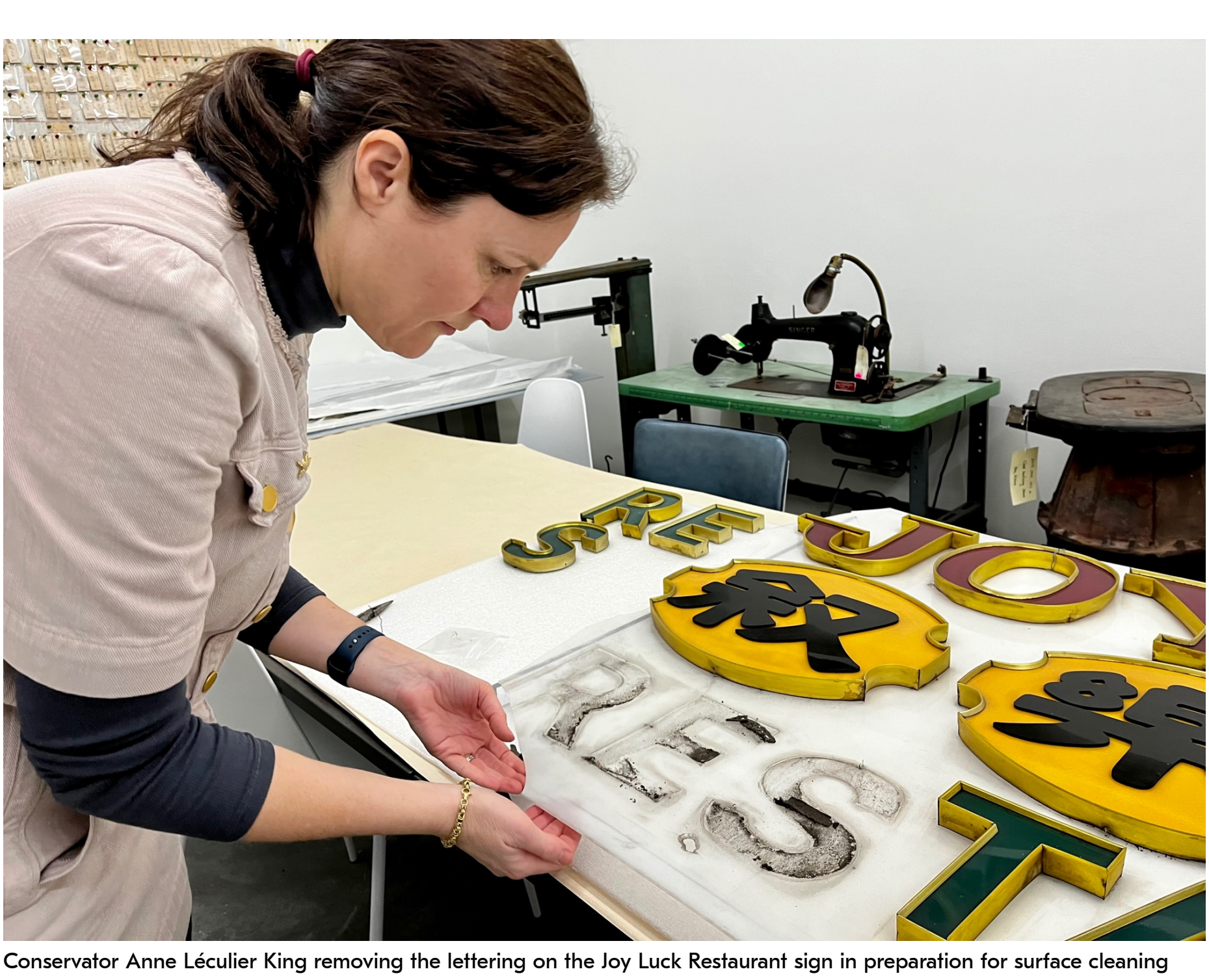
MOCA Collections

Newsletter

A monthly update on archival initiatives, work, and news by MOCA's Research and Collections Center

