



## Fran Miller

Fusing art and heart to dismantle patriarchal narratives of exclusion

Some surf photos are just pretty pictures of people performing on a watery stage. Fran Miller's images are much more. She collects moments that uncover suppressed identities and histories, her own included.

Fran's mother Kyoung was born into a subsistence rice farming family in coastal South Korea. She started working the fields when she was five and never saw the ocean until she eventually made her way to Australia, met Fran's dad, and settled in Sydney.

About a quarter of Australia's population was born overseas. With 270 separate ancestries represented, Australia is one of the planet's most multicultural nations. Yet, immigration policy remains a major source of contention in Australia, with extreme voices of racism sometimes heard, and felt, the loudest.

"There used to be a big bit of graffiti under the railway bridge near my childhood home," Fran remembers. "It read, STOP THE ASIAN INVASION. The message was so aggressive, traumatic, and painful to me." Fran speaks candidly about the shame she once felt for her Korean heritage because of these kinds of occurrences.

As Asian-Australian girls encouraged to assimilate into white Australian culture, Fran and her sister took up surfing after their parents invested in a beach shack in Wollongong. At first, Fran was just emulating her sister. "When I was finally allowed to surf—and I say allowed, because in those days, there were very strong stereotypes around surfing for females, not to mention mixed-race nine-year-old girls learning to surf in blue-collar Wollongong—my parents were worried about my safety, but they couldn't contain my desire to surf. I never once questioned that I couldn't do it myself."

Since neither of her parents surfed, Fran proceeded to teach herself. Genetically predisposed toward self-sufficiency, she refused to let anyone else carry her sun-yellowed,