

# BECOMING POLITICAL

Finding  
Within Possibility  
Community

by Christina Tran  
and the Field Team at

**APANO**





# LOOKING for PERMISSION POSSIBILITIES

I was taught that my most important civic duty was VOTING.

As a college student, you can register as an absentee voter and mail in your ballot.



Growing up, this is what shaped my idea of politics.



Meanwhile, I never saw my parents voting. And I was too busy looking for myself in the pages of my books.

費事去 jury duty.

BABYSITTERS CLUBS #4  
Claudia and Mean Janine

All English.  
All confusing.



The people in DC, the people in the papers,  
the people making the decisions... didn't  
look like me.



That's changing...  
(slowly)

But I still don't  
see where I  
fit into these  
entrenched,  
impenetrable  
systems.



As an Asian-American,  
I've benefited from  
institutional racism  
as much as I feel  
its negative effects  
on my life and in  
my communities.



## How Should Asian-Americans Feel About Peter Liang Protests?

by Jay Caspian Kang

... complicated, often-  
complicit relationships  
between Asian-Americans  
and the nation's racial  
hierarchies...

# Figuring out how to engage as an Asian American means reconciling a bunch of mixed messages:

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If my parents learned as immigrants to keep their heads down and stay out of trouble...



Go Back to China!



...why would I feel responsible for shaping this place (even if it is my home)?

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If I'm told I don't belong here and never see myself as a protagonist...



Why even bother?



... can I ever believe in my own power to create change?

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If I'm only tolerated if I'm acting like a "model minority" ...



Success and Wealth and the American Dream

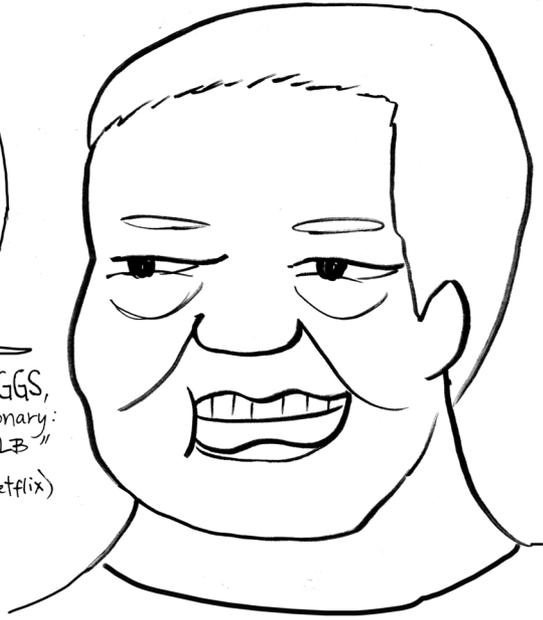


Solidarity and Justice and Autonomy for all.

... how will I have the courage to cause the disruption necessary for real change?

"You cannot change any society unless you take responsibility for it, unless you see yourself as belonging to it and responsible for changing it."

- GRACE LEE BOGGS,  
"American Revolutionary:  
The evolution of GLB"  
(streaming on Netflix)



I learned about Grace when I was looking for stories of hope and ways forward. Not only did her ideas resonate with me, I could also see myself in her.



She was a second-generation Chinese-American activist. She was involved in the civil rights and black power movement.

She opened her Detroit home to hundreds of people in the community. She showed me that change can start in your living room.



Her story helped me see that what I was doing in my own living room has revolutionary potential.



As I've grown, I've realized that there is no 'right' way to be political—the most important thing is to ENGAGE.

Now I see POSSIBILITIES all around me.

SARAH  
KAY  
poet and  
educator



RUBY KU  
raising kids  
and doing  
heartwork  
& campaigning



Cartoonists  
YUMI SAKUGAWA  
and  
MARINAOMI



KALPEN  
MODI  
actor &  
civil  
servant

MIMI THI  
NGUYEN  
professor, punk  
and zinester





**VEENA VASISTA**  
public policy to  
humanitarian  
clowning

**LILY YEH**  
building  
community  
thru art



**GEORGE TAKEI**  
actor & activist



**SOLEIL HO**  
writer and host  
of 'Racist  
Sandwich'  
podcast



These are just a few of the  
people who've inspired me.  
Who have you learned from?



