

## INTERVIEW WITH ILENE E '21, CREATOR OF "HOME | 家", WINNER OF THE UCHV SHORT MOVIE PRIZE 2020



**UCHV:** Where are you from, and what is your major?

**IE:** I'm from West Windsor, New Jersey, which is about 15 minutes away from campus. I am majoring in Computer Science, with certificates in Visual Arts and Applied Mathematics. Though it sounds like an odd combination of departments, my dream is to combine all of them into a career in animation/computer graphics.

**UCHV:** When did you start making movies and how did you come to make "Home | 家"?

**IE:** Though I messed around with iMovie and Photoshop animation early on, this is my first film. "Home" was my final project for VIS 220 (Digital Animation) with Tim Szetela. The concept for "Home" came from my desire to display my Chinese American background in an authentic way. Since my childhood home is where I developed my cultural identity, I think it's the most authentic possible representation that I can provide. So I decided to animate a portrait of my home.

**UCHV:** What was your budget?

**IE:** I didn't have a budget for this film--I borrowed a drawing tablet and sound recorder from the Visual Arts department and shot reference footage using my phone.

**UCHV:** Could you briefly describe the process you went through/difficulties you had in making "Home | 家"?

**IE:** The process was pretty straightforward. Once the scenes were planned out, I visited home and, with the help of my family, filmed some reference footage and recorded some environmental audio. After this was done, I rotoscoped much of the animation and layered the environmental audio to create the different spaces that appear in the film (e.g., kitchen, walkway, foyer, etc.). The most challenging part was likely the planning phase. Between choosing scenes to animate and designing how to animate them, I went through numerous iterations. I spent a lot of time on the visual style, getting the color balance to be minimal but not too plain. Choosing scenes for this film was especially difficult because the whole point is that it illustrates everyday scenes--it is entirely made up of mundane things that I usually don't notice. An important side effect of this planning is that it helped me notice and appreciate the tiny things about my childhood that taught me to embrace my Chineseness.

**UCHV:** Any final thoughts?

**IE:** I am so honored that "Home" was chosen for this prize! I originally made this film essentially as a self-discovery of my Chinese American pride. In light of current events, this feels more important than ever.