

## VI. Retranscription d'entretien

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L'entretien a eu lieu le 17 novembre sur Zoom avec Rachel Kuo et à ma surprise, Tiffany Diane Tso, qui nous a rejointes au début de ma présentation. La prise de contact s'était finalement nouée via l'adresse mail professionnelle de Rachel, mes différents messages laissés sur le site de l'AAFC et leurs différentes plateformes étant restés sans réponse pendant une longue période –me faisant redouter de devoir me passer d'entretien. Il s'agit donc d'un entretien semi-directif avec deux des 5 membres de l'AAFC qui vivent aujourd'hui dans des lieux distincts, à New York et Chicago. A sa demande, j'avais fait parvenir à Rachel Kuo mon guide d'entretien ainsi qu'un abstract de mon travail quelques jours plus tôt. En raison de son caractère tardif, cet entretien de recherche a été à la fois envisagé comme moyen d'accumuler de nouvelles informations pour approfondir ma problématique et comme entretien de contrôle, visant à vérifier et consolider certaines des analyses déjà réalisées pendant le travail de recherche.

## Interview guide

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Your views on :

1/ Context of participation to the AAFC ?

2/ The AAFC operation

3/ AAFC missions : Main topics and strategies

4/ Zines

5/ Intersectionality in AAFC

6/ The use and impact of Digital Technologies by AAFC

7/ Political inspirations & solidarities

8/ AAFC's work during the pandemic

9/ Associations or institutions working on similar issues

Retranscription d'entretien du 17 novembre 2020

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**Me:** Hi Rachel, how are you ?

**Rachel Kuo :** Hi ! I'm fine, thank you.

**Me:** Thank you so much for taking the time for this interview... If it's ok for you, I'll start by introducing myself, in a classic feminist way...

**Rachel Kuo :** (Nodding) Ok... Um... I think Tiffany is gonna join... But we should start!

**Me:** Oh, ok... great ! So... As you know, my name is Mélanie Cao. I am Belgian Vietnamese, I am 31 years old, I am an old student (laugh). I studied Communications at the University and... Hi Tiffany!

**Rachel:** Hi !

**Tiffany:** Hi !

**Rachel:** Melanie was introducing herself...

**Me:** Yes... Um, is it ok for you Tiffany, if I record the interview for the transcription?

**Tiffany:** Well, yeah...

**Me:** So I'm Melanie, I'm 31 years old. I am Belgian Vietnamese and I studied Communications... After that, I've worked as a journalist and in cultural institutions on feminist issues... And last year, I started a new master in Gender Studies... Um, maybe I can also explain how I discovered the AAFC.

**Rachel Kuo :** (nodding).

**Me:** So, during the pandemic... with the anti-Asian racism, I felt bad... And so I was looking... for people talking about that, or for feminist Asian collectives on the internet... So I made online researches and that's how I found the collective... And it was really helpful to have those other narratives about the crisis...

So... the goal of this interview is to discuss about the narratives and strategies of the collective, but also to talk about you personal experience as a member of the AAFC.

So... to start, could you introduce yourself?

**Rachel Kuo:** Ok, and I can expand on any... like feel free to ask follows ups in case our self-introductions are not complete. And so, I am Rachel, I use She/her pronouns, I am Taiwanese, I kind of try to model your introduction (laugh). I am 32. Well, currently I am also a scholar and researcher. So, I am a postdoc at the Center for Information Technology and public life, and also just got my PHD in Media Culture and Communications at NYU.

In prior to academia, I worked more in higher education doing like social justice education program. Um, my background has been like Institute of Communication, and so the work that I do with AAFC specifically, has been all of the zines work and another media and other social movements spaces I've done with media based organizing, which is like the uses of media and technology to find and identify problems and solutions to particular social issues and so, kind of these access media making, I am studying up digital infrastructures for a political mobilization and things like that, as a brief overview. Oh yes, I lived in New York city for 8 years, currently in Chicago where I moved July 2019 and also grew up in Chicago.

**Me: Ok, and Tiffany ?**

**Tiffany Diane Tso:** Yeah... I am also making a smoothie at the same time. Um, I am Tiffany... I am 32 as well and I am also like Chinese Taiwanese. Um, I was born and raised in Texas but I've been living in New York City for almost 9 years and um..., also have a journalism background... um... I came into the spaces as a writer and journalist and a producer. So, I think that what I bring to the

table is a lot of kind of like, event production and coordination as well as, you know, like writing and publishing. So I help out with you know, storytelling initiatives, and you know, our publishing online and the Asian American writing workshop and Black Women Radicals collaboration that we're working on, and Black & Asian feminists Solidarities. Um... and I don't have like any further education but I feel like you know, through my journalism and stuffs I've been exploring, like this Asian American feminism and Black & Asian solidarities and Conflicts... Yeah, and I don't know if anything else's missing (laughs)

**Me: No, I think it's really good as an intro. And I wanted to ask you more precisely: can you tell me how you came to organize in the AAFC?**