**THE END**

# POLITICAL PERSONA

Use this character sheet to brainstorm your natural inclinations and your aspirational strengths. Figure out what you have to offer to the world, and be playful with it.

NAME(S):

EXPERIENCE POINTS:

PRONOUNS:

RACE/ETHNICITIES:

AGE:

LANGUAGES:

## Draw your persona



Where do you feel most powerful?  
Who are you surrounded by?

## Traits



Hope	Creativity
Intelligence	Generosity
Wisdom	Energy
Adaptability	Enthusiasm
Strength	-----
Intuition	-----
Savvy	-----
Empathy	-----

## Skills



Design	Storytelling
Fundraising	Art
Persuasion	Listening
Public Speaking	Direct Action
Writing	Organization
Translation	Coordination
Religion	Food/Cooking
First Aid	-----
Survival	-----
Perception	-----
Insight	-----
History	-----
Intersectionality	-----
Investigation	-----

TOOL 1:

TOOL 2:

TOOL 3:



## Communities

List orgs or groups you belong to.



## Treasures

What gifts do you have to offer?



## Feats

What are you proud of?



## Ancestral Lineage

Describe your origin story and what past generations have passed down to you.

### Experience Levels



INITIATIVE



WISDOM



RESILIENCE

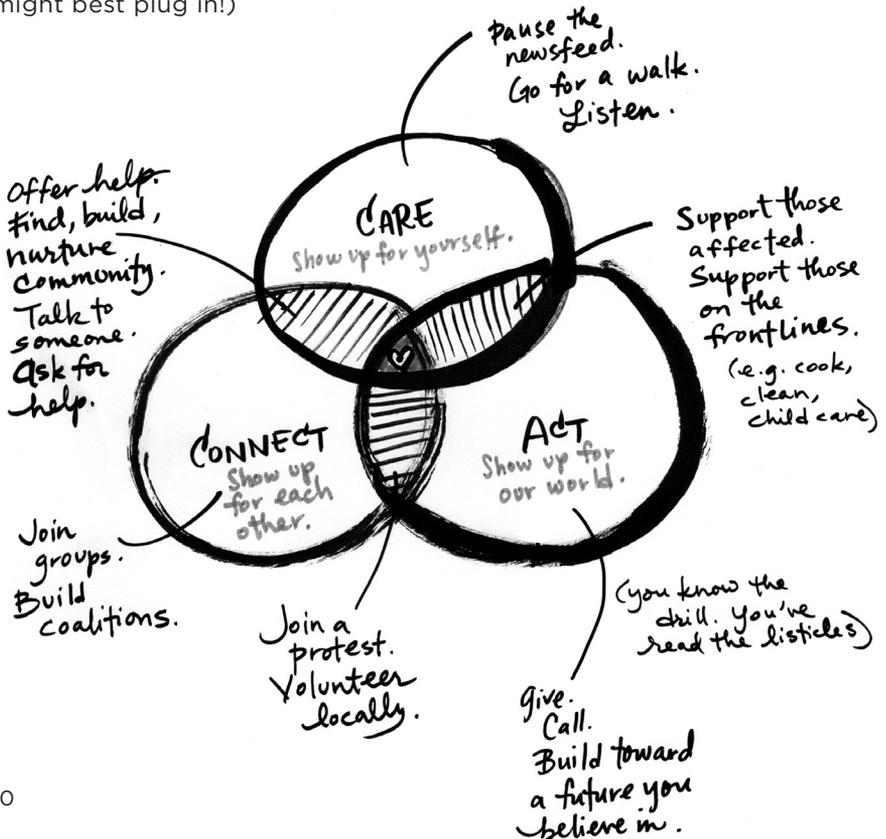


NOTE: Each of us carries within us the seeds of who we will already become. Each of us is a work in progress walking the journey of becoming who we already are. Fill out this sheet knowing that it—and you—will change!

