

Planet China



05

China
underground

同性恋

LGBTQ
SOCIETY

Coming out

Queer Love
Sexualities

Brave

AIRFRANCE



FRANCE IS IN THE AIR



SHANGHAI, TAIPEI, HONG KONG

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China underground

*This free ebook
includes interviews
with artists,
writers, entrepre-
neurs & thinkers*

China-underground.
com and CinaOggi.it are
two web magazines cu-
rated by Matteo Damiani
and Dominique Musor-
rafiti dedicated to Chi-
nese culture. Since 2002,
China-underground
has organized cultural
events, festivals, and
created documentaries,
photo reports, and mag-
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We thought it was important to explore the LGBTQ community in Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Chinese overseas experience, dedicating a special volume of Planet China to this topic. LGBTQ people around the world still face situations of discrimination and inequality. With this special issue, we decided to ask activists and artists to tell us what has changed over the years. Addressing the topic and deepening it gives us the opportunity to focus on what the real situation is today. The situation of right on sexual orientation and gender identity, around the world, is facing unequal treatment, discrimination in jobs and denial of family recognition. Hatred and rancor are diverted to those who are considered or are weaker and more defenseless, so it is a duty to defend and spread personal views and experiences to restore rights. Feelings are universal, there are no physical barriers except those created by the minds of living beings, so we try to break down these barriers to living all better. Acting the freedoms of others does not lead us to lose ours if there is mutual respect as a starting point. How can we accept hatred rather than love? How can we prefer discrimination to understanding? Intolerance generates hate while listening offers the key to understanding a complex subject where empathy is our main guide. We have tried to focus attention and explore different experiences, addressing issues such as the search for one's own identity within the family and society. All situations where a climate of respect is not observed provoke anxiety marginalization and can push to extreme gestures. It is our responsibility to avoid creating situations of isolation and loneliness for the most fragile people. To avoid irreversible gestures, it is up to each of us to make a contribution by listening and promoting respect, because if everyone put a drop in the bucket we can make the difference. Sexual orientation and gender identity are integral aspects of ourselves and should never lead to discrimination or abuse. This collection of interviews is a contribution to an understanding of LGBTQ context and situation. We hope for a world where all people can enjoy their dignity and rights fully.

Dominique Musorrafti

Planet China



Helen Zia

Helen Zia is a Chinese-American award-winning author, journalist, and activist

HELEN ZIA is an award-winning author, journalist, and scholar who has covered Asian American communities and social and political movements for decades. Helen holds an honorary Doctor of Laws from the Law School of the City University of New York, for bringing important matters of law and civil rights into public view. She is a graduate of Princeton University's first graduating class of women. Helen, Chinese American, has been outspoken on social justice issues ranging from human rights, peace to women's rights, countering hate violence, homophobia, and civil rights campaign against anti-Asian violence.



In June 2008, Zia married her partner Lia Shigemura in San Francisco, making them one of the first same-sex couples to legally marry in the state of California.

Is “coming out” nowadays still a problem in some American families?

Coming out is such a deeply personal act that it is always a concern and there is no way of knowing how accepting—or not—one’s family might be. Yes, there is more media and public discussion about LGBTQ people, but a few TV shows and movies do not erase homophobia. There is still ignorance, in-

tolerance, discriminatory laws and violence in the US as well as elsewhere in the world and it will take long-term commitment, vigilance, and activism to make real change -- but it can be done! We can never take human dignity and rights for granted anywhere.

The struggle for women’s rights, minorities, and LGBTQ rights are in-

tertwined and support each other or travel separately?

There is a saying that an injustice to one is an injustice to all. No one is truly equal and free until everyone is equal and free. When a society allows anyone to be treated as less than equal and therefore less than fully human, we not only rob those people of their full

Zia traveled to Beijing in 1995 to the UN Fourth World Congress on Women as part of journalists of color delegation

humanity, we also become complicit in their mistreatment. Sometimes people think they can look the other way as long as “their group” isn’t harmed. But that is an illusion because we are all connected by our humanity, and as history has proven over and over again, harsh and autocratic power will inevitably spread like cancer to maintain itself. The story of “first they came for the religious minority, and I said nothing. Then they came for the ethnic minorities, and I said nothing. Then they came for the LGBTQ people, and the poor; and the labor activists; and the immigrants; and the youth; and so on, and I said nothing. And then they came for me.” Our lives and rights as human beings are inextricably linked, there are no degrees of separation.

What can individuals do to help recognize the rights of LGBTQ people?

It is important to speak up and support the rights of all people, especially if some-



one is not part of a targeted group, such as straight people for LGBTQs, men for #metoo, and so on to be allies and to show that people are affected far beyond a targeted group. That support can be in the form of activism and organizing; providing resources such as money or access to power/media etc; sending a message of support; helping to educate friends and family, or simply showing up when

needed. Every act of support and kindness, large or small, in recognizing the rights and existence of LGBTQ people helps to make a difference.

How has activism changed in the last few years compared to when you started?

Worldwide there has been a conservative, nationalistic and fundamentalist shift that has inflamed fear and

even hatred of anyone who is different from the “traditional majority,” whatever that is. Anti-gay, anti-immigrant, misogynistic hate groups have become more visible and powerful – most notably at the top rungs of politics in the US. This is, of course, more challenging for activists and it is important not to get discouraged. History and positive change never move in a straight line and human society have

been through terrible times before. We must always remember that positive change is a marathon, not a sprint, and to keep working to bend the arc of history toward justice. We shall overcome!

What do you feel to say to those who still discriminate LGBTQ people?

I would ask them to try to put themselves in the shoes

Helen was named one of the most influential Asian Americans of the decade by A. Magazine



of those they discriminate against. If they or their loved ones were treated that way, how would they feel? I do recognize that some people are unable or unwilling to have empathy and that they get some kind of self-perceived benefit from hating and discriminating and hurting others. But if they are capable of empathy, then it may be possible to open their hearts and minds

What advice would you like to give to young activists who want to stop the hostility and discrimination?

Never give up! As the LGBTQ activists from a generation ago declared, Silence=Death! We’ve come a long way since then, but we still have a long way to go. If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem. Everything you do to create change makes a difference in the world and never forget that the future belongs to you!

She was the former executive editor of Ms. Magazine and continues speaking throughout the nation about the Asian-American and LGBTQ communities



Joanne Leung

Joanne Leung works full-time in pushing for greater LGBTQ rights in Hong Kong

Photo courtesy of Joanne Leung



JOANNE LEUNG is Hong Kong's first openly transgender politician and rights activist that energetically fights for LGBT community. Joanne Leung Wing Yan founded Transgender Resource Center (TGR) in 2008. She was previously the chairperson of the Pink Alliance, an organization which aims to facilitate cooperation between advocates for, and supporters of, LGBTQ rights in Hong Kong. Her organization (TGR) raises awareness of the issues facing the Hong Kong and mainland transgender- or trans - community, while also providing support for local trans people through services such as an online and telephone counseling service and a peer support group. In 2014 she spoke to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and was the first transgender person from Hong Kong.

When did you realize that your being did not reflect, your physical side? Have you always had very clear ideas about your identity?

I didn't feel comfortable with my gender since around age 6. But at that time back in the 60's, there ain't a lot of information on transgender and I am just confused having this kind of mindset. After a long time of strug-

gling and discovered that I am attracted to women at the age of 19, I have forced myself even harder to become a man.

Was there a particularly significant moment that changed your life?

