

Web and Windows Development



Letters

our readers kiss and tell

WE'VE BEEN GIVING IT TO YOU SINCE ISSUE #1

Hey, guys. I just wanted to let you know that I really enjoy *MAVIN*. It's a joy to see a multiracial/multicultural approach that celebrates everything and everyone that we are. *MAVIN* fills a need to have our experiences shown as beautiful and normal. I recognize that it's not always easy being mixed, but we need more than tragic mulatto coverage and "helpful" political agendas. You've given me that, issue after issue, since #1.

Jana Wright, Seattle, WA

FROM AN AVID CONSPIRACY THEORIST...

While I know there are many people of mixed race out there, it's comforting to know that there is a media voice out there working hard to bring us all closer together. Once again, thank you . . . and, being an avid conspiracy theorist, I think secretly everyone wishes they were of mixed race . . . little do some people know that, really, everyone is.

Perryne Lee Poy and Kasim Lanzot, By e-mail

YOUR "MULTI-WHATEVER . . . IS FOOLISHNESS . . ."

I recently saw a copy of *MAVIN* and felt the need to respond. This issue is so superficial compared to the real issues of being nonwhite in America that it is laughable. The fact that you have felt privileged to claim your "entire heritage" in your youth speaks to the

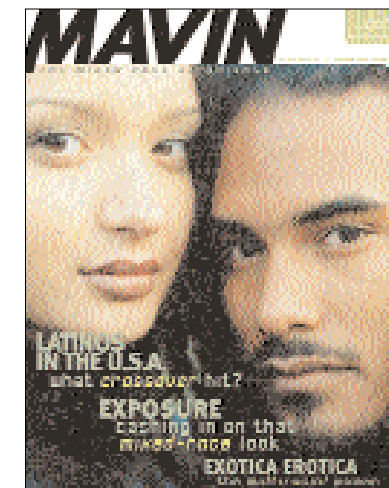
time and era you were born in. All of a sudden, in the past 10 years, people like you are moving towards this new idea of claiming "multi-whatever" as a whole new class of people. This is just a new wave of foolishness. Sisters and brothers, wake up! Unite with the oppressed, and it doesn't make a difference who your parents are!

Khafre Mukafe, Philadelphia, PA

MAVIN IS ON BASE

I'm in an interracial marriage. My wife is white and I'm black and we have two boys, 8 and 12. I'm a Marine Corps officer working in personnel, so I see lots of mixed-race couples, and every chance I get, I let them borrow my most recent issue of *MAVIN*, and the first question they always ask is "Where did you get this?" I immediately give them a subscription blank. Most of my peers who are in interracial marriages have children around the same age as I do, so something that caters to them would be a boost. Please keep up the good work, and I eagerly look forward to my next issue!!

*CWO3 Keith Sampson,
FPO AP, By e-mail*



SPRING 2000 • ISSUE 4

THE MORE WE MIX . . .

A statement made in your Spring 2000 issue by a contributing writer had a profound effect on me. "The more we mix, the stronger we become." Growing up in the '50s in Los Angeles being half Chinese, half Swedish was literally unheard of at that time. Not only was I rejected by both sides of the family and both races but treated as though I was from another planet by teachers and students. However, it did make me a stronger person as an adult coping with prejudices. My father, an eccentric 6'2" Chinese who had a nightclub in Chinatown, didn't help matters much by building a monstrous, red and green Chinese-style house in the middle of an upscale white neighborhood bordering San Marino. San Marino is now a predominantly affluent Asian community. What is that saying? "What goes around comes around!"

*Donna Lewis
By e-mail*

YOU ARE BOLD AND COURAGEOUS

I'm a Korean/Mexican male here in Chicago, and I would like this e-mail to go straight to the man who started this. I'd like to applaud you in your efforts for the biracial culture. I have just noticed your magazine and love it. I have been trying to get my own published and am still waiting; I'd love to know how you got yours independently published, which I find very bold and courageous.

Billy No Jr., Chicago, IL

FETISHIZING OUR OWN?

