

OUR PORTRAITS,

OUR

FAMILIES

a group photography show of family LGBTQ narratives

ASIAN PRIDE PROJECT | SUMMER 2014

WELCOME HOME.

Welcome to the Asian Pride Project's group photography exhibition *Our Portraits, Our Families*.

Our Portraits, Our Families celebrates the journeys, triumphs and struggles of LGBTQ individuals and our Asian and Pacific Islander (API) families and communities. Here, the Asian Pride Project team seeks to capture these stories by using photography as a medium for social justice and advocacy in the LGBTQ realm.

We invited panelists from International Center of Photography, Queens Museum, and *The New York Times Magazine* to join Asian Pride Project in selecting socially engaged artists with experience in the API and LGBTQ communities. By pairing professional artists with individuals & families, our goal was to use art as a means to raise visibility and awareness. Chiun-Kai Shih photographed inspiring professionals breaking the LGBTQ ceiling in creative industries. Alexis Lim, Justin Maxon, Ka-Man Tse, Nelson Chan, and Pete Pin were each assigned family subjects to photograph in the subjects' most familiar settings – often the home. This seemingly straightforward task was oftentimes complex for families; choosing to share their home life was a necessarily conscious act of accepting one's family as it is now, as it once was, and as it might become. The resulting work is a testament to the diversity of the subjects and artists.

We recognize that the portraits here are not definitive by any means. Family is not static; it is ever-evolving in the face of unpredicted revelation and change. What we offer is a small glimpse into the lives of a handful of families. What remains invisible to us as viewers are universal issues, from the little victories in life to our daily struggles. It is in this day-to-day living – openly and proudly – that is most inspiring about the families of *Our Portraits, Our Families*.

We ask you to view our work as a public call to action, to empower our families and communities to speak out against vocal and silent discrimination, to embrace the beauty in difference, and to expand the boundaries of love and understanding for people of all sexual and gender identities.

We invite you to take this opportunity to enjoy these diverse, rich and artistic LGBTQ family narratives.

Thank you.



Aries M. Liao Sng
Founder



Elena Chang
Director



Suma Reddy
Director



Leslie Kuo
Exhibition Manager/
Lead Curator

“ I have to say that while I have gone through quite a lot growing up – divorced parents, an early death of my dad due to mental illness – the one thing that provided strength was knowing that my parents loved me. Without a doubt.”

– Marcus Teo

“ You must not ever underestimate your own worth or character based on the negative voices around you. Be strong, keep both feet firmly planted on the ground and remember that living openly is one of the most liberating and kindest things you can do for yourself. It may be scary at times, but know that the support is out there and that you are not alone.”

– Peter Som

“ Prioritize love, and accept yourself.”

– D.B. Kim

“ We hope that family is a group of supportive, positive people, but that’s unfortunately not always the case. But you can also make your own family.”

– Anita Lo

The Families

Ka-Man Tse

Images by Ka-Man Tse

We are a family of five; I am the youngest of three daughters. My mom calls the shots and sets the tone. My father is stoic, but don't be fooled! He has a great sense of humor and play. My older sisters are responsible while I am the youngest – an artist and troublemaker. All three daughters are now married, expanding the family to 8. In a strange twist, their gay daughter is the only one who married an Asian – my wife Cheryl is Jewish and Filipino.

Food is the language we share in our family. Growing up in Schenectady in the 1980s, we would pile into our little blue Honda every month to make the 3.5-hour pilgrimage to buy groceries in New York City Chinatown (and go to dim sum!). The rituals of selecting the right meats and produce, preparing food, and sharing meals, continue to be an obsession and a joy. In this space between and during meals, my parents let loose and we bond.

When I first came out to my parents 16 years ago, I could not fathom how long they would need to come to terms with having a gay daughter. I often wondered if they ever would, but I was determined that we would remain in each others' lives. It has been a long and often painful process and still remains a work in progress. However, my parents have come to share meals with my partner and now welcome my wife into their home.



Cheryl Gladstone, wife
Mikwan Tse, mother
Yuk-hong Tse, father



“When I first came out to my parents 16 years ago, I could not fathom how long they would need to come to terms with having a gay daughter.”





Through the photographer's eyes
It is exhilarating to see my parents in the same room as Cheryl. Just the other day, they teamed up to yell at me for taking too long with the view camera as our meal of steak, razor clams, fish, and snow pea shoots started to cool. *Sik Fan Ah!* they exclaimed in joined exasperation.

It is the moment I have been rooting for.

