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Asian America and Empathy: Understanding the Chinese American Experience through the Art of Flo Oy Wong

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Asian America and Empathy: Understanding the Chinese American Experience
through the Art of Flo Oy Wong

Keywords: Asian American Art History, Flo Oy Wong, Empathy, Museum Studies, Chinese
American History.

by
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Capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of
Arts in Museum Studies

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Abstract

This capstone examines how the work of Chinese American artist **Flo Oy Wong** could be an impetus for dialogue for creating **empathy** for the Asian American experience. The capstone briefly discusses **Chinese American history** as the Chinese are one of the earliest immigrant groups to the United States and **Asian American art history** which demonstrates the role of art for Asian Americans. It also describes the importance of empathy in society and how some museums today are trying to apply empathy to serve their communities. Within this framework, I discuss artist Flo Oy Wong whose ability to tell stories about her experience as a Chinese American and the experiences of other immigrants can create empathy for Asian Americans. I conclude with a proposal for a hypothetical dual exhibition of her work and other Asian American women artists' work that builds on these themes. I intend this project to be a cornerstone for the field of **museum studies** by addressing the lack of representation of Asian American artists in public arts institutions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“We should be telling our stories. We are part of the American fabric.”

-Flo Oy Wong

This capstone aims to foster empathy for the Asian American experience through the art of Chinese American artist and activist Flo Oy Wong. The ideas I will discuss are the history of the Chinese in America, focusing on Chinese Americans in San Francisco, the history of Asian American art, particularly in the San Francisco Bay Area, importance of empathy in society, how museums are trying to apply empathy, and how Flo Oy Wong, an artist born and raised in the Bay Area, creates art based on her experience as a Chinese American that could be used to create empathy for the Asian American experience. The topics I will discuss are Chinese American history, Asian American art history, empathy and Flo Oy Wong. The De Young Museum in San Francisco is involved in my project because it would be the site for a hypothetical dual exhibition of Flo Oy Wong’s work and art selected by Wong that is created by Asian American women artists. Through this capstone, I am trying to address the creation of empathy for the Asian American experience and the lack of Asian American art in public art institutions.

As an Asian American emerging museum professional, the topics of empathy and the Asian American experience are important to me because when I have visited art museums, I have not seen art that conveys my experiences as an Asian American nor have I seen art created by

Asian Americans. These topics matter to the museum field because of the current conversations on diversity and inclusion in museums. The Asian American experience is generally not presented unlike the experiences of other minority groups. It also matters because empathy is a current trend in the field and museums are realizing that by fostering empathy in museum viewers, museums can advance the educational and economic progress in their communities. This lack of representation in art museums is a disregard to Asian Americans. If a museum is meant to educate, represent, and serve its community, by not representing Asian Americans who are part of American society in exhibitions or collections, art museums are not serving Asian Americans and not educating others about them.

While I am speaking largely about Asian American art history and the Asian American experience as a whole, I am focusing on the Chinese American experience because Chinese-Americans are the largest subgroup of Asian Americans and I am a Chinese American. This capstone project relates to society because Asian Americans have been and continue to be part of the American fabric, but their experiences are not prevalently discussed in the media or the arts. Only until recently has the stories of Asian Americans been told. This capstone project is important to the museum field because by presenting the story of a Chinese American, it can foster empathy for Chinese Americans, who had to live through the experiences of racial violence, fear of deportation, and discrimination, and others who had similar experiences immigrating into the United States. It also brings together voices of other Asian American women artists to show the similarities and differences that Asian Americans experience. It would also convey that a public art institution acknowledges Asian Americans' contributions to the arts. Flo Oy Wong's quote stated in the beginning of this introduction relates to the themes of this capstone because she presents the stories of Chinese Americans and other immigrants in her art.

Wong advocates for these stories to be told because Chinese Americans are part of American society and should be heard even though they currently are not.

This capstone addresses museum studies best practices because it is addressing diversity and inclusion in the museum specifically in collections and exhibitions in terms of showing art created by people from all ethnicities. It also addresses museum studies best practices in how empathy can be used to improve museum goers' wellbeing by engaging with their emotions to understand the experiences of others. It supports and advances a commitment to social justice because the goal of this capstone is to foster empathy for the Asian American experience which is typically not shown and create a dialogue to bring more representation to Asian American artists in the present when few public art institutions exhibit their work.

The key points in my literature review regarding Chinese American history are Chinese Americans, who have immigrated to the United States since the 1800's, have experienced racism exemplified by the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and the detention and interrogation of Chinese immigrants at Angel Island, and it was not until 1965, that racial barriers on Chinese immigrants were removed. Another key point in my literature review is the term Asian American was invented in 1968 to show pride, identity and belonging. The key points regarding Asian American art history in my literature review are Asian American artists have had thriving careers in the California and have explored a variety of themes ranging from East and West hybridity, urban life and community, modernism, identity, social memory, and trauma. The key points regarding empathy in my literature review are museums have tried to and are revisiting the idea of fostering empathy to promote different points of view; art has the potential to create open mindedness and address social issues in a tangible manner that engages people; and humans are instinctively capable of empathizing with others. The key point regarding Flo Oy Wong in my

literature review is Wong is an artist who tells stories about her experiences and the experiences of others in order to challenge how we view ourselves and others and is an advocate for the representation of Asian American women artists. My project proposal is for a dual exhibition of Flo Oy Wong's work and the work of other Asian American women artists that can shed light on the experiences of these artists and promote empathy in museum visitors. The reader can expect to find that Asian Americans, especially Chinese Americans, have contributed to American society in many ways and they have stories to tell. Museums have the opportunity to present these stories in meaningful ways that can foster empathy, compassion, and open mindedness.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In the introduction to his seminal book on race relations and the immigrant experience in America, *A Different Mirror*, Ron Takaki explains how race has been used as an analogy essential to the "construction of Americanness" by stating that the national identity is defined as "white" and not being white is deemed as different and inferior.¹ Takaki, a first-generation Japanese American goes on to discuss how Asian Americans have historically been considered the "Other" in American society. Ironically, Chinese immigrants, the subject of this capstone project, have been viewed both as "Other" and not "American;" yet, they have contributed to and have been part of America's history and growth as a nation since the 1800's. Chinese Americans and other Asian Americans have not only distinguished themselves in business, medicine and other essential parts of American life, but also as artists. Gordon Chang states that art was a part of the daily lives of Asian Americans in terms of creation, exhibition in the home and community, enjoyment in individual and organized methods, and celebration of it since Asians

¹ Ron Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. (New York: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown, and Co., 2008), 4.

first immigrated in the 19th century.² For many Asian Americans throughout history, making art enabled them to express their experiences in America of navigating their identity in this country and the feeling of otherness as immigrants, children, and grandchildren of immigrants. Yet, Asian Americans are not fully represented in the collections and exhibitions in public art institutions. This literature review will focus on Asian American art history within Asian American history and highlight the importance of how artists can tap into and encourage empathy in current society. The 2013 *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines empathy as “the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner.”³ Through art, viewers can be aware of the issues Asian Americans experienced and can empathize with them. The literature review will conclude with how the Chinese American artist, Flo Oy Wong, and her work draws on her experiences as the daughter of Chinese immigrants to create empathy for her audience. As Margo Machida wrote in *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary*, “once their works and ideas are placed in the civic sphere, artists can be seen to function as public intellectuals who provide unique insights into larger events by holding up a critical mirror to their society.”⁴ Artists have the unique ability to address and comment on social issues through their art and challenge the viewer to reflect on them. This literature review demonstrates the extensive history of Chinese Americans in the United States, the considerable art practice done by Asian Americans, the importance of empathy

² Gordon Chang, “Emerging from the Shadows: The Visual Arts and Asian American History,” forward to *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970* ed. Gordon H. Chang, Mark Dean Johnson and Paul J. Karlstrom (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008) xii.

³ “Empathy,” Merriam-Webster, accessed August 26, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/empathy>.

⁴ Machida, Margo, *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 6.

in society and how Flo Oy Wong and her work can be a catalyst to foster empathy for the Asian American experience in a public art institution.

Chinese in America: A Brief History

Asian America encompasses a large variety of ethnic groups that originated from Asia and would be too large to discuss in this literature review. Since the focus of my capstone is Chinese Americans, in this section, I will discuss the immigration of the Chinese to America. The United States has the largest Chinese population outside of Asia and Chinese Americans are the earliest and largest Asian descent group in the US.⁵ The first Chinese immigrated to America around 1849 to escape harsh economic conditions and find sanctuary from political conflicts in China.⁶ According to Takaki, Chinese migrants came to California in search of gold during the Gold Rush but were used to build the Central Pacific Railroad line.⁷ Many settled in San Francisco and by 1870, a fourth of California's Chinese population was living in San Francisco.⁸ The Chinese were viewed as threats to racial purity in America and were assigned the same status of racial inferiority as African Americans and Native Americans.⁹ This concept of a shared status led President Rutherford B. Hayes to tell Americans about discouraging the "present Chinese invasion" and accepting any suggestion that would prevent the Chinese from entering the country.¹⁰ In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act (CEA) which forbade Chinese laborers from entering the country. It was extended indefinitely in 1902 with the inclusion of all Chinese people restricted from entering the country. The CEA arose because of the widespread fear that the Chinese immigrating into the United States would challenge the

⁵ Min Zhou, *Contemporary Chinese America: Immigration, Ethnicity and Community Transformation*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009): 43.

