

The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA)

The Museum of Chinese in America Paper Reflection

Fourth Museum Visit

Farzana Zarabi

Alliance University

Our America

Dr. Nathaniel B. Perez

19/04/2023

The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA)

Abstract

From visiting the Museum of Chinese in America, I learned more about Chinese culture, their struggles as immigrants and their achievements in the United State. I learned from their first arrival to the United State as immigrants, labor force, coming here as students, and their new generation. I learned about discriminations that has happened from the first years of their arrival till the time of covid 19.

Keywords: MOCA, discrimination, Coronavirus, exhibitions.

The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA)

The Museum of Chinese in America

1: What is the history of this museum, and what was the reason it was placed in this community?

The MOCA museum started in 1980 in Manhattan's Chinatown as a history project by historian John Kuo Wei Tchen and community resident and activist Charles Lai. In 1984 the project moved into 70 Mulberry Street, occupying four rooms on the second floor that served as exhibit, office, and storage space. For a quarter century MOCA continued to collect and document Chinese American history, present exhibits, and programs, refine its dialogue-driven approach, and expand its reach beyond Chinatown.

In 2006, MOCA, announced a capital campaign to support expansion into a larger space on Center Street and three years later it opened. The reason for move was practical reason such as having more space for collections, handling larger exhibitions and programs, larger offices and meeting rooms, a desire for greater visibility and impact, and first floor access. MOCA has over 85,000 artifacts and ephemera that document the Chinese Americans diaspora including audio/video recordings, books, documents, oral histories, photographs, textiles, etc. All the artifacts are dating back to the early 1900s. All 85,000 artifacts are not exhibited in the museum due to lack of space but the exhibitions are organized as collections for exhibitions. ¹

2: What stood out as most prominent among the museum's exhibits? What made this the case for you?

All exhibitions were really new for me, and I learned from each of them separately. The most important was the exhibition about Covid 19 and discrimination about Asian Americans as a reason of spreading of Covid 19. And another part that was written about primary discrimination against

¹ <https://www.mocanyc.org/collections/collection-highlights/>

The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA)

Asian immigrants. The prominent thing was reading about the denying of the testimony of a Chinese man, who witnesses a murder by a white man, by court just because Chinese people were counted as an inferior race, discrimination about taxation policy against Chinese workers than other races, to 1875 immigration act that excluded group of people from the united state including women, and to discrimination against Chinese about Covid 19.

The covid 19 collection was prominent among other parts of the museum exhibitions. This collection was documented and lunched during the pandemic and most of the exhibition was about the shared stories of Asian Americans resisting coronavirus-fueled hate with acts of compassion, creativity, and courage. MOCA has documented grassroots responses such as projects that raise awareness about anti-Asian racism.

3: Do the staff represent the topic or group of people exhibited in the museum? why or why not?

The staff was not representing the topics because every artifact had the description bedside it and the visitors could read about that artifact. It was my first time visiting this museum and the person who was standing in the entry of this museum described to me in which part what kind of collections are and where I can find the washroom or café of the museum. One another staff was siting within the museum and was welcoming the visitors.

4: What is something you learned or was challenging to you about the visit?

I learned lots of things about the Chinese culture and history in this museum. I learned how they had immigrated to the united state, how Chinese students had came here started from a very small number 265 student in 1935 and was enlarged later. I learned about the stories of Chinese in America beginning with the gold rush in 1840s concluding here with the impact of immigration reform acts since 1965. I learned about the Chinese generation who have been burn in the united

The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA)

State. I learned about Chinese women working in factories, I learned about their culture, clothes, Achievements, trade, and discrimination about them.

I also learned about some materials that they were using in 1930 such as different kinds of irons and a laundry soap. And I remembered that some years before the same irones and laundry soap was still useable in my country (means similarities of my culture with Chinese culture).



The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA)

References

<https://www.mocanyc.org/collections/collection-highlights/>

The Museum of Chinese in America visit