

Christina Rose

Professor Perez

Our America

27 April 2023

The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) is a cultural institution located in the Chinatown neighborhood of Manhattan, New York City. Founded in 1980, the museum is dedicated to preserving and showcasing the history, culture, and achievements of Chinese Americans. Over the years, MOCA has become an important cultural center and a leading authority on Chinese American history, art, and culture. The museum's permanent collection includes over 65,000 artifacts, documents, photographs, and oral histories. These items provide a glimpse into the experiences of Chinese immigrants and their descendants in America, from the mid-19th century to the present day. The collection is divided into several themes, including immigration, labor, community, and identity. Each theme is explored through a combination of artifacts, photographs, and interactive exhibits. One of the most interesting exhibits at MOCA is the "Core Exhibition." This exhibit tells the story of Chinese Americans through six different sections, each of which explores a different aspect of their history and culture. The first section, titled "Journey," focuses on the experiences of Chinese immigrants who came to America in search of better opportunities. It features a replica of a typical immigrant's room and a display of the tools and equipment they used to work on the railroads, in laundries, and in other industries.

The second section, "Arrival," showcases the challenges that Chinese immigrants faced upon arriving in America. This section features a replica of Angel Island, the immigration station in San Francisco Bay where many Chinese immigrants were detained and interrogated. The exhibit also includes photographs and documents that highlight the discriminatory laws and policies that were put in place to restrict Chinese immigration. The third section, "Community,"

explores how Chinese Americans created their own communities in the face of discrimination and prejudice. This exhibit features photographs and artifacts from Chinatowns across the United States, as well as displays about Chinese American businesses, schools, and social organizations. The fourth section, "Work," examines the contributions that Chinese Americans have made to the American economy. This exhibit features artifacts and photographs from a variety of industries, including agriculture, fishing, mining, and technology.

The fifth section, "The Chinese American Experience," focuses on the challenges that Chinese Americans have faced in defining their identity and place in American society. This exhibit features displays about the Chinese Exclusion Act, which was in effect from 1882 to 1943 and prohibited Chinese immigration to the United States. It also includes displays about the ways in which Chinese Americans have fought for civil rights and equality.

The final section, "Memory," reflects on the legacy of Chinese Americans in American society.

This exhibit includes photographs, videos, and oral histories from Chinese Americans who have made significant contributions to various fields, including the arts, politics, and sports. In addition to its permanent collection, MOCA also hosts a variety of temporary exhibits throughout the year. These exhibits focus on a range of topics related to Chinese American history, culture, and contemporary issues. Recent exhibits have included "FOLD: Golden Venture Paper Sculptures," which showcased the intricate paper sculptures made by Chinese immigrants who were detained at the York County Prison in Pennsylvania in the 1990s, and "The Moon Represents My Heart: Music, Memory and Belonging," which explored the role of music in shaping Chinese American identity.

MOCA also offers a variety of educational programs and events for visitors of all ages. These programs include guided tours, workshops, lectures, and performances. One of the museum's most popular programs is its "Chinatown Walking Tour," which takes visitors on a guided tour of

the historic streets of Chinatown and provides a glimpse into the neighborhood's rich history and culture.

Overall, the Museum of Chinese in America is an important cultural institution that provides a window into the experiences of Chinese Americans throughout.