

Hongyan Yang 3:06

Hi Hello, everybody. Welcome to the 1882 Foundation symposium eight greetings from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I am Hongyan Yang, a PhD candidate and lecturer in architecture at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. I'm co chairing this years symposium this weekend with Wei Gan a PhD candidate in anthropology at Princeton University and Linda Wen, a recent graduate from Georgetown University. I hope you all are doing well. And thank you so much for joining us today. We have three wonderful sessions planned ahead. Before we get into today's session, how do museums best serve communities in times of change? I would like to start with a little formality introducing some housekeeping rules. Anytime during the session, we ask our audience to mute their microphones to minimize potential disruption. If you have questions during the session, please use the chat function by clicking the tune bottom bar chat. Our session assistance, Julia Lin will collect all the questions and forward them to our session moderator. Audience are invited to turn on their cameras and microphones during the q&a session. And finally, with great pleasure, I like to turn the table to executive director of the 1882 foundation Ted Gong to give an overview of this year's symposium.

Ted Gong 4:41

Well thank you everyone and welcome to to this session. Good afternoon to all of you or good evening depending upon where you're calling in from. You know, this has certainly been a specially busy APA Heritage Month. And if you are anything like me, you're beginning to feel zoomed out. So I'm glad you have pulled yourself together to join us in this final cap to the Heritage Month. This is the first of three consecutive webinars examining why and how we approach public education on Chinese American heritage in history, and by extension of our Asian American experience. I'm the executive director at 1882 Foundation, and the foundation was formed almost 10 years ago, after grassroots campaign to have Congress apologise for the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. We succeeded in getting the senate and the house in 2011, and 2012, to unanimously pass resolutions of regret and to condemn the Chinese Exclusion laws and to reaffirm their responsibility to protect the civil rights of all people in the United States. Five community and civil rights organizations did this. They were the Chinese American citizens Alliance, the National Council of Chinese Americans, Japanese American citizens league committee of 100, and the OCA Asian American advocates, plus the law firm of Covington and Burling. From that effort, the 1882 Foundation emerged. Now the foundation foundation is a 501 c three organization that seeks to broaden awareness and understanding of the history and continuing and the continuing significance consequences of the Chinese Exclusion Act. We do this through three initiatives. Talk story which revolve which we wrote revolves around uncovering and preserving all histories and story sites. Curriculum and lesson plans, which deals with developing educational material and teacher training, up to the 12th grade, and the 1882 symposium, which is an annual effort to bring museums, historical societies, and other stakeholders together to encourage their collaboration and best practices.

this symposium was intended to be small, we purposely organized them to avoid the common structure of formality of such conferences as those organized annually by triple A S or biannually by API hip. And we purposely did not rotate the symposium venue out of Washington DC, because we wanted to establish an expectation among participants that they could continuously reinforce contacts with DC based government and lobbying agencies. Our goal from our first symposium, symposium one, which was launched in the seminar room with the simple Smithsonian's APA Programs Office under Franklin order, was to build collaborations, and to share exhibits, programs and material. We also understood and we sought to learn how exhibition programs were increasingly being digitized, so that the sharing could be facilitated, and relationships could be strengthened. And we believe that continuous regular interactions through the small symposium format, will build the trust and develop the exchanges that will form the network that was discussed two years ago, at a gathering organised by deutzia and Doug Chen at chsa in San Francisco. Only our vision was slightly larger because other than museums, we sought to include educators from public schools, stakeholders such as from National Archives, cis immigration law historian, Library of Congress, Park and forest services and others. The second gathering of the network was to be hosted by MOCA in New York last year, but the far their cause the rethinking that the network joined the annual symposium in DC, which was being prepared for May. This was the original symposium eight, preparations were advanced with Nara to provide the meeting venue at its downtown office. But COVID entered intervned and this symposium was first postponed, because at that time, we thought the COVID restrictions wouldn't last more than three months, and then they were cancelled. So I'm very happy that this opening sessions will include Teng Chamchumrus, who will lead is often Nancy Maasbach and Herb Tam from MOCA, and a number of good friends and colleagues to continue what we had left last year. I think this would be a great session. As one panelists mentioned in our prep meetings, it feels like the right time to examine fundamental fundamental questions of purposes and process. Certainly the year of coping with COVID has been mentally exhausting and has challenged us all to examine our assumptions of what we do and how we do it. I think also the events this year between when we formulated our symposium topics in May last year and when we have had to self reflect on the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Atlanta killings have added urgency to us to understand how our programs are relevant to the community we want to reach or to reach us. I think Tengs opening remarks and the theme of Community centric designs and creation of curation of artifacts and stories is more meaningful now than we had this conversation over key at the buildings museums at the old Smithsonian museums coffee shop before the pandemic a year ago, I think also the year of coping with COVID has accelerated technological and Digital Trends and working relationships and outreach efforts, history in places school programs and museum layouts, that took form from Angel I and his discussion is his panel panelists will be richer because what we of what we have experiment with, and our experience allows us to do to discuss more confidently what we might expect looking forward into years ahead, no longer hampered by COVID but

enhanced by what we learn from coping in coping with it. And I want to close and return the program to Hongyan by making early but final comments about the concept of the 1882 symposium. So indulge me for half a minute because this is probably my last symposium, my sort of used by date is coming up. And you know, the symposium has always sought to conclude each symposium with a commitment to complete a goal or a milestone we call the milestone to be achieved during the year before next year's symposium. This shared goal was served to strengthen the collaboration between symposium six and symposium seven we had the 50 objects project that contributed to the tenement museums, your story our story project, which then contributed to MOCAs exhibit featuring Chinatown organizations from around the country. I had a conversation with a curator from the China alley museum in Hanford, and she had expressed how encouraging it was for her that a big Museum in New York should have reached out to her to contribute to the larger whole. She felt included I'm sure her ability to tell the story in New York was enhanced because of this contribution from Hanford and hope that we continue setting milestones that I would suggest that the network in this symposium joined together to produce symposium nine, and 10, and all those other Roman numerals that follow. So thank you for this opportunity to say these two things. And I return back to Hongyan.

Hongyan Yang 12:38

Thank you, Ted. I'm just going to transfer a table to Teng directly. Thanks.

Teng Chamchumrus 12:46

Thank you Hongyan and hi, everybody. Um, let me share screen with you all. See my screen? Can someone say something or thumbs up? Yep. Great. Thank you. Um, first of all, I'd like to thank thank Ted Gong and the 1882 Foundation group for inviting me here today and for making this convening possible. I know that Ted you said that, you know, this symposiums started out as a small intimate conversation in a conference room. I don't know who else is on the call today. But I went a glance to the audience today I saw people from London, Argentina, Puerto Rico, and maybe my friends in Malaysia and Thailand are awake. There might be someone calling in from there as well. So I think today, let's hope for an intimate global conversation about something we all care about. And also, I want to thank at 1882 foundation for your work. Your work actually has been an inspiration behind what I'm sharing with you today. I appreciate what you do for the AAPI community here in Washington, DC area and also with our network around the country as well. And welcome everyone including our colleague from icon US. This ties this conversation ties in nicely with the ongoing debate and discussion on the museum definition and what museums can do for people. So I hope everyone is healthy and well where you are so let's start the conversation. Today I'm going to let us take a break and go to somewhere far away. My name is Teng Chamchumras and this is where I'm from. I like to show this picture to people to describe where I was born and spent my younger years growing up. And what is interesting about this photo for me is that if you cover the top part, you see the old part of Bangkok and if you cover the bottom you see the top? And when you open up both the top and the bottom, you'll

