

Citation for Janet Yang
Presented by Aviva J. Briefel, Edward Little Professor of the English Language and
Literature and Cinema Studies
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Today, we honor Janet Yang's achievements as an award-winning film producer, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and fierce advocate for the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

The daughter of Chinese immigrants living in Queens, NY, you earned a Bachelor of Arts in Chinese studies from Brown University and an MBA from Columbia. From the start of your career, you have been committed to opening networks of distribution and production between the American and Chinese film industries. Your first position was with World Entertainment in San Francisco, a company dedicated to marketing Chinese cinema in North America. Soon afterwards, you proved invaluable to Steven Spielberg as a consultant on his 1985 historical film *Empire of the Sun*. As president of Ixtlan, a company you created with director Oliver Stone, you were the executive producer of award-winning films including *The People versus Larry Flynt* and *The Joy Luck Club*, an adaptation of Amy Tan's celebrated novel about intergenerational Chinese American families.

Throughout your illustrious career, you have produced a number of visual narratives in or about China, including *Dark Matter*, the romantic comedy *Shanghai Calling*, the animated film *Over the Moon*, and *High School Musical: China*.

You are a founder of Gold House, a nonprofit collective whose mission it is to "power and propel Asian American communities across every corner of culture"; a member of the Committee of 100, an "organization of Chinese Americans dedicated to the spirit of excellence and achievement in America," and chair of the U.S.-Asia Entertainment Summit for the Asia Society Southern California.

Named "one of the 50 most influential women in Hollywood" by the *Hollywood Reporter*, you were appointed president of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences in 2022. You are the first Asian American person and the fourth woman to hold this position. When asked in an interview about these "firsts," you responded, "Yes, I am the 'first,' but that wasn't the goal. The goal was to create community, bring different marginalized communities into the mainstream, and allow more and more people to have a sense of belonging."

President Rose, on behalf of the College, I am honored to present Janet Yang for the degree of doctor of humane letters, *honoris causa*.