MOUNTAIN MOVERS

SINCE 1969
As the newsmagazine of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, CrossCurrents keeps readers informed of Center activities, including academic programs, research projects, student achievements, and relevant university and community issues. CrossCurrents also covers important events and projects related to Asian American Studies and communities, but not directly sponsored by the Center. Past issues can be found on the Center’s website.

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SUPPORT ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

If you wish to support the UCLA Asian American Studies Center,
This past year, we launched our 50th Anniversary activities with a successful two-part symposium on Asylum and Deportation and the book launch of *Mountain Movers*, along with a summer reunion of original founders of the Asian American Studies Center. In the fall, we co-sponsored an exciting two-day conference to renew the ties between town and gown with the “Power to the People” conference that featured 55 speakers over a spread of issues of concern to our communities. Please enjoy recaps of and reflections on these commemorative activities and more within this issue of CrossCurrents.

We will continue the 50th Anniversary celebration this spring 2020 with *IMAGE MOVERS*, a three-weekend film festival in March sponsored in partnership with UCLA Film and Television Archive, Melnitz Movies, and the Center for EthnoCommunications and in collaboration with Visual Communications, Film Quarterly, and UCLA Asian American Studies Department. The aim is to reach a broader audience with thought-provoking films, old and new, that resonate with current issues today. We will also highlight our “50 for 50” fundraising campaign so that we can complete 50 oral histories of Asian American Studies founders by the end of our 50th anniversary celebrations. We hope you can join us in these and other activities.

Over these past two years, I have been inspired by the dedication of staff, the creative energy of students, the collaborative spirit of our faculty and the selfless dedication of community partners, elected officials and supporters with whom we have had the privilege to work alongside. And I am deeply thankful to the generous donors who make our work possible. The Center is not only a legacy institution, but continues to carve new terrain for the field and our future.

We look forward to seeing you as we carry the torch into the next 50 years.

Karen Umemoto, PhD
Helen and Morgan Chu Endowed Director’s Chair of the Asian American Studies Center

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Mountain Movers: Student Activism and the Emergence of Asian American Studies shares the narratives of nine remarkable students. For each of these Asian Americans, their ethnic heritages and racialized experiences, their family backgrounds, their education, and the social movements of their day intersected so that they became agents of change. They organized and mobilized fellow students and community members to establish and further Asian American Studies (AAS) on their campuses. AAS has since grown, not only offering a relevant curriculum for and about these students, but one that also helps develop and empower their communities. With accounts from San Francisco State University, UC Berkeley, and UCLA, *Mountain Movers* highlights how students changed the course of history.

Edited by Russell Jeung, Karen Umemoto, Harvey Dong, Eric Mar, Lisa Hirai Tsuchitani, and Arnold Pan, this new publication features UCLA alumni Amy Uyematsu, Casimiro Tolentino, and Preeti Sharma sharing their personal stories and experiences, alongside a history of AAS at UCLA by Jean-Paul deGuzman.

Attendees of the 2019 Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) Conference in Madison were able to purchase the book, just a year after the idea for the project was born at the last AAAS conference. A reception for *Mountain Movers* was held during AAAS on April 26 and the Center shared previews of an online “storybook” for it on the website, which includes oral history videos, photos and documents, a historic timeline and a curriculum module. The site can be accessed at [ucla.in/2ILk88H](http://ucla.in/2ILk88H). Print copies of the book can also be purchased from AASC Press.

The Center later hosted the Southern California book launch at 341FSN on May 25. The first part of the day brought together de Guzman and Sharma, who discussed their own journeys with Asian American Studies and the MA program and talked about the future of the field with the audience (See Angel Trazo’s illustrated notes from their talk on page 4). In the second part, Uyematsu read her poetry, with musical accompaniment by Taiji Miyagawa, and Tolentino shared his experiences at UCLA, including teaching the first Filipino American experience class.
On May 25, 2019, in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, I took a journey through the 50-year history of Ethnic Studies. The part of American history, which often remains unknown or untold, is the history of People of Color. In my own experience, it was not until I graduated from Colgate University in 2017 that I learned the field of Asian American Studies even existed. Now I am a student in the Asian American Studies Masters program at UCLA. This year the Asian American Studies Center co-published Mountain Movers: Student Activism and the Emergence of Asian American Studies, commemorating the establishment and 50-year legacy of Asian American Studies at UCLA, UC Berkeley, and San Francisco State University. While speaking at the Mountain Movers Southern California Book Launch at 341 FSN, contributor, Preeti Sharma, shared her own journey into Asian American Studies. Sharma explained that coming into the Asian American Studies Master’s program at UCLA felt like “being a kid in a candy shop.” Having come to UCLA after fighting to establish an Asian American Studies minor at her undergraduate institution, University of Florida, Sharma illuminated the all-too-common dearth of ethnic studies curriculum in American education. Now a PhD student in Gender Studies at UCLA, Sharma elaborates on sharing leadership and challenging systems in her Mountain Movers chapter as a way of ensuring the push for ethnic studies curriculum across the nation continues.

Fellow Mountain Movers contributor, historian, and lecturer, Jean-Paul de Guzman, told the audience of how Asian American Studies provided him with the language to speak on why such programs and the community spaces they foster matter. de Guzman outlines the founding of the Asian American Studies Center in his contribution, highlighting its creation as a bridge between community and scholarship.

Following the Mountain Movers reception, I attended the opening of “At First Light: The Dawning of Asian Pacific America,” a recent exhibition at the Japanese American National Museum. The panelists, Robert Nakamura, Duane Kubo, and Eddie Wong, explained the beginnings of Visual Communications (VC), the first Asian Pacific America media organization in the United States. From their telling of VC’s founding as a space for students to share their diverse stories in the predominantly-white field of film, to screening archival clips of Japanese Americans speaking out against incarceration in the courtroom to local social justice protests, the panelists brought the legacy of Asian American Studies to life. The multi-media exhibition ran in Little Tokyo from May 25 to October 20, 2019.

Angel Trazo is currently a student in the Asian American Studies MA program at UCLA and the author/illustrator of We Are Inspiring: The Stories of 32 Inspirational Asian American Women.
As part of the Center’s 50th Anniversary and Asian Pacific American Heritage Month activities, the Center’s Stanley Kwok Lau and Dora Wong Lau Distinguished Lecture Series brought different speakers to campus to discuss the important issues of asylum and deportation in conjunction with the multi-campus Southeast Asian Deportation Awareness Week.

On May 15th, Professor Mae Ngai of Columbia University came to the UCLA Northwest Campus Auditorium to deliver a lecture entitled “Mother of Exiles” - Refugees in American Myth and History. She stressed the importance of taking a hard look at immigration restrictions, policies, and their history. Ngai stated, “I feel that what is happening today with refugees and asylum seekers should be important to everybody because what we see happening around the world, it’s not just the United States; what we see around the world and on our southern border is a real emergency.”

The second part of the series, the Southeast Asian Deportation Awareness Forum, took place on May 23 at the UCLA Tom Bradley International Hall. Students, faculty, and community members attended the forum to learn about how deportation is directly affecting the Southeast Asian community here in the United States and about the resilience and activism of Southeast Asian Americans in resisting these unjust policies and advocating for change. Asian American Studies MA student June Kuoch shared their experience working on the series in their reflection below.

FORUM ORGANIZER REFLECTIONS

BY JUNE KUOCH

According to the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC), there were more than 17,144 Southeast Asians (SEA) with orders of removal at the end of fiscal year 2018 and subject to deportation at any time. After the election of President Trump in 2016, there has been a drastic increase in the Cambodian deportation quota to about 200 per year or an increase of 279%, due to the reinterpretation of agreements with Vietnam on the detention and deportation of pre-1995 refugees, and the placement of sanctions on Laos in order to force them to receive deportees. These statistics can seem abstract, but they represent the reality in which carceral violence operates within and against Southeast Asian refugee communities.

In August of 2016, eight Khmer men from Minnesota were picked up by I.C.E [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement]. This was the seed for the grassroots movement, Release Minnesota 8 (ReleaseMN8). Over a yearlong campaign, ReleaseMN8 had major wins, stopping the deportation of three Cambodian refugees, and uplifting the struggle of Southeast Asians in the United States, yet five of the eight were “sent back” to Cambodia—a place they had never been in their whole lives. I had the pleasure of organizing with ReleaseMN8 throughout my undergraduate career, even hosting the ReleaseMN8 fundraiser before moving to California, and even now at UCLA during my graduate career.