**Tiffany Diane Tso:** Yeah, um... Ok, so like many, you know, Asian American are just people in general (laughs) in the US. Post the 2016 elections was, um, you know, feeling like, I really needed to plug in, you know, more to just my community, and organizing work. And I actually found an event series all about Asian American feminism in the age of Trump that started right after the elections in January/February 2017. You know, I had been like plugging into lots of different things, just trying to figure out what my place I guess in the movement was, and I saw this event, and I was like: « What? This is exactly what I want to be doing, and I want to be organizing among other Asian American feminists... It just seemed like it was perfect. So, I saw that the first event was already sold out. Cause it had gathered a lot of interest and had been put on urgently by this nonprofit, the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, NAPAFW for shorter. It's like the only specifically Asian American women's nonprofit or national nonprofit. And they address issues of immigration rights, gender equity along with reproductive justice. And so yeah, I saw that event, I couldn't make it to the first one, because it was sold out and I saw a volunteer form, so I filled up that volunteer form. And I ended up kind of getting brought into volunteering for events that followed, so you know, there was like organizing panel for NYC organizers, and then there is also politics panels with elective officials, which I met Rachel through. But there were other ones after that, that I've either just attended or helped out at and from there, we ended up... it was me, Rachel and Julie who all were on this NAPAFW NYC chapter board. So, we were organizing under this national non-profit for our chapter, but we really kind of like doing whatever we wanted (laughs). Since there was not really any like direction or oversight or anything. And so, we just continued talking about and creating events and full pledge education around Asian American feminism. And we, when we had the opportunity, we created our own little formation and continue doing the work

under AAFC. That's how I got involved in, I don't know if Rachel has anything different. But we met during the politics panel.

**Me : Rachel, would you like to complete ?**

**Rachel Kuo :** No, it's a similar story as Tiffany. The only thing that I would add to is that I had heard or seen the event series and had reached out to a different friend, um who organizes with the Chinatown advocate ? who was also involved in the series at that time. So I really wanted to get involved and kind of thinking about getting involved with the events' serie. Um, I feel like multiple causes or people about what my different skills and interests were and getting involved like with the series and make things, kind of like one of the things that I know we have been talking about a lot in our collective, inside the kind of different forms of labour and work, as it situates within movement spaces and that something even at the start of getting involved in the AAFC... before AAFC was AAFC, like even that serie, that kind of level of coordinating work. Um, that kind of went into bringing people into volunteering in the event series, that was something I was reflecting on, and the kinds of ways that other friendships and relationships let me into that space. Um, and so, after the events serie, things to be said, sadly it took a while, we didn't formalize as a collective until, I think, the summer of 2018. We brought in different people to kind of have a conversation, and um, I think at first we had this idea that AAFC would it be a bigger collective, to get more organic, we could maybe exist across the series of slack channels... And I'm kind of realizing not only that we don't have the capacity to hold rightly like a huge formation ; but I think the kind of work that needed to happen for us, more internally, to figure out like a shared political analysis, something developped like a kind of collective rythm with each other. And so we kind of have moved to a model where there was four of us and now there is five of us in our leadership commitee, and that kind of mixed up with the core collective. And the other forms of work that you do that seems more expensive like partnerships, like collaborations with other entities and partners...

**Me : And I wanted to ask you about the name : how did you choose that name and at what moment ? Because you use "Asian American" which is not only a descriptive label but also refers to Asian American Mouvement. How do you relate to that history ?**

**Rachel Kuo** : Yeah, I think, Tiff correct me, I feel after the event serie when we were thinking about becoming a collective, we had thought about the first time we kind of meted to name ourselves and that kind of started with the *Asian American Feminist Collective*, and then I think after we were like, we're gonna formally launch as a collective in fall 2018. We did have conversation on what we wanted to rename ourselves, but given that it wasn't um... at the time, like an explicitly like Asian American feminist formation, that we stuck with this name because it explicitly and very clearly names what we are and do. And I think actually it's really helpful for us to kind of space making of Asian American feminism. Versus if we had a different collective name, that was something else. And I think part of also the reason for thinking through Asian American feminist collective versus other names that might be more abstract or metaphorical etc is that we also try to build like a pan-Asian politics across different diasporas histories, experiences, etc. And I think, having Asian American Feminist Collective also allows a certain flexibility in terms of how we build. But I think that's the name history.

**Tiffany Diane Tso** : Anything else, just 'cause, it already states in the title what it is (laughs) and we don't have to explain it as much. And that was kind of what attracted a lot of us also to the Asian American Feminism events series, 'cause it was like so explicit, and um..., so many different people, including myself, came into that space being like : "Oh my God, I've never seen that string of words together (laughs)", and that's actually like an event title also that we um, that so many people were like "I've never been in a space that's explicitly is Asian American and feminist and um, yeah, so I think it was just kind of also like... I don't know ! What Rachel said... kind of building this Asian American feminist public, and I think that people were attracted to the name and the title itself, would kind of understand our politics. And you know, and it would be easier to sort of like, I don't know, do the work that we do.

**Me** : **And had you been in some mainstream feminist collective before that ? Or it was you first feminist experience ?**

**Rachel Kuo** : Um, not first feminist experience but I think, in terms of participating in like a small collective that's feminist, then yes. I don't know, I guess it's tricky to say that I don't think I was involved in like mainstream feminist like formations, but I don't think that necessarily means that we weren't doing feminist work prior to be in a collective.