It has been really hard for me believing in God since my kindergarten. Being told as a sinner and could not escape from the gender incon-

gruous drawn me almost to end my life. In 2009, I made a decision to move ahead for the sex change and believe that God will never leave me. I gave myself a new name Wing Yan in Chinese to remember myself the rest of my life will be for praising God!

What gave you the strength to fight for being yourself?

Besides my religious belief, I actually didn't have another choice that can retain my life from committing suicide at that time because of no support in the society. And that's why I told myself to be the first transgender person to stay in supporting the community after my surgery.

In 2017, the U.S. Consulate Hong Kong and Macau selected Leung as the nominee for the Secretary's International Women of Courage Award, honoring women who have demonstrated exceptional courage, strength, and leadership in acting to improve others' lives.

Why do we need activism nowadays? Are things changing, or is there still much to do?

The acceptance of transgender people in Hong Kong became much better since I came out to the public. I became a public figure and the first transgender politician here in Hong Kong that change the perception of the whole society toward gender incongruous. Some





people will think they can hide in the closet and live as they wish but I don't see they become more happy living under anxiety. Activism let the society be free to oppression that benefits themselves as well. And more important to let the trans community understand they are not doing anything wrong to be true to themselves. There are still a lot to be accomplished as the majority of the trans

community here wouldn't believe they have a future!

Are there frequent discriminations and common stereotypes in Hong Kong?

Yes, not only toward trans people but a lot of men and women suffered a lot in the gender stereotypes in Hong Kong.

What about your work experience as founder of Transgender Resource Center (TGR) and as chairperson of the Pink Alliance? What are the biggest challenges?

Working with TGR means the focus is in an even more narrow transgender topic that most of the community are still suffered a lot at the moment which is not



She has been active for more than a decade highlighting the need for gender recognition and anti-discrimination legislation to be enacted in support of transgender individuals.

yet ready to walk with the center along the road of activism. And that means I am working most of the time alone on doing all important roles. Fortunately, there are other LGB organizations that are really supportive like Pink Alliance on advocacy. But working with a bigger organization means you cannot only focus on your works but have to spend a lot of the time dealing with people, resource, and net-

works that could be drawn a lot of energy.

How many transgenders are in Hong Kong? Do Transgender people support one another?

There aren't any possible and scientific way to know a near number of the transgender population in Hong Kong. But based on our experience and the number of members in a few cross-

dresser forum, we can assume that there are at least 30K transgender people in Hong Kong. TGR has been put a lot of effort into encouraging trans people to support each other but still, it is not an easy job. We can see there are more and more trans people wish to pay it forward in the community and be willing to take up the leading role soon.

How important is the support of family and friends? Are families and/or friends involved in Hong Kong to avoid emotional emargination?

Trans people tends to cut off from family and friends or else hide in the closet some years ago. My experience tells me that it is not working. We have done a Transgender Mental Health Survey and a Violence Against Transgender people Survey in Hong Kong and noticed there is a very high risk of the community suffered from mental issues and suicidal thoughts. With our hotline and counseling service, we have re-engaged a lot of families to support them trans kids as well as connecting trans people with a healthy social life.

I read that you're Christian. Why do you think some Christians fail to accept LGBTQ people when one of the main teachings is to love thy neighbor as thyself?

Although I have some thought on this, I keep telling myself not to judge or otherwise you will be judged. I once thought that they might be bad guys or

they might not read through the Bible. But Jesus just told me to love and do not judge. And I am the only LGBT activist that keep talking sincerely with the anti-LGBT groups and hope one day they can be changed because of LOVE.

What do you wish people understood about persons that align their body with their gender identity?

A very simple believe as not to judge. See the world as one and the beautiful creations of diversity.



She was selected as one of the “45 People Aged 45 or Below Making a Difference in Hong Kong” by Baccarat Magazine in 2012.

[Official site](#)

Joanne Leung

- Transgender rights fighter
- Pink Alliance chairperson
- Government cooperation to provide information

Think Like A Freak May 2nd, AAB201

TED HKBU
independently organized TED event

Shanghai PRIDE

Photo courtesy of Shanghai PRIDE

A special thanks to Charlene Liu and Raymond Phang Co-Founders of ShanghaiPRIDE



Shanghai PRIDE is the first and only LGBT Pride season in mainland China, celebrating diversity for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender community and friends.



SHANGHAI PRIDE (上海骄傲节) is an annual LGBT pride event that takes place in Shanghai, China. It was first held in 2009 and was significant in that it was the first time a mass LGBT event has taken place in mainland China. The festival featured events such as an art exhibition and film

screenings. There was also a large party hosted by a privately owned venue. Three thousand people from China and other countries attended the festival. The festival is organized entirely by volunteers with the support of media, businesses, individuals, and foreign consulates.

Shanghai PRIDE aims to raise awareness and visibility and to promote self-acceptance and acceptance for the LGBTQ community through sports, cultural, and social activities.

When did you first get the idea for Shanghai LGBTQ film festival? What did inspire you to create the festival?

Since our establishment in 2009, film screening is an important element within ShanghaiPRIDE. Most LGBTQ films are from the west and less Chinese productions. Hence we emphasize in Chinese films, short or feature. And as awareness

started to grow, more local productions too. We started our first Chinese short film category in 2014 then in 2015 we rebranded our film nights to ShanghaiPRIDE Film Festival with Chinese Short Film Awards since then. It is important for us to showcase LGBTQ stories via films as it is a medium that suits a lot of people and themes are very diverse. We also work with foreign consulates in Shanghai to do a cultural ex-

change, bringing in new and cutting-edge international films to ShPFF too.

What were some of the biggest challenges for LGBTQ film festival in China? Do you currently face them?

LGBTQ films are unofficially banned from public cinema and we have never heard international big-name passing censorship, hence we





are not able to screen at cinemas. We screen our films at private event spaces with limited seats. But as much as we want more to watch them, our current status is cozy too and creates an intimate environment for discussions and exchanges. All our screenings are free hence we need partners to provide spaces and funding for film rights and guest speakers.

What is the most important message of Shanghai LGBTQ film festival?

It would be experiencing the diversity among us. LGBTQ films are not just gays and lesbians and sad stories, there are many more about gender, exploration, queer, transgender, family, youth, disabilities etc. In general, films are windows to more lives of the LGBTQ community.

Shanghai PRIDE encourages the community and partners to support LGBTQ related projects and initiatives, celebrating diversity

How has the festival developed over the years? How much has it changed since you started?

It started in a cafe and since 2012, we collaborated for foreign consulates who have venues, and recent years, we have event spaces who can offer bigger venues too. In terms of film selections, we use to collaborate with Beijing Queer Film Festival as there are more inde-

pendent filmmakers there then foreign consulates will recommend films from their film library and since 2015, we reached out to more films ourselves and work with LGBTQ film festivals throughout the world to exchange films and get recommendations.

What is the LGBTQ situation in Shanghai? Is it different from the situation of other Chinese cities?

Shanghai is relatively more open and aware of LGBTQ compared to other cities. It is one of the many metropolitans and often the one showcased as the window of China. Many foreign expats are here too. So the Shanghai LGBTQ community is very diverse and vibrant. While other cities might be more local and in general, shyer to come out and participate in LGBTQ events. Awareness in 1st tier

cities like Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen might be higher but the rest are not. ShanghaiPRIDE is constantly collaborating with local organizations to create awareness and promote acceptance.

What did you achieve for LGBTQ community with your festival?