This past May, during Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, with the help of many different undergraduate Southeast Asian student organizations and the Asian American Studies Center, I had the opportunity to be a core organizer for the Stanley Kwok Lau and Dora Wong Lau Distinguished Lecture Series. One of the featured events was the Southeast Asian Deportation Forum. Undergraduate students had also been given the opportunity to further learn about deportation through a special topics class with Dr. Thu-Huong Nguyen-Vo. Through these and other events and activities, we were able to center the voices of those directly impacted by the “crimmigration” system, where the criminal (in)justice system and the immigration system intersect.

Fellow organizer Lan Nguyen and I invited our friends from across the United States to speak about the failure of refugee resettlement and deportation. With over 300+ people in attendances, the core speakers of the event were my two good friends, Khmer women and movement family directly impacted by this issue, Montha Chum and Jenny Srey from Release MN8. We followed up their lecture with a panel from both community members who have been organizing and have been impacted by deportation: Sheila Sy from Khmer Girls in Action, Somdeng Danny Thongsy from Asian Prisoner Support Committee, and Houth Billy Taing from Asian Pacific Islander Reentry & Inclusion through Support & Empowerment (API RISE) and the Anti-Recidivism Coalition.

The deportation forum was quite an emotional night for myself, as I felt two worlds of mine were colliding. It was the Midwest meets the West Coast. Furthermore, through the forum, those directly impacted by deportation spoke about incarceration, legal strategies, and the love that drives them to continue this work.

June Kuoch is currently a student in the Asian American Studies MA program at UCLA.
From the AASC Founders Reunion (Abraham Ferrer, UCLA AASC)
The Collective Memories Project continues to document the experiences and history of those involved in the growth of Asian American Studies and the start of the Center. These oral histories reveal the efforts taken to launch courses, spark new research, grow the first collection of publications and gather library, archival and other materials that now serve as major resources for students, scholars and communities. The long-term aim of the project is to continue beyond the UCLA experience to extend to the Asian American Movement more broadly: Led by Center for EthnoCommunications Assistant Director Janet Chen and Center Director Karen Umemoto, the Collective Memories team has completed more oral histories and shared them online at aasc.ucla.edu/aasc50. Currently the site features interviews with the following Center founders:

- Alan Nishio, first interim director of the Center
- Duane Kubo, co-founder of Visual Communications (VC) and Gidra contributor
- Florante Ibanez, co-founder of Samahang Pilipino and former AASC staff
- Mary Uyematsu Kao, former AASC publications coordinator and photographer who documented community and activist events
- Carol Mochizuki, former member of Gidra Staff, former Board President of the Asian American Drug Abuse Program
- Ichiro Mike Murase, former member of Gidra staff and co-founder of Little Tokyo Service Center and Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress
- Robert Nakamura, co-founder of VC and the founder of the UCLA Center for EthnoCommunications
- Brenda Paik Sunoo, journalist and writer, attended UCLA in late 1960s
- Merilynne Hamano Quon, organized conferences such as Sansei Concern, ARE YOU YELLOW, Oriental Concern, former AASC Student and Community Projects coordinator
- Casimiro U. Tolentino, assistant editor for Letters in Exile and co-founder of Samahang Pilipino
- Amy Uyematsu, former AASC staff and co-editor of Roots: An Asian American Reader
- Eddie Wong, co-founder of VC, worked on Roots and Gidra

The team is currently working on editing and transcribing the oral histories of others, such as Kenyon Chan, May Chen, Rocky Chin, Helen Chu, Judy Chu, Morgan Chu, Lowell Chun-Hoon, Mike Eng, Laura Fineeman, Alan Kumamoto, Vivian Matsushige, Franklin Odo, Dennis Ogawa, Rodney Ogawa, Glenn Omatu, Elsie Osajima, Jesse Quinsaat, Bob Suzuki, Paul Suzuki, Suzi Wong, and Mia Yamamoto. The Center hopes to complete fifty oral histories by Fall 2020.

The event was co-sponsored by the Asian American Studies Department, the Institute of American Cultures, and the UCLA Alumni Association - Diversity Programs. Thank you to everyone who attended and joined the Center in reliving old memories, creating new ones, seeing how far we have come, and imagining how to bring the Center into the future.
As UCLA celebrated its centennial year, the Institute of American Cultures (IAC) along with the four ethnic studies research centers also marked their 50th anniversary. It has been 50 years of advancing research for social justice, of fostering students and scholars, and of engaging with community. The centers under IAC - the Asian American Studies Center (AASC), the American Indian Studies Center (AISC), the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies (Bunche) and the Chicano Studies Research Center (CSCRC) - have all played integral parts not only in the history and growth of UCLA, but in and for communities of color locally and worldwide.

This year IAC collectively marked this occasion with the IAC Film Festival on February 1 at James West Alumni Center and the IAC 50th Anniversary Gala on October 27 at the Luskin Conference Center. During the day-long film festival, each center presented works from alumni and the evening ended with a reception and a screening of Selena, produced by alum Moctesuma Esparza. AASC invited Visual Communications co-founder Duane Kubo to show “Cruising J-Town” and Asian American Studies MA and Center for EthnoCommunications alum Asiroh Cham to present her film “My Name is Asiroh.” After their films were shown, they engaged in a discussion and Q&A with Center Director Karen Umemoto.

The IAC Gala in the fall brought together over 300 guests, who were treated to an evening with special performances and the honoring of community partners. AASC chose to recognize Visual Communications (VC), a long-time collaborator of the Center with a shared history as they too celebrate their 50th anniversary. VC was founded in 1970 by four UCLA students and filmmakers, Robert Nakamura, Eddie Wong, Alan Ohashi, and Duane Kubo. Executive Director Francis Cullado was on hand to accept the award and he thanked AASC for the honor and its work, stating, “Because of the foundation that the Asian American Studies Center has built from the movement, combined with the cultivation of our communities, many of us in several organizations today can trace back our histories to you.” To close the night, artist Nobuko Miyamoto performed a number of songs, including the classic movement song “We Are the Children” from A Grain of Sand, “To All Relations” and a couple of recently released songs. She was accompanied by Derek Nakamoto on keyboard.

The IAC and the centers were especially honored to celebrate their 50th anniversary with so many founders and supporters from across the decades. It was a night to reflect on how far the centers have come, as well as to strengthen the collective resolve to continue to push ethnic and indigenous studies forward into the next fifty years and beyond.
The Center partnered with the Asian American Studies Department (AASD) and the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON) for a special two-day event that celebrated the Center’s legacy of building research with community. On November 1st, an evening program entitled “The In-Betweens: Asian American Solidarity in the Era of Resegregation” was held at the Tateuchi Democracy Forum at the Japanese American National Museum. The event featured Asian American Studies MA alum and author Jeff Chang in conversation with Luskin Public Affairs alum and 2019 Activist-in-Residence Tanzila “Taz” Ahmed, after a viewing of episodes 3 and 4 from Chang’s docuseries We Gon’ Be Alright. A recording of their discussion, which covered topics such as ideas of freedom, the institutionalization and professionalization of Asian American studies, the current dehumanization of marginalized populations like Muslim Americans, and the growing cultural and political consciousness of AAPIs, will be released as part of Ahmed’s podcast project for 18 Million Rising.

On Saturday, November 2nd, the day-long “Power to the People” 50 Years of Bridging Research with Community Conference took place at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. The plenaries and workshops were actively organized to examine important issues for AAPIs and to see how current movements and community organizations can work with researchers and students to further positive change. The opening plenary was on building power and featured A3PCON Executive Director Manjusha Kulkarni with Asian American Studies and Political Science Professor Natalie Masuoka.

After UCLA Law alum Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (District 66-CA) presented a resolution for the 50th anniversary of Asian American Studies at UCLA to AASD Chair Professor Victor Bascara and Center Director Professor Karen Uememoto, he joined the plenary for “Elevating Voices and Building Solidarity,” which also featured Umemoto along with alumni Professor Diane Fujino of UC Santa Barbara and Chancee Martorell of Thai Community Development Center. The final plenary of the day brought attendees together to think about “Alternative Imaginaries and Futures.” Organized by API Equality-LA Executive Director Tracy Zhao, the panel inspired and revitalized many in attendance and featured Meenadchi of Trauma-Informed Nonviolent Communication; Yvonne Yen Liu, former UCLA Activist-in-Residence and Founder of Solidarity Research Center; and Tavae Samuelu of Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC).