# GETTING INVOLVED

It can be overwhelming to figure out where to start in terms of getting involved in politics. You may think politics is only about policy or what happens in DC, but there's a ton of work that we can do in our neighborhoods and at the local level. There's probably a lot you're already doing in your own life. Anytime you engage with something you care about in community with others...you're probably helping to create a better world.

These next few pages offer a ton of ideas. Pick and choose based on your energy level, your talents and skillset, and what is most needed for your community at any given point in time. (Refer back to your character sheet in the previous pages as a way to assess where you might best plug in!)





## Get Out There!

- Get involved in a school board or city council campaign.
- Become active in the Jade District neighborhood (around the intersection of 82nd and SE Division) through events and neighborhood clean-up.
- Canvass (talking to neighbors) or phone bank (calling voters) for issues you care about and for candidates you believe in.
- Help register people to vote. Volunteer with the New American Voters Project.
- Run for office yourself!
- Seek out resources to help you develop your leadership skills. APANO offers a leadership cohort program for emerging leaders called the Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Institute (API-CLI) and a youth organizing arm for Asian American and Pacific Islander high schoolers called ALLY (Asian Leaders for the Liberation of Youth) and ONYCS (Oregon's Nesian Youth for Change in Society).



# Get Talking!

- Provide stories and testimonials for campaigns.
- Write stories in-person or on social media. Write op-eds for your local or community paper (as an individual or as a group).
- Join APANO's annual Lobby Day to influence the decisions being made by elected officials about issues that affect our community.
- Call your representatives: let them know your stance on issues and how you expect them to represent your community.

**"I finally realized that it is important for me to be a part of the political conversation so that decisions are not made without the perspectives of those most impacted."**

~ Brandon





“I was born in China but the government’s One Child Policy forced my biological parents to give me up. Knowing that history, you can’t help but feel the pressure and injustice of the policy on your shoulders. It made me very aware of laws and politics, and how policies can create real life consequences. That’s why I wanted to get involved and understand politics, because I felt that policies can’t always be bad. They can be turned into something positive if the right people actually cared and did something about it.” - Ivy

