



So now imagine what happens when most of the media people consume depict Asians this way. For western Asians, this means it's difficult to see themselves in the heroes and humans that they see. It means that they see that few people like them are invisible, and few dehumanizing stereotypes. And for everybody else, exclusion and dehumanization in media often translates into subconscious thoughts, which then in turn into exclusion, dehumanization, and discrimination in real life. However, this also means that good portrayal of Asians in media could be a key to fighting against these problems.

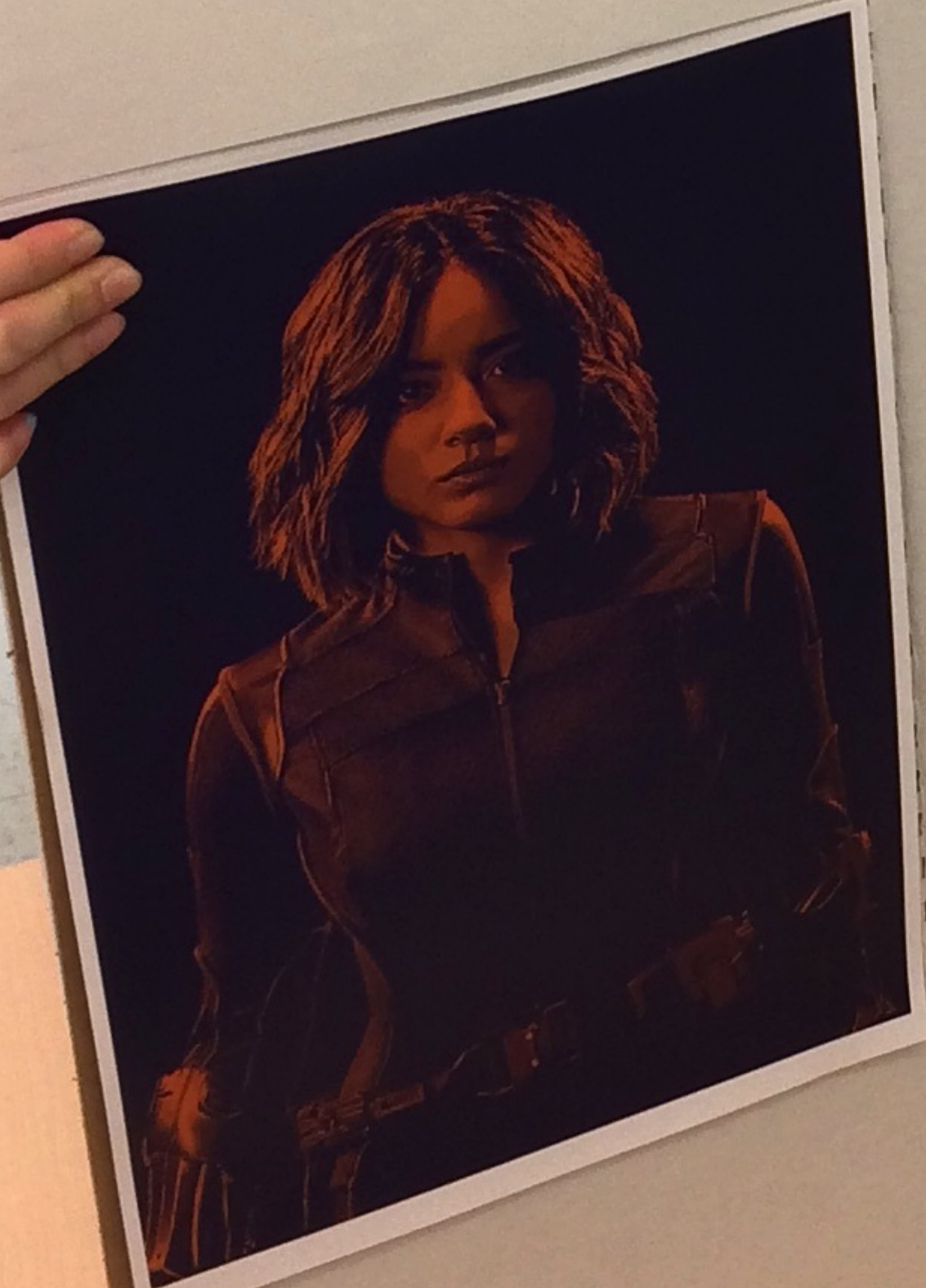
If this wall were to represent well-developed white characters in popular media, this wall would be beyond full by now.