Throughout the day’s 14 workshops, around 300 students, faculty, organizers, community advocates, and alumni engaged in discussions around issues like the environmental justice and the Green New Deal, gentrification, Census 2020, and mental health. To view the full list of workshops, as well to see notes from the sessions and video for the plenaries that will be made available on the Center’s website at a later time, visit aasc.ucla.edu/aasc50/conf19/.

The conference organizers are grateful to the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, College of Social Sciences, Institute of American Cultures, and Office of Diversity and Inclusion, as well as the Japanese American National Museum for their co-sponsorship and support.
Both of the guest-editors felt it was an honor, Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales, Karen Umemoto, Kent R. Varisa Patraporn, Johng Ho Song, Sheila Sy, Philip Nguyen, Isabelle Thuy Pelaud, Juily Phun, Roderick Daus-Magbual, Eric Mar, Susan Nakaoka, Lai, Emily Le, C. Aujean Lee, Arlene Daus-Magbual, Frankie Casil always helped us navigate through cultural protocol and taught us phrases in Chamoru whenever we engaged with other community members both in and outside of our research project with Chief Hurao Academy. Our mentor’s guidance also allowed us to connect with various community members and grassroots organizers, centering on their voices and perspectives during our time on the island. As an Asian American Studies major, I always hear about doing community-based research. However, actually going into the field—especially into a community that I was not apart of—really challenged my own expectations of what community-based research could be like through a collaborative, meaningful, and community-centered empowerment approach. I learned a lot about Chamorro history and culture but also found myself reflecting constantly on what conducting community-based research really meant to me and what a privilege it was to be welcomed into the Chamorro community, building long-lasting relationships with folks that extended beyond the academic scope of the program. The weekly field trips and group dinners we had with elders in the community also broadened my perspective on how important it was to recognize that we were not just there as student researchers, but also as guests and visitors in the land.” - Kelly Zhao

This past summer, the second ever cohort (pictured) participated in the UCLA Guam Travel Study program, led once again by Professor Keith Camacho with assistance of Asian American Studies and Public Health Masters student Paul Mendoza. Students reflected back on their activities and shared their thoughts and experiences with us.

"After embarking on the most rewarding and fascinating travel study program to the beautiful Pacific Island of Guam, it reminded me of my homeland of Jamaica. In Guam, I did not feel like a stranger, because I was welcomed by both Pacific Islander students, faculty and staff at the University of Guam. The indigenous Chamorro people have displayed lots of respect and appreciation to my UCLA cohort and, as a result, this has created an indelible space in my heart. My group did research about the “Suicide Epidemic,” in Guåhan with the Haya Foundation. I admire the Haya staff for their volunteer services, dedication to community, and providing a safe and dignified space to help establish reconnection through traditional holistic healing. My experience has caused me to think critically about the ways to help my community and the significance of social justice activism.” - Carlene Francis

"My travel study experience in Guåhan (Guam) was one of cultural enrichment and relation-making. As an Indigenous student of the Americas with a passion for Native sovereignty and self determination (especially dealing with, but not limited to, land rights), my outlook while searching for a study abroad program was to find one that honored the community it worked with both culturally and politically. Native Justice: Social Movements in Guam was the program for me. I spent 4 weeks on the island working with a community organization named Guam Preservation Trust to establish the first cultural heritage preserve on Guam. This would be a space where community members could visit and maintain their cultural practices as families in an area that supported them. I felt incredibly grateful to have been apart of this process as an intern and learned a tremendous amount of skill in regards to handling the rematriation of ancient sites with a sensitivity to contemporary culturalprotocol and community input. The skills I learned while working with the Guam Preservation Trust will last me a lifetime in my endeavors with law school and with my obligations to my communities as a land protector.” - Tecpatl T. Kuauhtzin

Guam Travel Study

Program Spotlight | NATIVE JUSTICE: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN GUAM

"DURING MY TIME THERE, IT WASN’T JUST ABOUT RESEARCH—it was about building trust, respect, and solidarity with the community members we were working with through the projects our cohort developed with grassroots organizations. I was really thankful that our mentor Frankie Casil always helped us navigate through cultural protocol and taught us phrases in Chamoru whenever we engaged with other community members both in and outside of our research project with Chief Hurao Academy. Our mentor’s guidance also allowed us to connect with various community members and grassroots organizers, centering on their voices and perspectives during our time on the island. As an Asian American Studies major, I always hear about doing community-based research. However, actually going into the field—especially into a community that I was not apart of—really challenged my own expectations of what community-based research could be like through a collaborative, meaningful, and community-centered empowerment approach. I learned a lot about Chamorro history and culture but also found myself reflecting constantly on what conducting community-based research really meant to me and what a privilege it was to be welcomed into the Chamorro community, building long-lasting relationships with folks that extended beyond the academic scope of the program. The weekly field trips and group dinners we had with elders in the community also broadened my perspective on how important it was to recognize that we were not just there as student researchers, but also as guests and visitors in the land.” - Kelly Zhao
HONORING BRUINS COMMITTED TO SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH UCLA: OUR STORIES OUR IMPACT

UCLA: Our Stories, Our Impact is a multimedia traveling art exhibit illuminating the role of UCLA and its alumni in advancing equity and equality. Part of UCLA’s yearlong Centennial Celebration, the exhibit debuted at UCLA’s Kerckhoff Art Gallery on October 3 and is anchored by the portraits and stories of Bruins who have advanced and shaped social movements. Featured Asian American alumni include Chancee Martorell of Thai Community Development Center, labor organizer John Delloro, and undocumented student activist Tam Tran, with Bill Watanabe, Kristina Wong, and Steward Kwoh among those profiled online. Other Bruins highlighted are Patrisse Cullors, Martha Gonzales of Quetzal, and Natalie Site Means. Visit ourstoriesourimpact.irle.edu to learn more about all those featured and to find out where the exhibit will be on view during its run.

At a reception for the exhibit on Saturday, October 5th, Kristina Wong shared how heartening it was to be among this group even though “we don’t get into social justice to be honored.” Bill Watanabe spoke on getting into the School of Social Welfare and how this recognition was a validation of that decision by the school fifty years ago to make sure their students looked like the diverse populations they would be serving. Chancee Martorell, who taught the first Thai American experience course at UCLA, emphasized that it takes a great deal of sacrifice to do social justice work, thanking her family, as well as her own staff and interns. She was especially proud of the latter, because “they are committed, dedicated individuals who are future change agents” and encouraged people to continue to support this next generation with mentorship in order to sustain the difficult work of social justice. The exhibit truly highlighted the impact that Bruins have made across different generations and into today.

CENTER RECEIVES KEY FUNDING FOR YURI KOCHIYAMA PROJECT

The Center is pleased to announce major support from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP), the National Park Service’s Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grants, and the California Wellness Foundation for a new project featuring activist Yuri Kochiyama and other curriculum development.

The educational project builds upon the Center’s past work and relationships with Yuri Kochiyama and her family. The Center was honored to host Kochiyama when she was a scholar-in-residence and has continued to share her legacy with her memoir Passing It On, published by AASC Press in 2004, and the housing of a collection of her papers related to the Asian American movement.

Center Director Karen Umemoto shared, “Yuri Kochiyama was deeply dedicated to human rights and civil liberties. Her compassion for the cause of justice was overflowing. We are grateful to be awarded this grant to share the civil rights story of Yuri Kochiyama and make a selection of her civil rights and human rights collection digitally available to the public so all can learn and be inspired by her and the social movements of which she was a part.”

With this support, the Center will create an open access online digital exhibition and accompanying high school curriculum on the work of civil rights icon Yuri Kochiyama. The exhibition will follow her life story told in Passing it On and will highlight her lifetime of work following incarceration in Jerome, Arkansas, including her cross-racial social justice organizing. The curriculum will be incorporated into teacher training workshops with the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Sciences’s Center X and publicized through conferences and networks to educators in California.

CCLPEP provides grants for educational projects that address civil liberties and include information and comparisons to the forced exclusion and incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. The JACS grant program’s mission is to teach future generations about the injustice of the World War II confinement of Japanese Americans and to inspire commitment to equal justice under the law.