see a mix of old and new. And you're trying to figure out okay, where exactly is the Bangkok that I identify with or anyone identify with. And it's a bit of both. And I think one of the things, the themes that you will see here today is about like, how, how can we as people move forward into the future with our cultural heritage, and yet, all the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow. So that's going to be the theme today so let's keep going. So as a sort of guiding questions for today's conversation, I'd like us, I know some of you are from the museum field and some of you may not be, but I'd like us to kind of have these three questions in mind as we are going to actually a trip around the world. And the three questions are, how can we foster sustainable change and keep communities vibrant and resilient and well? The second question is What role does culture play in community wellbeing? And the third question is, how can museums as cultural hubs play an active role in this effort? So take a moment and take these questions into the back of your mind. And and we'll continue with our journey today. Got a journey with this little building in the city of Georgetown, in Penang, Malaysia. Um, and I'm going to ask you to do this question. Unfortunately, we can't interact, live or raise our hand, but I'm going to ask you this question. You see this building? The question is, if you had a million dollars, what would you do with it? I'll give you a moment. And I'll give you additional information. If I give you the context that this building is in a very historically significant neighborhood, it is in the UNESCO World Heritage zone. In a historic city that is multi ethnic, multi linguistic, multi religious, it's been the maritime center in Southeast Asia for at least 500 years. And, and for those foodies in the group, it has one of the most famous cendol, which is a desert in Southeast Asia, right next to it, practically a stone's throw away from this building. It is a famous site for for a local hungry ghost festival. And it is also at the threat of redevelopment. So if you had a million dollars, what would you do with this money? I'm going to add more context for you. People who lives here actually have limited access to financing to own homes, rents are going up for both residents and businesses. Amenities are limited. Some of the back alleys don't even have lighting. There's a decline in local economy, people start to migrate to the suburb. The one local school, two blocks from has shut down, and there's a overall social decline in this community. It's about you know, a couple blocks wide and a couple blocks long, it's not that big of a neighborhood. One more time, if you had a million dollars, what would you do? Well, I ponder a lot over this building, because I had the opportunity to travel there and be part of a group that study conservation of all neighborhoods in Southeast Asia. I'm very passionate about that topic. As you know, I'm from Bangkok, and I've seen Bangkok growing leaps and bounds in the last couple decades. And I've seen the loss of the old Bangkok as well as the exciting new part of Bangkok. And I'm kind of curious, if I had the money to do this, what would I do? And I started to, to, to look around and ask questions, and a lot of people tell me, oh, we will spend the money to save this building. And I said, What about the people, the people that make this building alive, the people that keep the neighborhood alive. And that was a little bit of a dilemma between the people that the among the people that we were having conversation with because a

lot of us coming from a cultural sector, our instinct is to go for conservation objects or a built heritage or even intangible heritage, but sometimes the people who keep that tradition or the practice to keep that those places, objects and practices alive are sort of secondary. So I thought about it. And I said, Well, how can we think about this differently? So I did some research and just for your background, I only have worked in museum for the last almost 10 years. But prior to that, I spent a lot of my time in the disaster relief work I used to work for the Red Cross, and they respond to a we were part of teams that respond to a lot of disasters. So we were really into the community resilience framework. And so I thought for a second about and I said, What if we flipped the model, we change it from a concept of heritage conservation, to cultural sustainability. It's less about keeping things as it is, but allowing things to grow, but grow in a way that change doesn't kill all the good things. How can we shift from the focus on heritage objects, intangible heritage to communities and their needs. How can we make culture something that is so part of the basic need can can culture be considered part of things that we need, like food or shelter, as opposed to something that is so far away? And how can we think about culture or heritage as something to be preserved, instead of something that evolved with us as our needs, and our communities evolve? And so there's so many things going on. And you know, we started looking at what what does it mean to bring together different disciplines, conservation, architectural conservation, anthropology, economics, have we thought about bringing economics and the principle around international development into cultural conservation. So this is becoming more of an interdisciplinary concept of conversation and action rather than something that has field specific. And when we talk about people, can we give that ownership and the power of decision making, and action taking to the people themselves, with all of us who are interested in helping be helpers, but not necessarily someone who dictate what they need to do? So with all of that, um, I kind of sketch something out. And it start with, you know, people and who they are, and where they live. Right, so as people and their context, you know, what, what are their values? What are important to them as communities? And what are the contexts around them? Whether it's human context, physical, political, economic, social environment, and definitely culture. And I asked the question, if people are fine, where they are at what happened? Well, usually external shocks happen and when I start working on this framework, it was back in 2018. And, you know, the idea of having a pandemic or kind of major racial reckoning in the United States, were not kind of things that I would imagine to be our external shock, but here we are. But when I usually what I used to talk about external shock, in this context would be a disaster, you know, what if you know, a hurricane or a tsunami blow to your community? What happened? How that how does that impact your context and your well being? or it doesn't have to be a bad or negative external shock? It could be also economic boom, you know, what if something happened really bad, that drive the economic grow your community and that start to change the dynamic of who you are and where you live? What does it mean? If we really put the agency and ability to think about what's important to the people who live in those communities, it's up to

them to identify what problems they're facing, what might be impacting who they are, and where they live, how well they're living. How would they prioritize what their needs are and start working towards the solutions of what what, what needs to happen, and then take action. And the end goal is, you know, to live happily, to be to make sure that you know, whatever happens, you come back to where you were in terms of well being or even improved it right. What is nice about this concept is that if people invest in their community, they, they their well being and needs are met, they will have a strong sense of identity and belonging, and become a steward a good steward of who they are, where they belong, and then they reinvest back to the communities. So in a way, in an economic term, this is basically creating incentive for people to take care of themselves. But of course, you can't do it alone. And so if you look at the same model, but from the top down with the clear well being in the center, there's also a network of stakeholders or partners in the ecosystem, to also help enable the decision making and solution within the community and museum is one of them. And today, you know, I like to kind of walk you through some of the example where museum can play that role. So I could put the model together. So we start with people, who they are and where they live. And the process of, you know, trying to regain their well being, when something happened to the community. And then that cannot happen alone. So we have a green ring in this in this diagram to show that it takes an ecosystem to make that happen. So you're like, Okay, nice picture. So prove to us it can work, Right, And we'll get there. So before we get to some of the data. The question is, if museum were to be part of this conversation, what can you museum do and when I mentioned Museum, if not just Museum, but I think the overall cultural institution communities, including even public libraries can also be part of the conversation. And I think some of the key questions to be asked in terms of implementation would be this service to community, explicit in your Museum's vision, mission guiding principles mandate and organizational culture, being part of that green ring to support a community, really there. If it is, does the leadership of the museum, including board and management, emphasize a commitment to an investment in the service to communities? And if all of this is done, then there's some existing tools out there that can really help us. I think you're aware of the SWOT analysis, framework strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats. We use that all the time in both the business sector and also in nonprofit sector and we can apply that same tool in this conversation. You know, how can we use service to community as part of, of the SWOT analysis? What can you or museums uniquely do to contribute to help address the needs and challenges of community? Where and with whom in the ecosystem can you work with museum cannot work alone? But how can who can we partner with to make that happen? And last, but not least, I think this framework doesn't take away from the importance of collections and research. But the question is, what can we do more? How can we bring balance between the objects and for whom they are, so that what we do become relevant to the community we would like to serve? So I've talked a lot and you know, so far, it's a lot of words on in the question is, can I prove this? You know, as a trained economist, and someone

who went to business school, I love data and I struggle with this, this framework, because data in the cultural sector is hard to come by. You know, if I were to answer the question, what would you do with that \$1 million building. If data wasn't an issue, I would be running a return on investment analysis and chose something, but I don't have that information. What I have is a lot of good work that has been done by people, many people on this call, actually, that showed that it can be done. That community centric model can be adapted and can work in different contexts. You know, it just takes a vision and commitment and investment from the top down in your organization, and your partnership with everyone else in the community to make it happen, and while the process can be messy and difficult, it is all worth it. And there are four case studies I used to use in the past to talk about this and they start with Ted and his work in 1882 Foundation and other organization including the Smithsonian, an iconic mini museum that really work around Chinatown in DC at the neighborhood level. In Oakland, the Oakland Museum of California has done some great work in the city level, to really bring people in you from Oakland up into Oakland, you may have heard of their Friday events where the community has come and hang out a museum because it's their space. At the country level, I had the opportunity to work with the purple for black men cultural heritage at the Smithsonian to do a project in Bhutan where a national museum, a national level Museum, the Royal textile Academy of Bhutan worked in an interesting way where they aligned their public program education strategy to the country's social and economic development plan. So that's an interesting one where we are trying to figure out how to use culture to be part of STEM and career development pathway for students. And last but not least, this model also could work from an example from the museum and mainstream programs done by the Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit, exhibition service or site that shows that, you know, across the rural communities in the United States for the last 25 years, site partners with state humanities councils to actually deliver content to the rural communities and activate conversation and action in those communities using something that could fit this model. But today, I like to show you something actually that I'm really excited about, where instead of going back and look through time and see one example my fit this model, there is a project in Thailand right now that adopt this model, and said, let's figure out how to design a project with community and for the community using this model for for their own well being. So it's the first time that we actually pick the model and actually decide something and building it as we go. And the work is a work in progress. So I might not have all the information to share with you. I think we have enough to kind of show what exciting thing is happening. So if you would like to join me, I'd like to invite you to probably Thailand for a few minutes. Um, and I don't know if any of you have been to Thailand, you might have been to Bangkok, you might have heard of big city like Shin Mei in the north of Phuket in the south. But today, we're going to go to the Mae Chaem district. So it's in the province of Chiang Mai in the north of Thailand. And you can see in the map there, it's the shaded gray area, it is next to the tallest mountain in Thailand. And it's in the north. And so let me show you what it looks like. Um, that area is known

for the beautiful fog. So a lot of people travel their just to see to see a of fog either at dawn or dusk. And people camp out and it's really beautiful. You can see this photo. Unfortunately, it's also known for smog. And the picture that I'm showing you right now it might look like it was our focus, but that's not out of focus is just the haze from this smog. And that haze

