

2022 Makers Artists United (MAU) Calendar

Women hold up half the sky

by United Aunties Arts Association / Clare Yow

To be this daughter of the diaspora is to dwell in endless yearning and unearthing—where hope and shame mingle, comfort see-saws with doubt. Too *this*, not enough *that*. Honour elders, but draw your boundaries. How do you name and raise a Chinese baby in a world creased by a whiteness that, for so long, was your unwitting push and the destination, a patchwork of desires and supposed gains?

Over a generation of trying to confront and capsize 識聽唔識講 sik1 teng1 m4 sik1 gong2, my stumbling tongue sought to take root in some semblance of community. My parents gave little weight to notions of it before and after our immigration. Self-sufficient and siloed in the Toronto suburbs, there was no urgency to cultivate friendships beyond our household. I get why.

Being is synonymous with *being situated*, and despite being a latecomer to this practice, I have always hungered for more than to just *be*. At 22, my entry to Vancouver's Chinatown came via a group tour led by Hayne Wai. It culminated in a meal with kind strangers at Foo's Ho Ho. For years, I skirted around the peripheries of the neighbourhood—interested, longing, shaky—eventually finding a small place and purpose to grow there; to learn about and witness the pressures of racial capitalism, over-policing, gentrification, displacement.

Liberation is bound up in the courage, resistance, solidarity, and relief we nourish with others. I craved, and luckily, found feminist, diasporic allies to speak bitterness, cackle, and spit fire with. This March, let us never forget that International Women's Day was born out of 19th century socialist, communist, and anarchist movements. As we love, serve, and create for and with each other, let us always honour and embody the spirit of working class women—in Chinatown and beyond—who labour, stand firm, and fight.