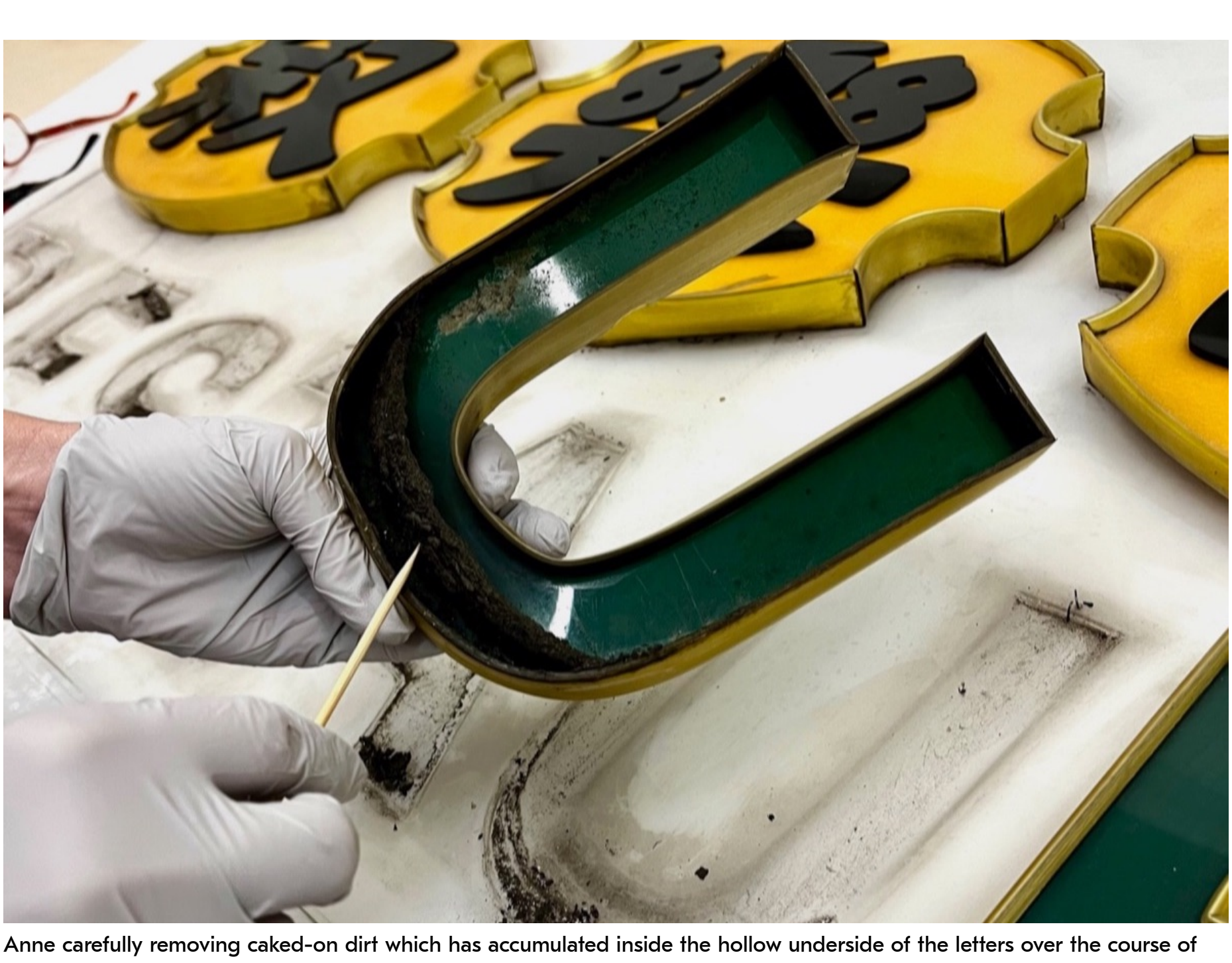
April 2023

Conservation Treatment Begins on Joy Luck Restaurant Sign



Conservator Anne Léculier King removing the lettering on the Joy Luck Restaurant sign in preparation for surface cleaning

This past Thursday, March 30th, conservator Anne Léculier King of **A.M. Art Conservation** began conservation treatment on our Joy Luck Restaurant sign. The first steps in the treatment process involved carefully removing the lettering fastened to the sign so that each of the components could undergo a thorough surface cleaning.