⁶ Takaki, 178.

⁷ Takaki, 179.

⁸ Takaki, 183.

⁹ Takaki, 188.

¹⁰ Takaki, 189.

dominant ideology of America as a racially homogeneous white America. White Americans viewed the Chinese as racially inferior. This idea is reinforced by John Kuo Wei Tchen in the context of American Orientalism. Orientalism, which is the perception of Western countries viewing countries east of Europe, such as countries in the Middle East and Asia, as inferior and undeveloped, affected the perception and actions of Westerners in their interactions with people of these ethnicities. Tchen states the fetishes placed on Asians were refined and expanded upon in contact with people of Asian heritage and the typical relationship between Asians and Westerners were of dominance and submission.¹¹ Tchen also explains,

These expressions of Protestant Orientalism [when European Americans impersonated Chinese people using yellowface makeup and spoke in mock pidgin English] in the commercial and popular culture have been acts of ritual performance, reinforcing notions of “we”ness and cultural difference. The American stage helped to create controllable, commercial stereotypes that could then be imposed on living and breathing Chinese as standards of acceptable behavior.¹²

He adds that the racist attitudes exemplifying American Orientalism resulted in laws like the Chinese Exclusion Act.¹³ The 1906 earthquake in San Francisco changed the lives of Asian Americans because the fires resulted from the earthquakes destroyed all of the municipal records and paved the way for new Chinese immigration.¹⁴ This allowed Chinese men to claim they were naturalized citizens which enabled family members to immigrate into the country. Many people immigrated as bona-fide family members or imposters who claimed to be related to people who were already citizens. The people that immigrated across the Pacific Ocean had to enter through the immigration station on Angel Island where many had to pass an exam and confirm their American identity. When the People’s Republic of China was established in 1949, many Chinese

¹¹ John Kuo Wei Tchen, “Believing is Seeing: Transforming Orientalism and the Occidental Gaze” in *Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art* (New York: New Press, 1994), 15.

¹² Tchen, 18.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Takaki, 201.

fled to the United States to escape from the Communist regime even in the face of immigration restrictions and discrimination.¹⁵

In the 1960's during the Civil Rights Movement when many ethnic groups were struggling for equal rights, Takaki says that "the question surfaced: if discrimination is immoral and illegal, why was there an immigration restriction law based on racial exclusion?"¹⁶ In 1965 just after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, Congress abolished the racial barriers and national quotas on Chinese immigrants which resulted in a wave of immigration from China.¹⁷ The Immigration Act of 1965 prioritized uniting families and the importance of skilled labor which altered the Chinese American community.¹⁸ Around the same time, universities established Asian American Studies as a discipline to study and explore the experiences of Asian Americans. Art historian Gordon Chang stated the reason for the need for Asian American Studies was because mainstream America had no interest in the history of Asian Americans.¹⁹ The term "Asian American" was coined in 1968 and was used as an assertion of belonging, pride, identity and community.²⁰ Chang's sentiments also applied to why Asian American artists were neglected by mainstream art criticism.²¹ Early Asian American scholars like Takaki prioritized promoting an elevated ethnic identity and self-assertion in America.²² They also considered art and art history irrelevant to their cause because the subjects were considered elitist²³ and worse, used to repress and stereotype Asians.²⁴ Despite these sentiments, visual art

¹⁵ Zhou, 45.

¹⁶ Takaki, 408.

¹⁷ Takaki, 409.

¹⁸ Zhou, 189.

¹⁹ Chang, "Emerging from the Shadows: The Visual Arts and Asian American History," x.

²⁰ Gordon Chang and Mark Dean Johnson, introduction to *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents 1900-1970*, ed. Daniel Cornell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 9.

²¹ Chang, "Emerging from the Shadows: The Visual Arts and Asian American History," x.

²² Chang, "Emerging from the Shadows: The Visual Arts and Asian American History," xi.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Margo Machida, *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary*, 2.

was vital to the Asian American community for many reasons. Gordon Chang explains it was an appealing and important path of expression because ancestral traditions highly praised art, freedom from the need for English fluency, and prevailing enthusiasm for Asian aesthetics.²⁵

Asian American Art History

Since my goal is to foster empathy about the Asian American experience in a public arts institution, it is necessary to explain the history of Asian American artists who have had vital careers in the West, particularly in California and the San Francisco Bay Area. Because of its strong support of Asian American artists, the San Francisco Bay Area became a prominent place in Asian American art history. Curator Mark Dean Johnson explains that the encouragement of an ethnic voice was Northern California's primary contribution to the growth of American modernism as seen in local museum exhibitions in the 1920s and 1930s.²⁶ He states, "it is further sensed in the ways art was embraced by the Asian ethnic enclaves, which suggests it [art] was a central component of the experience of immigrants of Asian ancestry in America."²⁷ The 1930s was a time for important museum exhibitions of Asian American artists throughout California, but primarily at the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. Asian American artists at the time created works focused on East and West hybridity, war and peace, urban life and community, philosophy and religion, and abstraction and ink painting.²⁸ According to Johnson, group and individual shows at the Legion of Honor featuring artists such as the Japanese American artists Chiura Obata and Isamu Noguchi presented a higher profile for all Asian American artists in a San Francisco museum during this time than is seen today.²⁹

²⁵ Chang, "Emerging from the Shadows: The Visual Arts and Asian American History," xii.

²⁶ Mark Dean Johnson, "Uncovering Asian American Art in San Francisco, 1850-1940" in *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970*, ed. Gordon H. Chang, Mark Dean Johnson and Paul J. Karlstrom (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 8.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Chang and Johnson, introduction to *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents 1900-1970*, 12.

²⁹ Johnson, 15-16.

Between the 1930's and 1980's, many Asian American artists continued to have vibrant careers before the term "Asian American" was created. During the World War II period, Asian American artists received many opportunities to show their work because they "contributed to constructing and confirming a domestic wartime identity that embraced long-standing American nationalistic notions about the national self and the enemy other."³⁰ Chinese American artists were in public demand due to their particular work and social position as a valued wartime ally against the Japanese.³¹ Postwar, Asian American artists like Isamu Noguchi and Carlos Villa used Western modernist ideas to explore and express their individual identity and place in the world.³² In California, especially in the Bay Area, Asian American women artists had vibrant art careers in the 1950's and 1960's before the flowering of the women's movement in the 1970s, feminist art history and the Asian American movement. Artists such as Ruth Asawa, Bernice Bing and Kay Sekimachi had an impact in their fields and were influential as teachers and institution builders. Asian American women artists also implored a variety of materials and techniques to experiment and communicate their ideas.³³ In the 1970's, following in the efforts of the Chicano, Native American, and African American art communities, community based Asian American cultural organizations formed foundational scholarship and critical writing on Asian American visual artists which has framed how Asian American art is depicted.³⁴ The

³⁰ Gordon Chang, "Deployments, Engagements, Obliterations: Asian American Artists and World War II," in *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970*, ed. Gordon H. Chang, Mark Dean Johnson and Paul J. Karlstrom (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 115.

³¹ Chang, "Deployments, Engagements, Obliterations: Asian American Artists and World War II," 113.

³² Paul J. Karlstrom, "Postwar California: Asian American Modernism," in *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970*, ed. Gordon H. Chang, Mark Dean Johnson and Paul J. Karlstrom (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 253.

³³ Valerie J. Matsumoto, "Pioneers, Renegades, and Visionaries: Asian American Women Artists in California, 1880s-1960s," in *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970*, ed. Gordon H. Chang, Mark Dean Johnson and Paul J. Karlstrom (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 185.

³⁴ Margo Machida, "Art and Social Consciousness: Asian American and Pacific Islander Artists in San Francisco, 1965-1980" in *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970*, ed. Gordon H. Chang, Mark Dean Johnson and Paul J. Karlstrom (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 257.

1970s were critical for Asian American scholarship and artmaking as the concepts of identity, self, and group representation were becoming prevalent.³⁵ Cultural organizations such as the Kearny Street Workshop were fundamental to the Asian American community art movement by combining cultural activism and grassroots politics to make art accessible to the community.

In the 1980's and 1990's Asian American art rose in prominence in public institutions. Machida explains Asian American art broke ground as a field in the 1980's and 1990's during the rise of identity politics when "domestic expressions of ethnicized and racialized identifications and social affiliations were being strongly challenged."³⁶ In the 1990s, many group exhibitions that focused on Asian American artists could be found in American art museums, art organizations and university galleries.³⁷ These included *Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art* at the Asia Society Galleries in New York in 1996, *With New Eyes: Towards an Asian American Art History in the West* at the San Francisco State University Art Department Gallery in San Francisco in 1995 and *They Painted From Their Hearts: Pioneer Asian American Art* at the Wing Luke Asian Museum in Seattle in 1994. During this period, Asian American artists' work focused on identity, difference and representation, history, culture, family history, community and place.³⁸ They addressed these themes to express their experiences as Asian Americans, what it means to be an Asian in America and the previous injustices inflicted on their community. Machida explains that since Asians constantly cross political, social and intellectual boundaries, no single narrative can encapsulate the extent of Asian American art production.³⁹ Asian American art includes art created by Asians from all over the

³⁵ Machida, "Art and Social Consciousness: Asian American and Pacific Islander Artists in San Francisco, 1965-1980," 258.

