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### The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA)

Since its establishment in 1980, MOCA has honored the living history of the Chinese experience in America by conserving and showcasing the 200-year history, legacy, culture, and varied experiences of American communities of Chinese origin. Despite growing its national membership and visitor base over the course of its four decades as a community-based organization, MOCA has managed to preserve its focus on the local area. The museum aspires to be timely, to tell complex and surprising stories, to highlight socially aware concerns, to offer an environment for honest conversation, and to host engaging activities. By showcasing the tales of this immigrant group, MOCA adds to a richer, more complex, and layered American story. The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) was built in this community to engage visitors in an ongoing historical conversation, allowing people from all backgrounds to view American history from a critical angle, think back on their own experiences, and forge deep connections between the past and the present, the local and the global, as well as between themselves and others.

What stood out to be the most prominent in my perspective, was that after the adjacent World Trade Center was attacked in September 2001, the economy of Chinatown was severely damaged, and the museum became crucial to the neighborhood's recovery. As a result, MOCA saw itself as the cultural and historical cornerstone, curator, educator, exhibitor, and research

center for all Chinese people of all nationalities living in America, not only for Manhattan's Chinatown.

The Museum of Chinese in America has developed from a local community organization founded by activists to a significant cultural institution, all the while its staff has upheld the museum's initial mission and guiding principles. The staff in the museum has contributed significantly throughout the history of the Chinese in America by fostering a "sense of home" for Chinese Americans, encouraging a deeper comprehension of the Chinese American experience, creating a safe learning environment to discuss civil and human rights issues, and offering programming that improves the lives of all visitors regardless of their identity and race.

The most interesting part of The Museum of Chinese in America is that they contain approximately 85,000 items and ephemera, some of which date back to the early 1900s, that document the Chinese American diaspora. These include audio/video recordings, books, papers, oral histories, pictures, textiles, etc. These artifacts symbolize Chinese culture and its influence on US history, and they help us understand it better. The Golden Ventura Paper Sculptures was one of the most interesting exhibits to learn about. It displays forty of the sculptures. It tells the tale of the passengers of the Golden Ventura, a ship carrying 286 illegal Chinese immigrants that ran aground in New York City in 1993. At first, these sculptures were created using materials that were easily found in jail, such as abandoned magazines and legal pad paper. As prisoners were permitted to use outside materials and resources that supporters had sent to them, figures evolved. Members of the grassroots activist organization People of the Golden Vision displayed and raised money for charity by selling more than 10,000 sculptures.