

Qianru Li

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Department of Theatre Arts
University of Pittsburgh
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2024-present Assistant Professor, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Pittsburgh
Affiliated Faculty Appointment: Cultural Studies
- 2022-2023 Adjunct Professor, Department of Asian and Asian American Studies, Loyola Marymount University (LMU)
- 2013-2015 Assistant Professor, Department of Dramatic Literature, Xi' An University of Architecture and Technology

EDUCATION

- 2024 Ph.D., University of California, Irvine, Drama
Graduate Emphases in Asian American Studies & Global and International Studies
- 2015-2018 Doctoral Coursework, University of Georgia, Theatre and Film Studies
- 2013 M.A., Shanghai Theatre Academy, Theatre and Traditional Chinese Opera
- 2010 B.A., Shanghai Theatre Academy, Literature of Theatre, Film, and Television

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Theatre and Performance Theory / Asian and Asian Diasporic Theatres / Decolonizing Theatre Histories / Inter-racial and intra-racial Relations / Multi-model Research Methodologies / Ethnic Studies / Memory and Intermedial Narrative Construction / Disability Studies / Student-centered, Anti-racist, Feminist, and Trauma-informed Pedagogies/

PEER REVIEWED ARTICLE

- October 2024 “Oral History as Theater: Transnational Legacies of China’s One-Child Policy.” *Amerasia Journal*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00447471.2024.2411173>.

BOOK REVIEW

- March 2017 Ju Yon Kim, *The Racial Mundane: Asian American Performance and the Embodied Everyday*, *Texas Theatre Journal* 13, no. 1 (March 2017), 116-117.

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

- July 2012 Edna Mazya, *Games in the Backyard*, produced by the Shanghai Art Theater, *Journal of Shanghai Theater* (上海戏剧) 53, no. 7 (July 2012), 14-15.

SELECTED AWARDS & GRANTS

2023-2024	University of California President's Dissertation Year Fellowship, UCI
2023-2024	Ithaca College, Diversity Scholar in Theater Studies (Declined)
2022	UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts, 21C Arts Research and Innovation Grant
2022	UCI International Center for Writing and Translation, the Schaeffer Graduate Fellowship
2022	UCI Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation, Summer Teaching Apprenticeship Program Fellowship
2021	UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts, Medici Scholarship
2021	UCI Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation, Graduate Fellowship Summer 2021
2021	UCI Center for Medical Humanities, Mellon Sawyer Seminar Suffer Well Summer 2021 Fellowships
2020	UC Speculative Futures Collective, Transnational Equivalences and Inequalities Grant
2019	UCI Center for Asian Studies, Graduate Student Grant Award
2018	UGA Graduate School, Communication of Research and Scholarship Grant
2017	UGA Graduate School, Innovative and Interdisciplinary Research Grant

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP PROJECT

2025-ongoing	<p><i>Our Stories</i></p> <p>An oral history and documentary film project on the everyday struggles of transnational families.</p>
2021-2022	<p><i>Who Will Look After Me? Transnational Legacies of China's One-Child Policy</i></p> <p>An oral history and documentary film project on women's reproductive rights under China's One-Child Policy in relation to immigrant elderly care in the U.S.</p> <p>Over the course of sixteen months, I conducted participant observation, semi-structured interviews, interview transcript translations, and archival research, while spearheading the production of a forty-five-minute documentary film. I partnered with the Asian American Senior Citizens Service Center (AASCSC)—a senior-serving, non-profit, and community-based organization in Orange County, California. (https://vimeo.com/843324851)</p>
2020-2021	<p><i>Sharing Comfort and Care: Intergenerational Story-mapping in the Cambodian and Pacific Islander Communities of Orange County</i></p> <p>Participated in an oral history, digital mapping, and online cookbook project that documents the displacement stories of the Cambodian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander communities in Southern California.</p> <p>Twelve months as a student researcher conducting semi-structured interviews with Cambodian Americans and Pacific Islanders, creating a digital map, and designing a physical recipe book. The faculty leaders of the project were Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Dorothy Fujita-Rony, Thuy Vo Dang, and Madelynn Dickerson. (https://sites.google.com/uci.edu/sharingcomfortandcare)</p>
2019-2020	<p><i>Count Us In 2020</i></p> <p>An oral history and documentary film project on the participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders(AAPIs) in the 2020 U.S. Census.</p> <p>Six months of semi-structured interviews with eleven AAPI community leaders in Orange County, California for a series of documentary shorts that focuses on the significance of AAPIs' engagement in the U.S. Census. I partnered with the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA), the largest AAPI-serving organization in Orange County. (https://rb.gy/udf0c)</p>
2019-2020	<p><i>Learning from Our AAPI Leaders: Toward a More Inclusive History of Santa Ana</i></p> <p>A digital mapping, oral history, and documentary film project that captures the one-hundred-and-fifty-year history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Santa Ana.</p> <p>Nine months as a student researcher conducting and documenting semi-structured interviews, creating a digital map on the History Pin, and producing a series of thirteen documentary shorts. The faculty leaders of the project were Dorothy Fujita-Rony, Isabela Quintana, and Judy Tzu-Chun Wu. (https://sites.uci.edu/aapielders/)</p>

