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Cultural Times

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Humboldt State University

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Cultural Times

FALL 2018 // ISSUE NO. 49

WHO WE ARE

The MultiCultural Center (MCC) is one of the four Cultural Centers for Academic Excellence. We are a dynamic and inclusive learning community that supports students in their academic and personal journeys at HSU. We do this by creating community, a home away from home and a safe place to Explore, Experience, Express, Empower and Engage. We are a student-centered program that fosters acceptance and respect of all people.

OUR FAMILY

The Cultural Centers for Academic Excellence also include the African American Center, Latinx Center and Native American Center.

The MultiCultural Center currently houses the Women's Resource Center and Scholars Without Borders. The MCC works closely with the Asian Desi Pacific Islander Collective (ADPIC).

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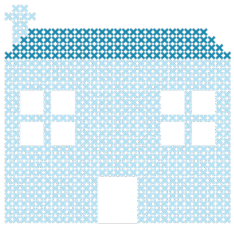


EDITORIAL LETTER

As a first-time publications editor, the work I've put forth with the help of my publications team has been a great learning experience. Being a new member of the MCC community has been incredibly fulfilling, as well-- I've made many friendships with people that I adore and who inspire me, and for the first time in my college experience, I now have a space on campus where I always feel welcome. In putting this issue together, my team and I wanted to center on a theme that captured the good the MCC brings to the campus community. We came up with *Home Away From Home*, and our main tribute to the theme is highlighted in "A Place To Call Home." Thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue and shared ideas and feedback. I'm especially grateful to Celeste Alvarez for her graphic design work, and to Mona Mazzotti, the Cultural Times Advisor, for having given me this opportunity.

Enjoy!

Cara Peters
Publications Editor

Mid-Autumn Festival

ADPIC and the MCC host an annual celebration

by Amanda Schultz // *originally published in The Lumberjack, reprinted with permission*

photo by ADPIC

Humboldt State University students gathered to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival, a collaborative event by the MultiCultural Center (MCC), and the Asian, Desi, and Pacific Islander Collective (ADPIC) on Sept. 24.

ADPIC President and Vice President Nikki Xiong and Tammy Phrakonkham presented the history behind the holiday, also referred to as the Moon Festival, and discussed why they celebrate.

"My favorite part is celebrating with family and friends, celebrating culture and traditions, and being able to keep this alive– especially in a rural community," Phrakonkham said.

After the presentation, came live musical performances for the crowd to enjoy. Tables set up were filled with crafts for students to partake in, including coloring, origami and writing Chinese symbols in ink.

Booths were also set up around the room, where different clubs on campus handed out information on their groups. Some of these clubs created a sense of diversity as they taught students about their own culture and religious organizations.

This event was welcome to all Humboldt State University students, even if they had no clue what the holiday was about. For many students, this was their first time learning about the Mid-Autumn Festival and celebrating the Full Moon.

Amanda Madden was one of these students attending for the first time as she worked at the event.

"I really like how everyone from all different places come together to hang out, eat good food, and learn about different cultures," Madden said.

After the activities, a buffet was held including dumplings, rice, and mooncakes—a traditional Chinese pastry eaten especially at Mid-Autumn Festival.

Mooncakes are round and meant to symbolize the full moon. They consist of lotus paste and may contain a yolk filling. Mooncakes usually have elaborate designs on their top layer, and can be found in a variety of flavors, such as red bean paste, chocolate, green tea and many more.

The Mid-Autumn Fest is commonly celebrated by southern and eastern Asian countries near the Pacific Ocean including China, Vietnam, India and South Korea.

The festival celebrates both the harvest season and the first full moon of autumn.

Just like Thanksgiving, families often join together around a table to celebrate and eat. Mid-Autumn Festival is the second most common lunar holiday to celebrate succeeding Lunar New Year.

The event was meant not only to introduce and educate HSU students about Asian cultures, but to also bring a sense of "home" to many of the students who typically celebrate this holiday back at home with their relatives.

HSU student Lauren Dirosa said she enjoyed the celebration, as it gave her the opportunity to celebrate an important holiday in her culture and to her family.