Teng Chamchumrus 34:22

due to slash and burn farming practice. And unfortunately, that's the way to do agriculture. There are many reasons One of which is that the land is pretty arid, and doesn't have a lot of fertilization. And so sometimes the easiest way to grow food is to cut down the tree and grow. Unfortunately, that also require burning of the topsoil and you end up with the smog. And where does the smog go? It actually goes into the valley where the city of Chiang Mai is in that not only caused environmental harm, but it's also causes some tension between those in the valley and those up in the mountains. There's a lot of up to read upon online. I don't have statistics to show you, unfortunately, there's no collection of data at that level. But that's a lot of articles to be read about you, Coco matcham. And you'll see stories about a lot of inequity issues and environmental injustice that are happening in that area. Though, also want to show you this, um, this is a typical road in the area, imagine that you live in this mountain, and this is how you have to get to work school, goes, go get food grocery shopping. Um, that's, that's your commute. And for the little kids here, and this photo goes to school, it means you actually have to leave home and be in a boarding school, even at a young age. Well, I don't want to keep us on these green photos, because in fact, Mae Chaem is actually a vibrant place, all with festival, and peoples and peoples in plural because there are at least seven or eight ethnic groups who live there. And they all have rich culture, and craft practices. And even the young people in the middle picture, if you didn't know that that picture was taken Thailand, you might have thought that this might have been from any city in the United States. So So what does it all add up to. So I'll let you take a moment to kind of take in what Mae Chem is like as a place. I can't see you so I don't know what your reaction is. But when I see this picture, I'm like, Huh, this is interesting. It's a Place where one photo cannot describe it in justice, and that I think my collage here doesn't even tell the full story of a little place in northern Thailand. So I don't know if I'm so worried is on the call today. I know it's 430 over there in the morning, but she is the woman with the black Garment in the bottom left of the slide. She made she is the director of the Chaem Mae city art and Cultural Center in the city of Chiang Mai down in the valley. And she made this observation to me. I met her in Malaysia so that's the first building you saw on this trip that we're taking together. And she made a comment to me that, you know, for whatever is lacking in Mae Chaem if we see those things, either economic, whether there are economic, social, or environmental deficits. They're outweighed by culture assets, that I can measure this I work here long enough to know that you can quantified it. The asset is greater than the deficits. The question is how do we unlock the cultural asset and make the playing field more equal between those

who live up in the mountains with less access to education and other modern, modern infrastructure, to the people who live in the valley with good schools and good career opportunities and good economic opportunities? So we decided that let's, let's ask the people, there are people who actually left their villages when not to get a vacation, make a career and then come back.

Teng Chamchumrus 39:20

And we asked them this question. What is success and happiness to you? So I'm about to walk you through the story of the project is happening. And I'm going to remind us that you know, we have the model we tried to use for this. So on the right corner of the slide and the following slide, you'll see that I call out a different part of the model. But we are starting with the orange part, which is the tip which is the well being part and at the micro level we want to know what what the intention of people are what makes him happy? So we ask the question, what, what is success and happiness to you? And these are some of the responses that we got. I'm not gonna read them all, I'll let you read them. I'll let you reflect on them a little bit on but I'm going to just read one of them, which is the first one on the left. And the answer was, let me start with happiness. First happiness is to do with what I like. Second is to be with loved ones. In Mae Chaem, I do what I like, and I am with my mom. So I'm a native speaker, the Thai language, but my translation skill is not that great. So it might have lost some sentiment when I translated these, but I hope you kind of get the feel of how important it is for how important this identity and sense of belonging really matters for the people that I they share that thought with us. Also, interestingly, the question was, what is success and happiness to you? None of them remember to answer the question on success, they kind of started with it or not at all. But then everyone talked about happiness. So I thought that was an interesting take as well from from what they did not say. So at the micro level, people actually want to be here. And their well being and their happiness in the community is so important to them. So So keep that in the back of your mind. Plus the flip the other side of this is a more of a macro level. So take a step away a little bit from the village, as I show you. And we're now looking at Thailand's socio economic development plan. It's called Thailand 4.0. And for those of you who don't know much about Thailand, so, you know, we started off as agriculture based country, and then we move into light industry, and then heavy industry. And then, so those are the version one, version two, version three, and now we move into version four. And the question is, you know, in the next 20 30 years, when we get version four, when Thailand becomes a place of creativity, innovation, you know, what, what, what is Thailand? Like, you know, what does it what is like to have smart industries, smart city and smart people? Right. So, in the backdrop, while we're hearing from from people who live in a small place, talking about their hopes and dreams, and what is important to them, we're also listening to the big economic and social development context of the bigger place that this was small place fit under. So with those two ends of the spectrum, with the micro and the macro, we start asking the question, okay, so that the intended future of people at their individual level is to be with their

loved ones, and do what they can do as proud people. And at the macro level, the country wants you to, you know, to be part of the smart economy, how do we get there? We are now getting that the gray area that you know, get from Mae Chaem unless you learn from those little photos to where people intended to be. And now the process of getting from here to there, what does it look like? So a few of us ask this question. And a few of us here include on

Teng Chamchumrus 43:57

three groups of people. One is the Chiang Mai, City, art and cultural center. One is a project called contai 4.0. contai means type people. So this is sort of the human capital aspect of what it means to develop people for the nation. And it's a national research program, out of Chiang Mai University, which is one of the top universities in Thailand. And the large local you see the SW is a network of education institutions in Thailand is is a is a network of university trained teachers trained educators. They also have lab schools, where, you know, new, new innovation in education, curriculum development, professional development happen. I happen to have gone to one of those schools as a child on my mom taught there and my parents both graduate from this system. So so I know the system quite Well, and and one of the school, the left school is actually in the match m community, and is there to serve indigenous children who were in boarding school that you saw earlier. So they got together and they asked the question. Okay, so we have students at a young age. We want them to grow and love Mae Chaem, like the adults are today, we also need to get them ready for the future of the country as the economic development plan. So how do we engage and equip them to explore thing can thrive in this changing world, impressing them with a sense of commitment to an ownership of their community, and then take action to invest in their shared future?

Teng Chamchumrus 45:53

So in a more technical museum based question, one of our key partner is the museum City Museum. How can you see a massive civic and gathering place and, you know, a place of education practices help unlock the cultural asset and contribute to hotel development that will feed to the first question that we asked. And this is where I'm COVID it just causing us a lot of trouble. So I'm, I have been I'm grateful to have been identified to help and be part of this project, under Fulbright specialist program, and COVID put a stop to it. So um, I didn't get to go and and this was decided to be a project back last late last spring, it was supposed to tie to school year over there. So the kids have time to you know, do some project that is museum babes, it will be some oral history project for those museum educators on the call today, we'll do a lot of Project Zero work. And we'll see thing when there and all those things. And we were going to build a program from scratch and COVID happened. And I said, Okay, I can't go. Well, one thing that I learned from this is when you are invited in, and the community actually embrace whatever they want to do, you're just a guest, and you don't need to be there for them to want to do their thing. So in the last many months, the project team actually formed and start to engage kids. And you see pictures from them visiting museums, and then the city of Chiang

Mai during the Design Week. Talking to curators and other practitioner getting inspired by objects and learning different ways of learning. They came back to the school and they start to kind of practice you know, storytelling, oral history, how do you collect stories? How do you retell story? How do you use your voice to tell a story about who you are and where you live. So these photos on the right side is basically I think, the prep session before they go off on their summer vacation, which started in in March in Thailand and that's how the school year work. So they're all actually leaving their boarding school when they're going back to their villages, and they're going to start collecting stories. And hopefully, when they get back, there will be an exhibition about them. And the story they want to share and exhibition will be in the city, interestingly enough, to share the story and the beautiful things that happen up in the mountain. And then they will travel this exhibition back to their school so that they can also celebrate their story with their community. So unfortunately, I don't have more photos to share with you is happening the kids are at home. But you know this work, as I said, is part of the ecosystem. So what is that green ring in in the model look like? Let's start with the museum and the research project. So the Chiang Mai City Art and cultural center and contain 4.0 project. Both are backed up by their own organization. So the museum is part of the municipality government and the research project is part of the economics department of Chiang Mai university, the school, the school is actually one of the few school we want to pilot the project. But because of COVID, we kind of have to scale it down. So it's only one school for now. And it's supported by also the university. And just a fun fact for those of us who might be interested in math on this call, the logo of the school University, that little graph there is it an exponential graph. And it's y to e to the power of x . And what it means is that, as a human being, you start you can start lower, but you never start at zero, you start above zero, and all you can do is grow. So I thought it's kind of fitting that our school partner has that that vision in mind.