- 2017-2018 *From Cage to Stage*
An oral history and documentary film project on the creative process of *Within These Walls*, an immersive performance on the incarceration of early Chinese immigrants at the Angel Island Immigration Station.
Eight months of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and archival research, while spearheading the production of a twelve-minute documentary film. I partnered with the Lenora Lee Dance, a dance company that tells the stories of BIPOC communities in San Francisco, California.
(<https://rb.gy/pjrk7>)
- December 2012 *Composite Gong-Drum in Sijing*
A state-level Intangible Cultural Heritage project in Shanghai that documents a dying indigenous art form—Composite Gong-Drum in Sijing Village.
Five months as the leader of ten student researchers conducting semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and archival research for a book project: Yafeng Xue and Jinghua Gu, ed., *Composite Gong-Drum in Sijing*, (Shanghai: Shanghai Cultural Press, 2012). I contributed to Sections 1 and 4 of Chapter 4 of the book.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Spring 2025 “World Theatre II (49 undergrads and 5 grads)” and “Creative Scholarship: Ethics and Methods (PhD seminar, 8 students),” Department of Theatre Arts, University of Pittsburgh
- Fall 2024 “World Theatre I (36 undergrads and 6 grads),” and “Enjoy Performance (35 undergrads),” Department of Theatre Arts, University of Pittsburgh
- Summer 2023 Instructor of Record, Department of Asian American Studies, “Asian American Communities,” University of California, Irvine

Teaching Associate, Department of Asian American Studies, “Asian American Stories,” University of California, Irvine
- 2019-2023 Teaching Associate, Department of Drama, University of California, Irvine
- Summer 2022 Instructor for the [Asian American Youth Leader 2.0](#) program at the South Coast Chinese Cultural Association
- Sep-Dec 2021 TA Professional Development Program (TAPDP), for Theatre, Music, and Arts, Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation, University of California, Irvine
1.5-day workshop to provide new teaching assistants with pedagogical training in Sep 2021; 6-week workshop (1 hour/week) online workshop between Oct and Dec 2021;
- Jan-Dec 2021 Pedagogical Fellow, Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation, University of California, Irvine
Graduate students competitively selected from across campus based on teaching evaluations, letters of recommendation, and demonstrated skills and interest in pedagogy
- Fall 2021 Teaching Associate, Department of Asian American Studies, “Asian American Histories,” University of California, Irvine
- Summer 2021 Instructor of Record, Department of Asian American Studies, “Asian American Communities,” University of California, Irvine
- 2015-2018 Teaching Assistant, Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Georgia

CERTIFICATE

- Winter 2021 Inclusive Excellence Certificate Program, Office of Inclusive Excellence, University of California, Irvine

20 hours of training in the intersection of diversity, equity, inclusion, & free speech at a Minority Serving Institution. Two courses: “UCI as a Minority Thriving Institution” and “Wellness (elective course),” <https://inclusion.uci.edu/education-training/inclusive-excellence-certificate-program/>

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

- 2025 “The ‘Unfit’ Stories: Making Space in Our Field for Space-less People,” presented at the *Association for Asian Americans Studies* conference, Boston, April 2025.
- 2024 “Theatrical Wit,” presented at the Reorienting the “Ecological” Thought: Performance as Methodology for Change, at the *American Society for Theater Research* conference, Seattle, November 2024.
- 2023 “Theatrical Mind: Chinese American Inter-becoming,” presented at the Asian American Performance Studies Working Group, at the *American Society for Theater Research* conference, Providence, November 2023.
- 2022 “Archiving *Within These Walls* and *Dreams of Flight*,” presented at the Performance and the Archive Roundtable, at the *Western Association of Women Historians* conference, April 2022.
- 2021 “Dangerous Contact: The Shooting of Akai Gurley,” presented at the Transpacific Performance Working Group, at the *American Society for Theater Research* conference, online, November 2021.
- 2020 “Dangerous Contact: The Shooting of Akai Gurley,” presented at the Transpacific Performance Working Group, at the *American Society for Theater Research* conference, online, November 2020.
- 2019 “From Cage to Stage: *Within These Walls*,” presented at the Transpacific Performance Working Group, at the *American Society for Theater Research* conference, Arlington, November 2019.
- 2018 “Transformative Bodies and Intersectional Resistance: Outside and *Within These Walls*,” presented at the *Association for Asian Americans Studies* conference, San Francisco, March 2018.
- 2017 “Resisting the Collective Amnesia: Asian American Racial Performances Online,” presented at the *Performance Studies international* conference, Hamburg, June 2017.

