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How To

Christina M. Kang

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

DOCUMENTATION OF THE ONE-PERSON EXHIBITION

A DOCUMENTATION OF THE ONE PERSON EXHIBITION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL

FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE:

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

SCHOOL OF ART

BY Christina Kang

DEKALB, ILLINOIS

MAY 2021
CATALOG

One-Person Exhibition

BY

Christina Kang

The following work is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts degree at Northern Illinois University. The work was produced between January 2020 and February 2021. It was present in an exhibition from February 28, 2021 through March 3, 2021 in the Annette and Jerry Johns Gallery, Northern Illinois University-DeKalb, Illinois.
List of Work

1. Pull as much of the skin away as you can. *Keep peeling the skin until it is all gone. If there are any stringy bits, pull those off too.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, December 2020

2. To preserve the integrity of your fragrance (and also ensure it lasts longer on your skin), *spritz both wrists lightly, let the liquid sink in, and then do absolutely nothing at all.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021

3. Wet the area and then rub the stain with soap and a brush. *Repeat twice if the stain is really set.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021

4. How to order from the secret menu at Chinese restaurants: *The diners are Chinese and there is only one menu - the Chinese one.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, February 2021

5. Three ways to clean a bamboo steamer Relief monoprint and screenprint on paper, 30” x 42”, October 2020

6. Guarantee your seat at the table. *Put down the placemat. Place the napkin on the left side of the placemat. Place the plate in the center of the placemat. Place the dinner fork and salad fork on the napkin.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, February 2021

7. Bring the water to a rolling boil. Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021
8. **Strain your noodles into a strain yourself into a strain your noodles**
Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021

9. **Mix until homogeneous.** Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021

10. **Fold the wrapper in half and seal completely.** Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, February 2021

11. “**Ask 15 Asian girls out for coffee. Keep asking until one of them clicks with you. If 15 don't work, then ask 15 more then 15 more then 15 more.**”
---Comment from Quora forum: “How do I get an Asian girlfriend (the right way)?” Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021

12. **Keep the cups on the skin for about 10-20 minutes, until the skin beneath them turns begins turning from red to violet.**
Remove the cups by simply lifting them off with your hands. 
Cover each with a piece of plastic wrap, gently pressing the plastic directly onto the surface to prevent a skin from forming as it cools. Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, February 2021

13. **Put yourself into your place yourself into your place** Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021

14. **Rinse and repeat** Screenprint on paper, 14” x 17”, January 2020

15. **Dust yourself off and try again to dust yourself off and try again** Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021
How To

*How To* is a one-person exhibition of mixed media drawings and prints. The exhibited work is meant to convey my personal explorations and representations of my identity crisis as a Taiwanese-American woman in the forms of deconstructed instruction panels. Additionally, *How To* is my representation of how Asians and Asian Americans are perceived in the United States through the model minority myth.

Identity is nuanced and evolves over time. When I first acknowledged my identity crisis, I wanted a concrete solution, a set of instructions that others had followed to resolve their own crises. Follow a list of steps; learn a language; learn to cook like my mom. After this, my identity would be easily identifiable and manageable. My reduction of identity — seeking a simple way to “solve” the associated crisis — also parallels the intentional misconceptions of Asians and Asian Americans in American culture.

**Historical Influences**

The model minority myth is a perception that certain minority demographics have a higher degree of socioeconomic status. For Asians in the United States, the model minority myth was first heavily applied to them in the 1960s as an attempt to discredit Black Americans fighting for the Civil Rights Movement. (Raymundo 27) The model minority myth reduces all Asians and Asian Americans into what most assume Asians in America are: East Asian, specifically Chinese or Japanese, middle to upper class, and well-educated. Yet there are countless untold narratives of ignored Asians in America who are none of the above. (Nguyen) The model minority myth places Asians and Asian Americans into a contradictory position of hypervisibility and invisibility. Certain Asians
are celebrated and made to be an example of “achieving the American Dream” through assimilation and hard work, but our experiences of racism and discrimination are minimized, the different histories of our marginalization rewritten and erased. While some do not even consider Asians to be people of color, others will always view Asians as foreign or a threat. (Raymundo 30)

From images of the docile, submissive, and robotic, to unfair contrast against other people of color and various socioeconomic statuses via the “model minority” trope. We are held up as an example of a “model minority”, particularly weaponized against other immigrants and people of color. The American Dream is reduced to three simple steps: “Follow the rules, work hard, and you will achieve success in the face of hardship.”