Akara Seung

Images by Pete Pin



PERSONAL ARCHIVE PHOTO

As a small boy in a Khmer Rouge labor camp, Akara Seung stole a yam – a crime punishable by death. And while his mother had bartered jewelry worth tens of thousands of dollars for a single chicken to feed her starving family, young Akara had kept the precious yam to himself. Decades later, safely living in the US, he is still shaken to tears when retelling the story of deceiving a mother who saved the family from certain death.

When he was 18, Akara went to a porn shop in Stockton, California with a curious group of friends. Finding himself aroused by images of naked men, he realized then that he was gay. At 24, still struggling with his sexuality, he was pressured into an arranged marriage. Three years later, he came out to his family and left his wife. His mother accepted his coming out with neither open arms nor resentment; she simply understood he would be better off not being married to a woman.

Though socially liberal San Francisco is just 85 miles away, Akara stays in conservative Stockton to care for his aging mother. For him, filial piety is no more a choice than one's sexuality.

RECOUNTED BY PETE PIN



Akara Seung
Duong Meas, mother

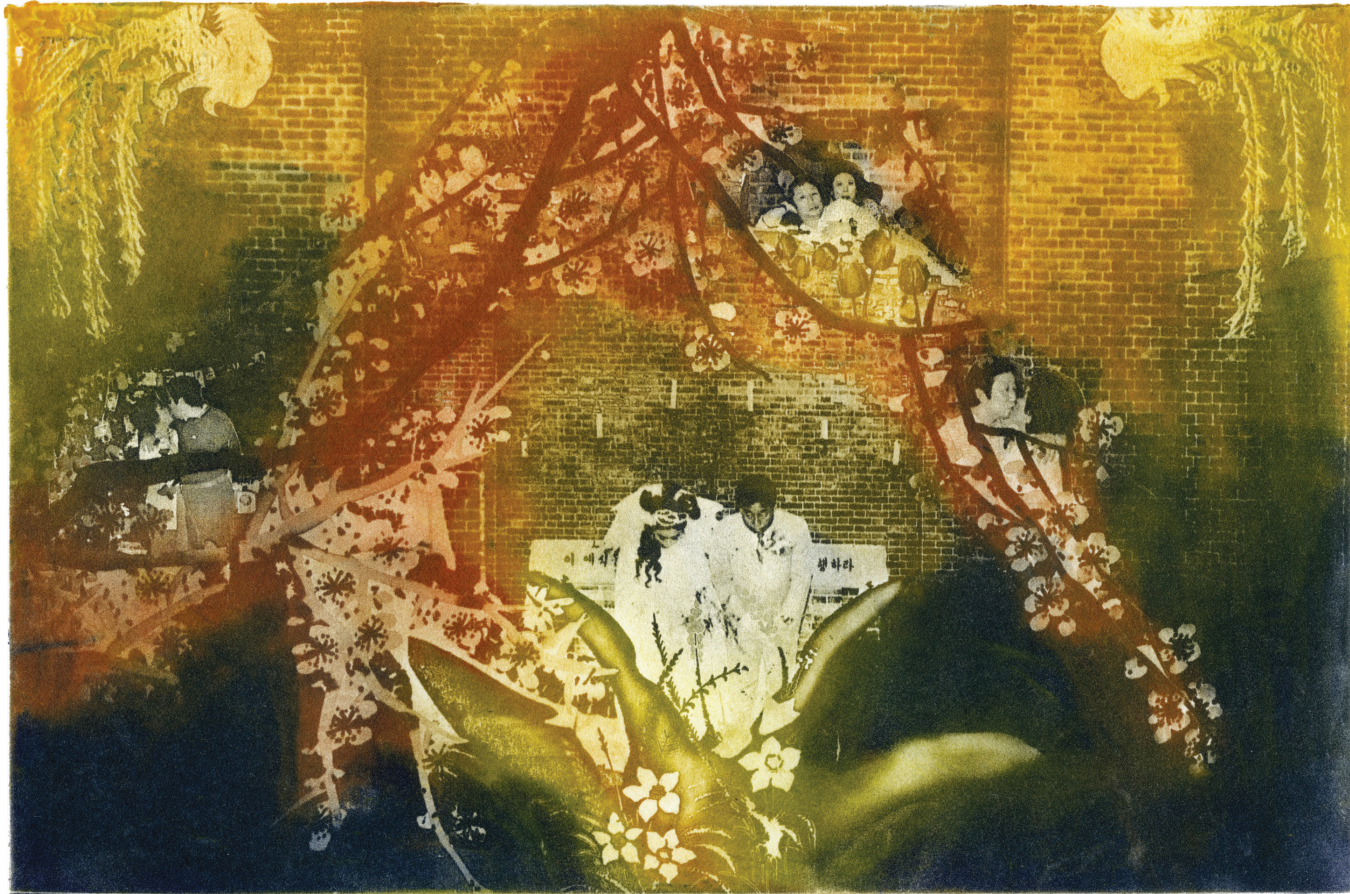
“ At 24, still struggling with his sexuality, [Akara] was pressured into an arranged marriage. Three years later, he came out to his family and left his wife. His mother accepted his coming out with neither open arms nor resentment; she simply understood he would be better off not being married to a woman.”



Through the photographer's eyes When he was 14, my uncle Akara arrived with his mother at a U.S. refugee camp after escaping the Killing Fields in Cambodia. With no possessions and no country, they quite literally had nothing to their name. The first piece of legal documentation came in the form of a refugee ID card. Though the card established his legal identity, it would take Akara decades to find himself.

Lesley Kim

Images by Justin Maxon



I'm a 29-year old Korean American lesbian female. Two adults who weren't prepared to be parents brought my identical twin and I into this world. My biological mother and father were drug addicts, so we went straight from my mother's womb to the incubators, and then to my adoptive parents' home. Since that day, my parents cared for and looked after my twin and I as their own.

My parents were strict traditional Korean parents. I did my best to please them, but my sexuality was something I had no control over. My parents found out that I was a lesbian in my junior year of high school; I came home late one evening and my parents began to reprimand me. Then my twin sister told them I was with lesbians and that I also like girls.

In that moment, I was honest and told my parents that I was a lesbian and that I don't find boys attractive. They refused to believe me and, for years, kept saying it was just a phase.

My mother and I had a turning point when I was 18. I was with my first girlfriend and, one night, we got into a serious argument. I was upset and got totally drunk, and then went to my mother's house. That night, my mother held me all night while I was sobbing, and wiped the tears off my face. My mother said that she would always be there for me even if I'm heartbroken over a female, because I'm her child and she would love me no less because of my sexuality.

That night will always stay with me because it was the first time my mother accepted me for who I am, and it was the first time she realized being gay was not a choice for me.

Today my family only wants to see me settled down with the woman of my dreams. They are my backbone and my reason to strive to become better in all aspects of my life. It's such a remarkable feeling of liberation to not be secretive about my sexuality, and to be completely open with everyone.



Pu Whan Kim, father
Hui Ae Kim, mother
Crystal So Young Cabral, twin sister
Pedro Cabral, brother-in-law
Lily Cabral, niece
Leo Cabral, nephew
Lukas Cabral, nephew

“Today my family only wants to see me settled down with the woman of my dreams. They are my backbone and my reason to strive to become better in all aspects of my life.”



Through the photographer's eyes

What is remarkable about Lesley's family is their ability to uphold cultural values while fostering personal growth. I aimed to convey the family's characterizations of robust domesticity, celebration, and individuality. After scouring family albums, I used old photos to develop collages along these themes and then employed solar plate printing. Through these reconstructed memories are images firmly rooted in the family's truth of affection and foundation.

Navin Dargani and Navin Manglani

Images by Nelson Chan



Navin Dargani and Navin Manglani
Sunita Manglani, mother of Navin M.
Meeta Manglani, sister of Navin M.

Our friends affectionately call us Navin squared. Beyond just sharing the same name, we also have a common heritage and set of values that have played an important part in our relationship. Both of our families are entrenched in their respective Sindhi communities in New York and Manila, which led to us to compare many of our life experiences when we first met. One of those comparisons was of our individual coming out stories which, remarkably, occurred within months of each other, before we even met. Both of our families thought sexuality was a phase that we might outgrow. Both of our families had fears about what our futures would hold without a traditional relationship. We spent months answering questions — about safe sex, AIDS/HIV, whether we were born this way, and even whether it was possible for us to marry a woman to satisfy societal expectations and keep our sexual orientation a secret.



Our journey was not an easy one. Thankfully, both of us have mothers and families who, over time, have become loving and supportive. Looking back, it was our honest and open communication with our families that created the solid foundation for our relationship. The process made us realize how brave and unconditional our parents' love for us is, especially in the face of a community that sometimes called our union 'unacceptable' and 'disgraceful.'

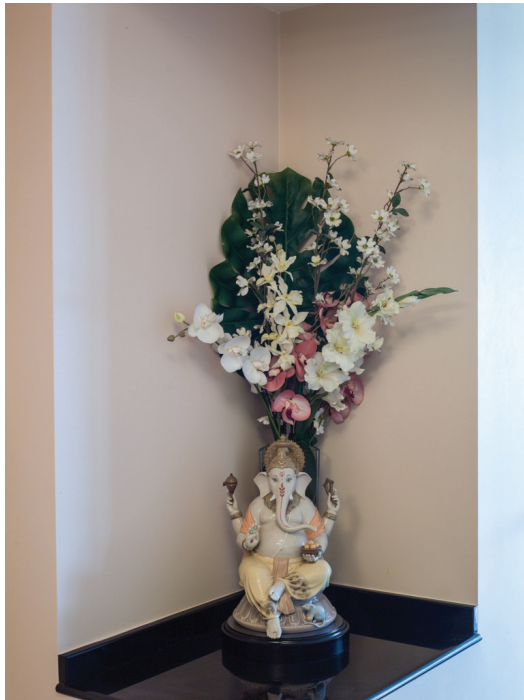
Our families watched us commit our lives to each other in Sonoma, California in 2011 in a beautiful commitment ceremony that demonstrated just how far we, our families, and our communities have come. At the end of the ceremony, a Hindu *pandit* (priest) with generational ties to both our families offered a prayer and then amazingly, two huge rainbows appeared in the sky. It was like the universe was saying *you've done right*, like the heavens approved. A month later, we tied the knot in Manhattan, on the first day same-sex marriage became legal in New York State. Truly, our relationship has been and continues to be marked by a series of firsts.



“[We] realize how brave and unconditional our parents' love for us is, especially in the face of a community that sometimes called our union 'unacceptable' and 'disgraceful.’”

Mashuq Deen

Images by Alexis Padrigal Lim



Through the photographer's eyes Navin M. opened the door and let me into his mother's home, an apartment 28 stories up looking out onto the East River in New York City. As I bent down to take off my shoes I noticed the aromatic smell of Indian spices from their Easter Sunday brunch. In the foyer, greeting me as I walked in was a statue of the elephant-headed deity, Ganesha, symbolic in Hinduism as the remover of obstacles, fitting given the journey described to me by the Navins. This was one of the first photographs I took that day. It was a beautiful detail in a Manhattan high-rise that had me wondering about this family's heritage and connection to faith.



My name is Mashuq Mushtaq Deen. I am a queer, transgender man of South Indian descent.

I came out of the proverbial closet twice in my life, the first time as a bisexual butch when I was 19, and then as a transgender man when I was about 30. The hardest part of coming out has been my family. I have been uninvited to family celebrations because of the fear that people would see me and talk. I have been asked to leave the house before guests arrive. My parents have, on two separate occasions, not spoken to me for two years. They did not come to my wedding.



And yet there have also been good times. My parents ask about my partner, Elizabeth, who I have been with for over fourteen years. They genuinely like her. We are once again talking - mostly on the phone. Not often, but regularly. They tell me about canasta and tennis and advise me on retirement accounts. I still love to hear my mother in a good mood. They're getting older and I know I have a limited amount of time left with them.



Mashuq Deen
Elizabeth Clark, partner
Marilyn Clark, mother-in-law
Mark Clark, father-in-law

My partner's family is not a replacement for my own family. They speak differently (all families have their own secret language). But they accept me at all times, are proud of me, and love me. I am grateful to have them.

It never lessens the loss I feel around my own family. I know they didn't mean to hurt me, but it hurt nonetheless. I don't come from a family that talks about things, so nothing has ever been resolved. We just muddle past the hard bits and into the next bits and hope for the best.



"I don't come from a family that talks about things, so nothing has ever been resolved. We just muddle past the hard bits and into the next bits and hope for the best."



Through the photographer's eyes

When we visited Deen's first home in Canarsie, the cool weather matched the reception he faced upon coming out to his family. Their struggle with his identity has been captured in his work as a playwright. On a recent weekend, his partner Liz's parents were visiting. I was privileged to observe the ease of their familial love in their laughter and understanding.

SPOTLIGHT: Breaking the LGBTQ Ceiling

The sentiment of wishing for a child's success in the world is one shared by many immigrant parents.

Fashion photographer and creative director Chiun-Kai Shih left Taiwan as a teenager and now heads his own New York studio, working for major Asia-Pacific magazines including *Condé Nast China*, *GQ Taiwan*, *VOGUE Taiwan*, *August Man*, *Jessica Malaysia* and *J Men*.

For this exhibition, Asian Pride Project invited him to photograph leaders in creative industries – an effort to demonstrate how one's sexual identity does not have to inhibit professional fulfillment.

望 望
子 女
成 成
龍 鳳

Long for son to become a dragon,
and daughter to become a phoenix.

Anita Lo, Chef

Lesbian, Chinese American
b. Detroit, Michigan



Anita Lo is one of the most respected chefs in the country. Her inventive contemporary American cuisine reflects her multicultural upbringing and classic French training at Ecole Ritz-Escoffier in Paris. Her first kitchen job was as garde-manger at Bouley. She later interned under Guy Savoy and Michel Rostang in Paris, worked her way through all the stations at David Waltuck's Chanterelle in NYC, and developed her culinary style at Mirezi. Anita opened Annisa in 2000. The New York Times recently gave the restaurant a three-star review, *Food & Wine* magazine named her one of ten "Best New Chefs in America," and the *Village Voice* proclaimed her "Best New Restaurant Chef." She has made her mark in popular culture through appearances on *Iron Chef America* and *Top Chef Masters* battling her contemporaries while forging new ground for female chefs. Her first cookbook, *Cooking Without Borders*, was released in 2011.

"Honesty with oneself and with others is liberating, and coming out is integral to personal happiness. But on top of it, we owe it to our communities to be visible."

D.B. Kim, Interior Designer & Architect

Gay, South Korean
b. South Korea



"My parents experienced turbulence through the wars, which reminded them of how important it is to love, and celebrate our lives and each other."

With a 25-plus-year career as one of the hospitality industry's most revolutionizing minds, D.B. has had a deft hand in creating what we know today as the quintessential luxury hotel experience, characterized by modern simplicity and Eastern influences. His work spans hospitality, architecture, interiors, and product design. After training under renowned architects, Peter Zumthor and Holly Hunt, D.B.'s breakout moment was at Starwood Hotels and Resorts in 2001. After Starwood, he worked in Paris for the iconic Pierre-Yves Rochon, Inc., a global luxury hospitality design firm where he worked on projects for the Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, The Ritz-Carlton, and Sofitel Luxury Hotels. He is currently a VP, Hospitality Design at The Wanda Group in China, and was formerly a Principal at Daroff Design. D.B. holds a bachelor's degree from Minnesota College of Art and a Masters in Architecture from Southern California Institute of Architecture.

Peter Som, Designer

Gay, Chinese American
b. San Francisco, California



Peter began drawing at a young age — inspired by his architect parents and the laid-back elegance of hippie-era San Francisco. He was a recipient of the Isaac Mizrahi Gold Thimble Award at Parsons The New School of Design before the 2001 Bryant Park debut of his namesake collection. Twice-nominated for the CFDA Perry Ellis Award for Emerging Talent, Peter was a semi finalist in the prestigious 2004 Vogue/CFDA Fashion Fund initiative. In 2006 Peter was a finalist for the Cooper Hewitt National Design Award for Fashion Design. Currently Peter consults for Tommy Hilfiger and designs a line of luxury home linens and bedding with Sferra. The Peter Som collection is regularly featured in fashion publications including *Vogue*, *W Magazine*, *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *InStyle*, and carried in luxury stores worldwide such as Bergdorf Goodman, Saks Fifth Avenue, Nordstrom, and Neiman Marcus.

Marcus Teo, Creative Director & Fashion Editor

Gay, Malaysian American
b. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

“The closet is a dark place—you don’t want to be in there too long or else it will cast a shadow on everything you do in life.”



“My mom has the same concerns with my relationships as with my straight brother’s. Sexuality is not a concern. Longevity in marriage and monogamy are more important to her.”

For over 20 years, Marcus has dedicated his creative vision to the worlds of fashion, arts, media & entertainment. An early stint at *Mirabella Magazine* captured his attention while studying film at NYU. As fashion director of *W Magazine’s* Men’s Portfolio, Marcus cultivated excellent relationships with photography and fashion’s creative forces. Marcus then started TeoCreative Inc., a creative company that believes in the power of effective communication through visual design and photography. As a freelance editor and stylist, Marcus has worked with Calvin Klein, Brooks Brothers, Hickey Freeman, Bloomingdales, Kenneth Cole, Coach, Mont Blanc and Nautica. He is a Contributing Sitings Editor to *Vogue*, and has also contributed to *W Magazine*, *British GQ*, *GQ Italy*, *GQ Japan*, *Glamour*, *Black Book Esquire*, *L’uomo Vogue* and *Arena*.

