

# ANNUAL REPORT

2006  
2007



CENTER FOR  
ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA

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Cover Image Credits

- LEFT TO RIGHT  
*Tibet Hope*  
*Tre*  
*Nā Kamalei: The Men of Hula*  
*The Princess of Nebraska*  
*New Year Baby*  
*Ken Leung*  
*The Learning*  
Filmmaker Spencer Nakasako

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**DEAR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF CAAM:**

Greetings and welcome to our 2007 annual report! I'd like to share with you a personal recollection from the past year that stood out from so many memorable moments, and one that exemplifies our work, as it speaks to the history of Asian American filmmaking within the context of family, community and the larger society. Last March, as a special presentation of the 25th SFIAAFF we presented the first public screening in more than 90 years of the first Chinese American feature film, *The Curse Of Quon Gwon*, directed by a remarkable woman named Marion Wong. The film dramatically tells the story of a young Chinese American bride (played by Marion Wong's sister-in-law, Violet) and her ordeal to endure the jealousy and harsh treatment of her husband's first wife (played, with steely relish by Marion Wong herself).

Although never truly "lost", as the film was always in the care of Wong family members, the film had nonetheless escaped the attention of film historians and archivists until word of its existence was passed on to filmmaker Arthur Dong during the research for

his CAAM-supported documentary *Hollywood Chinese*. Our first screening of *Curse* at the Oakland Museum of California was graced with the presence of some 50 members of the extended Wong family, including infants and teenagers, bringing home the sense of cultural transmission across generations that is vital to our work. *Curse* is a remarkable discovery, because Marion's film is every bit as good as other films of the early 1900's in terms of acting, direction and production values. And although the film's title suggests a lurid Oriental fantasy, *Curse* is actually a deeply moving drama about the status of married women in Chinese culture and suggests that this institution is already by 1916 undergoing profound change for the Chinese in America.



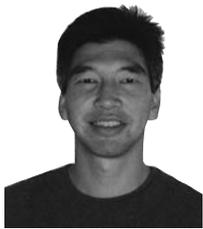
Not surprising, perhaps, *The Curse Of Quon Gwon* failed to achieve wider distribution beyond a few public screenings in Oakland in 1916, and was, within family circles considered a failure. Apparently, there were only a few family screenings in the subsequent years, the last being in the 1970s. However, here, in 2007, with *Hollywood Chinese* to provide the full context, we can finally appreciate the importance of Marion and Violet's achievement. We hope during the coming year to make *The Curse Of Quon Gwon* available on DVD to schools, libraries, and lovers of film. Will you join us in fulfilling Marion's dream?

If you are already a member and supporter of CAAM we know that you'll enjoy reviewing the many highlights of the past year, including our most successful ever San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival (SFIAAFF), and our first narrative feature-length production, *The Princess of Nebraska*, (directed by the master filmmaker Wayne Wang), our Media Fund projects of passionate and compelling documentary films for public television, and our distribution service to schools and libraries across the country.

If you are not yet familiar with our work, we invite to look through this report, as well as our "new and improved" website [www.asianamericanmedia.org](http://www.asianamericanmedia.org), and get a better sense of this unique organization that was founded 27 years ago by filmmakers, producers, and community activists to stake a place for Asian Americans in media. If you love film and enjoy seeing films that challenge the mainstream, if you understand the importance of the media in shaping attitudes, opinions, and public policy, and if you want to join a dynamic non-profit organization that is making a difference in the way that Asian Americans are seen and perceived, then we invite you to join us, and join in the excitement we feel as Asian American media—in film, video, and digital media—takes off! ❖

Sincerely,

Stephen Gong



THIS SUMMER I TRAVELED WITH my family to South Africa to do volunteer work in a rural village called Mapoch. I thought we could in some small way provide a useful service to the people there, but in the end I actually received much more than I gave out. I learned a critical

life lesson of the importance of building community and personal relationships, which in turn gave me some useful insights into our own community at CAAM.

For my service project I asked to help build something of concrete value with my hands. The volunteer supervisor therefore assigned me to build a latrine for the village pre-school. Suffice it to say that I have no carpentry or building experience so I worked as a laborer for two young local builders. This basically entailed loading, cleaning and laying bricks under the hot sun. Despite my best efforts, it became quite clear that I often got in the way of these two professionals because they had to double-check my work. One day I made a comment to the local pastor that everyone may have been better off if I had stayed at home and just sent some money instead.

Pastor Peter smiled at me and said, "If you had stayed home, you would not see how important this project is to our village. You would have deprived the people here of seeing that you came all the way from America to help, and we would not have become friends." His profound comment opened my eyes to the real importance of becoming personally involved in a community of people pursuing a common cause. You reinforce each other's commitments and the resultant relationships of working together can last a lifetime.

This new insight gave me an entirely different understanding of my role as a member of CAAM. We are a thriving community of filmmakers, film-goers, actors, producers, writers, educators, community leaders and political activists who all share a common goal of telling Asian American stories through film, television and digital media. By taking the time to actively participate

in the various programs and activities at CAAM such as the film festival, media fund, public broadcast, educational distribution or membership, we show each other and the greater society that we deeply care about our mission.

By working together, we also build friendships with people from many different backgrounds and perspectives in a supportive environment that celebrates diversity. To this end I would like to extend a warm welcome to three new board members, John Chung, Roger Kuo and Susie Pak. They bring with them tremendous energy, experience, commitment and resources and I am grateful for that.