Teng Chamchurus 50:54

Obviously, you will have support from Fulbright, and also the US Embassy in Bangkok. Both of both organization provided funding for this project. Last but not least, the project team is actually made up of people from from the Mae Chaem community, and I'll show introduce you to them in a minute. But without them, we will not be able to get in and do the work. And those are some of the meetings that happened throughout the last year when travel was feasible within Thailand. Obviously, I'm sitting here talking to you and looking at this from Rockville, Maryland. So it's it's kind of amazing to just know that it's happening. But the last part of the model is, you know, I just don't want us to forget that this whole journey is about employing a model. And the last type of model is that it recapped. We recapitalize people's sense of identity and belonging back to the community. And this is a part of recapitalisation. If you remember the bubbles, the quotes that I showed you in a couple slides ago on people shared them share with us their their, their hopes and dreams and what happiness mean to them. Either. We'd have everyone from artists to small

business owner to a pharmacist who was now running her own business back into community. Um, so I just want to put faces to the voices. These are the two teachers that are telling us why they chose to teach here and not elsewhere. And where where they stick with this. For the schools in this community where resources might be hard to come by, why is it important to for them to be here. And the last two the one gentleman with coffee beans, he actually owns a, he's a social entrepreneur, he's from one of the communities in the mountain. He runs a Fairtrade coffee business now and bring economic growth into the community. And then the gentleman in the red shirt in the center of the last photo is the project director who actually has a doctoral degree in education. But he's also from the community and he agreed to serve as a project director so he can relate to the kids and the teachers and the community directly on behalf of us. So these people want to be here, and they are helping us figure out how to get from students and youth from where they are today and unlock the cultural asset that they have today so that they can get to the intended future of, you know, how can you be happy in the world that is changing? To sum it up in a easy to follow diagram of the model, it looks like this. I'm not going to read through it, but it's just to show that off the slides we went through and the picture that we've seen actually before that the model could work and it's being worked on right now. So we started with these three questions. I don't know where you are. I would love to hear where you are with them. I know it's a different take on what museums usually do or could do. But it does Take away from what you already do and are doing. But it just asked the question a little differently and say, we could do something a little different to. So I'll leave you with this one last thought from James Shelton the third. He asked this question, I thought it's so fitting, he said, what are we willing to do to change the system to scale and give people what they need in order to thrive and solve their problems? Hopefully, we can continue this conversation or work together or share knowledge on if you like, the paper that I published was in on this link, I can drop the link on the zoom chat later as well if you're interested. And let's keep in touch. With that, I think I'm right on time. So I'm gonna turn the floor back to Hongyan? Yeah, thank you very much.

Hongyan Yang 56:00

Thank you very much, Teng. Now, I will turn the table to her Herb Tam. THE MODERATOR Herb is the curator and director of exhibitions at the museum chase in America, MOCA, Herb will lead a roundtable discussion following Teng's talk.

Herb Tam 56:21

Thank you Hongyan and also thank you Ted Gong for, you know, bringing us together here today, not just today, but for many years now. And, you know, the really important conversation we're having today about the role of museums in communities that we serve. And I think Teng's presentation, which is really beautiful, I think that there's a lot to think about and a lot to talk about. So I just want to get right into it with a discussion, but first, some business and some introductions. And I want to start with introductions of my fellow panelists and

then allow them to introduce the work that they're doing in their organizations. So when I introduce you, if you can sort of Raise your hands, give a wave so that people know who you are, that'd be great. So Nancy Maasbach president of the museum, where I work Museum of Chinese in America in New York. Cybelle Jones, the chief executive officer of the Society for experimental graphic design, Rochelle Shumard, manager of public programs at Chinese American Museum in Los Angeles. And Michael Truong, Executive Director, also of Chinese American Museum in Los Angeles. And last but not least, Jack Tchen, Professor and Chair of public history and humanities at Rutgers University and co founder of The New York chinatown History Project, which later became MOCA. So we're gonna have each of the panelists to is to spend two or three minutes talking about their organization, their organizations work, and then, at the end of that, we'll have many questions for all of you. And go through those questions, and then open it up to audience questions after that, so should be really lively discussion. I'm looking forward to it. So first, let's turn it over to Nancy Yao Maasbach for to talk about MOCA.

Nancy Yao Maasbach 58:45

Thanks Herb, and Herb is my favorite curator in America. So but Ted, thank you again, for those remarks and Teng, I really enjoyed hearing about your concept framework and I cannot more wholly agree with everything that you shared and I'm thinking a lot as you're sharing, you know, what is the what is the practical tactical ways in which one can really do that more fully? So MOCA, I think many of you know us. And Jack Tchen, of course, is one of our co founders. He has the ultimate heroes label of being our favorite dumpster diver. And I think we continue in that in that vein, and we know that and he knew that it wasn't it wasn't junk in that those dumpsters but valuable things, valuable artifacts, valuable stories, valuable components of our journey. So MOCA 41 years old, many of you know we have one of the largest collections of Chinese American history as I just referred to about eight more than 85,000 items. And many of you have reached out and asked if how they're doing we've been able to retrieve and stabilize 98% of those collections, and they're over at our new site MOCA workshop. But one thing I just say and sort of give you a sense we still have people come to the museum and they look around quizzically they just wonder, like, is this the right place I'm going to, because there's still a very great sense that this should be a museum of Chinese art, or Chinese calligraphy, or a Qing Dynasty vase. And many of us all get that sort of assumption. But you know, we really are very steadfast and shine that we want to really serve as like US history in New York City. So we're reaching about 50,000 people feed the door in 2019. And in the last year of virtual programming, we've probably increased our viewership, maybe eight to 10 fold. And that being all said, still within a very modest budget of a little under \$3 million. So you know, you see, we have the space, I'm in it right now. And Herb is about to open up new exhibit on July 15, in our current exhibit space, and we can talk more about that later. But thanks to everyone for all your support, especially over the last 15 months.

Herb Tam 1:01:01

Thank you, Nancy, the digital space. I yes we are getting ready to reopen July 15, excited about that. So next, turn it over to Cybelle Jones. Society for experimental graphic design, Cybelle.

Cybelle Jones 1:01:17

Right, thank you herb. And I had the pleasure of our rehearsal getting to hear Tangs presentation. And I'm just so inspired by his work, so I'm sure the conversations will continue after today, but I am my background is I have about over 35 years of being principal, leading museum exhibition and experience design, and you know, every possible topic, but the things that I'm most passionate about are experiences around cultural heritage, social justice, and our history. And recently, just a year ago, I joined a SEGD. And I'm going to try to just quickly see if I can share my screen, which is a nonprofit organization. We are a community of interdisciplinary designers. Can everybody see that? Are you able to see the screen? Yep, yep, we can see it. Um, so we're this we're nonprofit organization. And we are interdisciplinary designers that do everything from exhibition design, graphic design, education, research, and we're all about connecting people to place. And so part of my journey has been to really take advantage of the opportunity in our methodologies and processes as experienced designers to really put people and our end users in the center. And so we do a lot of work around education, conferences, summits, we work a lot with students. And I think that what I meant most excited about with all the disruption this last year is that we have the opportunity to reinvent and that those of us that are in the practice of cultural institutions and design really can make important and compelling change. So that hopefully the next generation of don't have to face the same things and and they actually have a fair voice in how we tell history and who tells that history, and what the meaning actually is of our cultural institutions. So I'm very excited about this conversation, and happy to be a part of it.

Herb Tam 1:03:38

Thank you, Cybelle. And next, the crew from Chinese American Museum, Rachel Shumard and Michael Truong. Can you talk about the work you're doing.

Michael Truong 1:03:54

Everyone, as mentioned I'm Michael Truong, the executive director of the Chinese American Museum, actually the been with museum for over 14 years or so, but became the executive director about two years ago. The Chinese American Museum is located in downtown Los Angeles. And as Teng was talking about importance of community and sustaining the history and the culture there. The Chinese American Museum is located in the garden near a building that was constructed in 1890, and is one of the last remaining buildings of historic Chinatown. So we think about the Chinatown of Los Angeles we think about Chinatown about four or five blocks away from here, but the museum was purposely put into this building to really share the history and the preservation of a story that Los Angeles forget. It was the fact that the Chinese was in Los

Angeles since the 1800s and beyond. So the building has always been considered to be the unofficial City Hall historic Chinatown. All had this Ca Ca or Los Angeles lodge actually had an office there. And when the museum opened 2003 it took a lot of work. You know, it was about 20 years in the making. So a nonprofit organization, the Friends of the Chinese American Museum, which I'm part of, was fundraising. And we've tried to get community support for over 20 years, we hosted our mission makers Awards Gala, to really raise funds. We continue with this gala now to get and it's one of our major fundraiser to honor those who support the Chinese American community. And before the museum open, we were celebrating Chinese America through a Latin festival, raising awareness, the fact that the Chinese Americans in his opening but the fact that when we think about the birthplace of Los Angeles we think about, a diverse location, including Chinese Americans are within this particular location. And I'm going to pass it over to my colleague Rachelle to talk about the next question.