This project was led by the UCLA Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, the Labor Center, and the Chancellor’s Advisory Council on Immigration Policy, in partnership with the Institute of American Cultures, the American Indian Studies Center, the Asian American Studies Center, the Bunche Center for African American Studies, and the Chicano Studies Research Center.
and outside of it, and I've traveled extensively across the US and abroad. Around culture, aesthetics, and community development, both in academia and literature in English, and the larger context of US/Philippine literary relations, culture and aesthetics between the Philippines and United States. The ways Filipino America is imagined not just in the Americas but in and by Filipinos writing in English in the Philippines is what most interests me, both as someone who analyses literature and writes fiction. The history of American Empire is often obscured, even willfully ignored, in the US. Living abroad in Manila for nine months during the 2018-2019 academic year was a transformative experience. Being immersed, first-hand, in the social milieus within which literary imaginations by Filipino writers are created, in daily life and across so many arenas such as holidays, elections, religion, even food, really illuminated the long-lasting legacy and continuing consequence of US imperialism, as well as the way things have been/are Filipinized or localized. Observing how US culture is both embedded and resisted, in expansive interactions, in exposure to contemporary Philippine arts and culture, in talking one-on-one with other Philippine writer-scholars, transformed any initial assumptions I might have had, even if unknowing. What surprised me was the way the regional elements of the Philippines as an archipelagic nation are constantly and intentionally grappled with, and how that impacts literary languages across the country. It’s not just about English vs. Tagalog, but also Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon and any of the other roughly 187 languages of the Philippines. Each of those regions has a distinct culture as well. The Fulbright experience at this point of my life was the culmination of a lifetime of work as well as a fresh return. I started studying Philippine Literature in English, and the larger context of US/Philippine literary relations, as an undergrad and grad student at UCLA over two decades ago. As a writer, scholar, and cultural worker since, I’ve followed my passions around culture, aesthetics, and community development, both in academia and outside of it, and I’ve traveled extensively across the US and abroad.

**ANNA ALVES ON HER FULBRIGHT EXPERIENCE**

Anna Alves was a part of the 2018-2019 Fulbright cohort in the Philippines, studying transpacific literary relations, culture and aesthetics between the Philippines and United States. Returning to school later in my life to get my MFA and then PhD made me more appreciative and cognizant of how being outside of your comfort zone, and “in the field” as it were, is both singular and invaluable. Going out into the “global field” felt like an organic extension of all of my prior interests and work.

During my Fulbright time, I learned that you never stop learning - about yourself, your field, and the world around you. Living abroad for that length of time, and the opportunities for cultural exchange and expanding your own world-views, require a more expansive immersion, outside of yourself and your work. In the end, I believe my time in the Philippines showed me that my capacity for discovery is both boundless and bountiful, and that intellectual resiliency will inform my academic and creative work in fresh ways, moving forward.

My immediate plans include finishing my dissertation manuscript to earn my PhD. I’m also returning to the Philippines in January 2020 to teach a Fiction Workshop at the Fine Arts Department at Ateneo de Manila University. The new academic and artistic colleagues I’ve connected with in the Philippines are already emerging a transpacific network for future collaborations and arenas of shared ideas. I am also cultivating some archival preservation projects between the US and Manila, especially around the N.V.M. Gonzalez Archives Collection housed at the University of the Philippines at Diliman, and I am looking for ways to more regularly source transpacific Filipino/American creative writing exchange workshops. A potential project close to my heart involves developing a follow-up to a book of oral interviews of multi-generational Filipino writers in English that Fulbright alum Roger Bresnahan published in the 1980s, Conversations with Filipino Writers. I’d like to develop a follow up entitled, “Transpacific Conversations with Filipino Writer,” that collects oral interviews with contemporary Filipino writers in English in the US and the Philippines.
MIKE HOA NGUYEN AND DANIEL LUU RECOGNIZED WITH DON T. NAKANISHI AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

Congratulations to Mike Hoa Nguyen and Daniel Luu, the 2018-2019 recipients of the Nakanishi Award for Outstanding Engaged Scholarship in Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies at UCLA!

Daniel Luu graduated this June 2019 with a B.A. in Asian American Studies and a minor in Urban & Regional Studies from UCLA. This Fall, he will begin a Master’s degree program in Urban Planning at UCLA. Those who nominated Luu as an undergraduate underscored his qualities as an incredible scholar, able to fuse research and artistry with community engagement. He worked with the Missing Piece Project, a public art project that calls for a collective dedication of objects by Southeast Asian refugee community members at the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington DC on each April 30 (the anniversary of the “end” of the war, and the beginning of many refugee journeys), and created a documentary short around it, bringing visibility to community voices. As a research assistant for the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge, he worked with a professor, staff researchers and students to examine the impacts of gentrification on the Cambodian community in Long Beach and created videos around them. Daniel continually demonstrated community service and leadership through working with several student and non-profit organizations, such as UCLA United Khmer Students for Cambodian Culture Night and VietUnity and other organizations in Long Beach.

Through the generosity of UCLA faculty, students, staff, and alumni as well as community leaders, an endowment for this award was established that honors the late Professor Emeritus Don T. Nakanishi, who served on the UCLA faculty for thirty-five years and who ably directed the Asian American Studies Center from 1990 to 2010. Among his invaluable contributions to Asian American Studies, Professor Nakanishi co-founded two, national publications: Amerasia Journal and AAPI Nexus. Professor Nakanishi published widely in the areas of Asian American politics and education, mentored thousands of students, and provided professional and community-based service locally, nationally, and internationally. The Nakanishi Award includes a five thousand dollar award. The award rotates annually between faculty and students. The faculty award will be given near the end of the 2019-20 academic year.

Faculty that nominated Mike Hoa Nguyen for the graduate award highly regarded him for his deep commitment to community through research, teaching, and activism. As one professor noted, “He embodies the spirit of Don [Nakanishi] through his scholarship and political engagement. As with Don, his work consistently bridges academic scholarship with the most underserved Asian American and Pacific Islander communities and populations.”

He has published extensively on the impact of Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) and his scholarship is enriched by his experience working in government. His work has documented the role that AANAPISIs play in empowering the most underserved students to transform their institutions and communities, while advancing a more positive, just, and democratic society. Since coming to UCLA, Nguyen has published four peer-reviewed journal articles, three book chapters, and a dozen other reports and briefs that focus on Asian American and Pacific Islander populations. His service to communities has earned him Certificates of Recognition and Commendations from U.S. Congressman Mike Honda and California State Assembly Members Paul Fong, Joe Coto, and Ash Kalra. “Mike’s expertise and perspective has been immensely helpful in our own work focused on expanding educational opportunities for AAAs... his research helped create factsheets and resources related to the Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard lawsuit,” said a community leader.

Nguyen received his B.A. in American Studies with a minor in Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies at UCLA. In Fall 2019, he joined the University of Denver, Department of Higher Education as a tenure-track Assistant Professor.

ALUMNI & STUDENT NEWS

- The late Dawn Bohulano Mabalon was honored at a special tribute in Ackerman Ballroom on January 26, and in the exhibit “Growing Up Dawn,” (pictured left, with some of her family, friends) at Kerckhoff Art Gallery. She was recognized with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) Conference and honored at the UCLA Pilipino Alumni Association’s Scholarship brunch.
- Asian American Studies (AAS) alum Randell Park and Ali Wong starred in and co-wrote with fellow UCLA alum Michael Golamco the film Always Be My Maybe, released in theaters and on Netflix this past May. The film will be featured in the Center’s upcoming IMAGE MOVERS film festival in March 2020.
- AAS MA alum Jeff Chang released the digital series We Can’ Be Alright, based on his book of essays of the same name. Fellow UCLA alum Sarah Nguyen served as a co-producer with director and producer Bao Nguyen.
- Double alum and APIAHiP Executive Director Michelle Magalong joined the University of Maryland as the Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow.
- Alum and 2017 Activist-in-Residence Lisa Hasegawa became the Regional Vice President, Western Region for NeighborWorks America.
- Education PhD alum OiYan Poon received tenure at Colorado State University. She was also recognized for Outstanding Contribution to Research and Scholarship by the NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Asian Pacific Islander Knowledge Community and with the Engaged Scholar Award at this year’s AAS Conference.
- Rethinking Ethnic Studies featured chapters co-authored by UCLA Education alumni such as Tracy Lachica Buenavista, Edward R. Curammeng, and Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales.
- Love, Robot by 2014-15 IAC-AASC Visiting Scholar Margaret Rhee won the 2019 Book Award from AAAS in the Creative Writing (Poetry) category.
- Double Bruin alum Stewart Kwok was the keynote speaker for the 2019 UCLA Asian American Studies Department Graduation Ceremony.
- Undergraduate Leann Thuy-Huong Pham and graduate student Edward Nadurata were chosen as the student speakers for the 2019 AASD Graduation Ceremony.

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Artists and writers were at the core of the early AIDS movement in the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities in Los Angeles. So when Irene Suico Soriano asked me to collaborate on an event as part of Lambda LitFest, a weekend series of readings by Lambda Literary, I jumped at the chance and suggested a panel of API AIDS activists/writers from that era, that would eventually become “I Get So Emotional, Baby: Queer Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Writing in the Time of AIDS” at the Pilipino Workers Center on September 22.

Before Irene was a staff at the Asian American Studies Center, she was a treatment advocate at the Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team (APAIT) in the 90s. A poet in her own right, she has dedicated her life to nurturing other writers. While at APAIT, Irene got a grant to organize a reading series called “Wrestling Tigers” at the Japanese American National Museum. Many fresh-faced queer API writers, including myself, had shared our first words in public at Irene’s readings. In Irene, not only did I find the perfect conspirator to organize the LitFest panel, but I also locked in the first panelist!

Next we recruited Napoleon Lustre and Diep Tran. Napoleon was a superstar in AIDS outreach, going to spaces to find the hard-to-reach at-risk populations that most feared to tread. He became HIV-positive while he was an undergrad at UC Irvine in the late 80s and bravely spoke about his experience. Most people know Diep as a pioneering restaurateur, but before her culinary career, she had been a published poet and her first job out of college was at APAIT in mid-90s. Still preferring “dyke” to the more polite term “lesbian”, Diep was drawn to APAIT as one of the very few explicitly radical and queer API spaces in Southern California.

We rounded out the panel with Joël Barraquiel Tan, one of the APAIT co-founders in 1992 who now makes his home in Hawai‘i. At the panel, Joël, a poet and performance artist, explained the confluence of factors that drew so many artists to the movement. AIDS hit the creative community hard, and there weren’t many other people beating down the door of AIDS service organizations for a job in those days. They needed foot soldiers to hit the pavement and educate the community who continued to turn a blind eye to the unfolding epidemic. AIDS gave many artists a steady gig to do something for the community, while leaving plenty of flexibility to hone their craft.

They not only provided the sweat equity, especially at a time when our government was ignoring the epidemic, but more importantly, their creativity and radical joyfulness was also the heart and soul of the movement, said Joël. You had to be creative to do AIDS work in immigrant communities that were supposedly averse to talking about death and sex (not just any sex, but gay sex.) Early APAIT social marketing campaigns, like “Love Your Asian Body”, were brainchildren of these artists. The portrayal of same-sex intimacy between APIs would still be considered provocative almost thirty years later. It put the up-and-coming agency on the map. At the panel, Diep shared a hilarious story involving a trunk full of dildos, nipple clamps and other restraints being stolen from her car, expensive gear that she used regularly to entice queer women to talk about safer sex practices. If AIDS had taken sex away from us in the 80s, these activists were bringing sexy back and making it fun again.

Literature was also a means for community building, be it writers’ groups or poetry readings. To secure sponsorship with JANM, Irene had promised big-name writers like Jessica Hagedorn, which she delivered. But she also sneaked in James Sakakura (APAIT staff who died of AIDS in 1996) and other writers/activists. On a regular basis, queer words and queer bodies occupied heteronormative spaces. Napoleon remembered performing for a Hollywood fundraiser for APAIT, where he not only smoked on stage, but also burned his arm with the cigarette. Even as AIDS became a cause for celebrities, Napoleon and other AIDS activists wouldn’t let the crowd be complacent about how the virus was wreaking havoc on people with HIV on a daily basis. It was the kind of radicalism that had attracted young queer APIs, like Diep, to the movement. She’s carried these progressive values with her to this day. Diep remains one of very few chef/restaurant owners to advocate so publicly against the pay inequities of restaurant workers.

Even in the face of so many gruesome casualties from the plague war, AIDS energized a generation of queer API activists/writers in the 90s. Now, as I compile a history of that time, I hope these stories can spark a spirit of creativity, playfulness, and experimentation among progressive warriors in our current dark times.

BRINGING QUEER API ACTIVISTS AND WRITERS TOGETHER FOR “I GET SO EMOTIONAL, BABY”

BY ERIC C. WAT

It is a tremendous honor to serve as the editor of *Amerasia Journal*, given the central role the publication has played in establishing the field of Asian American Studies. I deeply appreciate the intellectual vision of previous editors, most notably Keith Camacho, who has pushed the journal to substantively and imaginatively engage with Pacific Islander Studies. I also want to acknowledge Karen Umemoto for bringing *Amerasia Journal* into the digital age. Now published by Routledge Press, the journal will be accessible through the Taylor & Francis online database (visit [www.tandfonline.com/RAMJ](http://www.tandfonline.com/RAMJ)).

I begin my editorship reflecting on the heightened intensity of border, racial, and gender violence and in anticipation of 2020, a presidential election year, a census year, and the 100th anniversary of U.S. women’s suffrage. To foster collective intellectual, artistic, and political engagement with these topics, Monisha Das Gupta and Lynn Fujiwara are guest co-editing a special issue on “Law and Life: Immigrant and Refugee Acts Amid White Nationalism,” to be published in spring 2020. For fall 2020, Genevieve Clutario and Rana Jaleel will be co-editing a special issue on “Rethinking Gendered Citizenship: Intimacy, Sovereignty, and Empire.” I am also planning future special issue topics on “Critical Refugee Studies,” “The Unresolved Cold War,” and “Oceans and Archipelagos.”

Joining the faculty in the University of California (UC) system has enabled me to engage in cross-campus collaborations, like editing *Amerasia Journal*. With funding support provided by the UC Humanities Research Institute, the UCI Humanities Center, and Routledge Press, we will be able to host in-person publication workshops for the authors selected for the 2020 special issues and hopefully for future issues as well. We also plan to feature Amerasia at national conferences, like for the Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS), American Studies Association (ASA), and National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA).

I’m looking forward to embarking on this exciting journey with the support of Associate Editor Arnold Pan and Marketing Manager Barbra Ramos (pictured below tabling at AAAS 2019 in Madison, Wisconsin). We have urgent work ahead in this difficult political era, but we also have a tradition of collective intellectual and creative activism to motivate and guide us.

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu is Professor of Asian American Studies and Director of the Humanities Center at the University of California, Irvine.


**DID YOU KNOW?**

*Amerasia Journal* was founded at Yale in 1971 by Don Nakanishi and the inaugural editor Lowell Chun-Hoon (pictured celebrating the 45th anniversary of Amerasia together), as a publication of the Yale Asian American Student Association, and that same year, it became a joint publication with, and soon after a publication solely by, the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. Megumi Dick Osumi, Caroline Yee, Russell Leong, David K. Yoo, Keith Camacho, and Karen Umemoto would all later serve in the capacity of editor before the current editor Judy Wu.

**50 YEARS OF THE ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CENTER**

The 2019 open issue features the 2017-2018 Lucie Cheng Prize winner and forums on Pearl Buck and Lisa Yoneyama’s *Cold War Ruins*, as well as tributes to David Wong Louie and Dawn Bohulano Mabalon.

Guest editor: Gordon Chang (Stanford University)

This issue commemorates the 150th anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad, with its dependence on Chinese labor, and the 50th anniversary of Asian American studies, by looking at labor provided by Asians in the Americas, especially in a time shaped by U.S. imperialist expansion.

Guest editors: Diane Fujino (University of California, Santa Barbara) Robyn Rodriguez (University of California, Davis)

This special issue marks the founding of Asian American studies with articles addressing the meanings and forms of Asian American activism, both historically and currently.
Professor Gilbert Gee awarded the C. Doris and Toshio Hoshide Distinguished Teaching Prize

Professor Gee received his bachelor’s degree in neuroscience from Oberlin College, his doctorate in Health Policy and Management from the Johns Hopkins University, and post-doctoral training in sociology from Indiana University. His research focuses on the social determinants of health inequities of racial, ethnic, and immigrant minority populations using a multi-level and life course perspective. A primary line of his work focuses on conceptualizing and measuring racism discrimination, and in understanding how discrimination may be related to illness and he has also published broadly on the topics of stress, neighborhoods, immigration, environmental exposures, occupational health, and on Asian American populations. Dr. Gee was the past Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Health and Social Behavior and has been a guest editor for Child Development, AAPI Nexus Journal published by AASC Press, and the Asian American Journal of Psychology.

