

FORMOSArt: Showcasing the Artists of Today

Rebecca Lai
Editor

June 18th: “FORMOSArt: The People of Today, the Memories of Tomorrow” was a bold attempt to showcase Taiwanese American artistic talents. Hosted at Pomona’s Museum X of Contemporary Art, the exhibit featured over thirty pieces of artwork in various mediums—from traditional paints to computer graphic design. Some pieces were Taiwan-centric: the “opening” piece at the exhibit’s entryway was a mosaic of multiple paintings depicting traditional Taiwanese culture (the Aborigines, Taiwanese coastal scen-

ery, traditional Taiwanese dancers). Another piece was Fish Kuo’s “Ma Tzu On the way Bac,” a row of empty aboriginal Taiwanese “canoes” waiting on the shoreline, which highlighted both the beauty and the cultural depth of Taiwanese geography. Other pieces expressed artistic vision: feathered reptilian monsters perched on the arm of a woman with meticulously-rendered, flowing hair. Also striking were the abstract pieces: one featured a melding of vibrant colors shaped in irregular geometric forms, made all the more striking by the shadows that lurked at the picture’s edge. Graphic work included several cardboard cutouts

of zongzhi (i.e. Taiwanese glutinous rice) rendered in cartoon form, as well as stylized photographs of flowers and nature. All in all, FORMOSArt was an admirable display of Taiwanese talent and culture. The level of technical skill was undeniable; moreover, it’s not often that one finds an entire exhibit dedicated to the promotion of Taiwanese American artists. Even so, one does wish that there had been more artwork to highlight Taiwanese culture in particular; there was no common thread that linking all the art pieces, and perhaps a greater emphasis on Taiwanese culture would have filled that hole.



Top: Intern Rebecca Lai attends FORMOSArt.
Bottom: One of the works at FORMOSArt.
Photos Courtesy Of Rebecca Lai

CONGRESSWOMAN ROS-LEHTINEN ON WHY TAIWAN MATTERS

Tiffany Wong
Editor

On June 11, 2011 Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen came to the Taiwan Center to discuss “Why Taiwan Matters.” Ros-Lehtinen was greeted with an enthusiastic audience and media. Ros-Lehtinen began her speech by stating the qualities that the U.S. and Taiwan share. She believed that they both share core beliefs including justice, democracy, and liberty, which is why the U.S. needs to continue supporting Taiwan. Ros-Lehtinen stated that Taiwanese Americans are moving their way into leadership positions in professional sectors such as medicine, education, science, and the arts. Ros-Lehtinen’s stated her support in Taiwan by saying “...for me, Taiwan remains a great beacon of democracy.” Ros-Lehtinen criticized the disconnection between the two countries and has scheduled a hearing on U.S. -Taiwan relations. This will be the first hearing about Taiwan in seven years. Ros-Lehtinen is concerned with the re-

lationship of Taiwan with the rising power of China. She said that there has been “a market decline in U.S. support of the island’s freedom of action.” She referred to the previous Taiwan election that was influenced by China and fiercely said, “Beijing needs to stay out of this election. China must not repeat it’s bullying by launching missiles on the eve of election.” She proposed the U.S. to supply defensive weapons for Taiwan, but Taiwan has not been featured prominently in the Department Planning of Defense. She believed in the Defensive Arms Sales of U.S. policy and believes that the Taiwan Relations Act is the cornerstone. She believed that defense and security allow Taiwan to maintain a “prosperous, peaceful and democratic life.” However, there have been no foreign military sales since January 2010. Ros-Lehtinen stated that “military balance erodes in favor of the Chinese regime” and that Taiwan needs to receive defense soon because there are “over 1600 short range missiles targeting Taiwan, and Beijing continues buildup

of naval and air forces focused on Taiwan contingencies.” Taiwan defense spending is less than 3% of the gross national product. Ros-Lehtinen was angered when President Obama met with the chairman of China and did not mention Taiwan back in 2008. It has been eleven years since the cabinet last visited Taiwan. She believed that the issue goes beyond the defense of one self-governed island, and that China wants to tell other allies that the neglect of U.S. for Taiwan is how other allies of our nation will be treated. Allies will begin to question our relationship. She believed that Beijing should not be in control to tell us where we sell our wares. She was skeptical about the motives of China because the economic agreement between Taiwan and China was finally signed last year despite the growing political goal for China to absorb Taiwan. The U.S. should grant admission of Taiwan into the Visa Waiver program and conclude economic issues in trade agreements with Taiwan. She stated with indignation, “The Chinese dragon is extending its claws into the Pacific.”

VINCENT WHO?

Charles Lai
Editor

Who is Vincent Chin? If you know already, or know of the tragedy that befell him that night at the bar in June of 1982, pat yourself on the back. Evidently, not very many people do. Nor do they know of his legacy, his martyrdom, or his unintentional fight for Asian-American equality.