ShanghaiPRIDE has grown from a handful of organizers to now 30+ with more than 30+ events throughout the year. Participants have also grown to near 7000 for week-long events from 3,000. Though the progress is slow compared to the west we are happy with more people, businesses, media willing to come out and support.

How difficult is it for a filmmaker to get funding for movies with LGBTQ themes in China?

Very difficult as they are not guaranteed to go into the public cinema and commercialize. Most Chinese LGBTQ films are independent projects and go to film festivals. Most of the times, filmmakers are passionate about the theme and would like to contribute to and explore.

Some movies reveal the prejudices faced by the LGBTQ community in Asia. Is it still so long the path to overcome the morally conservative wall?

It is. LGBTQ or self-identity is often family matters or personal issues. When it comes to this, it is a taboo to come out and stand up for it. Coming out remains as the main issue faced by LGBTQ community in China or maybe Asia as in general, the society here is more conservative and not as verbal as the west. And also the Asian society, if brought up to follow their parents' will and going against, is considered disrespectful. But we are quite positive that things are changing and will change for a better future

Do you have any advice?

ShanghaiPRIDE is only going to celebrating the 10th year and although the LGBTQ movements in China might be slightly longer but still a baby compared to 30 or 40 years in the west. We cannot really compare the progress or push the community here to match the achievements or accomplishments. It requires more education and awareness but we are getting there.





北京同志中心

BEIJING LGBT CENTER

Beijing LGBT center is a other identities. The Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that center offers support relies on volunteer support to organize various with professional counselor team and services activities and events for in individual consulting, Beijing's LGBTQ community. group consulting, peer support, and workshops Beijing LGBT center mission is to empower and activities on psychology. Since 2012, the center started building a national LGBT-friendly counselor network. China's LGBT community to live rewarding lives unconstrained by sexuality, gender, or

Beijing LGBT Center

Beijing LGBT Center is a supportive resource to thousands of LGBT people in Beijing

A special thanks to Duan

Photos courtesy of Beijing LGBT Center



What is the priority in your Center's agenda?

Psychological counseling service and a transgender anti-discrimination program would take priority among other work assignments in the center. In China, the LGBT group usually face challenges in self-identification, coming-out, intimate relationships and so on. In the meanwhile, these challenges increase the risk of falling into depression 3-4 times

than the non-LGBT group. The center provides psychological counseling service weekly to support and help them. Since last year, we also begin to advocate for transgender anti-discrimination after the Department of Transgenders set up. By comparing to other groups of LGBT, the status quo of transgender is the worst while they also have to face much more challenges than other groups of LGBT. Ac-

cording to the "2017 Chinese Transgender Population General Survey Report", which is presented by Beijing LGBT Centre, Peking University and Embassy of Netherlands in China, shows that there are almost 90% of Chinese families cannot accept transgender, while approximately 48.5% of transgender female is completely refused to be looked after by their parents or guardians.

Since 2010 the center is providing psychological health services to the LGBT community

What are the main difficulties and problems that your Center has faced?

The major problems we are facing is that we cannot be registered under the Ministry of Civil Affairs of China, and this leads that it would be difficult to keep running the central office as lacking of funds.

Is "coming out" nowadays still a problem in China?

I would say "Yes". According to the report Being LGBT in China launched by UNDP, Peking University, and Beijing LGBT Centre, only 5% of LGBT would like to come out to their families. Hence we could say that the many of Chinese LGBT are placed under the pressure from families and societies.

The center promotes the rights movement, eliminate discrimination and achieve equality; to promote diversity and the development of civil society

2017
跨性别群体
/现/状/调/查/报/告

The Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Population in China

发布会] Press conference



Are there particular challenges for the LGBTQ community in China?

LGBT group aren't accepted by the society, while it is stigmatized and discriminated.

What are the biggest changes in China in recent years towards the LGBTQ community?

We still find out that many changes are going on there. One of them is that the level of acceptance among young people is increasing, and there is an active discussion of LGBT groups and other related topics going on the social media.

Chinese citizens, no matter what their sexual preference or gender identity, all deserve to enjoy equal rights



How do you reach people who don't advocate for themselves?

It would be difficult to influence these people to change their values. I do think that the center and other similar organizations could be regarded as perfect existences to encourage LGBT groups by working with them. Simultaneously, we also give the groups voice by collaborating with media and releasing of reports.

Do exist in China LGBTQ friendly job employers?

Yes. Some of the foreign ventures work with us to have the Sharing Talk and advocate for the gender diversity of the ventures.

Which is the most useful advice you would like to give to an LGBTQ person at present time?

It is easier to brace yourself and accept who you are

Since we are in social media era, do you have any advice for people who may be getting cyberbullied?

If your privacy is violated, I would suggest that you need help from lawyers. This is what I know now, I'm sorry about that.

PFLAG China Ah Qiang

Ah Qiang activist is head of
PFLAG China in Guangzhou, that
improve the living conditions of LGBT

Photos courtesy of Ah Qiang



同性恋亲友会
PFLAG CHINA





AH QIANG is an activist and executive director of PFLAG China (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays of China). PFLAG China, founded on June 28, 2008, is the country's largest non-profit serving advocacy organizations in China of the LGBT community and their families. PFLAG China encourages LGBT people to embrace their own identity and to improve communication and understanding. PFLAG China organizes events, dialogues, exchanges, helpline, lectures and other activities. PFLAG China strives to encourage meeting where parents and friends can looking for help to learn how to support their LGBT kids and friends. LGBT volunteers families and friends of LGBT advocate equality between sexual orientations and improve the social visibility of LGBT people.

PFLAG China holds a National LGBT Conference annually in different cities of China from 2009

How did you understand that you wanted to be an activist and how did you start?

When I first came into contact with the Internet, it was 1998. At that time, I realized that there are many sexual minorities in the world like me. At that time, homosexuality was considered abnormal. In China, I have hardly heard of anyone who will publicly come out. I didn't know how to fight for equal rights for myself. I expected to wait for a powerful official, or an influential star to come out. I think only they can influence others. I have waited for two years and have grown and studied on the Internet. Since 2000, I have made special contributions for a gay website, and then I volunteered for a nonprofit organization to answer the gay hot-line. At first, I didn't think I became an activist. I was just a volunteer. With a continuous investment, I found myself very fond of doing these things. Later I founded PFLAG China.

What are the main difficulties and problems you have faced in your path as an activist?

I think there are three things that are most difficult. First, the participation of the

LGBT community is very low. At first, most people were unwilling to participate. The fear itself made it difficult for us to carry out our work. Second, the policy restrictions on NGOs in the LGBT field. We have no way to carry out the work. We were unable to obtain a legal status, and this was a big limitation. Third, the understanding of public welfare in the entire Chinese society is still insufficient, and there is less understanding of NGOs in the LGBT field, and it is difficult to obtain sufficient financial support.

How does PFLAG China help to encourage LGBT people to embrace their own identity?

Through hot-line answers and encouragement, we organize offline sharing sessions and symposiums. We encourage lonely LGBT individuals to participate in offline activities and establish real links with the community. In this strong link relationship, they have a chance to accept themselves better. Moreover, in this sharing, many people will see that others around the LGBT community have already recognized themselves, come out, and live the life they want, which will encourage them.

Are there differences working on the territory, for region to region?

Yes, we have different strategies in different areas. Because China is very large, between the northwest and the coastal areas of China, there may be a 15-year gap on LGBT issues, while China's northeast is more talkative, the local private

economy is implemented, and more people work within the system. According to these situations, we design our activities. For example, in coastal cities, we will hold big events, and in some area, we emphasize small sharing and face-to-face communication with parents.

What has been achieved and what is still to be done in the field of rights in China?

I think the most important thing is that the visibility of the LGBT people is getting higher and higher. This is the biggest achievement of the Chinese gay movement in the past 10 years. Moreover, quite a few people in the society no longer think that LGBT is morbid. The marriage rights of the sexual minority, non-discriminatory legislation, adoption rights, etc., have not yet succeeded

How social prejudice impact on Chinese families to accept their children's sexuality?

Chinese society places special emphasis on family culture, face culture, succession, filial piety, etc., which affect the family's acceptance of LGBT loved ones. Our job is to promote cultural change, and this change is sometimes very fast for the



PFLAG China launched the first 400 hotline for LGBT people and their parents. It is answered by parents of gays and lesbians as well as psychiatrists in order to provide correct information and support to help them with their difficulties.

family's small environment, but rather slow for the whole social culture. It will be quite slow. Some people put traditional values before their kids' happiness, which will affect their ability to love them.

What best advice for those who are afraid of "coming out"? Why shouldn't hesitate too long?

My usual advice is if you wait another 10 years, will you change into heterosexuality? If you can't, then you have been waiting for 10 years, let yourself waste more time, can't be yourself. Hesitation and procrastination will not make parents happy and they will not be happy. Many people will think that. Many people will think that they do not come out of the closet, is for the love of their parents. But



Ah Qiang is producer of *Mama Rainbow* a documentary that exploring a pioneer generation of Chinese parents that have been stepping up and speaking out on their love for their gay kids

in fact, they don't have the courage to cross this level. I would recommend them to grow up. Only if a person has the courage, he can only face the incident, and he will not be afraid to do it.

What role do social media play in contemporary activism in China?

Social media plays a very important role in the gay movement. From the BLOG era,

social media has changed. We wait to be described by others, everyone can speak, everyone can define their own life, everyone can share their own stories. Social media has educated more LGBT learners to be themselves, and social media has given LGBT a platform and possibilities for voice. It can be said that the development of China's LGBT movement is closely linked to the advancement of social media

and technology, and social media has greatly promoted the LGBT movement.

What can you tell us about Valentine's Day promotions initiative of Alibaba offering weddings in California and "Rainbow Love" contest on Taobao? Did they help to open dialogue and remove some taboo?

That was in 2015. At that time, Taobao, through its gay marriage marketing campaign, found PFLAG, Beijing Gay Center, Blued, and others to work together to mobilize the community's gay partners to participate, and eventually went to California for a gay collective wedding that had greater influence in Chinese society. But in the last two years, as the policy has tightened, I have not seen Alibaba

participate in any new gay community, they are a business, they may be more concerned about their own interests, and the concern for LGBT interests is not more positive than other Chinese companies.

No.223

art photographer

No.223 leads us through seductive
spaces where the poses are fixed with
profound vulnerability

Photo courtesy of No.223



*Photography as a sign
of time and existence,
which creates
interior journals that
are an exclusive game
of complexity and
diversity*

*“My works are part of
my life and only exist
when I live my life.”*

No.223 (林志鹏) is a photographer and freelance writer. He was born in Guangdong province and graduated from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies with major of financial English. No.223 is one of the most important members of the Chinese generation of photographers who have risen to prominence from social media. He started with a blog, that reach millions of views, where he posted his art photographs works. He has contributed to numerous creative and fashion magazines as editor and writer and has produced photo shoots.

Since 2005 he began his self-publish project. Numerous are his solo exhibitions around the world. No.223 allowing the audience to get into fragments of real life and feeling: homes, nights, couples at parties, bodies, people naked through nature, love, fetishism, taboo ... A journey to images of the inexorable continuous evolution of identity in China that is both personal and international. He offered an intuitive photographic view almost unknown to Chinese young adults. No.223 currently lives and works in Beijing.



What is the main reason that motivated you to get into photography?

I am interested in it.

What do you want to tell with your photos?

Life. Any moment and mood of life, my experience, and my friends.

How difficult was to portrait LGBTQ themes in China?

Not difficult for me. I don't think it is difficult in China. There are no reasons to make it difficult.

What was the first reaction of the Chinese audience?

Their support. Few Anti-gay audiences also like to comment.

Has China lifestyle changed, compared to when you started photography? What are the biggest challenges nowadays?

Of course, many things have changed. The economy of China is going fast. The lifestyle of most people is getting better and more open-minded. But in gay society, it's not always going well. For example, Chinese

His personal way of look and free expression shows an intense emotion of Chinese young adults. He opens an erotic and sexy window that also have an introspective aesthetics, is chaotic, poetic and even punk

biggest social media Weibo announce that words about gay would be deleted and blocked. It happens only 3 months ago. But finally, Weibo canceled this rule after people protesting in Weibo.

What is your experience as a photographer in the era of social media?

I built up my first blog in 2003 and kept posing my photography works on it. It got about 2millions view at that time. I also used Flickr as my photo album to release my photo works. As the blog disappearing, I started to use Weibo and Instagram. All of my social media



Through his lens and snaps, he portrays an intimate and private hidden China that is no different from global youth life feeling and culture



are platforms to share my opinion and artworks. It's a convenient way to let more people know about your works. I was a blogger first and then became a photography artist.

landscape with my iPhone. I showed it to my friend and ask her to keep shooting for me as the composition of the iPhone photo when I was running with shirtless.

Can you share with us a moment from backstage of photo shooting?

I traveled to Madagascar in 2015, I came across an area "Red Tsingy". It's some kind of red earth and full of limestones. When I visited there, a voice in my mind to ask me I have to strip off and run into this big area. And I did so. I took a picture of the



Simon Chung

Simon Chung is a Hong Kong award-winning film director, that moved to Canada from the age of fifteen

Photos courtesy of Simon Chung

SIMON CHUNG graduated from York University in Toronto, where he majored in film production. After returning to Hong Kong, he worked in the local film and television industry. He worked as an independent filmmaker, his shorts *Life is Elsewhere*, *Stanley Beloved* and *First Love* and *Other Pains* won multiple awards at international film festivals. His first full-length feature film, *Innocent*, premiered at the Hong Kong International Film Festival and won the NFB Best Canadian Film Award at Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival. His second feature, *End of Love*, premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in 2009, while his third feature, *Speechless*, premiered at the BFI London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. He is a founding member of Ying e Chi, an independent film distributor in Hong Kong.



You grew up in Hong Kong and Toronto. What role did they have in your personal training?

I grew up in Hong Kong and left for Canada when I was 15. I feel very fortunate to be fairly well-versed in both languages and cultures.

I read that you studied at Hong Kong Baptist University: an institution

with a Christian education heritage. Did it have affected your personal identity?

Baptist University has a very well-known film program, and it was while working there that I first started making short films. My first shorts such as *Life is Elsewhere* and *Stanley Beloved* won international prizes, which encouraged me to continue the path of inde-

pendent filmmaking to this day.

What motivated you to become a director, how did you start your artistic career?

I studied film and had always wanted to make films. When I moved back to Hong Kong, I spent a few years working in commercials, TV, and film, and then I got a job as a technician at Baptist

University, which gave me access to some equipment and time-off during semester breaks, so I started making short films, and later on feature films.

Who influenced you as a person and film director?

There are many film influences for me: Bergman, Yasujiro Ozu, Hou Hsiao Hsien etc. For “I Miss You When I See You”, the films of Dardenne broth-

ers (Jean-Pierre and Luc) had been a huge influence.

How much of your work projects can we find from your own personal life experience?

All my films originate from personal experience and from those of people close to me. But the films are not really autobiographical. Once I start a screenplay, characters take on lives of

their own.

Where did the idea for the movie “Speechless” come from?

The idea of *Speechless* came from a news story I read about a man who was found on the shores of England. He had no ID on him and he couldn’t speak, just like the character in my film. I moved the story to China because I wanted to explore this story

in a Chinese setting, particularly a small town in China.

Can you tell us about your last movie “I Miss You When I See You”?

The film was conceived in 2011, and went through a long process of rewrites and looking for funding. After many attempts at finding industry support, we decided to make it independently. The theme of depression and reuniting with loved ones from the past is very close to my heart.

Do you have a film that you are most attached to? Why? Did you face unexpected or particular moment during the shooting of it?

You mean my own films? I like *I Miss You When I See You* the most. The scene in the rain was a memorable shoot. It was 3 a.m. when we started. I was scared that we wouldn't have enough water for the rain and that it would start to get light. I also had to bring my dog Buddy to the shoot, which complicates matters.

Can you share with us a story from the backstage of one of your film?

Jamie's apartment in the

film is my home, and Buddy is my dog. After I made the film, I sold the apartment and moved to Thailand with Buddy and my other dog. Sadly, Buddy died this past December.

From the time since you did your first work, until now, do you think there's any difference or changes in perception about gays in China and Asia? Has there been progress in rights and respect?

In recent years, some places such as Taiwan are considering legalizing gay marriage and Japan has made same-sex partnerships legal. However, gays are still repressed in China, and gay films cannot be shown there.

You and others film directors are founders of non-profit film organization Ying e Chi. Can you tell us why you have decided to found it?

We founded Ying E Chi with the intention of acting as a platform for independent film distribution. Over the years, we have helped hundreds of films by Hong Kong and Asian independent filmmakers find an audience.





Lucie Liu's TaipeiLove*

An intimate portrayal of Taiwan's unique journey towards same-sex marriage and equality

Photos courtesy of Lucie Liu

TAIPEILOVE* is a documentary from Berlin filmmaker Lucie Liu. Taiwan is the first country in Asia that on May 2017 ruled that same-sex couples should have the right to marry. Same-sex marriage will automatically become legal before 24 May 2019. Taiwan's fight for marriage equality is the result of a long journey. Taipei-Love* is a documentary focus on Taipei perception of homosexuality in Taiwanese society. The movie provides a deeper understanding for breaking down stereotypes and start to think about what is love: a feeling that is inclusive and indiscriminate.

Can you tell us something about you?

I'm Lucie and I am 25 years old. I studied political science but I was always very interested in theater. I used to act in theater and I started writing my own pieces and move towards the direction, that's basically me! Then I decided to start this movie because this documentary is kind of perfect combination of visual art and political science and that's what I



always wanted to do.

Where did the idea for your documentary "Taipeilove*" come from?

I used to live in Taipei in 2016. I was working at the Goethe Institute. I went to the gay pride parade (it was really packed) and I saw so many people. I met two Korean guys and Japanese guy and I spoke to them and they told me that the gay pride parade in Taiwan, they attend every year, is the only time in the year where they

can be truly themselves. I thought it was kinda odd but then I was digging a bit deeper and I started reading on it and I realized that Taiwan is really having a super important role in this by pushing same-sex marriage. I started reading about it and I realize there's almost no coverage and since I always wanted to do something, as I said, combines politics at the arts I wrote a script for a potential movie. It's really funny because I never had any film experience. I mean I did some short commission works but never anything

like that big, I kind of ended up pursuing a German political foundation to give me funding and I ended up flying to Taipei in October last year.

How would you describe your documentary?

I would say that TaipeiLove* is basically a snapshot of society that is currently going through a lot of change.

How long did it take to make the whole project?

Basically I'm still currently editing. Well, the idea process and the research process, I think, three or four months but not that intense and then the whole filming process was eight months. Right now the editing process has been going on. From when we started it's been like maybe a month. It will be finished in October or November. There is a trailer for our crowdfunding campaign.

When you started filming, did you plan ahead, or there were events that influenced the development of the documentary?

The first event that really changed something was when I went to Taiwan and my German cameraman was supposed to come to Taiwan. But then, only a few days before, he was supposed to come, he told me that he doesn't want to come because he was kinda scared of Asia. I was there all by myself and I have felt like incredibly lost, but I think this started my thrive because I realized "I'm here now and I can, I did it or I don't". So I put all my energy into doing it. Then I basically asked all my friends "Please connect me with anyone who's gay or lesbian" So I conducted around

40 interviews with friends of friends in the park in cafes. They just told me what is happening in their lives and I kept asking them very similar questions and so I could point out the difficulties in being gay or lesbian in Taiwan. Then the filming process itself started. I carefully selected three protagonists. The interviews I did with those 40 people they really helped me and put a finger on who's really important in the scene. So I was able to find five experts and politicians give me an inside interview. It's really interesting because everybody was super open about it, because I think there hasn't been any coverage or a lot of coverage. So everybody was welcoming me with open arms. That was probably like the highlight of everything. I just walked into the politician's offices and they gave me an interview. I think in Germany that wouldn't have. They really help me understand that this is like a super important issue.

What were the biggest challenges of "Taipei-Love*"?

I think personally, for me as a person, it was kind of difficult because, in the beginning, I was kind of doubting, because I mean, it was my first movie, my first produc-



tion and of course you have a lot of self-doubts and you kind of just want to be taken seriously. There's like still so much to learn, but I was really lucky. I had a really great cameraman. A nice guy. He supported me so much. He knew I didn't have experience. He helped me so much and supported me a lot. I'm really grateful that I had him. He helped me like it was his personal challenge. I would say the bigger challenge, I

think, it was really incredibly difficult and sad to see how people are struggling. How difficult still is, despite that same-sex marriage will be legalized, how difficult it is to be gay or lesbian in public or especially in terms of being with your family or talking with your family about it. One of the hardest challenges was to see how people are living in an open society but society is still too closed to accept. So that was very

challenging to work that.

Can you share with us a story from the backstage of your documentary?

Well, I think there's one I remember pretty closely. One of my protagonists is called Sarah and we became pretty close friends which were really nice. When we had an interview day with her, I interviewed also her aunt. Her aunt was sending a picture

of the interview situation to the group chain of the family. Then Sarah's mom calls and it was really moving, cuz her mom didn't really want Sarah to give this interview or do have anything to do with the documentary. We got the chance to listen to her mom telling Sarah all the reasons and everything that Sarah has always had trouble with. Her mom was on speaker so we could all hear it and it was really si-

lent in the room all of a sudden. Sarah's mom just talked about "I wish you had a husband, I wish you had children. It makes me very sad that you chose that life. I just want you to be happy and I don't want you to be lonely." This phone call kind of summarizing all the struggle and all the difficulties. So many people are going through and that was really moving and after this phone call, after she hung up it was just like everybody and the team was really tense and everything you could feel was the energy in the room. It was there I think was like the golden moment of the documentary. That was just super intense! I think we hit a really good time, cuz the people of my team were just really cool people, genuinely nice and that really helped me. I think it's like this very tense moment on one hand, and under the other one, a very cool team then it works together. Another story is that: I asked my team for motivation, like "What is the reason .. Why you're doing this documentary with me?" My cameraman, who I'm really close to, told me he has a daughter. He told me when he was in high school he was a bully. He used to bully gay kids. I was really shocked. He used to bully, but now he wants to help to do this movie because he realized he doesn't want

his daughter to grow up in a world that kind of makes difficult for her if she would be a lesbian. He just wants to show his daughter that change is possible and it's so interesting because he was the one who was putting so much trouble on gay kids in his high school and then he kind of changed his direction. The realization of the revelation and that was also really interesting. He wants her to grow up in a world where she doesn't have to worry about her sexuality.