As we start the new year in 2008, I would like to invite all of you to become actively involved with the CAAM community by:

- ❖ becoming a member if you have not already done so,
- ❖ coming to our events to meet other members,
- ❖ volunteering your time and contributing your resources and experience, or
- ❖ organizing a group of friends to attend our 2008 Film Festival from March 13th-23rd.

You will not only add your voice and energy to a community of people who are passionate about better and more frequent portrayals of Asian Americans in media, but hopefully you will also forge meaningful relationships with like-minded people for a lifetime.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Hsieh', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Hsieh  
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**CAAM collaborates with Wayne Wang and *Colma* director Richard Wong on its first narrative feature**

JONATHAN L. KNAPP

EVEN IF HE NEVER MADE ANOTHER FILM after *Chan is Missing* (1982), Wayne Wang would remain one of the most important figures in Asian American cinema. The director's solo debut, shot on location in San Francisco's Chinatown, was exemplary independent filmmaking. Made on a shoestring budget with unknown, local actors, its crisp black-and-white cinematography gives viewers a vibrant peek into a community typically ignored by American film. Along with films like Jim Jarmusch's *Stranger Than Paradise*, it heralded a new kind of do-it-yourself American filmmaking. Equally, if not more important, Wang's movie gave would-be Asian American filmmakers inspiration to follow their muse.

Though Asian American documentary had already begun to flourish at the time of Chan's release, narrative filmmaking remained relatively uncharted territory for Asian American makers until **Wang burst everything wide open**. Today's landscape is decidedly more promising: the 24th and 25th editions of the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival (SFIAAFF) each boasted 12 Asian American narratives.

In 2007, the Center for Asian American Media, known for having shaped the world of Asian American documentary over its 26-year history, took a bold step into the world of narrative film. Immediately following the 25th SFIAAFF, CAAM began an exciting new project called *The Princess of Nebraska*. The film is a great step forward for CAAM, but it also looks back to the organization's beginnings. The film's director is Wayne Wang. With *The Princess of Nebraska*, Wang also returns

to his roots. Made with a local cast and crew on a tiny budget, the film takes place largely in San Francisco's Chinatown. As CAAM Director of Programs Donald Young said, "Wayne has always liked to do films within a community, mixing real life and real people. *The Princess of Nebraska* does just that."

Since bursting onto the scene, Wang has successfully balanced his career between Hollywood and the independent world, crafting Asian American stories and otherwise. Following a few high profile movies—like the Jennifer Lopez vehicle *Maid in Manhattan* and *Last Holiday*, starring Queen Latifah—Wang decided to return to smaller scale Asian American film with *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers*, produced by Japanese company Entertainment Farm.

“After shooting something more structured, more specific, more written, more controlled, I tend to shake it all up and do something down and dirty.”

—WAYNE WANG



The film is adapted from Yiyun Li's short story of the same name about the relationship between an aging Chinese man and his estranged daughter, a recent divorcee living in the Pacific Northwest. Though *A Thousand Years of Good Prayers* was a clear return to Wang's Asian American and independent roots, the director wanted to strip down even further for his next film—and do it quickly. Of this inclination, he said, "After shooting something more structured, more specific, more written, more controlled, I tend to shake it all up and do something down and dirty."

After completing *A Thousand Years*, Wang immediately returned to Li's short story collection and found the source of his "down and dirty" project in another of the book's selections: *The Princess of Nebraska*. Wang had begun talking to CAAM much earlier about collaborating on a project and mentoring a young filmmaker. He took a particular interest in young filmmaker, Richard Wong, acclaimed director of *Colma: The Musical* (Winner of the Audience Award at the 24th SFIAAFF). Soon, what began as a theoretical discussion between Wang and CAAM about a collaboration with Richard Wong became a reality: *The Princess of Nebraska* would be directed by Wayne Wang, with Richard Wong as Director of Photography, and CAAM as producer.

According to CAAM Executive Director Stephen Gong, the circumstances for the project could not have been more ideal: "No other filmmaker has contributed more to the development of Asian American film than Wayne Wang, so it's hard to imagine a more fitting partnership for CAAM's first effort into narrative feature producing. From the outset this project emphasized experimentation and 'discovery through process.' These are qualities that distinguish Wayne's astonishing creative breadth as a filmmaker capable of and committed to both Hollywood 'A' pictures and personal, almost experimental, films. So, all in all, it was a privilege and an opportunity not to be missed."

Young explained further how perfectly the stars aligned for the film's shoot: "Coming right off the festival, we had a strong pool of young people with a wide range of production experiences. Their skills suited what we needed. Instantly, we had our crew."

With generous funding from Entertainment Farm and a script written by Michael Ray, the cast and crew began a whirlwind shoot characterized by Wang as free-flowing and off the cuff. "I see the film as a kind of jazz riff. There was a structure, a basic melody, but it was very loose and inspired by the moment so to speak." This improvisatory nature required everyone to be highly adaptable and committed to full collaboration.

This collaborative spirit extended to Wang and Wong, who used a lightweight digital camera to shoot in an almost verite style. According to Wang, "[Rich and I] worked very closely together. Rich's specific responsibility was DP, but we talked about everything, from responding to the script to where we were going to shoot, how we were going to shoot, just everything."

Young, who spearheaded the day-to-day production of the project, said that Wong's specific talents added a uniquely valuable component: "Rich has a lot of experience behind the camera as a video engineer. I've never met anyone with as much expertise who's also so creative."

