



Fabulous food of the Philippines

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You might not be familiar with many Asian fashion designers, but you've definitely seen their work. Designers of Asian descent are starting to dress the world's biggest stars and fashion icons. Following are four high-profile standouts on the fashion scene.

LIE SANG BONG

Lie Sang Bong founded his clothing line in 1985 and debuted his ready-to-wear collection in 1993. Renowned in his native South Korea, he is often referred to as the "Korean Alexander McQueen." Sang Bong's designs are minimalist yet geometric, and inspired by everything from Korean poetry to Bauhaus (German) architecture.



Models grace the runway for the Lie Sang Bong Fall Winter 2015 collection in New York City. Photo by HumbertoVidal / Shutterstock.com



Lie Sang Bong attends Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York City. Photo by lev radin / Shutterstock.com

VIVIENNE HU

Raised in China, Hu studied finance at the University of Hohenheim in Germany, moved to New York City to be an investment banker, then quit her job to study fashion design at the Parsons New School for Design. Based in New York, Hu's international influences are reflected in her cosmopolitan designs.



Designer Vivienne Hu walks the runway during New York Fashion Week. Photo by Sam Aronov / Shutterstock.com



A model shows off a design from the Vivienne Hu Spring 2018 at New York Fashion Week. Photo by Dietrich Zeigler / Shutterstock.com

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Gifted musicians deserve wider audience

Famed singer King Khan's credits include a solo LP.



Many people in the United States admire the fashion and other visual aspects of Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders. But when it comes to music, there's far less awareness and, perhaps, appreciation of these ethnic groups' past and current contributions.

If you're not of AAPI descent or a fan with a diverse or eclectic personal music catalog, you might be able to think of one or two. Chopin and Yo-Yo Ma easily come to mind. So, perhaps, do singer-songwriter Norah Jones (of Indian descent) and vocalist Bruno Mars (Filipino and Puerto Rican).

"There has been a very longstanding history of invisibility ... of Asian-Americans in media," said Christine Minji Chang, global executive director of Kollaboration, in a 2017 interview with National Public Radio. Kollaboration is a Los Angeles, California-based nonprofit whose mission is to "empower and connect the next generation of artists and leaders to reach mainstream media prominence and change culture," says its website.

Chang organized the first-ever showcase of Asian and AAPI musicians that was part of the 2017 South by Southwest Festival in Austin, Texas. Though not the premiere performances of Asians at the festival, the showcase event was the first time their appearances were highlighted.

As you mark Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, consider adding the following artists to your musical playlist. And you can search for others on the iTunes store and at soundcloud.com.

KING KHAN

A retro rocker, Khan is the front man for King Khan & The Shrines and one-half of King Khan and BBQ Show. King Khan & The Shrines have played at notable festivals including Coachella and South by Southwest. Khan, an Indo-Canadian, was invited by Lou Reed and Laurie Anderson to perform at the Sydney Opera House as a part of the Vivid festival in 2010. Fans of fun punk and retro rock can't get enough of his music. <http://kingkhanmusic.com/#!/king-khan-and-the-shrines>

MITSKI

Mitski Miyawaki is a New York-based indie musician. Born in Japan and half-Japanese by ethnicity, she attended the State University of New York's Purchase Conservatory of Music. Critics have praised the artist's work. Her 2016 album, "Puberty 2," has been variously described as emo, surf rock, dream pop and folk punk. <https://mitski.com>



Mitski Miyawaki is scheduled to perform in Santa Ana, California, on May 18.

Artful amalgam of cultures

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The featured artists in this issue of *Unity* fuse Asian traditions and philosophies with modernized American culture, resulting in a stimulating visual blend of East and West.



"Summer II"
by Shijun Munns



"Girl With Owl"
by Shijun Munns

SHIJUN MUNNS

Shijun Munns was born and raised in Foshan, China, a town famous for its aesthetic nature, she says. Art has been a part of Munns' life since the age of 10. "I am devoted to the creation of art with an Eastern spirit of tranquility and harmony wedded with the colorful vitality of Western art," Munns notes.