Legalising same-sex marriage is a historic moment for Taiwan. Do you think it reflects an important part of the society or LGBT community still faces problems with "coming out", tradition, families, religion ...?

I wish it would have a really big impact of course, but I honestly think for now that legalizing same-sex marriage will definitely lead to a change in society into a note. You will just see a lot more weddings or it becomes more normal, to see that but I'm not really sure. I really hope it would bring that change, but from what I've heard and what I've seen that families are still a huge obstacle. I talk to so many people and they were

in their 30s sometimes even in their 40s and their family still doesn't know. So I hope it would bring that change, but I think it takes a lot more time and a lot more education to actually have this change that everybody is hoping for.

I heard there was a protest from Catholics ...

It's so weird when you think about the new society be-

cause like the part that is actually religious, in terms of Christian religion it's so small. It's four, around five percent of society and when you think about the part of society that is gay or lesbian is equal. Five to ten percent. If you think about it's like two equally big groups but the problem is that the religious groups are so vocal because they get so much money. They have so much funding from America, Australia. A

lot of priests from America and Australia are in Taiwan so this religious is so vocal. They have so much money into that. They make advertising on TV, so it's really difficult for the other group to kind of hold against. They have this weird propaganda against LGBT education or gender education and they think that they tell people that their child will turn instantly gay. These people are so odd, it's so weird.

They are really strong there and so they also fuel these anti-gay protests, so it's a really big divide like a small part of society but that's like a really strong divide.

How do you expect audience reaction will be to your documentary? Do you think they will understand the historical important step in human rights for the LGBT com-

munity in Taipei?

I think as for now, I was always doing the documentary target audience, that is actually Europe and I hope any Western country. I'm also hoping for America, but I think that a lot of people don't know a lot about Taiwan. When I told people I was going there, a lot of people told me to have fun in Thailand. I think they will learn and they will see that

this really small country that has this huge change going on, which is historic for Asia and I hope that they will understand and realize and give Taiwan more credit for it. I know politically, it may have its chaos and nobody recognizes Taiwan and China have constantly claiming Taiwan, but I think in terms of like human rights and soft power it's incredibly important to actually give Taiwan credit for it. It helped Taiwan





Official site

go through that and be the role model it is supposed to be. What I'm really hoping to do is that I will be able to go to different universities in Asia and just show the movie there. Because after all, I hope that next to the biggest Western audience. I hope that if I go to university screenings, attend university screenings in Asia will also bring a slow impact there. I really hope that. If people see what is possible in their own continent I hope in that change, maybe can a little

bit change it up a little and changes in habits.

Do you think the example of Taiwan will help others Asian Countries to consider more freedoms and rights for the LGBT community?

I think if you have one positive example, others can follow. I'm sure that it won't be a change within the next five years. But I think within the next generation, my

generation, when I'll be a bit older or when I'll have children, then it's going to be definitely easier for them to be openly gay or lesbian in Asia. That's what I'm really sure of. Because if you have one positive example, I think others can actually follow. I know that it's so difficult to generalize in Asia because there are Muslim parts and Buddhist parts. But I spoke to activists in Taiwan and also I was in touch with activists all around Asia. They just have a problem. Other

countries want to legalize it as well but the politicians and the governments they really don't want to do it. Society is a lot more involved but after all, it's the Government to the other side. But I've always said if I'm in a lecture hall in some country: in South Korea, in Japan or anywhere and I only have the ability to speak to some students and those students will be touched by my movie that would be a huge success for me.



Chen Chen

Chen Chen is an author that let his audience explore his universe. He investigates forms of love through relationships with family, daily life experience, territory ...

Photos courtesy of Chen Chen

The photos were taken in order of appearance by Jess X. Snow, Keegan Lester, Jeffrey Gilbert





CHEN CHEN born in Xiamen, China, is an American poet grew up in Massachusetts. After graduating from Newton North High School, he received his B.A. in creative writing and Asian/Pacific/American Studies at Hampshire College in 2011, and his M.F.A. from Syracuse University in 2014. Chen is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in English and creative writing at Texas Tech University, where he is a part-time instructor in composition. He received in 2017 National Book Awards. He wrote *Set the Garden on Fire* (Porkbelly Press, 2015) and *Kissing the Sphinx* (Two of Cups Press, 2016). His work has appeared in *Poetry*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Drunken Boat*, *Best of the Net*, *The Best American Poetry*, *The Academy of American Poets*, and elsewhere. When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities was a finalist for the Lambda literary award for gay poetry.

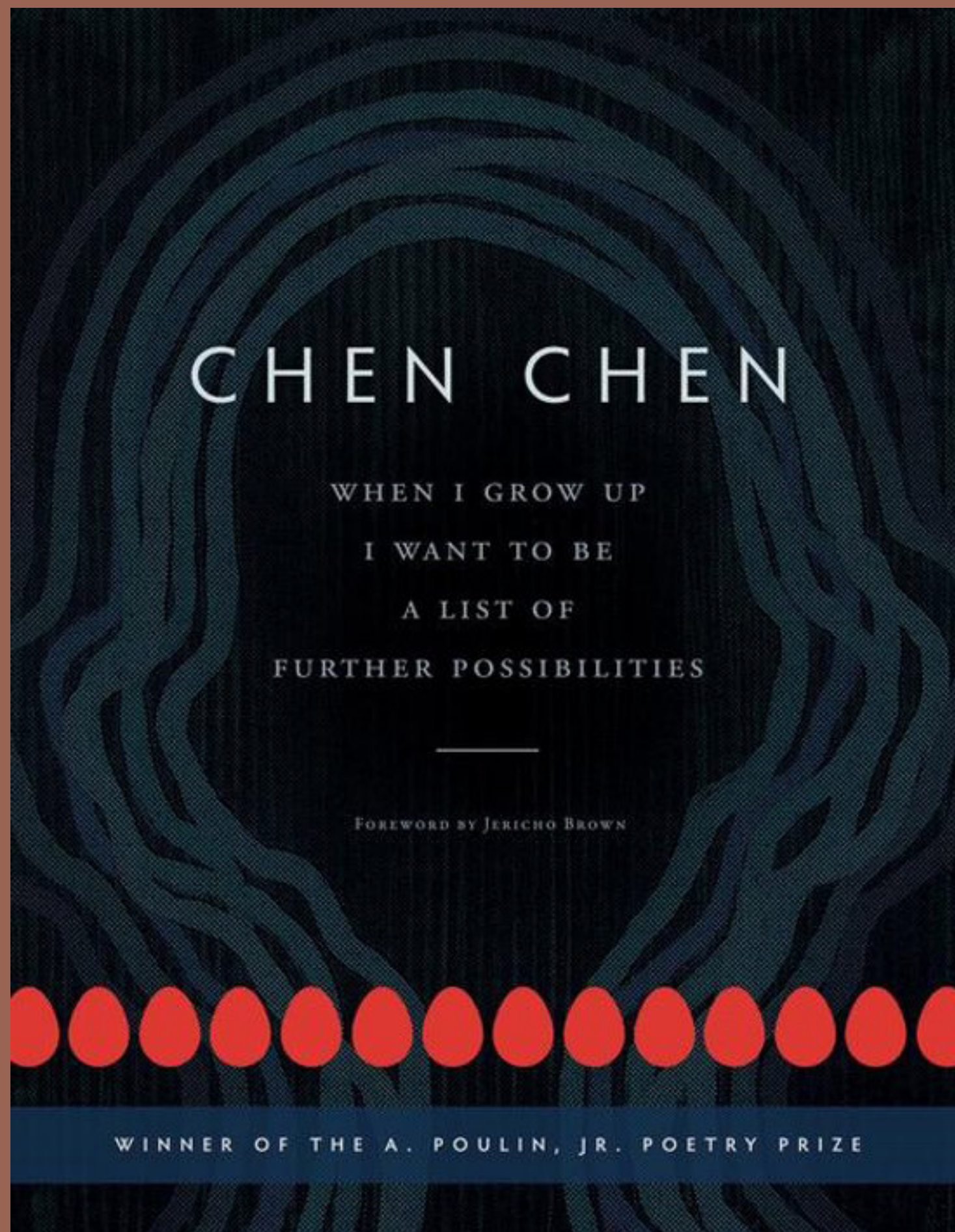
What motivated you to start writing? When did you understand your passion for poetry?

