

*For Immediate Release*

***Interior Lives: Contemporary Photographs of  
Chinese New Yorkers***  
**Opening October 26**



**Documenting the city's largest wave of Chinese immigration**

**(New York, NY – Sep 24, 2018)** *Interior Lives: Contemporary Photographs of Chinese New Yorkers*, on view at the Museum of the City of New York from October 26, 2018 through March 24, 2019, features the work of three photographers—Thomas Holton, Annie Ling, and An Rong Xu—who bring into focus the complex realities of Chinese-American immigrant life in the city. The exhibition is curated by Sean Corcoran, Museum Curator of Prints and Photographs, and is organized in conjunction with the Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) exhibition *Interior Lives: Photographs of Chinese Americans in the 1980s* by Bud Glick.

“With more than half a million people of Chinese descent living in Manhattan’s Chinatown and other neighborhoods across the city,” said Whitney Donhauser, Ronay Menschel Director of the Museum of the City of New York, “New York is home to the largest ethnic Chinese population outside of Asia. We’re honored to join MOCA in offering an intimate look into a significant community full of vastly diverse experiences.”

“MOCA’s presentation provides the rare opportunity to consider the evolution of a community—New York City’s Chinatown—allowing visitors to examine a community over a 40-year period,” said Nancy Yao Maasbach, President of the Museum of Chinese in America. “We are pleased to present this exhibition with MCNY to re-ignite conversations about what the experiences of Chinatown residents can contribute to the broader discussion about community, space, and perseverance.”

In the 1960s, significant policy changes in the United States and China opened a new chapter of Chinese migration. The number of immigrants from mainland China nearly doubled between 1980 and 1990, and again between 1990 and 2000. Over the last two decades, photographers Thomas Holton, Annie Ling, and An Rong Xu examined the complex relationship between these individuals and the places they live. Their work shines a light on a community of New Yorkers as they navigate, both privately and publicly, their place within the city.

Since 2003 Thomas Holton has followed the trajectory of a single family living in a 350-square-foot apartment on Ludlow Street, creating an increasingly personal body of work as his friendship with the family developed. From bright, busy meals to quiet moments of reflection, Holton captures the shifting landscape of growing up and growing apart.

Annie Ling’s work began in 2011, when she spent over a year documenting the lives of the 35 residents of now-shuttered 81 Bowery—then one of the city’s few remaining lodging houses, offering makeshift rooms for as little as \$100 a month. The hardworking men and women who lived there, aspirants of the American Dream, turned cramped cubicles into bedrooms and tiled hallways into kitchens and communal spaces.

An Rong Xu, born in China and raised in New York City’s Chinatown, uses photography to explore Chinese-American identity, documenting the intersection of “two sometimes polarizing cultures.” Xu confronts the preconceptions and stereotypes assigned to Chinese-Americans by portraying the community as an integral part of the American landscape. His rich, cinematic work is rooted in the beauty of the ordinary, revealing often-hidden inner lives.

In the 1980s, the majority of Chinese immigrants to New York came from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China’s southern provinces, and settled in Chinatown. But in more recent years, both the origins and destinations of these immigrants have shifted, creating a multi-ethnic diaspora that spans all boroughs. Focusing on both this new wave of immigrants and the burgeoning first-generation population, *Interior Lives* offers a glimpse into the lives of contemporary Chinese New Yorkers—highlighting all that has and hasn’t changed over the past 40 years.

This exhibition is organized by the Museum of the City of New York in conjunction with the Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) exhibition *Interior Lives: Photographs of Chinese Americans in the 1980s* by Bud Glick, on view Oct 18, 2018 through Mar 24, 2019.

*Interior Lives* is made possible with lead support provided by Con Edison, with additional support provided by the Honorable Diana Ayala, New York City Council, District 8; The Andrew and Marina Lewin Foundation; Mannar Wong; and Joyce Yu and Edward Lai.

Made possible in part by The New Network Fund, supported by  JLGreene

Press Preview: Tuesday, October 23, 10am—12pm

### **Public Programs**

#### [Sweet & Sour: Chinese Food and Immigrant Identity](#)

Wednesday, November 7, 6:30pm–8:30pm

Tickets start at \$20; \$15 for Museum Members

What is the history of Chinese food in New York City, in restaurants, as a take-out staple, and as prepared in immigrant households? Jack Tchen, founder of the Museum of Chinese in America, moderates a conversation with leading restaurateurs: Lien Lin, owner and executive chef of Brooklyn's Bricolage NYC; Wilson Tang, owner of the famed Nom Wah Tea Parlor in Manhattan's Chinatown that dates back to 1920; and Jason Wang, CEO of Xi'an Famous Foods, now a chain of 13 restaurants originally founded by Wang's father as a food stall in the Golden Mall in Flushing, Queens.

#### [Intimate Subjects: Thomas Holton and the Lams](#)

Wednesday, January 16, 6:30pm–8:30pm

Tickets start at \$12; \$10 for Museum Members

In this intimate, behind-the-scenes look at *Interior Lives*, documentary photographer Thomas Holton sits down with several members of the Lam family, including Steven and Cindy Lam, both subjects featured in his series of photographs, "The Lams of Ludlow Street." Holton and the Lams will discuss their unique 15-year working relationship as photographer and subject in a conversation moderated by Nancy Yao Maasbach, president of the Museum of Chinese in America. Afterwards, explore the gallery in an exclusive after-hours viewing.

### **About the Museum of the City of New York**

The Museum of the City of New York fosters understanding of the distinctive nature of urban life in the world's most influential metropolis. It engages visitors by celebrating, documenting, and interpreting the city's past, present, and future. To connect with the Museum on social media, follow us on Instagram and Twitter at @MuseumofCityNY and visit our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/MuseumofCityNY](https://www.facebook.com/MuseumofCityNY). For more information please visit [www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org).

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Photo credit: Thomas Holton, *Chinese Soap Opera*, 2004

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