

Stories Beyond the Stones

Fariha Kha

Picture this: You're hungry on your only lunch break and there are no places to eat in the area. If there are, you end up spending all of the money left in your wallet at a fancy restaurant. On your way to the restaurant, you start to smell delicious aromas from different cultures. You turn around and you see—a food truck!

This bronze sculpture, meticulously designed and set within Central Park, is a tribute to the often-overlooked heroes of New York's vibrant street food culture. Nestled amidst the lively backdrop of food trucks and the lush greenery of Central Park, this monument is a testament to the dedication and success of the city's street food vendors.

The monument features a food truck sculpted with an uplifting angle, symbolizing resilience, determination, and success. This upward trajectory embodies the entrepreneurial spirit and hard work of the vendors who bring an array of flavors from around the globe to the streets of New York.

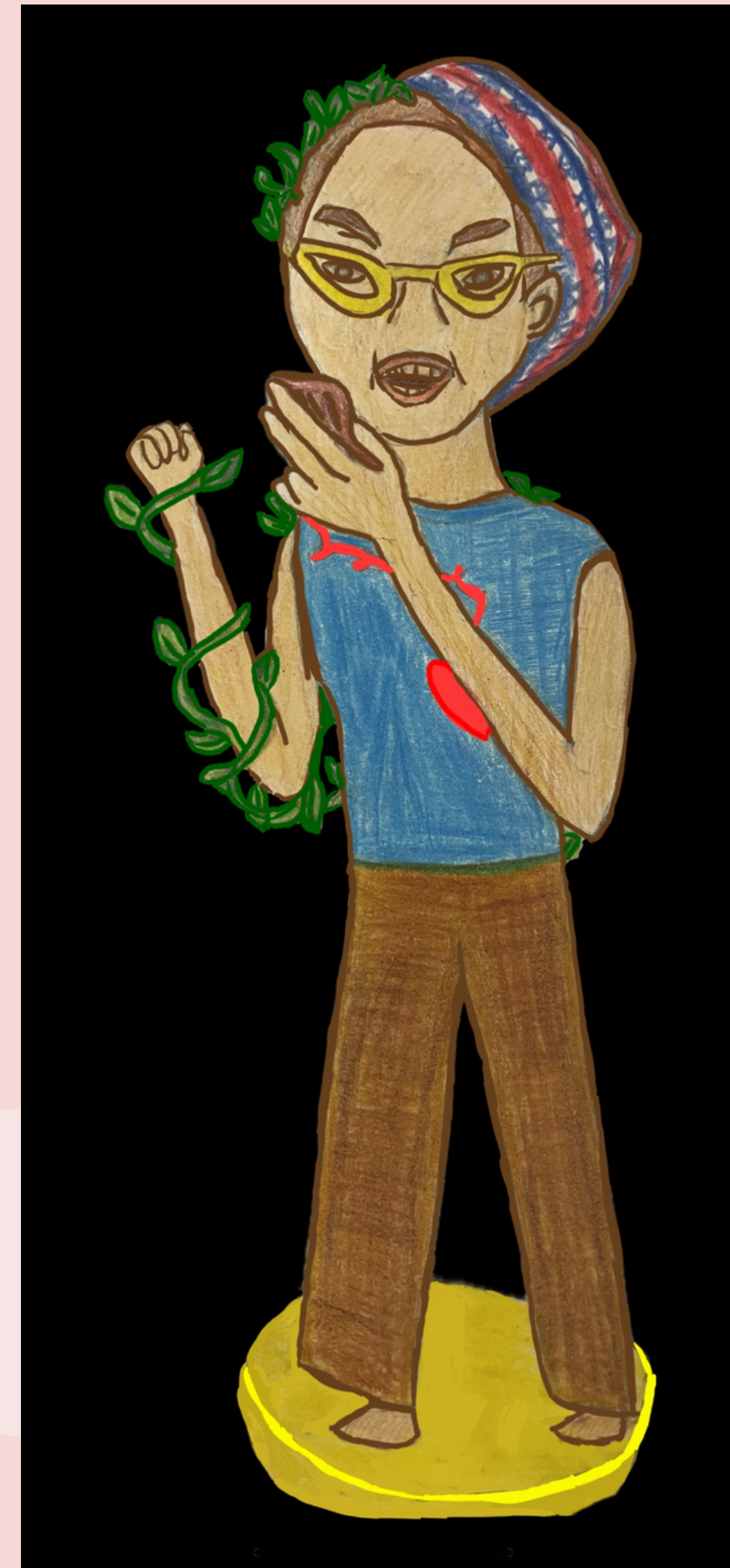
New York City's food truck vendors represent a fusion of cultures, infusing the city with diverse tastes and traditions. Beyond their culinary offerings, they are pillars of the local economy, providing affordable dining options for students, residents, and the diverse array of visitors frequenting Central Park.

Placed strategically within Central Park, amidst the vibrant atmosphere and cultural diversity, this monument serves as a powerful symbol of appreciation. Accompanied by a dedicated plaque reading "DEDICATED TO THE VENDORS OF NYC," it honors the vendors' unwavering commitment to preserving culinary traditions and fostering unity among communities.



In an ever-changing society reflecting different values across time, don't dismiss that giant sculpture before diving into the stories it had once told and the guarded tales of the silent.

Jennifer Chen



In remembrance of one of the greatest advocates for equality during the 1960s civil rights movement, Yuri Kochiyama remains to be a lesser well-known figure in the history books compared to similar civil rights activists like Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcom X during their time. To recognize her achievements and reflect the values she represented, a monument made in her honor serves as a reminder to find unity, peace, and love in a world so full of hatred and polar perspectives that keep people separate.

Yuri who was a Japanese American that survived through WW2 internment camps is an inspiring individual because she saw the injustices the Black and Puerto Rican communities faced with widespread racism and discrimination as well as how her own people were imprisoned by the U.S. government. The collective experience of inequality ignited a fire inside her to use her voice and peacefully protest against such injustices.

Yuri's monument is supposed to look like her physical appearance but there are symbols that make her unique to stand out. For example, the hat that she wears is colored the American flag to show that she is an American because she was born in California and the vines with the leaves around her represents her roots to Japan because she grew up with these two cultures and Japanese culture is also much more intertwined with nature. Additionally, the material of the sculpture is made out of wood because wood can be considered as a natural "Earthy" material and easy to carve a sculpture and to be painted over with great details.

Yuri is also seen with a microphone because she uses her voice to advocate for all communities of color as her values reason that if one community is suffering, then all communities are suffering. True justice is not achieved if there is no true equality for all and that is why the radio wire is drawn to the shape of her heart because she leads with what she believes is true and just.

Following Yuri's life to New York where much of her participation in civil rights movements came from, this life sized monument would be placed in Citi-Field, Flushing, New York because Citi-Field invites all people from different backgrounds to come together. Flushing, Queens is also a very diverse place where many residents are immigrants from around the world. No matter the individual's background, people can find common ground and learn about Yuri's accomplishments as long as anyone identifies as a human.