I've known since second grade that I wanted to become a writer of some kind. Throughout elementary school, during recess, I would get my friends to act out skits with me on the playground. These make-believe sessions were based on TV shows and movies, often with my own additional characters or plot twists thrown in. I would jot down ideas for future skits, sometimes spinning these into short stories. Eventually, more and more of my own world-building occurred, took over. As my friends moved on to playing "real games" like soccer or basketball, I kept dreaming up scenarios and increasingly, playing them out on the page. In middle school, I got obsessed with the show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and thought for a while I'd become a TV writer (maybe I'll still write for TV at some point, who knows). I loved and continue to love the kind of long-form, serial storytelling that a TV show can do. In high school, I started to write poetry more seriously—outside of English class assignments, though it was fantastic, dedicated English teachers who encouraged me and looked at

my drafts and guided me through my early attempts at rigorous revision. I feel extremely lucky that I had these English teachers who spent time with me during lunch and after school, talking with me about poetry, what I was reading, what I was writing. Also lucky: the amazing public library I frequented during my high school years—the Newton Free Library in Newton, MA. I checked out so many poetry books by contemporary poets who are still my influences today: Margaret Atwood, Louise Glück, Li-Young Lee, Robert Hass, and others. I also read translations of the Dao De Jing and other works of Chinese as well as Japanese philosophy. It wasn't until my third year of college, though, that I started to focus primarily on writing poetry. Up to that point, I wrote both fiction and poetry, and more fiction. It was taking workshops with Heather Madden and Aracelis Girmay at Hampshire College as well as with Martín Espada at UMass Amherst that really shifted things—changed my life. I fell in love with the process of working on a poem for hours and hours, trying to get every line, every image strangely right, fully alive.

Who influenced you as a person and poet?

My family, both blood and chosen. And with particular gratitude to my friends Sam Herschel Wein and Mag Gabbert, who have been really important first/trusted readers for my work. I love trading poems with them, talking about craft alongside our specific visions, our specific hopes for what a poem can do. Sam and I also collaborate on a number of projects: a joint chapbook, a journal called Underblong, outfit decisions, etc. My teachers, including graduate school teachers whom I haven't mentioned yet—especially Bruce Smith, Michael Burkard, Christopher Kennedy, and Minnie Bruce Pratt during my MFA... and especially Curtis Bauer and Jill Patterson during my PhD. My partner Jeff Gilbert and our pug dog, Mr. Rupert Giles (named after a Buffy character, of course). My community through Kundiman, an organization that nurtures Asian American writers, supports Asian American literature. And with great love to Cofounders Sarah Gambito and Joseph O. Legaspi, to Executive Director Cathy Linh Che. And the friends, the family I've made through Kundiman, including Monica Sok, Muriel Leung, Janine Joseph, Michelle Lin, Kazu-



mi Chin, Swati Khurana, and Jennifer S. Cheng.

Did you find any difficulties or obstacles to express your points of view at the beginning?

For a while, I kept trying to write like the poets who most influenced me, such as Louise Glück and Li-Young Lee. But I was trying too hard to be a serious poet, writing about very serious things in a sort of spare, recognizably “high lyric” way. Sometimes I would write much more conversational poems that used a lot of humor, but I didn't give those poems as much weight or really think of myself as a poet who could be funny and serious at the same time. It took time for me to see how much more alive my poems were when I allowed a kind of language that was closer to the way I talk with friends, with people I love. In graduate school, I returned to poems by Allen Ginsberg and Frank O'Hara, by Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Ross Gay, Brenda Shaughnessy, and Mary Ruefle. And I saw and valued more the comedic moments in work by Glück and Lee. The play and imagination in these poems led to weird new work of my own. Halfway through my MFA, I started to embrace an approach to writing that felt

more wacky, more true, and more me. Another kind of difficulty, set of difficulties: growing up gay with deeply homophobic parents... and growing up as the child of Chinese immigrants in predominantly white school environments. I don't want to simplify things here—I also experienced and continue to experience homophobia from white folks, too. Much of my poetry is autobiographical and explores these confrontations with homophobia, xenophobia, and racism. Sometimes straight white classmates in creative writing classes have misunderstood my work or been dismissive of it. I've had to push through those unhelpful comments. Finding and building community outside of writing programs has been crucial. I wasn't exaggerating when I said that falling in love with poetry was a life-changing event. I'm not exaggerating when I say that becoming friends with fellow queer poets of color has been life-saving.

What message do you want to communicate with your works?

I don't think there's anyone message I want to communicate. I hope there's a range of things to glean from my poetry. I love being surprised by a reader's in-



terpretation. I don't think a poem really starts to live all it can live until someone else picks it up, carries it around in their own idiosyncratic way. That's the magic: the interaction between someone else's brain and being with this language-creature I've made.

What about your book “When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities”? Where the idea come from? How long did it take you to complete it?

This book started as my MFA thesis. I worked closely with my thesis advisor, Bruce Smith, on the initial version. The title comes from a

poem in the collection. The collection happened poem by poem, over the three years of the MFA, and mostly during the second half of the program. I started to think about grouping the poems together through working on two different chapbooks—Set the Garden on Fire, which eventually was published in 2015 by Porkbelly Press, and Kissing the Sphinx, which came out in 2016 via Two of Cups Press. The former chapbook contained very narrative poems, more straightforward autobiography. The latter chapbook had very surreal poems, more fictionalized or just fictional speakers and scenes. I was working through how to bring these two aesthetic directions to-

gether in some way but first had to see them as separate, smaller projects. My MFA thesis included a handful of poems from both chapbooks and then a great deal of other poems. I wanted the collection to feel expansive, to say something about potential and becoming as a perpetual process, not a thing that ends once you're an adult. Growing up goes on and on, in all these surprising ways. And as a queer person of color, I often have to create my own ways forward (and back, too—the kinds of memory, kinds of history that are mine instead of what's been dictated to or for me). At the same time, as I said in my last response, I wanted a range of interpretations for the reader, as well. So, I don't think this book is (about) any one thing. Post-MFA, I sent the book out to presses. When it won BOA Editions' A. Poulin, Jr. Poetry Prize, the judge for the contest, Jericho Brown, reached out and we worked on revising the manuscript together. Brown was incredibly generous with his time and really understood the book as a book better than I did—its arc, its shape. The oldest poem in the book, “Race to the Tree,” I started in college. So if you count that, it took seven years to complete the book. But if we're starting from when I started assembling

these poems as a book, then it's more like three years.