**Tiffany Diane Tso** : Yeah, I mean, I think that everyone had her own um, entry points into organizing, you know. So others it's like, Julie who is more involved in City politics or you know, Senti who is more involved in the reproductive rights movement/non profit based, or Salonee and Rachel work in academia... everyone has their own realm, like they're kind of organizing in before in different ways of like you know, whatever, doing activism. And none of them that were explicitly, Asian American and feminist... And so you know, I think in every single movement spaces there is supposed to be like, a feminist politics but um... that either that being, you know, white feminists or actually misogynists or (laughs)... I don't know, there is a lot of issues in every spaces including in feminist spaces I'm sure, that Asian American are facing and stuffs and yeah, that we all kind of like, did some stuffs and at the end of the day, it's like we all kind of were desiring um... you know, a political space or an activist space that actually reflected our um.. visions and goals...

**Me** : **Ok, and can we talk a bit now about the collective operation, the daily organization : how do you decide which topics you are working on, how do you process ?**

**Tiffany and Rachel** : Silence.

**Me** : **I don't know if my question is really clear...**

**Tiffany** : No, I think we got it (laughs). Just cause we don't really have like anything formal necessarily. Um, like as a collective, I think we're resisting like becoming a official non-profit or you know, like becoming some sort of official organization. Um, and we kind of prefer to keep things a bit looser and because you know, this is something we all do on our spare time, we're not paid, you know... (laughs) organizers. Um... and, that reflects in that spaces that we ultimately wanted to be something that we come together and do um... you kown... like as a passion project in ways... and we don't want to make it into something that's like work. Um...or you know, like that basically I guess, replicates the same work systems and stuffs, that we are kind of resisting (laugh) um... as you know, as anti-capitalist feminists. So, we um... yeah, we don't really have anything that is formal, but we kind of just have meetings monthly and you know... we check in and kind of chat ; we're texting stuffs...

Um, but we discuss like different things that we want to take on, so whether we get requests you know, from different organizations who want to collaborate or want us to like, put on a workshop

or you know, drop in, whatever host something... so we have different asks that would end up like discussing as a group, what we are or not participating in, and um, also you know... We do - I think a lot more in the beginning of the collective -, like a lot of ideas like : « what topics do you want to bring in front of crowd in events, that we're excited about ? Our projects we wanna do ? », um... and you know, through that, you know Rachel headed our zines that we made, and althought most recent one "Care in the time of Coronavirus" was something Bluestockings actually approach us about, and so, that was a collaborative... Things like, um, you know, our talk circle that we have, which is like an intimate event, where like anybody who identifies as Asian American feminist can come, and just talk about love and sex... with those other projects we were all actually excited about doing and so we will get together and talk about that.

Um, what we wanna do, we have retreats um... ideally twice a year, especially now that Rachel is you know, away from us, it's good to have face time and also um, I think that it's good for us building bonds as a collective. And you know, understanding where we are organizing from, and like, you know... what is important to us. Rewinding on things um, yeah. So we kind of just take things as they go (laughs)...

**Me : And do you have specific roles in the collective or everybody is doing everything ?**

**Tiffany :** Anyone has a specific role, I do think we have our specific kind of niches or you know, Rachel is like zine queen, so that is a lot of that type of stuffs and I don't know, I guess I do have a production background, so I feel like that kind of stuffs - I don't know -, come more easily to me. But we definitely don't have specific roles. We're all of us have done a little bit of everything. And it is really like project based, so it's like certain people leading a project, they're doing a lot of directing in you know, whatever, that type of stuffs. Um, but that ultimately, we are kind of like plugged in wherever we can, and also how we can. 'cause you know, we all have different capacities, based on like work and life and stuffs, we try to make a lot of space for that too. Um, cause again, we don't wanna make it into another job.

**Me : And how did you decide to make a zine for the coronavirus, on that subject specifically ?**

**Rachel :** I can speak to that. And so actually as I mentionned also, I think as we also became like, quote and quote bigger, like in terms of more visible and more people know about AAFC, um we get contacted a lot more for collaborations. So our project sort kind of moved from that primarily,

but once that we created and kind of moved to the direction of also doing collaborations and partnerships. And so, for the coronavirus zine in early March, Matilda who is with Bluestockings bookstore, - which is a radical feminist bookstore collective in the Lower-East Side of Manhattan -, had reached out to us. Just like in our inbox, to be like : "hey, I've been thinking about noticing what is happening in my community, - so Matilda doesn't identify as Asian or Asian American right, but was just these acts of witnessing and documenting. Um, these acts of witnessing and wanting to document these incidents of anti-Asian racism and do our zine project in collaboration. And they also ran *Too Young To Be Sick Collective*, like a chronic illness collective at Bluestockings. And so we had a conversation about if we're gonna be talking about anti-Asian racism during covid, in addition to collecting stories by people experiencing this, like how were we also moving this in the directions about political conversation. There is like History of xenophobia in the US as well as like other movements spaces, like to really think through. So it's like what people might comment "oh I want something that is speaking to my experiences, and the racism during covid also getting stories like how important it is to like decarcerate like our present system right now, how important it is to, maybe think about the legacy of disability justice. Um, in this moment and in the past, and also towards the future, what is the importance of bringing this conversation with domestic workers, with sex workers as well. And so that threw a project like a zine, that we can think about a more expansive political orientation. And so, with the zine there is also the sense of urgency that like we were hearing and seeing these narratives and kind of we need to get this out quickly both in the sense of like there was a need for resources about covid cause this is a little bit like pre like wars and lockdowns. So we were like : "ok we need an object that people can have like when they kind of needing to be sheltered in, at home. And also a kind of way to start kind of moving and like stirring a narrative around the anti-Asian racism during the pandemic. So I think that those were kind of like motivations under curating this particular project. Um, and following that, we did some additional collaborations with Bluestockings including a reading of the zine and a Tweet chat, that brought in a lot of like other community partners just to talk about care, and like community interactive agency during the pandemic.

