July 2010 Version

DISCUSSION GUIDE

For Educational Version Screenings

KRISTINA WONG
WONG FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

DISCUSSION GUIDE

BEFORE SCREENING

1 | Did you know that Asian American women have high rates of suicide?

Why do you think that most people don't know this statistic?

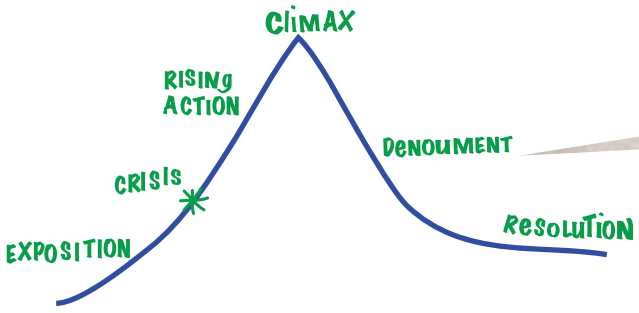
Why do you think this statistic comes as such a surprise?

2 | Why do you think Asian American women have some of the highest rates of depression and suicide in this country?

3 | What are you expecting to see in this show?

What are you expecting to leave with?

The Dramatic Arc of fiction



More Information: **flyingwong.com**

AFTER SCREENING

1 The character of Kristina vehemently insists that the show is fiction. Why do you think she is so overly insistent that the show is a "work of fiction"?

How does her insistence that the show is fiction reflect on the show's subject matter of depression and suicide among Asian American women?

2 Name some of the "dramatic arcs of fiction" that your culture has prescribed to happen in your life (maybe in the trajectory of school success, marriage, career, life success etc).

What happens when our realities fall short of this fiction?

How does this effect our mental health?

3 There are some obvious layers of fiction in the show like the use of the dramatic arc of fiction. There are also less obvious layers of fiction like how the phone call stories to get free psychological help keep changing each phone call.

What other layers of fiction did you notice in the show?

4 During the Wong Are the World sing-a-long, the chorus is:

We are complete
We are perfect
We are the ones who keep killing ourselves
But let's start smiling

What does this chorus mean in terms of suicide and depression among Asian American women?

How might insisting Asian women are "perfect and complete" actually add to the problem of depression and suicide?

How does "smiling" despite such a horrible tragedy actually feed the problem of depression and suicide?

More Information: **flyingwong.com**

AFTER SCREENING *continued*

5 There are knitting, unraveling and knitting metaphors throughout the show. Why do you think this is?

What does the knitting mean to you?

6 In the show, Kristina attempts to tell 6.25 million stories in order to "represent each and every Asian Pacific Islander woman positively" but she fails in her effort. Why does she fail?

What pressures do people of color have to "positively represent" the people of their ethnic background in ways that white people do not?

Why is this?

7 If anything, Kristina's approach seems to outright reject the multi-character monologue show format and becomes more about her journey in doing this show.

Why do you think Kristina chose not to do a show portraying different characters?

How would that approach to doing this show been different than how she actually does the show?

8 Kristina comes to the realization that Asian American women fall into their own "holy trinity"—there are perfect women, porn stars who have all had crises, and the rest are women in crisis who commit suicide.
How realistic is this?

Is this another form of fiction?

More Information: **flyingwong.com**

AFTER SCREENING *continued*

9 | At the end of the show, Kristina finally sees a therapist and is led on a series of tests. What do you think Kristina is trying to say of the process of getting free mental health services? What of the process of tests?

10 | Why do you think the show never comes to a clear resolution?

Is there a clear resolution?

KRISTINA'S RECOMMENDED READING LIST

Books

Finding Iris Chang by Paula Kamen

Articles

"Push to achieve tied to suicide in Asian-American women" by Elizabeth Cohen

http://www.cnn.com/2007/HEALTH/05/16/asian.suicides/index.html

"SFGate: Historian Iris Chang won many battles/The war she lost raged within"
by Heidi Benson

Read more:
http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2005/04/17/CMGCNBQRRP1.DTL#ixzz0pjCiZgM1

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