"My art explores the cultural, spiritual and philosophical meanings of home through the celebration of women," says Munns. "Summer II" is a representation of a Chinese woman wearing a traditional celebration dress. The colorful flowers depict life in the summertime; the white crane in her dress is a symbol of renewal; and the Guanyin figures, or beings, in the background represent compassion.



"Peace" by Shijun Munns

"Peace flows from an inner sanctuary in ourselves," says Munns, referring to "Peace," a woman's portrait with white doves – a worldwide symbol of peace – surrounding her head. Munns describes "Girl With Owl," a portrait of a young Tibetan and her bird, as a minimalist piece using negative space to draw the viewer into a world that is rapidly disappearing.

Munns teaches all forms of art, including Chinese brush painting and manga (Japanese comics). She is a founding member of a primarily Asian-American artist community in the Atlanta, Georgia, area that promotes the artistic essence of Chinese traditions overseas.



"Kitten Eating Ramen" by Cindy Moy

CINDY MOY

Cindy Moy is a second-generation Chinese-American and a native New Yorker who was born and raised in Brooklyn. While she was growing up, Moy's parents insisted that art was merely a hobby. To ensure success later in life, they said she should focus on math and English. Moy says she applied to Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art on a whim and was accepted. Although she applied to art schools her senior year of high school, Moy ultimately made the tough decision to pursue a degree in accounting and began work as a public auditor after college. Years later, Moy joined a group that reignited her love for drawing and steered her toward becoming a professional artist.



"Origami Owl With Mouse"
by Cindy Moy



"Love Birds and Cherry Blossoms"
by Cindy Moy

Moy's drawings are usually lighthearted, cute and vibrantly colored. She often incorporates elements from her Chinese heritage and American pop culture. That incorporation is evident in "Kitten Eating Ramen."

One of Moy's favorite hobbies growing up was folding origamis, which inspired her to create "Origami Owl With Mouse." Moy says that in the wild, an owl and mouse are usually hunter and prey, respectively, but she wanted to portray them as friends.

"Love Birds and Cherry Blossoms" is Moy's interpretation of cherry blossoms in the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. The two lovebirds with the coloring and shadows of lime green serve as a stark color contrast to the pink flowers.

Moy says the vibrant colors and harmonious compositions she creates are designed to calm the mind.

EVA LEONG

Born and raised in Shanghai, China, Eva Leong recalls being 7 years old at the start of that nation's cultural revolution. Music and other creative outlets were essentially forbidden. Leong says it was not easy growing up as a creative person in such a restrictive environment, yet she remembers being somewhat of a rebel. She questioned adults when she didn't understand something and wore her hair differently than her classmates. She attributes her early years of formal, traditional Chinese watercolor training and focus on Chinese philosophy to enhancing her artistic growth, which provided a creative outlet and energy.

Leong moved to New York City as a young adult to study at the Art Students League, and then pursued a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Parsons School of Design. She describes her work as a fusion of East and West stemming from her early training in Chinese watercolor, and living in New York City, where she studied Western painting.



"Landing" by Eva Leong

Leong describes her technique as a blend of two distinct mediums: watercolor on rice paper and oil on canvas. All three of her works featured in this publication are oil on canvas. "Landing" was painted after an evening spent at a vineyard in Stonington, Connecticut. Leong says the visiting cranes are a symbol of blessings in Asian culture.

Kevin, a restaurant regular, was given the honor of having a special roll named after him by the restaurant owner. Leong's "Kevin Roll" depicts Kevin anticipating the arrival of his very own roll.



"Kevin Roll" by Eva Leong

Through the energetic brushstrokes in "Kitchen Magic," Leong says she tried to capture the scents and sounds of cooking in a restaurant kitchen.