I am extremely pleased every time I receive your magazine and will be renewing my subscription. However, in the spirit of constructive criticism, I would like to lodge a cautionary note. Issue #4 has a few articles concerning the exploitative eroticization of mixed-race peoples. "Exotica Erotica" and "Exposure" are both thoughtful pieces about the politics of fetishizing our looks for reasons of commercial and/or sexual gain by others. Following these insights, however, is the piece "Skin," which, in my mind, reinforces the harmful stereotypes about mixed-race women the other

two articles combat and question. The pictures and most of the text undermine mixed-race women's attempts to reclaim and redefine their own sexuality. Matching the history of the quadroon balls with the sexy pictures of "modern-day mulattas" made me feel like the author was either unaware of the implications of this particular mix of text and image or mistakenly believed the historical narrative would counter-balance them. Again, I think the magazine is an important contribution to our discussions of race, ethnicity and personhood in our society. Thank you

for creating what I find is the best mix of issues and the arts in publishing for interracial peoples. Just take care that your celebration of our beauty does not mimic stereotypes that oppress us.

Catherine Squires, Assistant Professor, Center for Afro-American and African Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

I think secretly everyone wishes they were of mixed race . . . little do some people know that, really, everyone is.



SPRING 2000 ISSUE #4

A RINGING ENDORSEMENT

I have seen the last issue of *MAVIN* and am very pleased with it. I have given it to my wife (of mixed background) and a co-worker (also mixed). Both were very enthusiastic readers. In fact, they couldn't put the magazine down, even when I was talking directly to them. I believe that *MAVIN* fills a deep need of mixed race people. The chief thing it does is say, "I'm OK." Secondly, it shows people who are multiracial who are proactive, non pathological and are not just reacting to a mono-racial world. Thirdly, it shows a diversity of multiracial people. It's not just "black"/"white" or "black"/"Asian," it's a lot of different combinations and multiple combinations. This is reality of the first order. In the future, you will, no doubt, get some competition. Just stick to your guns and take the high road. Keep *MAVIN* on a track which you feel best serves the interests of your readers and let the others worry about being sensationalistic. I would love to give ringing endorsement of your magazine. It definitely serves a worthwhile purpose.

William Javier Nelson, Ph.D., By e-mail

THANKS FOR YOUR INTEREST IN "AFRO-ASIANS"

I'm an African-American female married to an Asian male. Our presence in the interracial community is nonexistent. I never knew it was such a black and white community. So any acknowledgment of mixtures such as my own is greatly appreciated.

Makima, By e-mail

EDITOR'S NOTE: See issue #3's "Chopsticks and Chit'lins: The Afro-Asian Experience" feature.

UPLIFTED AND INSPIRED

I'm writing to tell you that I'm truly excited about your beautiful magazine!! I'm a junior in college in Pennsylvania. I am also multiracial and life has not been easy. I am currently going through my

"identity crisis." I am so tired of being lumped into one category, or worse, being considered a mistake or confused. When I saw your magazine, I was instantly uplifted and inspired. Seeing other mixed-race people really helps me, and sometimes I wish that people could see the beauty. I am truly excited and will be sending my subscription form immediately!

Clarisse A. Wiley, Erie, PA

BE THE MASTER OF YOUR OWN IDENTITY

This is exactly what we need!!! As a Hapa (half Chinese, half Jewish, or white; again, it's all semantics) 24-year-old who grew up in San Francisco, I applaud your efforts. As a teenager and even in college, I found there wasn't a community, nor were there any resources to turn to, about the identity issues I was facing. It's so important for other multiracial teens and young adults to realize that they are NOT alone in their confusion and that they have the freedom and privilege to be masters of their own identity. Since more multiracial children will be coming into these issues than ever before, it is refreshing to know that they will have this magazine. I wish I had it when I was growing up!! Thank you.

Alison Wong, New York, NY

DO I HAVE TO IDENTIFY WITH ANYTHING?

Both my mom and biological dad are Puerto Rican but my stepdad is black. I just read your magazine and find a lot of similarities to my own experiences. There is a dispute between the different races at the parties I attend. I always check the box that says "Hispanic," but I am confused at times because I don't know how to identify myself. Everyone always tells me I look black and act black, but I know I am Hispanic. But I can barely speak Spanish, which makes a lot of Hispanics discriminate against me and is another reason why I question my identity. Do I have to identify with anything? Lots of love.

