



CHINESE AMERICAN HEROES

chineseamericanheroes.org

Museum of Chinese in America

美洲華人博物館

Dedicated to preserving and presenting the history, heritage, culture and diverse experiences of people of Chinese descent in the United States.

The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) began as a part of the New York Chinatown History Project. It was founded by historian, John Kuo Wei Tchen, and community activist, Charles Lai, in 1980. The organization sponsors educational and cultural programs to promote and represent Chinese-American history, making it accessible and visible to the public. Located in NYC's Chinatown, the museum strives to preserve and display the "history, heritage, culture, and diverse experiences of the people of Chinese descent in the United States."¹

The museum focuses on the legacy of Chinese-Americans and issues currently facing the Chinese-American community, but it is also the founders' mission to go beyond this and promote dialogue among people of all cultural backgrounds. MOCA displays art and multimedia collections, provides educational programs for local schools, hosts festivals, workshops, and conferences in pursuit of these goals. In July 2009, the museum was the location of the first Asian American Comic Book Convention held in New York City.¹

In the summer of 2009, MOCA expanded from its original location to a new and much larger location at 215 Centre Street. The original location at 70 Mulberry Street is in the process of being transformed into an archive intended to serve as a research center for those interested in learning more about Chinese American history.

The official opening will be held on September 22, 2009, when the museum's "core collection" will be unveiled, along with exhibitions featuring both Chinese-American artists and Chinese artists living in the US. In the museum's new location, Maya Lin, board member and designer of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington DC, has created an art installation called "The Journey Wall" which displays bronze tiles that serve to link Chinese-American family names and places of origin with the places they settled in America.

The new museum will feature the Chinatown Film Project, highlighting films about daily life in Chinatown from ten New York based directors every Thursday of the summer of 2009.

The museum's collections include more than 60,000 letters and documents, business and organizational records, oral histories, clothing and textiles,

¹ <http://www.mocanyc.org/about/>

¹² <http://online.wsj.com/video/asian-americans-can-be-superheroes-too/F9B86996-7724-4ADF-A52B-E11A840D7DAF.html>

photographs, and precious artifacts. Featured are exhibits such as “core portraits”, a multi-media presentation that displays Chinese-Americans who exemplify a particular historical period. Those featured include, Yung Wing, the first Chinese person to graduate from an American university; international film star, Anna May Wong; and Women Airforce Service Pilot, Hazel Ying Lee, who gave her life for America during World War II.³

Chief curator, Cynthia Lee, states one of the museum’s missions is to change the public perception of Chinese history as not contemporary and unchanging. She has remarked that she wants to use the museum to educate the public and combat the notion that Chinese people isolate themselves and do not want to interact with society at large. Lee sees her mission as helping present Chinese history as a ‘living, dynamic thing’.²

The Museum of Chinese in America is located at 215 Centre Street, Chinatown, NY with archives located at 70 Mulberry Street.

¹ <http://www.mocanyc.org/about/>

² <http://online.wsj.com/video/asian-americans-can-be-superheroes-too/F9B86996-7724-4ADF-A52B-E11A840D7DAF.html>

³ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/09/arts/design/09chinatown.html>

²⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/09/arts/design/09chinatown.html>