"It's one of the times where we actually get together and hang out," Dirosa said. "It's a time where we get to appreciate our culture."

Indigenous People's Week

by Clarissa Readen

In 1992, on the 500th anniversary of Columbus Day, Humboldt State University students followed in a revolution to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Week (IPW). They created it as a way to celebrate diversity and to educate the community instead of celebrating Columbus, a man who oppressed many indigenous people. Since America is considered a "melting pot," meaning a multicultural blend of people all melting together as one, Indigenous People's Week is more fitting to celebrate than a single person.

The Indian Tribal & Educational Personnel Program (ITEPP) students hosted the Indigenous People's Week Kick Off where Cheryl Seidner of the Wiyot tribe started it all off with a prayer. This is especially significant because HSU is on Wiyot land. Ellen Collegrove of the Hoopa tribe also played a big role in Indigenous People's Week.

photo by Humboldt State University

"Indigenous people are the epitome of resiliency... The ceremonies and languages that have been brought back, or that are being revitalized, are just a few of their positive accomplishments."

At the kick off, Collegrove sang a prayer song from the Flower Dance, a coming of age ceremony for Hupa, Yurok and Karuk girls. After the prayer song, a lot of the indigenous students talked about what it means to them to be indigenous. One student talked about all things having life, and how we respect everything-- from the ground we walk on to the food we eat-- and we only take what we need.

Another IPW event was Honoring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. This event shed light on the fact that indigenous woman face extremely high rates of abuse. This event took place at the Goudi'ni Gallery on campus, where there was an art exhibit that represents indigenous women that have been killed or are missing. The artist chose to represent the pain of the family by hanging up hundreds of earrings that have lost their match.

There was also a Flower Dance demonstration in honor of all the women who have been sexually abused. One of the teachings of a Flower Dance is how a woman should be respected, which made it relevant to the exhibit. All the women who participated in the demonstration wore beads and used flower dance sticks, making their dance and the singing beautiful. Another purpose of including a Flower Dance was to pray for the families to have strength as they go through hard times.

In the latter half of the week, one IPW event was Dancing On Tears: Tribal Resilience, a powerful presentation put together by Vincent Feliz, Dr. Kishan Lara-Cooper, and Ellen Colegrove. In the beginning, the talk covered problems that indigenous communities are facing, including drug and alcohol addiction, and the highest rates of suicide.

As the presentation came to a close, however, they ended it on a lighter note by highlighting the positive aspects of indigenous communities. Indigenous people are the epitome of resiliency, just the fact that they still exist is amazing. The ceremonies and languages that have been brought back, or that are being revitalized, are just a few of their positive accomplishments.

In 1492, Columbus "discovered" America. Not only is he credited for finding a place that was already inhabited, but he did terrible things to the people he encountered. As people are beginning to recognize this, cities and states are changing Columbus Day to something else. Whether it be Indigenous People's Day or Discover Day, as Hawaii has renamed it, it's all steps towards a future where we don't teach our children to celebrate a barabaric person. Futhermore, it frees indigenous people from being forced to celebrate their oppressor, like previous generations.

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ON RACE

by Kumi Watanabe-Schock

The Campus & Community Dialogue on Race (CDOR) is an annual event at Humboldt State University that invites students, staff, faculty, administrators, and community members to present and attend programs that relate to racial justice and its intersections with all forms of oppression and resistance.

The CDOR provides a powerful mechanism in which community members can all grow and learn to create an inclusive and well-informed society through education, dialogue, and action.

This year marked the 20th annual Dialogue, held from Oct. 29 to Nov. 2. Its theme was Existencia es Resistencia/Existence is Resistance. More than 30 events and workshops included a keynote speech by Latinx poet Denice Frohman, as well as two featured speakers, Raina León (in collaboration with English & CRGS Depts) and Reverend Alvin Herring.

Some of this years workshops included Cultural Appropriation vs. Cultural Appreciation, Pedagogy of the Unwoke, Disrupting Bias 101, and Loving the Skin I'm in: My Story featuring Sadie Shelmire, a 6th grade African American student.

