



PHOTO COURTESY OF TENZIN YUNUEN

Tenzin Yunuen, @ShopBIPoCSac

Many artists have found the COVID-19 pandemic has limited how they can share their work. Small businesses run by Black, Indigenous and other People of Color often find their opportunities are even more limited. **Tenzin Yunuen** recognized the need and created the rapidly-growing Instagram account **@ShopBIPoCSac** just in time for the holidays.

ShopBIPoCSac is pretty new [and] growing quickly. Why did you decide to start the Instagram account?

I [was very influenced as a teenager by a] magazine called Giant Robot. It was so exciting because their goal was [promoting] Asian artists and performers. [It] was just phenomenal... I couldn't get out of my head. But what really got this going is recently I had a friend launch [a] business, and I promoted her on my personal page. And I got a lot of likes...Within minutes, people were [saying], "You know, this is something Sacramento needs. This is something that like I've been waiting for." And I was like, "Yeah, same."

What methods have you used to go beyond your circle of friends?

That very first post, "Do you or somebody you know, that is BIPOC, own a small business in Sacramento," that was actually on my personal account first. And I am friends with a few really amazing activists in Sacramento. So of course, they're in those comments already posting a bunch...I get to shout out @cutiesofcolorsac.

They're volunteer-run [and] have been [spreading the word]. So many [other], businesses, artists, and people, not just them. The networking grows it. If I post something, somebody else is going to share it. And then from then on, whoever shares it afterwards gets to see it.

How do you plan to keep people engaged with businesses that you promoted, say last month?

I go back every day, twice a day, and I go back to the businesses that I first promoted, and I look to see if they have any deals, or if they have any new posts or a new product, and I will repost that.

So you're staying engaged with these businesses as you go?

I'm...getting to know really their business like, pretty intimately and like I'm having to scroll down into their Instagram pages to screenshot their pictures to be able to curate their photo sets. So I'm getting to know quite a few Sacramentans.

Do you plan to keep it Instagram-only?

I'm going to keep it on Instagram, but I do really want to grow it into a multimedia platform, either like something that people can have in their hands because not everybody has access to Instagram—like a mini pamphlet...I'm not necessarily offering any promises. I can't say, "This is going to get you more customers"...All I can do is be a good community member, and a good neighbor and [provide] a platform where [businesses are] more likely to be visible. □

@ShopBIPoCSac features several artisans each day at instagram.com/shopbipocsac

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