UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

February 3, 2022
Jim Logan

A Journal Project of Note

erin Khuê Ninh, a UC Santa Barbara associate professor of Asian American Studies, has been honored by the Council of Editors of Learned Journals (CELJ) for her exploration of racialized sexual violence in and among Asian American communities in the Journal of Asian American Studies.

Ninh and co-editor Shireen Roshanravan of Northeastern Illinois University received CELJ's award for Best Public Intellectual Special Issue for their forum #Wetoo: A Reader.

Diane Fujino, a UCSB professor of Asian American Studies and co-editor in chief of the Journal of Asian American Studies, called the #Wetoo issue "a powerful set of articles on racialized sexual violence that insists on complexity of thinking about the meanings of violence and dives into complicated discussions of silence and complicity. It is innovative, daring even, in its approaches in an academic journal that include creative and autobiographical writing. It intervenes in a crucially important issue and is already having a pedagogical impact in the classroom and among wider publics."

Ninh's research has focused, in part, on figures normally dismissed as part of a "myth" of model minorities — think of second-generation hyper-achievers bound for elite colleges and high-profile careers.

"When I started teaching about sexual violence," Ninh said, "I felt like the same kind of denial and dismissal extended to model-minority experience of rape

culture — and the harm this did to my students' chances of being able to make sense of their own experiences was unacceptable.

"Shireen and I aimed to create a reader because we wanted these texts available for teaching, available to shift what is possible in the college classroom," she said. "That the *Journal of Asian American Studies* took on the collection as a special issue meant built-in endorsement to academics working in the field, which is tremendous."

As a bonus, Ninh added, she and Roshanravan had the good fortune of partnering with the Asian American Writers Workshop in New York City, which helped with their poetry editing and cross-published a selection of the pieces in *The Margins*, the group's journal, expanding the collection's reach to artists and writers.

"With the CELJ award," she said, "we're grateful to have the reach and life of the issue extended that much farther, and for the discussion of sexual violence as their own lived experiences to continue to be available to students in complex and nuanced ways."

Lisa S. Park, professor and chair of Asian American Studies at UCSB, called the honor a wonderful acknowledgement of the kinds of original and creative work that Ninh has produced over the course of her career. "In this special issue," she said, "Ninh and her collaborators ask difficult but necessary questions about American rape culture and provide a fresh approach that resonates with Asian American students and beyond."

Ninh, whose new monograph is "Passing for Perfect: College Impostors and Other Model Minorities" (Temple University Press, 2021), said the pieces in #Wetoo "are made of the best stuff: courage and integrity, intellect and generosity and grace. Shireen and I are grateful to everyone who saw what #WeToo could be, and helped make it happen."

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we

draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.