Monica Campos, West Palm Beach, FL

Send us YOUR comments, thoughts, criticisms...your PURGE! Send to: purge@mavinmag.com OR: *MAVIN* Purge, 600 First Avenue, Suite 501, Seattle, WA 98104. NOTE: Your purge becomes the property of *MAVIN*. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.



FREE SPIRIT STILT DANCERS MANAGED BY ZOHAR ISRAEL, NEW ORLEANS, LA / 1998

them if they fall. But else-where in the world, stilt walking can be more pedestrian. A construction worker in the Pacific Northwest climbs aboard metal stilts as a practical way to put up drywall.

These are but a few reasons people everywhere rise to be bigger than they are on their own two feet. It may seem contradictory, but stilts, which were meant to set people apart from others, actually end up becoming grand levelers, with many cultures sharing the same longing to be "higher than thou." Stilts are bound together by the same cosmic vision: The view really is better from up here. ■

HAPA BIG BOARD

KIMI KAWABORI



After moving from Berkeley to Vancouver, Canada, at the age of five, Hapa Big Board creator Michael Speier became increasingly aware that he and his mixed family were different. A child of Jewish and Japanese parents growing up in a conservative, predominantly white neighborhood, throughout grade school, he became familiar with taunts like "American Jew Jap." After college, Speier's involvement with local Asian groups helped him become more comfortable identifying with and exploring his mixed-race heritage.

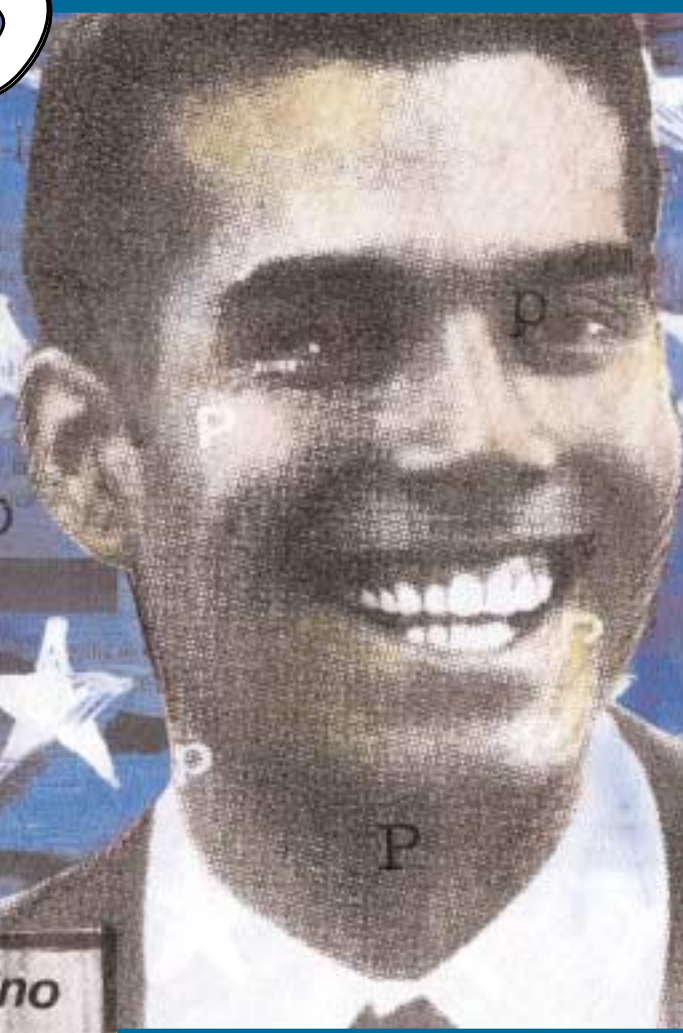
Speier's Hapa Big Board is vibrant and striking. A collage of bright colors swirls over an eye-catching 16-foot-long skateboard. The idea originated from a children's book he wrote 3 years ago called *Nectarine River*, a spinoff of the wildly popular Japanese children's story, *Mo Mo Taro*, or *Peach Boy*. Speier wanted to explore urban-living settings and the challenges mixed-race people face. As the wave of interracial dating and mixed-race children continues to rise, Speier envisions his artwork "...challenging urban culture and general perceptions of how we view ourselves." Describing it as a sort of "urban surfing," Speier sees his skateboard as a symbol of the empowerment to fluidly move across cultural and physical boundaries in a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected. The board invites people to explore the compartments on the top of it, as well as the sliding drawers at its sides, to listen to audio and congregate on its surface. Inside the drawers one finds a map locating the highest concentrations of mixed-race people around the world, a chain of mixed-race dolls and a pidgin word game.