**Me : Ok. And on the zines, you said that the choice of using that form is also linked with the history of Asian American groups or activism. Um, where does that come from, can you tell more about it ?**

**Rachel Kuo :** The zine as part of like, Asian American history ?

**Me : (nodding).**

**Rachel Kuo :** Yes, so... actually, with Asian America, some of the earlier forms of the movement like if we think about earliest forms like in the 60's and 70's, it's a lot of that came out from students newspapers. So students newspapers in California kind of bringing Asian American into being alongside like, Black Liberation movement. So a lot of that, actually, the political work, was happening, at the level of newspapers, like circulars, and zines, so there are deep archives of these, right ? And so the kind of ways that people from social, or ways that people were circulating politics.

And I think zines also have like a rich feminist history, from the white girls zines to the ways that zines have been used by different subcultures, as a way to like, both circulate information but also for people to connect with one another. Because it's a very intimate form, we share a space together... like I give you a zine. That kind of moment of intimacy and connectivity that are both very feminist, so there are these multiple histories of like these preforms as an object with an Asian American movement, but also feminist movement. And I think, for us, like as an object and form, like it kind of sorted out with our first zine that we gave at our launch party. Except people who came to it with a copy of the zine. And so pre-pandemic, the zine is also something that we would give people in person when we encounter them in events. And I think, um, the zine was a way for us also to put a manifesto that we had created on a google doc, and to another like tangible material for that seems like more precious. Right, like that people would like to keep and hold on to, cause these are more precious forms of media. And so, I think we have started to do that and had a really great response. That's also been something that we continued to create. And I think zines is something that I personally really love because as an object, new kind of things even when it's digital, you think about it's potential future as a printable object. It can't be like super long, because you like need to print it, so you can kind of think about it more as a curation. So, it's not what we do on a zine, on « Asian American feminist histories », that is about these completely concrete history, and rethinking about how are we constructing some political arguments and designing them together, and bringing them to the space of the zine. So kind of both, there is an history to it, and I think like as a general form it offers that kind of arguments...

**Me : And for the process, it's often based on open call to people ?**

**Rachel** : On pandemic zine, we did do an open call just to get like community stories, like documenting these incidents. But actually, for the content has been more... I think part of it's like we... in terms of like the labor to create like original forms of writing, like the zine has been more, like we reach out to people who have like, already... maybe written something and we are adapting for the zine form. So we reached out to people whose pieces of writing are maybe already existing on another media form, or like people who have like done digital projects... And so it's these kind of access, like outreach to the other organizers, like writers, poets, artists to include them in the space of the zine. So definitely more about curation and then an open call for submissions. But that might change, given that the zine have more attraction and how we can actually lift up over their voices. But I think Tiff has run our digital storytelling project which is more open call, and give space, especially for emerging and first time writers to have a place to share their piece of writing.

**Me** : **So, the curation... is you, -the members of the collective-, choosing some interesting contents from different places on social medias; that is how you process ?**

**Rachel** : For the zines, yeah. So all the zines, like both if you look at the one on Covid, the one on History, like those two if you look at the table of contents, like a lot of those pieces exist like elsewhere. Or they are like, writers that maybe are like: "ok, we know that we would like to include you in that space, because of your work, like you have a pre-existing form of writing?". And sometimes people will write original content but it has been like, within our circles and networks of friends.

**Me** : **Thank you (laughs). Um... so you talk a lot about intersectionality and I just wanted to know how you apply an intersectional approach in the work of the collective.**

**Rachel Kuo** : Um, Tiff, if you wanna share... or I just keep going.

**Tiffany** : (laughs). Um, yeah, I have a hard time talking about this, but I feel like we, as Asian American group, we're very explicit and I guess, the ways that we represent or you know, bring together, um Asian Americans... because we know that within Asian America you know, that's such a like, over and composing term that um, include so many different identities. So I think one of the main thing is, you know, making sure that we're always giving spaces for all those different

identities. Um you know, around sexuality or race or ethnicity and background, you know, religion and that um... it's us as a group, we don't represent all the Asian Americans obviously, we are only five people um, and that, a big part of the work is just, you know, always like thinking about it, intersectional approaches to our feminism whatever we are creating, the projects that we do or whether it's the zine or storytelling or events, and who we ask to be on our panels or speaking on different subjects, how representing different issues. So it kinds of always might be the lens that we approach our work with um, and that we are always very careful about not replicating you know (laughs) systems and stuff that are trying to... we tried to do our work in a way that honors and empowers like, everyone who identifies with that Asian American umbrella. And those who don't also, as well, you know, if you look at our website, we always pay homage, we always mention the work of Black and other women of color feminisms, that we recognize that we are not doing that work in a silo. And that it's not Asian American feminism is not like : "oh, we are talking about Asian American feminism because we think Asian Americans are the best and that we deserve more, rights ! », (laughs). Um, we do our work alongside feminists of color and that were towards collective recreation. Um, I have no doubt it was just too broad (laughs) Rachel you can maybe speak (laughs)...

