

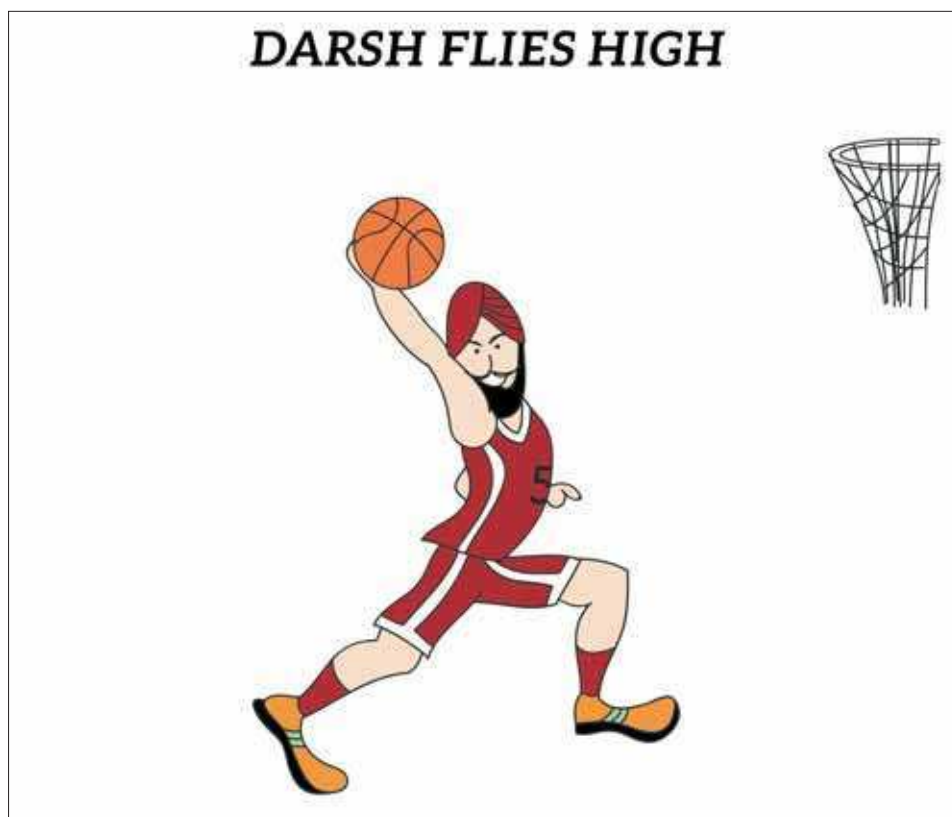
“Wham! Bam! Pow!” now featured at the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience

“Wham! Bam! Pow! Cartoons, Turbans & Confronting Hate,” an exhibit of illustrations by Vishavjit Singh, whose cartoons emerged from a tragedy — the 9/11 attacks — is currently on view at the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience in Seattle. The display, which features cartoons, photos, a shield selfie station, a turban video installation, and an interactive space, opened this month and runs through April 14, 2019.

A Sikh American with a turban and beard, Vishavjit was a target of fear, anxiety, and ignorance after the terrorist attacks in 2001. Verbal insults and threats fluctuated depending on news coverage. Concerned for his personal safety, he turned to humor and comics — one of his childhood loves — to create Sikhtoons. His simple imagery often has an edge that pierces stereotypes, prompts self-reflection, and promotes action while adding a missing perspective to the comic-book genre.

Horrified by a 2012 deadly attack at a Sikh Gurudwara (house of worship) in Wisconsin, Vishavjit decided the world needed a new superhero. At the urging of photographer Fiona Aboud, he cast away self-doubts of body image and put on a Captain America suit and turban, transforming into “Sikh Captain America” — a superhero on a mission to fight bigotry and hate.

Vishavjit’s alter ego has been featured on national media, including “Totally Biased,” a comedy series with W. Kamau Bell. On the show, New Yorkers were interviewed to find out their definition of a



superhero.

One interviewee responded: “More muscles. Taller. Whiter.”

Since then, Sikh Captain America has made appearances at comic cons, political rallies, and schools, sparking dialogue and challenging common perceptions of what it means to be an American superhero.

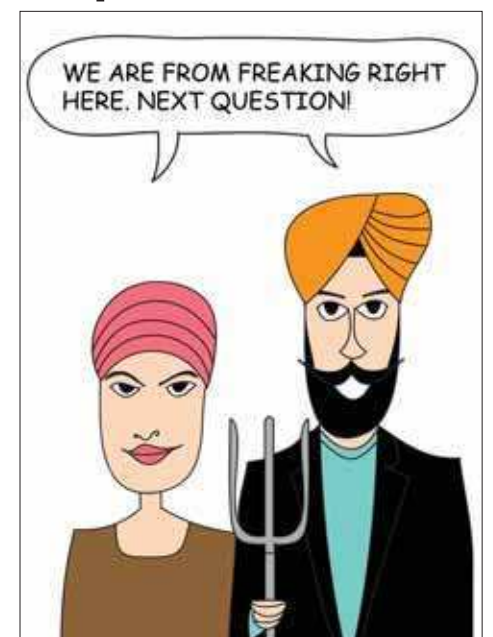
“Wham! Bam! Pow!” follows Sikh Captain America’s journey as he reflects on being Sikh American and discovers the heroic power of compassion.

Many of Vishavjit’s cartoons focus on the idea of “turbanphobia,” or an irrational

fear of turbans and the people who wear them. Others address racial diversity or highlight struggles in dealing with racism.

One cartoon looks at Disney’s racial diversity onscreen and off. Another celebrates one of Sikh America’s biggest stars, Darsh Singh, the first Sikh-American NCAA basketball player, who overcame racism to become an online hero. In a riff on artist Grant Wood’s “American Gothic” painting, the artist uses the famous image depicting a farmer and his wife and flips it with a Sikh couple in turbans forced to answer where they are from.

“Wham! Bam! Pow! Cartoons, Turbans & Confronting Hate” is on view through



WHAM! BAM! POW! “Wham! Bam! Pow! Cartoons, Turbans & Confronting Hate,” an exhibit of illustrations by Vishavjit Singh, whose cartoons emerged from a tragedy — the 9/11 attacks — is currently on view at the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience in Seattle. Vishavjit’s cartoons address the idea of “turbanphobia,” or an irrational fear of turbans and the people who wear them, as well as racial diversity. One cartoon celebrates one of Sikh America’s biggest stars, Darsh Singh (left photo), the first Sikh-American NCAA basketball player, who overcame racism to become an online hero. In a riff on artist Grant Wood’s “American Gothic” painting (right photo), the artist uses the famous image depicting a farmer and his wife and flips it with a Sikh couple in turbans forced to answer where they are from. (Images courtesy of the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience)

April 14, 2019 at the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, located at 719 S. King Street in Seattle. To learn more, call (206) 623-5124 or visit <www.wingluke.org>.

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