Rachelle Schumard 1:05:50

Yes, hello, everyone. So inside the museum, we have several permanent exhibitions and a dedicated space for temporary exhibitions. Journeys, as you see here tells the story, the history of Chinese in the United States, starting with the California Gold Rush, all the way up to present day. Our origins exhibit exhibition continues the story from the formation of new Chinatown in the 1930s to the suburban neighborhoods of the st. Gabriel Valley were many Chinese immigrants began establishing homes and community in the 1980s. And Pictured here is our last temporary exhibition. Prior to the covid 19 pandemic, the red envelopes show, which featured over 200 AAPI artists from across the country to celebrate the year of the rat. Our museum serves a diverse population as we are situated in Los Angeles. In addition to exhibitions, we offer school tours and host a variety of public programming to serve and educate the community and touring. Though in person programming was not permitted over the past year, we have put efforts into staying connected with our community, we like increasing our online programming. And to learn more about us, you can find us on Facebook at Chinese American Museum on Instagram and at Camlaorg and you can go to the website it says to here.

Herb Tam 1:07:15

Great, thank you, Rachelle and Michael. And last panelist welcome Jack Tchen from Rutgers University. Jack, can you talk about what you're doing over there Rutgers.

Jack Tchen 1:07:26

Yeah, sure. It's good to see everybody. I see a lot of names I know from museum days. And thank you 1882. And thank you also, thank you Herb very much. A lot of you know me from when I was doing mainly my work in Manhattan. But I've shifted my focus to engage with global warming questions, but also working with black and indigenous communities. I should maybe give a historical context for that. That really grounds itself in terms of the work I've done. So some of

you may know of the work I'd done called New York before Chinatown, and part of that work was looking at someone like George Washington, and why was he so obsessed with Chinese porcelain were in the middle of the Revolutionary War, right. And he was desperate to reach his local China amount of British non Chinese merchant who was trying to provide him with the latest settings of porcelain that would be fit the style of a gentleman. And George Washington, of course, was also a surveyor, and with the Native Americans that I work with today, the Munsee Lenape people, they actually still refer to him as a town destroyer. In other words, by surveying the areas that he did, he was actually expanding into indigenous lands. And he also, of course, was an owner of 100 more slaves. And so I tell the story of George Washington, because the founding of the nation and is embodied by him, actually brought together a set of fundamental social and justices that have to do with dispossession of the lands, that had to do with the enslavement of an indentureship of not only African and African Americans, Afro caribbeans, but also the attempted enslavement of indigenous peoples as well. And that was actually deeply linked in terms of the extraction processes of trying to not only get beaver pelts, but also find things that Asia but in particular, the China market wanted, so that it could gain access to those luxury items that were being produced in the quote unquote orient. So I bring this up really to say that in this moment, of the pandemic, but also in this moment, of, of the horrible killings that have been going on Both in terms of anti Asian violence, but also, of course, anti black violence and the many other kinds of anti other violences that have been happening over the past number of years. There's an intertwined history for that. And so with social justice questions, I think deeply interconnect Asian Americans, Chinese through the exclusion laws, but also general kind of anti Chinese racism that continues, and the social justice issues that seem to be more linked to Oh, African Americans, or this group or that group. So I kind of wanted to just say that my work right now is trying to understand these, the contemporary interconnections. And why in some ways they get in the way of dealing with global warming in the United States, especially. A lot of people blame China for not only COVID, but also why the United States is not able to get more solar panels, because they're built more cheaply in China. All of these kinds of issues are intertwined with various kinds of scapegoating, and not really taking responsibility for this nation's historical kind of climate injustices that it has. And so for me to deal with contemporary questions of global warming, but also contemporary issues of social justice, we do have to go into that deep colonial history, and really grapple with that. So for me, that gives, in some ways, an added urgency, but also an added grounding for what we're dealing with now. And how, with global warming, the the clock is ticking, in terms of how much time do we really have to deal with it. We're already in the midst of horrendous, increased huge impact events, of which COVID is actually a part in part an expression of new terms of development into quote on quote, wild areas and the chronic cross species diseases that are that are making us very vulnerable.

Jack Tchen 1:12:10

So I guess I thought I would just kind of raised that 1882 part of this question, because the 1882 exclusion was not simply an isolated instance, that only had to do with Chinese, but really was linked to the dispossession, enslavement, but also leading up to the international eugenics movement of which New York was actually at the center of so this kind of systematic othering is something that is deeply ingrained in the US culture, I would say. So let me just stop there, but that's my latest work.

Herb Tam 1:12:44

Great, thanks, Jack. And that's a good segue into, you know, sorry, a conversation about museums and the communities that museums serve. And it sort of brings me back to a theme of Teng's presentation around, you know, happiness. And certainly this moment, when we think about this moment, it's, you know, happiness is maybe a difficult word to remember may not be the first word that comes up because of what's been happening over the past year. Certainly, for museums, it's been a tough time, you know, many have been closed for a while many are still closed. And there are different expectations on museums. You know, since what happened last year, the killings of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, have brought up a lot of issues around how museums can be part of social justice, racial justice movements. And, of course, you know, all the violence that we've been mentioning, where eight Americans were targets. You know, happiness is just one word that comes to mind so easily. So I wonder if for the panelists, you know, I'm sure there's a going thing going through your mind in terms of what your organizations can do, to respond to a very complex cultural and political moment. So, you know, I wonder what has been going through your mind about, you know, what's what's possible for, for museums in the moment, and I'll just open it up and you know, if he has responses to that, you know, please chyme in.

Nancy Yao Maasbach 1:14:45

Herb we're a polite group, you should just call on someone. Well, Nancy, you spoke up so. Please. I'll try to keep succinct. You know, I think we all struggle with the inability for maybe some perception to see the layers and the nuance in, in, in all groups and in all people. And, you know, we've been giving, we've had the good fortune of being able to speak to a lot of different groups, especially in the last eight weeks in particular, as many corporates, parent associations, schools, other organizations, Pfizer, you know, have really asked for us to chat with them about what we think about the current climate and questions around social justice allyship always surface. And at the same time, there is still a huge bridge to understanding and and I find that because we even have our textbooks and we haven't been able to redefine the narrative just around the first 180 years of Chinese Americanness and journey, what we're still struggling with is post 65. And, you know, I think all this data we all know very well, you know, we had an eight fold increase in Chinese American population after 1965. So, you know, we had 300,000 international students from China in 2019. We have 80,000 families, we chose China, 80,000 adoptees, and now it's a three child policy. There's so much has changed, particularly in last 40 years, but because

we have still grappling with having people understand the the origin story, the first 100 years of first 50 years first, you know, you know, several decades, there's a there's this interesting sense of the word community I always struggle with. Because we are we're dealing with so many different communities. And in some ways, the irony for me is that when we use the word community, it's actually limiting. And it often at least in the MOCAs context, in New York City, it often refers to Chinatown. And I struggle with that because it becomes in this odd way exclusionary, and what we really want to try to make space for is for, you know, all these groups, and really to see individuals and their passion and their purpose and their journey in the space. But there's so much around what needs even happened from the from from 220 years ago, let alone the last 40 years, that we are so behind. And that's why Herb and I often talk about the rest of the team at MOCA, which still remains, you know, 12 people at this point, to the urgency around what we want to do, and like responding to the idea of museums. And in our role, I feel like you know, often people think of museums as passive organizations or institutions or structures or buildings. And there's nothing more, there's nothing more opposing to us in that view than then the not the passivity, the aggressiveness, the urgency around what we feel that we need to do. And I'm guessing how we might all feel we can not work quickly enough. And that's often how we feel. But we want to make sure that we are mission focused, and not always getting pulled by gravitational elements.

Michael Truong 1:18:09

Yeah, like to add to what Nancy is saying, I think about zones. I think right now, especially with everything that's going on, there's like this reflection about what museum is what we can do you know, I was the educator for quite some time pre-pandemic. And a lot of the conversation we had at the museum was, you know, we want to share our history, so it won't be repeated again. But as we've seen, what we're doing now its being repeated. So as a museum, I took pride as a staff member thinking about a museum as being an educational space. But I think with the pandemic, and everything is going on, it has been viewed more as a community space. We are not just the voice of the community, but we are there to support the community. You know, so when we talk about the Chinese back in history at the museum, we have to talk about not just what happened, but why it happened. You know, when we when we talk about 1882 we talk about Chinese Exclusion, but what led to Chinese Exclusion. You know, when we talk about Dennis Kearney, the Chinese must go that's a dangerous rhetoric, that led to exclusion, then we're talking about blaming the Japanese, for Detroit auto workers, and then we have the killing of Vincent Chin. And currently now with the pandemic, of, you know, Kung Flu and all this other dangerous rhetoric, we see that dangerous rhetoric can lead to violence, and as museums as we witness to go on, as happening, I think we have to take a more proactive approach. And think about not just part of history, but being able to current events. And I think that's something that as the Chinese American Museum and as a staff, we've been trying to figure out a narrative and how we have to support the community, the Chinese American community, but also

providing a lot of unity for other POC. Because it's not a unique, you know, aspect to our community, every community is facing this.

