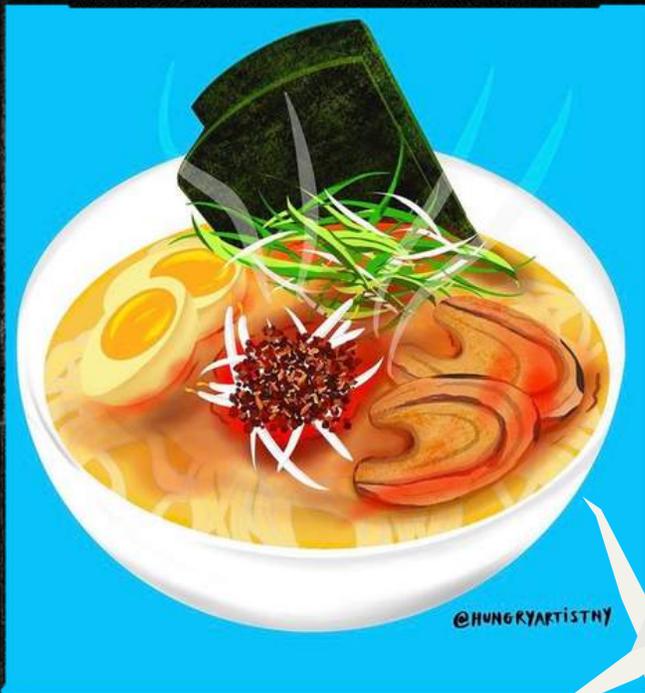


CANVA STORIES

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Pollyanna Dee is a Filipina visual artist and freelance illustrator based in Manila, Philippines. In lieu of her visual storytelling, her current favorite medium is digital art.

CANVA STORIES 19



Justin
@hungryartistny



*NEW YORK
City*

Queens to Manhattan

Justin was born and raised in Queens, New York. He loves trying and eating unique foods in New York City. He describes it as a melting pot of food & art. He uses his platform to uplift the AAPI community and to recommend some of the best NYC eats!



Sam Llanes

@sammakesamess



Sam Llanes is a Jersey City based Filipino-American illustrator and designer with a focus on storytelling. Using playful colors with fun shapes and locations to depict nostalgic life moments for herself and other people is what she enjoys best. Over the summer she is an art teacher & set designer for Jersey City's Camp Liberty, run under the Educational Arts Team.

Tiffany Chen

Tiffany Chen

Tiffany Chen

@tiffanychenart



**Tiffany Chen is a self-taught
illustrator from Seattle and is
represented by the Andrea Brown
Literacy Agency. She is known for
her works that depict colorful,
animated scenes of natural
landscapes/ features.**

CANVA STORIES

CANVA STORIES

CANVA STORIES

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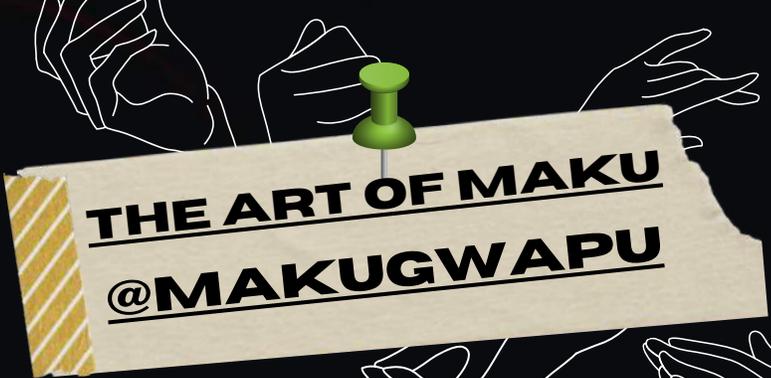
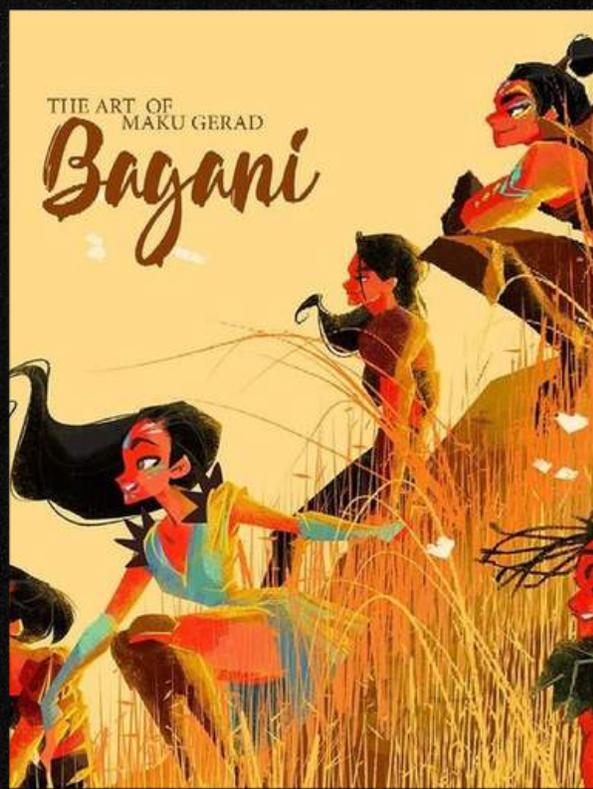
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Gerard Quizon is a freelance character illustrator and digital designer. His favorite inspirations include fan artworks of popular athletes, actors, bands, and characters. Over the years, he has participated in various online art exhibitions and has currently 75.9K followers on Instagram.

