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## MUSEUM OF CHINESE IN AMERICA MARKS 1-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF FIRE AT ARCHIVES BY BRINGING RECOVERED ARTIFACTS ONLINE AT GOOGLE ARTS & CULTURE

[New York, NY] January 22, 2021 – Almost one year to the day when a 5-alarm fire nearly destroyed its nationally treasured collection of more than 85,000 historical artifacts, MOCA has launched a new partnership with Google to make hundreds of digitized images of objects, sculptures, letters, photos and videos from MOCA’s collections available for free on the **Google Arts & Culture** digital platform to be viewed, studied and enjoyed by people near and far online and on its app, available for download on Android and iOS.

Starting today, users of Google Arts & Culture will now be able to see a new MOCA virtual exhibition titled [\*\*\*Trial by Fire: The Race to Save 200 Years of Chinese American History\*\*\*](#), available exclusively on the platform.

*Trial by Fire* marks the one-year anniversary of a fire at 70 Mulberry Street that occurred on January 23, 2020 and tells the story of the Museum’s race against the clock to retrieve, rescue, and repair its archives, the largest collection of Chinese American artifacts in the world. *Trial by Fire* is an original MOCA exhibition written, researched and compiled from the Museum’s daily social media posts, primary sources such as videos and images, public records and news reports that documented the first critical weeks of the fire, its aftermath and recovery effort afterward.

In addition, over 200 digitized high-resolution images from MOCA’s collections will be available for the first time on the platform as well as digital exhibits of [\*\*\*With a Single Step: Stories in the Making of America\*\*\*](#), MOCA’s permanent exhibition, and the [\*\*\*My MOCA Story\*\*\*](#) video project, a crowdsourced social-media storytelling project launched by MOCA at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These will all be available at <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/museum-of-chinese-in-america>. Journalists requesting a Press Preview link to these virtual and digital exhibitions should email [press@mocanyc.org](mailto:press@mocanyc.org) to receive the link.

“One of the unexpected silver linings of this period of time are creative and intentional new partnerships. MOCA is incredibly grateful to Google Arts & Culture to expand MOCA’s usership which will inevitably broaden the much-needed scholarship in the areas related to the Chinese American narrative in America,” said **Nancy Yao Maasbach**, President of the Museum of Chinese in America.

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“Google Arts & Culture is proud to share the Museum of Chinese in America's journey from tragedy to triumph, as it worked to successfully preserve and protect the museum's art and historical artifacts for generations to come,” said Google Arts & Culture US Lead **Simon Delacroix**. “Now people around the world will get to experience the museum immersively through virtual tours and exclusive exhibits.”

### **Virtual Tour with Street View**

Users will be able to experience for the first time a multimedia-augmented virtual tour of [\*\*\*With a Single Step: Stories in the Making of America\*\*\*](#), MOCA's permanent exhibition that tells the story of 200 years of Chinese American history.

Using the Street View feature, people can explore the Museum of Chinese in America virtually, selecting works that interest them and clicking to discover more or diving into the high-resolution images, where available.

A specially designed Street View ‘trolley’ took 360-degree images of selected galleries that were then stitched together, enabling smooth navigation of 9 rooms within the Museum such as **Down with Monopolies! The Chinese Must Go!**, a section which examines the political climate leading up to and the painful legacy of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act; and **Building Community** which showcases an old general store as a composite of salvaged objects and memories from Chinatown stores across America (Los Angeles, Boston, and New York City).

Each of the 9 rooms shown in the virtual exhibition is enhanced and supplemented with video and audio to enable further immersion into the content of each section of the Museum.

In addition, users of Google Arts & Culture will be able to watch videos from the [\*\*\*My MOCA Story\*\*\*](#) crowdsourced storytelling project. Following on the heels of MOCA's archives recovery from the 70 Mulberry Street fire and at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, MOCA launched the My MOCA Story project as a way for the public to respond to the anxieties of lockdown. The project prompted people to record 1-minute “My MOCA Story” videos of themselves showing and sharing the story behind a precious family heirloom in their home. Videos were submitted through MOCA's social media channels at [#mymocastory](#) or by emailing [mymocastory@mocanyc.org](mailto:mymocastory@mocanyc.org). The project is ongoing and MOCA invites the public to share a My MOCA Story video which will be added to MOCA's Collections on Google Arts & Culture.