Cybelle Jones 1:20:15

Yeah, I wanted to add to Nancy's point about urgency, because I think our models never really functioned on behalf of the communities or the people that we serve. I mean, most museums are not agile, they're not able to be responsive to news that changes in 24 hours, they're not able to answer the questions, maybe that are to build a network of support for those individuals that are looking for, you know, where can I go and actually hear concrete facts? Because I'm getting a lot of misinformation, where can I go to be supported? And I think that that actually means and I agree, Nancy, we have a lot of work to do. Because our methodologies are broken, we don't engage those members of the community and of the history that we need to so that they're a part of that conversation. I think Tengs model is a great one. But that's something new, how do we go into these existing institutions? And I would even say, go out of institutions that don't even deal with culture, science, American history, they're all telling the story, from a bias colonial way, going back to, you know, Jack's point at the beginning. So we have tremendous work to do. And I keep thinking, how do we just create a new model that doesn't take 10 or 20 years to renovate, or to redo or to re curate, but really kind of have layering and lenses of which we can bring new interpretation to objects and things that are already there by bringing more people into the conversation?

Herb Tam 1:21:55

Jack, how would you respond to that? Because I think that's great. You know, we have these existing institutions and, you know, how can we not reinvent the wheel but and sort of add on to people?

Jack Tchen 1:22:09

This is a really tough one, because I really believe in museum spaces and museum collections and, and having actual places, especially in a place like New York, where the Chinese American experience was basically invisibilized, Chinatown was well known, restaurants are well known, all those things are well known, but the actual history is pretty much invisibilized. So the museum really has an important role of physically being there. At the same time, it's just so expensive. It's just so difficult, and a permanent exhibit is so expensive, and it takes years and years to do. So how can we think of maybe the role of museums as being as being reinvented as agile spaces that can help facilitate dialogue can help be trusted places to gain reliable histories? How can they be places in which we're engaging with the complex communities that are there. Chinatown was never strictly Chinese, it was always a mixture of downtown port culture groups that were coming in and out. Very early African American community of the city was there before it got driven out of the downtown area. The early churches had slave galleries in which the slaves are supposed to sit in the high back area. And the the their masters were sitting in the paid pews in the front, and we still have those churches. So there's, there's amazing dialogues that can happen that

speak directly to today, in some ways that requires us to be agile, and to be in cross group dialogues, to really then adjust the framing that we're also having, because in some ways by focusing on one group sister or another, which is the logic of how our institutions are set up, it also creates boundaries, where it's more difficult to actually talk across across groups. One of my favorite exhibits that had been done by Herb in the team was really the one around food, which I thought opened up the door to have that kind of cross cultural discussion, but also food can be tried because I know I you know, I grew up with grade school reports having to be the one Chinese kid and talking about Chinese foods and chopsticks and all that. So I'm not advocating that. But there are ways in which I think we can be agile in creating spaces that then bring people together and to and to really listen and build those relationships across groups, which seems to me to be paramount right now.

Teng Chamchumrus 1:24:54

If I can interject to to Jack's point, One way to consider is also think about who might be non museum partners that we could talk to. I'll use an example where Ted Gong joined me in a panel at the Anacostia community museums back in December 2019. It's a museum for the people symposium, and we had a session on how to think about museum from outside the field. And one of our panelists, was actually a therapist from a local LGBTQ clinic in Washington, DC Whitman Walker clinic. And she was describing one of her first patients on the she met who, um, you know, not going to go into the details of him. But one of he was experiencing homelessness and how he spent his day was a lot of time with one of the free museums at the Smithsonian, a National Gallery of Art in DC, and also spending the evening at the millennial stage at the Kennedy Center, which every day, there's a 30 minute show for free for anyone to go, you know, partake? And she asked him, Why do you go to museums? And the answer was, so that I don't have to be alone. And so the panelists turned to the audience. And she said, you know, as a therapist, I don't know if you know, but loneliness is one of the major epidemics in this country. And whether you know it or not, museums already are doing part of their work by being that place for people to connect. But if you actually bring more intention to that, and work with us, where we actually work with people who might need connection, but they never know how to get to museums, or know that museum is a resource, we can work together and make the impact, more intentional, and more concrete. So just an example of how, you know, thinking about partnership in a different way could also be helpful.

Herb Tam 1:27:03

Yeah, so want to stay on that a little bit longer. Some of your ideas about community sort of connectedness and how museums can be part of that equation. And I wonder if people have thought about that. I think in our earlier call, like our prep call, we were talking about how museums could serve as places to help people deal with trauma even. And I thought that was a really interesting, kind of, sort of very provocative idea. You know? Yeah, I actually do want to say more about that. And I'm curious if other panelists have kind of, you know,

responses to, to that kind of role for, for museums in their communities.

Teng Chamchumrus 1:27:53

For the question of this museum is trauma prepared? Yeah. So just the backstory of that is at the same panel that we were having conversation about how to reimagine museums, and other panelists is from DC public libraries. And the her funny quote, which is not quite funny, when you think deeply about it, she said, sometimes at public libraries, we have to remind ourselves that we are also about books. Because a lot of time, I think public libraries have evolved so much that they are becoming more and more of a community center than just a place for books. And she said that nowadays, when they recruit for people who work at the libraries, they also recruit from, you know, people, people with social workers degrees or psychology degrees, because the frontline workers that meet with people who walk into that space, are actually providing service and the first connection. And if, if the space is truly open for all, as the mission or the intention is asking for then people might be walking in with all different issues and challenges and might come with trauma. So the question is, are the staff members trauma prepared and trained to respond to the people that they want to serve? How do we make remain healthy, and also help with the need of the people that that we are working with? So that's what the gist question of, you know, how do we she asked me, How do we make public libraries trauma prepared, but I think the same question could also apply for museums as well. What curious about what others think about that?

Nancy Yao Maasbach 1:29:48

I agree with you, wholeheartedly. You know, I see sometimes there's not that much difference in terms of people's perceptions when they come in, about what the services are, what the content is what the mission of the entity is. And I think it's really, really dangerous if we go into a space where we're not fully trained. And also, it's just, you know, I use this example, sometimes a lot of people assume if you're from Taiwan, or you're Taiwanese that you understand the cross strait relationship. And it's the same assumption as if you're Chinese and you should know kung fu. I mean, these are all very similar assumptions that we make based on our perceptions. So I think subjectivity in this way is, and it's really tricky, because we have that fine line of being a museum that talks about oral histories. So sometimes oral histories being you know, from one's personal viewpoint, and from one on one's own experience is naturally subjective and anecdotal. And yet, how do you refine that into space, that then also creates an objectivity and that learningness and that expertise without overstepping or under delivering, and I feel like all of that has to be really, really crystallized, to make sure that what we're offering isn't, isn't disingenuous. And is also founded in proper training, as you suggest.

Cybelle Jones 1:31:08

Yeah, I saw a really, I was really honored to participate in an autism training for one of my clients, and the security guards. You know, some of them had children who are family members, and they were some of the biggest advocates

and leaders. And I mean, they had to be really sensitive about the training, they had to prepare ahead of time and turn certain exhibits on and off. But what it taught me is that, you know, even the staff that you don't think of as being interpretive or you know, can really help a great deal. And they notice, they notice when people are uncomfortable, they notice when someone might be emotional. And so, again, it kind of things about the roles that, you know, we create and these institutions a little bit differently.