Furthermore, Wong, a San Francisco native, brought his vast knowledge of local terrain to the shoot—something that became particularly valuable given that the protagonist of the film, Sasha, spends much of the story wandering around Chinatown. Wang and Ray altered the story in a couple distinct ways, particularly with respect to Sasha, a young Chinese woman who has recently moved to the States. They transposed the story's Chicago setting to San Francisco and made Sasha a product of the new China. Raised by capitalism in an era well after Tiananmen Square, she appears Western. Actress Ling Li, a recent Chinese transplant to the US who had never acted before, brought much of herself to the role of Sasha.

"We planned to make a film about a young woman from China who's in her early 20s, but we chose Ling, who was only 18 at the time," Wang said. "She's been in the US for only three or four years, but she's very American because she's very Western. If you go to Beijing, to Shanghai, the younger generation is very Westernized—at least on the surface. At the same time, Ling is also very Chinese in her own way. But she's free from all the morality, the Cultural Revolution, the spirituality."

*The Princess of Nebraska* is a portrait of a young girl caught between different traditions and different ideas. A Chinese immigrant well-versed in American fashion and pop culture, Sasha lies somewhere between East and West. She's also in between adolescence and adulthood. She travels from college in Nebraska to San Francisco to explore the possibility of getting an abortion. As played by Li, Sasha is romantic and impulsive, extremely young and very open to the possibilities that surround her.

Since *Princess* wrapped, Wong and CAAM have continued to collaborate, as the organization is producing the filmmaker's follow-up to *Colma*. For his part, Wang still intends to make Hollywood films, but it seems that another "down and dirty" project is not far off: "It was really rewarding to return to my roots, work with Rich, work with Don, work with CAAM. Actually, I'm really interested in continuing and doing more."

*The Princess of Nebraska* was featured at film festivals around the globe including Telluride, the San Sebastian Film Festival, the Toronto Film Festival, and the Hawaii International Film Festival. San Francisco Audiences can look forward to seeing the film in Spring 2008. ❖



**AND THEREAFTER II**

By Hosup Lee and Hun-Ock Im

Ajuma is one of thousands of Korean women who married American servicemen and immigrated to the United States with hopes for a better life. Now widowed, she leads an isolated existence in southern New Jersey save for the occasional gambling trip to Atlantic City. A former prostitute, she is alienated from both Korean and American society, and is at first unwilling to revisit the past. Over pictures from her youth and homemade Kalbi stew, Ajuma ruminates with wit and scathing honesty on men, married life and aging alone.

Funded 2006  
Festival 2007

**BEIJING TAXI**

By Miao Wang

*Beijing Taxi* captures a rapidly modernizing city over a two-year period as it grooms itself to host its first Olympics Games. While the ancient capital city of China attempts to transform its image, the intimate portraits of three taxi drivers shed light on the socio-political implications of hasty development. Photographed in a cinematic, verité style, *Beijing Taxi* takes us on a poetic journey into a fragment of a society riding the bumpy roads to modernization. The destination is unknown.

Funded 2007

**BOLINAO 52**

By Duc Nguyen

*BOLINAO 52* follows filmmaker Duc Nguyen as he investigates a Vietnamese boat escape in 1988 where more than half of the passengers died from thirst and starvation. The 52 remaining survivors were finally rescued by a group of Filipino fishermen after being left by a U.S. Navy ship and 37 long days at sea. The survivors eventually became known as the "Bolinao 52".

Funded 2006  
Festival 2007

**THE BONESETTER'S DAUGHTER**

By Fawn Ring

*The Bonesetter's Daughter: The Making of an Opera* documents the birth of a new opera that bridges the operatic traditions of China and the West and brings together some of today's leading creative spirits. We follow bestselling author Amy Tan (*The Joy Luck Club*), composer Stewart Wallace (*Harvey Milk*) and director Chen Shi-Zheng (*The Peony Pavilion*) as they bring to life an opera based on Tan's most personal novel, *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, a multigenerational epic about one family's history told through three generations of mothers and daughters.

Funded 2007

**CALAVERA HIGHWAY**

By Renee Tajima-Peña

When Armando and Carlos Peña set off to carry their mother's ashes back to the Texas borderlands and reunite with their brothers, the road reveals more than they bargained for.

Funded 2007

**THE FIRST BATTLE**

By Tom Coffman

A documentary about the struggle for freedom, equality and full citizenship in America, waged behind the scenes in pre-WWII Hawai'i. Fragile inter-ethnic relationships and untried Nisei leaders are pitted against the full weight of the United States government. *The First Battle* puts internment in a new light and unmask the unreliability of constitutions in times of crisis.

Funded 2006  
Broadcast 2007

**FREEDOM ON THE ROCKS**

By Yun Suh

The only gay bar in Jerusalem brings together Israelis and Palestinians who risk their lives by challenging society's greatest taboos. Their collective experience of persecution over identity forges a common bond between two groups typically viewed as enemies. In so doing, the community at this underground sanctuary represents a needed model of tolerance in an otherwise divisive and explosive region.

Funded 2007

**FROM A SILK COCOON**

By Satsuki Ina

Woven through letter, diary entries and haiku poetry is the story of a young couple whose shattered dreams and forsaken loyalties lead them to renounce their American citizenship while held in separate concentration camps during WWII.