To consider Asians and Asian Americans as a model minority is to completely remove the vast differences in our identities; an intentional, malicious act of whitewashing. Not only does this alienate us and pit us against other racially and culturally marginalized people, but also invalidates our experiences of discrimination and marginalization. Our cultures are appropriated, bodies fetishized and viewed as disposable, traditions edited to be more palatable for a white audience. These harmful ideals are imposed upon us while ignoring the complicated differences in class and privilege between and within all minority communities.

I find there to be many similarities between the dissemination and perceptions of instructions and the model minority myth. Most instructional imagery is intentionally generalized and simplified in order to reach a broader audience. Asian American identities are also intentionally simplified by white supremacy, the model minority myth
set upon us. Like instructions out of context, the model minority myth directs the general public to perceive *all* Asians and Asian Americans as rich, educated, and successful. Our perceived success is reduced to a few steps - keep your head down, do what you are told, and work hard. What is not explicitly shown are the Asians who are cherry-picked by the U.S. government to immigrate to the United States based on their skillset or education (Guo). Also not shown are the systemic roadblocks placed in front of other marginalized communities of color and economic status. (Nguyen) Or, Asians like former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao and former interim ICE director Tony Pham who were put in positions of power in order to show diversity, but were specifically chosen because they benefit those already in power (Diaz) or did not advocate for marginalized groups. (Wang) The power granted to us is temporary and conditional, and for other Asians and Asian Americans: non-existent.

The exhibition choices of *How To* is meant to convey how the model minority myth traps Asians and Asian Americans into a specific role within the racial politics in America. Asians and Asian Americans are used as a wedge to prevent solidarity between communities of color. (Chow) Specifically, our status as the model minority has most often been used by the media to unfairly contrast Black people as lazy and undisciplined. It implies that Black people are unable to achieve socioeconomic success due to their own shortcomings instead of the harmful systemic limitations placed upon them. Asians and Asian Americans are used to invalidate and discredit the trauma and harm placed on Black and Brown communities to the point where we are considered “honorary whites” by other people of color. (Raymundo 27)
The color grey is one of the dominant colors in my exhibition. Grey represents how Asians are placed between the white and black communities- our narratives and success manipulated by white supremacy to further marginalize other communities of color and those in lower socioeconomic positions. Grey is also a neutral and subdued color which parallels how Asians and Asian Americans are often perceived as quiet, emotionless, and robotic. The painted grey color fields behind my framed drawings represent how I want to break out of model minority myth, but I am also an involuntary perpetuator of it. (See Figures 24-26) I hold many of the privileges that are defined as the model minority myth: I come from a middle-class household with parents who hold graduate degrees, I am well-educated, and perceived as smart and disciplined because of my race. Try as I might to dismantle the model minority myth, I am still a product of the myth and continue to be an example of a model minority. This is the reason why, though the imagery depicted in my work is of instructions rebelling or breaking down, the exhibition still traps them within traditional standards of exhibitions, framed and on the wall.

**Philosophical and aesthetic concepts**

*How To* presents a series of instruction panels that are in varying stages of disrepair and reconstruction. These panels represent instructions as systems of internalized and external racism, disconnect from my heritage, my fears of being seen as foreign in both my and my parents’ places of birth, and how I simultaneously have power, privilege, control and yet it is reluctantly granted in service to the lie that America is a place of equal opportunity.
The overarching theme in the instructions is the limited function and space that the hands hold. It is implied that these hands are rebelling against the set tasks they were originally drawn to carry out. The hands are detached, but are unable to physically leave the space, so they are going through and dissecting the entire instruction panel. The hands depicted in these instructions are my hands in the various stages of my understanding of my identity. Some are rendered with whiteout to represent how I and other people have whitewashed myself.