"Asian" includes Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Indian, Korean, Thai, Malaysian, Vietnamese, and so many more nationalities, which are further divided into ethnic groups themselves. To represent Asian culture with caricatures of oriental women, silk robes, and exotic flute music in a "silly" manner without any Asian actors is ignorant and dehumanizing."
- Grace Zhou, Comicsverse, 2017

"[...] Asian-Americans are invisible. Though they make up 5.4 percent of the United States population, more than half of film, television and streaming properties feature zero named or speaking Asian characters, a February report from the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California found."
Only 1.4 percent of lead characters in a sample of studio films released in 2014 were Asian.
- Amanda Hess, The New York Times, 2016



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Media is everywhere, and media is powerful. It tells us what society believes - and what to believe. What, then, does it tell us when the vast majority of media don't feature people of colour?

Racial underrepresentation and misrepresentation affect the way society treats people of different races, though in subtle, indirect and pervasive ways. In the case of East Asians, it can contribute to the lack of visibility, assertiveness and important roles they have in Western society.

Fortunately, the conversation on media representation is more visible than ever before. Nowadays, not only are people featuring more East Asian characters like the ones featured on this display, they're also trying to raise awareness and try to find the whys of underrepresentation, and what society can do about it.

Here, we've featured different voices and opinions on the state of East Asian representation in Western media, discussing things such as stereotypes, visibility, causes, lack, and different approaches and perspectives about the problem. By featuring these voices and a few well-developed Asian characters, we'll hope to inspire others to explore the issue and add to the conversation - and maybe change the face of media.



"[...] that fallacy of 'There isn't an audience, for people of color' ... well, it's code for 'white people aren't going to accept people of color as the lead characters.' [...]"

But beyond that, the idea that white people can't identify with people of color speaks ill of white people, right? Why can't they identify with people of color? Everybody here talks about how growing up, how pop culture influenced their lives. And I'm betting that for most of us, our favorite character/superhero growing up was not Asian. They aren't real. It was probably a white person.

We talked about Harry Potter, we talked about the X-Men. They're all white people and I identify with them very, very much, right? So it's not that hard to identify with someone that's not of your ethnicity, right? Because we've been doing it our whole lives."

-Kaibi Chow, Super Asian America San Diego Comic-Con Panel, 2015





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Media is everywhere, and racism is pervasive. It fills us with anxiety, sadness, and anger. It tells us that there is something wrong with us, that we are not good enough. It tells us that we are not smart enough, not hard working enough, not good enough. It tells us that we are not white enough. It tells us that we are not American enough. It tells us that we are not... well, it tells us that we are not what it wants us to be.



"I don't believe in 'them' and 'us' anymore. The people of color and white people are not going to be the same people as they were before."





The display board features several items:

- Top left: A poster with a blue background and white text in Chinese characters.
- Top center: A poster with a blue-toned portrait of a woman with glasses and a white fur collar.
- Top right: A poster with a white background and a green and red bar chart.
- Bottom left: A poster with a purple-toned portrait of a woman.
- Bottom center: A poster with a purple background and white text in Chinese characters.
- Bottom right: A poster with a red background and a black-toned portrait of a woman.