Funded 2005  
Festival 2005  
Broadcast 2007  
Distribution 2006

**GOOD FOR HER**

By Elizabeth E. Lee

The director explores, through a collection of personal narration, nostalgic images of Korean beauty standards, contemporary news clips and direct interviews with Korean youngsters and university professors, the cosmetic surgery boom in Seoul and the intense pressures on Korean youth to undergo cosmetic surgery.

*Distribution 2007***HOLLYWOOD CHINESE**

By Arthur Dong

*Hollywood Chinese* is a captivating revelation on a little-known chapter of cinema: the Chinese in American feature films. From the first Chinese American film produced in 1916, to Ang Lee's triumphant *Brokeback Mountain* almost a century later, *Hollywood Chinese* brings together a fascinating portrait of actors, directors, writers, and iconic images to show how the Chinese have been imagined in movies, and how filmmakers have and continue to navigate an industry that is often ignorant about race, but at times paradoxically receptive.

*Funded 2001, 2005, 2006**Festival 2007***THE CATS OF MIRIKITANI**

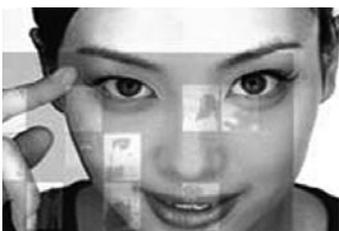
by Linda Hattendorf and Masahiro Yoshikawa

Winner of the 2006 Audience Award at the Tribeca Film Festival and Best Picture in Tokyo International Film Festival's Japanese Eyes section, this moving documentary uncovers the remarkable life of artist Jimmy Mirikitani. When filmmaker Linda Hattendorf began documenting his artwork in 2001, Jimmy was 80 years old and living on the streets of Manhattan. To survive, he sold his vibrant paintings - images of mischievous cats and ripe persimmons as well as searing renditions of desert internment camps and fiery atomic blasts. When 9/11 shrouds downtown in its own toxic cloud, Linda invites Jimmy into her home, beginning an unusual friendship and a journey into his troubled past. Helping him navigate the maze of social services, Linda discovers that Jimmy is related to San Francisco Poet Laureate Janice Mirikitani. She learns that he was imprisoned in Tule Lake internment camp during WWII and separated from his sister (whom he hadn't seen since), and that the rest of his family perished in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Although these memories are painful, Jimmy eventually confronts the traumas of his past and makes steps toward a new life. Skillfully balancing past tragedies with present-day hopes, *The Cats of Mirikitani* is a sensitive, insightful treatise on the healing power of art and friendship.

*Funded 2003**Festival 2007**Broadcast 2007**Distribution 2007*

*"CAAM, then NAATA, was one of the earliest funders of the film. This support showed other funders that the project had merit and helped us eventually raise full completion funding. I'll always remember the warm voice of Toni Tabora calling to tell me that my film had been selected for funding; it is these personal touches that make the staff here such a pleasure to work with. CAAM then programmed the finished film in the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival and worked with ITVS to find a place for it on Independent Lens. Now Co-Producer Masa Yoshikawa and I are working with Pam Matsuoka on the Educational Distribution plan. So it's been a great five year relationship and I am really honored to be a part of this family."*

—LINDA HATTENDORF, DIRECTOR





**A DREAM IN DOUBT**

By Tami Yeager

There's no question that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 damaged the American psyche. For Rana Sodhi, that fateful day would shatter his long-held image of the United States. *A Dream in Doubt* documents the murder of Rana's brother Balbir Singh Sodhi; on September 15, 2001, while working at his gas station in Mesa, Arizona, Sodhi was fatally shot by a man who mistook him for an Arab Muslim because of his turban. *A Dream in Doubt* follows Rana Sodhi as he seeks to reconcile his brother's death with

the success that the family has enjoyed since immigrating to the United States. The post-9/11 climate of intolerance and revenge is jarringly juxtaposed with the archival photos of the family's journey from their native India to the U.S., a story of universal hope and perseverance. Through Rana's questions, anger and loss, the film distills the essence of the "American Dream" and the resilience of the human spirit, and communicates the spectrum of human strength and weakness that were unleashed on two fateful days.

*Funded 2003, 2004*

*Festival 2007*

*The Center for Asian American Media has been an essential partner throughout the four-year process of making "A Dream in Doubt." In addition to providing crucial seed funding, the talented and dedicated folks at CAAM also offered invaluable guidance and moral support that made the film possible.*

—TAMI YEAGER, DIRECTOR/WRITER

**THE LAST GHOST OF WAR**

By Pham Quoc Thai and Janet Gardner

Thirty years after the end of the Vietnam War, four Vietnamese families are among the several million victims of Agent Orange filing a class action suit against 32 multi-national chemical companies. From Vietnam, they tell their stories, while lawyers battle it out in court over evidence. The question is who should be held accountable in the wake of the largest chemical warfare operation in history.

*Funded 2005*

*Distribution 2007*

**THE LEARNING**

By Ramona Diaz

*The Learning* follows several Filipino teachers in Baltimore City across a school year, chronicling the sacrifices they make as they try to maintain a long-distance relationship with their children and families, and begin a new one with the mostly African-American students whose schooling is now entrusted to them.

*Funded 2006, 2007*



**LITTLE MANILA: FILIPINOS IN CALIFORNIA'S HEARTLAND**

By Marissa Aroy & KVIE

Filled with chop-suey houses, gambling dens, and dance halls, Little Manila was once a bustling area in downtown Stockton and home to the largest number of Filipino immigrants outside of the United States. As farm laborers, Filipinos faced backbreaking work, low wages, and at times extreme racism, yet they still referred to Stockton as the "City of Gold," and looked to the United States to fulfill their dreams. *Little Manila: Filipinos in California's Heartland*, tells the Filipino immigrant story.