Repetition is a significant part of How To. This is made particularly obvious in my titles, where some include looped phrases. I wanted this repetition to convey the physical breakdown of the instruction imagery, as if the instructions were glitching. In “A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia”, the following text was an inspiration for my inclusion of repeating actions:

_Homi Bhabha’s (1984) seminal essay, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” is crucial here. Bhabha describes the ways in which a colonial regime impels the colonized subject to mimic Western ideals of whiteness. At the same time, this mimicry is also condemned to failure. (Eng and Han 676)_

This mimicry is most frequently referenced in my work through internalized racism and whitewashing. I also realized that the process of executing instructions is another form of mimicry (though not the exact mimicry Bhabha writes about).
By complete chance, some of the instructions I read online unintentionally contained the cyclical dialogue I wanted. In a Quora forum titled “How do I get an Asian girlfriend (the right way)?” one of the top rated answers began with the sentence:

“Ask 15 Asian girls out for coffee. Keep asking until one of them clicks with you. If 15 don't work, then ask 15 more then 15 more then 15 more.”

This sentence really captured how Asian people, in this instance Asian women, are objectified and generalized into a monolith. I wanted this sentence to be paired with the imagery in Figure 16 to make the viewer reflect on the objectification and fetishization of Asian women. I chose to draw the Ramune soda bottle and its cap because of its disposability and method of opening. The repetition of the phrase “then 15 more” implies the identical abundance of Asian women, as if they are a pack of Ramune soda bottles. Finish one bottle, reach for another, and another, and another...

The way Ramune soda is opened is different from the common pop tab or screw cap on other soda vessels. You must take the cap and push it into the opening until it clicks. I correlated the unique way it is opened with the ways Asians and specifically Asian women are frequently perceived as exotic, mysterious, and indecipherable. The process of pushing the cap in until it clicks also echoed the Quora advice “Keep asking until one of them clicks with you”.

Some of the instruction panels in How To convey the expectations set upon me by others and by myself. Perceived as a cis straight woman, I have expectations placed upon

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1 Quora is an American question-and-answer website where questions are asked, answered, followed, and edited by Internet users, either factually or in the form of opinions.
me by my parents to grant them grandchildren, to be a homemaker and serve my husband. These expectations were specific inspiration for my drawings “*Put yourself in your place yourself into your place*”. (See Figures 29) The three drawings reference kitchens and personal bathrooms, spaces that can be considered traditionally feminine and domestic. In these spaces, my mother placed her expectations for me as a woman and wife. As the only girl in my family, I grew up helping my mother in the kitchen, mincing garlic and onion, washing vegetables, and other preparatory tasks. It was made clear to me at a young age that I was to learn how to cook and clean only to serve my future husband and family. I quickly became familiar with the tedious and cyclical tasks that come with cooking. These tasks included peeling skins off of vegetables, descaling fish, folding dumplings, and above all maintaining a clean space. Most of these tasks are unseen by the men in my family as they only see the final product and their only task is to consume. The hands in these drawings are repeating actions, such as placing an item into a microwave (see Figure 18) or chopping the same green onion (see Figure 19). This repetition represents my fears of settling for less than what I want for myself and stagnating. In terms of femininity, there was a lot of pressure for me to marry quickly in order to avoid premarital relations. My parents placed significant value on my virginity and eventual marriage to my husband. Figure 20 shows hands obsessing over my wedding ring - polishing it, holding it up to the light as if it were a lens. This conveys how I was brought up to place my self-worth into my marriage and the sacrifices and compromises of household labor.
As for the expectations I place upon myself: I find myself overcompensating for my identity by trying to show other Asians and Asian Americans that I am Asian enough. I am disconnected from my parents’ culture and yet not fully a part of the place of my upbringing. I feel compelled to prove my Asian-ness so my ethnicity is validated by other Asians. This way I can feel as if I fit in with the people I heavily relate to. Part of this overcompensation comes from growing up with internalized racism in a predominantly white area, which contributed to my language loss and intentional disconnect from Asian communities. When I was in middle and high school, I would intentionally isolate myself from the other Asian students, determined to be “different”. I was ashamed to be Asian and tried several ways to distance myself from what I thought were physically “Asian” traits. I tried to lighten my skin, pinched my nose in the hopes that it would change shape, and even smiled differently so my eyes would not slant upwards. I was hyper aware of how non-Asian people viewed my parents and Asian friends to the point where I would try to look as “American” as possible by emphasizing only speaking English, dressing like my white friends, and other actions that distanced myself from my Taiwanese and Chinese communities.