At its core, Speier sees his unique Big Board project as a platform for interaction. "I wanted to create something that whole families can walk up to and enjoy. Young people can explore the interactive art work, and adults can take part in the educational information." ■



Contact Michael Speier at nectar@vcn.bc.ca.

CURIIOUS



GEOURGE

ILLUSTRATION BY SHANE PARK SMITH AND ANNE SCATTO

A CURIOSITY TO ANGLO-MEDIA IN THE U.S., DUBYA'S HALF-MEXICAN NEPHEW COULD BE THE NEXT BUSH IN THE WHITE HOUSE—BUT WILL ANY LATINOS VOTE FOR HIM?

BY THE SUMMER OF 2000, a buzz was swarming around George Prescott Bush. The son of Florida Governor Jeb Bush and Mexican-born Columba, "P." as he's known to family and friends, including uncle, George W., was enjoying the spotlight afforded to a handsome and charismatic young man whom pundits have slated as heir apparent in the Bush political dynasty. A speaker at the Republican National Convention, star-struck journalists dubbed him "Salsa-sexy," "Rico suave" and "a bronzed god." An aide to George W. Bush compared him to "Ricky Martin, except better looking," and *People* magazine ranked him #4 on its year 2000 list of the 100 most eligible bachelors.

P. became a staple on his uncle's campaign early on. Two ads that aired in the larger Latino markets featured P. extolling his uncle's virtue en Español. Mainstream media ate it up, conservative writers eluding that he was "evidence" for the Republican party's nebulous campaign of "compassionate conservatism." As the all-purpose ethnic mix to woo historically left-leaning Latinos over to the right, "the little brown one" (the ill-famed moniker bestowed upon him by his grandfather, former President Bush), was dispatched to New York's Puerto Rican Day Parade. One Latino face in a crowd of three million, George P. shook hands and beamed his brilliant smile. Here was a

As mainstream media zeroed in on the youngest Bush, their appraisals were consistent: G.P.B. was a suave, sexy and squeaky clean young man. In an April 18 article, the *New York Times* offered a gushing portrait of Master P. Frank Bruni wrote that the younger Bush was "tall, tan [and] had the twinkle of a nascent celebrity," and with an apparent nod to the paradox of Bush and brown, the writer also offered this explanation: "His mother, Columba, is Mexican, and that side of his heritage is as evident in his appearance as the other side is in the comfort he says he feels "in front of a microphone." Cleanly cleaving down the center, the *Times* offered their recipe for the perfectly engineered candidate for 21st-century American politics.

More concerned with tired "Hispanic hunk" clichés, an unnamed *Knight Ridder* writer offered a less sophisticated approach, asking only three questions: "Does he have a special someone? Can he swivel his hips like Ricky Martin? Could he unbutton his shirt, just a little?"

But as the mainstream media machine obsessed over the GOP's new "secret weapon," many Hispanic journalists, perhaps smarting from America's exploitation of all things Latin, rejected George P. Bush as their

young man whose name epitomized lily-white conservatism, but whose swarthy complexion pointed due South. Perhaps not Puerto Rico, but close enough.

continued on page 56

continued from page 55

spokesman. The political satire site www.pocho.com, whose motto is "Spanglish is my language," dubbed P. the "incredibly lifelike Latino." Site creator Lalo Alcaarez's cartoon sardonically depicts P. rallying readers to see the "amazing similarities" between his uncle and farm worker's rights legend, Cesar Chavez.

And whereas the *Times*' only mention of P.'s undergraduate life at Rice University was noting a Mexican restaurant he frequented, Russell Contreras of the *Houston Press* centered his scathing profile squarely on P.'s apparent disinterest in all things Latino on the Texas school's campus.