His research in the fields of Public Health and Asian American Studies has been honored with a group Merit Award from the National Institutes of Health for the development of multicultural measures of discrimination for health surveys. In addition, he received two Scientific and Technical Achievement Awards from the Environmental Protection Agency for development of the Stress-Exposure-Disease Framework. This year, Dr. Gee shared the Delta Omega Award for Innovative Public Health Curriculum with student leaders from the CHS Grads for Racial Justice: Amelia Fay-Berquist, Elida Ledesma, Ashley Lewis, Sarah Jane Smith, and Marisol Torres. He also was appointed to the Committee on Informing the Selection of Leading Health Indicators for Healthy People 2020 with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Students that nominated Dr. Gee described how they benefitted tremendously from his generous mentorship and inspirational teaching. One student wrote how courses such as the Influence of the Social and Physical Environment on Racial Health Disparities and Writing for Publication in Public Health fundamentally changed the way she thought and engaged with research. “Dr. Gee played a central role in demystifying the research process, and gave me a voice to be a part of a world that I was never meant to be a part of, making research accessible through his teaching and mentorship,” said one student. “Education and mentorship for Dr. Gee is not about pushing ‘facts’ or creating more hierarchies, it is about learning to be more human, utilizing the tools of research and education to develop greater compassion and care for one another,” said another student.

The late C. Doris Hoshide, Class of 1934, of Rockville, MD established the teaching prize to recognize an outstanding professor in Asian American Studies. She was a longtime supporter of Asian American Studies at her alma mater. The Hoshide Prize includes a one thousand dollar award.

Professor Ninez Ponce (pictured left) received one of the highest awards in public health—the Health Services Research Impact Award 2019 by AcademyHealth. She was also honored by Asian Health Services, a community health center based in Oakland Chinatown, and recognized as one of the 100 Most Influential Filipinas in the World by Filipino Women’s Network.

- Professor Randall Akee was appointed Editor-in-Chief for the American Indian Culture and Research Journal, published by the UCLA American Indian Studies Center and named to the UC President’s Native American Advisory Council.
- Professor Keith Camacho was honored with the 2018-2019 Graduate Student Appreciation Award at the Asian American Studies Department (AASD) Commencement Ceremony.
- Professor Kyeyoung Park published LA Rising: Korean Relations with Blacks and Latinos after Civil Unrest (Lexington Books).
- Professor Benjamin Woo was recognized as a Distinguished Fellow by the American Psychiatric Association.
- Professor Grace Hong was appointed the Associate Director of the Center for the Study of Women.
- Professor Rachel Lee published “Metabolic Aesthetics: On the Feminist Scentscapes of Anicka Yi” in Food, Culture, and Society 22.4 (Fall 2019). She also co-led a Seminar for faculty and graduate students on Health Humanities for the UCLA Humanities EPIC (Excellence in Pedagogy and Innovative Classrooms) project and wrapped up a three-year term as book review editor for Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience.
- Professor King-Kok Cheung published Chinese American Literature without Borders (Palgrave Macmillan), as well as contributed the afterward for Pangs of Love and Other Writings (University of Washington Press) by David Wong Louie. She also participated in the David Wong Louie Memorial Conference on November 15.
- Professor Emeritus Snehendu Kar published Empowerment of Women for Promoting Global Health and Quality of Life (Oxford University Press).
- Professor Paul Ong co-published Uneven Urbanscapes: Spatial Structures and Ethnicoral Inequality (Cambridge University Press) with Silvia Gonzalez.
- Professor Margaret Shih was appointed Associate Vice Chancellor, Bruins X.
- The Center welcomed three new faculty members (pictured right) whose work are connected to AAPI communities: Cindy Sangalang of Cal State Los Angeles, Lee Ann Wang of the University of Washington, and Evyn Lê Espiritu Ghandi of UC Berkeley. Professors Sangalang and Wang have joint appointments in Social Welfare and Asian American Studies. Professor Lê Espiritu Ghandi is a part of the growing Asian American Studies Department.
- Community Health Sciences Professor May Sudhinaraset was awarded funding by the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) to conduct a study on the social networks of undocumented API students attending or recently graduating from UCs, CSUs, and Community Colleges.
- A retrospective of film works by Professor Gina Kim of Television, Film and Theater was shown in Munich, Germany this past March.
- Asian American Studies lecturer Dr. Kim Tran received a professional development award from UCLA Academic Personnel Office.
- Fellow Asian American Studies lecturer Dr. Lily Anne Welty Tamai was installed as the new Ventura County JACL Chapter President this year.
- The Institute of American Cultures (IAC) welcomed Christopher Soto, as Assistant Director of Development for IAC and the four ethnic studies research centers.
- AASD wished student affairs officer (SAO) Kristine Espinoza (pictured right - center) good luck as she left UCLA and began a doctoral program in higher education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. They also welcomed two new staff members (also pictured right): Kylin Sakamoto as the administrative specialist and Gregory Pancho as the new SAO.
The program consisted of ten artists—and two musicians—who were invited to select an image from the current “At First Light” exhibit that inspired them to create an original written work to perform in front of a live audience (sadly, one of the ten artists, Koji Sakai, was called away due to a family emergency and could not participate). From poetry to short fiction, and from diaristic journal entry to memory-piece, the artists brought to the gathering exceptional works that, when paired with the equally evocative images they were inspired to write about, offered a tantalizing glimpse into the ways through which still images inspire other forms of artistic expression.

The literary artists chosen to participate in “REFLECTIONS/REFRACTIONS” represented a “new guard” of Asian American literary talents. From “old hand” Amy Uyematsu, whose letter to renowned poet Lawson Inada, “Dear Lawson” (as read by stand-in Taiji Miyagawa) provided a stunning yet intimate overview of a movement as related from one friend to another, to Teresa Mei Chuc’s succinct and touching “On the other side of the ocean,” the evening accommodated a wide range of voices and perspectives. Taiji Miyagawa’s moody, bluesy upright bass workout suitably framed his selection, a portrait of elderly activist Mrs. Ishibashi (whose husband gave name to the vanguard Little Tokyo Peoples’ Rights Organization), while Eric C. Wat broke from the activist tenor of many of the photographic selections to ponder the isolating effects of suburbanization and displacement in his selection of a boy flying a kite along his Marmion Way neighborhood, accompanying “A Boy Named Sue,” excerpted from his forthcoming novel Swim.

Other literary artists presented works that spanned the wide spectrum of both activism and community-building, from Miya Iwataki’s ode to the Asian American Movement, “Spirit of the 1960s and ’70s: A Snapshot,” to Kenji Liu’s power-of-place offering, “Letter to San Pedro at First St., 1972.” Novelist Naomi Hirahara examined community displacement and empowerment in her piece, “Super 8: An Ode to the Alan Hotel,” while Irene Suico Soriano and Stan Yogi observed multiple generations as an agent of community legacies in their respective works, “Variations of Living” and “Hakujin Equals American, Oriental Equals Us.”

Traci Kato-Kiriyama’s “To The (Old)(post-) Young(Future) Bloods (before I die without telling you)” gained its inspiration from an image of former VC Executive Director Linda Mabalot. And to close the program, Dom Magwili (for many years the acting adviser and director of UCLA’s annual Pilipino Cultural Movement, “Spirit of the 1960s and ’70s: A Snapshot,” to Kenji Liu’s power-of-place offering, “Letter to San Pedro at First St., 1972.” Novelist Naomi Hirahara examined community displacement and empowerment in her piece, “Super 8: An Ode to the Alan Hotel,” while Irene Suico Soriano and Stan Yogi observed multiple generations as an agent of community legacies in their respective works, “Variations of Living” and “Hakujin Equals American, Oriental Equals Us.”

As the third of four public programs complementing the “At First Light” exhibit, Visual Communications has rightfully cast the spotlight on the power of the still images contained within VC’s Asian Pacific American Photographic Archive to capture a moment in time, and to inspire action. It has been a good time to remind one and all of the power of those images and artifacts. And thankfully, this next-gen set of Asian American literary masters proved more than up to the challenge.