**Rachel Kuo** : Yeah, I think that just to go along with everything you just said and I think one of the thing that we're really trying to do in terms of how we apply intersectionality, that we really try to move away and push against individual recognition and representation, like I think it isn't about individual recognition or representation, like all the time making sure that we are bringing people for the sake of representation. But really thinking about like, how are we consolidating our media object, or workshops etc, in a way that is about a collective politics. And so for example, this summer we were part of the Allied Media Conference, we did two events : one on feminist **abolitioning** and transformative justice, and one on anti-colonization and anti-capitalism. We were like : "ok, we're gonna have a huge panel, with different ethnicities, like these different groups coming together to talk about this". But how are we really thinking about media conversation between two people, THAT is intersectionality at its core. But it's really about ways other people come build relations and enlightments and connect to these topics, without necessarily that individual moment of recognition or representation happening. But it's because we are a small collective of five, and because there is like so many histories, experiences that make up, like Asian and Asian American diasporas; and also when we are thinking of how we're connecting with like other communities of color... I think beyond, we're trying to reduce people down, to the level of

their different identities, it's about like bringing together like a chapel of level of analysis for people to connect across differences.

**Me : Tiffany you wanted to add something ?**

**Tiffany :** No, I was just nodding (smiling).

**Me : Ok. I would like to go back to the collective's missions in general. So, I know the main topics that you have already talked about, of the collective but um... can we talk about the strategies ? I wrote three things : producing spaces, stories, and community building. Can you talk about that and how yo think you are building community ? It 's a very large question...**

**Tiffany :** Um, yeah. I mean I guess, like you know, underneath, these are projects that we do, I feel it's like political educational and all. It's like the reason why we are doing this all is because we are trying to um, spread (laughs), feminism I guess, and create a... better sort of Asian American like, leftist like politics and political awakening almost, um... yeah, and so how we do that is yeah, right like building and creating spaces so, whether it's just like you know, bringing people together for a potluck, or picnic or something, or you know, for somethink like a pannel or a workshop or round discussion talk circle... Um, yeah, just like literally creating spaces for like people to come and make connections, um, and to like learn.

**Me : Just a precision, how do you invite people to those events ? Is it only by the use of social media ?**

**Tiffany :** Yeah, a lot of it is on social media for sure except for smaller events we will do more like invite only, approaching people we work with in our community, people from different organizations, or just different organizers that we know, so sometimes we'll do um, smaller invite only things, if it is like a larger thing, um, we will call out to the entire public, so usually do social media cause we do have a lot more of a reach on there... um but you know, obviously, in person's spaces, there is always capacities and so, I think that you know, the beauty of online is that we've been able to kind of expand that, um, since we've moved to like to the digital world, which we actually didn't really do before covid. Like we actually did mostly like in person events in New York City before that, and it wasn't until March that we did our first virtual event on Zoom.

And so, yeah, it is lot of social media, you know, at first, when we were a smaller collective you, we did a lot more things like email reachouts and stuffs, when we first did our initials events and stuffs and like, our launch event we had actually emailed different people and like ask people to invite people and stuffs and... (laughs) um, you know we did create on social media, but we had a smaller platform then and now, that it's like kind of really exploded, and I feel it really did exploded around March/April around the time the zine came out. And now I feel there are too many people that we can't hold (laughs) space for it anymore, which is unfortunated but you know, that's what makes the social media platforms that much more kind of like important to us, because those are the only ways that we can like communicate to everyone at the same time. Um... but yeah, so, usually, just through social media...

**Me :** And can your reach older people when using social media, I guess you have a lot of young people; but can you reach the older generations for example ?

**Tiffany :** Um, I mean, I think it is, yeah, we do[missing word] I think definitely demographic around like around our ages, you know, like probably around 25 to 35 I would guess, um... just based on like you know, people who will come in person in events. Um... I think moving online actually, I think, has kind of age range diversified a bit, just based on like, you know, Rachel mentionned the Allied Media Conference, so that was, you know, something that we had a range of people applied to be a part of our cowork. And um, I think it was a little bit more wideranging and we do, um, see more I guess like, intergenerational kind of building on... but that, I don't know... I think older people are definitely online... (laughs). And yeah, I don't know, Rachel, do you have anything to add to that ?

