



SAMEER PANDYA

Sameer Pandya is a fiction writer and an interdisciplinary literary and cultural studies scholar. In both his fiction and scholarship, Pandya is primarily interested in the question of cultural dislocation and racial identity among South Asian Americans.

His first book, [THE BLIND WRITER: STORIES AND A NOVELLA](#), longlisted for the PEN/Open Book Award, follows the lives of first- and second-generation Indian Americans living in contemporary California. The characters share a similar sensibility: a sense that immigration is a distant memory, yet an experience that continues to shape the decisions they make in subtle and surprising ways as they go about the complicated business of everyday living.

He is also the recipient of the PEN/Civitella Fellowship

His novel [MEMBERS ONLY](#) is published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

His scholarly essays have been published in *Journal of Asian American Studies*, *South Asian Popular Culture* and *Amerasia*. Pandya has also published widely in the popular press, with work appearing in *The Atlantic*, *ESPN*, *Salon*, *Sports Illustrated*, *New York Daily News*, among other places.

He is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara.



MICHELLE HANABUSA

After a career ending injury in professional figure skating, Michelle pivoted and dived into design and contemporary fashion. Following her time in the corporate world, she endured trial and error venture-backed experiences pioneering her own entrepreneurial narrative in 2016. Michelle fueled a nationwide social campaign that celebrated diverse voices and backgrounds, which curated over 3 million impressions in one day. This was an eye-opening display of multiculturalism that inspired the beginning of UPRISERS.

In 2019, UPRISERS launched as a dynamic vehicle for advancing social change and elevating the stories of the underrepresented. Instead of following a seasonal collection schedule, the brand releases drops parallel with community issues happening in real time. Michelle and her passionate team value creating thoughtful and empowering educational content to accompany each capsule. Delivering on the core of UPRISERS, they have propelled campaigns such as #MagandangMorenx, coined by trendsetter Asia Jackson dedicated to challenging traditional beauty standards and colorism; #HATEISAVIRUS, a global movement to raise awareness around the increased racism and xenophobia during the pandemic; #SomebodysBeloved, with recording artist MILCK, focused on healing and building power around justice; and so much more. Now a leading Asian American woman owned small business, you can find UPRISERS in-store and online at PacSun and Complex SHOP.

Michelle is also the Co-Founder and COO of Hate Is A Virus – a nonprofit and community of mobilizers and amplifiers dedicated to dismantling hate and racism. The movement started in March 2020 to amplify, educate and activate APPI to stand for justice and equality in solidarity

with other communities. Since then, it has evolved into an organization participating in local and national campaigns, creating safe spaces for dialogue and education, and providing actionable steps to fundraise in partnership with trusted community leaders and orgs.