

Exploring Intersectionality With VAYLA

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This spring, I have been able to intern at VAYLA, an intersectional AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander) nonprofit organization based in New Orleans focused on advocacy through providing climate and reproductive justice education, community organizing education, and comprehensive civic engagement. This truly has been my dream internship! I have been able to explore the reproductive justice framework through an AAPI lens, which has informed my activism in new ways, allowed for me to connect with my roots, and explore topics in an intersectional way.

When beginning my internship, I set a few goals to guide myself and the work that I was aiming to do. These goals were written with the intention of introducing people to complex topics in digestible ways that also offered them resources to learn more. One of the biggest ways I have been trying to do this is through content creation. I have been given a lot of freedom with my internship but for content creation, I decided to focus on podcasts and zines. I thought that zines would be a good concise way to share information and then a coordinating podcast episode would provide more nuance and resources to look into.

The project I am currently working on aims to discuss and bring attention to sex work, care/emotional labor, and pleasure culture through the lens of Asian Americans. This project has required so much research and forced me out of my comfort zone. Through reaching out to professors and talking with local community members, I have been able to get a much broader view of these topics. This has been a practice in networking, but it has also allowed me to immerse myself within the community in ways I haven't been able to before. Once this zine is finished, another intern and I will record a podcast episode about our process, sources, and why we found this topic important to research and share.

Interning at VAYLA has been an amazing experience and I am looking forward to continuing my work with them this summer and beyond. Feel free to follow our Instagram @rjvayla to get more information as to when the zine and podcast are released!