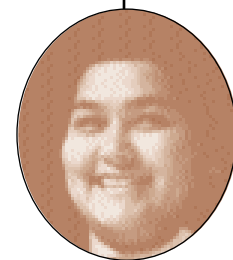
Contreras interviewed Mike Gomez, a former vice-president of Rice's Latina/o student organization, HACER (Hispanic Association for Cultural Enrichment at Rice). Gomez was skeptical of P.'s public celebration of his Mexican heritage on the stump since, from his recollection, P. was AWOL from campus events for *la raza*. In another interview, Gomez told Salon's Jake Tapper that although issues of ethnic pride are "wholly personal," P.'s muy Latino public persona made him a justifiable target. "[It's] an issue of whether or not George P. really cares about the Latino community as a whole. If he is going to push his uncle for president under the auspices of being Hispanic, I think it is legitimate to question his credibility, when he has not demonstrated in the past that these issues are important to him."

The media dichotomy of George P. Bush is reminiscent of another multiethnic guy with a toothy smile. When millions saw Tiger Woods embracing his Pilipina mother and extolling his multiracial heritage on shows like *Oprah*, white America thought it was cool, while black folks wondered, "What's a Cablinasian?" And when Woods rejected being vetoed into exclusive blackness, he was criticized by many in the black community as yet another escapist. A profile of prominent black Americans

in *Ebony* included a sarcastic disclaimer that Woods didn't like being labeled black, preferring to be called "multiracial."

So is George P. Bush a Hispanic hunk or wannabe white boy? It depends on whom you ask. But what's curious about this youngest George is that he epitomizes the sensitive balancing act too familiar to high profile people of color in the U.S.A. The balance is to maintain "street-credibility" while not offending white mainstream society. Throw racial or ethnic mixed-ness into the fray, and the scenario becomes even trickier. Almost instinctively, multiracial people excite questions of allegiance from minority communities. P. epitomizes the "half-white" predicament of straddling that line between oppressor and oppressed. Unless you're exceptionally savvy, if you are Hapa haole, mulatto or mestizo, you face an ultimatum: either adopt fist-in-the-air militancy or accept sell-out status.

After Jeb Bush's embarrassing Florida recount debacle, many place P. as the next Bush in line for political big time. But if George P. Bush even has any political aspirations (and that's still up for debate), he will need to define more carefully his public relationship with race. I don't question that he feels a very sincere connection and dedication to the Hispanic community. The irony, however, is that if he desires a political future, he probably already has the Anglo vote. But to be victorious in an ever-browning America, he will need to garner Latino votes as well. As racial/ethnic litmus tests always go, you have to work twice as hard to get half the credit. But by building prominent bridges into the Latino community, George P. Bush may be able to convince his most vociferous critics that he's not just an ethnic opportunist. If successful, the youngest George's charisma and sun-kissed complexion could cajole America's 35 million Hispanics in a border crossing even Republicans would support: a mass exodus from left to right. ■



Performance Art

redefining personal mixed-ness

Alison De La Cruz

Alison De La Cruz creeps barefoot onto an empty stage and crouches behind a small table. Palming a handful of shells from her sungka board—a nod to her Pilipino heritage and the metaphoric foundation of her performance—she smiles and says, "This is my palace." Her pronouncement is true. With strikingly honest spoken word and ubiquitous song, De La Cruz draws the audience into her one-woman show, "Sungka." Complete with monologues, one-liners and an ode to Spam delivered by a diverse cast of characters, "Sungka" delves into her experience as a bibibabae—a term unique to De La Cruz's personal lexicon: bi and bi describe being both biracial and bisexual, and *babae* is woman in Tagalog.

"Sungka" is a life-long confrontation and negotiation of ambiguity. A biracial pinay from Southern California, De La Cruz found herself feeling isolated by those who believed she "wasn't Pilipino enough," and the others who said she "wasn't white enough," and the images of white middle class lesbianism that didn't relate to what she called, her "brown-skinned bourgeois" background. In junior high, she turned

to writing as an outlet, and found words to be her passion. "I fell in love with the whole idea that as a writer, I could create the reality; I could set the rules." Writing also allowed De La Cruz to tell the stories she had always longed to hear: real stories about race, gender and sexuality.

