



ASIAN ARTS INITIATIVE

1219 VINE STREET * PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107 * (215) 557-0455



Police Brutality Victim, Corky Lee, 1976

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High-resolution images available
upon request and online at:
www.canarypromo.com/asianarts
Website: www.asianartsinitiative.org

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Asian Arts Initiative presents *Into the Picture: Images of Asian Pacific America by Corky Lee*, on view Sept. 4-Oct. 5

Longtime photojournalist captures scenes of labor, protest and celebration within APIA communities

PHILADELPHIA — Shedding light on the evolution and expansion of Asian and Pacific Islander American (APIA) communities through photography, Chinatown's **Asian Arts Initiative** presents ***Into the Picture: Images of Asian Pacific America by Corky Lee***. On view **Sept. 4-Oct. 5**, the exhibition walks viewers through images of labor, protest and resistance, as well as the celebrations, rituals and gatherings that have defined the socio-political and cultural landscape of APIA communities over the past five decades.

New York-based photojournalist and self-described “unofficial and undisputed Asian American Photographer Laureate,” Corky Lee is the most prolific photographer of the APIA experience working today. He employs a trademark bystander perspective, capturing personal stories amid chaotic public spheres — from images of police brutality and hate crime memorials to snapshots of parades and celebrations.

A second-generation Chinese American, Lee started his photojournalistic career in junior high school when he saw a photograph commemorating the 1869 completion of the Transcontinental Railroad that failed to include any Chinese workers despite the fact that thousands of them had worked and sacrificed their lives during its construction. Ever since, Lee has wielded a camera like a sword “to combat indifference, justice and discrimination,” chronicling scenes of the mundane to the explosive in the everyday lives of Asian Pacific Americans and capturing the nuances of all the moments in between.

“It’s an honor to host Corky Lee and his work,” says **Gayle Isa**, executive director at Asian Arts Initiative. “I’ve always been inspired by his passion and his persistence in documenting our

communities, and I especially admire how he has often been able to see his role as a photographer as a community organizer catalyzing tangible, positive change.”

In the early 1970s, for example, Lee helped to organize a community health fair in response to perceived inequality in access to health care in NYC’s Chinatown. The fair resulted in the creation of a permanent health center in the neighborhood.

Concurrent with the Corky Lee exhibition, local photographer **Jano Cohen’s *The Vibrant Community of Philadelphia Chinatown: A Work in Progress*** documents the city’s Chinatown neighborhood through portraiture. By photographing community members as they work, worship, shop and play, Cohen hopes to “raise awareness of communities in need. Tourists and families come to Chinatown to enjoy the great selection of restaurants and experience Chinese New Year, but beyond the traditional Chinese gate is a complex commercial and residential community that is home to immigrants from many Pacific Asian countries, as well as their American-born children.” Cohen will introduce the project, as well as participating community members in attendance, at an opening reception on **Friday, Sept. 7.**

Schedule of Events

Into the Picture: Images of Asian Pacific America by Corky Lee
The Vibrant Community of Philadelphia Chinatown: A Work in Progress

On view Sept. 4 – Oct. 5, 2012

Opening Reception with Jano Cohen: Friday, Sept. 7, 6 p.m.

Artist Reception with Corky Lee: Friday, Sept. 28, 5:30 p.m.

First Friday Open House: Friday, Oct. 5, 6 p.m.

Asian Arts Initiative
1219 Vine St.
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-557-4055
www.asianartsinitiative.org

Gallery hours: Tuesday-Friday, noon-6 p.m.

About Asian Arts Initiative

Asian Arts Initiative is a community-based arts center in Philadelphia that engages artists and everyday people to create art that explores the diverse experiences of Asian Americans, addresses our social context, and imagines and effects positive community change. Recently relocated due to the expansion of the Pennsylvania Convention Center, Asian Arts Initiative is now in a new home at 1219 Vine Street, where we are contributing to the revitalization of Vine Street and Chinatown North. For more information, please call 215-557-0455 or visit www.asianartsinitiative.org.

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To request photos, interviews and more information, please contact:
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