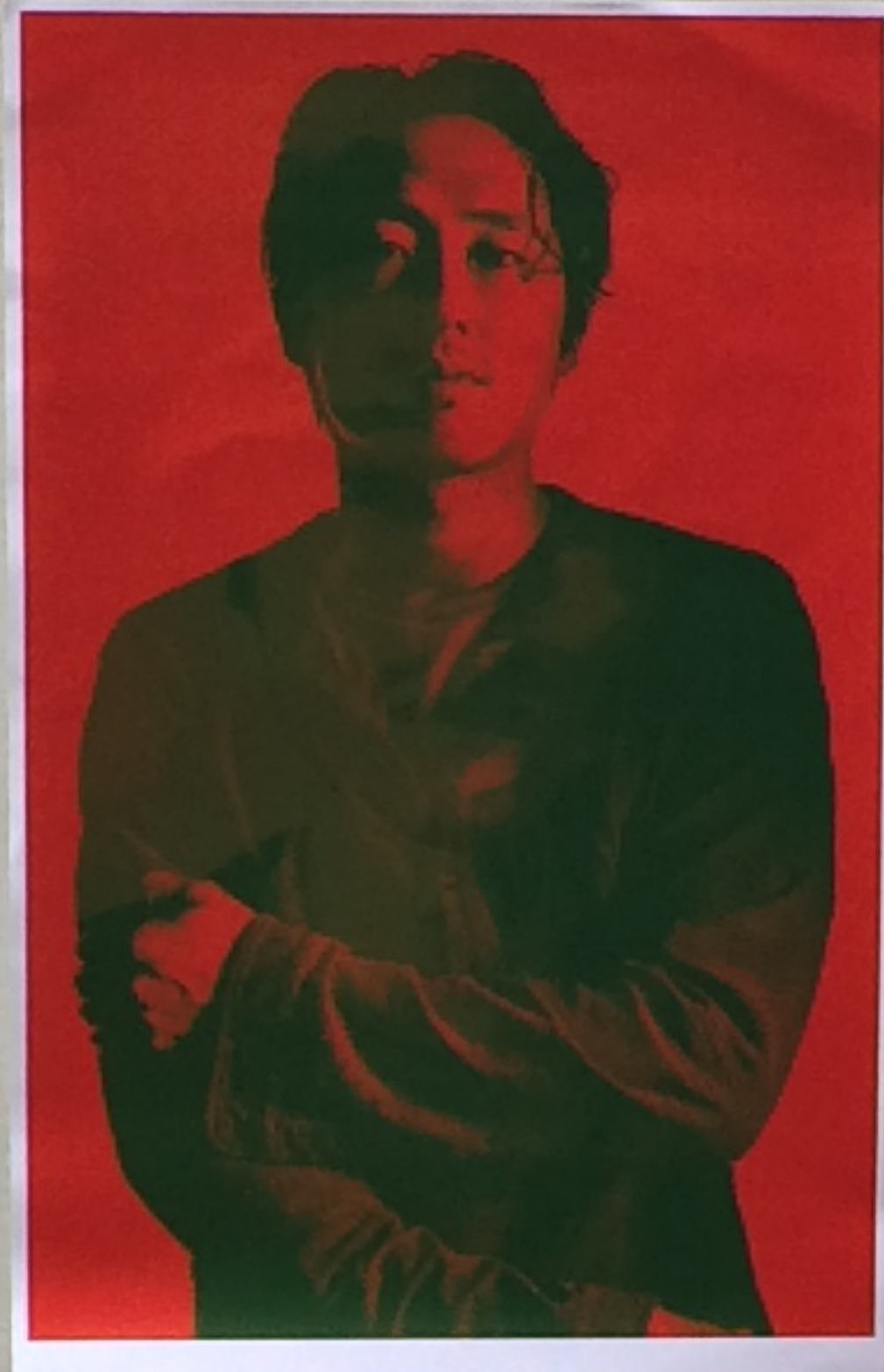


For more information on Asian Representation, check out

Partner Projects	Articles
 The Heart Shaped in the Street Project	 Asian Representation at All In Things Center - CU
 The Asian Business Calling	 What's Missing in the Way of Asian Representation

This project was created for student participation in the Live Well, Take Action Ambassador Program for East Asian Study. This program is a partnership between the Center for Global, Cross-Cultural Studies and the Center for Asian Studies and the Center for Global, Cross-Cultural Studies. For more information, visit www.cocostudies.org/projects/live-well-take-action.

ALPHA Education
TAKE ACTION



Only 1.4 percent of lead characters in a sample of studio films released in 2014 were Asian.*



"These are just a few of the reasons why I identify so strongly with Glenn on *The Walking Dead*. I'm always cognizant of my ethnicity and race, but I've never asked to be or wanted to be defined by it, certainly not marginalized or limited because of it. I respect and can understand why others feel such a deep connection with their cultural and racial background. As an adopted child raised by a Caucasian family in America, I don't feel that way. And right now, it feels like Glenn is the only Asian character on television who doesn't inhabit an Asian family or world."