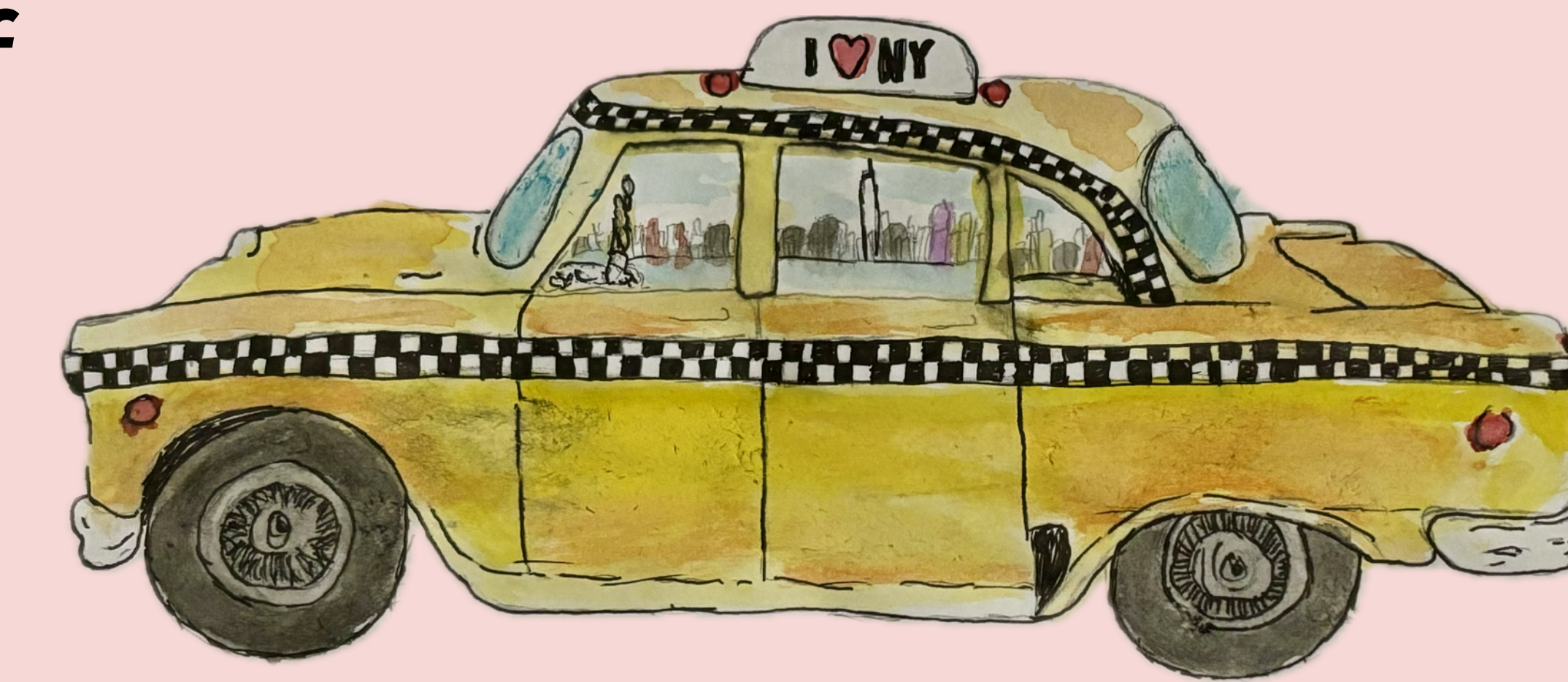
Representation matters in all kinds of ways and the American story rarely tells the success stories of Asian Americans. Yuri's presence empowers change in society because the statue will spread messages of freedom, peace, and equality to remind and motivate people of the progress to continue and advocate for human rights. There are very few representations of Asian Americans, and Yuri's statue could also invite hard conversations among daily people for educational opportunities. It serves as a powerful message of what it means to be human and destroys the feeling of apathy for others' struggles that feels so relevant to New York City.



These statues all challenge the audience to seek understanding of underrepresented stories and celebrate the individuals to the communities that have broken beyond the surface of stereotypes. The purpose is to encourage audiences to have conversations that promote unity and finally see to celebrate historically oppressed communities that faced adversity in all aspects of life. New York City, a home to the world, can not be a more perfect place to host these statues by telling the stories of the people who have lived and influenced the rich cultural tapestry of this city.



Angelina Nur



New York, specifically Manhattan is known for its bustling and hectic environment due its highly diversely populated community. However, many individuals would not be able to manage the chaotic environment, causing the role of taxi driver's to serve as a fast service for people to go from place to place far more conveniently. Although their popularity and demand was far greater in the past, due to car services such as Uber, Lyft, Revel and many others, where their services are connected to technology, which is very prevalent in today's society, the need for taxi's has decreased tremendously. However their impact should not go unnoticed as through the low requirements needed to employ, many individuals of color who were often not officially qualified or educated for work, were provided an income, bringing unemployment rates lower.

Although an existing monument of "The Taxi Driver" is occupied in the Italians and Macacha Guemes, in the neighborhood Puerto Madero, in Buenos Aires, a monument of a taxi should also exist in New York, preferably in Midtown Manhattan, which is home to major tourist attractions such as the Empire State Building and Time Square. A bronze statue painted with the traditional colors of a taxi, yellow black and white. The monument would have its windows open rather than closed and painted off in order to allow the viewers to see through the monument onto the background symbolizing how taxi's have been all across New York, bringing so many people to their destinations. The open windows also allow for the community to engage with the statue, as they can pose through the open space of the windows along with providing another tourist attraction for people all over the world.