About the Artists

Nelson Chan

Chinese American

b. New Jersey, USA, 1983

Nelson Chan is a New York-based artist born in New Jersey to immigrant parents from Hong Kong and Taiwan. He has spent most of his life between the United States and Asia — two continents, each with its unique culture. This immigrant experience has propelled him to explore themes of migration, longing, labor, dreams, and sacrifice; influencing both his work and personal involvement in community-focused organizations.

Nelson has worked as a volunteer in various non-profit organizations promoting advocacy for arts and education as well as LGBTQ issues within the API community in Providence, RI. Combined with his art practice, this desire for civic engagement through the intersection of art and community led him to the application of art as a form of advocacy and communication. This philosophy is intrinsic to his studio practice and as an avid educator of the arts.

Nelson is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, where he received his BFA in 2006, and of the University of Hartford, Hartford Art School, where he received his MFA in 2012. He has exhibited nationally and internationally; most recently at the Mills Gallery at the Boston Center for the Arts, 2013 Flash Forward Photography Festival, and Kunstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin.

He teaches photography at the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies as well as the College of Staten Island.

Alexis Padrigal Lim

Chinese Filipino/Filipino American

b. New Jersey, USA, 1992

Alexis is a New York based photographer and organizer. Their images are informed by interdisciplinary studies and the negotiation of various identities – genderqueer, masculine, female, second generation, mixed race API, student, youth. They are interested in creating images that contemplate spatial relations, especially considering the neoliberal development of New York.

Alexis' interest in organizing began during Occupy Wall Street and continued into their student life at New York University through Queer Union, a student activist organization that aligns LGBTQ students against forms of systemic violence. They have also been part of efforts to prompt the university to demystify the process of reporting sexual assault. To gain organizing and facilitation skills tailored to the needs of QTPOC (Queer and Trans People of Color), Alexis attended The Audre Lorde Project's TransJustice Community School. They received a BA in 2014 from NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. As a recipient of the Dean's

Alexis Padrigal Lim

Continued

Award for Graduating Seniors, they will be photographing queer API youth in Seattle, with the intention of increasing visibility and contributing to the archiving of this community. The project will also focus on aspects of the city that affect the quality of life for marginalized youth, e.g. the transportation system, health clinic accessibility, LGBTQ safe spaces, and food affordability. Alexis plans to build a written and visual body of work that analyzes the positionality of chosen subjects within a rapidly changing urban context.

This is their first exhibit.

Justin Maxon

Italian American

b. California, USA 1983

Justin was born in a small town in the woods of northern California. An artist and documentarian, his projects reveal variables of truth in humanity's conflicted existence.

His work challenges the mnemonic past by generating transformative spaces where stored trauma associations can be amended in an attempt to foster new cognitive pathways. The process includes layering images through multiple exposures and collage, resulting in complex, hyper real narratives.

Justin has received numerous awards for his photography. He won the Deeper Perspective Photographer of the Year at the 2008 Lucie Awards; that same year, PDN named him one of 30 Photographers to Watch. He was invited to participate in World Press Photo's 2010 Joop Swart Masterclass. He was also selected as one of Magenta's Flash Forward Emerging Photographers.

Grants awarded include the Magnum Foundation Emergency Fund, FotoVisura Grant, the Alexia Foundation for World Peace Professional Grant, and the Aaron Siskind Foundation Fellowship. Most recently, he was selected by Blue Earth Alliance for their fiscal sponsorship.

His work has been exhibited at the Musuem de Arte Acarigua-Araure (Venezuela), OneArts Space (New York), Second Floor Gallery (London), 25CPW Gallery (New York), the Bermuda National Gallery, Rayko Gallery (San Francisco), Photoville Festival (New York), the Project Room (Chicago), the Exposure Gallery (San Francisco), the Singapore International Photography Festival, the LOOK3 Festival (Charlottesville), the Chobi Mela Festival (Bangladesh), the Lodz Fotofestiwal (Poland), the New York Photo Festival in Dumbo, and the Fotopub Festival (Slovenia).

About the Artists

Pete Pin

Cambodian American
b. Thailand, 1982

Pete Pin is a Brooklyn-based photographer. Born in the Khao-I-Dang refugee camp on the border of Cambodia and Thailand following the Cambodian genocide, his work primarily deals with memory, generational trauma, and identity in the Cambodian-American diaspora community. For the past four years, he has been working on a long-term project exploring the legacy of the Killing Fields across generations in his community. Working with reportage, portraiture, and found ephemera, Pin seeks to use photography as a means to create space for generational dialogue through collaborative storytelling, installations and workshops.