³⁶ Machida, *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary*, 2.

³⁷ Machida, *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary*, 1.

³⁸ Machida, *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary*, 5.

³⁹ Margo Machida, "Reframing Asian America" in *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now*, ed. Melissa Chiu, Karin Higa and Susette S. Min (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 19.

world who immigrated to or are born in America that there is no one way to describe it; yet, all Asian American art is connected through themes such as identity, representation and trauma. Machida reinforces that in an ever-changing and heterogeneous society, concerns expressed by artists of non-Western heritage are important to expanding the country's most essential view of itself, its ideology and its shared character.⁴⁰ 2008 was a significant year when Asian American cultural production experienced immense growth in the field of Asian American art historical scholarship and exhibitions in what Margo Machida calls a "Harlem Renaissance-like era in the arts".⁴¹ It marks the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the academic discipline of Asian American studies which was developed in the San Francisco Bay Area.⁴² And in 2008, the De Young Museum in San Francisco opened *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900-1970*, the first comprehensive survey of Asian American art before the term "Asian American" was created and the book *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970*, published by the Stanford Asian American Art Project, was a landmark text on Asian American art from the Gold Rush period to the 1970's that brought attention to the field of Asian American art after being neglected by the mainstream art world. While there were some exhibits about contemporary Asian American art in the 1990's, this exhibition and book showed the breadth of art production created by Asian Americans from the late 1800's and 1900's before the term "Asian American" existed.

Empathy

In order to foster empathy for the Asian American experience, it is necessary to explain what empathy is and how it could be used in art museums by visual artists. In 1992, the

⁴⁰ Margo Machida, "Art and Social Consciousness: Asian American and Pacific Islander Artists in San Francisco, 1965-1980," 277.

⁴¹ Machida, *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary*, 1.

⁴² Chang and Johnson, 9.

American Alliance of Museums published the landmark report *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* which was a plan of action that called for museums to fulfill their responsibility to educate diverse audiences and build an inclusive community. The report states “guided by the spirit of excellence and equity, museums have the potential to nurture an enlightened, humane citizenry that appreciates the value of knowing about its past, is resourcefully and sensitively engaged in the present, and is determined to shape a future in which many experiences and many points of view are given voice.”⁴³ Museums have the power to influence visitors in how they view the past, the present and future and respond to it. This is also an early sign of the museum field trying to address the concept of empathy by promoting the idea of creating a future that includes the voices of different experiences and points of view. The report notes how the connotation of objects and the way museums convey their meaning are evolving because objects are full of intricate context and visitors contribute to an object’s context by providing individual experiences to their interaction with an object.⁴⁴

This is similar to the ideas John Berger promoted in his book and television series, *Ways of Seeing*. Berger states the way we view things depends on our knowledge and experiences and we are always investigating the connection between things and ourselves.⁴⁵ Speaking on the topic of images and how we view them, Berger argues all images encapsulate a mode of seeing and our understanding and appreciation of them rely on our way of seeing.⁴⁶ *Excellence and Equity* and John Berger equally acknowledge that an individual’s experience with an object depends on their experience and knowledge. Art historian Noah Charney reaffirms Berger’s

⁴³ American Alliance of Museums, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, (Washington DC: American Alliance of Museums, 1992), 8.

⁴⁴ American Alliance of Museums, 13.

⁴⁵ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 8-9.

⁴⁶ Berger, 10.

argument by saying that sympathetically looking through mindsets that are different from others can show truths about what we see and about ourselves.⁴⁷ In his argument about why art history may be the most important subject to study today, Charney contends that art history and humanities overall teaches critical skills such as the ability to think outside the box, educate themselves, appreciate and respect different perspectives and cultures.⁴⁸ Without these abilities, people who have narrow-minded perspectives do not produce original ideas and can potentially create intolerance.⁴⁹ Art has the potential to create open-mindedness for its viewers about people and cultures and could reveal things people would not know about the world or ourselves. Artists have the ability to address certain issues or experiences in a tangible manner that can engage people. As authors Caroline Turner and Jen Webb explain, artists can be cultural activists by using their creative abilities and vision to attain social justice and political change by motivating people through emotional engagement.⁵⁰

In the 2017 *Trendswatch* report published by the American Alliance of Museums, author Elizabeth Merritt promotes the idea that museums can cultivate empathy thereby influencing the economic, emotional and educational progress in their communities.⁵¹ The American Alliance of Museums now acknowledges the importance of applying empathy in the museum as a way to strengthen communities. This is reinforced by Elif M. Gokcigdem in the introduction to his book, *Fostering Empathy Through Museums*: “Museums and empathy are a powerful

⁴⁷ Noah Charney, “The Art of Learning: Why Art History Might Be the Most Important Subject You Could Study Today,” *Salon*, last modified January 15, 2017, <https://www.salon.com/2017/01/15/the-art-of-learning-why-art-history-might-be-the-most-important-subject-you-could-study-today/>.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Caroline Turner and Jen Webb, “The Artist as Cultural and Political Activist,” in *Art and Human Rights: Contemporary Asian Contexts*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 36.

⁵¹ Elizabeth Merritt, “Empathy a Mile in my Shoes: Closing the Empathy Deficit,” *American Alliance for Museums Center for the Future of Museums Blog*, last modified May 1, 2017, <https://www.aam-us.org/2017/05/01/empathy-a-mile-in-my-shoes-closing-the-empathy-deficit/>.

combination that can provide transformative experiences of dialogue, discovery, understanding, and contemplation to all regardless of age or background. Together they can plant the seeds that nourish generations of souls.”⁵² He also writes, “Museums hold a mirror to our collective behavior, knowledge, conscience, complex histories, and values. Through their educational mission, they can provide safe and critical context to fostering empathy through experiential learning, storytelling, artistic expression, dialogue, and contemplation.”⁵³

But what is empathy exactly and how does it relate to Asian American art history? Author Roman Krznaric defines empathy as “the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that understanding to guide your actions.”⁵⁴ The idea of empathy rose in importance in the eighteenth century when the philosopher and economist, Adam Smith wrote that our moral awareness came from our mental ability to change places with the sufferer.⁵⁵ In recent years, many scientific studies have shown evidence that humans are innately capable of empathy. For example, neuroscientists have found a ten section “empathy circuit” in our brains that if it was damaged, could diminish our understanding of others’ feelings.⁵⁶ And evolutionary biologists proved that we as social animals naturally evolved to be empathetic and supportive like our primate cousins.⁵⁷ The study of empathy and how to foster it is an ongoing area of interest for psychologists because of its importance to help people interact and understand others in all stages of life. In an article published on the Lesley University, a college in Cambridge, Massachusetts, website titled “The Psychology of Emotional and Cognitive Empathy”, the authors claim that empathy is essential

⁵² Elif M. Gokcigdem, *Fostering Empathy Through Museums*, edited by Elif M. Gokcigdem, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016, Kindle edition.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Roman Krznaric, *Empathy: Why It Matters, and How to Get It*, New York: TarcherPerigee, 2015, Kindle Edition.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

for creating interpersonal relationships and develops over time and in relationship to our social environment.⁵⁸ All of these ideas apply to the work and ideas historians, activists, artists and museum professionals have promoted since the Civil Rights Era. The artist Flo Oy Wong is one of many artists whose choices of materials and content promote empathy by conveying ideas that can speak to people.

Flo Oy Wong: An Artist and Activist

The work of Flo Oy Wong aligns with some of the themes found in Asian American art such as identity and memory and the importance of empathy. I believe that her powerful work could ignite a conversation about the Asian American experience in a public art institution and could engage the viewer to learn and empathize with it. Flo Oy Wong was born and raised in Oakland's Chinatown by parents who immigrated from China. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and the National Origins Act of 1924 restricted the Chinese from living in the United States and many Chinese, including her parents were interrogated and detained at the Angel Island Immigration Station near San Francisco in order to determine who would be allowed into the country. Flo Oy Wong's mother was a paper person, a person who faked his or her identity on paper, which was a desperate practice many Chinese did in order to enter the US. Since the Chinese Exclusion Act banned the entry of Chinese laborers' wives and families, Wong's mother came into America identified on paper as Wong's father's sister; likewise, Wong's sisters were her father's nieces on paper. When Wong was born, her father had a paper marriage created between Wong's mother and an acquaintance to confirm the legitimacy of Wong's birth. Wong grew up unsure about her family's history and when the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, which repealed explicit racial barriers, and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965,

⁵⁸ "The Psychology of Emotional and Cognitive Empathy," Lesley University, accessed July 24, 2018, <https://lesley.edu/article/the-psychology-of-emotional-and-cognitive-empathy>.

which removed national immigration quotas, were enacted, that she was able to learn about her real family history. Wong graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a Bachelor's Degree in English in 1960 and received a teaching credential at Hayward State University, now known as California State University, East Bay, in 1961. After her children were in school, Wong enrolled in art classes at De Anza College, a community college in Cupertino, where she found instructors who fed her thirst for knowledge and gave her direction to convey ideas, she originally thought she did not have the courage to say. Many of Flo Oy Wong's works were inspired from her experience as the daughter of Chinese immigrants and the experiences of people like her and her family in the Chinese American community. Flo Oy Wong explained in a 2009 interview how her art making is influenced by the fact that Americans do not see her as American and Chinese people see her as too western, so she does not feel "complete in any place."⁵⁹ Many of her works are created out of cloth rice sacks, a material which she has used since 1978⁶⁰, and new and found materials using methods such as embroidery, photo transferring, beading and silk screening to evoke the Chinese American experience.⁶¹ Machida believes, her decision of methods and materials taken from her immediate environment underlie the "close, generative connections between her art and real life conditions that inspired it."⁶² Her application of everyday materials and techniques, typically associated with domesticity, aligns with art created by other female artists such as Faith Ringgold and Ruth Asawa. Her use of everyday materials also places her within the period of modernism in which artists such as Marcel Duchamp and Ed Kienholz used everyday objects with or combined with traditional art

⁵⁹ Flo Oy Wong, interview by Angelika Piwowarczyk, *Asian American Art Oral History Project*, Chicago: DePaul University University Libraries, 2009, 4.