Anne carefully removing caked-on dirt which has accumulated inside the hollow underside of the letters over the course of decades during which the sign was hung over Chinatown's streets

Over the course of the day, Anne and our staff were pleased to welcome a few of the sponsors who helped us fund the cost of conservation and requested an opportunity to view the sign as it was being treated. Pearl and Esther Leung, whose grandfather Sai Fon Lung started the Joy Luck Restaurant at 57 Mott Street in the 1930s, took the opportunity of stopping by MOCA's archives at 3 Howard Street to also drop off two menus from their family's restaurant that they wished to add to MOCA's collection.

Pearl and Esther Leung with Anne, as she goes through the conservation treatment the sign will undergo in her care

A mint condition menu of the Joy Luck Restaurant donated to MOCA's collection by the family of Sai Fon Lung

Kristine, Bob, and Judy Dennehy observing the conservation treatment that their sponsorship of the sign helped to support

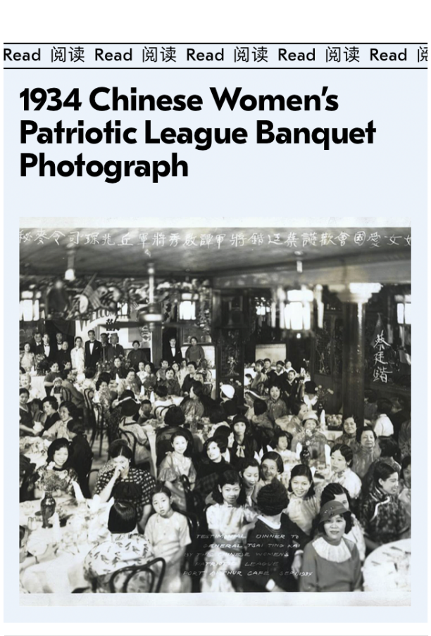
The sign has since been transported to Anne's professional conservation lab in White Plains, where she has all the tools and chemicals needed to complete the conservation process. We anticipate that the treatment will take approximately two months and look forward to sharing more updates once repair of the sign is complete.

Thank you so much to all of our generous sponsors for making the conservation of our Joy Luck Restaurant sign that was damaged during the fire possible! We would like to specially acknowledge Lillian Cheu, Pam Elam, Kerri Ann Lee, Franklin Leung, Alice M. Lee, Norma Chu, Carmel T. Leong, Victor Leung and all the members of Sai Fon Lung's family who sponsored the sign but we were not able to meet.