INVITED TALK

National

- 2024 “*Who Will Look After Me?* Filming with Chinese American Seniors,” Asian American Theatre course, New York University, New York, October 2024.

STAGED PLAY

- 2022 Playwright and Director, *The Interview Day*, UCI Contemporary Arts Center, April 2022. A short play on Chinese American immigrant senior care, featured in the Writers’ Festival: Women, Bodies, Words.
- 2019 Playwright and Director, *It is Very Important to Stay Healthy*, UCI Contemporary Arts Center, December 2019. A multimedia live performance on China’s One Child Policy and women’s reproductive health.
- 2012 Playwright, *Jocasta: A Contemporary Adaptation of Oedipus the King*, Directed by Xiaoyang Wang, Black Box Theater, Shanghai Theatre Academy, March 2012. An adaptation of *Oedipus the King* that focuses on domestic violence and women’s health.

2010 Playwright and Director, *SCL 90*, New Space Theater, Shanghai Theatre Academy, June 2010.
A play on intergenerational trauma, featured in the 2010 Shanghai New Plays Festival.

FILM

2023 Associate Producer, *To Write From Memory*, Directed by Emory Chao Johnson, premiered at the 73rd Berlin International Film Festival, February 2023, and received the Golden Reel – Best Documentary Short Award at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival.
A short film about a Taiwanese-American transgender person who has been haunted by unresolved intergenerational traumas while exploring the possibilities of a major transition.

MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCE

2023 Director, *A Shot In The Dark*, premiered at the UCI Experimental Media Performance Lab (xMPL), June 2023.
Incorporating legal testimonies, documentaries, news reports, poetry, essays, and animation, the project focuses on relationships between Asian Americans and African Americans.
*I mentored and collaborated with one UCI Drama alumnus and nine undergraduate students from all disciplines at UCI and LMU. They served as research assistants and voice actors for this project.

MENTORSHIP

Graduate Students

2024-2025 Graduate Teaching Mentor for Patrick J. Mullen in Spring 2025
Comprehensive Exam Preparation for Payne Banister and Patrick J. Mullen in Spring 2025
Directed Project Directing for Guilherme M. Yazbek in Spring 2025
Preliminary Exam Supervision for Laya Shahzamani in Spring 2025

SERVICE

Department

2024-2025 Season Selection Committee Member, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Pittsburgh
2024-2025 PhD Admissions Committee Member, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Pittsburgh
2024-2025 Graduate Awards Committee Member, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Pittsburgh

University

2025 Panelist of the “Professor Panel,” Asian Student Alliance, University of Pittsburgh
2022 Student Representative for the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American taskforce, University of California, Irvine

Professional

2022-ongoing Steering Committee Member for the American Theater Archive Project.
2025 Chair and Discussant for the “Approaching the Monstrosity, Awkwardness, and Hauntology of Our People through Theatre Studies,” at the *Association for Asian Americans Studies* conference, Boston, April 2025.
2024 Graduate Student Mentor, at the *American Society for Theater Research* conference, Seattle,

- November 2024.
- 2024 Working Session Convener for the “Reorienting the ‘Ecological Thought: Performance as Methodology for Change,” at the *American Society for Theater Research* conference, Seattle, November 2024.
- 2019-2022 Co-founder and Co-facilitator of the Irvine Playwrights Workshop, a monthly new play development workshop that is free and open to the public.
- 2022 Volunteer for the Teaching for Justice Conference, a spotlight on teaching Asian American Studies across the curriculum, April 2022.
- 2020 Inclusion Officer/Liaison to the Field Conversations Organizers at the Graduate Student Caucus Cabinet of the *American Society for Theatre Research*, co-created the first graduate-student-focused panel at the 2020 ASTR conference, November 2019 – November 2020.
- 2020 Co-organizer and co-moderator for the *Global Asia(s) Workshop* – a UCI graduate student workshop symposium co-sponsored by the Humanities Center and the Asian American Studies, February 2020 – March 2020.
- 2019 Archivist for the Lenora Lee Dance and documented the creative process of *Within These Walls and Dreams of Flight*, December 2018 – June 2019.

Community

- 2020-2022 Consultant for the Asian American Senior Citizens Service Center (AASCSC).
- 2022 Guest Speaker on sexual violence and domestic abuse prevention for the We Rise Above Chapter at the Irvine Unified School District, October 2022.
- 2020 Consultant for the Civic Engagement Program at the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA), July 2019 – July 2020.

LANGUAGE

Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese)