ROOTS

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Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

AAPI 2008

MULTICULTURAL CENTER
May is AAPI Month

For this year’s Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the MCC is bringing events to Cal Poly that promise to be entertaining, political, status quo challenging, and representative of a diverse range of Asian cultures and experiences.

Clash of Cultures? Islam and the West.
Dr. Ahmad Amad will examine the question of the ‘comparison of cultures’ between Islamic countries and the Modern West. Co-sponsored with the Cal Poly Religious Studies Program. Thursday, May 1, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., Building 33, Room 286.

The Hypersexuality of Race.
Dr. Celine Parrenas Shimizu urges a shift in thinking about sexualized depictions of Asian women in film, video, and theatrical productions. The discussion will include clips from early Hollywood cinema, stag films, gonzo pornography and independent Asian American feminist film and video. Thursday, May 8, 4 to 6 p.m., University Union, Room 220.

My Journey After 9/11
Dr. Zayn Kassam is the chair of the Religious Studies Department at Pomona College and a frequent commentator on Islam in the modern world. Co-sponsored with the Cal Poly Religious Studies Program. Monday, May 12, 7 to 9 p.m., Bldg. 8, Room 123.

Taiko Drum performance
This event includes a 30-minute presentation on the history, culture, and significance of Taiko, as well as a 30-minute musical performance by Ichimi Daiko of Arroyo Grande. Tuesday, May 13, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m., University Union, Room 221.

Unpacking the Model Minority Myth
This workshop will discuss the origins of how Asian Americans have come to be known as the "model" for which other minority groups are compared. Dr. Grace Yeh, professor of Ethnic Studies at Cal Poly, will lead the discussion and present materials to better understand the myth. Wednesday, May 14, 7 to 9 p.m., Bishops Lounge, University Union, Room 208

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Yo! MCC Raps

The MCC’s Rap Sessions event brought together a panel of three hip-hop activists to discuss the hip-hop generation’s role in politics.

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Check out MCC on the web @ multicultural.calpoly.edu
Club's goal is to involve people in the culture and has been dancing hula for seven years. “If people are interested then I’m willing to maybe teach them a couple of hula moves,” she said.

“Real hula,” Yuen interjected. Asked what “real hula” is, Candido replied, “like the grass skirt, the coconut bra, the typical hula girl image; that’s not true.”

Yuen also said that part of Hawaii Club’s goal is to involve people in the Hawaiian culture beyond the touristy mainstream. “It’s not just pineapples; it’s not just the stereotypes,” he said, “it’s not just the surfboards. ‘Do you surf?’ Not everyone in Hawaii surfs.”

He also emphasized that the club can show people a local side of Hawaii that can lead to cheaper vacations and more of a local, cultural experience. Candido said that at meetings, “sometimes we have food, which is cool. We learned how to make Spam musubi one meeting and then we learned about Hawaiian music and stuff, I think that’s fun.”

Yuen said that Hawaii club t-shirts are in the works and a public luau. “We’ll probably have a tent and have tables and a stage, and it’s pretty much like a concert; a concert-dinner,” he said.

He added that the club hosts off-campus Hawaiian food nights which are large potluck dinners. “There are not too many cooks in the club, so we’re trying to teach them so we can get more food out there, but we had a pretty good table (at the last one). We were all stuffed; it was like a second thanksgiving.”

For more information on Cal Poly Hawaii Club, e-mail Calpoly808@gmail.com or search Cal Poly Hawaii Club on Facebook.

The club meets Wednesday nights 8-9 p.m. in building 11, room 104.
Buddy Wakefield: Domestic Dog With A Bite

He describes himself as “an exact cross between Bruce Willis and Charlie Brown.” While he’s merely making a joke about his physical appearance, the personalities of the two shed light on Buddy Wakefield’s style of poetry.

While on stage at Another Type of Groove in April, he was really comical. He told jokes and was really animated throughout the show. In one poem he said, “I often wonder if anyone died because of the pencil I handed to an inmate in San Quentin.”

But underneath the comedy, there is a serious nature. In a poem titled water gun, Wakefield delivered a slap in the face to people who focus on their friend’s weaknesses. “It was easy for you to take the wind out of my sails. All you had to do was suck.”

Following his performance, Wakefield answered a few questions while signing autographs and selling CD’s.

