

Unscripted - A Blog for Actors - Backstage

Searching for 'Asian' Debra Winger...

The other night I finally watched a documentary film that I've been wanting to watch for years, '[Searching for Debra Winger](#)'.

It's a documentary by Rosanna Arquette about the challenges working women in the entertainment business face; while aging, being full-time mothers, etc.

I remember the buzz about this film when it was premiering back in May 2002. I didn't quite have those concerns back then.

After about the first hour, where every actress that is interviewed in the film has been seen and has voiced her opinion on why Debra Winger would have left the business in her prime; I wondered, how exactly does this pertain to *me*?

There was not one single Asian female celebrity actress featured in that entire documentary.

Sure [Lucy Liu](#) hadn't exactly made her splash yet in *Ally McBeal* and [Sandra Oh](#) hadn't sauced her 'sauciness' in *Sideways* either, and...who else is there again?

Other than some of the many Asian actresses I admire; Ching Valdes, Rosalind Chao, Joan Chen, and Gong Li, I can't think of any equally prominent Asian celebrity actress back then or even now. What gives?!

We've been around a long time; a very long, long, long time. Is the '[Joy Luck Club](#)' really that small? How exactly am I supposed to anticipate the business for someone like me?

Everyone knows that Asians have it the hardest next to Native Americans. Oh, but what I wouldn't give to be a main character in the upcoming [Twilight Saga: New Moon](#).

I'd rather be a [Cullen](#), but the chance at being in that film even if it is as a [Quileute](#)...no complaints here. Ugh, my heart just landed in my chest. Dirrty.

But I digress. Everyone knows Asians look much younger than they are. So is our 'thirty' really the caucasian 'twenty'?

If that's the case, how am I supposed to assess the whole 'female age' thing in Hollywood? Or should I consider myself slightly 'immortal' like a 'vampire'? A girl can dream...

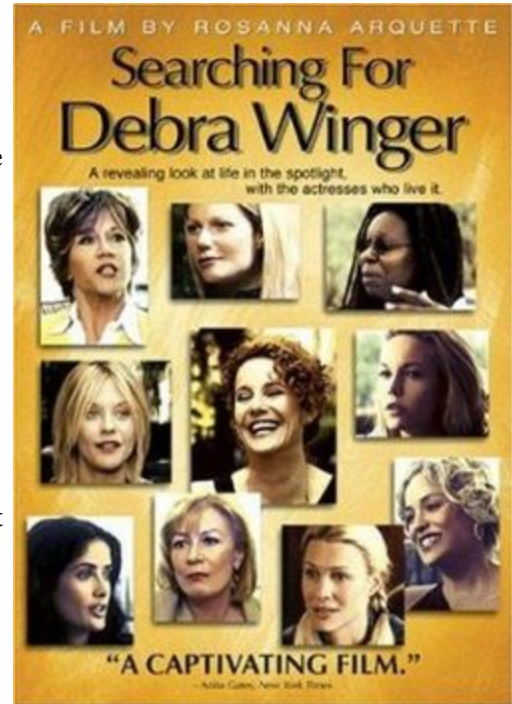
While I was watching, part of me felt like shouting, "Are these 'lucky' women who get to make a living as actresses and who get to be mom's at the same time actually *complaining* about it?"

Don't get me wrong, Rosanna Arquette made a ground-breaking testimonial documentary.

There were many noteworthy testimonies, particularly about how difficult it is to be a woman in the business in the first place.

The late Adrienne Shelley, gave an honest testimony about her 'tits' being 'too sassy' for a producer to have cast her in a particular role.

Yup, I guess that's showbiz...? I knew of Ms. Shelley. We had mutual friends in the theatre world.



Being an actress that is not in the same position as the women interviewed in this documentary; i.e. blond, blue-eyed, 'caucasian' (*need I say it!*) or 'african american' even, I wasn't sure how to form an opinion about what I was hearing.

Never having seen an Asian-American actress myself play the lead role in a highly marketed, successful Hollywood romantic comedy almost dehumanizes us to the rest of the world on a subconscious level.

Yes, we go through those things, too. Just like everyone else. We could be vampires too, like everyone else. Not just werewolves, geishas and concubines or lawyers.

We fall in and out of love with people who don't love us back. We make mistakes. We can be hookers who get carried away by rich investment bankers too. And I'm sure some of us even know how to be expert assassins who topple red sports cars over buses!

Clicks on the links. It's not a segregated lifestyle or performance people! 'Sex and the City' had nothing on me and my girlfriends while I lived in New York...or here in LA. Where were the Asian hotties in that?!

But maybe now, it's not 'what' the story is about. I think Hollywood is about to run out of re-makes anyway. We deserve our turn.

It's the 'who' in the story telling that changes the 'how' in how it is told thus creating something 'original'.

Who the storyteller is increases the many ways in 'how' a story is shaped and perceived; therefore fractaling it into different emotional dimensions and perspectives for the audience to experience.

It's like watching the reflection of a mirror upon another mirror; the path is infinite, as far as the eye can see. I'm Asian, we speak in metaphors.

So maybe I can't necessarily relate to 'Searching for Debra Winger', but I can relate to searching and creating some kind of 'Asian' Debra Winger for myself,... Knock, knock. Guess Hu's there? Asian Debra Winger.

(photos courtesy of Flower Child productions and Yours Truly)

Yours Truly -- Ann Hu

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Don't worry - we're out there, and we're fighting the fight! We ain't going anywhere!



Posted by: [Lynn](#) | [July 04, 2009 at 02:34 AM](#)



dude! i know what you mean! it's so...so...so...heartbreaking. i'm filipino so it narrows everything that much more - my agents are finding that i'm "not asian enough" for asian roles, but "not latina enough" for latina roles. (i'm not latina!) it's rough. i wrote this a few years ago: <http://charlenedeguzman.xanga.com/608804940/item/>

i'm at least happy to say that there are a handful of filipno actresses that have arrived ever since, that i could add to the list.

but yeah, it's annoying, i feel like lucy liu is usually the only asian actress anyone could ever name off the top of their head. let's change that!

Posted by: [charlene](#) | [July 05, 2009 at 02:17 PM](#)



debra winger and the french are evil

how can they want roman polanski a rapist to be free
no matter how old the case is he should be arrested
this case should have been worked on a long time ago

Posted by: [donna](#) | [September 28, 2009 at 07:04 PM](#)

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