



Recovery Update - Museum of Chinese in America Archives Fire



During this unprecedented and extremely trying time, Alliance for Response would like to share some uplifting news from our cultural community.

On the night of January 23, 2020, the eve of Lunar New Year eve, a 5-alarm fire broke out at 70 Mulberry Street, the building that houses MOCA's Collections and Archives. Over the past 2 months Alliance for Response New York City <http://afrnyc.org/> has been in close communication

with Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) leadership and staff. Our hearts go out to the MOCA staff and community as they continue to work through this hardship.

Initially, MOCA feared that everything would be lost but given the heroic efforts of NYC agencies, the NYPD, and the NYFD it became apparent that MOCA's Collections and Archives would suffer extensive damage, but could be salvaged. On January 29th and 31st the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) and the NYC Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) assisted MOCA with the retrieval of 20% of its collections. As a non-profit organization that strengthens the disaster mitigation and response capabilities of the New York City cultural heritage community, AFR NYC was there to assist MOCA with facilitating communications for necessary supplies, transportation, and 14 trained disaster recovery specialists, with backgrounds in registration, archives, and conservation, with a dozen more on stand-by, to help retrieve and triage the irreplaceable MOCA collection.

The outpouring of support was evident at a time of crucial need. See NBC February 5, 2020 coverage of the response:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/invaluable-items-recovered-after-museum-chinese-america-archive-fire-n1130206>

On Sunday March 8th a dawn to dusk effort by NYC DCAS saw the retrieval of nearly all of MOCA's remaining archives and collections from 70 Mulberry Street to an offsite facility where materials are now drying. To date MOCA has retrieved 95% of their archives and collections and they continue to accept donations here.

<https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/mocafirerecovery>

"The conservators also prepared the MOCA staff with information about best practices for any future retrieval and recovery efforts. The assistance of AFRNYC and NYC DORIS were invaluable for our recovery effort and without AFRNYC and NYC DORIS, the process would not have gone as smoothly or as successfully. MOCA is deeply indebted to AFRNYC and NYC DORIS." – MOCA Board and Team

Alliance for Response remains committed to the MOCA recovery and will continue to facilitate collections advice and volunteer assistance when we are all able to move forward. I sincerely thank all of the onsite trained disaster recovery specialist volunteers and those who continue to offer assistance, advice, and supplies.

Stay well,

Cindy Albertson

Vice President

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