

Minnesota Now (MPR) | Little Asia Market brings Asian American makers and artists together
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- CATHY WURZER:** It is summer in Minnesota. And that means there are all manner of community events to enjoy. To help your social calendar, we thought it would be fun to highlight various community events every week here on the program. This weekend, the Little Asia Market will celebrate Asian artists, musicians, creators, and businesses in the Longfellow neighborhood of Minneapolis.
- Wone in Youa Vang are the co-creators of the LAM Pop-up event at Arbor Brewing on Minnehaha Avenue in South Minneapolis. Both are on the line. Thanks for joining us.
- YOUA VANG:** Thanks, Cathy.
- CATHY WURZER:** Wone, let's begin with you. You started Little Asia Market in response to this increase in anti-Asian violence across the country. Can you speak more to what drove you to start the event?
- WONE VANG:** Yeah. We as a community was feeling very hurt, very frustrated with everything that was happening. So we felt that we wanted to come together to showcase who we are, and how unique we are as individuals, and make a community event around it by bringing together some artists, and makers, and performers.
- CATHY WURZER:** So the concept for the Little Asia Market, how would you describe it? How does it work?
- WONE VANG:** It is a community event. So it's free to all to come and join in. It's a way for us to kind of celebrate who we are as an individual, also as a group. It's also a way for us to kind of uplift the Asian artists to kind of support our Asian business, and protect our Asian communities, and also recognize who we are and all of our accomplishments.
- CATHY WURZER:** I am really glad you're doing the event at Arbeiter Brewing, which is on Minnehaha Avenue in South Minneapolis, because I think, if I'm not mistaken, they're one of the very few Asian-owned breweries in the country.
- WONE VANG:** It is. The great part is this is the second year that we're doing it, and Arbeiter Brewery is definitely supporting us. They are one of only 2% of the Asian-American-owned breweries in the United States. So we are so happy to have them be partners in this event.
- CATHY WURZER:** So you mentioned that there will be a number of artists there. You both will be showcasing your own art. You are co-creators of Third Daughter Restless Daughter. You want to tell me about third daughter restless daughter?
- YOUA VANG:** Our grandmother used to do traditional pandao, which is Hmong traditional embroidery. And obviously, our stuff is not exactly the same. But Hmong embroidery uses a lot of cross-stitching elements. They do cross-stitching in their work.
- And so we learned from our mother who learned from her. So I feel it's like a muscle memory through generations. And what we do is we try to connect our culture to what people really want or pop culture.
- CATHY WURZER:** I love Hmong embroidery. It is just so intricate and beautiful. And it's just, oh my gosh. It is such a beautiful art. Can you kind of describe some of your pieces for the audience?
- YOUA VANG:** Sure. So like you said, Hmong embroidery has a lot of storytelling elements to it. Ours is really more humor. So we try to capture pop culture elements, try and capture just stuff that kind of strikes our fancy. And I feel like humor is such a connector to everybody in any situation that you're in.

CATHY Say, Wone, I want to get back to you here too. I'm curious about the response from other artists and performers
WURZER: who are involved in the Little Asia Market. What are they saying?

WONE VANG: Everyone is super excited to be part of this event. I'm really happy that we were-- over half of the artists have come back to be part of it. We have several new artists also that's part of this event. So there's probably over 20 Asian-American makers.

CATHY Say, before you both go, what are you going to be most excited-- what are you looking forward to this weekend?
WURZER:

WONE VANG: I am looking most forward to having everyone just kind of come together. And then we will also be doing, between us and Arbeiter, we will be doing a donation to two nonprofit foundations. So there is a national foundation called the Very Asian Foundation, and we'll be donating \$1 from all pint sales that day for the event. And we are also doing a roundup cash bar donation for a local organization called the Hmong Museum, which is based out of Saint Paul, Minnesota.

CATHY And, Youa, what are you looking forward to this weekend?

WURZER:

YOUA VANG: I am just really excited to have community. Like, as an Asian-American, all the stuff that was happening was just really scary. But to just celebrate our voices, but to also talk about or see how talented everybody is.

CATHY I'm glad that you both are participating. And thanks for putting this together. And thanks for joining us too.

WURZER:

YOUA VANG: Thanks, Cathy.

WONE VANG: Thank you.

CATHY Wone and Youa Vang are co-creators of the Little Asia Market. It's happening this Saturday, July the 10th, at
WURZER: Arbeiter Brewing Company in Minneapolis.