

Richard Hama

ROSE RISING *The documentary 'The Rose: Come Back to Me' follows the Korean indie rock band away from K-Pop and to Coachella.*

ROSE-TINTED

Korean rock documentary complements Asian art exhibit BY GARY SINGH

LAST WEEKEND, a Korean rock music documentary opened the Silicon Valley Asian Pacific FilmFest, paired with a visual art show exploring resilience and healing. For a moment, it felt like everything was coming up roses and cherry blossoms.

An adventure of Contemporary Asian Theater Scene (CATS), the Silicon Valley Asian Pacific FilmFest usually erupts only in Sunnyvale, but this year a special opening night celebration at De Anza College's Visual and Performing Arts Center included access to "Threads of Resilience," a new exhibition exploring art and healing at the Euphrat Museum, which is connected to the theater.

The opening night film, *The Rose: Come Back to Me* followed Korean indie rock band The Rose through various personal and musical ups and downs, all as the band soared to global status, culminating with an appearance at the 2024 Coachella Festival. The footage provided deep, personal insight into the band's dynamics, their disenfranchisement from the K-Pop ecosystem, their songwriting process and their struggles with grief and trauma, which emerged in several hit songs.

Director Eugene Yi and producer Diane Quon spent many months following the band around. They didn't even realize the whole journey would wind up on the Coachella stage. Such a thing wasn't even in the cards when they started filming. When the festival gig materialized, the film's structure began to solidify in ways the filmmakers had not predicted. This is often how the best documentaries come together. When everyone got to Coachella, it was a serious moment, not just for The Rose, but also for the filmmakers.

"I had never been backstage at a major festival with the band, and that was just so much fun to see their dreams come true," Quon told me, speaking at the VIP reception before the De Anza screening. "That was something they always wanted to do. So to be there and experience it with them was really fun."

Yi agreed: "Sound check at Coachella was really magical because it was amazing to be up on stage with them, filming them, when there was nobody there, and just imagining what it would be like."

That week, the band had recorded a bunch of new material. The filmmakers were present for everything.

"Just to see them make songs, it's magic to see that process come together and to see their chemistry as they were all working together," Yi said.

Before the screening, film fest VIPs were given access to an opening-night reception for "Threads of Resilience," an exhibit of artists exploring themes of grief, trauma, resilience and healing through their works, which included tapestries, sculpture and installation. Kathy Fuji-Oka's *Altar of Solidarity*, for example, featured various fabrics, fibers, photos, lace, trims and Shinto arrows hanging from the ceiling, all to create a flowering cherry blossom installation that memorialized those who were incarcerated in Japanese internment camps during WWII, including her own family.

The Sansei Granddaughters, a collective of five Bay Area third-generation (Sansei) Japanese American artists, also participated, similarly exploring themes of ancestral remembrance. Their work was dedicated to poet and artist Flo Oy Wong, a decades-long legend in the Asian American women artists' community who passed away earlier this year.

In another corner of the exhibit, Stephanie Metz presented her definitive large hanging felt sculptures that encouraged anyone to hug them and touch them, a refreshing and surprising way for participants to connect with the art and share their sentiments with nearby gallery attendees in ways that didn't normally happen, especially in today's social media-damaged world. It was almost healing to watch.

"This is radically tactile and physical and present and analog," Metz declared, as we stood there in the jam-packed gallery. "I think it helps people feel present, to be able to engage in real space in real time with other people."

Both the art show and the opening night film, as well as the entire festival, dealt with similar themes of healing. The curators knew what they were doing.

"To have that connect, in that sort of really beautiful way, that synchrony, is not something we've seen before anywhere, at any festival," Yi said. "So it's been really meaningful."

In the end, the evening was rosy for all who attended, with not a thorn in sight.

OCT 22 THRU FEB 6	THREADS OF RESILIENCE
	Euphat Museum of Art
	Cupertino