

ACT2
END
RACISM

ACCT
Foundation
ACTION! CHINESE CANADIANS TOGETHER

Press Release

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New Disney movie, 'Turning Red' celebrates the Asian cultural experience in Canada while exposing anti-Asian racism inherent in pop culture.

Calgary, AB-ACT2endracism and ACCT Foundation mark the historical significance of the first feature-length movie directed by an Asian woman, Domee Shi.

The film chronicles the experience of a 13-year-old Chinese girl, Meilin Lee (Mei), while growing up in Toronto, Ontario. The girl discovers her ability to turn into a red panda. The movie has been described as a love letter to Toronto and a coming-of-age film.

However, a recent review penned by CinemaBlend and its managing director Sean O'Connell has sparked much-needed discussion about inclusion and why representation matters. The review, now pulled from the website, had described the focus on Lee's Asian Canadian background and its plot as limiting the film's ability to connect with audiences. In other words, no one else would be able to relate to the film's 'foreign' subject matter.

Founder of ACT2endracism, Teresa Woo-Paw adds, "The perpetual foreigner places Asian communities as not belonging. Increased anti-Asian violence due to the pandemic has disappeared from the headlines. Yet our communities remain uncertain and on high alert. It's no wonder when we continue to see racist rhetoric at the top echelons. This movie is relatable to all because Chinese culture is Canadian culture."

ACCT board member, Janet Yee said, "The racist review reveals anti-Asian sentiment is alive in pop culture. His comment is white centred flowing from the top echelons of leadership. Even the apology is empty with no consequence. The sentiment continues to cast racialized communities aside as foreign and unrelatable."

Lynn Deutscher Kobayashi, President, Greater Toronto Chapter, National Association of Japanese Canadians said, "What defies universality is reviewer Sean O'Connell's inability to see beyond his own narrow experience. Shame on him for using his voice to invalidate this coming-of-age film for a generation that values diversity and a city recognized by the United Nations and the BBC as the most diverse city in the world."

The movie premieres today streaming on Disney+. Domee Shi was awarded an Oscar in 2018 for her animated short film, 'Bao'.

For information or to book an interview:

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