

**Q. Can you introduce yourself and tell us a little about who you are?**

A. My name is Amy Hou, and I came from Nanjing, China, as an immigrant student to America. I currently live in Boston, Massachusetts. Being an immigrant has shaped how I see the world: I'm more open to different perspectives and more motivated to take advantage of opportunities. At the same time, I still stay connected to my background and culture, which is an important part of who I am.

**Q. Can you tell us the idea behind your work?**

A. My idea behind the piece was inspired by Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*, where she uses everyday language to explore social issues, particularly discrimination. Rankine draws on moments from daily life—ranging from classroom interactions to public figures like athletes and writers—to reveal how discrimination operates across different contexts. Through her work, I not only gained insight into broader communities but also began reflecting on my own identity. I found myself questioning whether I fit within these narratives of discrimination, which led me to encounter the term “model minority.” While this label is often viewed as harmful to Asian communities, I have experienced it differently. Traits like being quiet and hardworking have, at times, positioned me as trustworthy and responsible in others' eyes. This led me to consider how, as an Asian and an immigrant, certain forms of discrimination can feel beneficial, even as they remain limiting. From this perspective, I began to reconnect with my cultural roots, particularly my name, and reflect on how my identity shifts and is reinterpreted in the United States.

**Q. What do you hope resonates with people when they experience your work?**

A. I hope to resonate with people who have experienced being read as a “model minority,” not just as a label placed on them, but as something that quietly shapes how they see themselves. Psychologically, this experience can create a split between the inner self and the version of oneself that is recognized and rewarded by others. When certain traits, such as being quiet, hardworking, or compliant, are consistently affirmed, they can begin to feel less like choices and more like expectations we internalize. Over time, this can blur the boundary between authenticity and performance, leaving individuals to question whether they are acting out of their own identity or responding to what is socially accepted.

As immigrants, this process often becomes even more layered. Adapting to a new culture can involve subtle shifts in language, behavior, and even self-perception, creating a sense of being continuously translated. A name might be shortened, mispronounced, or replaced; cultural habits might be softened or hidden. These changes are not always forced, but they accumulate psychologically, contributing to a feeling of transformation that can be both empowering and disorienting. Through this piece, I want people to recognize that this experience is shared, that many of us navigate the tension between who we are, who we were,

and who we are expected to become, all while trying to maintain a sense of self that feels whole.