

KRISTINA WONG

WONG FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST



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LAUGHS COMING as it tackles
issues of depression."**

—Philadelphia Metro

**"Wong's work is compelling because
it is, by turns, confrontational and
candid, acerbic and guileless,
cartoonish and so razor sharp it
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uses ambiguity to provoke thought."**

—NY Arts Magazine



FILM PRESS KIT

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-that's Wong in a nutshell."
— *The Associated Press***

ABOUT

After playing sold out houses from Alaska to Los Angeles to New York City, to Yale, Kristina Wong's unforgettable one woman tour de force performance of "Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" is finally captured in her first ever concert film through the thoughtful direction of Michael Closson.

In this hilarious and whip-smart performance, Kristina takes a surprisingly raucous approach to addressing the high rates of depression and suicide among Asian American women—she tries to single-handedly save them all with her show! She fails fantastically at the task, creating hysterical laughter that descends into a sobering coda.

It's one hell of a roller coaster ride! But don't worry... it's all fiction.

RUNNING TIME: 85 minutes

RATING: This Film is not rated

WEBSITE: flyingwong.com





REVIEWS



**"Raucous and irreverent
-that's Wong in a nutshell."
- *The Associated Press***

**"One of the funniest shows in town ... It's a wild
ride, and Wong's a magnetically energizing artist."
-*Don Shirley, LA City Beat***

**"Wong's work is compelling because it is, by turns,
confrontational and candid, acerbic and guile-
less, cartoonish and so razor sharp it draws blood.
Plus she masterfully uses ambiguity to provoke
thought."
- *NY Arts Magazine***

**"One woman show keeps the laughs coming as it
tackles issue of depression. "
-*Philadelphia Metro***

**"Wong's one person show injects her trademark
irreverent humor into a work of unblinking social
commentary."
-*San Francisco Bay Guardian***

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LOGLINE

Performing artist and entertainer Kristina Wong uses her hilarious one-woman show to cure all the mentally ill and suicidal Asian American women in just 85 minutes. Alternating between her razor sharp wit and naked truth come fantasy, she fails fantastically before descending into a shattering climax...but don't worry, it's all fiction.

SYNOPSIS

Beneath a backdrop of unfinished knitting, perched in a nest of yarn balls, Kristina Wong opens her show by introducing herself to the audience as performer "Kristina Wong." She explains that while this show has something to do with the high rates of depression and suicide among Asian American women, it is completely fictional. She goes out of her way to describe how fictional it is. So everything that follows, such as the use of the personalizing terms "I," "we," "our," and "us" are based entirely on research of other women outside the Wong Family. It's definitely "not about me!" she exhorts. She goes on to tell a detailed story about a nervous breakdown she had after Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month, while explaining "it was all fiction" - or was it? To further emphasize the show's fictitious qualities, she pulls out an old school overhead projector on which she graphs out "The Dramatic Arc of Fiction". She describes arc and the dynamics of the crisis, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. She will refer to this chart often to follow the show's progress.

The crisis: "Why are all these Asian American women killing themselves? And how will Kristina Wong save them all?"

Overachiever that she is, Kristina outlines the show's huge crisis and states that she, as the character, will solve it in 85 minutes. This will be a landmark, historic show! She then proceeds to quickly and easily move the audience through the arc and out of the crisis, doing such things as meditation and hopeful "sing-a-longs" to will away the pain and depression. Heroically ambitious "Kristina" is not satisfied with saving just the Asian Americans in the audience, she wants to save them all! To do that she must first attempt to tell the stories of all 6.25 million Asian American women so that none are forgotten. This spirals the show out of control and right back to where she started - "The Crisis". Every time Kristina checks in with the Arc of Fiction to see how the show has progressed, she finds that she is still at the crisis.

