

Gunindu S. Abeysekera

www.gunindu.com | gunindu123@gmail.com | Orange County, California

EDUCATION

- 2026** **Ph.D., Culture & Performance**
University of California, Los Angeles - Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance
- 2019** **M.A., Asian American Studies**
University of California, Irvine
Thesis: "Anubhāva: Historytelling Through Bharatanatyam Dance in the South Asian American Diaspora" (Documentary Film & Written Thesis)
Film: bit.ly/Anubhava Written Thesis: bit.ly/GuninduAbeysekeraMATHesis
- 2018** **B.A., Film & Media Studies**
Minor: International Studies
University of California, Irvine
Dean's Honor List: Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Winter 2017, Fall 2017
- 2015** **Significant Transferable Units** (earned while in high school - Early College Program)
Irvine Valley College

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2017-present** **Co-Founder & Program Coordinator**, [YALU](#): Youth Advancement, Leadership, & Unification
- Summer 2022** **Communications Fellow**, [South Asian SOAR](#): Survivors, Organizations, and Allies - Rising
- 2017-2020** **2019-2020: Outreach & Engagement Coordinator**, [UC Irvine FRESH Basic Needs Hub](#)
2017-2019: Student Marketing Manager, UC Irvine FRESH Basic Needs Hub
- 2020-2020** **Videographer**, "Count Us In" Documentary on AAPI Census Participation, OCAPICA
- 2018-2019** **Graduate Researcher**, [Office of Inclusive Excellence](#) - University of California, Irvine
- 2017-2018** **Undergraduate Seminar Instructor**, [UTeach](#) - University of California, Irvine
- 2017-2018** **Co-Founder & Director of Media & Communications**, South Asian Student Union at UCI
- 2015-2016** **Marketing Intern & Media Producer**, Farrah Khan for Irvine City Council (2016 campaign)

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

- 12 MAR 2022** Presenter and Panelist, "Translating Our Realities, Transforming Our Diaspora: A Sri Lankan American's Experiences Curating the Language-Learning Blog @SpeakInSinhala"
South Asian Studies Association Annual Conference - Virtual (Zoom)
- 2 NOV 2021** Guest Lecture, "Experimental Ethnography: Community Resilience and Digital Media"
Course: South Asian American Experiences, Professor Beheroze Shroff - UC Irvine
- 13 JUL 2021** Guest Lecture, "Alternative Archives: Telling the Stories of Our Communities through Film"
Course: Asian American Film & Video: Poetics & Politics, Professor Beheroze Shroff - UC Irvine
- 30 APR 2021** Presenter and Panelist, "Space, Place, and Temporalities"
White Rose South Asia Conference 2021, University of Leeds, UK - Virtual (Zoom)
- 26 APR 2021** Workshop Presenter, Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Heritage Events:
"Nostalgia Without Memory: Love & Resistance Stories by a Sri Lankan Immigrant"
Los Medanos Community College - Virtual (Zoom)
- 7 FEB 2021** Presenter and Panelist, "Art Form, Gender, and the Literary Imagination"

South Asian Studies Association Annual Conference - Virtual (Zoom)