Leong teaches Chinese watercolor in Connecticut schools, and adult and children's workshops at her studio. "With every stroke of paint, I rely on the traditional techniques that I have learned," says Leong. "I am always conscious of the expressive energy of Chinese brushstrokes and will continue to keep it apparent in my paintings."



"Kitchen Magic" by Eva Leong

Fabulous food of the Philippines

In 2017, a Hawaiian staple crossed from the islands to the mainland, and foodies in the U.S. haven't been the same since. The centuries-old dish known as poke helped to elevate the profile of Hawaiian chefs, who earned major culinary points for the raw seafood dish that's long been a healthier food option.

This year, Filipino food gets its turn in the gastronomic spotlight. On Instagram last year, it was hard to miss those pretty purple yams called ube, drawing more converts to Filipino cuisine. People who have never experienced Filipino food are devouring entrees such as kare-kare, lumpia, longganisa and sisig; all are bright, spicy dishes worthy of the accolades they're receiving. Other Filipino dishes include pinakbet, a vegetable dish with bitter melon, okra, eggplant and shrimp paste, and pancit, made with rice noodles, cabbage and chicken.

Leah Cohen is the co-owner and chef of New York City eatery Pig & Khao. A one-time "Top Chef" contestant, Cohen's pork-themed restaurant has been called "an Asian hipster destination of a much more familiar kind."

Chefs such as Cohen, Tom Cunanan of Washington, D.C.'s Bad Saint (Bon Appetit magazine's No. 2 New Restaurant in America in 2016, and Barb Batiste of Big Boi Filipino Comfort Food in Los Angeles, California, are adding their unique flair with bold, inventive menus and clean takes on classic dishes. And Philippines-based Jollibee is a fast food chain with restaurants in California, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey and New York. Its menu includes Fiesta Noodles and halo-halo, a popular Filipino dessert.



Pinakbet is made from mixed vegetables steamed in fish or shrimp sauce.



A chopped pork dish, sisig has been served for centuries.



A savory peanut sauce complements the stew known as kare-kare.



Halo-halo is a mixture of shaved ice, evaporated milk and various ingredients, including boiled sweet beans, coconut and fruits.

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Proud champion of Filipino cuisine



Rommel Mendoza's favorite celebrity chef is Anthony Bourdain.
Photo by Melissa Ponder / Mel Ponder Photography

Chef Rommel Mendoza was influenced by his Filipino culture, his mother's cooking and travels to Europe due to his father being stationed abroad. Mendoza's passion for cooking grew while he worked as a sales trainer in the corporate world. Mendoza soon enrolled at Stratford University, where he earned a culinary degree. Throughout his career, he has worked as a head chef for a fine-dining establishment, and owned a deli/smoothie shop and a small catering company.

Today, he is corporate executive chef-retail brands and Joint Ventures senior corporate chef with Virginia-based Thompson Hospitality, the largest minority-owned food service company in the U.S. Mendoza's book, "Prix Fixe: Made in the USA by a Filipino," details his childhood stories and trips to Germany, Spain and other locations and – of course – features his favorite Filipino recipes.

Mendoza, a husband and father of three sons, lives in Oregon. He recently shared more details about his background and current work life with *Unity* magazine.

- Q. In how many countries have you lived?
A. The Philippines, USA and Germany (previously West Germany during before the unification).

While living in Europe, I visited many of the surrounding countries – France, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, England, to name a few – exposing myself to the culture and food. Being a military brat, we moved around a lot while my dad was in the service: California, New Jersey, Hawaii, Massachusetts, West Germany and Virginia.