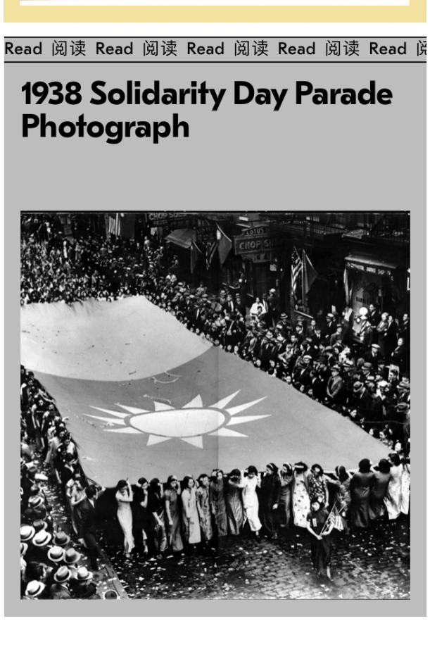
Sponsor an Object

Maggie Gee's Airman ID Card and Honorable Discharge Certificate

P.S. 23 Drawer of Girls' Student Records

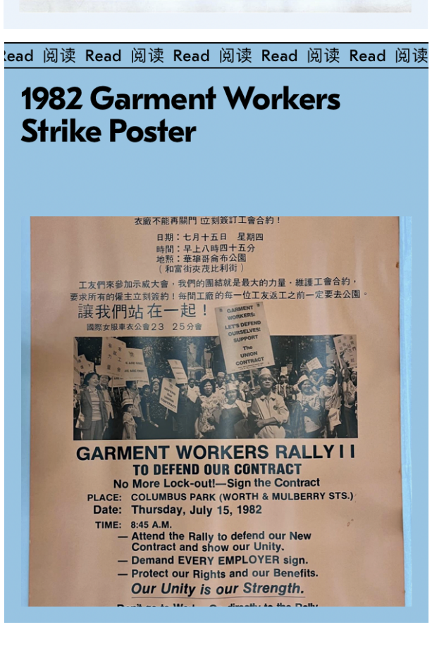


1934 Chinese Women's Patriotic League Banquet Photograph



1938 Solidarity Day Parade Photograph

Pagoda and Garden Paper Sculpture



1982 Garment Workers Strike Poster

Consider supporting MOCA's fire recovery efforts by sponsoring an object from MOCA's collection! Sponsoring an object entails contributing any amount--large or small--to help fund the repair of a treasured piece of Chinese American history that was damaged during the fire at MOCA's archives.

We post a profile for objects needing sponsorship on MOCA's Facebook, Instagram, and Sponsor an Object webpage. Each object is selected based on exhibition and conservation priorities, and each profile features research into the object's history and significance, an assessment and photo documentation detailing its damage, and a proposed course of conservation treatment.

MOCA offers **Chinese-language translations** for all of our Sponsor an Object webpages. Readers can easily navigate from English to Chinese pages by clicking the **"En / 中"** icon on the menu bar at the top of MOCA's webpages.

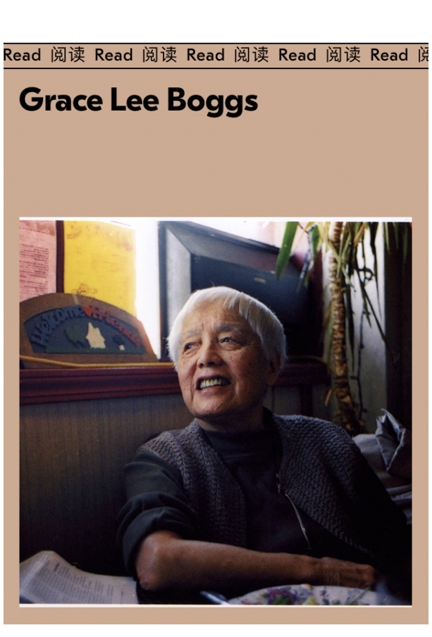
To thank sponsors who donate at specified levels, we include acknowledgement of sponsorship in the object's catalog record, on an official certificate of sponsorship, and/or on exhibition display labels, depending on level of contribution. If you can support our conservation efforts by contributing any amount towards the repair of an object, please visit our **Sponsor an Object** page.

Please click on an icon above to learn more about **objects that still need additional sponsorship** to reach the total conservation cost goal.

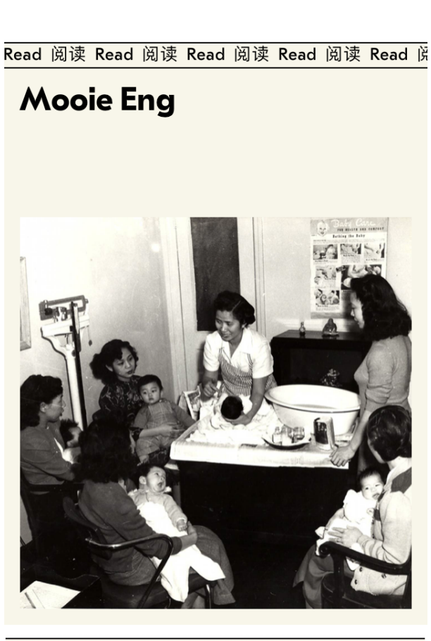
Sponsor an Object from MOCA's Collection

Women's History Month Stories

This past March, MOCA joined thousands of institutions across the country in elevating women's stories in celebration of Women's History Month.



