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MUSEUM OF CHINESE IN AMERICA (MOCA) ANNOUNCES NEW FALL EXHIBIT:

FOLD: GOLDEN VENTURE PAPER SCULPTURES

ON VIEW OCTOBER 5, 2017 THROUGH MARCH 25, 2018

[New York, May 23, 2017]—The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA)'s Fall 2017 exhibition, ***FOLD: Golden Venture Paper Sculptures***, features unique folk art created by Chinese immigrants detained between 1993 and 1997 at York County Prison, Pennsylvania, after the ship they were on, the Golden Venture, carrying 286 passengers ran aground off the coast of Rockaway Beach, Queens on June 6, 1993. Through the poetics of the artworks, the exhibition will provide a lens to consider past and current U.S. immigration policies and control practices. It will be on view from October 5, 2017 through March 25, 2018.

The sculptures depict everyday objects and scenes that reminded the detained Chinese immigrants of home (lanterns and pagodas), ideals of America (eagles), and feelings based on their imprisonment (caged birds). Yet, what emerges during their incarceration is not only a new style of folk art called *Qian Zhi*, or “a thousand papers”—a hybrid form of the Chinese paper folding tradition—but a policy of indefinite detention for asylum-seekers.

Photography and archive materials provide the social and political context, while a newly produced video chronicles key immigration legislations since the detainment that today impact the lives of immigrant communities. Comprised of excerpts from interviews with attorneys, scholars and those directly involved in the Golden Venture story, such as members of the grassroots activist group People of the Golden Vision, the video will be played on loop, and at the beginning of each public program.

“*FOLD* represents a longstanding trajectory at MOCA that critically explores contemporary immigration issues through its historical antecedents, ranging from the legacies of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to McCarthy era surveillance of Chinese immigrants after World War II,” said curator Andrew Rebatta. “Our visitors will learn how the disproportionately punitive practices of our current immigration system are rooted in the story of the Golden Venture passengers, who were then at the center of a national immigration debate.”

MOCA first exhibited some of the sculptures in the 1996 exhibition *Fly to Freedom: Art by the Golden Venture Refugees*. With this exhibit's iteration, the Museum will expand the conversation and understanding about immigration issues during a time of heightened anti-immigrant sentiment evidenced in the nativist rhetoric of our current administration, and at a time when the world's population of displaced peoples is at unprecedented levels and continues to grow annually.

During the run of the exhibition, there will be a dedicated workshop space for visitors to learn about the cultural underpinnings of this traditional paper folding folk art practice and its techniques, as well as the symbolism of these forms, through the lens of Chinese gift giving culture.

Screening series, panel discussions, performances and workshops will expand the conversation and understanding about immigration issues, with particular attention placed on the immigrant detention system. “Pausing to reflect upon the conditions, situations, and processes during the detainment of the Chinese immigrants aboard the Golden Venture is richly relevant today,” said MOCA President **Nancy Yao Maasbach**. “*FOLD* presents complexity, empathy, and art within its makeup.”

Additional Programs

During the run of the exhibitions, MOCA will offer a series of related events, public programs, family programs, walking tours, and gallery tours. A schedule of guided tours of *FOLD: Golden Venture Paper Sculptures* in America will be available on the museum website. Visitors can join MOCACREATE drop-in art workshops every first and third Saturday of the month, from 1 – 4 p.m.

Please check the museum's website at mocanyc.org for updates and information on upcoming programs. For press requests and images and to RSVP for the press preview on Wednesday, October 4, 2017 at 10 a.m., please email press@mocanyc.org.

FOLD: Golden Venture Paper Sculptures is made possible with the generous support of the S. H. Ho Foundation and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

About the Curator

ANDREW REBATA is the Assistant Curator at MOCA. He has worked on exhibitions at community-based museums in New York, Chicago and Washington, DC. In 2011, he was Curator-in-Residence at the Museo Experimental El Eco in Mexico City, and has most recently organized exhibitions and performances for the New Forms Media Society in Vancouver, BC.

About Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA)

The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) aims to engage audiences in an ongoing and historical dialogue, in which people of all backgrounds are able to see American history through a critical perspective, to reflect on their own experiences, and to make meaningful connections between: the past and the present, the global and the local, themselves and others.

Hours:

Monday – Closed

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday – 11am-6pm

Thursday – 11am-9pm

MOCA First Free Thursdays: Free gallery admission on the first Thursday of each month, made possible through the generosity of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and J.T. Tai & Co. Foundation.

Admission:

General Admission: \$10/ MOCA Members: Free

Seniors (65+ with ID) and Students (with school ID): \$5

Children under 2: Free

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