This internalized racism is depicted in a variety of ways in How To. Hands pouring soy sauce onto another hand (see Figure 2), hands eagerly catching whiteout arrows into their cups (see Figure 23), hands trying to scrub off the color of cabbage leaves (see Figure 4). These actions are intentionally ridiculous to convey the futility behind trying to mask or change my race. In “Strain your noodles into a strain yourself into a strain your
noodles”, the hands go from brown to white as they strain the noodles, representing how I filtered and edited myself to be more accessible to white people. (see Figure 13)

Another factor of my identity crisis stems from assimilation. My parents intentionally only taught English to my brothers and I in the hopes that we would better fit in with our peers at school and around the community. This may have slightly helped us in our education, but it also isolated us from our Chinese and Taiwanese speaking relatives and friends. This isolation made us feel like we were imposters, as we looked Asian, but we related more to our non-Asian peers. This is most directly addressed in my drawing “Mix until homogeneous”. (See Figure 14). “Mix until homogeneous” references the metaphor of the “melting pot” in America. The melting pot refers to the different cultures and traditions of immigrants in America blending together into one harmonious and indistinguishable culture. This has been challenged many times, with some groups preferring the term “salad bowl” to refer to different cultures remaining distinct but still harmonious. (Crossman) In Figure 14, the hands are handling instant macaroni and cheese noodles. The process of making instant macaroni and cheese involves mixing the cheese powder into the noodles until they are thoroughly combined. However, the hands are attempting to brush the cheese off of the macaroni noodle. This act of removing the cheese is meant to satirize assimilation and the melting pot metaphor. My brothers and I may be assimilated into American society, but racial and identity politics will prevent us from ever fully assimilating.

Overall, the most significant factor contributing to my cultural disconnect is my language loss. I cannot fluently speak my parents’ language, and so I cannot fully connect
with my relatives in Taiwan. This language barrier is one of the main reasons why I am unable to fully access and understand my heritage and my parents’ culture. I feel guilty and ashamed for viewing this cultural disconnect as a burden. While I can still learn Taiwanese and Mandarin, I am still unable to carry my parents’ full cultural heritage into the future.

I feel this language barrier most strongly at family gatherings, because my relatives will constantly point out that my brothers and I are the only non-fluent Mandarin speakers out of everyone there. When I am not with family, the other places that this language barrier comes up most frequently are at Chinese/Taiwanese restaurants. Many Asian waitstaff have assumed I am fluent and speak to me in Mandarin only to see my expression and switch to English. For restaurants that I frequent quite often, I will practice my order in Mandarin so I do not look out of place. In most places though, I end up pointing and gesturing at the menu. In Figure 6, the hands are mimicking my gestures and pointing at various items on the menus. On the right hand side, there is a pair of hands hiding underneath a napkin. Those hands convey the shame I feel for my language barrier. In Figure 5 the drawing shows the hands tracing invisible strokes. The hands’ actions are specifically tracing the strokes of the Chinese character 我 (wō), meaning “I” in English. I chose 我 to represent my search for validation through learning how to speak Chinese. The hands are whitewashed to represent my poor pronunciation of Chinese characters. The vagueness of the hand gestures represents my lack of familiarity of Chinese. I do not expect the viewer to recognize 我 in the drawing, but for them to
understand that the drawn instructions are specific and convey the inaccessibility when it comes to deciphering an unknown language.

Folds are also a prominent feature in the exhibition - many of the instruction panels are drawn to be folded over one another, obscuring and hiding information from the viewer. (See Figure 12) Some drawings are displayed on angled shelves to represent how they are attempting to escape the wall This method of displaying my drawings also changes the angle that the viewer sees them in, bringing them into the rendered spaces. (See Figures 27-30) These folds convey the limitations of my personal narrative. As a perpetuator of the model minority myth, I cannot speak on behalf of the Asians and Asian Americans who have been made invisible by this myth. My own perception of Asian American identity is unintentionally reductive due to my limited experiences with my heritage. These folds also represent how my own identity has been reduced by other people. The act of folding is meant to create a more compact item; something that is easier to handle. I have had experiences that feel similar to being folded compactly.

People have told me, “You’re more American than Asian, anyway.” or “Taiwanese is basically Chinese.” These words ignorantly simplify my identity. It removes the nuance of how Asian American identities are continuously altered because of factors like assimilation, imperialism, and colonialism.

The folds also indicate the autonomy of the instructions. They are no longer flat with a linear narrative; instead, the folds take them into a 3D space where the instructions can instead become structures. The folds indicate a rebellion of the instruction panels because information is hidden from the viewer. The viewer cannot “complete” the tasks
that the instructions refer to. The implied dimension the folds create represent Asian and Asian American identity breaking out of the monolithic stereotypes we are placed under in the United States.

One of the more accessible areas in my work is my food imagery. Food is widely considered to be one of the universal languages. There are common elements in our cuisine from culture to culture. Everyone has memories associated with food; memories gathering together to eat as a family or in a group. Food is a point of access for the viewer. As they recognize the food in my work, they can relate to it and think of their own experiences.

Food is also one of the easier points of access for me in connecting with my family and heritage. My family conveys our love through food. We replace physical and verbal affections with the time we spend together making and eating food. Out of all of my family members, my mother is the one who frequently conveys her love to her family through her constant labor in the kitchen.

Much of the food referenced in *How To* are leftovers or takeout ephemera, like wrappers, sauce containers, or chopsticks. Part of this is to represent how much Asian cultures have been dissected, commodified and appropriated into something palatable for white audiences. Chinese food in the U.S. is not the same as Chinese food in China. Foods that are considered to be distinctly Chinese, like eggrolls or General Tso’s, are actually completely based in America. (Houck) Another reason for the inclusion of takeout ephemera is to represent the lack of foundation for Asian and Asian American identities. The drawings “*Guarantee your seat at the table...*” (See Figures 9-11) discuss
the temporary powers granted to select Asians under the model minority myth. Our places at the metaphorical table of power are conditional - as long as we go along with what is already set, or as long as we do not cause trouble, we are able to stay. At times our seat at the table comes at the expense of other people of color. So, the “tables” I render are also disposable. They are napkins and takeout boxes. They are scraps, but we are supposed to be grateful to be included.

For me personally, the takeout ephemera represents the distance I feel with my family and heritage and the ways I have felt picked apart in my identity. As I continue to live apart from my family, the closest family comfort meals I can replicate while working as a student are through instant Asian food packets and Asian takeout. It does not escape me that the majority of these instant meals are not authentic, but it feels accurate to my upbringing. I never got to know most of my grandparents and I am distanced from my parents, so the easier ways I can investigate my heritage are through things I can purchase. The value I place onto takeout ephemera elevates them to be similar to fossil digs, where I am carefully dissecting and looking through the remnants of what has been left behind. The leftovers I draw convey this loss I feel, as if something has been taken from me, and also convey how other people attempt to understand my identity. At times it feels like I am being dissected, scrutinized and questioned in order to discern how Asian I am.

**Technique and process**

The printmaking process was a heavy influence in the conception of my drawings and prints. With printmaking processes, information is quickly and easily disseminated
through the multiple. This dissemination is similar to how people encounter and interact with instructions. Instructions are printed on many commodities: food packets, furniture kits, machinery, etc. When collecting instructional imagery from sources like instant food packets, chopstick wrappers, machinery instructions, and airplane manuals, I noticed how similar each one looked to the other. The imagery consists of simple, bold lines. It is very similar to how comics simplify forms down to a few lines. Realistically, these decisions are probably made for easier mass manufacturing. However, I correlate the way printmaking transforms and duplicates my hand as another way Asian identity is simplified. Asian cultures in the United States are appropriated for their aesthetic. Traditional Asian imagery is appropriated and printed onto disposable takeout boxes and plastic bags.

The two prints I included in How To are meant to represent the flattening of Asian and Asian American identity. They are larger than the drawings and present themselves formally as maps and guides instead of individual instruction panels. While my drawings address very specific instances of my identity, my prints show the arc of my identity crisis. Figure 7, “Three ways to clean a bamboo steamer”, presents my identity crisis in three general stages. The first stage, the top steamer basket, contains my hands and my family’s hands. We are all working together to create dumplings. This first stage is the foundation of my identity and what I consider to be the strongest part of my identity. The second stage, the middle steamer basket, contains my hands cutting the red threads that represent my connection to my family. This stage represents my internalized racism and the different ways I worked to distance myself from my heritage and ethnicity. The last
stage, the bottom steamer basket, contains small altars with various takeout ephemera and Taiwanese/Chinese trinkets. Outside of the steamer basket are food wrappers and instruction panels. This last stage represents the lack of stability with my identity. I place value on these objects because of the distance I feel from my family and other Asians.

Figure 21 is another print that shows the general cyclical nature of an identity crisis. There is not really an end to my identity crisis, because there is no concrete solution to resolving my identity. I can, of course, take steps to help relieve my feelings of diaspora and not belonging, but as I continue into the future, more and more of my parents’ heritage will be lost. This is represented by the process of rinsing tea. I chose this process because I strongly associate tea with my parents. My parents are very particular with their teas and only brew their tea with loose tea leaves, never bags. They taught me to always rinse my tea leaves at least twice to obtain a cleaner tea flavor. In my print, the tea leaves are rinsed several times past their prime, the dilution of the tea echoing the gradual loss of my identity.

It was important for me to create drawings in tandem with my prints to get the viewer to understand my need to slow down. The drawings are direct representations of my own identity. They are specific and at times inaccessible. They are intended for the viewer to understand that each identity is complicated and unique, but there are always common elements between every identity.

The whiteout material became very significant to me as I continued to create the drawings for How To. At first I used whiteout solely on the hands to represent their power in editing the space. With each new drawing, the meaning of whiteout expanded. I was
literally whitewashing areas of my drawings. The thick texture of whiteout stood out from the paper and would often overwhelm the other materials if I was not careful. Whiteout became a metaphor for how whiteness has diluted aspects of my identity. It also represents how my identity under the model minority myth is used to whitewash other marginalized groups.

I chose *How To* to be mostly comprised of 6” x 6” drawings. These drawings consisted of whiteout, Bic blue pens, highlighters, red pens, graphite pencils, gel pens, and gouache. Most of these materials are not considered in an archival or traditional sense to be artist tools. I consider whiteout, red pens, and highlighters to be used most often to physically edit forms and other written documents, specifically documents in the draft stages of their writing. However, these tools are slowly becoming obsolete through the increased usage of editing programs, online submission forms, and other digital tools. The act of physically drawing instruction panels that are breaking down or reconstructing themselves with tools that are becoming obsolete has felt like a quiet liberation of the tools’ traditional uses. While creating these drawings, I was reflecting on the degradation and continuation of harmful systems. Systems like white supremacy, capitalism, and colonialism are deeply entrenched in the very foundations of the United States. The very founders of the United States wrote the Constitution with only white men in mind, assuming that women and people of color were not fit to govern. (Gardiner) We continue these systems as if they are beneficial to all, despite the horrific violence and trauma these systems inflict upon anyone who is not immensely rich, white, or in a position of power. I wonder how - and if - these systems can be reformed. Repurposing office tools
to create my work has felt like a futile synonym for how we have adapted to these systems.


Nguyen, Viet. “Asian Americans Are Still Caught in the Trap of the ‘Model Minority’ Stereotype. And It Creates Inequality for All.” *TIME*, June 2020,

pp. 27-35,

Wang, Claire. “Tony Pham, new interim ICE director and Vietnamese refugee, draws criticism from Asian groups.” *NBC News*, 2020,
Figure List:
1. *Pull as much of the skin away as you can. Keep peeling the skin until it is all gone. If there are any stringy bits, pull those off too.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, December 2020

2. *To preserve the integrity of your fragrance (and also ensure it lasts longer on your skin), spritz both wrists lightly, let the liquid sink in, and then do absolutely nothing at all.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021 (Drawing 1/2)
3. *To preserve the integrity of your fragrance (and also ensure it lasts longer on your skin), spritz both wrists lightly, let the liquid sink in, and then do absolutely nothing at all.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021 (Drawing 2/2)
4. *Wet the area and then rub the stain with soap and a brush. Repeat twice if the stain is really set.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021
5. *How to order from the secret menu at Chinese restaurants: The diners are Chinese and there is only one menu - the Chinese one.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, February 2021 (Drawing 1/2)
6. *How to order from the secret menu at Chinese restaurants: The diners are Chinese and there is only one menu - the Chinese one.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, February 2021 (Drawing 2/2)
7. *Three ways to clean a bamboo steamer* Relief monoprint and screenprint on paper, 30” x 42”, October 2020
8. *Three ways to clean a bamboo steamer*, detail shot
9. Guarantee your seat at the table. Put down the placemat. Place the napkin on the left side of the placemat. Place the plate in the center of the placemat. Place the dinner fork and salad fork on the napkin. Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, February 2021 (Drawing 1/3)
10. Guarantee your seat at the table. Put down the placemat. Place the napkin on the left side of the placemat. Place the plate in the center of the placemat. Place the dinner fork and salad fork on the napkin. (Drawing 2/3)
11. **Guarantee your seat at the table. Put down the placemat. Place the napkin on the left side of the placemat. Place the plate in the center of the placemat. Place the dinner fork and salad fork on the napkin.** (Drawing 3/3)
12. *Bring the water to a rolling boil.* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021
13. *Strain your noodles into a strain yourself into a strain your noodles*. Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021
14. *Mix until homogeneous*. Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021
15. Fold the wrapper in half and seal completely. Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, February 2021
16. “Ask 15 Asian girls out for coffee. Keep asking until one of them clicks with you. If 15 don't work, then ask 15 more then 15 more then 15 more.”

-Comment from Quora forum: “How do I get an Asian girlfriend (the right way)?” Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021
17. Keep the cups on the skin for about 10-20 minutes, until the skin beneath them begins turning from red to violet. Remove the cups by simply lifting them off with your hands. Cover each with a piece of plastic wrap, gently pressing the plastic directly onto the surface to prevent a skin from forming as it cools.
18. *Put yourself into your place yourself into your place* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021 (Drawing 1 / 3)
19. *Put yourself into your place yourself into your place* (Drawing 2 /3)
20. *Put yourself into your place yourself into your place* (Drawing 3/3)
21. *Rinse and repeat* Screenprint on paper, 14” x 17”, January 2020
22. *Dust yourself off and try again to dust yourself off and try again* Whiteout, gouache, highlighter, gel pen, ballpoint pen, and graphite on paper, 6” x 6”, January 2021 (Drawing 1/2)
23. *Dust yourself off and try again to dust yourself off and try again* (Drawing 2/2)
23. Show title drawn on wall in Annette and Jerry Johns gallery with Blue Bic pens.
24. Exhibition shot of wall #1 in *How To*. L to R: *Pull as much of the skin away as you can...*, *To preserve the integrity of your fragrance...*, *Wet the area and then rub the stain with soap and a brush...*, *How to order from the secret menu at Chinese restaurants...*, *Three ways to clean a bamboo steamer; Guarantee your seat at the table...*. 
25. Exhibition shot of wall #2 in of *How To*. L to R: *Bring the water to a rolling boil, Strain your noodles into a strain yourself into a strain your noodles, Mix until homogeneous, Fold the wrapper in half and seal completely, “Ask 15 Asian girls out for coffee...”*, Keep the cups on the skin for about 10-20 minutes...
26. Exhibition shot of wall #3 in of *How To*. L to R: *Put yourself into your place*  
*yourselves into your place*, *Rinse and repeat*, *Dust yourself off and try again* to *dust yourself off* and *try again*
27. Installation shot of *Dust yourself off and try again to dust yourself off*
28. Installation shot of *Guarantee your place at the table...*
29. Installation shot of *Put yourself in your place yourself into your place*
30. Installation shot of *How to order from the secret menu at Chinese restaurants...*
31. Installation shot of *To preserve your fragrance...*
32. Installation shot of *Bring the water to a rolling boil*