*Funded 2007*



### THE MOSQUE IN MORGANTOWN

By Brittany Huckabee

An Indian-American woman's campaign against extremism in her West Virginia mosque unexpectedly pits her against its other moderates, exposing a critical divide in American Islam. *The Mosque in Morgantown* tells a story about the struggle for women's participation in mosques, of the potential clash between traditional Islamic practices and core American values, and of competing paths to social change. Through it all, it offers a meditation on the nature of American identity and of religion itself.

*Funded 2007*

### MOST HONORABLE SON

By Bill Kubota

After the Pearl Harbor attack, Nebraska farmer Ben Kuroki volunteered for the U.S. Army Air Corps. He would become the first Japanese American war hero, surviving 58 missions as an aerial gunner over Europe, North Africa and Japan. Between tours of duty he found himself at the center of controversy—a lone spokesman against the racism faced by the thousands of Japanese Americans who were sent to internment camps. Through interviews and rare, never-before-seen film, *Most Honorable Son* recounts one man's remarkable journey through World War II, providing context to two seemingly disparate histories—the U.S. air war and the Japanese American experience.

*Funded 2006*

*Broadcast 2007*

### NERAKHOUN: THE BETRAYAL (PREVIOUSLY DISTANT GROUND)

By Ellen Kuras and  
Thavisouk Phrasavath

Combining documentary and experimental narrative, *Nerakhoun: The Betrayal* reconstructs how the long term effects of the CIA-run Laotian secret air war continue to haunt and shape tragedy in the lives of its Southeast Asian teenage survivors living in the U.S. Too young to recall their own Lao history or to know the circumstances of the secret air war that forced their resettlement to the U.S., many Lao teenagers in America are lost, caught in a world where spirit belief and traditional imperatives clash with Madonna and teenage gang pressure. Raised in America, yet unaccepted as Americans, they are struggling with their ethnic identities in the face of racism and poverty. Their lives are ruled by the absence of history, family, and identity.

*Funded 1994*

*Festival 2007*

### OH SAIGON

By Doan Hoang

In 1975, a South Vietnamese girl and her family were airlifted out of Saigon on one of the last helicopters to leave in the final hours of the Vietnam War. Twenty-five years later, she returns to Vietnam to discover two uncles who had been kept hidden from her. While her father was a South Vietnamese pilot, his younger brother deserted the Southern army and their older brother, a Communist, fought on the opposing side. In an attempt to heal political differences and the wounds of war, the young woman brings her father home to Vietnam for the first time since their escape to reunite him with his brothers.

*Funded 2006*

*Festival 2007*

### OUT OF THE POISON TREE

By Beth Pielert

On the eve of the long-awaited Khmer Rouge trial, a Cambodian American survivor of the genocide returns to Cambodia hoping to unlock the mystery of her father's disappearance in 1975. Thida Buth Mam's quest intersects with many silent voices: widows, survivors from remote villages, monks and even former perpetrators.

*Funded 2005*

*Distribution 2007*



### NEW YEAR BABY

By Socheata Poeuv

Born in a Thai refugee camp on the Cambodian New Year, documentary filmmaker Socheata Poeuv was deemed by her family “the lucky one,” fated to good fortune. As a child growing up in the United States, she knew that her parents had survived brutal oppression and genocide under Khmer Rouge, but they never spoke of it aloud, and she had never witnessed any atrocities firsthand. Nevertheless, black-clothed figures made their way into her nightmares, and lurked in the shadows of her bedroom.

Twenty-five years later in the suburbs of Texas, her parents make a startling admission, and the impact of the Khmer Rouge suddenly becomes very real. Impelled to confront and give human face to her childhood shadows, Socheata travels to Cambodia to unravel the mystery shrouding her family’s survival and eventual escape. Her voyage parallels her family’s emotional journey through a series of revelations: unimaginable sacrifice; promises made and kept; the fierce solemn love for those who were left behind, and finally, one long unsung hero, a “Cambodian cowboy” is unveiled.

With disarming candor, humor and poetic animation Poeuv’s debut feature resurrects memory and personal history to reclaim her family’s past, and what is easily a heartbreaking story also becomes one of triumph. Winner of both the “Top Ten Audience Pick” and Amnesty International’s “Movies that Matter” award at the 2006 International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam, *New Year Baby* is a testament to one father’s extraordinary bravery, and the love that binds a family together.

*Funded 2004, 2006*

*Festival 2007*

*The first time I ever saw a Cambodian American youth on television was when I was 16 through a NAATA production. Years later, CAAM was the first organization that believed in New Year Baby. Before we had awards, before we had a film—when it was just an idea. Wherever we go, I will never forget that. Where would I be without CAAM?*

—SOCHEATA POEUV, DIRECTOR

### PILGRIMAGE

By Tad Nakamura

This innovative documentary tells the inspiring story of how a small group of Japanese Americans in the late 1960s uncovered their lost history and created the Manzanar Pilgrimage. Their effort transformed the abandoned WWII American concentration camp into a symbol of retrospection and solidarity for people of all ages, nationalities and races in our post-9/11 world.