Loving the Skin I'm In: Sadie Shelmire workshop.

photo by Humboldt State University

Love and Happiness as Revolution: Raina León Poetry Reading and Workshop.

photo by Humboldt State University

Diwali Prakash

by Meenal Rana

On Nov. 9, HSU students and community members celebrated Diwali Prakash in the Kate Buchanan Room and Karshners Lounge.

Diwali, also known as Deepawali, is a religious celebration, observed in many countries including India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Trinidad, and Malaysia. Diwali is widely celebrated in the United States and Canada due to large populations of people of Indian origin.

The prayers and religious rituals performed on Diwali vary by group; Hindus and Sikhs celebrate it in a different way based on their religious and cultural beliefs and history relating to the origins of Diwali.

As the festival marks the auspicious beginnings for new things, people clean their houses and decorate them with lamps and flowers, buy new clothes, resolve old resentments, and exchange sweets with family and friends.

The event was hosted by the MultiCultural Center, and with the help of the Asian Desi and Pacific Islander Collective (ADPIC), the Child Development department, and other HSU students and staff.

The festival was celebrated in the form of a cultural fair, where there were different activities such as henna body art, saree trying, lamp making, and various performances. Displays were set up around the room for educational purposes. These included the "Jewelry and Artifacts of India" table, and pictures from the Rural Youth Volunteers in India program, a collaborative program between HSU and India.

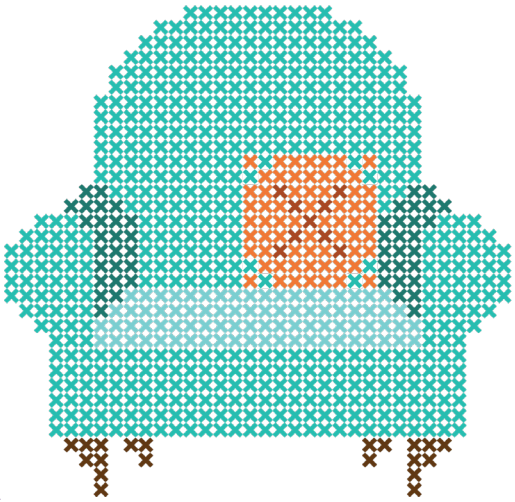
Dr. Jacob Varkey, a Biological Sciences professor, delivered the welcome address and shared personal experiences of celebrating Diwali. Gurpreet Heer, a Psychology student, performed a Punjabi dance along with a few of her cousins from Eureka.

Bimal Singh Chopra, a guest performer who traveled from San Francisco, engaged the attendees with his Punjabi drum, known as Dhol, which are used in various ceremonies and mark happy occasions.

Through this inclusive festival, I enjoyed the celebration of diversity, where we all, regardless of what our background is, broke bread and danced together.

It is important to celebrate different cultural festivals in order to come together, create a more inclusive environment, celebrate diversity, and heal from the pain that is caused by natural and human created disasters.

photo by Branden Mark



A Place To Call Home

To highlight the positive impact that the MCC has on the Humboldt State campus, we reached out to current and former HSU students and employees, who shared with us their testimonies on what makes the MCC such a special community.

Kiana Howell
Major: Wildlife

My RAMP Mentor showed me the MultiCultural Center in our first meeting, and the Pride flag as a closeted queer person was a great comfort. For my first year, I used the Center for free printing and a reminder that there is always a home for everyone. My second year I had less printing to do, but I did have RAMP mentees of my own that I was able to show this comforting place to.

Now in my third year, I was in need of a place to relax, study, and warm my food in between class and work. By this point, I felt the MCC was most like a home away from home, and it's efficient to have one place for all my needs-- a place where I don't feel anxious about my identities. Now I sign in almost every day. I'm rather shy, so I don't actively chat with staff or other regulars. Nevertheless, I find the greetings, brief exchanges, and farewells are warm, grounding moments in a cold, chaotic world. I'm grateful to have a place on campus to slow down, overhear fantastic conversations, and just be.

Branden Mark, alumnus
BA: Business Admin.