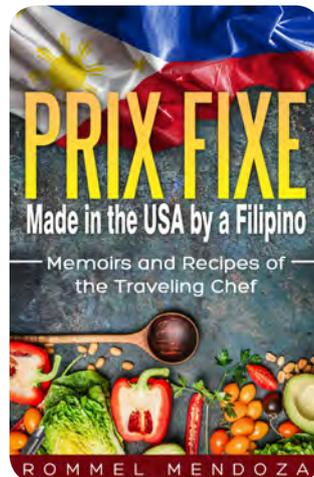
- Q. In which country, aside from the Philippines, is Filipino food most prevalent and popular?
A. Unfortunately, it is not as popular in other countries ... yet! In the USA, it has been gaining popularity and a few known celebrity chefs, such as Anthony Bourdain and Andrew Zimmern, have stated, "It will be the next biggest food trend!"

- Q. Aside from your mother, which chef or culinary figure has influenced you the most?
A. There are so many – from the chef colleagues and friends at Thompson Hospitality, Compass Group USA to executive chefs I have met being in the industry, there are things you learn and pick up from every one of them ... As for celebrity chefs, Anthony Bourdain is my absolute favorite.

- Q. Which Filipino dish do you most often prepare for people unfamiliar with the cuisine, and why?
A. It has to be one of the national dishes of the Philippines: chicken or pork adobo. People who hear adobo automatically think that it is like the adobo seasoning used in Latin/Hispanic cooking. It is far from that. I feel chicken or pork adobo is a great introduction to the many delicious entrees that the Philippines has to offer!

- Q. Aside from your chef appearances, how else do you teach people about Filipino food?

- A. I am a self-published author. My book, "Prix Fixe: Made in the USA by a Filipino, Memoirs and



Recipes of the Traveling Chef," was launched in February 2017.

I have been conducting book signings in Compass Group units throughout the USA. Along with book signings and chef events, I have conducted cooking classes and speaking engagements regarding Filipino cuisine.

Mendoza's memoirs were published in 2017.

Couture designers' creations turn heads

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HANAKO MAEDA

A native of Tokyo, Maeda moved to New York City at the age of 5, spending most of her childhood there. She attended Columbia University in New York City, where she studied anthropology and art history. While in college, Maeda completed several fashion internships. After graduation and her return to Tokyo, she launched ADEAM for spring 2012. ADEAM debuted at New York Fashion Week for fall 2013.



Hanako Maeda. Photo by Kathy Hutchins / Shutterstock.com

GUO PEI

Guo Pei had been creating couture for decades when Rihanna stepped on to the red carpet in her jaw-dropping yellow cape three years ago. Nicknamed the "omelette dress" for its striking resemblance to brunch, it went viral, inspired a plethora of memes and made the world notice Pei's work.



Rihanna, wearing a Guo Pei original, attends a 2015 gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Photo by Sky Cinema / Shutterstock.com

The dress had been sitting in Pei's studio for three years when Rihanna's team discovered it while researching Chinese couture before the 2015 Met Gala in New York City. The event's theme was "China: Through the Looking Glass."

Beijing-born Pei is the subject of "Guo Pei: Couture Beyond," published April 3, 2018, and a documentary, "Yellow Is Forbidden," scheduled to be released in July 2018.

ZANG TOI

Born and raised in a small village in Kelantan, Malaysia, Toi moved to New York City at the age of 20 to attend Parsons School of Design. One year after opening House of Toi in 1989, Vogue Editor Anna Wintour featured him in the magazine, and became one of his champions. In 1990, Zang was awarded the Mouton Cadet Young Designer of the Year, which recognizes the top young designer in the U.S.

Since then, Toi has dressed celebrities Kirstie Alley, Heather Graham, Patti LaBelle, Eva Longoria and Sharon Stone. He has also created wardrobes for philanthropist Melinda Gates.

On Sept. 13 2017, Toi opened his first store – a luxurious, 800-square-foot boutique at 1046 Lexington Ave. – in New York City.



Carol Alt, left, Zang Toi and Kimberly Guilfoyle attend the Spring/Summer 2018 Zang Toi fashion show. Photo by lev radin / Shutterstock.com

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