

An Entrepreneur's 2020 Christmas



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Andrea “Fuji” Lorena is an entrepreneur based in Miami, FL who mainly works with photography, often exploring narratives through her work and documenting life in all of its forms. With such a tough year soon coming to a close, she agreed to share her 2020 story and what she hopes this Christmas season will bring.

2020 has been such a rough year to many people for various reasons. Many are relieved as we near its end. As an entrepreneur, what were some of the challenges you faced?

As a photographer/businesswoman, 90% of my income comes from hospitality-based clients such as hotels, restaurants, chefs, etc. Back in March when everything shut down so abruptly, 90% of those businesses did so as well including marketing agencies. A lot of my clients had to let go of their staff and a lot of the marketing agencies got furloughed.

Therefore, much of my plans for 2020 got canceled. I’m very thankful to Oolite Arts, which is a creative and cultural learning center, for giving me an artist’s grant during the pandemic and helping me get by. Personally, my biggest challenge was learning how to slow down. I’m the kind of person that’s always up, energetic, pumped to work, and create new content for everybody. I had to learn how to relax and take time to myself to really evaluate what I’ve been doing to take care of my mental health. For us artists, that’s very important. I had to learn to let things go and stop planning ahead so much. A lot of the productions I work with, we plan them weeks to months ahead. Not knowing what the future held with this pandemic was hectic and as a traveling photographer who flies out every month to a different place, it was a hard hit having to cancel that part of my job as well. In retrospect, however, I’m pretty thankful that I was obligated to slow down because it brought my creativity up – I started getting more creative with my photography, getting back into hobbies again such as painting, ice skating, and I read about two books a week on average.



Have these challenges changed your mood at all towards this holiday season?

Absolutely! For someone like me who deals with anxiety and depression, the pandemic has been one of the hardest things to deal with – both mentally and physically. However, the fact that I’m alive and well as well as my family is more than I could ever ask for. I’m excited to spend Christmas with my immediate family as well as my mother’s side of the family who are in Miami along with us. I also have family in Ohio, New York, Cuba, and Spain that I won’t be able to visit this year, unfortunately, but thanks to Zoom calls, we can still have moments together through a screen. We still have a chance to lighten the mood, get in the holiday spirit, and make the best out of a terrible situation. We have to continue to spread the positivity.

Many businesses are known to have the holiday season be their busiest time of the year. Would you say your business has stayed just as busy or have you seen a contrast to previous years?

I feel like this is a high season for any businesses in Miami as well as anywhere else. It honestly should be busier as this time last year, I was doing work for Uber Eats for most of the month of November and at the moment, there are no bookings for it. I was also working a ton of concerts but those have also been postponed for most of the year – completely out of my hands there. So, my schedule has definitely been affected and I should be a lot busier, but I’m thankful to have work at all. Fortunately, I’m fully booked from now until December.





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What are some of the things you enjoy doing to get yourself in the holiday spirit?

This year, I decided to make everyone's gifts instead of buying them. Because I've had so much time on my hands, I figured I can get creative and do something different. For example, I bought a puzzle of 1,000 pieces, put it together, painted music lyrics on top of it, and framed it. I figure this would make a perfect and thoughtful Christmas gift to anyone, and I'm excited to distribute them. I also love listening to Michael Bublé and Mariah Carey's Christmas albums. They are great mood boosters. I love putting up Christmas decorations and buying candles to light around the house as well as sing and dance. I tend to get really inspired around this time of year, so I also write a lot of poetry along with some hot cocoa.

Any advice for fellow entrepreneurs this holiday season?

Continue following the guidelines like wearing your masks, washing your hands regularly, and practice social distancing. I would want them to remember to take care of themselves this new year and remember to always stay strong – hope for the best.