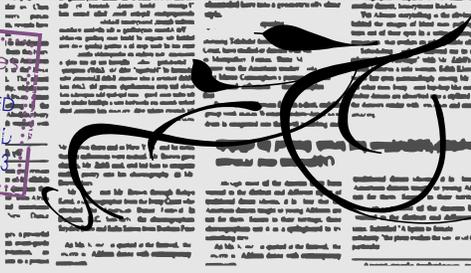


Harsha Ann is a graphic designer/illustrator based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. She is known for her color-vibrant and hypnotizing digital works along with branding that is all her own.



HARSHA ANN

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



HATE IS

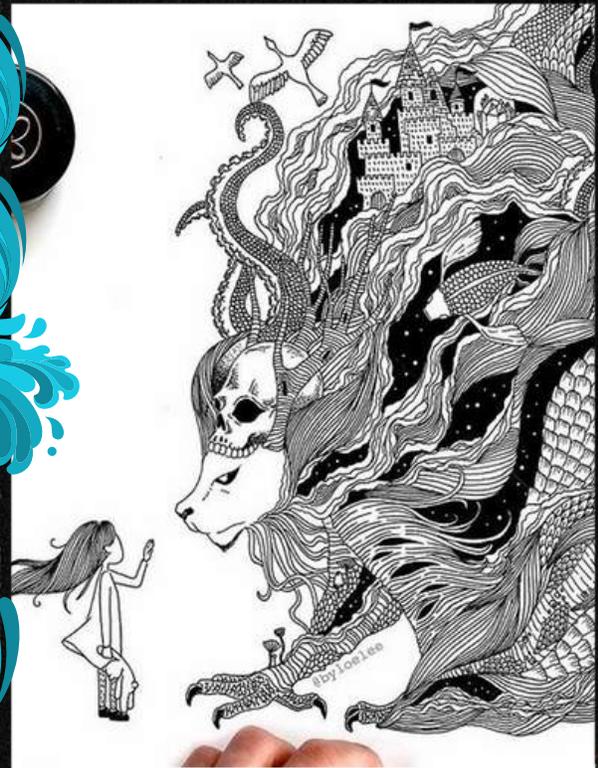


A VIRUS

Loe Lee is an illustrator, designer, and muralist living in New York City. Her clients include but are not limited to: Coca-Cola, Grubhub, CVS, Chinatown NYC, and more. She is also a senior designer at VICE media group.