Today, at 25, De La Cruz's resume is impressive. Her works have appeared in the chapbook *Mix'd Up*, and *Going Home to a Landscape: New Writings by Filipina Women*. She produced the Los Angeles Festival of Philippine Arts & Culture and is also on the Board of Directors for Hapa Issues Forum. De La Cruz was recently honored at her alma mater's first lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered alumni/ae reunion. A national tour and marketing plan for "Sungka" is now in the works.

As her future takes off, De La Cruz hopes that she can continue to give people a new perspective: "[I want] to redefine who they see in the community and what they see as beautiful." With the drive and talent she possesses, the world is certainly Alison De La Cruz's palace.

HEATHER SAKAI

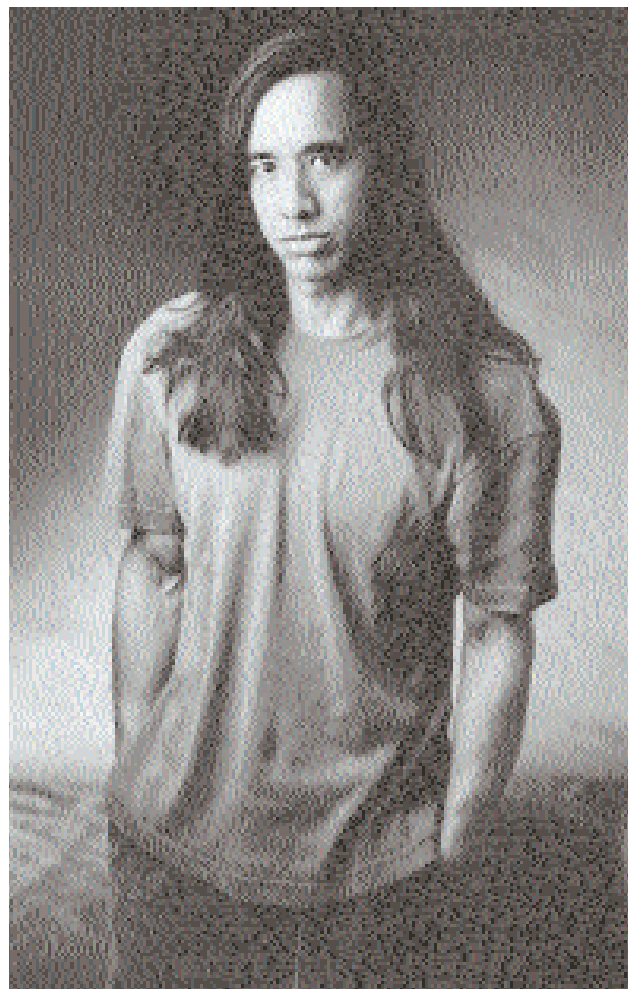


PHOTOGRAPHS THIS PAGE BY LYNSEY PIMENTAL

Kip Fulbeck

What do you do when you're already an accomplished teacher, performance artist and filmmaker? Kip Fulbeck, 35, decided to write his first novel. *Paper Bullets*, which has just debuted (University of Washington Press), is a fictional autobiography about a multiracial Asian-American male living in southern California.

By the age of 26, Fulbeck was a professor of Art Studio at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Since 1991, his award-winning videos and thought-provoking performances have taken him all over the world. His first critically acclaimed piece, "banana split," deals with his Hapa identity, interracial dating



and masculinity. But the video that caused a real stir was 1994's "Some Questions for 28 Kisses." He starts by explaining, "To be angry, you have to have a reason." And people get angry. A series of love scenes between Asian women and white men are further complicated by several narratives and text. The video questions not only film representation, but where Fulbeck, a product of a Chinese mother and Anglo father, fits into all of this.

His current gig, "I Hope You Don't Mind Me Asking, But," is a series of monologues that takes Fulbeck around the nation performing to packed audiences. "It's a mixture of honesty and of me showing that I'm vulnerable, that I make mistakes. The real key is that you talk about these unique things about yourself," Fulbeck says of his performances.

Whether motivating a small workshop or a packed auditorium, Fulbeck's energetic stage presence keeps audiences on their toes. His in-your-face approach has people buzzing long after he has left the building. "They're expecting a boring podium speaker, but when I get the emails afterward saying things like 'I felt like I want to go and make art afterward,' that makes me feel really good," he says.