For many, the MultiCultural Center is a home away from home, as it is a safe space where any student can be free to be themselves. Students come into the welcoming environment, where they can enjoy the free resources provided, as well as have a place to take a nap, eat lunch and have good times among friends.

As a student staff alumnus, I too enjoyed many joyous experiences at the Center. I got to work with remarkable people, who I still keep in contact with after my time at HSU. Together, we worked to program many amazing events where the whole community came together to celebrate the diverse cultures on campus. I am very grateful for my time at the MCC, as it was a humbling learning experience. The memories will be lifelong for me because they were some of the best times of my life!

Giselle Velasquez
Major: Psychology

This being my final year at HSU, it's unfortunate that I have just come across the MultiCultural Center (MCC) and its delightful student staff. However, I don't want to reflect on the "could've been," but instead be optimistic of the Centers' future and the lives of those who have yet to experience its potential impact!

The Center supplies resources that are otherwise lacking in the community, and provides the solace of a home. As a gay woman of color, it's difficult to find an entire space where I feel comfortable when expressing the pride I have for these various intersectionalities. It brings me joy to say that I've attended meetings held by the Queer Student Union (QSU) and Scholars Without Borders (SWB) all under the same roof. This only demonstrates that the MCC goes above and beyond to extend a hand to people from all walks of life, and lets them know that it can be their home away from home.

photo by Cameron Rodriguez

Culture is not a costume

Student project educates others on cultural appropriation

Freddy Brewster

Signs were posted throughout HSU during the Halloween season to inform the public that another person's culture should not be treated as a costume.

The 17 signs were mostly staked throughout the library and quad areas. They featured a number of student activists and leaders showcasing costumes and other offensive versions of their cultures.

The project was organized by Deema Hindawi, a junior majoring in Criminology and Justice studies. Hindawi adopted the idea from a project started on the Ohio State University (OSU) campus.

Last year the MultiCultural Center (MCC) printed out the OSU fliers and spread them throughout the campus, but this year Hindawi and the MCC decided to use students from HSU to make their own.

"We were trying to get student leaders because these are people that you see a lot," Hindawi said. "You see their faces a lot, you see them doing different actions."

The fliers featured a simple message, "my culture is not your costume." Hindawi and the MCC felt that the message was important because of the unrealistic representations featured in the caricaturized costumes.

"You are taking someone's culture and you are just twisting it in any way you want," Hindawi said. "You are not taking into account what it actually is. You're just taking what you think is cool and twisting it. You are simplifying something that is actually a lived life."

Last year over half of the signs were missing when Hindawi went to retrieve them at the end of the event. Some of the signs this year have turned up missing, and one was vandalized.

"Facilities is supposed to send an email to clubs or us, saying that they took them down, but we haven't heard anything," Hindawi said. "We had one poster that within a day of being put up, it was vandalized. They took the poster off the stake and they wrote on it."

The message written on the sign was incoherent: "Which culture this? What is the point? Stay opened mind (sic)."

The vandalism and missing signs did not dampen Hindawi's spirits. She hosted a discussion alongside Women's Resource Center Coordinator Tania Cubas on Monday Oct. 29 in the Goodwin Forum in Nelson Hall. The discussion focused on cultural appropriation versus cultural appreciation. About 100 people attended the event.

"People started to get involved and interested," Hindawi said. "They were asking questions and we were answering them. It was really powerful."

Originally published in The Lumberjack. Republished here with permission.

photo by Brittany Britton

Sing Our Rivers Red

by Humboldt State Now

Beginning Sept. 6 through Oct. 18, the Goudi'ni Native American Arts Gallery hosted Sing Our Rivers Red, a traveling earring exhibit aimed at bringing awareness to the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women, and colonial gender-based violence across North America.

The purpose behind the exhibition is to raise consciousness, unite ideas, and demand action for Indigenous women, girls, Two Spirit and LGBTQQIA people who have been murdered, tortured, raped, trafficked, assaulted, or gone missing.