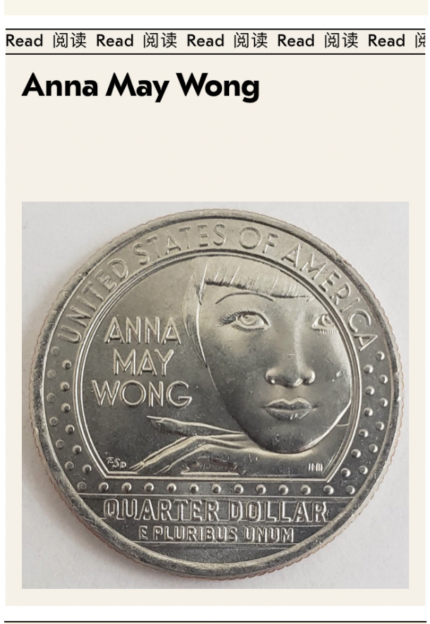
Grace Lee Boggs



Mooie Eng

Marci & Maureen Louie

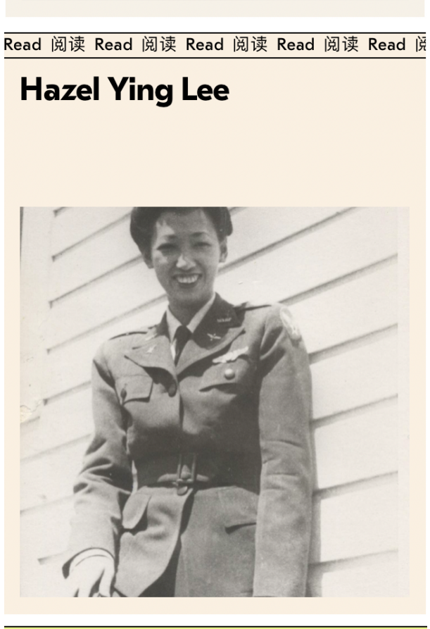
Jadin Wong



Anna May Wong

Michelle Yeoh

Katherine Sui Fan Cheung



Hazel Ying Lee

Maggie Gee

Christine Choy

Helen Zia

Dr. Betty Lee Sung

The first celebration of a women's history week was a grassroots affair mobilizing over a hundred community women to do presentations in classrooms across the country. It was organized by members of the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women in 1978 to attempt to address the near complete absence of women's history in the general public consciousness and k-12 curriculum even at that late date. The success of this first effort inspired the national leaders of organizations for women and girls to initiate similar celebrations within their own organizations, communities, and schools. They also spearheaded a national lobbying effort which resulted in President Jimmy Carter issuing the first special Presidential Proclamation declaring the week of March 8th, 1980 as National Women's History Week, and culminated in 1987 in Congress declaring March as National Women's History Month in perpetuity.

In his historic 1980 proclamation, President Carter acknowledged, "From the first settlers who came to our shores, from the first American Indian families who befriended them, men and women have worked together to build this nation. Too often the women were unsung and sometimes their contributions went unnoticed. But the achievements, leadership, courage, strength and love of the women who built America was as vital as that of the men whose names we know so well." He went on to assert, "Understanding the true history of our country will help us to comprehend the need for full equality under the law for all our people."

Each year since then, local educators and community institutions have taken up the call to celebrate and bring awareness to women's vital contributions to history and contemporary society. MOCA is proud to have joined in the celebrations this year with the launch of **MOCA Cinema: Spotlight on Women Filmmakers**, a film fest showcasing the work of women documentary filmmakers who tell our stories, in line with this year's theme.

All month long, MOCA also highlighted the life stories and work of remarkable Chinese American women—both historical and contemporary—on MOCA's social media. We have compiled the stories above for you to enjoy.

Please click on any icon above to navigate to the story on MOCA's Collections webpage.

If you can help increase our capacity to present more Chinese American women's stories by donating photographs, documents, or artifacts to MOCA's archives, please email us at **collections@mocanyc.org**.