## Get Learning (and Unlearning)!

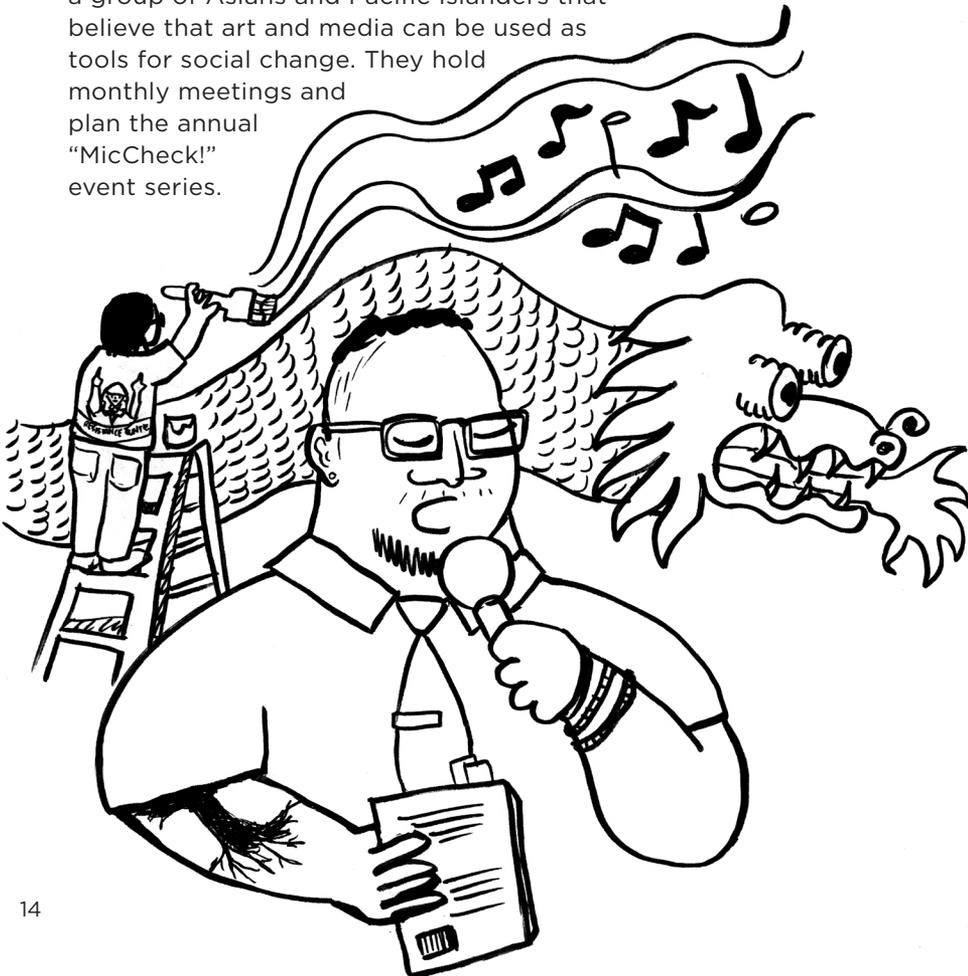
- **ABOUT SPECIFIC ISSUES** APANO offers an ongoing series of workshops, issues forums, and volunteer opportunities that help politicize Asians and Pacific Islanders in Oregon. Show up to build your analysis, gain leadership experience, and learn how to navigate systems of power and oppression.
- **DURING ELECTION YEARS** In 2017, APANO became a 501(c)(4) nonprofit, which allows the organization to become involved in electoral organizing for political candidates at the state and local level. Leading up to an election, look up APANO’s political endorsements to get educated about each candidate’s records and values.
- **LIFE-LONG JOURNEY** Read writers, scholars, poets, and artists working at the intersections of social justice. For some starting points, look up the Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit representing the work and thinking of 15 grassroots organizations with Asian American bases.

# Get Expressive!

Any cultural work that we do that shifts the narrative or that changes people's hearts and minds...is also political.

- Share the art that's bubbling inside of you wanting to get out into the world.
- Seek out, support, and spread the word about artists of color.
- Make the kind of media you want to see more of in the world.
- Get involved with AMP (Arts & Media Project), a group of Asians and Pacific Islanders that believe that art and media can be used as tools for social change. They hold monthly meetings and plan the annual "MicCheck!" event series.

**“There are people who are scared of talking and who are scared of telling the world their story and speaking up and the problem with that is that when they don't speak, they allow other people to speak for them. And oftentimes those people can't do it justice. No one can tell your story like you can.” ~ Sarah**