Literally in the dark, Kristina discovers that she is stuck in the crisis. No matter what she does she can't move forward along the Dramatic Arc of Fiction so she can save them all. Still undaunted, she produces a flashlight and finds an old friend, her grandmother, and her

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mother and asks them to help. None of these people have answers or want to deal with the crisis, so she turns to the all knowing internet for answers. She googles "successful Asian women" to find only Asian celebrities or Asian porn stars. After charting their biographies along the Dramatic Arc of Fiction, Kristina concludes that Asian women fit into three neat categories: 1. Perfect women who have never had a crisis (family, friends and mainstream celebrities who never talk about having a crisis, so of course it doesn't exist), 2. Women who have had crisis and dealt with it by changing their bodies or their bodies or their identities and going into Porn. 3. Women who are stuck in the crisis like Kristina and who will inevitably commit suicide!

Now, instead of solving the crisis and saving them all, Kristina IS the crisis!

The threads of the story continue to unravel in sync with her sweater. A plan collapses as a pocket tears off, a solution slips away as a sleeve rips off, and so on.

Shaken but always resolute, Kristina decides to get professional help. Without health insurance she cannot afford a therapist, so she again turns to the internet to hunt for a free psychiatric help. As with everything she tries, this quickly devolves into an exhausting series of phone calls and mishaps. Miraculously, her perseverance is finally rewarded with a hilarious "Hollywood" style audition for the illusive role of "free county therapy patient". She lands the roll, but the therapist's meetings end up being an endless cycle of reliving, recounting, and retelling of the pain, with the only relief being comic.

In one last act of desperation, Kristina takes a culturally outdated personality test. This last resort fails as expected, but Kristina is inspired to plow past the crisis and complete the Dramatic Arc of Fiction in her own insane way. She fails fantastically at the task, creating hysterical laughter that descends into a sobering coda. It's one hell of a roller coaster ride! But don't worry... it's all fiction.





Kristina BIOGRAPHY

Kristina Wong is a nationally presented solo performer, writer, actor, educator, culture jammer, and filmmaker. Described by the East Bay Express as "brutal but hilarious... a woman who takes life's absurdities very seriously," her body of performance work includes short and full-length solo performance works, outrageous street theater stunts and pranks, subversive internet installations, and plays and sketch comedy.

Her performances have been shown in spaces that include:

Yale University, REDCAT, Mark Taper Forum, the Comedy Central Workspace, La MaMa ETC, South beach Comedy Fest, Jumpstart Performance Company (San Antonio, TX), the Painted Bride (Philadelphia, PA) among dozens of others.

She was awarded the Creative Capital Award in Theater and a Creation Fund from the National Performance Network to create her third full-length solo show, "Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" exploring the remarkably high incidence of suicide among Asian American women in a world that's more nuts than we are.



Kristina wrote and performed in the CBS Multicultural Comedy Showcase. Her show "Free?" was also featured earlier this year at Comedy Central's South Beach Comedy Festival in Miami (Programmed alongside such comedy legends as Kathy Griffin, Louis CK, and Katt Williams).

Kristina was invited as the alumna commencement speaker for the 2008 UCLA Department of English graduation. She is completing a novel started with the PEN USA Rosenthal Emerging Voices Fellowship. She is a freelance contributor to anthologies and magazines that include Playgirl Magazine. Her mail order bride website is www.bigbadchinesemama.com with general info at www.kristinawong.com.



Kristina GRANTS & AWARDS

Grants

Creative Capital Award
National Performance Network Creation Fund
Durfee ARC
Center for Cultural Innovation (Awarded 3 times)
Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, Artist-in-Residence Grant (Awarded 4 times)
Pen USA Emerging Voices Fellowship

Residencies

Hermitage Residency
MacDowell
Atlantic Center for the Arts

Cities that Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest has played (and will play):

Yale University, CT
Cornell University in Ithaca, NY
REDCAT in Los Angeles
Ford Amphitheater in Los Angeles
Living Arts of Tulsa, OK
ASU Gammage Tempe, AZ
Pangea World Theater in Minneapolis, MN
University of Chicago, IL
Bunnell Street Gallery in Homer, AK
Out North Theater in Anchorage, AK
Miles Playhouse in Santa Monica, CA
Queens Theater in Queens, NY
Stonybrook University in Long Island, NY
Smith College in Northampton, MA
Jumpstart Theater in San Antonio, TX