Do you think that growing in Massachusetts has affected your way of writing?

Yes. I didn't use to think so. I used to think I could live anywhere and that I'd be inspired and changed by people, but not the place. And then I moved to West Texas to do a doctoral program. It was such an uprooting. I didn't recognize the landscape, the seasons. I missed what was familiar to me, growing up in Massachusetts. I missed the trees, the hills, the way the air smells in autumn. I realized how deeply I'd been shaped by those elements, as a person, and as a poet. If you flip through my book you'll see all the references to trees and four distinct seasons and snow, lots of snow. Some of that was also influenced by my time in Syracuse—where I spent three years, for my MFA. This next collection of poems I'm working on is definitely influenced by the flat, dusty plains of West Texas, and how outside of that landscape I felt while living there... but also the particular beauty of it.

Can you share with us a story that inspired you to realize a poetry that became special for you?

I remember reading, for the first time, the poetry of Pablo Neruda, thanks to a class taught by brilliant poet and Neruda expert Martín Espada. I remember reading the poem “I Explain a Few Things,” which describes Neruda's aesthetic shift from a detached surrealism to a politically engaged lyricism during the Spanish Civil War. Espada reading this poem out loud to us in his deep, booming voice... and then going back to my dorm room, I read the poem out loud myself... I was changed, through and through, without knowing that I needed this transformation.

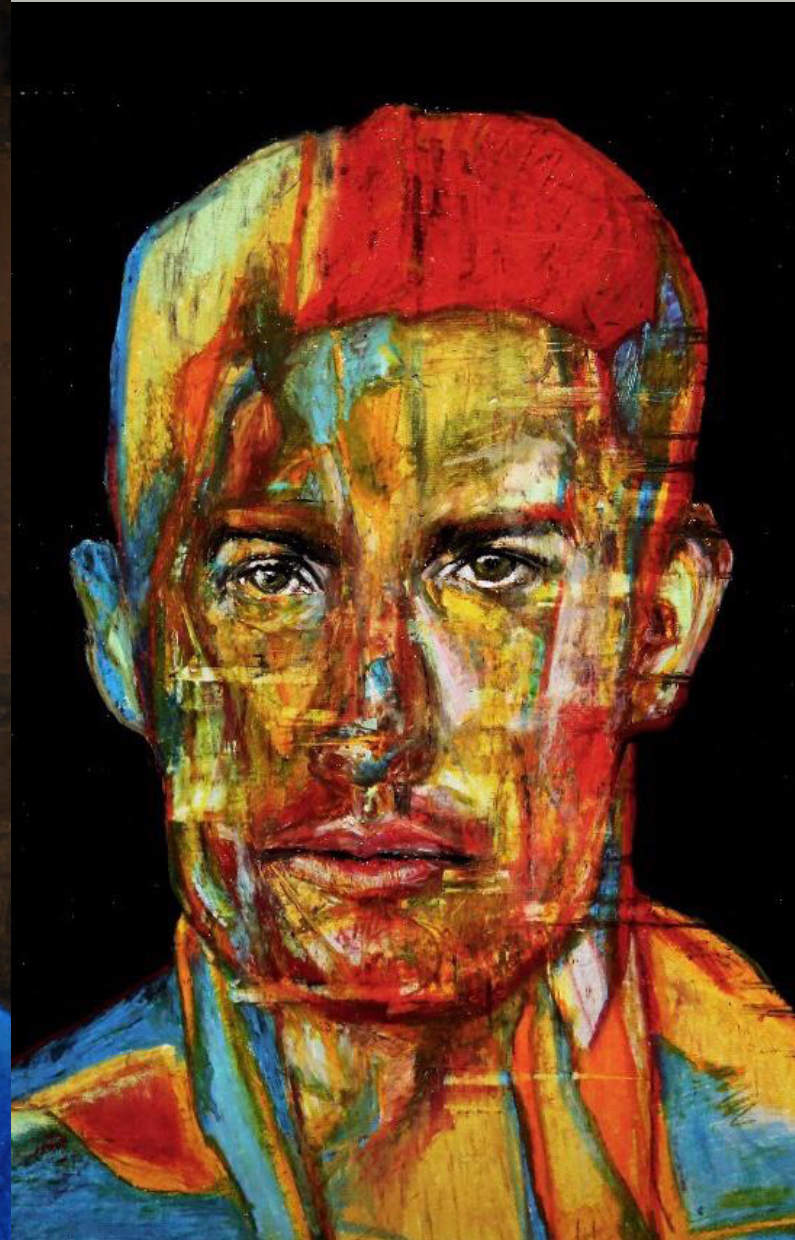
A black and white portrait of Lin Jun Liang, a man with dark hair and a beard, looking thoughtfully to the right. He is wearing a dark t-shirt. The background is a plain, light color.

Lin Jun Liang:

Art from Inside Out

*Lin Jun Liang is a modern fine artist
that creating a meditation message
interacting through anatomy and
human feelings*

Photos courtesy of Lin Jun Liang



LIN JUNLIANG is a modern artist. He was born in Hualien, Taiwan. He studied at the National Taiwan University of Art, Department of Multimedia and Animation Arts and Shih Chien University Department of Communications Design (BA). His works including video installations, body art, post-system ef-

fects clips, expressionist portraits, and paintings. Lin Jun Liang exams the remove identity, the autonomy, the human feelings, and meditation with sensibility and carefulness. He was recognized in 2009, 2012 by the National Taiwan Museum of Youth Collection and in 2014 for the Taipei Art Award.

How and when did you get into art?

During the period of the institute, I entered the art field after being guided by a professor from the UK.

Who influenced you as a person and an artist?

Family encouragement

What keep you inspired?

Digital game.

How would you describe your art project? What do you want to tell with your artworks?

Gray. It's about humans unexpressed emotions.

Are there any of your artwork related to a moment that marked a significant change in your life?

Yes.

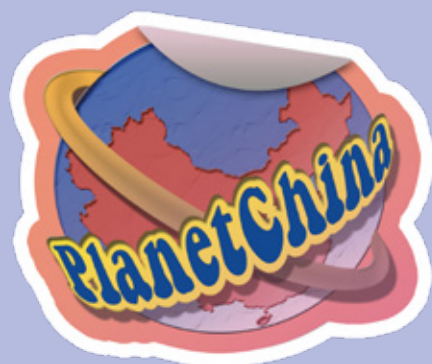
Do you think art could be an instrument in the defense and in the claims of LGBTQ rights?

Yes, but it can not be reduced only to express bright colors and physical pleasure, we should rather focus our attention on social discrimination and equality from various points of view.

Can you share with us any story behind your art project?

I was born in a comic shop. I grew up reading comics and watching Japanese animation during my elementary school.

My father used his comic techniques to guide me how to observe, how to paint, how the human body looks, how to look at it, how to understanding the stories in cartoons and movies, this journey deeply affects my future desire for aesthetics.



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