He received his BA at the University of California at Berkeley where he graduated magna cum laude and studied photography at the International Center of Photography in Manhattan. His photographs have been published and featured in *The New York Times*, *TIME Magazine*, and NPR, among others. He was a Fellow at the Magnum Foundation, was named an Emerging Talent by Getty Reportage, and was an Artist in Residence at the Bronx Museum as part of the Season of Cambodia Festival in New York.

Chiun-Kai Shih

Taiwanese American
b. Taipei, Taiwan, 1973

Chiun-Kai Shih is a New York-based photographer and creative director. He is best known for his energetic presence and ability to connect to his subjects. Chiun-Kai has been actively involved in multiple fundraising efforts on behalf of the LGBTQ community, particularly the Hetrick-Martin Institute whose mission is to provide a safe and supportive environment for LGBTQ youth and their families.

Chiun-Kai attended New York's LaGuardia High School of Music, Art, and Performing Arts and received a BA in Photography at the School of Visual Arts where he studied with legendary fashion photographer Bob Richardson. His photographs have appeared online and in print media, including *August Man*, *GQ Taiwan*, *Vogue Taiwan*, *Movement*, *JMen*, and *SNAP Magazine*. He opened his own photography studio and is a creative consultant for numerous fashion brands such as True Vintage Revival and Paul Benenly.

Ka-Man Tse

Chinese American
b. Hong Kong, 1981

Ka-Man Tse is a New York based photographer and video artist. She constructs images that begin from small gestures and moments that then unfold across landscapes, and in public and private spaces. Her images are informed by the points of intersection between LGBTQ issues and the API community; and what is shared and negotiated between the two seemingly divergent worlds. She has been photographing in the API community for over 12 years, and in the LGBTQ API community for 6 years.

She received an MFA from Yale University in 2009, and a BA from Bard College in 2003. She has exhibited at the Museum of Chinese in America in New York, NY, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, Cornell University, Capricious, the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center, Gallery 339 in Philadelphia, and the Eighth Veil in Los Angeles. She was a SPARC Artist-in-Residence through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and completed the Artist in the Marketplace program through the Bronx Museum of Arts.

Her photographs have appeared in publications and online, including *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Capricious Magazine*, *O Magazine*, *Huffington Post*, *WNYC*, *HyperAllergic*, *ArtInfo*, *Art In America*, *Performa 07: Everywhere and All at Once*, *Salon.com*, *Hyphen Magazine*, *Time Out New York*, and *The New York Times Magazine online*.

She teaches at Yale University School of Art, Parsons the New School of Design and at The City College of New York.

Acknowledgements

Exhibition Team
Aries M. Liao Sng
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Elena Chang
 Director, Asian Pride Project
Suma Reddy
 Director, Asian Pride Project

Leslie Kuo
 Exhibition Manager/Lead Curator
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 Designer

Selection Committee
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Aries M. Liao Sng
 Founder, Asian Pride Project

Clinton Cargill
 Associate Photo Editor,
 The New York Times Magazine
Prerana Reddy
 Director of Public Programs & Community Engagement, Queens Museum

Producing Sponsor



Founded in 2005, the Asian Women Giving Circle (AWGC) is a donor advised fund of the Ms. Foundation for Women. AWGC is a diverse group of Asian American women pooling their resources to invest in Asian women-led, social change projects in New York City.

Presenting Partner



Founded in 1980, the Museum of Chinese in America is dedicated to preserving and presenting the history, culture and diverse experiences of people of Chinese descent in the United States. The Museum promotes dialogue and understanding among people of all cultural backgrounds through its innovative exhibitions, educational and cultural programs.

Community Partners



Special Thanks

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A special thank you to the selection committee members for lending their expertise in visual arts and advocacy, as well as to the dozens of friends, supporters and volunteers who have contributed their precious time, talents and resources in making this project a reality. Thank you also to the activists, community members and allies of our Asian American and Pacific Islander LGBTQ communities for working in the advocacy movement in NYC.

We are especially thankful to the individuals and families from the LGBTQ community who contributed meaningful photos and quotes for The Public Collection. We are inspired by your advocacy and actions as role models.

Lastly, we offer our deepest thanks and appreciation to the artists who shared with us their visual appreciation of the human experience, our professional subjects in creative industries who show us how to dream big, and to our family subjects whose visibility, courage and love inspire us every day.

About Asian Pride Project

The Asian Pride Project (APP) is an arts and advocacy group that uses the power of visual storytelling for Asians & Pacific Islander (API) lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) individuals, and their families & cultural communities.