A long hanging cloth covered with hundreds of earrings was displayed in the gallery space, each earring representing those who have not been given the proper attention or justice. This exhibition provided a space of solidarity, supported by additional materials and media, such as letters to missing women from their loved ones and an original painting by Nani Chacon.

Sing Our Rivers Red illuminates that Water is the source of life and so are women. We need to sing our rivers red to remember the lives lost and those that are metaphorically drowning in injustices.

UndocuWeek

by Carlos Sanchez

From Oct. 1 to Oct. 5, Scholars Without Borders (SWB) hosted "UndocuWeek," a week of campus events that brought attention to the obstacles and barriers that undocumented citizens face, and also celebrated their accomplishments.

Dialogues were facilitated to raise community awareness of many critical issues, and also to educate faculty, staff and students on how to be pro-active allies.

Various clubs on campus and non-profit organizations in Humboldt County collaborated with SWB to help bring UndocuWeek to HSU. With the help of AS Presents, SWB was able to bring activist Karolina Lopez as the keynote speaker. Lopez is believed to be the first monolingual, Spanish speaking keynote to ever present at HSU.

Lopez is a transgender afro-Mexican woman who, while seeking asylum, was detained in an all-male detention center for three years. After facing many incidents of physical and emotional abuse, Lopez chose to use her voice to speak up for those with similar experiences. In 2011, Lopez created the non-profit organization Mariposas Sin Fronteras, under which she visits detention centers, delivers letters to detainees and raises money to pay bonds.

More than fifty students and community members attended Lopez's speech. Those present said they were moved by how resilient Lopez is. Many also said they were inspired by the important work she does to help those living in the shadow of detention centers.

Throughout the week, SWB staff delivered a know your rights workshop and as well as an Undocumented Student Ally Training (USAT). Attendees of this workshop learned about terminology, legislation and how to become a pro-active ally. The USAT has been a crucial aspect of SWB as it serves to educate others on how to best support undocumented students at HSU.

We received feedback from over 100 attendees who wanted to learn more about how to support the undocumented community. Scholars Without Borders is excited to have brought UndocuWeek back to campus and is looking forward to preparing a curriculum so that UndocuWeek becomes a annual event.

Scholars Without Borders was opened on the HSU campus in April 2017. It benefits the campus by developing institutional capacity so that all students, regardless of legal status, are served and advocated for. It strives to bring resources to undocumented or mixed status students because they have an unmet need unlike most students.

'Sunshine Every Day'

Remembering the life of Key'Maan Stringer

photo by Corliss Bennett

by Kimberly Wear

When professor Rae Robison first met Key'Maan Stringer during the orientation for incoming students in Humboldt State University's Department of Theatre, Film and Dance in August, the 19-year-old freshman immediately stood out.

"He came over and said, 'I just want to thank you. I'm so excited,' and he hugged me and I'm not a hugger," Robison recalled. "Then, every single time I saw him on campus, he would yell, 'Rae,' and he would give me a hug."

He was simply "a very sweet boy," she said, who made his way to college despite facing overwhelming obstacles, arriving in Humboldt County from Los Angeles to begin classes just 12 weeks ago.

"I have just never met anyone who was so joyful, every time you met him, in my life. Ever," Robison said. "It just breaks my heart."

The aspiring actor known for his bright smile and a bubbly personality that could light up a room is presumed to have drowned after being swept off the North Jetty on Oct. 29 while trying to free a fishing line that had become entangled in the rocks.

Now those left behind are grappling with the sudden loss of a young man who held so much promise — a first-generation college student who had endured homelessness and the foster care system, yet remained eternally optimistic and determined to chart a new course for his life.

Corliss Bennett, director of the university's Cultural Centers for Academic Excellence, was at the airport to pick up Stringer when he first arrived in town after one of her sorority sisters, who works as a transitional social worker in Los Angeles, let her know he was coming to attend Humboldt State.

Bennett remembers how Stringer looked at the bucolic fields as they drove down U.S. Highway 101 and exclaimed in amazement, "Wow, a cow," and how she laughed and replied back, "Welcome to Humboldt."

"We both just cracked up," Bennett said.

