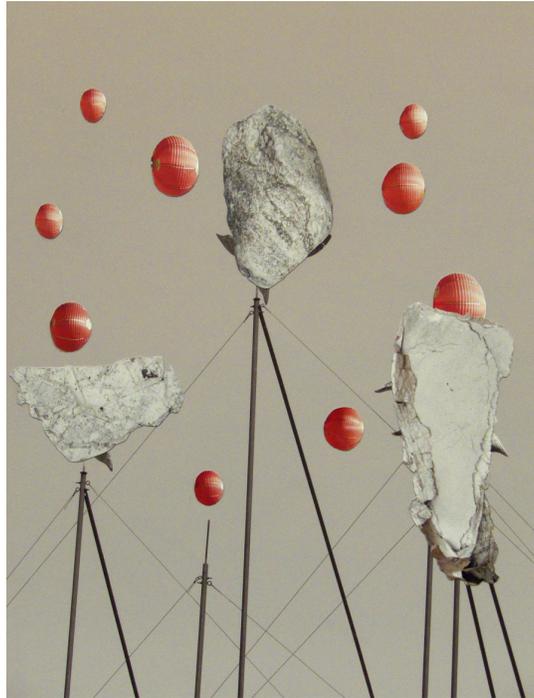


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(de)Constructing Chinatown

July 26, 2012 – October 28, 2012

MEDIA PREVIEW DAY

Tues., July 24, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

THE CHINESE AMERICAN MUSEUM PRESENTS A NEW EXHIBITION THAT EXPLORES NOTIONS OF LOS ANGELES' CHINATOWN AS IT RELATES TO LOS ANGELES' CHANGING CULTURAL, ETHNIC AND ARCHITECTURAL LANDSCAPES

(LOS ANGELES, July 3, 2012) -- On view beginning July 26, 2012 through October 28, 2012, ***(de)Constructing Chinatown***, a new exhibition from the Chinese American Museum (CAM) at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, features an evolving critical view of Los Angeles Chinatown through the eyes of eight local artists who use the historic neighborhood as a canvas to capture a glimpse of the constantly changing city.

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Chinatowns around the world have long been the subject of art, literature and culture, with artists often creating their own idyllic impressions of these unique places, often reducing them to an exotic destination filled with both mystery and intrigue. Unfortunately, Los Angeles Chinatown is not exempt from this clichéd legacy. Such representations have overshadowed the critical role of this community as both a cultural center for new immigrants and a location for important connections with surrounding communities.

The new exhibition, ***(de)Constructing Chinatown***, is an artist showcase of Los Angeles Chinatown, revealing a the geographical space in a state constant change, from the original home of Historic Chinatown, where Union Station now sits, to the current home of “New Chinatown,” along the Broadway Avenue corridor, the exhibition provides an alternative view in contrast to preconceived notions about Los Angeles Chinatown. This new perspective provides a real understanding and appreciation of Los Angeles Chinatown as an essential part of the City’s culturally diverse and ever-changing landscape.

The many landmarks of Los Angeles Chinatown are represented in the major demographic shifts portrayed by the artists, including Castelar School, the second oldest school in Los Angeles, a Statue of Joan of Arc at the old French Hospital, a replica of Saigon’s famous clock tower, and a new influx of contemporary art spaces and cafés. Chinatown continues to be an evolving place—home to 15,000 residents—where diverse communities intersect, and art and culture thrive. This distinctive setting has inspired and motivated each and every artist selected to be part of ***(de)Constructing Chinatown***.

Showing in the Museum’s Wilbur and Beth Woo Gallery and the Mezzanine Gallery, ***(de)Constructing Chinatown*** covers about 2,000 square feet of exhibition space. Among the artists featured in this exhibit are:

Heimir Björgúlfsson is a native of Iceland who now lives and works in Los Angeles. His work is about the relationship of people with their surroundings and nature. For this exhibit, Björgúlfsson assembled 111 photo-collages made from images collected in and around Chinatown.

James Rojas built an interactive model that physically represents three sites historically associated with Chinese and Chinese-American communities in Los Angeles: *Old Chinatown*, *China City* and *New Chinatown*. Museum-goers engage with Rojas’ three-dimensional model by reading it like a map, arranging its many features and projecting their memories onto it.

Betty Lee shares stories from the Home Café, a small Chinatown restaurant owned and operated by her family from 1973 to 1988. The personalities of customers and their stories of Chinatown are accompanied by a collection of photographs providing a peek into their lives and capturing this moment in time.

Matthew Winkler examines an architectural cross section of Los Angeles' Chinatown with eight drawings, one for each block of College Street between the 110 Freeway and the Metro Gold Line Station. Winkler's collection shows residential, commercial and tourist landscapes as they have changed dramatically along this short piece of road.

The exhibition also includes work from the artists **Audrey Chan, Phung Huynh, Michael Sakamoto** and **Shizu Saldamando**.

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MEDIA PREVIEW DAY

CAM is hosting a special Media Preview day on Tuesday, July 24, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. in anticipation of the exhibit opening. Media will be treated to a private viewing of the exhibition before it opens to the public and will have the opportunity to engage CAM representatives for interviews. Light snacks and refreshments will be provided.

OPENING RECEPTION

An opening reception will be held at the museum on Thurs., July 26, 2012, 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. for members and 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. for the general public. The evening will feature special guest speakers, delicious refreshments, and the debut of a exhibition catalog featuring works from the show. To RSVP, call (213) 485-8567 or email rsvp@camla.org by Tuesday, July 24.

ABOUT THE CHINESE AMERICAN MUSEUM

The Chinese American Museum (CAM) is jointly developed and operated by the Friends of the Chinese American Museum (FCAM) and El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, a department of the City of Los Angeles. Located within the El Pueblo Plaza in downtown Los Angeles, CAM is housed in the historic Garnier Building, the original "city hall" for the Chinese American community in Los Angeles. The Museum's mission is "to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of America's diverse heritage by researching, preserving, and sharing the history, rich cultural legacy, and continuing contributions of Chinese Americans." CAM is located at 425 North Los Angeles Street in El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, across from Union Station. Hours are 10 a.m.– 3 p.m., Tuesday – Sunday. Admissions are suggested donations of \$3 for adults and \$2 for seniors and students. Members are admitted free. For more information about the Museum, please visit our website at www.camla.org.

FIND US ONLINE!

- Website: www.camla.org
- Facebook: search for <Chinese American Museum>
- Flickr: http://www.flickr.com/photos/camla_org
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