

## Artist's Bio

Dabria Fong is a digital media artist who works with video, creative coding, and graphic design to contemplate prevalent social issues in the United States. She is inspired by her Asian American culture and aspires to shed light on the lack of diversity (ethnic, gender, sexual identity, age, etc.) in American media through her work.

Her most recent work explores Apple's virtual assistant, Siri, and how our society envisions the invisible voice-input and response system. Dabria is drawn to the human connection to technology and is inspired by human-centered design. Her interest in human-centered design and technology began at a young age when she noticed her mom had difficulty navigating social media because of language barriers. Dabria believes that technology should be universally accessible and easy to use regardless of language, gender, race, and other identities that divide society.

## Artist's Statement

“Sirimoji” is a project exploring our societal response to Siri. Siri is a voice input and response system created by Apple, made to serve as an artificially intelligent assistant. but because of the way Siri talks and interacts with users, the digital assistant almost feels like a real person, creating a biomorphic identity for the voice we hear.

Thinking about Siri's voice, language is commonly used as an identifier of one's ethnicity or race in our modern society. Depending on what language(s) a person speaks fluently, it is usually easy to guess what their ethnicity is or where their family roots derive from. However, since English is a global language spoken by over 50 countries, when someone speaks English fluently it is more challenging to assume their ethnicity. If you were to close your eyes right now and envision someone who speaks English fluently, what characteristics do you see?

While our brains are incredibly complex and have the ability to generate imagery within our own minds, typically our imagination is a combination of things we have already seen before with our own eyes. Although we encounter a diverse pool of people with varying ethnicities, gender and sexual identities, and other characteristics every day, we generally do not have lasting memories of strangers on the streets. In comparison, we tend to remember notable figures such as celebrities, actors, musicians, and others in entertainment media. American entertainment media has consistently faced criticism that there is not enough ethnic diversity in the casts of TV shows and movies. Despite the societal demand for more representation of ethnic diversity, the entertainment industry has made very little progress. If the content that our society consumes consistently underperforms when it comes to ethnic diversity, it is likely that our imagination lacks ethnic diversity as well.