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**PEARL RIVER MART GALLERY PRESENTS
'NOT YOUR CHINA DOLL: A RETROSPECTIVE OF ANNA MAY WONG'S TRAILBLAZING CAREER'**

In celebration of AANHPI Heritage Month, this exhibition features stunning archival photographs, ephemera, an interactive installation, and classic film clips

New York, NY — April 29, 2024 — Curated by Katie Gee Salisbury, the author of [Not Your China Doll: The Wild and Shimmering Life of Anna May Wong](#), Pearl River Mart's newest exhibition shines a light on the life and career of Hollywood's first Asian American movie star.

Born Wong Liu Tsong ("Frosted Yellow Willows") in 1905 to a Chinese American family in Los Angeles, Wong settled on her future profession by age 11. By 14, she was doing extra work in films, and by 17, had won her first starring role. Two years later, she got her unlikely breakout role in *The Thief of Bagdad* (starring Douglas Fairbanks in brown face), which skyrocketed her to stardom.

While many roles followed, most were stereotypes — China dolls or dragon ladies always scripted to die in the end. After some success in Europe, she returned to Hollywood and spoke out against the industry's blatant racism (she had been passed over for *The Good Earth's* lead female role, which went to German-born Luise Rainer), eventually parlaying her renewed stature into a series of groundbreaking films with Paramount. In 1961, just weeks before rehearsals were set to begin for *Flower Drum Song*, in which she was to play the role of Madame Liang, Wong died in her sleep of a heart attack.

"The idea of the show is to give people a primer on Anna May Wong's life and career, the important achievements she made, and why she's still relevant today," Ms. Salisbury says. "It's also a celebration of how glamorous, beautiful, and composed she was, and a way to introduce people to her filmography. A lot of people who know about Anna May Wong haven't actually watched her films. You won't fully get her until you see her on screen. Her magnetism and charm — you just have to see the moving pictures themselves. In the end, I hope the show inspires people to explore more about Anna May Wong."

"When Katie approached us about a show centered on Anna May Wong, it seemed like the perfect fit," says Pearl River Mart President Joanne Kwong. "We were looking for something both inspirational and educational for AANHPI Heritage Month and in our community, Anna May Wong is a pioneering icon. That being said, most people in this country have never even heard her name, even with her face on a quarter and a Barbie doll in her honor. So Katie's exhibition, along with her companion show in Chelsea Market and table activation in the Meatpacking district, will hopefully strengthen Anna May Wong's legacy, and those of her contemporaries, and give them the places in history they rightfully deserve."

Accompanying Ms. Salisbury's Soho exhibition are two installations:

- "Not Your China Doll: Art Inspired by Anna May Wong." On view for the month of May in Chelsea Market, this exhibition features artwork from six AAPI and POC women artists working across various mediums, including oil paints, charcoal and ink, illustration, digital art, and collage. (Pieces available for purchase.)
- "Young Hollywood Was Asian: The Pioneers Who Made Motion Pictures." Presented in partnership with the Meatpacking Business Improvement District, archival photographs of pioneering yet lesser known AAPI figures in Hollywood will appear on outdoor tables for the month of May. Included are Oscar-winning

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cinematographer James Wong Howe, Hollywood's first AAPI heartthrob Sessue Hayakawa, Filipina movie star Elena Jurado, and more.

"Not Your China Doll: A Retrospective of Anna May Wong's Trailblazing Career" is on view from May 1 through Sept. 8, 2024. An [opening reception](#) will be held May 9 from 6 to 8 PM. The event is free but [registration](#) is appreciated.

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Purchase inquiries

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About the Curator

Katie Gee Salisbury is the author of *Not Your China Doll: The Wild and Shimmering Life of Anna May Wong*, a new biography of the first Asian American movie star. Her work has appeared in the New York Times, Vanity Fair, The Believer, the Asian American Writers' Workshop, and elsewhere. She was a finalist for the Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship in 2021 and gave the TED Talk "As American as Chop Suey." She also writes the newsletter Half-Caste Woman. A fifth-generation Chinese American who hails from Southern California, she now lives in Brooklyn.