*Funded 2006*

*Festival 2007*

### PROJECT KASHMIR

By Geeta Patel and Senain Khesghi

Two friends travel to Kashmir’s war zone and confront their own personal identities and explore key issues of religious and cultural conflict, human rights, freedom of expression, revealing the roots of a divided South Asian immigrant community in the U.S.

*Funded 2005, 2006, 2007*

### SENTENCED HOME

By David Grabias and Nicole Newnham

Like many young Cambodian Americans who arrived here as refugees in the 1980’s, Louen, Kim and Many hoped for the best. Little did they know that their destinies, guided by youthful mistakes and the unforeseeable aftermath of 9/11, would decades later bring them full-circle; from birth in Cambodia to an unwilling return.

*Funded 2003, 2004*

*Festival 2006*

*Distribution 2006*

*Broadcast 2007*



### THE SLANTED SCREEN

By Jeff Adachi

From silent film star Sessue Hayakawa to *Harold & Kumar Go to Whitecastle*, *The Slanted Screen* explores the portrayals of Asian men in American cinema, chronicling the experiences of actors who have had to struggle against ethnic stereotyping and limiting roles. The film presents a critical examination of Hollywood's image-making machine, through a fascinating parade of 50 film clips spanning a century. It includes interviews with actors Mako, Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa, James Shigeta, Dustin Nguyen, Phillip Rhee, Will Yun Lee, Tzi Ma, Jason Scott Lee, comedian Bobby Lee, producer Terence Chang, writer Frank Chin, and directors Gene Cajayon, Eric Byler, and Justin Lin.

Funded 2007

Festival 2006

Broadcast 2007

Distribution 2006

### SOMEONE ELSE'S WAR

By Lee Wang

An army of civilians from around the world is working in Iraq to support the U.S. Military, but few know of the complicated order of global capital that has brought them to the Middle East. Wang's fascinating documentary tells the stories of three Filipino Halliburton-employed TCN's (Third Country Nationals) who labor in the Iraqi war zone.

Funded 2006

Festival 2007



### SPEAKING IN TONGUES

By Marcia Jarmel and Ken Schneider

*Speaking in Tongues* follows a community considering a proposal to make bilingualism a goal for every public school student. As the community grapples with the implications of this radical idea, we see how this potentially revolutionary approach impacts the families of four students already involved in this educational experiment. Through a complex prism, this film humanizes issues too often lost among rote debates about immigration, assimilation, globalization, and the definition of "real" Americans.

Funded 2007

### TALKING BACK TO YOUR TELEVISION: VIDEO ART & ACTIVISM

By Valerie Soe

This compilation of Valerie Soe's early experimental works (1986-1992) confronts the myths of Asian stereotypes head-on through images, personal stories and film clips. Included titles are *All Orientals Look the Same*, *Black Sheep*, *New Year*, *Picturing Oriental Girls: a [Re] Educational Videotape*, *Walking the Mountain*, and *Mixed Blood*.

Distribution 2007

### TIBET HOPE

By William Bacon II and Brad Swenson

*Tibet Hope*, featuring His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, chronicles the efforts of the Tibetan people to survive the invasion and occupation of their country by the Chinese government. This documentary explores key Tibetan settlements in Kodari, Nepal; Dharamsala; and several other strongholds of Tibetan culture in India.

Distribution 2007

### WHATEVER IT TAKES

By Christopher Wong

*Whatever it Takes* chronicles the triumphs and struggles of an innovative small high school set in NYC's notorious South Bronx in their inaugural year. This deeply emotional, cinema verité documentary follows the lives of two characters: Edward Tom, a brash Asian American, rookie principal, and Sharifea Baskerville, a ninth-grade girl with big dreams but even bigger obstacles. A dramatic uplifting story with uncommon personal access, *Whatever it Takes* reveals a community born into hardship but rising to excellence.

Funded 2007

### WHOSE CHILDREN ARE THESE?

By Theresa Thanjan

The lives of three Muslim teenagers are impacted by post 9/11 domestic anti-terrorism security measures. Navila fights to release her father from detention; Sarfaraz, a popular basketball player, confronts pending deportation; and Hager, a young woman who faces bias, is spurred into activism.

Funded 2005

Festival 2006

Broadcast 2007

Distribution 2006

**The Diversity Beat covers  
the 2008 election —  
one underrepresented  
community at a time**

JONATHAN L. KNAPP

ASK A POLITICAL EXPERT TO NAME THE BIGGEST moment of the 2006 US midterm elections and it's likely that he or she will utter a word that previously meant nothing within the American political landscape: "macaca." During a campaign rally, incumbent Virginia Senator George Allen, a Republican, hurled the French colonial slang term for "dark-skinned person" at S.R. Sidarth, an Indian American volunteer for Democratic candidate Jim Webb. In addition to throwing his reelection bid into disarray, Allen inadvertently exposed an essential truth about the US: the country's population is changing rapidly.

Webb beat Allen by the slim margin of 0.3 percent—in no small part due to Allen's racist gaff. Webb's victory was an enormous coup in a Southern state that is predominately white and, therefore, Republican. But the white majority is shrinking. According to the 2006 American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau, 4.8 percent of Virginia's population is Asian American. An exit poll from the 2006 election conducted by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund determined that 76 percent of Virginia's Asian American voters chose Webb over the incumbent Allen. In the same survey, 13 percent of Asian American voters said that 2006 marked their first trip to the polls.