Asked what puts gas in his tank, he responded, “these shows, people thinking enough of me to buy a CD, and a lot of hard work and grind. I’ve been on the road for about seven years, and you know, I live the dream though, I get to do my thing, I get paid fairly well for it.” He added that living the dream doesn’t come easy. “It cost a lot of health and fear to get here, I mean, I’m a poet for a living, it’s not like there’s any paved way or any certainty by any means; it’s a pretty self-absorbed art form.”

He then explained, “Everybody writes a poem. Who am I to make a living doing it? I think it’s my respect for forward human movement.”

Wakefield also said that provided the right time and place, there is nothing about himself he would not share in a poem. “I don’t always feel the need to make myself completely open and vulnerable; I have for both blessing and curse,” he said, “but I don’t mind taking it anywhere if it’s for the greater good.”

While performing, Wakefield often jerks his back and snaps his head forward to emphasize lines, but has he ever hurt himself on stage? “Yeah, in Berkeley; in October actually,” he said, “I jumped off the stage and cramped my ankle and it was swelled up and it was about the size of a baseball and black and blue and I faked it until the end of the show. There was a lot of pain involved.”

When asked what his greatest achievement would be, Wakefield’s response was instantaneous and surprising, “To be a great athlete.” Judging from his joking behavior on stage, it would seem that this was just another joke, but it’s not. “It’s the part of my human experience that I have not fully experienced yet; that I’ve not fully taken advantage of; that I’ve not, I don’t know how to say it but, that I have not explored much,” he said. “I’ve always lived in my head and thought too much.”

Now at age 33, Wakefield said that he’s really seen the power of “enjoying this world through sober, physical activity.” He has taken up boxing and mixed martial arts training and said that he now spends most of his time and money on health and working out, “but not in an overly-obsessed vanity way, but because I’ve been dealing with … I’m dealing with the psychological roots of a lot of problems and I find that physiologically those can be healed sometimes.”

Asked if he will someday enter the ring in a fight, Wakefield said, “Not a chance. I’m not a tough guy.” He then added, “One of the trainers had a pretty wimpy metaphor but I guess it works. It’s that there’s domestic dogs and then there’s wolves, and I’m totally a domestic dog, but I am excited about the fighting skills and experience and learning and also to know them in case a wolf ever comes to my door. I don’t want him there.”

When asked about his poetry writing process, Wakefield seemed to light up and take joy in explaining that, “I’m not in control of that all the time. I once wrote the line “pull the bible belt back through the loops it missed” and it’s a great line man, and I didn’t write it; someone else in the universe did. It just came through my head and into my pen and that seems a bit too hippy-dippy spiritual, but it’s the truth and I don’t know how to deny it.” He then added, “I didn’t sit there and mathematically think about it and put it together; it was just there.”

With a grin Wakefield then said, “Writing a good poem is like the first time you ever did acid. Remember that? You’re sitting in the back of the van with all the fellas and you’re like “I don’t know dude, are you f******d up?” “Ummm, I think I feel something.” But you don’t have to do a survey; you know when you’re f******d up just like you know when you’ve written a good poem. You don’t have to shop it around and get a gazillion opinions and feedback. You just know if it’s good if you spent quality time making it that way. It’s the same thing with love; you don’t have to do a survey. “Am I in love? Are you in love?” You f******n’ know. You know.”

As asked if this statement means he’s in love with poetry, Wakefield’s grin grew, “Yeah, sure. I don’t want to f*** it or anything. I love it, but it’s family.”
Katastophe at ATOG
Transgender hip-hop artist and slam poet

Before he was Rocco Kayiatos, he was a female high school slam poetry champion. After graduation, he toured with the all-female performance group Sister Spit. Soon after, he began adding beats to his hip-hop influenced poetry; creating rap music that would grow to one day earn him the title of “producer of the year” at the Out Music Awards.

Today, under the name Katastrophe, Rocco creates deft lyric laced electronic, emo-hop. His music is characterized by his rapid and sometimes hypnotic delivery, synthesizer driven beats, and emotional lyrical content. Quickly rising up in the growing “queer hip-hop” music scene, Katastrophe offers another fresh viewpoint channeled through the medium. His music is both “heavy handed” and “tender-hearted”; words that appear in tattoos across his chest and down his arms respectively.

Katastrophe will perform at MCC’s Another Type of Groove event on Wednesday May 7, 7 – 9:30 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center Pavilion.