⁶⁰ Flo Oy Wong, interview by Angelika Piwowarczyk, 3.

⁶¹ Victoria Alba, "Flo Oy Wong: Rice-Sack Stories," *Fiberarts* 29, no. 1 (2002): 20.

⁶² Flo Oy Wong, *Flo Oy Wong: 70/30, seventy years of living, thirty years of art*, San Francisco: Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center, 2008, 11.

materials to reference and respond to the intricacies of modern life.⁶³ Many of her works relate to the theme of memory, trauma, identity and belonging as some of her works are expressing her experiences as a Chinese American. Machida also describes

“The trajectory of Wong’s visual and dialogic choices reflects a firm sense of local belonging and communal memory, as well as an acknowledgement of the often-difficult circumstances shared by people of color who came of age in this nation during the 1940’s and 50’s. Against the historical backdrop of exclusionary immigration laws (which the artist’s parents experienced first-hand), ethnic discrimination, and racial violence, and spurred by the 1960’s rise of the civil rights and Asian American movements, Wong, like many Asian American artists and writers influenced by these landmark developments, began to address the themes of belonging and place.”⁶⁴

Rice is an important material in her work because it is culturally symbolic as a dietary staple in Asian culture and symbolic to her personal history.⁶⁵ According to Wong, “it is the physical and spiritual food for me”.⁶⁶ Her work, *Eye of the Rice: Yu Mai Gee Fon* (1986-2000) (see Appendix B: Figure 1) is about how her father was shot by a relative while Flo was growing up in Oakland’s Chinatown. Since her father was severely injured, her family was stripped of their main source of income and had to survive on donated bags of rice from relatives and friends. *Eye of the Rice: Yu Mai Gee Fon*, started in 1986 and finished in 2000, contains rice sacks hand sewn with materials such as beads, sequins and lace. Her work *My Mother’s Baggage: Lucky Daughter* (see Appendix B: Figures 2 and 3), made of images and text transferred onto a suitcase, conveys her experience as the unwanted daughter in her family and she was considered lucky because her birth preceded the birth of a son. Wong explains that,

“Chinese parents did not count unless they had their sons...And it was very painful for me to be the sixth daughter because I became aware, my older sisters told me that my mother cried for a month after I was born...And the reason I was called the lucky daughter was because I preceded the birth of a wanted boy. So, in Chinese families, any girl who precedes the birth of a male heir is the lucky daughter...I, being the sensitive person that I was, and still am, didn’t understand that and blamed myself that I wasn’t born a boy.”⁶⁷

⁶³ Flo Oy Wong, *Flo Oy Wong: 70/30, seventy years of living, thirty years of art*, 12.

⁶⁴ Flo Oy Wong, *Flo Oy Wong: 70/30, seventy years of living, thirty years of art*, 12.

⁶⁵ Flo Oy Wong, interview by Angelika Piwowarczyk, 3.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Flo Oy Wong, interview by Angelika Piwowarczyk, 4.

Her most famous work to date is *made in usa: Angel Island–Shhh* (see Appendix B: Figure 4), a multimedia installation piece started in 1997 and installed in 2000 in the Angel Island Immigration Station. It tells the stories of Chinese detainees that passed through the station and the secrets they hid for years in order to get around the restrictive immigration laws. *made in usa: Angel Island–Shhh* consists of twenty-five rice sacks sewn on American flags, with the flags being used as frames, and the audio recordings of the people she interviewed for the project that for which she created a flag. She also stencils and embroiders the name, date of arrival and paper name of each person she interviewed onto the rice sack. *made in usa: Angel Island–Shhh* was also exhibited at the Ellis Island Museum in New York City, where many from Europe were stationed and interrogated before entering the US, in 2003. Wong’s integration of audio and video recordings to her art making practice is similar to the practice of other Asian American artists. When *made in usa: Angel Island–Shhh* was shown at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, the associate curator and organizer of Flo’s show, Kristine Kim said,

“I was really struck by the idea of Flo as an artist being a catalyst within her community...getting people to open up and talk about things that had been hidden and shameful. We also saw a parallel between the Chinese Americans coming to terms with this history and the incarceration of Japan Americans during World War II--both were once considered too embarrassing to talk about.”⁶⁸

Flo Oy Wong’s art can reach people with different experiences and bring them together by presenting these untold stories.

When Flo Oy Wong was beginning to exhibit her work, there were few opportunities for women artists of color to show their work. She became an activist and was active in the Northern California art community challenging public institutions by

“...knocking on doors, asking tough questions as to why somebody like me didn’t have an opportunity to submit. I wasn’t saying, you know, ‘Let me submit because I am female. Let me submit because I am

⁶⁸ Scarlet Cheng, “Seeking Out History’s Hidden Stories,” *Los Angeles Times*, last modified September 30, 2001, <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/sep/30/entertainment/ca-51522>.

Chinese American.' I was saying that I deserve a place in a museum or a gallery or a traditional space because I make art that talks to people."⁶⁹

She was the first Asian American to join the board for the National Women's Caucus for Art in 1991 and even there, encountered opposition from people who did not see Asian American women as artists. After attending the National Conference for the Women Caucus of Arts in 1989 where she also encountered Asian American women artists not being fully represented in the panels and presentations, Flo Oy Wong was responsible for organizing the art of Asian American artists for a national photographic slide bank that included the work of women artists of color for the Women's Caucus for Art including Berenice Bing, Kyenum Kum and Hung Liu. Her work in creating the photographic slides with other Asian American women artists resulted in the establishment of the Asian American Women Artist Association in 1989 in order to form a community and view work created by other Asian American women artists. Her work on different leadership boards and creation of the Asian American Women Artist Association paved the way to bring Asian American women artists' voices to the table, not only aligning with the values expressed in *Excellence and Equity*, but contributing significantly to Asian American art history and how art can foster empathy. As author Tirza True Latimer says of Wong,

Wong is a teller of unspoken (or unheard) stories that bring people together. Her multilayered work combines everyday materials (rice sacks, items of clothing, suitcases, beads, envelopes, snapshots, flags, sequins, newspaper clippings) and mundane expressive vernaculars (stenciling, stitchery, cooking, cutting and pasting) to voice historically muted narratives that sometimes affirm, sometimes contradict, and always unsettle our received ideas about who we are — individually and collectively. She dismantles barriers that separate us from aspects of our selves, families, histories, and communities.⁷⁰

Latimer's quote poignantly sums up Flo Oy Wong and her work in how her use of everyday materials can connect the viewers to the familiar in order to convey larger ideas about ourselves, histories, and communities. Her ability to tell stories can bring people together from all walks of

⁶⁹ Flo Oy Wong, interview by Angelika Piwowarczyk, 6.

⁷⁰ Tirza True Latimer, "Flo Oy Wong at the Luggage Store," *Open Space*, last modified November 15, 2013, <https://openspace.sfmoma.org/2013/11/everyone-gets-a-piece-of-the-pie-just-ask-flo-oy-wong/>.

life to learn and reflect on the stories she conveys in her works. Flo Oy Wong rightfully belongs in the canon of art history and could serve as a catalyst to enable viewers to better view the plight of Asian Americans.

Asian Americans, particularly Chinese Americans, have been part of the American landscape in history and art history; yet, their representation in both subjects has been lacking in recent years and their experiences have not been fully represented. Empathy can be used as a tool to understand the Chinese American experience and make people aware of the issues Chinese Americans have previously faced. Flo Oy Wong and her work could start a dialogue about the Chinese American experience and foster empathy in viewers by telling her story and the story of other Chinese Americans. It is my feeling that in light of what is now the 50th Anniversary of Asian American Studies as well as considerable advances on the part of Asian American artists, it is time to reignite a conversation about the significance of Asian American art and its themes in 2018.