The literary program “REFLECTIONS/REFRACTIONS” was organized by Visual Communications as a program of the VC Founders’ photographic exhibit “At First Light: The Dawning of Asian Pacific America,” that ran from May 25 through October 20, 2019, and was presented by Visual Communications and the Japanese American National Museum. A special “thank you” to the VC and JANM staffs, to Eddie Wong and Amy Uyematsu for their inspiration in conceiving this literary event, and finally to all the artists whose written works and still images were showcased in this program.

Abraham Ferrer is the Archives and Distribution Manager for Visual Communications and a UCLA alum.
REFLECTIONS FROM 2018-2019 IAC-AASC VISITING SCHOLAR

JOSEN MASANGKAY DIAZ

I have long admired the work of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center – from its commitment to Asian American studies as an interdisciplinary project to its to community-engaged scholarship – and it was a special honor to spend the year at the center as the Institute of American Cultures Visiting Research Scholar.

A highlight of my time with the center was meeting and spending time with Karen Umemoto, Melany de la Cruz-Viesca, Marjorie Lee, Irene Suico Soriano, Barbra Ramos, Arnold Pan, and Tam Nguyen. I took note of the ways that each of them contributes to the daily operations of the center and its function within and outside of campus. Yet, I appreciated the ways that they collectively highlight individual work in an effort to build with each other from within the center itself. It was also a pleasure to meet undergraduate and graduate students at various events, many of whom count their time with the center as one of the most meaningful experiences of their time at UCLA.

I enjoyed my time collaborating with Karen and Melany, in particular. We often discussed the histories of anti-martial law activism in Los Angeles, focusing especially on the ways that these legacies directly shaped Filipino American community organizing in Los Angeles. Karen’s and Melany’s work on youth and community justice informed these conversations: I learned a great deal from them, and I am looking forward to the ways that they will continue to support research around anti-martial law activism for scholars and activists.

Likewise, it was a privilege to work with Victor Bascara and Lucy Burns. As my faculty sponsor, Victor inquired about my work often, engaged it thoughtfully, and kept his door open for me. Lucy encouraged every step of the manuscript process, offered guidance for the highs and lows of it, checked in, and lent wisdom around the complexities of martial law. I also acknowledge David Yoo and Sophia Fischer at the Institute of American Cultures for their warm welcome and support and to co-IAC scholar Roy Perez for their camaraderie.

The year afforded to me the time and resources I needed to spend time on research and to reflect upon my work and those of others. I aimed to complete my book manuscript during this year, and my focus was, naturally, on completing the writing. But the year with the center reminded me of the importance of thoughtful engagement with material, with big and small ideas, with conversations with people who know more than I do about all kinds of things. In many ways, this became just as important as the words per day that I aimed to write. In the end, I finished the first complete draft of my manuscript, “Postcolonial Configurations: Dictatorship, the U.S.-Philippine Cold War, and the Making of Filipino America” (contracted with Duke University Press). The manuscript points to Filipino America as a configuration that reveals the ways that authoritarianism under the Ferdinand Marcos regime collaborated with the liberal policies and reforms of the U.S. government during the Cold War period. More importantly, it tries to reimagine Filipino American beyond these totalizing determinations of Filipino life in order to center the myriad ways that Filipinos articulate and express themselves in the world. This past year with the center was instrumental for getting this project closer to its finished form.

I have been fortunate to be part of dynamic academic departments, but my time with the center is the only time that I have been part of an Asian American studies center. In this way, my year with the AASC was especially important. It was a reminder of the challenges, promises, and legacies of Asian American studies. It helped illuminate Asian American studies as a kind of praxis, an example of critical and generative work.

Josen Diaz is currently an Assistant Professor of Ethnic Studies at University of San Diego.

DID YOU KNOW?

An introductory reader on the history of Filipinos in America, Letters in Exile was the first anthology published on the then little-known history of Filipinos in this country and was the second book published by the Center. Materials selected for this book were chosen by students belonging to the Pilipino American Anthology Project to shed light on key areas in Pilipino history.

THE CENTER WELCOMES VISITING SCHOLAR

ERIN KHUÊ NINH FOR 2019-2020

For the 2019-2020 academic year, the Center welcomes IAC-AASC Visiting Scholar erin Khuê Ninh. Ninh is an Associate Professor in the Department of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, with affiliate appointments in Feminist Studies and Comparative Literature. Ninh completed both her BA and PhD degrees in English at Berkeley and previously was at UCLA as a UC President’s Postdoctoral Fellow in the English department.

Her research and teaching explore the subtleties of power, harm, and subject formation, whether in the contexts of terror and war, of family and immigration, or of girlhood and beauty. She is currently working on a book project, tentatively entitled, “Perfect Lies: Passing for the Model Minority.”
The Center for EthnoCommunications, led by Director Renee Tajima-Peña and Assistant Director Janet Chen, worked on several events and projects this year. EthnoCommunications held three events at 341 FSN, a community space in Little Tokyo sponsored by Visual Communications. At Monday Nite VC: Rewind a series curated and moderated by frequent Ethno guest editor Walt Louie, Professor Tajima-Peña was a featured guest and she discussed her background and her career as a filmmaker, activist and educator. For the Creating Community Media Bootcamp (pictured left), Janet Chen, Tadashi Nakamura, Victoria Chalk and advanced students and alum from Ethno classes trained storytellers, ranging from educators, students and community members, on how to use digital video filmmaking techniques to tell stories from diverse and marginalized cultures, peoples and histories. Chen also organized the Building History 3.0 Project Workshop, based on Tajima-Peña’s project that uses a collection of educational technology resources, including a graphic timeline, short documentaries, lesson plans and interactive activities in Minecraft to teach about the WWII Japanese American incarceration camps.

EthnoCommunications has played a major role in the Center’s 50th Anniversary activities. As the producer and lead filmmaker for Collective Memories, Chen heads a team of student workers/interns (including those pictured to the right) to film and edit the oral histories of those involved with the founding of AASC and the Asian American Studies movement. Chen, her team, and interviewers Professor Karen Umemoto, Professor Valerie Matsumoto, Professor Susie Ling, Dr. Karen Ishizuka and Meg Thornton plan to reach fifty interviews by Fall 2020.

EthnoCommunications is a key part of the programming for IMAGE MOVERS: Asian American Studies Center 50th Anniversary Film Festival. Chen and consultant Lindy Leong are the main organizers. AASC (Karen Umemoto, Sean Metzger, Barbra Ramos, Meg Thornton) is partnering with UCLA EthnoCommunications (Renee Tajima-Peña, Janet Chen), UCLA Film & Television Archive (Paul Malcolm, KJ Relth), UCLA Melnitz Movies, Film Quarterly (B. Ruby Rich, Rebecca Prime) and Visual Communications (Francis Cullado, Abe Ferrer, Lindy Leong). Taking place over three weekends in March 2020, IMAGE MOVERS will showcase Asian American Pacific Islander themes/topics through films and interactive discussions with scholars, writers, community members, filmmakers, students and the public. Screenings will be at the UCLA James Bridges Theater, Northwest Campus Auditorium, and the Hammer Museum’s Billy Wilder Theater. Learn more about the festival at aasc.ucla.edu/aasc50/film/.

EthnoCommunications also continues to provide institutional support to the Asian American Documentary Network (A-Doc), a national network that works to increase the visibility and support of Asian Americans in the documentary field that was co-founded by Renee along with Grace Lee and Leo Chiang. Both Chen and Professor Tajima-Peña now serve as core members.

EthnoCommunications is currently developing a new website that can be viewed at aasc.ucla.edu/ethno/. It should be finalized in Spring 2020.