NHPRC Grant Update: New Oral Histories Uploaded

WAVES OF IDENTITY
JOURNEY WALL
CHINO LATINO
GOTTA SING GOTTA DANCE
MANY VOICES ONE HUMANITY
SUNSET PARK
9/11 CHINATOWN
ARCHAEOLOGY OF CHANGE
PORTRAITS OF CHINATOWN
FRONT ROW
SOUR SWEET BITTER SPICY
ONE WORLD COVID-19

The above image lists oral history projects MOCA has digitized and made freely available on its oral history archive platform OHMS, an effort currently made possible by grant funding from the NHPRC

This past month marks the half-way point of a 3-year grant MOCA received from the **National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)** to support the digitization of 150 of MOCA's oral histories. This effort is part of a larger ongoing Digitizing and Sharing MOCA's Oral Histories initiative to restore, digitize, and make freely accessible the over 600 interviews the museum has conducted since its inception in 1980.

We are happy to report that with the support of our current NHPRC grant, our staff has completed the transcription, time coding, cataloging, and digitization of 84 oral histories totaling 5,704 minutes to date. Added to the 100 interviews totaling 8,976 minutes completed under past grants from the Henry Luce Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), we have now made a total of 184 oral histories totaling 14,680 minutes freely accessible digitally on MOCA's oral history archive platform **OHMS**. This work significantly advances MOCA's mission of documenting and presenting a diversity of stories illuminating Chinese American experiences and history.

Click to listen to newly added oral histories from MOCA's **Waves of Identity**, **Journey Wall**, **Portraits of Chinatown**, and **Front Row** oral history projects.

CLIR Grant Update: Paper Sculptures Digitization Complete

With the support of a joint 3-year grant from the **Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)**, MOCA, in partnership with the Center for Jewish History (CJH), has completed the digitization of MOCA's collection of *China Daily News*, *Chinese American Times*, and *Fly to Freedom* paper sculptures made by Chinese from the Golden Venture.

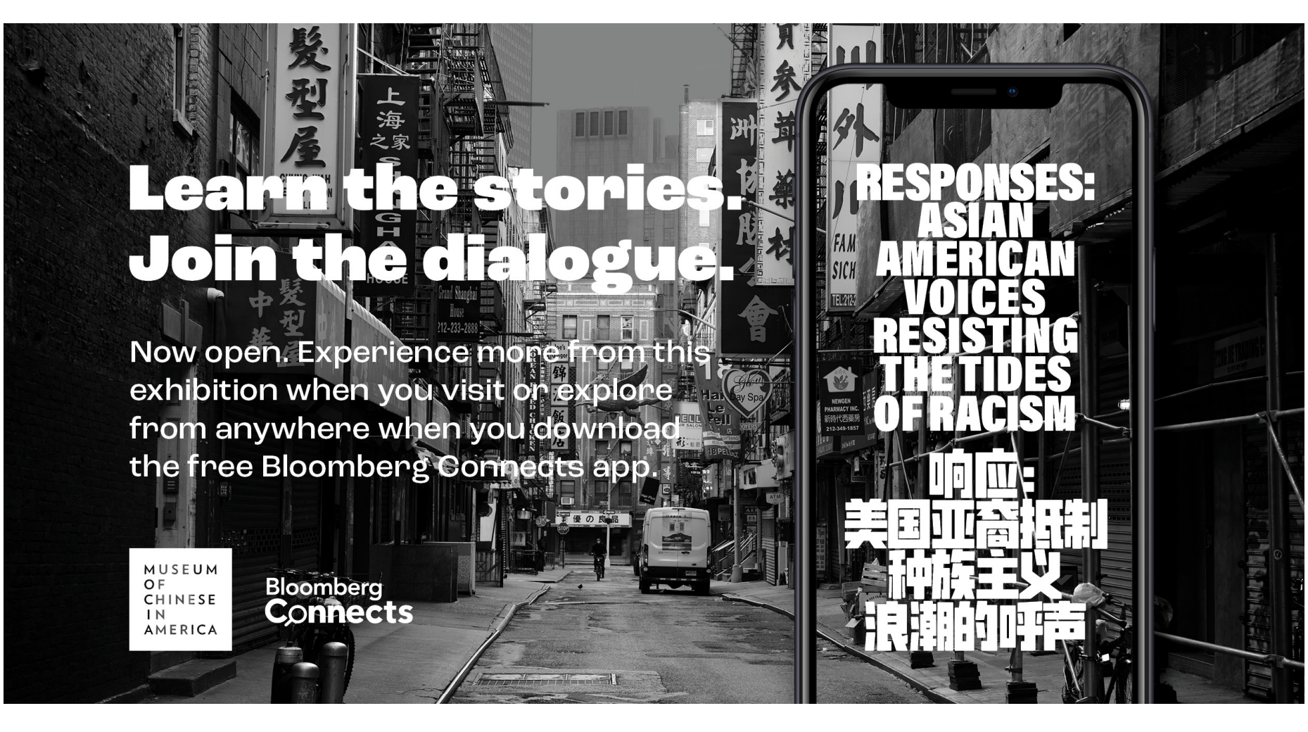
We have recently received the complete batch of high resolution photographs of the *Fly to Freedom* paper sculptures from the CJH, and our staff members Minna and Diyang are currently working on updating the images in our catalog records. Taken at different angles at extremely high resolution, new photographs such as those above will help us expand remote digital access to the sculptures, some of which have been damaged or made more vulnerable by water damage during the fighting of the fire, thus reducing the need for frequent handling and aiding their longterm preservation.

