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## MUSEUM OF CHINESE IN AMERICA (MOCA) ANNOUNCES FALL EXHIBITION FOR 2016:

### *Sour, Sweet, Bitter, Spicy: Stories of Chinese Food and Identity in America*

October 6, 2016 – March 26, 2017

[New York, NY] August, 2016 — The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA)’s Fall 2016 exhibition, *Sour, Sweet, Bitter, Spicy: Stories of Chinese Food and Identity in America*, on view from **October 6, 2016 through March 26, 2017**, challenges how Chinese food is defined and interpreted through the personal stories of more than 30 revered Chinese and Asian American chefs—from Michelin ranked to generational home cooks.

“Chinese food is a cornerstone of American culture, and it has brought so many different generations and ethnicities together. Since the beginning of Chinese immigration to the U.S., Chinese eateries have served as the foundation of a new life in a new place. By opening the door to their kitchens, Chinese people became integral parts of their communities. This groundbreaking exhibit presents all the complexity of Chinese cuisines and Chinese life in America,” shared **MOCA President, Nancy Yao Maasbach**.

*Sour, Sweet, Bitter, Spicy* invites the audience into a conversation about the meaning of Chinese food as a platform for experimentation, a test of authenticity, a means of immigrant survival, and a microcosm of Chinese culture. Following on the success of MOCA’s 2004 exhibit *Have You Eaten Yet?*, this new exhibit *Sour, Sweet, Bitter, Spicy* dives deep into individual journeys, exploring how food represents a cultural form of expression and identity heavily influenced by life experiences and geographical landscapes.



Cecilia Chiang at her restaurant.  
Courtesy of Cecilia Chiang.

The exhibit weaves together the complex stories through a dynamic video installation featuring pioneering chefs such as Cecilia Chiang, Ken Hom, Anita Lo, Ming Tsai, and Martin Yan; new restaurateurs like Peter Chang, Vivian Ku, and Danny Bowien; and persevering home cooks like Biying Ni, Yvette Lee and Ho-chin Yang.

Each chef and 18 different regional cooking styles are represented through unique ceramic sculptures presented on a monumental dining room table. Through these interpretative pieces, the visitor absorbs each chef’s cooking style and experience through their narratives, inspirations, and memories.



Ming Tsai. Courtesy of Ming Tsai.

In Chinese, the saying *Sour, Sweet, Bitter, Spicy* (酸甜苦辣) refers simultaneously to the delicate balance of flavors that define Chinese cooking and the vicissitudes of life. The tapestry of tales that emerge is rich with immigration experiences, food memories, favorite dishes, and cooking inspirations that define the culinary—and personal—identities of these chefs, drawing visitors into a conversation about how food defines Chinese in America and themselves individually.

“Food is at the heart of Chinese culture, and in America the very definition of Chinese food is constantly contested in home and restaurant kitchens across the country” **said Herb Tam, Curator and Director of Exhibitions at MOCA.** “This exhibition is really an elaborate dinner table conversation with some of our most exciting chefs about how we define Chinese food and how Chinese food defines us.”



*Courtesy of Danny Bowien.*

**Featured Chefs:**

**Danny Bowien**  
(New York, NY)

**Peter Chang**  
(Rockville, MD)

**Nancy Chen**  
(Naperville, IL)

**Chris Cheung**  
(Brooklyn, NY)

**George Chew**  
(New York, NY)

**Cecilia Chiang**  
(San Francisco, CA)

**Philip Chiang**  
(Los Angeles, CA)

**Sally and Gilroy  
Chow**  
(Clarksdale, MS)

**Susanna Foo**  
(Radnor, PA)

**Jeff ‘Tao’ Gao**  
(Boulder, CO)

**Ken Hom, OBE**  
(Bangkok, Paris, Rio de Janeiro)

**Vivian Ku**  
(Los Angeles, CA)

**Yvette Lee**  
(Honolulu, HI)

**Leonard Liao**  
(Jackson Heights, NY)

**Anita Lo**  
(New York, NY)

**Biying Ni**  
(New York, NY)

**Doniyar Sobitov**  
(Brooklyn, NY)

**Cara Stadler**  
(Portland, ME)

**Wilson Tang**  
(New York, NY)

**Yvonne and Mike  
Thompson**  
(Pounding Mill, VA)

**Kimmie Lee Tie**  
(Raleigh, NC)

**Michael Tong**  
(New York, NY)

**Ming Tsai**  
(Wellesley, MA)

**Jason Wang**  
(New York, NY)

**Doron Wong**  
(New York, NY)

**Frank and Tommy  
Wong**  
(Mandeville, LA)

**Jonathan Wu**  
(New York, NY)

**Cori Xiong and Heng  
Chen**  
(Houston, TX)

**Martin Yan**  
(San Mateo, CA)

**Ho-chin Yang**  
(Alhambra, CA)

**Chris Yeo**  
(San Jose, CA)

**Grace Young**  
(New York, NY)

**Wenbin Yuan**  
(Brookfield, WI)

**Featuring Ceramics by: Heidi Lau and Lu Zhang**

## About the Curators

AUDRA ANG is the author of *To the People, Food is Heaven*, a memoir about her seven years as a Beijing-based correspondent for The Associated Press. In between meals of “mouthwatering chicken” and “red cooked pork,” Ang covered disasters, disease and dissent while chronicling the breakneck changes convulsing China. She was Nieman Fellow at Harvard University and a fellow at UC Berkeley’s Center for Chinese Studies. Ang, who grew up in Singapore, regularly eats unseemly amounts of food at one sitting.

KIAN LAM KHO is a food writer, consultant, and founder of the Chinese cooking blog Red Cook. Red Cook was a finalist for the James Beard Foundation Award in 2011. Kho teaches Chinese cooking classes at the Institute of Culinary Education, Brooklyn Kitchen, and Haven’s Kitchen. His cookbook, *Phoenix Claws and Jade Trees: Essential Techniques of Authentic Chinese Cooking* is the culmination of years of research on Chinese cooking techniques and their implementing in the home kitchen.

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. Andrew is currently developing an exhibition of paper sculptures created by the *Golden Venture* refugees scheduled to open in Spring 2017.

HERB TAM is the Curator and Director of Exhibitions at MOCA. He recently co-curated “*Waves of Identity: 35 Years of Archiving*,” an exhibition that explored the construction of Chinese American identity through MOCA’s archival materials. In 2012, he curated “*America through a Chinese Lens*,” which surveyed photographs of America by contemporary artists and non-professional photographers of Chinese descent. Tam was previously the Associate Curator at Exit Art and the Acting Associate Curator at the Queens Museum of Art.

## 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 *Sour, Sweet, Bitter, Spicy: Stories of Chinese Food and Identity 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 [www.mocanyc.org](http://www.mocanyc.org) for updates and information on upcoming programs. Follow the exhibit with #SourSweetBitterSpicy. For press requests and images and to RSVP for the press preview on October 5, 2016 at 10 a.m., please email [press@mocanyc.org](mailto:press@mocanyc.org).

*Sour, Sweet, Bitter, Spicy: Stories of Chinese Food and Identity in America* and related programs are 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. The opening reception is sponsored by Resorts World Casino New York City.

## 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 Free First 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 12 in groups less than 10: Free

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