
FILM REVIEW

Breadfruit and Open Spaces. 30 minutes, 59 seconds. Featuring the members of the United Pacific Islanders Corporation and Dr. Lola Quan-Bautista.

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SINCE THE LATE 1980s when the United States of America signed the Compact of Free Association with the island nations in the then Trust Territory of Micronesia, numerous Micronesians have traveled easily back and forth between Guam and islands such as Chuuk and Yap. Many of these Micronesians come to Guam to be educated, and some chose to make Guam their home. The desire to own land on Guam has always been part of their dream. Other Micronesians came to Guam and worked on locally owned farms or what the Chamorros called ranches. As a rancher and researcher, Lola Quan-Bautista was exposed to the Micronesian farm-workers. Over time, her interest and connection with these people has led to this documentary.

This film documents a particular group of Micronesians, mostly Chuukese and Yapese, living on the Gill Baza subdivision, situated in the village of Yigo in northern Guam. Quan-Bautista carefully weaves the stories of these Micronesians in this 31-min film. She features members of the United Pacific Islanders Corporation, a nonprofit organization, created by the residents of the Gill Baza subdivision, after learning that they would be evicted from their lands for not adhering to the Guam law requiring homes on certain-sized lots be connected to sewer systems. Despite the difficult situation they were facing, these Chuukeese and Yapese people speak of their great desire to own land in Guam and to raise their families on their

land based on their cultural knowledge of space. Quan-Bautista documents space from the lenses of Chuukese and Yapese viewpoint. Their view of space comes in the form of landownership, communal living, and communication.

Breadfruit and Open Spaces is filled with stories of these families and their joys and struggles of being landowners on Guam. One landowner in the Gill Baza Subdivision, Kini Sinanap, talks about planting things that his family can eat. "I grow breadfruit, I grow bananas, I grow sweet potatoes, and I grow things that we can consume." When it comes to land, he remembers his grandmother's counsel to him back in Chuuk. The wisdom this Chuukese grandmother passed on was, "Take care of the land and it will take care of you."

Joshua Martin talks about coming to Guam and struggling to get his education and eventually owning his own land. His daughter Kathy Martin is the promise sister of Lola Quan-Bautista. A promise sister in Chuukese culture is when two non-blood-related women come together and promise each other that they will support and be there for each other. Upon purchasing land in the Gill Baza subdivision, Kathy recounts how her father, uncle, and brothers helped clear the then overgrown thick jungle area into space where homes can be built to fit the communal lifestyle of her family. Martin points out the first breadfruit tree her father, Joshua, planted and how great and large it is now. On their land, the breadfruit tree continues to provide sustenance to her family and many other Micronesians.

Other women who are landowners such as Justina Hartman speak out about no longer being evicted by landlords. In a fervent fashion, she speaks of how great it is to own the ground upon which she stands, the space in which she and her family can live on into the future.

Despite the passion for landownership on Guam expressed by these Micronesians, Quan-Bautista weaves in the struggles that accompany landownership in Chuukese culture. She does this by defining the role of men in Chuukese culture as being that of provider and protector. Joshua Martin shared his role of *manigi* or first-born son in Chuukese culture. They are responsible for the well-being of the family. The reference to family here means immediate and extended family members. Quan-Bautista and her position as promise sister to Kathy Martin helped to gain further insight on Joshua Martin's struggle with his older sister who is the first-born daughter or in Chuukese culture is the *finigi*. The role of the *finigi* is to manage the entire assets of the family including land. Like many cultures in Micronesia, land is passed on through the women, denoting a matrilineal society. Joshua Martin speaks to how he resolved issues over land use in Chuuk with his older sister. He came to the conclusion that the bond between brother and

sister was far more vital for the well-being of a family than was land. As a reviewer and an interculturalist, I know that Quan-Bautista was able to acquire this information because she was seen by the Martin clan as not an outsider but an insider. Her position as promise sister enabled her to navigate this space with insider status, a position that could only be achieved over time. Where trust and confidence are built, lives are intermingled, promises are kept, and sacrifices are made for one another.

When it comes to communal living, Justina Hartman speaks to the Chuukese cultural use of space. She helps bring understanding to the Micronesian approach to "living space." Hartman explains how she started with a one-bedroom home on her land. Overtime, she discovers her daughter needs a place, and she adds on a room to the structure as a way of providing for the family. Other rooms are added onto the structure when other familial needs arise. Quan-Bautista develops this a bit more in the film by explaining that on a piece of land families, such as the families of a brother and sister, can have separate living quarters yet can share a kitchen in a communal fashion built between the two living structures. Other women speak as to how women in the Gill Baza subdivision often use the communal kitchen area as a gathering place where they cook using open fire, eat meals together, and share stories and laughter. This type of setting or use of space is one that resembles how life would be back on the home islands of Chuuk and Yap.

The space for communication is very hard to come by in a communal style of living. Everyone is busy taking care of everyone else. Quan-Bautista documents how Kathy Martin discovers the use of email and how, through it, Kathy strengthens her relationship with her father. Email, as a space to strengthen bonds in a family, has been rewarding for Kathy and Joshua. The film further develops the space for communication as these Micronesians are served notices to appear in court. Justina Hartman, when questioned about the pending court appearance, recounted that for a long time it was as though no one was listening to her. She felt like she was on a boat adrift calling out to others and was not heard by anyone. Now with the pending court appearance, she felt that her voice was being heard not only by the courts but also by her neighbors and the larger Guamanian community. Kini Sinanap proposed the idea of having a Micronesian Food Fair at the subdivision to show the larger Guamanian community just how they are using the land and growing. This sharing of thoughts, feelings, struggles, and ideas, whether it be through email, in a court setting, or at a fair, has helped this group of Micronesians develop an even more important space, that of human understanding.

The title of this film, *Breadfruit and Open Spaces*, explains the imagery captured by Quan-Bautista as she mingled and became a part of these

Micronesian families. She saw the deep value these people had in being connected to the land. She saw how they managed their space through a shifting of her Chamorro lenses to that of her promise sister Kathy Martin's lenses. Key to Quan-Bautista's successful documentary was this very relationship with Kathy. Kathy was able to open the way for Quan-Bautista to capture varied cultural nuances and deep cultural values and philosophies of the Micronesian families in the Gill Baza subdivision. Kini Sinanap's sharing of the Chuukese value of *wurufutu*, something deeply felt which is ripped out from you, speaks to the depth of Quan-Bautista's relationship with these people.

Important to note is how the documentary captured the real intenseness of the eviction notice, the struggle regarding what to do, the value of coming together, and the educating each other. Quan-Bautista said it best, "The whole process helped them to find their voice." She further observed how they recognized the power that comes in working together. Even more brilliant is Quan-Bautista's capturing of how these Micronesians in this Gill Baza subdivision navigate space as landowners, families, or communal living, and the ever challenging space of being understood. She is to be commended for her work with the Micronesians on Guam and for this film. As a Chamorro, she truly lives the Chamorro value of *Inafa'maolek yan fan aayuda*; translated this means to get along and help each other. You see this Chamorro value lived by the Micronesians in this film.