Chapter 3: Project Proposal

Project Title: Flo Oy Wong: Made in America

A. This project will be both a survey exhibition of work created by Flo Oy Wong that presents her experience of being the American-born daughter of Chinese immigrants and conveys the Chinese American experience as well as an exhibition of Asian American women artists to communicate the Asian American experience. Issues I have raised in my literature review focuses on Asian American art history and empathy. In the past few years, the art of ethnic groups such as African Americans, with the newly created *African American Art History Initiative* at the Getty in 2018, and Latino Americans, with the 2017 *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA* which explored the connection between Los Angeles and Latin America, have been gaining wider exposure; yet, Asian American art has not. Art has been an important tool for addressing the injustices inflicted on the Asian American community and conveying the personal experiences of the artists as members of the Asian American community. Asian Americans created art since the 1850's and Asian American artists were prolific in the 1920's and 1930's in public art institutions; however, they are rarely exhibited in the current age. Empathy is a trending topic in the museum field because museums are becoming aware that they can foster empathy in visitors through their methods of teaching to strengthen communities. The specific institution that I am proposing to hold this exhibition would be the de Young Museum in San Francisco. I have chosen the de Young because they held the first comprehensive survey exhibition on Asian American artists in 2008 and first retrospective of Japanese American artist Ruth Asawa in 2006. Furthermore, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF) which includes the de Young Museum has had a long history of exhibiting Asian American art since the 1920's and 1930's. On the FAMSF website, the former director, John Buchanan wrote, "Our roster of Asian American exhibitions is

arguably the most significant of any major American museum. Our commitment is not only critical to the institution's self-conception, but also relevant to the understanding of what constitutes a more holistic vision of American culture."⁷¹ Since FAMSF is committed to showing art created by Asian Americans, it would be relevant to have an exhibition of Flo Oy Wong's work at the de Young. The exhibition I envision would consist of two parts co-curated by Flo Oy Wong and Timothy A. Burgard, Ednah Root Curator-in-Charge of American Art at FAMSF in the 20th century and Contemporary Galleries on the 1st floor of the museum.⁷² I propose an exhibition of Flo Oy Wong's work curated by Burgard that will represent the breadth of her work documenting different moments of her life and a concurrent exhibition of Asian American female artists selected by Flo Oy Wong that focus on different ethnic experiences within Asian America. This idea reprises and extends past collaborations between the curator and artist who have worked together to display women artists and artists of color at the de Young. Burgard and Wong co-curated a series of four multicultural exhibitions at the de Young Museum in 1997 titled *Art of the Americas*. The exhibitions, "Cultural Crosscurrents," "Pride of Place," "Art and Ethnography," and "Identity Crisis," dealt with different, but related themes that prioritized being historically accurate and inclusive than previous museum exhibitions at the time. The exhibitions also were seen by the curators when they were selecting artworks as an opportunity to include more women and people of color.

Burgard wrote:

Our goal is to help develop an innovative and flexible museum model that emphasizes the interconnections among peoples and enhances cross-cultural understanding... Identity-based art

⁷¹ "Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900–1970," *Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco*, accessed September 22, 2018, <https://www.famsf.org/press-room/asianamericanmodern-art-shifting-currents-1900-1970>.

⁷² This is a hypothetical exhibition based on my capstone research in which Ms. Wong and Dr. Burgard co-curated a series of exhibitions in 1997. I have not personally contacted Ms. Wong or Dr. Burgard about this project.

alternately has been embraced as the necessary expression of a multicultural America or denounced as a divisive force of separatism. Museums, which have become both a meeting place and a battleground for these divergent views, face their own identity crisis as they reevaluate their missions...⁷³

This stated goal encompasses what the exhibition could promote in the Bay Area and potentially the rest of the country. Some of the works that I believe should be included in the Flo Oy Wong retrospective are *made in usa: Angel Island Shhhh* 2001, mixed media; *My Mother's Baggage: Lucky Daughter*, 1996, mixed media; and *My Mother's Baggage: Paper Sister/Paper Aunt/Paper Wife*, 1997, mixed media (see Appendix B: Figure 5). The introductory panel will describe Flo Oy Wong's significance within art history and Asian American art history and the reason for the survey exhibition as well as the presentation of Asian American female artists selected by Wong. The didactic labels will be biographical information to give context to the time period that her work is about. The object labels would be her actual words explaining the meaning behind the piece in order to shed light on her experience. Both the didactic labels and object labels will have translations in Traditional Chinese, the written Chinese language. The exhibit will culminate with works selected by Wong and created by Asian American female artists. The introductory label will describe Wong's advocacy work including the creation of the Asian American Women Art Association. It will also describe how the de Young gave Wong the permission to select works from the museum's collection in order to give Asian American female artists' the opportunity to have their work displayed in the de Young in 2018. The art will be exhibited thematically which could show how Asian American artists delve into similar themes between each ethnic group. The object labels will include

⁷³ Susan R. Ressler, "Asian American Women Artists: Community Networks and Cultural Autonomy," *Women Artists from the West*, edited by Susan R. Ressler, (Jefferson: McFarland, 2010), 53.

biographical information about the artist, text about the work itself and a statement by Wong about why she selected this piece. Each label will be translated into the language of the artist's home country.

- B. This project would meet the needs for the de Young Museum and the field in multiple ways. Between 2008, when the *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents* exhibition opened, and now, there have only been two exhibitions of work by Asian American artists: the works of Maya Lin, a Vietnamese American artist, in 2008 and Kay Sekimachi, a Japanese American artist, in 2016. The de Young Museum is long overdue to have an exhibition that focused on an Asian American artist and in particular, a Chinese American artist since the last exhibitions that focused on a female Asian American artist were the Japanese Americans Ruth Asawa in 2006 and Kay Sekimachi in 2016 and the Vietnamese American Maya Lin in 2008. An exhibition of Flo Oy Wong's work would align with part of FAMSF's mission "to contribute to the economy and culture of San Francisco"⁷⁴ because San Francisco Bay Area has a large Chinese and Chinese American population (people of Chinese descent at 21.4% were the largest subgroup out of 35.8% Asian Americans within San Francisco's population in 2012⁷⁵) and Flo Oy Wong is a Bay Area artist. An article published by the SF Gate states, "Wong, who has taught storytelling classes, believes the telling of the tales can be healing. 'I'm after the stories so our shame can lessen and maybe be eliminated,' she says. "We should be telling our stories. We're a part of the American fabric."⁷⁶ It would

⁷⁴ "About," *Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco*, accessed September 22, 2018, <https://www.famsf.org/about>.

⁷⁵ Kevin Fagan "Asian population swells in Bay Area, state, nation." *SFGate*, last modified March 22, 2012, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Asian-population-swells-in-Bay-Area-state-nation-3425777.php>

⁷⁶ Kimberly Chun, "SECRETS & LIES / A Sunnyvale artist sheds light on sacrifices by Asian immigrants," *SFGate*, last modified October 23, 1998, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/SECRETS-LIES-A-Sunnyvale-artist-sheds-light-2983751.php>.

meet the needs of the field because it could create a dialogue about Asian American art in 2018 since representation in museums and society matters and 2018 is the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of Asian American Studies. Diversity and inclusion in museums in terms of collections, exhibitions, staffing and leadership continue to be ongoing conversations in the field and this would be one way of moving in the direction of bringing more diversity into the museum field.

C. This project has two goals:

a. Foster empathy for the Asian American experience;

and

b. Serve as a catalyst for renewing interest and appreciation of Asian American art.

D. Two objectives for creating empathy for the Asian American experience is executing the exhibit of Flo Oy Wong's work and creating context for the Asian American experience by providing information about the history of Asian Americans entering the United States. Two objectives for being a catalyst for renewing interest in Asian American art in 2018 is publishing a catalogue for the exhibition and having public programs relating to her work and Asian American art. These public programs might include a conversation between Dr. Burgard and Ms. Wong, a symposium about Asian American art and a panel between Ms. Wong and the artists she selected for the exhibit.

E. The first potential stakeholder for this project is the artist Flo Oy Wong because she is a living artist and it is important to represent her work the way she would want it to be shown. The second stakeholder is the population of Chinese Americans in the Bay Area and potentially the rest of the country. They would be stakeholders in this project because the exhibition would bring to light an element of Chinese American history that would be

considered embarrassing and shameful for many older Chinese Americans. The project would potentially be inspiring for young Chinese Americans because it could show them that they could achieve a career in the arts instead of in the business or science field which Chinese American culture prescribes. More importantly, the project would show Chinese Americans that their culture is represented in a public, encyclopedic art museum and the largest public arts institution in San Francisco.⁷⁷ A third potential stakeholder for the project is San Francisco organizations that focus on Asian Americans such as the Chinese Cultural Center and the Chinese Historical Society of America because they can collaborate on related events and public programs for the exhibition. A fourth potential stakeholder is Asian American scholars and Asian American art history scholars because art is a helpful tool for understanding the Asian American experience and Flo Oy Wong's work could be contextualized within the Asian American art movement in the 1990's when many Asian American artworks focused on identity, memory and trauma. Lastly, fifth potential stakeholder is universities with Asian American Studies majors as Asian American Studies professors could use the exhibition as a learning tool to teach students about the Chinese American experience.

- F. The resources needed to implement the project is the space for the exhibition and the artwork itself. The financial resources needed to implement the exhibit are sponsors and donors to the exhibit. The staff resources needed to implement the project are:
- a. Flo Oy Wong: It is my vision that the artist, Flo Oy Wong, will co-curate the exhibition to work with the FAMSF on the direction of the show. Ms. Wong would be hired on a contractual basis for this project.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

- b. Curator: The Curator will co-organize the exhibition and create the text for the didactic labels, object labels and introductory text.
- c. Registrar: The Registrar tracks the location for each piece included in the exhibition and work with other institutions regarding shipping and insuring artwork from other institutions.
- d. Exhibition Designer: The Exhibition Designer will create the layout for the exhibition.
- e. Exhibition Technicians (3): The Exhibition Technicians will install and deinstall the works before the exhibition opens and after the exhibition closes
- f. Sponsorship Manager: The Sponsorship Manager will be responsible for soliciting and cultivating donors to sponsor the exhibit.
- g. Translators: The translators will work with the curators to translate the text into different languages spoken in Asian countries
- h. Editor: The Editor will work on compiling an exhibition catalogue to coincide with the exhibit and editing the exhibition labels.
- i. Publisher: The publication house that published the exhibition catalogs for *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900-1970* and *The Sculpture of Ruth Asawa: Contours in the Air* will be the publisher for this exhibition.
- j. Rights and Reproduction Coordinator: The Rights and Reproductions Coordinator will work with Flo Oy Wong, the Publisher and the Curator to receive approval for the use of images of the artwork for the website and advertisements.
- k. Marketing Coordinator: The Marketing Coordinator is responsible for promoting the exhibition in advertisements, newspapers, and websites.