The highly anticipated launch of MOCA's partnership with Google Arts & Culture is the Museum's latest successful pivot towards adapting and sharing its curatorial, archival, and educational content via digital platforms. Since the onset of the global coronavirus pandemic in mid-March 2020 that forced museums across the U.S. to temporarily shutter their physical

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operations, MOCA has been offering live-streamed tours of its exhibitions, public programs, family festivals and educational workshops, and masterclasses to thousands of virtual attendees. In 2020, 65,000+ people attended MOCA's virtual programs and 4 million unique users viewed or engaged with MOCA's content on its social media channels.

MOCA also has been named one of 20 "**America's Cultural Treasures**" through an extraordinary initiative led by the **Ford Foundation** in partnership with other leading U.S. foundations and philanthropists. Through the America's Cultural Treasures initiative, MOCA has been awarded a transformative grant of \$3 million to provide much-needed support to ensure its continued sustainability as a significant national anchor for artistic and cultural diversity in America. Read more [here](#).

On January 23, 2020, a five-alarm fire consumed the Chinatown building housing MOCA's archives along with four other cultural and community organizations. Ninety-five percent of the archives was salvaged from the fire-torn building and is now undergoing conservation at **The MOCA Workshop**, the Museum's newly opened temporary Collections and Research Center designed by **Atelier Cho Thompson** at 3 Howard Street, one block from the Museum's main space at 215 Centre Street.

For media inquiries, email [press@mocanyc.org](mailto:press@mocanyc.org).

Browse the **MOCA Shop by Pearl River** online for a collection of unique gifts inspired by MOCA's exhibitions, and shop online at <https://pearlriver.com/collections/museum-of-chinese-in-america>

The **MOCA OneWorld COVID-19 special collection** is documenting stories of Chinese Americans and the Chinese diaspora resisting coronavirus-fueled hate with incredible acts of compassion, generosity, and creative and artistic expression. Email [oneworld@mocanyc.org](mailto:oneworld@mocanyc.org) to submit a story, images, videos or text, or to invite MOCA to record an oral history interview virtually with you.

Stay up to date at MOCA's website [www.mocanyc.org](http://www.mocanyc.org) or [sign up](#) for MOCA's monthly e-newsletter.

Follow MOCA on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and TikTok at @mocanyc; and WeChat at MOCANYC\_USA.

### **About Google Arts & Culture**

**Google Arts & Culture** puts the treasures, stories and knowledge of over 2,000 cultural institutions from 80 countries at your fingertips. If Google's mission is to make the world's

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information more accessible, then Arts & Culture's mission is to make the world's culture accessible to anyone, anywhere. It's your doorway to explore art, history, and wonders of the world. Discover stories about cultural heritage ranging from [Van Gogh's bedroom paintings](#), [Puerto Rico's heritage](#), [Sports in Australia](#) or [the women's rights movement to ancient Maya temples](#), [Japanese Food](#) and [Indian Railways](#).

### **About the 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**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, MOCA's main museum space at 215 Centre Street is temporarily closed until further notice.

### **The MOCA Workshop: Collections and Research Center**

The MOCA Workshop is the Museum's new Collections and Research Center, which was previously located at 70 Mulberry Street. Nine months after the fire at 70 Mulberry Street in January 2020, MOCA has opened a new home for its extensive archive of over 85,000 artifacts that document the Chinese experience in America. Designed by the multi-disciplinary concept and design firm **Atelier Cho Thompson** and located at 3 Howard Street one block away from the Museum, The MOCA Workshop is a publicly accessible research space that invites hands-on engagement with MOCA's Collections.

The MOCA Workshop's storefront space serves as a reading room featuring the Museum's extensive library of Chinese and Asian American history and literature. The remainder of the ground floor and The MOCA Workshop's second floor house MOCA's Collections and institutional archives, which were retrieved from 70 Mulberry Street after the fire. Additionally, The MOCA Workshop is equipped with a triage space to conserve materials, a digitization station, and an oral history recording station.

### **Hours**

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, The MOCA Workshop at 3 Howard Street is currently open by appointment only. Please contact [info@mocanyc.org](mailto:info@mocanyc.org) to make an appointment.