

UPDATED RELEASE

Museum of Chinese in America
Announces Grand Opening September 22, 2009

Maya Lin-Designed Building Features Multiple Exhibition Galleries, Interactive Visitor Kiosks, a Multipurpose Classroom, Research Center, and a Flexible Space for Multidisciplinary Public Programs

*Core Exhibition Explores the Chinese American Experience
From the 1850s to the Present Day*

*Art Exhibition “Here & Now: Chinese Artists in New York”
Features Works By Four Contemporary Artists of Chinese Descent*

September 24, 2009, New York, NY – The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) opened its new location at 215 Centre Street on Tuesday, September 22, 2009 with a series of events designed to highlight the Museum’s role as the leading museum dedicated to preserving and presenting the history and culture of people of Chinese descent in the United States. Also on September 22, the Museum unveiled its core exhibition, “With a Single Step: Stories in the Making of America,” a history of the Chinese American experience, along with an art exhibition, “Here & Now: Chinese Artists in New York,” featuring contemporary artists of Chinese descent living in New York.

“From its community-based roots, MOCA’s new home marks its emergence as a national institution,” said Jonathan Ligh, M.D., Chair of MOCA’s Board of Trustees. “Our institutional capacity will increase six-fold and allow us to house a range of exhibitions and programs to facilitate a deeper and broader dialogue about Chinese American history, identity, and culture.”

“The Museum of Chinese in America was established nearly 30 years ago by two Chinese Americans, co-founders Charles Lai and John Kuo Wei Tchen, who knew it was important to document and preserve the history of our Chinese American heritage and experience,” said Museum Director S. Alice Mong. “Our new location will allow the Museum to look at that experience through many different lenses and bring 160 years of our history to vivid life through innovative art and history exhibitions, films, panels, and educational and cultural programs. We’re thankful to our Board of Trustees, to the City and State of New York and to our wonderful donors and foundation and corporate supporters for helping make this possible.”

The New MOCA

Designed by artist and designer Maya Lin, MOCA's new home is a 14,000 square-foot space in a former machine shop, renovated to feature multiple exhibition galleries, interactive display kiosks, a multipurpose classroom, a research center, and a flexible space for multidisciplinary public programs. MOCA expects to achieve LEED SILVER certification through the incorporation of environmentally sustainable design solutions throughout the Museum. At the heart of the Museum is its historic skylit courtyard, left deliberately raw and untouched, that harkens back to the memory of a traditional Chinese courtyard house. The core exhibition wraps around this courtyard and short biographic films telling the stories of Chinese Americans through history—from the 1850's to the present day—are projected onto the glass windows facing the courtyard.

Located just inside the main entrance is the Journey Wall, which features individual bronze plaques donated in honor or in memory of people of Chinese descent. Each tile is engraved with the name of a Chinese American family, highlighting both their Chinese place of origin as well as their current home in the United States. Transcending the traditional donor recognition wall, the Journey Wall illustrates personal journeys that describe the larger Diaspora of Chinese Americans throughout our country.

“MOCA's new space focuses attention on individuals and families of Chinese heritage who have made their homes throughout the country, and who are very much a part of the fabric of this nation. The space was designed to show the dynamic presentation of the Chinese American story, as an integral part of the greater, and continually evolving, American story,” said Ms. Lin.

Core Exhibition: “With a Single Step: Stories in the Making of America”

The core exhibition presents the diverse layers of the Chinese American experience while examining America's journey as a nation of immigrants—an overview of Chinese in the United States from the 19th century to the present, individual stories that reveal what it has meant to be Chinese in America over time, and the physical traces and images of past generations left for us to consider, reflect on, and reclaim.

The exhibition is tied together by three main threads: the relationship between China and the United States and its impact on Chinese Americans; how Chinese Americans have perceived themselves in American society (and have been perceived) over time; and, the impact of Chinese Americans on politics, culture, and life in the United States.

Historian **John Kuo Wei Tchen** and **Cynthia Ai-fen Lee** were the co-curators of the core exhibition. The exhibition was designed by **Matter Architecture Practice** with graphics by **mgmt. Design**, lighting by **Marcus Doshi Lighting Design**, fabrication by **ExPlus Incorporated**, and audiovisual systems integration by **VideoSonic Systems**.

Art Exhibition: “Here & Now: Chinese Artists in New York”

Curated by **Zhijian Qian**

Here & Now is MOCA's first group show of contemporary artists, and features prominent Chinese artists who live and work in New York. For the past two decades, artists in the Chinese Diaspora have drawn increasing attention in an art world that is becoming ever more trans-cultural and international. *Here & Now* will move visitors beyond the framework that defines Chinese artists as “traditional,” “westernized,” or “hybrids of East and West.” The exhibition explores what it means to be Chinese American by questioning the usefulness of these categories in regards to Chinese artists today. The exhibition will also be accompanied by a series of panel discussions, artist workshops, and a full-color, illustrated catalogue that features interviews with artists Xu Bing and Wenda Gu. The exhibition is organized into three seven-week long chapters—Visual Memories, Crossing Boundaries, and Towards

Transculturalism. The first chapter, opening September 22 and running until November 2, features the following artists:

- Xu Bing (b. China, 1955; U.S. arrival, Wisconsin, 1990)
- Yun-Fei Ji (b. China, 1963; U.S. arrival, Arkansas, 1989)
- Lin Yan (b. China; U.S. arrival, New York, 1986)
- Cui Fei (b. China; U.S. arrival, Pennsylvania, 1996)

The subsequent chapters of the exhibition will be mounted on November 19, 2009 and on January 10, 2010.

MOCA Background

MOCA began as a community-based organization founded in 1980 by John Kuo Wei Tchen and Charles Lai and Chinese American artists, historians, and students who felt that the memories of first-generation “old-timer” Chinese Americans would be lost without oral history, photo documentation, research, and collecting efforts. Now a focal point of the community’s cultural life, the Museum has evolved into not only the keeper of the community’s documented history, but the community’s cultural history as well. The Museum’s original location (which will continue to be used for archives and collections) is in the heart of Chinatown on the second floor of the historic, century-old school building that was once Public School 23. For more information, visit www.mocanyc.org

MOCA will have special hours during its free opening week (five free days):

Tuesday, September 22: 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm (last entry at 3:30 pm)

Wednesday, September 23: 11:00 am – 5:00 pm (last entry at 4:30 pm)

Thursday, September 24: 11:00 am – 5:00 pm (last entry at 4:30 pm)

Friday, September 25: 11:00 am – 5:00 pm (last entry at 4:30 pm)

Saturday, September 26: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm (last entry at 4:30 pm)

Beginning Sunday, September 27, the Museum’s hours will be:

Monday: 11am-5pm

Tuesday: Closed

Wednesday: Closed

Thursday: 11am-9pm

Friday: 11am-5pm

Saturday: 10am-5pm

Sunday: 10am-5pm

The Museum is closed to the public on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, except for prescheduled group tours and special programs.

Admission:

General Admission: \$7

Seniors (w/ID) and Students (w/school ID): \$4

Children under 12 in groups less than 8: free

MOCA Members: free

Target Free Thursdays: Free gallery admission every Thursday through the generosity of Target

Project Management:

Beckelman+Capalino serves as Project Manager for MOCA, coordinating construction and exhibition development, relationship management with the City of New York and other public agencies, and management of the public funding and reimbursement policies.

The architects for the new facility were **Bialosky + Partners** and the general contractor was **NY Construction Associates LLC**. The permanent gallery was designed by **Maya Lin Studio** with **Matter Architecture Practice**.

MOCA is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit educational organization supported by its members, individual donors, and by public and private funds.

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