

Sh*t Asian Mothers Say – Best Title Award – In Conversation with Michelle Law

Michelle Law is a freelance writer based in Brisbane. She writes for magazines, journals, newspapers, film and television. She is the co-author of the comedy book, *Sh*t Asian Mothers Say*, and has had her work anthologised in books like *Women of Letters* and *Destroying the Joint*. She has received an Australian Writer's Guild AWGIE award for her interactive media



work, and had her films screened on the ABC and at film festivals locally and abroad. Last year, she won the Queensland Premier's Young Publishers and Writers Award. This year, her first play *Single Asian Female* sold out at La Boite Theatre Company. In her spare time, Michelle enjoys hanging out with her cat and tending to a very aggressive tropical fish. (Just the one – it's eaten all of the others.)

Your writing is diverse – theatre, TV, film, newspapers, journals and magazines. How did you diversify so early in your career?

I think I was able to diversify because I remained open to and searched for all kinds of opportunities, from playwriting programs, to self-structured mentorships, to pitching ideas to literary journals. For instance with grants, I applied for many of them and kept applying for them despite being rejected a lot, so you need to be persistent. Diversifying my skill set was a strategic move, because I wanted to build a sustainable

career, but also a result of me loving all different kinds of writing.

I've heard you speak of your frustration when an aspiring writer says they don't read much. Please elaborate.

It frustrates me when aspiring writers don't read because you can't be a writer if you're not a reader. I tutored writing at university and the number of writing students who didn't read always astounded me. We learn how to write well by reading the works of better writers, so if you're not reading you're not going to get far.

I love the title of your book, Sh*t Asian Mothers Say. I understand you co-authored this book with your brother. What was your Mum's reaction to the book?

Mum loves the book and can identify the parts we've written that are almost direct quotes from her! My brother and I write about Mum and the family quite a lot and I think for Mum, who's always been very creative but didn't have the opportunity to go to uni herself – she really enjoys that we document stories from her life.

Where can people purchase your book?

They can order it at Avid Reader Bookshop (my favourite bookshop in Brisbane) or directly through the publisher Black Inc's website:
<https://www.blackincbooks.com.au/books/sht-asian-mothers-say>

What was it like seeing your play Single Asian Female come alive on stage?

Amazing! I'd been developing it for years so to finally see it come to fruition on stage was surreal and extremely exciting. I also love how actors make your words sound better than they look on the page!

Writers often struggle prioritising writing when they're

working at home. Is this an issue for you, and how do you manage it?

It can be an issue when I have a lot of projects on and they're clashing, but generally I try to deal with the most pressing deadline first, and if I get stuck working on that, then I hop onto another project and back again.

What's coming out next from you ie. what should we look out for?

A web series that I've co-created, co-written and am acting in called *Homecoming Queens*. There's some more info on it here: https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/sa/media-centre/news/2017/08-11-homecoming-queens?utm_source=social&utm_medium=twitter-1&utm_campaign=homecoming-queens

Photo by [Tammy Law](#).