Through multimedia art forms – including video and photography – and a multilingual platform of over 12 languages, APP aspires to foster greater visibility, pride, acceptance, unity, and harmony in our communities. We believe in the power of sharing, connecting, and relating to give API families the support they need when facing challenges concerning our sexual and gender identities.

History

Asian Pride Project was conceived in May 2009 by Q-Wave, a community organization devoted to strengthen the voices of LGBTQ people of API descent. Rooted in a desire to create an online multimedia and multilingual community and resource for families of API LGBTQ individuals, APP was soon joined by two other New York City-based community groups – the Gay Asian and Pacific Islander Men of New York (GAPIMNY) and South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association of New York City (SALGA-NYC).

Since then, Asian Pride Project has continued to fulfill and grow its vision. In 2011, APP became a finalist in the Verizon Asian Pacific Visionaries Contest. In 2012, APP journeyed to the White House as recipients of the White House Champions of Change Award, and, at the National Queer Asian and Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA) Conference, filmed interviews and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) with LGBTQ individuals and their parents. In 2013, APP worked with Sri-Lankan performing artist, D’Lo, to collect personal stories and poetry from the South Asian LGBTQ Community, and continued filming interviews at the South Asian DesiQ

History

Continued

Conference in San Francisco. In 2014, APP organized and facilitated social gatherings and educational workshops for API families with API PFLAG of NYC, and conducted more interviews and PSAs with Laotian, Vietnamese, Indian and Chinese parents. And in the summer of 2014, APP kicks off the photography exhibition *Our Portraits, Our Families* at the Museum of Chinese in America.

Supporters

The work of APP is made possible with funding and support from Stonewall Community Foundation, National Queer Asian and Pacific Alliance (NQAPIA), Asian Women Giving Circle (AWGC), Asian and Pacific Islander Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays of New York City (API PFLAG of NYC), Museum of Chinese In America (MOCA), Project Reach-Chinese American Planning Council, and our dedicated and tireless volunteers and donors.

INTRODUCING
The Public Collection

The Public Collection is a community-sourced photo collection that offers glimpses into *being family*, including the partners, parents, siblings, friends, cousins, aunties, uncles, and chosen families of individuals in our API LGBTQ communities. We at Asian Pride Project invite you to add to this important collection.



“My 90+ year old grandmother outed me to my parents in 2008. They responded by cutting off all ties with me until the birth of our son last year.”

– Sujin



“At the end of the ceremony, a Hindu *pandit* (priest) with generational ties to both our families offered a prayer and then amazingly, two huge rainbows appeared in the sky. It was like the universe was saying *you’ve done right*, like the heavens approved.”

– Navin & Navin



“My biological mother and father were drug addicts, so we went straight from my mother’s womb to the incubators, and then to my adoptive parents’ home. Since that day, my parents cared for and looked after my twin and I as their own.”

– Lesley



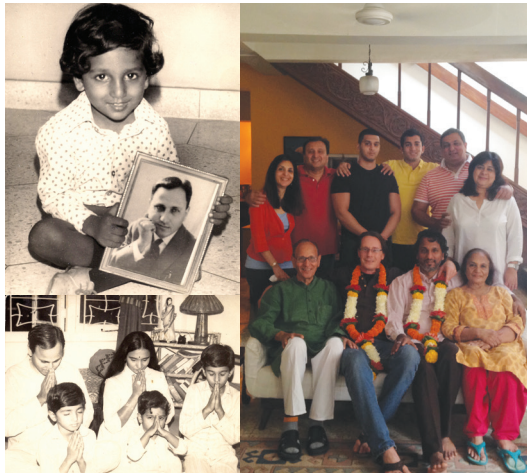
“My *nanima* (mom’s mom) and *nanaji* (mom’s dad) lived with me for my whole life, and were integral in raising me. When I came out, it was a tough process, particularly with my mom. When I got married, she, and my entire extended family, came to the wedding in full force. It was an amazing transformation, and it has been incredible to have my family on board.”

– Monica



“We are living the life we dream because my [transgender] son, Aiden, had the courage to say, ‘This is who I am.’”

– Marsha



“The next morning, in Bombay, [my partner] Thomas and I walked to a flower vendor who made us the most extravagant garlands out of orange and red marigolds, white chrysanthemums, pink asters and folded green leaves. We exchanged them in the last family gathering on this trip, in celebration of our being together for eight years, and the family said touching things about each of us, our paired selves and our home.”

– Vivek

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