



artspicks

Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Kristina Wong's one-woman show addresses the high rate of mental illness and suicide among Asian-American women, but don't expect the Los Angeles-based performer to offer a cut-and-dried explanation. "I'm not a brochure," says Wong. "It's more complicated than that. We're all nuts. We're living in a world that's so crazy. To just say some people are more chemically imbalanced ... I don't know." During the performance, Wong's character knits, inviting the audience to knit with her and trying to convince everyone that, really, she's fine. Her sweater, which unravels slowly but surely over the course of her monologue, suggests otherwise.



The set's backdrop, a giant patchwork of unfinished knitting projects, adds to the off-kilter atmosphere.

THEATER

Originally, Wong planned to make these projects herself, but realizing it would take too much time, she sent out a call for help; in return, she got scores of women eager to volunteer both their half-knitted sweaters and their sad tales. "People were driving me crazy with their stories about [depression and suicides]," says Wong. "I [myself] would knit to stay calm." While talking to these women did not provide "the answer," their excitement to share showed Wong "how few places there are for people to be honest." People can look like they have it together, she says, but on the inside they're unraveling. "We are good at lying to ourselves and to each other, spinning yarns to survive."

—Mickey Jou

Fri.-Sat., March 23-24, 8 p.m., \$20, Painted Bride Art Center, 230 Vine St., 215-925-9914, www.paintedbride.org.