- l. Outreach Coordinator: The Outreach Coordinator will reach out to communities in the Bay Area with a predominate Chinese population to get them to visit the exhibition.
 - m. Conservator: The Conservator will repair any damages to the artworks before and after the exhibition.
 - n. Educator: The Educator would develop and coordinate the education workshops that are related to the exhibit.
 - o. Public Programs Coordinator: The Public Programs Coordinator will organize the public programs that are in conjunction with the exhibition such as artist talks between the museum and Flo Oy Wong and lectures with Asian American art historians.
 - p. Graphic Designer: The Graphic Designer will design the labels, brochures and publication.
 - q. Photographer: The Photographer will photograph the artworks featured in the exhibition for the catalogue and website, installation shots of the space and promotional shots for the exhibition.
- G. List of tasks needed to implement the project
- a. The Curator will propose the exhibition of Flo Oy Wong to the Director and Board of Trustees as a future exhibition to be held at the De Young Museum.
 - b. The Director and Board of Trustees will approve the exhibition for the De Young Museum.
 - c. The Curator will contact Flo Oy Wong and work with her on the content of the exhibition and selecting objects. (3 years ahead)

- d. The Curator will contact the Registrar to provide a list of works to obtain for the exhibition. The Registrar will write up an incoming loan contract with each owner of the work and send it to each owner.
- e. The Curator will collaborate with Flo Oy Wong, the Graphic Designer, Rights and Reproductions Coordinator, Editor and Exhibition Designer on the design for the exhibit including the catalogue. (3 years ahead)
- f. The Graphic Designer will design the catalogue. (3 years ahead)
- g. The Curator and Flo Oy Wong will collaborate with scholars in Asian American art history and Asian American Studies to write essays to be included in the catalogue. (3 years ahead)
- h. The Graphic Designer will create the exhibition signage for the walls and design the brochure (2 years ahead)
- i. The Rights and Reproductions Coordinator will work with Flo Oy Wong and other artists in the exhibit on approving the usage of the artworks for the website, exhibition materials and promotional materials. (2 years ahead)
- j. The Sponsorship Manager will solicit donors and companies and apply for grants to receive sponsorship for the exhibit. (2 years ahead)
- k. The Curator and Flo Oy Wong will collaborate with Public Programs Coordinator, Educator and Outreach Coordinator on educational and public programs.
- l. The Marketing Coordinator will send out promotional material for the exhibition such as banners and bus signage. (8 months ahead)
- m. The Sponsorship Manager secures funding for the exhibition. (8 months ahead)

- n. The Editor will submit the catalogue to the publishing house to create the publication. (8 months ahead)
- o. The Curator and Flo Oy Wong will write the labels for the exhibition for the Editor to review. (6 months ahead)
- p. The Curator and Flo Oy Wong will work with translators on translating the object labels into different languages such as Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese and Tagalog. (5 months ahead)
- q. The Marketing Coordinator will send out a press release to San Francisco and art press. (5 months ahead)
- r. The Public Programs Coordinator will open registration for educational workshops and public programs on the museum website. (4 months ahead)
- s. The exhibition catalogue is published. (4 months ahead)
- t. The Outreach Coordinator will reach out to universities, community centers and businesses with a predominate Asian population, and Asian centric cultural centers to promote the exhibitions and programs. (4 months ahead).
- u. The Registrar will receive all of the incoming loans of artwork and work with the Conservator on restoring objects that are in need of repair if given permission by the original owner. (2 months ahead)
- v. The Exhibition Technicians, Registrar and Exhibition Designer install the exhibit. (6 weeks ahead).
- w. The Marketing Coordinator will schedule social media promotions to go live during the exhibit (3 weeks ahead)

- x. The Curator and Flo Oy Wong speak at the press preview for the exhibition. (2 days ahead).
- y. The opening reception for the exhibition occurs. (8 hours ahead)
- z. The exhibition opens to the public.
- aa. The Educator and Public Programs Coordinator will hold education workshops and public programs for the exhibit. (1-2 months later)
- bb. The Registrar and Exhibition Technicians deinstall the exhibition. (8 months later)

Chapter 4: Conclusion

As a third-generation Chinese American, researching Chinese American history and Asian American art history has been a cathartic and eye-opening experience that raised several questions for me. The first question that emerged from my research is if Asian Americans have been practicing art since the late 1800's, why have there not been more initiatives to include Asian American artists in art history curriculum and exhibited more of their considerable body of work in art museums? The second is why has Asian American art not gained the exposure that the art created by other groups such as Latino Americans and African Americans have received in art institutions in recent years? The third is how can empathy be incorporated into museum exhibitions to create more open mindedness and compassion in viewers especially in regard to artists from ethnic groups and international artists? I was surprised by the extensive history of Asian Americans making art because I did not have any knowledge on Asian American art and was more familiar with African American art and Latino American art from my art history studies when I started this capstone. I was also surprised by the idea that art and art-making as a career and profession is integral to Asian culture since my experience is that many Asian cultures prioritize careers in medicine, business, and technology.

Asian Americans are getting more exposure this year as seen in the films *Crazy Rich Asians*, *Searching*, and *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*; yet, their visibility in public art institutions is currently nonexistent. Asian American art should be more prioritized in the present. The exhibition of Asian American art can show Asian Americans that their vision and culture are valued in society and help them to feel represented in their community. It would also demonstrate to young Asian Americans that art and museums as career paths are a possibility. Increasing the representation of Asian Americans and their experiences in public art institutions is important because Asian Americans are part of the fabric of American society and deserve to see themselves in museums. Museums are meant to serve, educate, and represent their communities in exhibitions and collections. The San Francisco Bay Area, for example, has a large Asian American population and if art museums are not collecting and exhibiting the work of people in their community, how are they serving this part of their community? In Los Angeles, museums are elevating the work of Asian Americans and other ethnic groups and the Bay Area could follow in its path. In the first Pacific Standard Time initiative presented by the Getty and other Southern California art institutions which focused on art in Los Angeles between 1945 and 1980, there were exhibitions of minority groups such as Asian Americans in *'Round the Clock: Chinese American Artists Working in Los Angeles* (January 21-May 25, 2012) at the Vincent Price Art Museum and *Drawing the Line: Japanese American Art, Design, and Activism in Post War Los Angeles* (October 15, 2011-February 19, 2012) at the Japanese American National Museum; Latino Americans in *Art Along the Hyphen: The Mexican-American Generation* (October 14, 2011-January 8, 2012) at the Autry National Center and *Mapping Another LA: The Chicano Art Movement* (October 16, 2011-February 26, 2012) at the Fowler Museum; and African Americans in *Identity and Affirmation: Post War African American*

Photography (October 23-December 10, 2011) at the California State University Northridge Art Galleries and *Now Dig This! Art and Black Los Angeles 1960-1980* (October 2, 2011-January 8, 2012) at the Hammer Museum. In the second Pacific Standard Time initiative, *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA*, over 70 participating museums had exhibitions focused on Latin American and Latino Art in conversation with Los Angeles, which has a large Latino population, such as *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985* (September 15, 2017-December 31, 2017) at the Hammer Museum, *The US-Mexico Border: Place, Imagination, and Possibility* (September 10, 2017-January 7, 2018) at the Craft & Folk Art Museum, and *Found in Translation: Design in California and Mexico, 1915-1985* (September 17, 2017-April 1, 2018) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The Bay Area could benefit significantly from creating an initiative for Asian Americans to bring attention to artists from the Asian American community.

Asian Americans have a story that can be told through art, and art can arouse people's emotions to create empathy. This capstone is meant to start a conversation about bringing more Asian American artists to the forefront in public art museums considering the longevity of these artists' art practice. I would suggest next steps in relation to my capstone would be to first, actualize the exhibition I proposed in this capstone. This would be a good opportunity for the de Young Museum to show the work of Asian American women artists since the de Young has not had a group exhibition focusing on Asian American women artists to my knowledge in the last decade. A group show on Asian American women artists would parallel group shows on female artists from other ethnic groups like *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985* at the Hammer Museum and *We Wanted a Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965-85* (October 13, 2017-January 14, 2018) at the California African American Museum in Los Angeles. Besides influencing different art media, Asian American women artists played roles as teachers, activists

and institution builders in their communities. The second next step would be for the Bay Area to have a similar initiative to *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA* with the focus on Asian Americans. This initiative would give recognition to Asian Americans for their contributions to the Bay Area, represent their experiences in the art museum community, and increase exposure of Asian American artists to the public. This project will impact the future as it can contribute to the conversation the museum world is having on diversity and inclusion by addressing the lack of Asian American art in museum exhibitions. It will also contribute to the importance of cultivating empathy in museum goers by presenting the Asian American experience directly from that perspective in order to show viewers who may have a stereotypical view of Asian Americans what it actually is. Lastly, it could contribute to the current issues regarding immigration. Flo Oy Wong's piece *made in usa: Angel Island Shhhh* presents the stories of Chinese Americans who were detained at Angel Island and had to fake their identity on paper and continue living that lie in order to enter the country. The embarrassment and fear the Chinese experienced entering the country and the government's specific restriction on Chinese immigrants echoes the current U.S. government's actions regarding immigration as seen with the zero-tolerance policy, the separation of families and the sending of troops to the border to prevent a migrant caravan from crossing. Showing this work could promote empathy for immigrants who risk their lives to create better lives for themselves and provide for their families.