Put simply, Asian Americans had a massive impact on that election. In a year in which Republican strategists turned anti-immigration sentiment into a major political tactic, minority communities throughout the nation played an essential role. The extent of this role



ABOVE Audience Members at the All American Presidential Forums

will grow substantially in the years to come. The US Census Bureau projects that the US population will be only 53 percent white by 2050 (it currently hovers above 70 percent). The primary cause of this shift is massive growth in the populations of two ethnicities: Hispanic and Asian American. In a two-party political system that is frequently perceived as majority versus minorities, this demographic change will have enormous consequences. Non-white ethnicities will have an expanded role in the political sphere.

With this in mind, the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) and its partners in the National Minority Consortia (NMC) have launched Diversity Beat, the NMC Election 2008 Initiative. Early in 2007, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting called for an engaging public media project that would use a range of new media tools to enhance coverage of the upcoming election. The NMC partners came together to create just that: a program that uses digital technology and journalistic resources to diversify election coverage, telling stories about communities often ignored by politicians and the mainstream media alike.

The NMC consists of five national media organizations: CAAM, Latino Public Broadcasting in Los Angeles, National Black Programming Consortium in New York, Native American Public Telecommunications in Lincoln, Nebraska, and Pacific Islanders in Communications in Honolulu. Each organization has a track record for cultivating cutting-edge media makers and building bridges between underrepresented communities and established public media outlets.

Using this experience, the NMC will produce and foster uncommonly rich coverage of an election that already promises to be historic on multiple fronts. Two of the leading candidates, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, break the mold of the white male president. Equally notable, as CAAM Executive Director Stephen Gong explains, is that the electoral shift implicit in the Census Bureau's forecast of population change has already begun to take shape: "There's always been this sense that this shift was far down the road, but it started in the 2006 elections. The Asian American vote was instrumental to Senator Webb's victory, for instance. In the upcoming election, communities of color will have a greater impact than ever before."

The 2006 Virginia election proves to be only the tip of the iceberg. Asian Pacific Islanders have been flocking in recent years to Nevada, "a battleground state," with that population jumping 225 percent between 1990 and 2000. As of 2004, 7 percent of the state's electorate was Asian Pacific Islander, a percentage greater than the margin that kept Nevada in Republican hands in 2006. In the first years of George W. Bush's presidency, much was made of his ability to win over a significant chunk of the Latino vote, previously considered a Democratic stronghold. According to a report by the Pew Center for the People and the Press, however, this changed drastically in the 2006 election. The Latino vote swung 11 points towards the Democrats from 2004 to 2006. Immigration was cited as a major reason for the shift, echoing what many of Virginia's Asian American voters said about their



Tavis Smiley questions the Republican candidates at the All American Presidential Forums

decision to vote for Democrats in the latter election.

As the 2006 election illustrated, minority voters cannot be ignored. As Diversity Beat will show, their stories cannot either. The first prong of NMC's initiative has already proven this. African American public media personality Tavis Smiley, a veteran of BET and NPR, moderated two All-American Presidential Forums on PBS in the summer and fall of 2007, each focusing on the candidates of one party. The NMC Diversity Beat put forth \$100,000 to sponsor the forums, which consisted exclusively of journalists of color. This enabled the debates to focus on issues of particular interest to the minority electorate, providing a different type of depth than that typically found in presidential debates.

The Democratic forum, in which all major candidates participated, took place at Howard University in Washington, DC. The Republican forum, which was hosted by Morgan State University in Baltimore, had a somewhat different turnout: the four leading candidates (Mitt Romney, Rudy Guiliani, John McCain, and Fred Thompson) skipped the debate, citing "scheduling conflicts." The debate did go on, but the absence of these candidates was glaring and—to many bloggers and journalists reviewing it afterward—seemed further proof that the Republican Party does not reflect the interests of minority communities.

In addition to sponsoring election coverage in traditional forums such as debates, Diversity Beat will help young journalists bring a fresh perspective to the race. The NMC is actively recruiting journalism fellows from underrepresented communities throughout the country.

By partnering with prestigious journalism schools, like UC Berkeley, the NMC gives emerging talents a platform to make their voices heard. The primary venue for the project is the Online News Hour, an offshoot of Jim Lehrer's highly respected news program on PBS. While some of the video reports may end up on Jim Lehrer's program, the project's focus is the online forum, where there are fewer restrictions than on television, and more opportunity for community dialogue.

"Our particular focus on digital media gives us greater opportunity to ensure new alternatives and fresh perspectives," explains Sapana Sakya, CAAM Media Fund Director and Diversity Beat's project manager, "Additionally, by working with the country's best journalism schools, we will bring a new partnership to public television."

The NMC's extensive connections to experts in the fields of local, regional, and national politics will be at each fellow's disposal. This will result in full, rich stories about the minority electorate and its impact on various political races and issues. These stories will cover communities in the short term and the long term, a potential example of the latter being months-long coverage of the way that Nevada's booming Asian Pacific Islander community helps shape that state's political discourse before and after election day.

Though the NMC as a whole sponsors the project, CAAM serves as its manager, overseeing budget and operations. CAAM has a long history in public media programming and Diversity Beat is only the latest example of a vibrant project that enriches the organization's

public media mission. A paper by Professor Pat Aufderheide and Research Fellow Jessica Clark at American University School of Communication's Center for Social Media defines public media as media that "builds a group's social awareness...public media are media that aim to increase public knowledge and cohere and mobilize audience members."