- 2 FEB 2021** Presenter, "Preserving Our Communities Through Digital Storytelling in the Diaspora"
South Asian Federation's "South Asian Awareness Week" - UC Riverside
- 16 NOV 2020** Guest Lecture, "Archiving Through Digital Media & Art"
Course: South Asian American Experiences, Professor Beheroze Shroff - UC Irvine
- 10 JUL 2020** Guest Lecture, "Oral Herstories: Preserving our Communities Through Storytelling"
Course: Asian American Women, Professor Beheroze Shroff - UC Irvine
- 14 MAY 2020** Series Guest [Spotlight](#), "Shelter in the Storm: Asian American Artists"
Asian American Studies community members
- 9 APR 2020** (Postponed COVID-19) Presenter and Panelist, "Archiving Our Resilience: Memory, Identity, and Community in the South and Southeast Asian Diaspora"
Association for Asian American Studies Annual Conference - Washington D.C.
- 26 NOV 2019** Guest Lecture, "Oral Herstories: Preserving our Communities Through Storytelling" on my MA dissertation and documentary films, "Serendipitous" and "Anubhāva"
Course: Asian American History, Professor Dorothy Fujita-Rony - UC Irvine
- 4 NOV 2019** Guest Lecture, "Preserving our Communities Through Storytelling" with my documentary films, "Serendipitous" and "Anubhāva"
Course: South Asian American Experiences, Professor Beheroze Shroff - UC Irvine
- 26 AUG 2019** Guest Lecture, "Preserving our Communities Through Storytelling" with my documentary films, "Serendipitous" and "Anubhāva"
Course: Asian American Stories: Love, Family, Immigration, Professor Beheroze Shroff - UC Irvine
- 22 APR 2019 & 24 APR 2019** Guest Lectures, "Bend it Like Beckham and the Bildungsroman"
Course: Formative Fictions: Coming of Age in Asian America, Professor Julia H. Lee - UC Irvine
- 7 FEB 2019** Panelist, "Navigating Grad School as a Queer Person of Color"
Womxn's Hub "Ask a Grad" Panel - UC Irvine
- 30 JAN 2019** Lecture & Workshop Facilitator, "Colonialism and Memory"
Students for Justice in Palestine Teach-In Workshop - UC Irvine
- 21 MAY 2018** Paper Presenter and Panelist, "Politics of Padmavati: A Survey of the Patriarchal Hold on 'Feminine' Power"
Undergraduate Critical Theory Conference, Panel: The Unthought in Discourses on Nation, Coalition, and Law - UC Irvine
- 12 FEB 2018** Workshop Facilitator & Panel Moderator, "Shadeism & Anti-Blackness in South Asia"
South Asian Student Union and African American Studies Department - UC Irvine
- 5 NOV 2018** Guest Presentation, "(Re)Creating Culture in the Diaspora" with my documentary film, "Serendipitous"
Course: South Asian American Experiences, Professor Beheroze Shroff - UC Irvine
- 6 NOV 2017** Guest Presentation, "1.5 Generation & Memory in the Sri Lankan-American Diaspora" with my documentary film, "Serendipitous"
Course: South Asian American Experiences, Professor Beheroze Shroff - UC Irvine

ONGOING PROJECTS

- 2020** [@SpeakInSinhala](#)
Blog creator and curator

- Daily Instagram blog with a Sinhala “word of the day” and artwork relating to social justice
- 2020** **Project ISLAND: Introducing Sri Lankan American Narratives in the Diaspora**
Project creator and interviewer
 Multimedia ethnography through YALU: Youth Advancement, Leadership, & Unification
- 2018** **Pen Pal with Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka!**
Project creator and organizer
 Pen pal letter exchange program between 60 Sri Lankan-American youth through YALU and Sri Lankan youth volunteers at *Sarvodaya Shanti Sena* in Sri Lanka