**Rachel Kuo :** Yeah, I would just say that I know, because we primarily use like now, as Tiffany mentionned, because we do have a big audience on Twitter, Instagram and like sometimes we do use Facebook, but I think it's a more neglected platform... um, that we do use those as a primarily way to reach audiences, and then what usually ? making partner with people ?? the use of social medias channels. And yet, I think the kinds of ways why we've been able to grow both as nationally, transnationally, I think diversify a certain age ranges, like I think meeting people across languages, class and maybe generations... immigration status can be trickier, cause we are like on platforms for example, like the ethnic diasporas platforms like Wechat lines... Like what apps in terms of how we're promoting to audiences who are being intentional about those

? Like that people might be using those to strap? information like about us or by us; and like those more ethnic networks, but we're not using those more directly.

So I think like at the top, as we've grown, I think there is like a moment to revisit conversations : who are we reaching and why. But I think there's also a kind of realization that has been cultivated, a kind of public around this, as we are clear about who we are reaching, why and then, because of that, what is that can be mobilized that to do? And so, we're kind of clear about what we can make possible, and what we need to like, partner with other people to make possible anything. For an example of that is how we worked in conjunction and collaboration maybe with groups that are doing more based building work; that's like on the ground and local, and like how we can support that work with our platforms. Um, but I think, the turn that being more digital has expanded in certain ways; and I think like, be able to kind of mobilize and create a discussion about like Asian American feminism at a different scale. But I think, because we've also, I think, the digital beyond the output of the work that we do, also undergoes our internal infrastructure. Like me moving to Chicago, we have been like remote organizing with each other, for, like months, prior to the pandemic, even though our first public facing event went virtual in March. But that we had a more robust infrastructure to collaborate with each other remotely prior to projecting was helpful.

**Me : And about the community building,- because you mentioned the collaborations with other associations or the library Bluestockings-, is it that way you are thinking about community building ? Or for you, community building is more about connecting people through those social media and proposing those narratives ?**

**Rachel Kuo :** Yeah, I guess, there are different layers of community building um... cause I think like at one level right, there is deep community building, like the pre prior to pandemic that we did a lot of potlucks, and talk circles and we work on deepening the community that we have with certain like partners, so we work very closely with people like Bangladeshi Feminist Collective; like with Red Canary Song, we are making like friendships. So when we think about like a community that is like close; like those are kind of like rightly people that we know that were in partnership conversation with, that exceed I think the bonds of like our organization, and also just only doing work together right. We are friends with people who might find other spaces , they are primarily political home.

So I think quite that one layer... Another layer like are people who come to our events and also start building community with each other out one of the things that we had heard was like, in Seattle, like somebody who came to our Asian American History workshop.

For more, with somebody that like she met at one of our workshop so it's like kind of those levels... And then, community building that's like broad... that's like our platform of people who see themselves as Asian American feminists that might come to our platforms to like seek for information and kind of like want to then...deepen their commitment by either joining one of our events and meeting people in one of those spaces. So, community building is a broad and big term that I think, captures different layers of how relationships get build, right ; and I would say, I don't know if all of our followers on social media like I would say that, "oh great, we're building community", like maybe that is like more that rebuilding up a feminist public and hopefully that folks that would do that, like start building community, and like building up their political home in their local sites and with other people. So, I guess that's like a kind of long way of saying that there are just different forms of community building that we are doing in different ways; and I think one of the challenges I think of ... the remote organizing like... regard like the remoteness of certain things now, is that like the intimacy that can't get captured. That the level of like a potluck in someone's home or like talk circles; like you can't really do that as well, in Zoom, I would say with people who haven't met each other before. Like there is something, I think, that's both like the kind of like sensual, like kind of thing of being in space with other people, that doesn't translate into the digital... as well. And so I think we are kind of try to figure it out. Well, what do we do, like at this moment, in terms of kind of building up one intimate communities' spaces, that are different from I think, workshops pannels events, etc.

**Me : And um, yeah, what changed with the, you said that from March you used more the digital technologies, in which ways it impacted the way you have worked ?**

**Rachel Kuo :** Is the question is also on how the shift to the digital because of the pandemics has changed how we've been working ?

**Me : Yes...**

**Rachel Kuo :** Um, I now have been talking a lot, Tiff do you want to answer or should I ?

**Tiffany :** I don't know... I mean um... I think that... I mean for me, not to say something negative, but I do feel like there... like the loss of like in person meetings is kind make things harder for us to,

I don't know, stay in touch on a deeper level and like be on the same page sometimes (laughs). That's a personal take away but ...

**Rachel Kuo :** I think Tiffany had to get along both like internally as a collective and also externally as these workshops and events where you can't really have more difficult conversations; and I think a really pressing conversation I think in our feminist spaces is how do you address conflicts, like at a level of interpersonal relationships. Because we are talking about conflicts at the level of the State, but we really need to get to it interpersonal. But it is really difficult to do it in an online space, when you don't know when you really get to see like that person again. Like that to see someone hurt to then build a connection that in solely digital requires a different level of intention. That sometimes, it can be easier like after a moment of conflict to like, for people, just to be "Oh, I'm just gonna not message that person again". But that's happening in AAFC, but it happens in other movement spaces very much. But the kind of infrastructures for how we can remedy. Like after conflict is difficult and is even in our workshops spaces it can be hard for somebody to like, see something honest as a moment that, there are like growing and their politics to share. And then not know, like "oh I'm never gonna see these people again" like, how will I be hold in a space like beyond that kind of moment of interaction.