About the Chelsea Market Artists

Mina Chacko is an aspiring character designer and character animation student at the California Institute of the Arts.

Helen Chang finds inspiration in the ever-changing urban landscape of her native New York City. Chang's use of decollage, the process of revealing hidden layers and textures within found materials, adds depth and complexity to her collage compositions. Drawing inspiration from such culturally and visually iconic figures as Anna May Wong, Chang uses vintage film stills and assorted ephemera to reflect the dynamic and hybrid nature of the city as metaphor for identity.

Felicia Liang is an artist, illustrator, and risograph printmaker based in the Bay Area, California. Her work is inspired by the cultures and communities she's around, as well as her own inner musings. She loves using color, experimenting with different mediums, and playing with a wide range of styles—from simple line drawings to maximalist compositions.

Tiffany Liang is an artist based in Manhattan, NY. She graduated from Wesleyan University with a major in film studies, but often found herself working in the painting studios late into the night. As a result, her work focuses on technique, history, and storytelling. Working primarily with oil paints, Tiffany meticulously creates large-scale portraits to reclaim space for figures who may have been lost or forgotten over time.

Linda Sandoval is a California native, born and raised in Los Angeles. She gathers inspiration from black and white photo stills of Hollywood's yesteryear. One of her favorite subjects to include in her collages is the iconic Anna May Wong. Through her art, she hopes to create a world where different cultures and eras can coexist.

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Elizabeth Yoo is a Korean-American fine artist, writer, and lifelong New Yorker. She specializes in key art for movie posters, physical media, and book covers. The poster she illustrated for Academy Award-winning director Ryūsuke Hamaguchi's *Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy* was named one of the best movie posters by Posteritati, Letterboxd, and Little White Lies. Her paintings, rendered in Japanese watercolor, Sumi ink, pastel, and charcoal, often evoke the glamor of Old Hollywood and film noir.

About Pearl River Mart

Pearl River Mart was founded as a “friendship store” in 1971. The iconic Asian emporium has locations in New York City’s SoHo district and the popular Chelsea Market with both a retail outlet and Pearl River Mart Foods. From home furnishings to fashion to snacks and everything in between, the store features one-of-a-kind items imported from Asia, as well as innovative merchandise designed and created by Asian Americans. A beloved destination for people from all over the globe, Pearl River has become symbolic of the uniqueness, authenticity, and multiculturalism of New York City. Visit www.PearlRiver.com and follow on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#).

About the Pearl River Mart Gallery

The Pearl River Mart gallery features curated exhibitions with local artists from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds. Previous artists include: sculptor Warren King; *New Yorker* magazine cartoonists Amy Hwang, Jeremy Nguyen, Suerynn Lee, Evan Hahn, and more; photographers Louis Chan, Hiroyuki Ito, and Corky Lee; painters Julia Chon, Arlan Huang, Kam Mak; illustrators Sammy Yuen, Nancy Pappas, Jerry Ma, Yumi Sakugawa, and Felicia Liang; and multimedia artists Wiena Lin, Ben Sloat, and Xin Song.

Recent exhibitions include “Reunion: Food as Culture, Community, and Coming Home” curated by Christine Wong; “Spirit Dreams: Where Ancestors Come to Speak” by Julia Chon; “Just Between Us: From the Archives of Arlan Huang” curated by Danielle Wu and Howie Chen; “Our Roots Run Deep: Finding Home in Chinatown” by Warren King; “Drawn Together: Stories of Resilience and Renewal in NYC CHinatown” by Sammy Yuen; “Soft Solidarity (SoS): Uniting to Protect, Empower, and Heal,” a group show of AAPI women artists; “Heartmind: Portraits from the Bob Eng Lee and Asian American Arts Centre Collections,” presented in collaboration with nonprofit arts organization Think!Chinatown; “Corky Lee on My Mind: A Photographic Tribute,” dedicated to the legendary photographer and activist Corky Lee (1947–2021).