Much has happened since the authors of Fresh Talk/Daring Gazes: Conversations on Asian American Art first conceived of this volume in 1989, when there were only a few scattered resources on this topic. Since then, exhibitions of contemporary Asian American art have been organized by museums on both coasts, and writings by artists, critics, and art historians have added to the growing bibliography of exhibition catalogues, books, and essays under this rubric. (1) So Fresh Talk bears witness to a period of shifting perspectives on an emerging field. In the preface, the artist, curator, and scholar of Asian American art Margo Machida frames her experience of this process by stating that the volume was initially intended as a reference book, which would list Asian American artists and document their work, thereby providing an established shape to this over-looked community. However, as the book progressed and the institutional context of the field was transformed, the original idea of an inclusive sourcebook gave way to a project that was more focused, interpretive, and dialogic. In many ways, the struggle with these different goals and the shifting context appear on the surface of the text through the various tones and strategies that are taken throughout the volume. While such a multiplicity of voices and goals could be seen as a weakness, it is in fact the strength of Fresh Talk.

Three different pieces constitute the front matter, the preface by Machida, a foreword by Lisa Lowe, who is known for her critical work on Asian American cultural studies, and an extensive historical introduction by Elaine Kim, an ethnic-studies scholar who has helped forge the fields of Asian American literature and women's studies. Together, these three parts serve to introduce and to frame the collaborative text and the images that follow from a multiplicity of perspectives. Machida sets up the history of the project as an extensive partnership that witnessed the rise and ebb of interest in Asian America and multiculturalism in the art world. Lowe then engages in a treatment of Asian modernity and the politics of migration, weaving in discussions of the artists and their work. In her article, which constitutes the centerpiece of the introductory material, Kim places the contemporary artists of Fresh Talk within the larger history of Asian American art and selected contemporary exhibitions. In an act of self-conscious canon formation, Kim links the multimedia works of these late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century artists to nineteenth-century commercial photography in San Francisco's Chinatown and the art of the Japanese American internment. (2) Thus, the essay serves to solidify community links and to establish the collective body of work in Fresh Talk within a wider historical context of Asian American visual production.

Although the tone of the introductory essays is chiefly celebratory, the authors do cite problems and issues that have dominated critical responses to Asian American art. For instance, Machida laments the perception that "artists of Asian background are all too often perceived as yet another minoritized group encasing themselves in an exclusionary cultural armor while also clamoring for mainstream recognition" (xii). Further, she adds that Asian American perspectives in art have been labeled as "parochial and self-
marginalizing," despite the fact that they hold more general, but often overlooked, relevance (xii). Lowe urges dialogue and collaboration between Asian and non-Asian artists and critics (xxii). Kim adds a whole host of problems, such as the common conflation of Asian and Asian American art, which allows for Asian American production to be dislocated and cast as foreign, and the habitual reduction of Asian American art to mere autobiography (33, 36). She also asks why Asian American studies scholars have not taken up art, while other fields, such as literature, have maintained a central and important place within the interdisciplinary context of Asian American humanities (40).

As a response to the problems that are mapped out in the first sections, Fresh Talk offers the final chapter of the book, entitled "Interchanges." In this section, each of twenty-four artists is paired with a commentator from a wide group of multicultural and multinational artists, critics, scholars, activists, and curators. Clearly, these cross-cultural pairings intend to disrupt mainstream assumptions about Asian American art by giving a significant voice to other minority and globally displaced individuals. Some of the notable names include Homi K. Bhabha, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Griselda Pollock, Ella Shohat, and Lowery Stokes Sims. Not all of the commentators were previously familiar with the artists about whom they wrote, but prior knowledge was not always part of the criteria for the combinations. Of the pairings of artist and commentator, some were particularly fitting, such as Faith Ringgold's essay on Pacita Abad's textile double portrait and Enrique Chagoya's response to Manuel Ocampo's use of imagery to negotiate a Spanish colonial past in the Philippines. The commentators are not only diverse in ethnic, cultural, and professional backgrounds, but also in the nature of their responses, which were intended to be uneven and unique. Some, such as Jolene Rickard, use the work as a source for personal reflection, and others, such as Kobena Mercer, provide a rigorous review of the artist's featured work within his or her larger oeuvre. As such, these varied and unanticipated pairings are indeed fresh and often even daring.

One should not overlook the deftly written captions by the artist Sharon Mizota, which accompany the color and black-and-white photographs of the latter sections of the book. Rather than simply reading artworks as totems for the community, Mizota incisively analyzes the diverse works, there-by grounding the volume in the work. In fact, Mizota's thought-provoking responses add to the essays of the commentators by widening and sometimes pivoting the lens of interpretation and placing the works within a dynamic field of critical response.

In more than one instance, the volume asserts that the artists and their work must be seen beyond simplistic identity politics. Indeed, the extended gallery of images and commentaries is successful in allowing for a dynamic view of Asian American identity, with figures such as transnational Allan deSouza, whose South Asian, East African, British, and American past adds complexity to his work; Albert Chong, whose pieces probe the biracial dimensions of his Chinese Jamaican heritage; and Y. David Chung, whose work in and about African American communities represents a multiplicity of American experiences. The commentary, from many national, ethnic, and gender perspectives, helps to skillfully cut away facile associations and simplistic modes of naming. In particular, Ella Shohat's discussion of Lynne Yamamoto's work challenges the neatness of single-hyphenated labels by referring to her own Iraqi-Israeli-American identity. Further, a number of wider concerns regarding sexuality, memory, performativity, and history intersect in valuable and productive ways. The reader is struck by the poignant manipulation of the body in many works, such as Long Nguyen's, and the keen reflections on science and technology of Michael Joo. Although the introductory segments
of the book come short of foregrounding the dynamic orientation of the work, when read
together, the different perspectives that arise in the volume allow for a rich and satisfyingly
unresolved understanding of Asian American positions.

On a fundamental level, the front and back of the book function in contradictory ways and
perhaps signal the changed and shifted agendas of the project over its long decade of
development. The first section, particularly Kim's introduction, attempts to build the
foundations of a nascent field and to fortify its core, while the last section actively breaks
down the internal and external boundaries that might be used to define this body of work.
Even Kim herself admits, after her extended discussion of early twentieth-century Asian
American artists, "The threads that connect contemporary Asian American artists to
California and other West Coast painters and sculptors of prior decades are fragile" (19).
Certainly, it is debatable whether a linear approach to contemporary Asian American art,
oriented along a trajectory of earlier West Coast artists like Chiura Obata, and iconic
names, such as Isamu Noguchi, is the most relevant or constructive framework for the
topic at hand.
Asian Americans have been involved in the entertainment industry since the first half of the 19th century, when Chang and Eng Bunker (the original "Siamese Twins") became naturalized citizens. Acting roles in television, film, and theater were relatively few, and many available roles were for narrow, stereotypical characters. Early Asian American actors such as Sessue Hayakawa, Anna May Wong, and Bruce Lee encountered a movie-making culture and industry that wanted to cast them as caricatures. Some Pan-Asian includes East Asian, Southeast Asian, Central Asian and South Asian. This is not up for debate, both adding to it and removing from it. 4. View issues through the lens of Asians First not partisanship. Every issue, social or political is viewed through the lens of "Is it good for Asians?". Don't devolve a complex issue down to whether the American political left or right supports it or is against it. 5. Don't be defeatist. Having a binary view of Blacks, Whites, Asian women, America, assimilation etc. are not useful. 9. Focused on Asian diaspora. Native Asians living in Asia are permitted on our sub, they need to be mindful of all our rules and abide by them. 10. The NO list.