Jack Tchen 1:32:01

In the early days of the New York Chinatown History Project, when we decided to focus on Chinese laundry workers on the East Coast, you know, the eight to 10 15,000, Chinese laundries in the metro region, it became clear as we started talking to people, and as they started, as families, the children who grew up in the back of laundry, start talking, that these were families that had to grow up and somehow managed to find a living as a consequence of Chinese Exclusion. So that in effect, laundries could be understood as a as, as, as really a very confined, alienating experience, and by itself, so so in some ways, as we were talking to the the fathers and mothers, the children, it became clear that there was cross generational stigma, but also cross generational trauma of the exclusion experience itself. So I think we necessarily, in just trying to be there to listen to them also, we're there working with them, I mean, one of the first calls we got was of a laundry in the South Bronx, where the, where the father had been killed in the laundry, had been shot in the laundry, and the family decided to close up the laundry, and then donate the items that they had of the laundry, you know, scores of years of, of their family story, living in the back of the laundry, also, to donate it to the project. It became clear that the Chinese American experience of that earlier period was deeply traumatic. And we couldn't just treat this as academic historians, none of us were really, and to really just have this full of understanding of what that experience was about. So in some ways, I think the community that we're trying to document really taught us that and we learned a tremendous amount, you know, from that process. So in some ways, we have to also then learn and work with the parts of the community that do deal with trauma in a professional way. And how do we partner with those, folks? How do we deal with alienation? Those kinds of questions? Yeah, I see Nancy's walking around. I'm I'm guessing you're walking towards the laundry section. Nancy, is that what you're doing? Yeah, yeah.

Nancy Yao Maasbach 1:34:45

Yeah, exactly this is I think, the piece that you're talking about, right. And

Jack Tchen 1:34:52

And the eight pound iron, a cast iron and we tried to on the floor, Nancy on the floor below the iron, we tried to kind of show the wearing of the floor because the laundry, working there for 10 12 14 more hours a day standing there and some of the laundry was we visited the floorboards, the the linoleum would be worn through the floorboards would be worn through, and it would just in some ways mark those, those those hours, right, of grueling work that they have no

choice but to to do, right. So yeah.

Rachelle Shumard 1:35:34

To kind of add on to the conversation, something that we've been talking about a lot is how to react to trauma that might occur in real time, as well. Um, I know, in our museum talks about a lot of dark history, and I and we understand that people may walk in with certain trauma, but we also understand that there is a lot happening right now in the moment, and our staff has started training, to help intervene, and the device of the bystander, so in case something does happen in a museum, when we do open up to the public, you know, we can be prepared to help in that situation. You know, whether it's to, you know, kind of calm a situation or urge straps some way or, you know, so I think, for us, we're really aware of that right now. Some things may happen in in real time, in person.

Herb Tam 1:36:44

Thank you for that. My next question before I turn it over to audience questions. You know, there are a lot of folks, I think, in the audience that are museum professionals, or work in public history, and want to ask analysts, you know, the work that we do in our culture history, they may, they may be seen as sort of indulgences by folks in the immigrant communities that we serve, many of whom are working class, they, you know, they're too busy, maybe to go to museums, they'll have a company, that sort of culture where museum going is a sort of leisure activity. So how do you, you know, how do you guys make these things accessible, and relevant to people's lives in the communities that you serve? I think a lot of us have this question all the time. Nancy, would you like to pick that up?

Nancy Yao Maasbach 1:37:44

Yeah, sure. You know, I think we do a lot outside of the museum. So we do come back as a home base here. And of course, school groups come, you know, all the time, probably 40% of our visitorship is still school groups, from public and private, mostly tri state area, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut. But what I love about the education program, led by Lauren Nechamkin and Nora Chen is, you know, we do go out into the communities, we have a very close relationship with several of the junior high schools, the elementary schools, and they also we also have partnerships that bring some of these families that, and I and, you know, I relate to it, because I am the only museum my parents and I ever went to, together before they came to MOCA was in Taiwan, and you know, the, the National, you know, the museum there. And there just wasn't a habit of that, for me to go with my family, there just wasn't enough disposable income, right. And so what we want to do really is, you know, admissions revenue from our total revenue makes up less than 3%. So I don't know if others have this, you know, but sometimes you do have visitors who come in, and they want it to be free, right? The ultimate question is, how much does anyone really want to give, you know, to pay to enter a museum? And it's usually the answer is zero, whether it be the Met wherever, or MOCA. So we never

want a fee, or even the mindset that one doesn't want to spend money to be a barrier to entry. So I think that's something that we want to make sure that we welcome. So in fact, MOCA actually, for several years now has been, you know, complimentary admission for anyone living in this general area. So when we say to bridge, it's Chinatown, and also that, you know, we disseminate that information through the schools, and also New York Chinese Cultural Center, which is a dance instruction space. A lot of those families are recent immigrants. They do everything bi-lingually. So actually, they were using our space for all their dance classes, which we're really excited about. So they had, you know, well over a couple 100 students in our space every, every week. And so those parents would just, you know, we encourage them, to enjoy the space enjoy the museum, of course, was complimentary, but doing those types of partnerships, and now United East is going to be sharing space with us and having people come into this space, where they might be here for another reason, but then they get to also experience MOCA. It's something that we really tried to sort of, you know, harness that kind of partnerships with people coming into the space and creating a little bit more comfort, because they're used to some other activity, but it's within the museum space. And then it's sort of sometimes it's baby steps and sometimes it's some some leaps and bounds.

Michael Truong 1:40:22

Yeah, I think at the Museum of the Chinese American Museum, you know, when we think about a museum, we try to think about beyond our galleries in terms of space uses. So we actually partner with our local mall in Los Angeles, and we actually created several murals on the storefronts to celebrate or to talk about the Chinese American experience, we also worked with Grant Park locally, to really bring in art to the community. So we're trying to think about partnerships as not necessarily as really key for our survival, and to really spread our mission and thinking about the museum as not just a location based now, but as mission driven, of making sure we're able to share the Chinese American Experience everywhere in anywhere, regardless, if it's in our galleries or whatnot. I'm also aware that, you know, when we do our or when we do our history, that as a museum, we were here to elevate the stories, and we had to really think about who we elevate, and how we elevate the stories and how we present the stories. So we make sure that when we select the artist, that you know whether or not they're AAPI, or whatnot, but they're able to have a compelling story, that the visitors are able to connect with them. Because when we talk about, you know, immigrant stories, and you having someone else who's not from the community, you know, making the art, there's nuances that people won't get, right, because this should may be based on the traditional European motto of art. But if we have our own artists in our own community, creating art, this hopes, the fact that you know, our community are able to really look at it, appreciate it understand, you know, certain imagery, certain metaphor is they're a part of our own culture our own community.

Herb Tam 1:42:18

Great, thank you, Michael. Jack, I know you do?

Jack Tchen 1:42:25

You know, I, this whole question of communities, and well being is so important. So I'm glad, can you bring that up. And I think it's really, in some ways museums can be spaces wherever they are, that are creating community, across groups that maybe have never identified with each other or never thought of being part of a community. And, and in that process of creating community, it's actually breaking that alienation breaking that isolation, breaking that fragmentation that actually helps to promote well being, in looking at some of the studies about people who have been traumatized from the Holocaust, but also from enslavement. And this would go across generations and affect the kind of embodied so that the generational trauma has actually become part part of how they carry themselves and part of the body memory. So the question about well being is so deep, and not something that could be easily dealt with. But clearly, by becoming a part of a community, even if it's just for a short period of time, the possibility of kind of breaking that alienation and connecting in some way and being able to speak or be a part of something is so important for well being. So I guess I'm thinking that, you know, part of what's important. So there are some studies we're talking that we're talking about the generations after those family members who had been a part of the Holocaust or part of enslavement, and what happens in the subsequent generations that are carrying that trauma on in some way, but they don't even know what the trauma is necessarily, that there are people who are now talking about the importance of post memory, in which oftentimes, it's the creativity, of storytelling or dancing or painting or whatever that's so important to work through once the trauma surface to work through some kind of creative transformation that helps the younger people in that same family. So something about all that seems to me critical for us to also have people understand the value of these kinds of discussions and the value being caught between cross cultural contexts in which the psychology of how to deal with trauma, you know, in a Cantonese context or Taiwanese context may be very different than the US context, which is a lot about, you know, expression and talk and you know, you go see a therapist and that kind of thing, which may not be the way to do that, oftentimes, it's over food, right? Going back to food or, or some kind of, you know, some other way of handling. And so what, what's the cross cultural ways in which we can come up with well being that actually help the family members who may be coming from very different kind of cultural systems as well.

Cybelle Jones 1:45:41

I don't know if I could I just want to add something on that, Jack, because we were working with the Illinois Holocaust Museum, which is primarily visited by Chicago middle school students, and they're primarily African American, and there's just a total disconnect. They don't see the connection to their personal story. And so we worked with the spoken word artist in Chicago, who then interviewed the Holocaust survivors in the Holocaust survivors were even confused why we had this, what they consider the hip hop artist to meet with them, but the narrative that he wove was so beautiful. And when they heard

it, they said, he totally gets it. And when the kids come in, to see someone who looks like them, who's a contemporary, who's talking about, you know, the same anguish, but a different context, then they can really see that upstander narrative. And so I think it is, you know, what, the thing that we have to battle is the big city, small city, the, you know, the silos and, and this is where we have the opportunity and cultural institutions to show the other, to put people in other people's shoes. And I think that's why, you know, museums can make a difference, you know, even in the smallest communities, and even if it's just an adjunct to a performance area, you know we can see it. And sometimes it's the only way a young person might see someone that doesn't look like them.