Immediately she took on the role of mom, helping Stringer move into his residence hall and taking him shopping at Target with money donated by members of her sorority and other close friends.

When he got his Humboldt State ID, she was there to record the moment as he beamed proudly for the camera, recalling how he turned to her, saying, "Look Ma, I'm a college student now."

These 12 weeks he spent on campus were some of the most stable in his life, she said, and Stringer would stop by her office at least three times a week — but always on Mondays when she worked late — to check in and say hello, leaving a note if he missed her.

On Oct. 29, she said she kept watching the clock, wondering where he was, when she got a call from the vice president of student affairs telling her he was gone.

"It's so tragic he won't be able graduate from college like he set out to do," Bennett said.

On Nov. 5, one week after the accident, she said she found herself overcome by the fact he wouldn't be walking through her office door, ready with a hug.

"I just sat there at my desk and stared at the staircase," Bennett said.

Just the other day, she found a note he'd left that she hadn't noticed before posted to one her books.

It read simply: "Key'Maan was here," with a heart drawn on the bottom.

Excerpt originally published in The Northcoast Journal. Reprinted here with permission.

La Complejidad de Ser Mujer

Dice la gente lo que es “ser mujer”
Pero nunca preguntan “¿Quien eres tu?”
Agradable, delicada, criada
Nunca obstinada, rebelde, salvaje.

El amor que puedo dar es solo una pequeña parte de mi
No puedes verme a todos con una sola mirada.
Yo soy Mujer; una leona con fuerza insubordinada.

Pero en mi dualidad soy
hermosa como una rosa de lejos,
pero lista para pinchar los que intentan
Sacarme de las raíces en las que crecí.
Soy obstinada y rencorosa; no estoy dispuesta a complacer

A quedarme en tu florero
en casa como tu premio.

Soy más fuerte y más bella si me mantienes afuera.
No quepo en tus rincones confinados
y a seguir intentando a que me contengas
sería eliminar mi Poder.

by Yajaira Padilla

STUDENT ESSAY

My Biggest Regret in College

Don't be afraid to push yourself and get out of your comfort zone in college, it can lead you to do great things you never would have imagined before.

In my first three years at HSU, I never joined a club or became a part of any resource center on campus. I was extremely closed off and hesitant to do anything outside of school and work. That changed when I found out about the MultiCultural Center (MCC) and applied for a position. I had only visited a few times, and I wasn't too familiar with any of the resources and services that they provided.

After being hired, I soon realized what a vital resource the Center is to many students. The MCC provides free printing, various spots to study, a computer lab, and there's always food to share in the kitchen. However, most importantly, the Center provides a safe space for those who may feel lost or simply out of place in the college experience.

Many students, and especially first generation students like myself, struggle with a sense of simply not belonging for a multitude of reasons—the distance from home, the lack of mentorship and/or the guilt of abandoning their family. If these students aren't directed to the right resources it can be detrimental for the rest of their college career. Centers like the MCC are crucial to closing the gap between first generation students and building the confidence to help them believe that they can graduate from college.

The Center has become a home away from home for me, where I've found some great friends to surround myself with who support me in whichever way they can. Working at the MCC has also provided me with great opportunities to build upon my graphic design and photography skills.

Everyone involved in the Center provides a dynamic perspective on the college experience, and it's amazing to see everyone's passion for cultural diversity come alive at the Center.

There's a drive that's apparent from everyone who comes by and watching everyone work together towards a common goal is uplifting.

The openness and kindness from everyone at the Center has made me feel like I finally belong. It only took three long years, but I'm glad I'm finally here.

— **Celeste Alvarez**

Flick Mix

Film student Cameron Rodriguez reviews three movies from 2018.

Black Panther

1

Despite Black Panther's box-office success, sadly, I feel the film will be stigmatized for its comic book origins. I recently purchased a Black Panther issue written by Ta-Nehisi Coates and was enthralled by the storytelling. Comparing the writing from the comics to the film, it was clear that the film took more inspiration from the fantastical elements rather than the poetic and deeply political roots of the comics. For the average movie goer this is perfect for an origin story, but for a comic book fan it's a little underwhelming. The pacing is reasonable for a Marvel film, but there are moments where chess pieces are moved and characters are taken out of the equation with no real poignancy. The writing of Ta-Nehisi Coates and others could have been utilized much more in terms of validating the operatic drama that the film conveys.