So I think that it gets really tricky, like level of mediation of relationships where it's not organically after an event that you can touch base with someone to be like, "that moment felt tense, that was weird, like do you want to have a drink and talk about it ? " or "Do you want to just go off for five minutes and process ?". So I think that kind of layer, like what happens in a zoom or another platform becomes the container for interaction itself, and it's hard to go beyond that. So I think that it's kind of expanding on what Tiffany's saying. From my observation, I think we are busier since going online. And I think because you're cutting out things such as travel, and it also might be like, since some other things in marge between Wing Luke Museum and the zine, like our partnership with Black Women Radicals that we've also... visibility on us has been different. So, I don't know if it's just like the digital technologies, but I think with everything being digital and like, a kind of expanding visibility, it makes it busier in terms of the requests that come in.

And so, we're kind of also in a moment of like how do we become more intentional about what we say yes to, so we also have room to like, build our vision with more intention rather than always just like, responding to the needs of other people.

**Tiffany :** Yeah, but I guess on the flip side, you know, we have people from Belgium reaching out to us, or doing like you know, presentations for people in the UK, **it's extending our reach and our spread I guess.** But yes, it is hard to build intentionally I think.

**Me :** **Can you say something about the collaboration with Black Women Radicals that you made during the crisis ? I saw the video online with Rachel and also the project on the website, can you talk about the collaboration that you made ?**

**Rachel Kuo :** Sure. So, Jaimee from Black Women Radicals... Jamie is like... Black Women Radicals, someone as a collective and she is one person (laughs). So, I think that's something like I'm going to think about that kind of labor, but she runs **Black Women Radicals and reached out to us to do that IG live conversation with the five of us.** Um... **because of the importance of how are we building Black and Asians Solidarities, and like that is an important conversation** to renew. So she reached out to us and we had that. And what has been exciting, it's like that work has now been supported by the Asian American Writers Workshop, that give us a home in many ways to continue exploring this conversation.

So we have a two years portfolio project with them. And like two years is like a longer time like, to really think about how are we building a relationship and friendship together. And so that's like kind of that partnership of like how are we engaging with that. But I think like, those are also real containers for how we talk about label when you have like a collective of five, and like one person as well. And also, even on dynamics, when you do think about Blacks & Asians Solidarities, there are like, uneven differences at the level of race, gender, class ; like that also really need to be grappled with. And so I think, it's not like when we're talking about this partnership, "oh we're all gonna split it like, equally" right, like that it's gonna be like each of us. That all five of us will go and then like, then Jaimee will go. I think like that even requires a different intention on like the five of us, to really think about how are we more equitable with labor, how are we intentional about bringing a black writer and artists. And doing that work, because of these dynamics for, of unevenness like at the structural level.

So I think, all that is to say like we are nesting this prop', like partnership is like building a practice of like how we have discourses about Asians and Black Feminists Solidarities, but also how we're practicing it, at an interpersonal level.

**Me :** **I also wanted to talk about History. I mean, History as a narrative practice, that you use in different zines. It was in the center of zine number two and you also use a lot History to politicize, in the zine 3. I just wanted to ask you, how come that you have that approach?**

**Tiffany:** I mean I think that a big part of it is that people just don't know Asian American History in general. Um, but along as Asian American Feminist History, um... and not a big part of it was just anytime you know you would mention anything historical, you know, or would mention leaders from the past right, most of the time people... the awareness level's really low. Like people don't get. If you don't go to school, like us school that has, at College specifically, that has like Asian American Studies, then you probably don't really get any sort of Asian American History. Um, and so, I feel the main thing was just that, because it was so noble, that we wanted to be able to like, you know, create a space where people are able to like, explore those histories and like, know that they exist. Because it's just, you know, it's erased and like, it's ignored within American History courses. So, the main impetus was just that, you know like, knowing our history and stuffs like, what helps radicalize us sometimes (laughs), like knowing that we come from a lineage of people who have been like excluded, and marginalized, and that, you know, we didn't just come to American as rich immigrants and stuff (laughs). And so, yeah, I think, it' mainly just kind of doing the like radical work of educating people, you know, like deep political histories in America, that we don't exist in silos... this is not the first time. Even though it is the first time for me, the topics like Asian American feminism had ever come up, we're not the first you know, people to call ourselves Asian American Feminists... And we're definitely also not the first people to establish a formation like this.

Um, so I think just creating a space for people to like, explore more, and like, giving people some kinds of entry way to like, talk about these things or you know, people who are really educated in just certain part and just want some spaces to like talk about it and.... yeah, I think it's just been really important, like adding an intentionality to our work that is like, you know, that I think that a lot of people think that what we do is really new and noble um... but it's not ! (laughs) Yeah, I don't know, just like helping people like feel like they come from a lineage that they like..., I don't know, I think it helps us feeling like less alone anyway, understanding that we are not the only Asian American feminist out here (laughs). I don't know if Rachel have anything to add to that ?