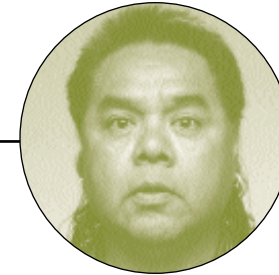
A die-hard Lakers fan, Fulbeck still finds time to surf, hang with his black pug, Kita, and continue to make art. Whether playing guitar in his band, Red Rooster Paste, or being a lifeguard during his summer hiatus, Kip Fulbeck is making an important mark on the mixed race community and its future.

For more information, visit www.seaweedproductions.com.

VICTORIA NAMKUNG



PHOTOGRAPHS THIS PAGE BY SUZANNE BERNEL



James Luna

James Luna once said, "I'm a therapist, a used car salesman and an evangelist," in reference to his satirical shows. Audiences from Arizona to Washington, D.C., have had the pleasure of experiencing Luna's multimedia installations and performance art, which use humor to address serious Indian issues. The notable "Shameman" monologue touches on "shamans" who commodify spirituality and the white people who buy it. Luna's enterprising "shaman" sells a tennis racket, a cell phone and even a buffalo horn. His latest work, "American Indian Studies," parodies technology and Indian tradition. In the interactive performance, rock 'n' roll, video, objects, physical comedy and audience participation add to Luna's striking stage presence.

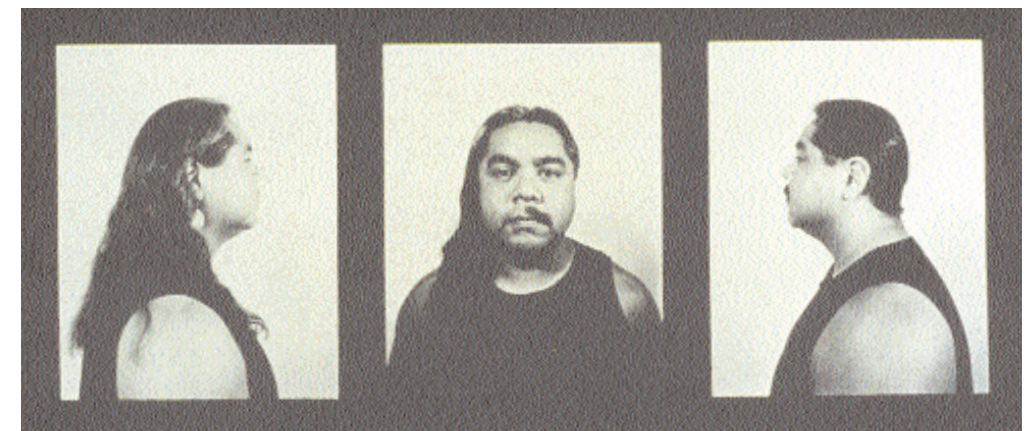
The sometimes controversial Luna was born in 1950, to an Indian mother and Mexican father on the La Jolla reservation, where he currently resides. Having studied art as an undergraduate and counseling for a master's degree, Luna now serves as an academic counselor at Palomar Community College in San Marcos, California. While Native American audiences may relate more to his work, Luna does not

shift things around for non-Indians. "If people don't get it, they're never gonna get it. I don't think it's my place to spoon feed people," he says.

Undoubtedly his most multiracial piece, "Half-Indian, Half-Mexican" is a three-part spread of black and white photographs. The self-portraits are essentially mug shots. One features a profile with long hair, a large Indian earring and a clean-shaven face. Another profile has Luna with a black moustache and slicked-back hair. And the third photo has Luna facing the camera dead on, with both stereotypical images confronting the viewer literally down the center of his face. Does his multiracial heritage challenge Luna's legitimacy? "I think for some people—I call them the cultural police—that's an issue with them. But if you dig deep enough you'll find that they're not full-blooded either. When I first moved back here, I thought, well, hell, I'm not gonna deny this part of me," he explains.

With performances at the Whitney, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History under his belt, Luna has no plans to stop making art. "There's a lot of work to do. The multicultural movement isn't over."

VICTORIA NAMKUNG



PHOTOGRAPHS THIS PAGE BY WILL