Cal State University, Long Beach
Off-Center in Austin, TX
(Part of "Throws Like a Girl Festival")
National Performance Network Annual Meeting New Orleans, LA
La Pena Cultural Center in Berkeley
National Asian American Theater Festival, New York, NY
TeAdaWorks Festival in Los Angeles
University of California at Santa Barbara
University of California at Santa Cruz
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
The Painted Bride in Philadelphia, PA
Under the Radar Festival, Public Theater NYC
MACLA in San Jose, CA





Q&A with Kristina Wong

What inspired you to create Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest ?

In 2005, I was performing at Wellesley College. It's a utopic all-women's college in Massachusetts. I was immediately struck by how safe the campus was. They have an honor code among the women where it's ok to leave their bikes and doors unlocked. There's a feminist co-op that hosts an annual "naked party" and has this amazing library of progressive feminist literature and lesbian erotica. It was a college experience so different than what I experienced at UCLA where I constantly felt mentally and physically on the defensive and could never walk around the campus at night without being on high alert. As I was walking around the idyllic Lake with my Wellesley student hosts, we started talking about suicide attempts there and at nearby campuses. I remember thinking, "How can anything so bad happen in such a perfect setting?" Then we stumbled upon the topic of the high rates of Asian American women killing themselves. People say the same thing to me over and over about the issue: "I had no idea. Why would are they killing themselves? They seem so beautiful and perfect."

The show is really drawing out the issue that so many people refuse to believe there is a problem inside such a "perfect" package. This denial is perhaps one of the main reasons why the problem continues to persist.

Why did you choose Michael Closson to direct your first concert film?

I was originally resistant to filming this and marketing my show as a concert film. As a theater artist who works so interactively, I didn't feel that even the best recording of this show would do it justice. In the show I throw things at the audience, I pet them, I have them hold hands and sing— how can this be captured on camera? On my large list of pet peeves is when people miss my show and ask, "Do you have it on YouTube?" or "Did you tape it?" Like they actually would take the time to watch it a scratchy archive of my work. Live theater is best when it is live theater, bottom line.

I relented because Mike was so enthusiastic about filming it and appealed to my need to want to get this out to audiences who wouldn't catch my show live otherwise. He had more faith in this project than I did, and I'm really grateful for his positive attitude because I'm so proud of what came out of it.

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Q&A with Kristina Wong

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Mike has been a huge fan for years and an extremely loyal friend. In fact, Mike brought his wife Nancy to a show of mine on their first date! And now they're married... go figure. Mike did what a lot of folks don't do in this town, he walked through this whole process from beginning to end and put a helluva lot of time and money behind it. It's totally heartwarming. He really took the time to break down a script and think about each shot and figure out how to translate it to camera.

What is next for you?

I'm still touring this show. There's a great demand still ... unfortunately because depression and suicide affects so many communities and nobody really knows how to talk about it. I'm honored to be a guest in the cities I visit, thought it is sometimes heartbreaking for me that I cannot "fix" the problem, only start dialogue that I don't know how it finishes.

I'm also looking forward to working more with Mike. He's fantastic. And I'm not just saying that. We're already talking up some documentary/mockumentary ideas, a few tv shows and even a feature.

I'm working on new shows. Including a show about having no car in Los Angeles. I also got a MAPFUND grant to work on a new show called "CAT LADY." It's about pick up artists, cat ladies, my cat Oliver's pee problems, and re-learning human communication in the digital age. I also have a lot of unfinished projects I want to tie up soon. My novel, a screenplay, and some comedic essays.





MAIN PRODUCTION CREDITS

Starring	Kristina Wong
Executive Producers	Michael Closson and Kristina Wong
Produced by	Michael Closson and J. Elizabeth Martin
Directed by	Michael Closson
Written by	Kristina Wong
Director of Photography	John O'Shaughnessy
Edited by	Michael Closson Tina Imahara





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