

Wan-Lin Tsou



Artist's Statement



My name is Wan-Lin Tsou (she/her) and I have been proudly working with Metro for over six years. I have a passion for excellent customer service, and it is a great pleasure to encourage companies to help motivate their employees to use transit for their commutes.

In 1983, my family immigrated to the United States from Taiwan when I was three years old. My father wanted his three children to assimilate as fast as possible into American society. He allowed my siblings and I to be re-named by our elementary school with traditional English names. I was quickly renamed to Elizabeth. Therefore, I went by the name of "Liz" for the first twenty-five years of my life.

After taking a transformative course with Landmark Education, I realized that I needed to reclaim my heritage and birth name to be my true and authentic self again. I went back to using my Taiwanese birth name of Wan-Lin and began learning more about my culture too.

I took it for granted when I was raised by my paternal grandparents during my childhood. They were invaluable to my family's survival and success since my parents were too busy to care for their children.

In America, my mother was studying hard to obtain her master's degree in accounting while my father worked multiple jobs to support the family.

I was taught the importance of education and hard work at a young age. When I was around twelve years old, I helped my family run a small motel in Fort Worth, Texas. My sister and I were tasked to wash, dry, fold, and restock all the towels and sheets at Clayton House Inn. We also helped clean the guestrooms and deliver items to guests' rooms too. This helped to develop my strong work ethic and to value education to pursue a career that both helps people and gives me purpose.

Next, I became enamored with art as a young person because of my love of movies and books. I first used movies to be informed about American pop culture so I could have better conversations with my peers at school.

Later, I discovered the magic of comic books and graphic novels. I first tried to free-hand draw Kraven the Hunter, a villain, from the Spider-Man comic book. Also, I took many art classes throughout high school, however, I had not practiced drawing in a long time.

Last year, I was moved to help with the American-Asian Native Hawaiian Pasifika (AANHP) bus project after



attending the King County AANHP Employee Resource Group where I met a couple that was directly affected by the tragic Monterey Park shootings. The victims were all from an AANHP background and the Employee Resource Group felt that we needed more positive representation of our AANHP community.

I was inspired to create a piece and submit it to be displayed as part of the AANHP visibility project. I wanted to highlight 20 different AANHP countries with their traditional dessert foods, cultural patterns, and national landmarks. The theme of this art idea is to try to represent different facets of a large AANHP diaspora.

My idea is to have these smaller images of foods, patterns, and locations create scales that make up the body of a dragon or fish. Furthermore, I wanted to highlight many Pacific Islander countries like Samoa, Marshall Islands, Philippines, and Fiji, since they are often overlooked countries and yet are very important in representing the Asian diaspora. Also, the folks from these Pacific Islands do have a presence here in the Northwest too.

In conclusion, this project on AANHP representation is important to me to highlight our diverse community, allow more AANHP folks to be seen, and to celebrate our many cherished and distinct cultures.