

Abigail Clemens  
ID #: 80741940  
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### **Candy R. Wei Prize for International Studies in Art and Design Submission**

To fulfill my international study requirement at Stamps, I studied animation and sound design with my Japanese peers at Kyoto Seika University. During my five months in Japan, I learned the basics of storyboarding, character movement, stopmotion animation photography, and Protools sound mixing, all of which became integral techniques in the execution of my senior integrative performance project, *Three Steps*. Besides gaining this technical knowledge, my time at Seika reinforced my personal commitment to make joyous artwork that celebrates the multiculturalism of my interracial upbringing.

During my time in Japan, I spent many of my days in solitude. Despite my fluency in Japanese, I was not initially accepted by my peers and teachers because my artwork and I were both foreign – culturally and aesthetically ostentatious, immoderate, and individualistic. No matter how hard I tried to fit in and be respectful, I was repeatedly heartbroken when my work was excluded from critiques and dismissed by my professors. I finally had a breakthrough, however, when my projects began incorporating cultural themes and production processes that were familiar to my fellow Japanese students. My animations did not necessarily adhere to the aesthetic that Kyoto Seika is famous for teaching to its students, but because my peers followed the same steps in production, they were able to relate to my work. Similarly, once my sound effects and recorded music included more of the sensibilities that I shared with my classmates, we were able to bond and bridge the cultural gaps that had isolated us from each other. Struggling to

understand and be understood by people different from myself inspired me to make artwork that explores common cultural themes and promotes compassion and understanding. My future creative work will continue to embody these ideals of warmth and respect.

## Images



*Still image from performance on April 7, 2017. This is a full shot of my piano trio performing simultaneously with projections of Chinese ink wash-inspired animations. I painted bamboo and peonies, which are frequent motifs in Chinese scroll painting, to symbolize my flourishing resiliency in growing up torn between my identities as a Chinese person versus a Chinese-American person.*



*Still image from performance on April 7, 2017. This still captures a moment in the first musical piece when the drums become more percussive in a moment of changing harmonic key centers, whilst the animation displays written lines from the first chapter of the Confucian Analects. The juxtaposition of these two serve as a conflicting metaphor embodying my transition into American adulthood with a fixation on the accomplishments of my ancestors and creative influences.*



*Still image from performance on April 7, 2017. This is a still capturing the silhouettes of me and the pianist. The anonymity of the musicians is intended to highlight the content of the animations, as well as reflect my own racial ambiguity.*



*A process shot taken in my studio. I created all of my animation via stopmotion animation software and traditional brush painting. I successively took a picture of each frame to create sequences of motion.*



*Three Steps (Film Still at 00:32), 2017. This still is part of a longer walking sequence in which the physical landscape behind my character constantly changes. The lack of continuity in the background represents my journey to navigate the multiple cultural influences in my life.*