*How to Look Asian* is a piece made for Intermediate Video Art consisting of “appropriated” internet found footage. The prompt for this project asked us to critically comment on media/dominant culture through juxtaposition. When thinking about elements of juxtaposition within culture, what came to mind was the popularization of East Asian features as desirable or trendy alongside a massive rise in racialized violence towards Asian Americans in 2020.

Somewhat due to the greater visibility of Asian pop culture, elements of Asianness and Asian culture that were previously a source of ridicule have become desirable. Through face-taping, makeup techniques, or even surgery, non-Asian people replicate exotified or exaggerated takes on Asian features. In some cases, this is done in order to profit off of the ways in which Asian women are hypersexualized as both submissive and exotic. Through selective editing and the juxtaposition of a variety of appropriated clips from social media (YouTube), I intend to portray cultural appropriation as a form of violence and create dialogue on the meaning of Asianess in America.

*How to Look Asian* asks what it means to be Asian, what it means to be Asian American–is it the presentation of your body, through being the owner of a set of features that are racially coded as Asian? Is it the experience of racialized violence and oppression? To me, to be Asian American is to hold a deep cultural understanding of historical trauma, perseverance, and joyous community.