Gong explains that Diversity Beat will do just that: "Effective democracy requires unfettered, free-flowing discourse. If you partake in public media, you give greater access to all voices. With Diversity Beat, we aim to engage the minority electorate. CAAM is not a political organization, nor do we advocate any one agenda. We strive for full inclusion of Asian Americans in the political process, regardless of political party affiliation."

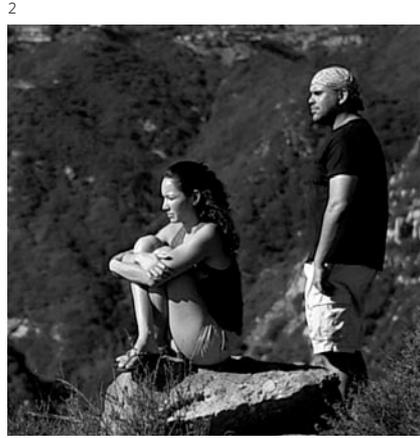
If 2006 was any indication, the 2008 election will be unique, with diverse issues, diverse candidates, and a diverse electorate—younger and more ethnically varied than ever before. Diversity Beat will ensure that the many different voices of this electorate resonate throughout the country—straight to the media and straight to the politicians. ❖

The absence of these candidates was glaring and—to many bloggers and journalists reviewing it afterward—seemed further proof that the Republican Party does not reflect the interests of minority communities.



ТОР Democratic Presidential Candidates  
 БОТТОМ Republican Presidential Candidates

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 25TH SFIAAFF



### AWARD WINNERS

- 1 **BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE**  
Owl and the Sparrow, Dir. Stephane Gauger
- 2 **SPECIAL JURY AWARD**  
Tre, Dir. Eric Byler
- 3 **SPECIAL MENTION**  
Actor Ken Leung, star of Shanghai Kiss and Year of the Fish
- 4 **BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE**  
New Year Baby, Dir. Socheata Poeuv
- 5 **SPECIAL JURY AWARD**  
A Dream in Doubt, Dir. Tami Yeager
- 6 **COMCAST AUDIENCE AWARD (NARRATIVE)**  
American Pastime, Dir. Desmond Nakano
- 7 **COMCAST AUDIENCE AWARD (DOCUMENTARY)**  
Na Kamalei: The Men of Hula,  
Dir. Lisette Marie Flanary

- 1 The crowd spills out of the Castro Theatre following the Centerpiece Presentation screening of **HOLLYWOOD CHINESE**.
- 2 Renowned San Francisco hula dance company, Na Lei Hulu | Ka Wekiu perform before the screening of **NA KAMALEI: THE MEN OF HULA**.
- 3 Festival attendees at the Opening Night Gala held at the Asian Art Museum.
- 4 Director Chen Shi-Zheng speaks with the media following the screening of the Closing Night film **DARK MATTER**.
- 5 MC Hammer (right) makes an appearance on the red carpet of the Opening Night film **FINISHING THE GAME**, directed by Justin Lin (left).
- 6 Yul Kwon (left), winner of **SURVIVOR: COOK ISLANDS** and Sung Kang (**THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT**) enjoy the night of live music at Directions in Sound.
- 7 Spotlight filmmaker Spencer Nakasako (A.K.A. **DON BONUS**) shares hilarious anecdotes during his conversation with filmmaker Justin Lin (**BETTER LUCK TOMORROW**).
- 8 Filmgoers enjoy the world premiere of **SHANGHAI KISS** at the Castro Theatre.
- 9 DJs spin and fans dance at **DIRECTIONS IN SOUND**, a night of live musical performances, held at The Independent.
- 10 Brenda Song (left), star of the Disney Channel Original Movie **WENDY WU: HOMECOMING WARRIOR**, takes a picture with fans.



**ASSETS**

Cash—Operating	165,353
Cash—Petty Cash	220
Future Fund Cash Reserve	171,857
Accounts Receivable—Distrib	16,842
Reserve for Bad Debt	(2,500)
Commuter Checks	1,570
Other Receivable	3,200
Pledges Receivable	1,625
Grants Receivable	76,500
CPB Grant Receivable	241,015
Total Current Assets	<u>675,682</u>
Equipment	148,938
Less Accum Vulated Depreciation	(119,710)
Total Fixed Assets	<u>29,227</u>
Prepaid Expenses	9,396
Investment in LLC	440,805
Total Other Assets	<u>450,201</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>1,155,110</u></b>

PEAN GUEST HOU

NO  
PARKING  
ANY  
TIME

## LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	16,223
Other Payable	17,012
Accrued Vacation	22,074
Media Grants Payable	347,485
Jim Yee Mentorship Fund	1,087
Royalties Payable	366
Deferred Revenue—Festival	685
Deferred Revenue—PTV	6,079
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>411,011</b>
Temp. Restricted Net Assets	311,377
Unrestricted Net Assets	432,722
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>744,099</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITY &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>1,155,110</b>

2006–2007 REVENUE



2006-2007 EXPENSES



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**INSIDE FRONT COVER**

*DJs spin and fans dance at Directions in Sound, a night of live musical performances, held at The Independent.*

**INSIDE BACK COVER**

*Tibet Hope*

**INTERIOR PAGES**

**3** *The Curse of Quon Gwon*

**8** *From a Silk Cocoon*

**9** *Good For Her Face*

**10** *Last Ghost of War*

**11** *Out of the Poison Tree*

**13** *Whatever It Takes*

*Tibet Hope*

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