Consider Supporting the Work of MOCA Collections

The small staff at MOCA's Collections and Research Center do vital work to care for and offer access to an extensive collection of 85,000+ objects documenting and supporting research on Chinese American history. In addition to our Sponsor an Object-funded conservation and grant-funded digitization projects, we have been rehousing object by object collections salvaged from the fire. Please consider supporting our work through donating to **MOCA's Fire Recovery Fund**. Your donation helps support the purchase of archival-grade rehousing supplies, of which we have a massive ongoing need given the size of our collection. No donation is too small and each contribution enables us to continue preserving MOCA's historical treasures for generations to come.

Donate to MOCA's Fire Recovery Fund

Free Digital Guide



Learn the stories.
Join the dialogue.
Now open. Experience more from this exhibition when you visit or explore from anywhere when you download the free Bloomberg Connects app.
MUSEUM OF CHINESE IN AMERICA
Bloomberg Connects
RESPONSES: ASIAN AMERICAN VOICES RESISTING THE TIDES OF RACISM
响应：美国亚裔抵制种族主义浪潮的呼声

Discover more about the Museum in our bilingual digital guide on **Bloomberg Connects**, the free arts and culture app. Explore our permanent collection, get a behind-the-scenes look at our *Responses* exhibition, and more with exclusive audio content and commentary. Download the app here.

Download Free Bloomberg Connects App

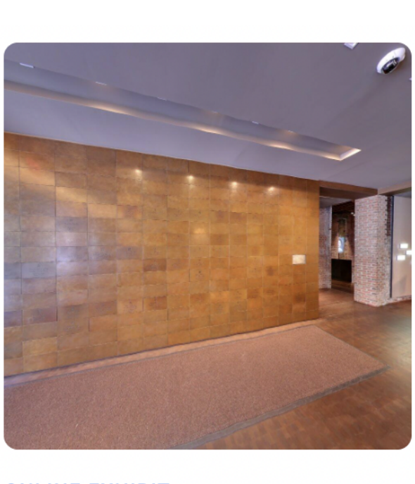
ONLINE EXHIBIT

Trial by Fire: The Race to Save 200 Years of Chinese...

ONLINE EXHIBIT

My MOCA Story

Museum of Chinese in America



ONLINE EXHIBIT

With a Single Step: Stories in the Making of America

Google Arts & Culture

In 2021, MOCA launched a 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.

MOCA's special virtual exhibition titled ***Trial by Fire: The Race to Save 200 Years of Chinese American History***, available exclusively on the platform, tells the story of the Museum's race against the clock to retrieve, rescue, and repair its archives. *Trial by Fire* is an original MOCA exhibition written, researched, and compiled from the Museum's daily social media posts, and 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 are 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.

Explore Google Arts & Culture

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OF
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IN
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