Blackkklansman

2

Blackkklansman is a unique Spike Lee joint in that it's Lee's attempt to settle any qualms had with his previous projects. With the producing of She's Gotta Have It for Netflix and the adaption of the novel Black Klansman by Ron Stallworth, the officer that infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan, the film seems like a logical step for Lee. Blackkklansman has most of the elements you would expect from Spike Lee. If that's something you're seeking, then the film will resonate with you, but if you're seeking more, you just might be disappointed. Comparing this film to his original body of work, I can't help but feel that something was missing. It's not that I was disappointed with the film, I was just expecting more from it. In many ways, I felt the film could have embellished more elements to create more of an impact.

Fahrenheit 11/9

3

Michael Moore's Fahrenheit 11/9 is a movie I didn't exactly love or even enjoy, however, I was intrigued enough to consider it a necessary follow-up to Moore's 2004 film, Fahrenheit 9/11. The film explores critical topics such as gun-control policy, immigration policy and angry-white-nationalism. The film does not shy away from divulging controversial information— from President Trump's campaign process all the way to the systematic sabotage that was implemented well before his presidency. Enjoyment of this film really depends on audience members' attention span. Simply put, this film may or may not resonate with you, depending on your political biases and how relevant the topics are to you.

Want to contribute to Spring 2019 Cultural Times?

Submit artwork, photos, essays, or recipes to: mcc@humboldt.edu

Subject line: Cultural Times

by Friday, April 12, 2019 @ 5PM

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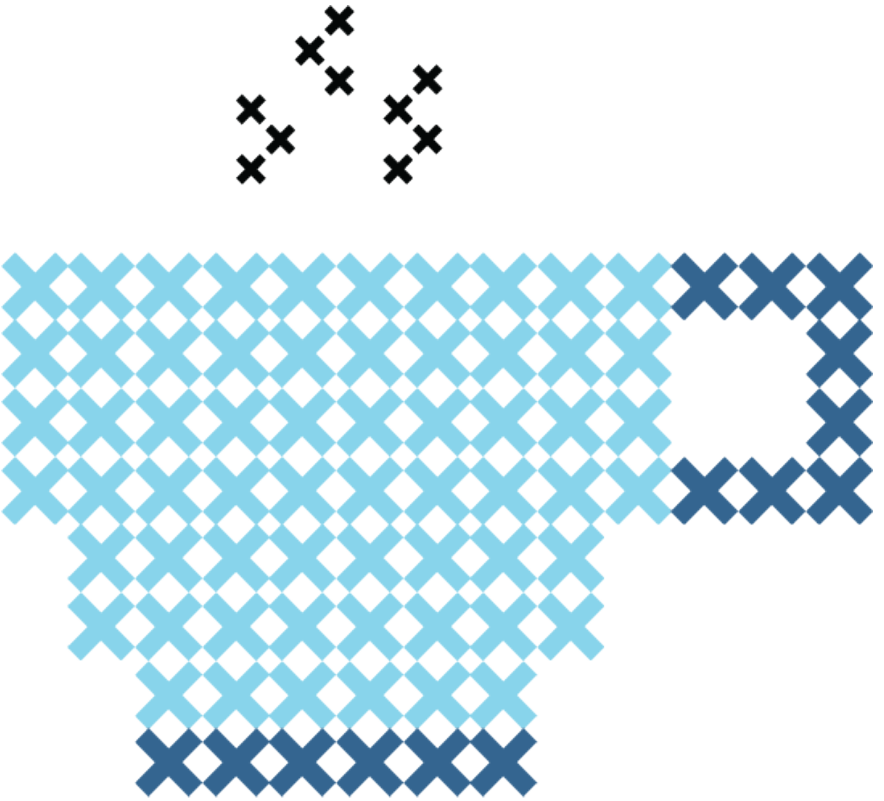
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