Rachelle Shumard 1:47:15

Yeah, I'd also like to add as well, you know, especially during COVID, I think, you know, not having our museum exhibitions to be able to be walked into and really had to think of ways to, to connect to the community. And one of the ways to do that, of course, with programming. So, you know, to when you think about this question about art as indulgences, you know, how can we make it more digestible for people and for the audience, and with our programming, it's, that's one of the ways you know, you can have those open discussions, you can make it very relatable. You can bring the artists more to life, if you have them in person, and you can listen to them and compare from them. And you can hear what inspires them. And so, you know, one of the programs that we just recently did was, for our online exhibition, we had our year, the online exhibition, we did the artist showdown, and you know, wasn't supposed to be anything like, profound or you know, anything like that it was just supposed to be something really fun. But it was also a way to get to know the artists and to have the community see themselves reflected in the types of artists that we deliberately choose to showcase as a museum.

Herb Tam 1:48:38

Thank you for that Rachelle, and all the panelists, thank you for taking my questions. I want to turn it over to some audience questions, we may only have time for one or two. So let me get to it, the first one was from Ted, I believe, who asks. You know congresswoman Grace Meng has been requesting congressional funding to study the creation of a national APA museum. Since it is at least some years away from that goal, what do you think is the best use of congressional funding for the time being for existing Chinese slash Asian American museums and Chinese historical societies across the nation, the only thing is the best use of federal funding for for the kind of work that we do.

Jack Tchen 1:49:27

I'll go first. You know, every time I go to the west coast, and especially go through the countryside and realize that there are individuals who have been collecting objects from railroad gold mining, whatever. And also in the northeast, I realized that there are a lot of people were just been collecting stuff. I worry about all that stuff, a great deal. And I'm also so aware of people just tossing out things. Children grandchildren, not realizing the value of letters or objects.

Just tossing it out. That's the that's part of the dumpster diving story. So, you know, I'm worried that so much of this stuff is just being lost, and there's no place to put it. So that's one, one really deep concern I have. The other one is that, you know, I think we can do so much through our smart devices. And that's an important way to kind of build, build history, build solidarity, build connections. The worry, of course, that we have, in building a central Museum in DC is that that's going to soak up all the money, that that regional and local museums also need to survive, and there has to be a way to solve that problem. So that there's some mutual synergy happening as opposed to everybody looking to donate to the most prestigious site. And, and therefore draining the possibility of, of the many institutions that are represented in the audience and here on the panel from surviving.

Herb Tam 1:51:16

Nancy, do you have thoughts on the question of what to do with all this money, federal money?

Nancy Yao Maasbach 1:51:21

you know, the first time and again, just always in transparency, and my honest opinions about things when when I heard that congresswoman Meng was thinking about this, you know, this was several years ago, I really paused and I said, I, I get it. But at the same time, it seems like it is following just this, the easy thread, if you will. And I think there are moments in history that really, if they are properly recorded in books and textbooks, in a building in a institution, that they will open up a narrative for many, many others. And in that way, I think, the situation on Japanese internment, Chinese Exclusion, and its aftermath, these are these are very important, you know, markers in US history, obviously, and the things that we already do know about much more readily. But those two in terms of the AAPI experience are fundamental to really understanding and helping to broaden out the narrative for other groups. So in my sense, and I and I hope I'm still objective about it, but that's one reason why I'm at MOCA is I do feel that there needs to be more of a, you know, a Chinese American Museum that that can in a consortium, like this one, like the ones that that you know, deutzia was trying to do a couple years ago. And that that's important. I do think that whichever, we need to hold each other accountable. So the funding part is a big deal. But holding each other accountable. And we've talked about this, and Herb and I brainstormed and others on this call when we hosted the gathering, it's just as how can we be more thoughtful about, okay, we have an exhibit, it can travel, and let's just have it travel to Chicago to John Day to you know, to Houston to LA, wherever it may, and maybe LA has one, then lets travel it to New York. And then the expenses are really just around shippingg, and to be really transparent about our model that really benefits one another in a spoke type of way, whether there be some some hubs in the sort of major cities and then spokes around to support this, you know, the smaller ones are trying to grow. But I think that that's a really important model for Chinese America. So yeah, definitely AAPI, I would think just we're just having a hard time thinking about the new MOCA, is that that research and

that scholarship is going to take decades to get an AAPI a museum on the lawn done well and there's also no space on the lawn and also my whole also leaning is that you know if you're in a Chinatown somewhere The food's a lot better and the experiences like you're actually rolling out into a living breathing, you know, conversation with, with with the neighborhood.

Herb Tam 1:54:15

Um, Cybelle do have you thoughts on this question?

Michael Truong 1:54:20 Yeah, um, you know, I'm sitting here just really thinking about the diversity like a localized history and in nationalized history, and what we can do to bring in similarities of localised history into a larger American narrative. You know, I think that that's one thing that is really missing and funding can be used to really, perhaps making sure that our history is included in the textbooks, and perhaps funding localized museums, to create curriculum based on local history and then creating a network to really spread it out to nation because the thing what's important is like, you know, we know, this Chinese Chinatown Los Angeles in New York, you know, DC and whatnot. But there's so many Chinese American communities in the Midwest, and you know, in the south, that aren't discussed and aren't incorporated into our larger narrative. And if we understand that, you know, this Chinese American experience is an American experiences since the 1800s. And that's taught within you know, the classrooms, then I think that our voices would be heard, and we won't be continue to be facing this discriminatory legislation or anti asian hate, or any of these aspects with this, you know, key understanding that our legacy has been here, since you know, the construction of America and especially the construction of California.

Herb Tam 1:55:54

Thank you Michael? Cybelle do you have any thoughts of questions for what to do with federal money? Yeah.

Cybelle Jones 1:56:03

Yeah, I know, we're getting tight on time. But I think that part of the problem, and I'll go to Jack's point about George Washington, part of the problem is when we do these museums that are only about one group, we see masses of that group go to that, which isn't bad, because it's pride. So in some ways, you know, we want to have a women's museum and a Hispanic Museum, Asian Pacific Museum, but there's only so much space, you know, I would love to see money put so that when, you know, Mount Vernon is redoing their exhibit on George Washington, there's things about what was happening for the Asian, the early Asian population, and perceptions, because those people might not go to, you know, the African American Museum on the mall or an Asian Pacific museum. So I feel like when we separate, the problem is we're not actually reaching the people that we that we also want to be reaching. So it is a tricky thing of pride and heritage for those who want to see themselves represented, you know, in a way that's meaningful in those collections, but I think it has to be some sort of hybrid, so that we're really educating and putting money and in

local history museums, so that those stories are told there, where those kids are going, because we know, a lot of people make a pilgrimage to DC, but that's, you know, a small percentage of the broader population.

Herb Tam 1:57:30

Thank you Cybelle. Oh, and Rachele, and I'm a give you the last on this question, what would you do with a million bucks? Going back to Teng's, Trump?

Rachele Shumard 1:57:43

Yeah, I would, I would mostly echo the sentiments that everyone is previously said. But you know, to, to list it all the same. I think that is really a good point. Because, you know, separating, separating the different Heritage's into different spaces, you know, might not be the best way, I think, putting the money back into the local organizations where they really know the history and they can really dive deeper into it, and educate those people in their community and people in this community and as mentioned, as well, you know, I come from a community where we didn't take that pilgrimage to DC when I was in eighth grade. You know, there was no funding for that. So with that release, or the greater nation as well, you know, it's so it's it's hard to say, but I would probably leaned more towards the smaller museums.

Herb Tam 1:58:44

Thanks so much, Rachele. And with that, I think we're out of time, let's close the roundtable discussion. There's a lot more to discuss. And I think, you know, but I thought this was a really rich discussion. So we want to thank Nancy Cybelle, Rachele, Michael, and Jack. And Teng, of course for, you know, also giving us this wonderful prompt to sort of talk through. So and also thanks for the audience who joined today. You know, sorry, we didn't get to every questions, but it was great to be in conversation with you all. And with that, I want to pass it over now to Hongyan for, for the final sort of goodbyes.

Hongyan Yang 1:59:31

Thank you. On behalf of the foundation, I just want to once again extend our appreciation to our panelists for forming such a robust and stimulating conversation. I would like to close out today's session with an overview of tomorrow session two, same time we'll discuss some of the innovations in design, education, research and outreach that really put the concept of community centric design into practice. So there will be leading members of museums and preservation communities to join to discuss their ideas, approaches for creating space that affect communities, help us to remember honor heal, and to look into the future and build towards social justice. Thank you, everyone, for joining us today. I'll see you tomorrow, hopefully. Bye. Thank you