Project Spotlight | ‘ASIAN AMERICANS’ ON PBS

Academy Award®-nominated filmmaker, Professor Renee Tajima-Peña (Who Killed Vincent Chin?, No Más Bebés) is currently completing ASIAN AMERICANS, a groundbreaking five-episode docu-series that will air in May 2020 on PBS. Told through individual lives and personal histories, it explores the impact of this group on the country’s past, present, and future and examines the significant role of Asian Americans in shaping American history and identity. As the series producer, Tajima-Peña has led several teams, with many UCLA faculty, alumni, and students—such as Vice Provost David Yoo and alumni Eunice Chung, Justin Martin, Gena Hamamoto, Alex Margolin, and Grace Lee (to name just a few)—also serving as integral parts to the production of the series. Grace Lee’s episode on the Asian American movement will premiere at the IMAGE MOVERS Film Festival.
IAC/AASC Graduate Student Research Grants

RISHI GUNÉ
MA Student Asian American Studies
RESEARCH PROJECT: Fragments of National Inclusion: Indian American Women/Trans Diasporic Communities and the State

HARLEEN KAUR
PhD Student Sociology
RESEARCH PROJECT: Surviving Stigma: How Sikhs Navigate Racialized Violence and Trauma in the US and Canada

JUNE KUOCH
MA Student Asian American Studies
RESEARCH PROJECT: Southeast Asian Deportation: Abolitionist Models of Justice through a Queer/Trans Feminist Praxis

ANGEL TRAZO
MA Student Asian American Studies
RESEARCH PROJECT: What's the Tea?: The Bond Between Boba and Asian American Youth Culture in California

Don T. Nakanishi Award for Outstanding Engaged Scholarship in Asian American & Pacific Islander Studies

MIKE HOA NGUYEN
PhD Education - Public Policy

Martha Ogata Research Grant to Study Domestic Violence and Abuse in Asian Pacific American Communities

JUNE KUOCH
MA Student Asian American Studies
RESEARCH PROJECT: Southeast Asian Deportation: Abolitionist Models of Justice through a Queer/Trans Feminist Praxis

Partick and Lily Okura Research Grant on Asian Pacific American Mental Health

MICHELE J. WONG
PhD Student Social Welfare
RESEARCH PROJECT: Invisible Bodies: Asian American Women at the Intersection of Racism

George & Sakaye Aratani Graduate Fellowship

ELYSE IZUMI
MA Student Asian American Studies
RESEARCH PROJECT: Power and Grace: Hula and Eisaa as Resistance
PROJECT SITES: Okinawan Association of America & Hālau Hula a Kawika Ika‘i ‘o Leinani

Rose Eng Chin & Helen Wong Eng Fellowship
Professor Harry H. L. Kitano Fellowship

RISHI GUNÉ
MA Student Asian American Studies
RESEARCH PROJECT: Fragments of the State: Indian American Women/Trans Communities and the False Promise of National Inclusion

Tritia Toyota Graduate Fellowship

LAUREN HIGA
MA/MSW Student Asian American Studies and Social Welfare
RESEARCH PROJECT: Uchinaanchu Cram School: Transformative Pedagogies in Okinawan-American Communities

Pearl Wang Fellowship

ZHEYU LIANG
MFA Student Film & Television
RESEARCH PROJECT: Documentary Proposal: Life in the Cracks

JIANCHAO LAI
PhD Student Social Welfare
RESEARCH PROJECT: Facing the Asian Movement: A 1970s Narrative

Kizuna Little Tokyo, Inc - Taylor Weik
PROJECT: Developing the Next Generation of Japanese Americans

Kizuna Little Tokyo, Inc - Stephanie Nihahara
PROJECT: Nikkei Community Internship

Japanese Community Youth Council - Stephanie Nitahara
PROJECT: Project 9066

Japanese American Cultural & Community Center - Stephanie Nitahara
PROJECT: Fiesta Matsuri 2019

Japanese American Cultural & Community Center - Taylor Weik
PROJECT: Rising Stars College Life 101

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PROJECT: Rising Stars College Life 101

2019-2020 UCLA ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CENTER AWARDS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS
ACADEMIC PRIZES, FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND INTERNSHIPS

Don T. Nakanishi Award for Outstanding Engaged Scholarship in Asian American & Pacific Islander Studies

DANIEL LUU
MAJOR: Asian American Studies

Morgan & Helen Chu Outstanding Scholar Award

VY VY LU
MAJOR: Molecular, Cell and Developmental Biology

Nhat H. Tran, M.D. Scholarship

THIEN-TRUC JESSICA NGOC PHAM
MAJOR: Psychobiology
MINORS: Asian American Studies and Global Health
PAPER TITLE: Do I Have Dyslexia?

21st Century Internship

ALMA E. VILLA LOMA
MA Student Urban Planning
RESEARCH PROJECT: Asian American Studies Center’s Collective Memories Project
INTERNSHIP SITE: UCLA Asian American Studies Center and Center for EthnoCommunications

Dr. Sanbo & Kazuko Sakaguchi Graduate Internship

LAUREN HIGA
MA/MSW Student Asian American Studies and Social Welfare
RESEARCH PROJECT: “Power to the People”: 50 Years of Bridging Research with Community Conference
INTERNSHIP SITE: UCLA Asian American Studies Center and Department

Hiram Wheeler Edwards Prize for the Study of WWII Internment Camps and Japanese Americans

ELYSE IZUMI
MA Asian American Studies
PAPER TITLE: Whispers in the Archives: Finding Okinawan American Voices in the Japanese Concentration Camps

Rose Eng Chin & Helen Wong Eng Prize

JUNE KUOCH
MA Student Asian American Studies
PAPER TITLE: Cyber Fantasies: Rina Sawayama, Asian Feminism, and Techno-Orientalism in the Age of Neoliberalism

Ben & Alice Hirano Academic Prize

KATHLEEN CORPUZ
MA/MPH Student Asian American Studies and Public Health
PAPER TITLE: Living in Kalihi: Remembering Stories of Struggle and Resistance

Professor Harry H.L. Kitano Graduate Prize

RISHI GUNÉ
MA Student Asian American Studies
PAPER TITLE: Purvi Patel as “Figuration”: Indiana, the State and the Politics of Criminalization

Tsugio & Miyoko Nakanishi Prize in Asian American Literature & Culture

ANGE TRAZO
MA Student Asian American Studies
PAPER TITLE: Drawing Asian Americans: Asian American Youth Characterization and Graphic Illustration in Ms. Marvel and Ichiro

INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT | MICHELLE MURAKAMI

“Aratani Internship has provided me with the opportunity to engage myself with and deepen my knowledge for the growing Japanese American culture. The LTSC staff have been incredibly kind and generous during my time as an intern. It did not feel like the typical internship - it was like I was just a new part of the team. From working on projects to helping order massive amounts of furniture and amenities, the Budokan team never failed to make me smile and laugh. I realized that with this internship my purpose was to educate and provide service to the community around me.

The stories and wisdom passed down by generations before have exposed me to the possibilities of challenges that can be overcome. It is by telling stories like theirs — at times understated, nostalgic, and emotional — where we have epitomized and proven that passion and dreams can be explained through any medium and we can effect change in others.”
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Janet Chen, Tammy Borreto, and Susan Sookhoo at Dawn of a New Day. | At the Founders Reunion | Carol Machizuki and Vivian Matsushita leading a game | Irene Park and Irene Soriano making sure attendees enjoy dessert | Betty Leung and Christopher Soto at the registration table | Rocky Chin after winning a prize from one of the games (1, 2, 5: Abraham Ferrer; 3, 4: UCLA AASC).
The UCLA Asian American Studies Center was founded in 1969. AASC, along with the three other ethnic studies centers and the Institute of American Cultures, have been celebrating our 50th anniversaries during 2019 and 2020. These celebrations coincide with UCLA’s centennial year.

We’ve come a long way since 1969—from teaching the first Asian American studies courses at UCLA, producing two of the pre-eminent journals in our field, leading the Interdepartmental masters, major and minor programs, launching the Asian American Studies Department, supporting the Center for EthnoCommunications, processing important collections, fostering AAPI researchers and scholars, and so much more. Many people have been with us on this journey—whether as students, faculty, staff, organizational partners or community members—and we thank you for all you have done to help us reach this milestone.

We invite you to connect—or reconnect—with the Center and to join us for our slate of special programming and events that not only mark how far we’ve come and the accomplishments we’ve made, but also look forward to the future of Asian American Studies.

UPCOMING 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

WINTER 2020

IMAGE MOVERS: ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CENTER 50TH ANNIVERSARY FILM FESTIVAL

WEEKEND 1: March 6-8
WEEKEND 2: March 13-15
WEEKEND 3: March 20-21

In partnership with the UCLA Film and Television Archive, Melnitz Movies, and the Center for EthnoCommunications, AASC will present a series of films related to Asian American and Pacific Islander histories, issues, and experiences.

Learn more at aasc.ucla.edu/aasc50/film/.

To stay up to date, sign up at bit.ly/AASC50