Since I have always had a conflicting relationship with my Chinese American identity, this experience has taught me many things. The Chinese, including my own family, had the courage and determination to provide for their families by risking their lives to immigrate to the United States. The Chinese were also subjected to racial violence and fear of being deported

when they were interrogated on Angel Island and afterwards when they entered the United States if they were a paper person. The Chinese have contributed greatly to California ranging from the agriculture business to the building of the railroad to the art community; yet, Chinese Americans and other Asian Americans are not fully recognized by American society and not represented in public art museums. Since this capstone stemmed from my thought about how I do not feel represented in an art museum, I feel that it is extremely important to advocate for the representation of Asian Americans in public art museums. Flo Oy Wong's sentiment about not feeling complete in any place validates my own experience of feeling incomplete in any place. This has also taught me that Asian American art history is extensive and is vibrant in themes and mediums which I had never known and should be shared with the world. What remains to be done is having an actual conversation that addresses this lack of representation and elevating the work of Asian American artists in public art museums. The work will not be done until there is a concrete plan to have an Asian American art exhibition in this current decade and have museums show Asian American art at least every few years. The questions that remain are when will museums address the lack of representation of Asian Americans in exhibitions and how will they address it?

We are currently living in a day and age where racism, xenophobia, and intolerance continues to be prevalent. Human beings are capable of empathizing with others as it is ingrained in our biology. Artists like Flo Oy Wong, who tell the stories of the unsung hero and challenges how we view ourselves and our communities, have important and powerful messages to say and we, as viewers, should listen with compassion and understanding. Museums have the ability to promote empathy and compassion for others by exhibiting art created by minorities and telling

their stories. In doing so, museums are serving their communities and promoting a more compassionate society.

Appendices

Appendix A: Annotated Bibliography

Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970, edited by Gordon H. Chang, Mark Dean Johnson and Paul J. Karlstrom. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.

Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970 is the first encyclopedic text on Asian American artists active before 1970 to offer critical analysis on those artists who had not received art historical attention. It uses multiple contexts such as aesthetics, art production and criticism, and national and international backgrounds to frame the work of the artists. The book includes a chronology of Asian American art history and has essays on topics such as Asian

American artists in San Francisco, Chinese artists in the United States, and Asian American female artists in California. The essays in the book will provide an understanding of Asian American art history and the essays mentioned above relate to Flo Oy Wong and her work. For example, a chapter on Asian American female artists explains that besides their art practice, many female artists like Ruth Asawa were influential as teachers and institutional builders which relates to Flo Oy Wong's work to advocate for and provide opportunity for Asian American female artists. It will also help to contextualize Wong's work within this history and why her work is important in Asian American art history. In the conclusion of his foreword regarding the perception of Asian American art, author Gordon Chang writes "The ways that dominant society received and understood Asian American artists may lead to new ways of understanding the dynamics of race and racial ideologies in America...Exactly how we will view these works will depend on how receptive we are to challenges to our assumptions about 'American art,' 'modern art,' 'Asian art,' and even about Asian Americans themselves."⁷⁸

Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents 1900-1970, edited by Daniel Cornell. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents 1900-1970 is the exhibition catalogue for the first extensive survey exhibition on Asian American art in the twentieth century at the De Young Museum in 2008. The catalogue and the exhibition reconstruct American art history to include the work of Asian American artists who were largely ignored from the art history canon

⁷⁸ Gordon Chang, "Emerging from the Shadows: The Visual Arts and Asian American History," forward to *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970* ed. Gordon H. Chang, Mark Dean Johnson and Paul J. Karlstrom (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008) xiii.

and recognize their contributions to it. It touches on themes such as war and peace, urban life and community, and philosophy that are found in the work of many Asian American artists featured in the exhibition. This is the first comprehensive exhibit on Asian American artists in a public encyclopedic art museum and the themes featured in this exhibit are relevant to Flo Oy Wong's work such as the theme of urban life and community.

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin Books, 1990.

Ways of Seeing is based on the BBC public television series of the same name by John Berger who challenged traditional Western methods of looking at art and changed the way people viewed it. Berger raised questions about the hidden methodologies in images and argued to see art from viewpoints that oppose our own. Berger's book argues that one views art from different perspectives, it can reveal truths about what we are looking at and about ourselves. For example, in his argument about the different contexts of viewing Old Master's paintings, Berger explains that all images embody a way of seeing and one's understanding, or appreciation of an image relies on our own way of looking. His book could be applied to how one views Asian American art and how if visitors look at it with an open mind, they could potentially understand the Asian American experience and empathize with it. Using the example of *made in usa: Angel Island Shhh* by Flo Oy Wong which presents the stories of Chinese immigrants detained at the Angel Island Immigration Station, museum visitors could view the work with an open mind and show empathy if the museum provided context for the work and historical information about that time period.

Fostering Empathy Through Museums, edited by Elif M. Gokcigdem. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016.

The anthology includes case studies of actual museums, from art museums, children museums and science museums, using different methods to encourage empathy among their visitors. The chapters include case studies such as instilling emotional and cognitive skills through the arts, increasing exhibit engagement using creative exercises and the psychology of empathy. It supplies ideas for future methods to employ empathy in exhibitions, programs and visitor experiences that will serve the museum's mission and create societal growth. *Fostering Empathy in Museums* provides examples of how real-life museums are employing empathy to engage their visitors. The case study on the programs created by the Botin Foundation in Spain and the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence to teach emotion skills in adults, children, adolescents and families through the arts had increased art appreciation and ability to discern the potential harms and benefits of different emotions in participants. This might be applied to the work of Flo Oy Wong in that visitors could be challenged to view art from many perspectives and notice the emotions it conveys.

Krznaric, Roman. *Empathy: Why It Matters, and How to Get It*. New York: TarcherPerigee, 2015.

Roman Krznaric's book asks the question of how society can extend its empathic capabilities. He argues that by recognizing the experiences of others, society can become more fair, creative and happier. The book explains the six habits of empathetic people such as finding

experiences, turning on the empathic brain (the shifting of our mentality to acknowledge that empathy is at the center of human nature) and involving oneself in conversation which help them comprehend how people navigate the world. In order to determine how to encourage empathy in a museum setting, it is important to understand what empathy is and why it is important to society. Once one grasps and commits to a comprehension of empathy, then it could be applied to museums and encourage empathic learning among visitors for art from other cultures.

Latimer, Tirza True. "Flo Oy Wong at the Luggage Store." *Open Space*. Last modified,

November 15, 2013. <https://openspace.sfmoma.org/2013/11/everyone-gets-a-piece-of-the-pie-just-ask-flo-oy-wong/>.

"Flo Oy Wong at the Luggage Store" is a review of a career retrospective of artist Flo Oy Wong's work who creates art using everyday materials and common, poignant actions to convey untold stories that challenge identity. It explains Wong's personal history regarding her parents' immigration to America, her grappling with her identity and family history and its influence on her work. It discusses particularly her use of rice sacks and the theme of food because it allowed Wong to negotiate her family history and Asian stereotypes. This article surveys Flo Oy Wong's work throughout her career and her artistic impact. It also discusses certain artworks about her experience as a Chinese American emigre that would be relevant to my project proposal.

Machida, Margo. *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social*

Imaginary. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

Unsettled Visions explores the pioneering work of Asian American artists during the 1990s. The 1990s was a pivotal period when there was a renaissance of Asian American art, an increase in immigration from Asian countries which affected the cultural landscape of Asian America and a change in the definition of “Asianness” in Asian American art. The book focuses on important themes for Asian American artists during that period such as migration, representation of the Other and a sense of place. Flo Oy Wong’s career flourished in the 1990s around the same time as these artists and her work delves into the same themes that the artists engaged with.

Merritt, Elizabeth. “Empathy a Mile in my Shoes: Closing the Empathy Deficit.” *American Alliance for Museums Center for the Future of Museums Blog*. Last modified May 1, 2017. <https://www.aam-us.org/2017/05/01/empathy-a-mile-in-my-shoes-closing-the-empathy-deficit/>.

Elizabeth Merritt, the Founding Director of the Center for the Future of Museums at the American Alliance of Museums, explains empathy is important for creating social trust and how it is crucial for individuals and society. However, the ability to empathize with others has decreased and the growing empathy deficit could result in intolerance, discrimination and bullying. Empathy is essential to society because it could impact how society addresses issues such as immigration, homelessness, etc. Museums can generate empathy through storytelling and promote altruism and tolerance. Since this was published by the American Alliance for Museums, it demonstrates that empathy is a trending topic and considered important for the

museum field. Empathy could reduce discrimination and intolerance and promote benevolence for other people like Asian American women.

