Mina Shum is an award-winning filmmaker whose work is hailed around the world for its bold social commentary, compassionate story-telling, and dedication to diversity and inclusion—a commitment that SFU proudly shares.

Ms. Shum arrived in Canada from Hong Kong when she was just a year old and went on to earn a B.A. in Theatre and a Diploma in Film Production from the University of British Columbia. She likes to say that she is the child of the Praxis Screenwriting Workshop, the Cineworks Independent Film Co-op, the Canadian Film Center—as well as working-class immigrant parents who weren’t exactly thrilled by her career choice in the beginning.

Ms. Shum would eventually leverage that lived experience in her films, exploring the tension between family expectation and personal ambition, between cultures and generations, and between old worlds and new.

Her films are eminently relatable and approachable; their universal themes engage a broad global audience. Perhaps her best-known movie, Double Happiness, starring the now-famous Sandra Oh, tells the coming-of-age story of a Chinese Canadian struggling to define her identity amid pressures from her traditional family. Released in 1994, it quite literally changed the face of Canadian cinema and today is required viewing in SFU’s ASC 301 course, Asian Canadian Identities: Experiences and Perspectives.

The New York Times has called Ms. Shum’s work “wry and winning”—and indeed, her list of honours and accolades is long. Her five feature films have earned Best Feature at Berlin; Audience Awards in Torino, Italy; Special Citations and Top Ten Awards at the Toronto International Film Festival. Most recently, Meditation Park, starring Cheng Pei Pei, Tzi Ma, Don Mckellar and Sandra Oh, won TIFF Film Circuit’s People’s Choice Award and San Francisco’s Center for Asian American Media’s Audience Award.

Mina Shum successfully challenged entrenched racial barriers to break new ground in Canada’s film industry. Her career is a beacon for all filmmakers and storytellers, regardless of gender or background. For advancing diversity in the arts and for unifying communities by artfully revealing the universal truths that connect us all, Mina Shum is conferred the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, honoris causa.