Vincent Who? was a documentary directed by Tony Lam and produced by Curtis Chin (unrelated to Vincent) that details the 1982 murder, and the massive aftereffects. But first, it starts by asking over eighty Asian-American students, “Who IS Vincent Chin?” Sadly, not one had the answer. Not one knew of his murder, or the immediate uproar of the Asian-American community afterwards. No one knew how, before Vincent, there was no “Asian-American”, only “Chinese-American”, “Japanese-American”, etc. Not one of them knew how his death united all Asians in America to fight injustice and racial inequality. Admittedly, I didn’t either.

Vincent Chin was celebrating his bachelor party at a club in Detroit, Michigan the night of June 23, 1982. He had a job; he was just about to get married. Life was good. However, two men, Ronald Ebens and Michael Nitz, began to pick a fight with Chin and his friends, subsequently getting both parties kicked out of the club. Ebens and Nitz hunted down Chin later that night, and bludgeoned him with a baseball bat. “It’s because of you little motherf**ers that we’re out of work!” The U.S. auto industry at the time had lost many jobs to Japan. As Chin slipped into a coma, his last words were, “It’s not fair”. No Vincent, it really wasn’t fair. Vincent Chin died four days later.

The immediate event that transcended Vincent’s



Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Photos Courtesy Of Google

death was a huge blow to the Asian-American community. As it turns out, neither Ebens nor Nitz served a single day in prison for their act of hate-filled murder. Both were acquitted of all charges. It wasn’t fair. And for the first time, all Asians banded together, under Vincent Chin’s name. Vincent Chin became a martyr, a symbol representing the fight for racial equality. Vincent Who? is an eye-opening account of just how ignorant Asian-Americans today are of the battles we’ve had to fight to get to where we are. We know nothing of the pan-Asian-American civil rights movement that followed: the rallies, the speeches, and the protests. And as Asian-Americans, the least we can do is honor the memory of Vincent, who unintentionally made America today a better place for us to live in. So if anybody asks you, “Who is Vincent Chin?” you had better know.

“We thank you for your courage, and your unintended gift. We thank you for giving us a chance to live in a way that brings to life what has been destroyed by death.” – Marcia Lee

The Temple City Budget Cuts Protests

Amy Phan
Editor

On the evening of May 25th, a group of about thirty students gathered in front of the District Office in the quiet streets of Temple City. Armed with handmade signs and loud voices, they united to protest a single cause: the budget cuts that took their teachers.

The event had originally started on Facebook, when a sophomore named Michael Ng asked his peers to sign a petition to help a Spanish teacher get her job back. The event escalated, with more than 500 people clicking “attend” and pages of sympathetic, shocked, and fiery comments.

However, the situation was larger than the job security of one teacher. Because California became deeper in debt over time, the Board of Education decided that there was not enough money for all the teachers to stay at Temple City High School. As a result, an English, Spanish, and music teacher, along with one librarian, received pink slips. Unanimous negative feedback came from how that the teachers were expelled due to lack of seniority rather than teaching quality.

Not long after the first Facebook event was created, another one surfaced. This event was created by sophomore Kyle Evanko, who urged the students to take action with an active protest at the District Office.

News and feedback from both events traveled quickly, and soon most of the school, including the students and teachers, became aware of the movements that were happening both online and on campus. Many students believed that their actions would not be sufficient in reversing

the actions of their superiors, while others were determined to fight against the system.

Though more than 200 people signed up on Facebook, only about thirty people showed up on Las Tunas drive at 7 PM on the day of the District Office protest. It was scheduled right before a district office meeting, to make a direct impact on the board members who were partly responsible for the decisions.

The students carried signs and posters, with different expressions written brightly in marker or paint. Posters like “Hands off my education,” and “Honk if you love teachers,” meant to motivate readers to support their cause. One humorous poster read, “Is our children learnin’?”, parodying a remark made by George W. Bush, while another simply said, “I’m so mad, I made a sign.”

The students would catch the attention of the passing cars, yelling out and cheering when the drivers honked. To garner more attention, the students diverged into groups and walked around at different intervals.

Regardless of the grim situation, the students enjoyed the thrill of protesting. They traded posters, cheered and laughed, whooped at ecstatic cars, and enjoyed the unity of their cause. The event lasted long past its arranged end time of 8 PM, as students continued to call out and wave their signs.

In the end, only the pink slips of the English teacher and the music teacher were recalled. Nevertheless, the impact made by all the protestors, supporters, and sympathetic students and teachers were enough to soften the blows of a painful and bitter goodbye.



People Protesting Against Budget Cuts
Photos Courtesy Of Amy Phan