Min, Susette S. "The Last Asian American Exhibition in the Whole Entire World." *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now*, edited by Melissa Chiu, Karin Higa and Susette S. Min. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

This essay raises questions about the undertaking of creating exhibitions focused on identity, the phenomenon of identity centered survey exhibitions, how *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now* belongs within these survey exhibits and why they are needed. Susette S. Min argues that within the context of identity politics this exhibition could create a dialogue for the unanswered issues of racism and multiculturalism from the 1990's and bring it into the mainstream. Min lastly mentions the importance of highlighting the point of moving beyond the boundaries of an identity focused foundation to reassess the community of non-acceptance. This essay provides ideas about the importance of identity-based exhibitions and how to approach the concept of identity in exhibitions especially in an exhibit focused on the identity of a Chinese American female artist.

Piowarczyk, Angelika. "Flo Oy Wong Interview." *Asian American Art Oral History Project*. Chicago: DePaul University University Libraries, 2009.

In this interview with the author, an undergraduate student, Flo Oy Wong describes her family's history, her path into art at the age of forty and her work process of creating art such as

her rice sack pieces. She discusses her becoming an activist because she worked to get representation in museums and argued for a place in museums to show her art that speaks to people. Wong goes into the background history and process of creating the work, *made in usa: Angel Island –Shhh* which received a National Endowment for the Arts grant. This interview gives context to why Flo Oy Wong creates art that tells stories and her passion for bringing representation to Asian American women artists.

Takaki, Ron. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. New York: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown, and Co., 2008.

Ron Takaki's book presents American history from the establishment of Jamestown to the present through the lens of various minorities such as Asian Americans, African Americans, Latino Americans, etc. The book's chapters on Asian Americans focus on subjects such as Chinese women in America, Chinese born Americans, the San Francisco earthquake, and the Chinese Americans' attempt to distance themselves from Japanese propaganda during World War II. The book concludes that America is a country built by minorities and it is our country's critically important quality. *A Different Mirror* shows the history of Chinese Americans in America and will help contextualize the work of artist Flo Oy Wong for my project. If one understands the history of Chinese Americans, it will be helpful to meaningfully creating empathy for the Chinese American experience.

Tchen, John Kuo Wei. "Believing is Seeing: Transforming Orientalism and the Occidental Gaze." *Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art*. New York: New Press, 1994. 12-25.

This essay discusses the perception of Asians in America through the Occidental gaze and how Orientalism was the lens that Westerners including Americans viewed Asians and Asian immigrants. It explains how Asians were prescribed a racial identity, which were the stereotypes of Asians, upon entering the United States and how it affected, and continues to affect, the power dynamics between Asians and Americans. It also describes how the cultural and commercial expressions of Asians as the "other" pervaded in media and society and its effects on the country's policies such as the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. This is relevant because these are bias and perceptions that visitors would probably have when entering an exhibition about Asian Americans. For exhibiting the work of Flo Oy Wong, it would be important to create strategies to counter these biases and redirect their concept of who an Asian American is from the Occidental perspective to the perspective of an actual Asian American.

"The Psychology of Emotional and Cognitive Empathy." Lesley University. Accessed July 24, 2018. <https://lesley.edu/article/the-psychology-of-emotional-and-cognitive-empathy>.

The article explains the concepts of emotional and cognitive empathy which are both important for building compassion for others and creating successful relationships; how we empathize and how to cultivate it. Emotional empathy is feeling the same emotion as another person; the feeling of distress in reaction to noticing another person's anguish; and experiencing

compassion for that person. Cognitive empathy is learning to acknowledge and comprehend a person's emotional wellbeing to process a person's feelings. People empathize by either simulating another's feelings in ourselves or comprehending a person's emotions based on norms for how a person should feel. Humans have the biological ability to cultivate empathy, but societal and cultural factors will affect the level of empathy humans develop. The article explains the psychology of empathy in humans and even though certain factors could influence how a person show empathy, all humans are capable of empathizing with others. If Flo Oy Wong's work was presented with the context of Chinese American history, it is possible that people could understand and empathize with her experience.

Urbanelli, Elisa. *The Sculpture of Ruth Asawa: Contours in the Air*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

This is the exhibition catalogue for the first comprehensive retrospective of Ruth Asawa, a Japanese American female artist. The catalogue contextualizes Asawa within American art history and Asian American history by explaining Asawa's time in the Japanese internment camps, attending Black Mountain College among other artists and the early critical response to her work. It also establishes her importance within the bigger national setting of artists who reconsidered art to be a method of navigating the world. The exhibition focuses on one female Asian American artist who has as an artist, educator and activist background similar to Flo Oy Wong which could be used as a model to present Wong's story and art. Flo Oy Wong was also inspired by Ruth Asawa after seeing her crocheted wire works in Asawa's home to return to making her now famous rice sack pieces.

Wong, Flo Oy. *Flo Oy Wong: 70/30, Seventy Years of Living, Thirty Years of Art*. San Francisco: Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center, 2008.

https://archive.org/details/isbn_9781605854205.

Flo Oy Wong: 70/30 is written by the artist in collaboration with Asian American art historian Margo Machida, curator Nancy Horn and Asian American journalist William Wong. She goes into detail about important works from all of her projects as well as her career path in the arts and making art out of people's stories. The book touches on how her work reveals hidden stories of the Chinese American past and enables a person to understand the Asian American experience. *Flo Oy Wong 70/30* provides context directly from the source to her work because she is describing it in her own words. It will provide a better understanding of her work and how it could be used to convey her experience and the experiences other Asian Americans may have faced.

Appendix B: Images

Figure 1



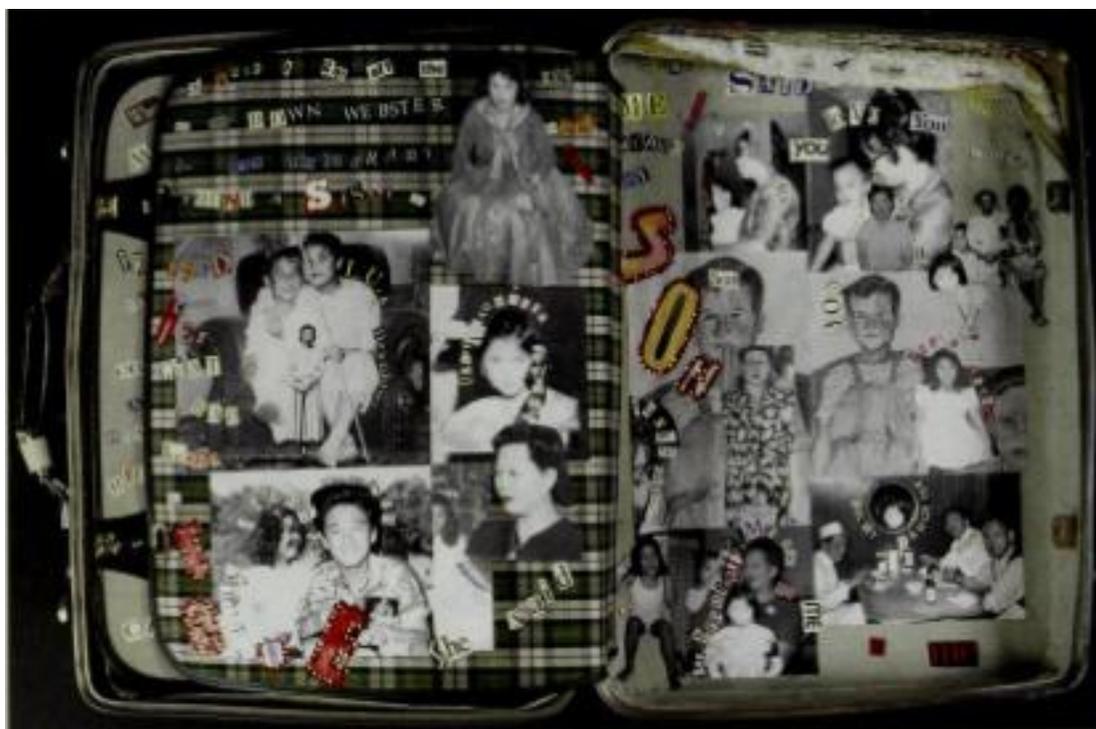
Eye of the Rice: Yu Mai Gee Fon (accompanied by two chairs, Bitter Melon Rice Blues and Lee See Star Mai Aung, and Rice-ing, the rice sack covered child's hobby horse) 1998, 14' x 17' x 2', mixed media (rice sacks, thread, lee see, sequins, beads)

Figure 2



My Mother's Baggage: Lucky Daughter, closed suitcase with tag/gloves, 1996, 15" x 20" x 6," mixed media (suitcase, white gloves beaded, tag, photos)

Figure 3



My Mother's Baggage: Lucky Daughter, inside pages, 1996, approximately 20" x 46," mixed media (suitcase, photos, magazine text, sequins)

Figure 4



1933: Gee Li King, 1998 2' x 3', mixed media (rice sack, beads, sequins, painted text) from *made in usa: Angel Island Shhh*

Figure 5



*In November of 1933 from My Mother's Baggage: Paper Sister, Paper Aunt Paper Wife, 1996
14" x 18" x 11", mixed media (antique suitcase, scanned photos, magazine text)*

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