EVENT & PROGRAM COORDINATION

- 14 NOV 2019** “Food for Thought: A Conversation on Community Microfarming & the Movement for Equitable Food Systems in OC”
UCI FRESH Basic Needs Hub; UCI Sustainability Resource Center
- 31 MAY 2019** “Anubhava Film Premiere & Dance Workshop” Exhibition of my MA Thesis
Department of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Irvine
- 23 APR 2019** “Honoring the Victims of Sri Lanka” Candlelight Vigil & Interfaith Ceremonies
Youth Advancement, Leadership, & Unification; South Asian Student Union; Sri Lanka United - UCI
- 31 MAY 2018** “Chai Night” Discussion Series, “Hindutva in the U.S.” with Professor Vinayak Chaturvedi
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine
- 24 MAY 2018** “Chai Night” Discussion Series, “Basic Needs Security” with the FRESH Basic Needs Hub
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine
- 12 APR 2018** “South Asian Culture Night: Diversity in the Diaspora” Cultural Showcase and Philanthropic Fundraiser for Non-Profits, South Asian Network and Women Lead Nepal (\$1,619 raised)
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine
- 5 MAR 2018** “Chai Night” Discussion Series, “Interpersonal Violence in South Asian Communities” with South Asian Network (OC Non-Profit)
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine
- 27 FEB 2018 -** “South Asian Art Week” Art showcase, film screening, and open mic night
1 MAR 2018 *South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine*
- 12 FEB 2018** “Chai Night” Discussion Series, “Shadeism & Anti-Blackness in South Asia” Lecture, panel, and fundraiser for Black Lives Matter
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine
- 5 FEB 2018** “Chai Night” Discussion Series, “South Asian LGBT+ Identities” with Satarang LA
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine
- 22 JAN 2018** “Chai Night” Discussion Series, “Mental Health & South Asia”
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine
- 15 NOV 2017** “Chai Night” Discussion Series & Workshop, “South Asian Professionals” with South Asian Network (OC Non-Profit)
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine
- 15 NOV 2017** “Decolonize Your Wardrobe” Student Demonstration
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine
- 8 NOV 2017** “Chai Night” Discussion Series, “South Asian Womxn & Activists”
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine

1 NOV 2017 "Chai Night" Discussion Series, "Feminisms of South Asia"
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine

11 OCT 2017 "Chai Night" Discussion Series, "Diversity in South Asia"
South Asian Student Union - UC Irvine

AWARDS

2022 **Finalist: Dubai Independent Film Festival**
For the dance film, "Bhumika" I directed, filmed, and edited

2021 **Semi-Finalist: San Francisco Indie Short Festival**
For the dance film, "Bhumika," I directed, filmed, and edited

2018 **John Liu Asian American Studies Fellowship**
Received a \$1,000 scholarship for the pursuit of my M.A. through UC Irvine

2018 **Best Multicultural Organization at UC Irvine**
South Asian Student Union

2018 **UCI Cross Cultural Center's Praxis Award**
South Asian Student Union

2017 **Franco Tonelli Memorial Prize for Television and Digital Media Theory & Criticism**
Received \$200 for my essay, "The Intersectionalities of Gender and Race through Hip-Hop Culture and Music," from the UCI Department of Film & Media Studies

TECHNOLOGICAL PROFICIENCIES

Canon 5D Mark IV	Proficient	Google Programs	Proficient
Final Cut Pro (7 and X)	Proficient	Website Development	Proficient
Adobe Photoshop	Adequate	Excel	Adequate
Apple Procreate	Adequate	Social Media	Proficient

LANGUAGES

English	Fluent
Sinhala	Fluent
French	Fluent

REFERENCES

Academic:

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu

Professor and Former Chair - Department of Asian American Studies at UC Irvine

Director - Humanities Center at UC Irvine

j.wu@uci.edu

Beheroze Shroff

Lecturer - Department of Asian American Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies at UC Irvine

bshroff@uci.edu

Dorothy Fujita-Rony

Professor and Director of Graduate Studies - Department of Asian American Studies at UC Irvine

dfr@uci.edu

Ketu Katrak

Professor - Department of Drama at UC Irvine

khkatrak@uci.edu

Community:

Andrea Mora

Director - [FRESH Basic Needs Hub](#)
andrea.g@uci.edu

Ramya Harishankar

Founder, Artistic Director, and Principal Guru - [Arpana Dance Company](#)
Founder and Former Board Member - [Ektaa Center](#)
ramya@danceramya.com

Farrah N. Khan

Mayor - [City of Irvine](#)
Executive Director - [Newport Mesa Irvine Interfaith Council](#)
farrakh@cityofirvine.org

Anuk Peliyagoda

Co-Founder - [YALU](#): Youth Advancement, Leadership, & Unification
anuksp22@gmail.com

Dinali Mallikage-Fernando

Founder and CEO - [Hendrick's Tea House](#)
dmallikage@gmail.com

Additional references available upon request.