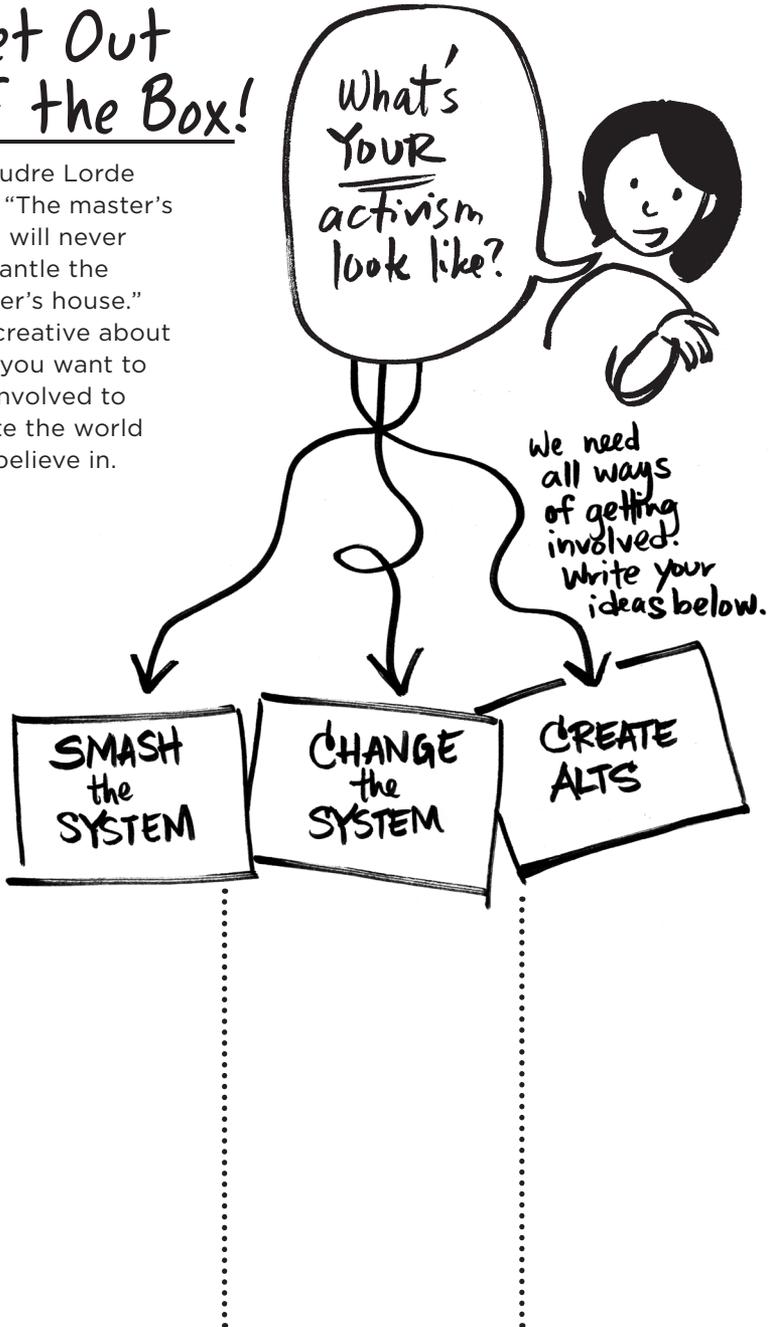
## Get Connected!

Connecting with others and doing this work in community is what will keep our movements sustainable. Here are some ideas of where you might find and meet people of like mind and heart.

- Come to APANO's monthly member meetings (3rd Thursday of every month!) and sign up to lead a meeting on a topic that matters to you.
- Connect with other community organizations in your local area that are making movement on the issues you care about (such as Basic Rights Oregon, Forward Together, NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon, Community Alliance of Tenants, SEIU).
- Be aware of the intersectionalities of the work you're doing with other groups, and actively show up in solidarity for their work as well (for example #Asians4BlackLives.)
- Organize house parties to educate and fundraise with your friends and family.
- Organize gatherings that lead to more conversations between people in your communities who normally wouldn't meet.
- Become a trained Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) member and learn the skills needed to help your family, neighbors, and colleagues during a disaster.

# Get Out of the Box!

As Audre Lorde said, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." Get creative about how you want to get involved to create the world you believe in.





FALL 2018  
{ a collaboration between }



CHRISTINA  
TRAN

Christina has been making comics since 2013 and zines since 2014. Find her online at [sodelightful.com](http://sodelightful.com) or in-person at Mt Caz, a renegade community art space in Corvallis, OR.



Ava Kamb & APANO Field Team

APANO

Asian Pacific American  
Network of Oregon

APANO is a statewide, grassroots organization, uniting Asians and Pacific Islanders to achieve social justice. We use our collective strengths to advance equity through empowering, organizing, and advocating with our communities.

Orchards of 82nd  
8188 SE Division St, Portland, OR 97206  
[getinvolved@apano.org](mailto:getinvolved@apano.org)  
(971) 340-4861