

This week we put the spotlight on high-quality, Chicago-produced digital art for you to enjoy as we shelter-in-place.

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In celebration of Asian and Pacific Islander American Heritage Month and in keeping with Silk Road Rising's tradition of Asian and Middle Eastern peoples telling our own stories, we are honored to share three videos created by artists with whom we love to collaborate. If you enjoy their work as much as we do, we encourage you to share their videos with your family, friends, and colleagues.

Here's to great art going viral!

FOBia

Created by Priya Mohanty



Read this statement from creator Priya Mohanty, who has worked with Silk Road Rising on *Jihad Against Violence: Oh ISIS Up Yours*, *Obstacle Course*, and *Let There Be Light*:

While we debate what immigrants mean to America, *FOBia* attempts to answer what America means to immigrants.

In this comedy, we follow Kay, a 34-year-old Indian immigrant, as she sets out to forge her own path in a new country.



Away from her family and no longer protected by their wealth, in a foreign

autobiographical, coming of age story.

With immigration being such a focal point of discussion these days, immigrants are often reduced to statistics, devoid of complexity, nuance, and all too often, humanity. The discussion primarily revolves around how they may or may not benefit America and its economy.

FOBia seeks to go beyond those stats, put the immigrants in charge, and give a face to actual people—it seeks to humanize lived experiences through a comedic lens.

FOBia was recently selected as Best Pilot of 2019 by [IndieBOOM!](#)

Watch "FOBia"

Shukran Bas

Created by Arti Ishak



Read this statement from creator Arti Ishak who has worked with Silk Road Rising on *Unveiled*, *Mosque Alert*, *Then Came the Fall*, and *The Four Hijabs*:

I want MENA actors to know they deserve to be leads in their own stories and inspire them to reclaim power over their narratives.



Shukran Bas was created by a group of actors who were tired of being misrepresented onstage and dismissed off.

According to a national survey by MENATMA (Middle Eastern and North African Theatre Makers Alliance) 76% of MENA-identifying respondents working professionally identify as performers, and yet actors have the least amount of systemic power in the structure of American theatre making.

Actors are brought on after the content and project leadership has already been selected, often times with no MENA voices involved, and are treated as representatives of the MENA community but with little agency to affect the final product.

It's always been my goal to upend the hierarchy of art-making that gives narrative power to the few over the many.

Read more about *Shukran Bas* in [The Reader](#).

Watch "Shukran Bas"

Yellow Dress

Created by Marissa Lichwick



Read this statement from creator Marissa Lichwick, who performed her one-woman play, *Yellow Dress*, at Silk Road Rising in 2015:

My philosophy is to create your own work and not wait for someone else to misrepresent your story.

Yellow Dress is a short film inspired by my one person play by the same title. I knew that no one would write this story for me, so after a disappointing audition, I put fingers to keyboard and began to type.

I had a difficult childhood growing up, first on the streets and then in an orphanage, in South Korea. My life today, fortunately, is fulfilled with a toddler and loving husband.

I have learned to claim my personal narrative and allow it to move through my work. My experiences propel my creativity as I explore themes of motherhood, abandonment, family, death, loss, and my multiple identities of Korean, Korean American, and Korean adoptee. Nothing is too sacred and I create characters that succumb to or become victims of memory.

The big takeaway from my short film, *Yellow Dress*, is that a healthy, loving family life can be an antidote to trauma.

Yellow Dress has been selected by three film festivals, most recently as an Official Selection for the upcoming [That Film Festival - Cannes](#).



Watch "Yellow Dress"

Emergency Relief Fund for Artists



Silk Road Rising is proud to be amongst 100+ local theatre companies who have rallied together to promote a NEW limited edition “Chicago Acts Together” t-shirt featuring the names of all participating theatres. 100% of the proceeds from sales will go to [The Chicago Theatre Workers Relief Fund](#), a League of Chicago Theatres initiative that directly assists theatre workers who have lost work as a result of COVID-19.

[Click Here to Buy Before May 19th](#)



Silk Road Rising is honored to be among the recipients of an Arts for Illinois Relief Fund Grant. The Arts for Illinois Relief Fund provides financial relief to workers and organizations in the creative industries impacted by COVID-19. The fund is a partnership between the City of Chicago, the state & residents of Illinois, and the broader philanthropic community. The fund is administered by Arts Alliance Illinois in partnership with 3Arts & Arts Work Fund.

Learn more at <https://artsforillinois.org/donate-and-apply>

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