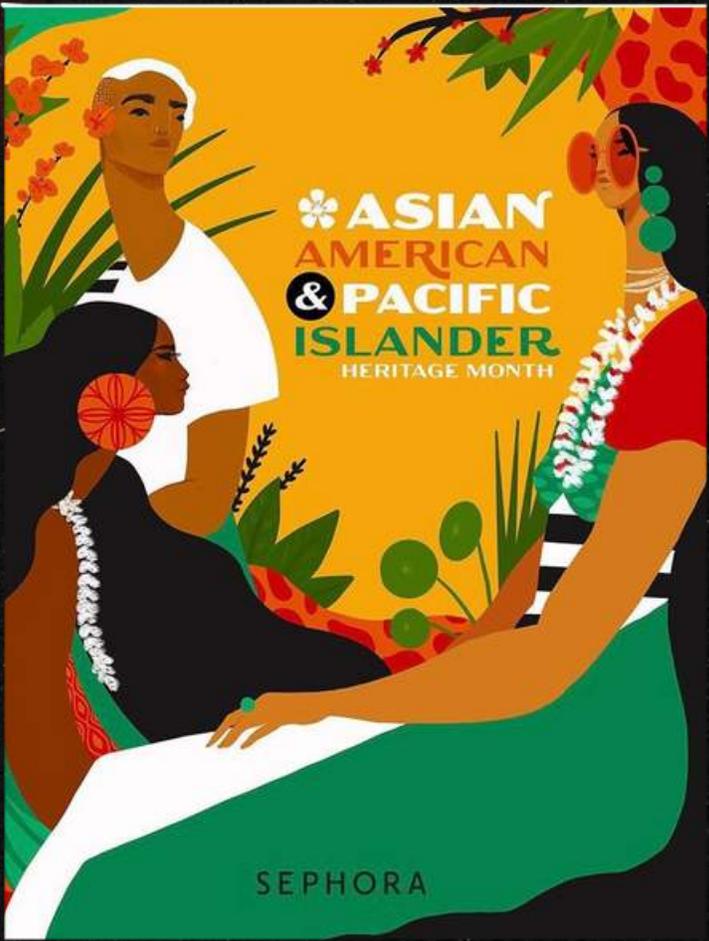
Loe Lee
@bylolee



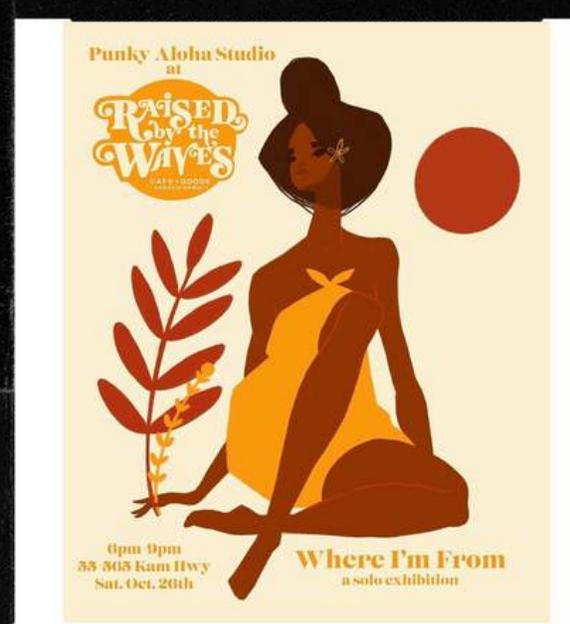
Shar Tuiasoa

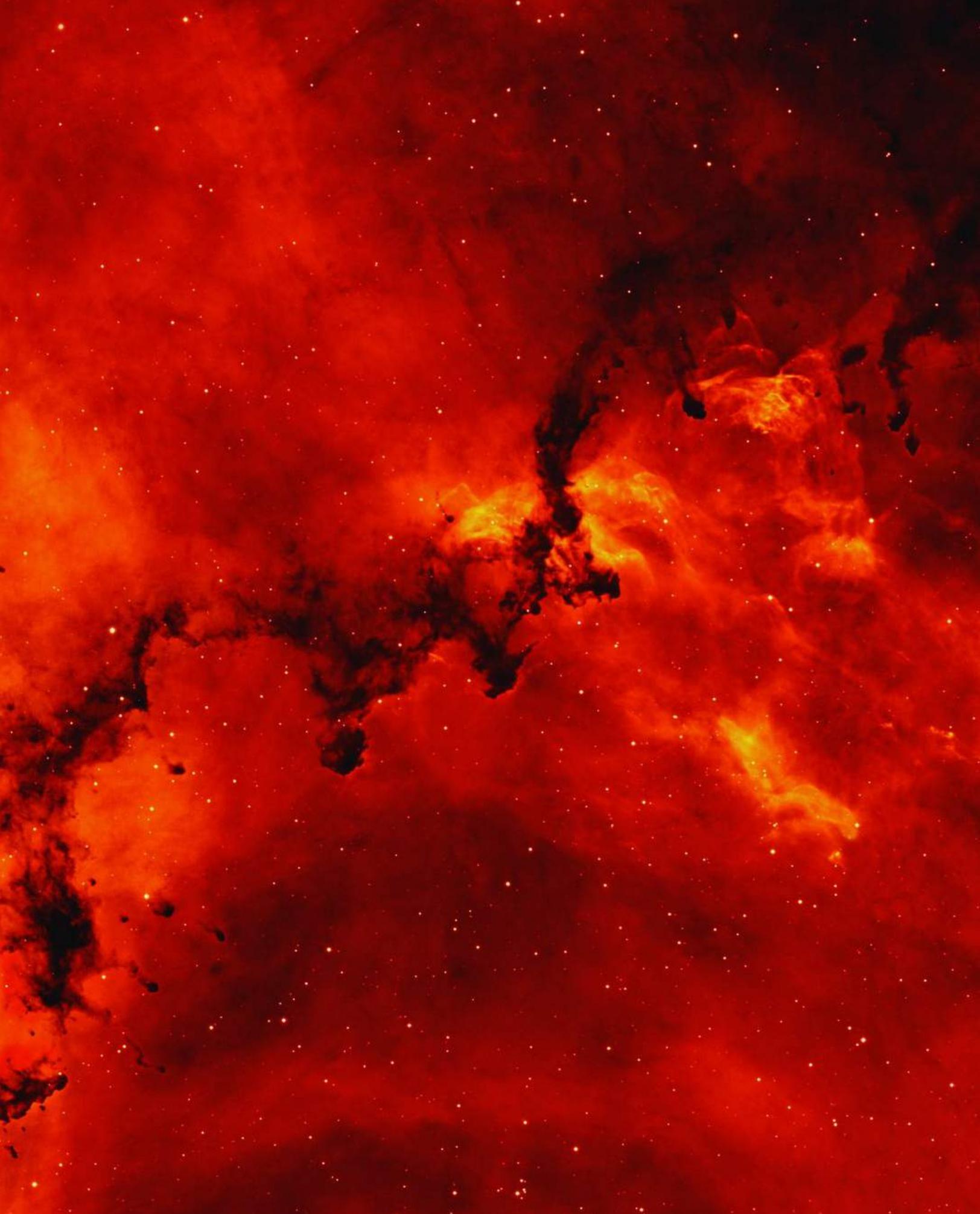
Punky Aloha Studio

Punky Aloha Studio is the illustration studio of Shar Tuiasoa, a freelance illustrator based in Kailua, Oahu. A few of her clients include Sephora, Patagonia, Harper Kids, and more. Shar also sells her prints in her shop, in Hawai'i, Japan, and the US.



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SEPTEMBER 2021 • ISSUE 08

ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER CULTURE

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THANK YOU.

BY: MILLA NGUYEN

Issue 8 covers Asian & Pacific Islander culture, yet there is so much more to discuss and explore. As one of our editors (Katherine Chou) states in the editor's note, "The Asian community is far from a monolith", meaning, we are not meant to be generalized or molded into stereotypes you see on television. As an Asian American myself, there is no doubt that I have witnessed the hardships that other Asian Americans have gone through. For example, some must find out their true identities by themselves. Some might question why fellow students at their high school or university poke fun at their accents. Some must study in a foreign country with a whole population that speaks a language that is not their first. Some might endure ostracization among peers because of family values. And while these obstacles are very present today, I can say that I & we, as Culture Talk are grateful for the lives that we live as Asian Americans. Culturally, there is so much to appreciate from our traditional cuisines to languages to our family's stories. The Asian & Pacific Islander community is expansive and will continue to become connected through a web of strings. And while the world continues to change, the community does too. Acceptance and love provides support and awareness on a social and political level. Pushing dialogues can never be easy. If they were, people could not have open-minded discussions. Just as we have discussed in our previous issues, sometimes crossing boundaries to help others makes the effort worth it. Life is also full of opportunities as well. On a student perspective, we are all trying to find our way. Though, it gives me a sound mind when I see Culture Talk members, friends, and family members who are not of Asian descent support those who are members of the Asian/ Pacific Islander community. As we wrap up our 8th issue, I'd like to give a warm and tremendous thank you to our main editors and writers, nothing is possible without you. I'd also like to extend our grateful thank you to our cover and gallery artists who granted us with their beautiful artwork and what they do for the Asian/ Pacific Islander community. Last but not least, the readers. It is imperative that we state our gratitude because the support, the discussions, and the friendships encourage us to keep creating. -Until next time, the writers, editors, and members of Culture Talk.



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