**Rachel Kuo :** (laugh). No, it was perfect Tiff'.

**Me :** **In the first zines, you gave a lot of examples of inspirational figures like for example Women of Color feminism or Black feminism as theoretical inspiration. But you don't give so much Asian American figures? Maybe there are some collectives, but do you also want to give some names that really inspires you?**

**Tiffany:** Sure, so **our first workshop that we made virtually was an Asian American Feminist History workshop**, we tempted to like you know, kind of bringing our own historical like Asian American feminist heroes, um, like we talked about our own people but um, that we kind of like, allowed that to become like a point of discussion for everyone else. But you know, we talked a lot about the **Unbound Feet Collective**, I don't know if you're familiar with them...

**Me:** Nodding.

**Tiffany:** A collective of artists and poets who made performances, and a part of the way they first met was actually through a rap circle called Asian American feminists. So we called about them, I like to talk about Helen Zia, cause she is a lesbian journalist like advocate, you know all these different things that I'm very inspired by... um, and Rachel likes to talk about Grace Lee Boggs and Senti likes to talk an organization she used to work for Sakhi for South Asian Women, which is a group who addresses domestic violence within South Asian immigrants communities in New York City. And yeah, we tempted to like, kind of give these stories as an entry point for people to kind of also dig into their own, um you know, who Asian American feminists heroes are to them or like who they see as historically like icons or historically related to them. A lot of times you know, people who may have not ever heard of some of these, people that we're talking about and so it's like just a great opportunity for them to like you know, learn these names, and like, dig more into them. But then yeah, a lot of the times, people end up bringing their own family members or you know, cultural icons like Constance Wu or pop culture icons or whatever ; because you know, how absent, I guess, Asian American women in general or like Asian American like feminism has been from..., our understanding of medias and History... So, a big part of it is kind of that we bring, we create the space for people to like, do that, like identity exploration and start these conversations about history and stuff. I guess the way that we do pay homage to like, you know, third world feminists and black feminists' histories, because a lot of, you know, Asian heroes and icons that we're talking about now too, were also inspired by those movements. And so yeah, we feel the need to pay respect to that, to the people who originated these like um, theories and stuff. But um... through kind of like the history workshop, and some of our social media projects, um, we do a lot more I guess like talking about like our Asian American mothers and stuff (laughs). Yeah, the question was just like "do we ever talk about Asian American people", and yes, we do (laughs).

**Rachel Kuo :** Yes, like these conversations are not completely new ! But built on people movements, etc that come before. There's the big names : Grace Lee Boggs, Helen Zia, Yuri Kochiyama, that people know of. We also encourage people to think about everyday people,

parents, aunts, siblings, organizers in local spaces, and different feminist heroes or ancestors in their own lineages, experiences..And also Black feminist histories and Third World Feminist movements hold Asian American feminist heroes, for example Margot Okazawa-rey who we've been lucky to meet was an original member of Combahee River Collective).

**Rachel Kuo** : Um... I need to hop off in a couple of minutes. So, also happy to answer any questions...

**Me** : **What are your relations with the university? For example Rachel you published a work in collaboration with the university - not for the AAFC -about Asian American digital politics and I wanted to know if there are some collaborations with the university and the collective ? Or with the Asian American studies ?**

**Rachel Kuo** : Yeah, I can answer that very quickly. So part of it too is like, both myself and Salonee work in academia, like our jobs, what we get paid professionally to do, like at the level of these institutions. So some of those partnerships that we had come out that relationships that we're building at work, like the way other collective members like Julie might build relationships with people in City Council in New York City government ; like Tiff with people in journalism and Senti with other non-profit through the level of work. So some of those partnerships like come from that universities, like we've done stuffs with the Asian Pacific American Institute at NYU through those relationships, we've held events in those spaces.

And part of that partnership is like when we're doing in person events, like institutions and places that sometimes can offer free spaces (laughs) to have people in. So, there is that level I think of like, different collaborations. And like also we're working with students, like students groups that ask us to speak, at the level of Asian American Studies, we will definitely get asked, because also the history of Asian American Movement building has also led to the creation of Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies. And so I think that there's... there is like academic interest, like I think people who work with an academic institution that do reach out to us, in terms of like either speaking, and things like that. But I think my partnership, I think more explicitly comes into a partnership with an institution like some of that is also driven on a back of preexisting relationships. That like Salonee might call or like we're fulfilling requests. But I think a huge part of it is like we're also trying to not give too much to institutions (laughs), cause institutions can also be sites of harm, where a lot of these higher are replicated. So, I think our attention really has been to build partnerships, like more directly in other arenas. But if we're building with institutions, like really thinking about how we're redistributing access to spaces etc...

**Me : Thank you... you answer my question (laughs). If you need to go Rachel, tell me.**

**Rachel Kuo :** I don't wanna like just dip out. If there is any closing question that both of us can answer ?

**Me : I think we've talked about the main topics. Is it possible if I need some precisions about something, to write to you by email ?**

**Rachel Kuo :** Yes, you have mine, I drop it here and Tiff, if you wanna share yours directly.

**Me :** Thank you very much.

**Tiffany :** Well thanks for reaching out.

**Rachel Kuo :** Yeah, we're exciting about your project.

**Me :** Thank you so much for this interview, I was very happy of this talk with you and thank you for your time.