



## *Glamour & Grace Gala 2008* Celebrates Another Fabulous Year!

**T**he Chinese Historical Society of America presented its annual fund-raising gala *Glamour & Grace 2008* on Saturday, September 20 at 6 pm at the Four Seasons Hotel in San Francisco. A crowd of nearly 400 people representing a grand mix of

Asian American society—political figures, professionals, corporate and foundation sponsors, and community leaders—were present for the evening's festivities.

*Glamour & Grace 2008* showcased artistry and accomplishment through new multi-media presentations accompanying musical performances by Composer & Pianist Jon Jang and Saxophonist Francis Wong. Philip Choy, the Architect of Chi-



*Historian Phil Choy addresses the capacity crowd at CHSA's annual gala.  
Photo by Leland Wong.*

nese American History, was honored by the musical duo with the piece "Three Hundred Years: From the

Empress of China to the Present." A world premiere of a new video sharing about Him Mark Lai, the Dean of Chinese American History, and his legacy was also presented.

2008 has been a landmark year for CHSA with "The Chinese of California: A Struggle for Community" at the California Historical Society. Through a unique collection of artifacts, images, documents, and personal stories, this groundbreaking exhibit explores the complex history and unique challenges of Chinese Americans in their fight for civil rights.

Another prominent example of CHSA's work this year was the launch this spring, in celebration of Asian Pacific Heritage Month, of the *Civil Rights Suite*, a trio of exhibits

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## "The Chinese of California" Closing Reception

**N**early 100 people attended the closing ceremony of "The Chinese of California" exhibit on Thursday, August 21, 2008. This event was a last chance for visitors to view the exhibit while also enjoying a preview of Charlie Chin's work-in-progress performance of "Uncle Toisan," as supported by the California Council for the Humanities, San Francisco Arts Commission, and Zellerbach Family Foundation.

A first-ever collaboration of The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley, California Historical Society, and CHSA, "The Chinese of California" challenged preconceptions about the Chinese immigrant



*David Crosson, California Historical Society Executive Director, addresses the large crowd at the closing ceremony.  
Photo by Dr. Donald Cheu.*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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# Upcoming Events in 2009

## *The Architecture of San Francisco Chinatown*



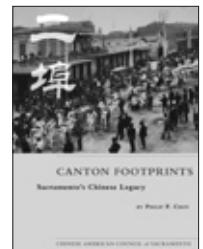
Thursday, February 5, 2009, 6 pm  
San Francisco Public Library, Latino/Hispanic  
Community Room, 100 Larkin Street, San Francisco

The San Francisco Public Library and CHSA present a book reading by Phil Choy, author, retired architect, and Board Emeritus of CHSA. Phil's latest publication is the new edition of his seminal study, *The Architecture of San Francisco Chinatown*.

## *Canton Footprints: Sacramento's Chinese Legacy*

Saturday, February 21, 2009, 2 pm  
CHSA, 965 Clay Street, San Francisco

Chinese Americans have long contributed to Sacramento's diversity and been an integral part of its rich history. In this reading of his most recent book, historian Philip Choy brings more than 150 years of Chinese American history in the Delta area to new audiences.



## *A Celebration of the Year of the Ox: A Historical & Musical Legacy*



*Courtesy Connie Young Yu.*

Saturday, February 28, 2009, 2-5 pm  
Hakone Gardens, 21000 Big Basin Way, Saratoga

CHSA is proud to co-sponsor, in association with the Hakone Foundation, a celebration of the Lunar New Year at the beautiful Hakone Gardens in Saratoga, CA. Historian Connie Young Yu will give an illustrated talk about the garden's history. The event will also feature the musical wonders of

Francis Wong. A \$25 per person donation is kindly requested.

## *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles*

Sunday, March 22, 2009, 2 pm  
CHSA, 965 Clay Street, San Francisco

In *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles*, author and *New York Times* reporter Jennifer 8. Lee takes readers on a remarkable journey that is both foreign and familiar by traveling the world in her quest to understand Chinese food and the people who make it.

Her journey took her to the hometown of General Tso (a military hero immortalized as much for crunchy chicken as his conquests), the surprising origins of the fortune cookie (it's not China!), and to six continents in search of the world's greatest Chinese restaurant. The book also sparks debates as to who really invented chop suey and why Jews love Chinese food—and is an insightful tribute to immigrants and to America.



# Celebrating the Life & Art of Painter Gary Woo

The late Gary Woo was one of the most accomplished artists associated with the 1950s and 60s development of abstract expression. His art is infused with his personal experiences as an immigrant from Canton, China—including enduring a brief detention at Angel Island Immigration Station in 1939.

“I paint to live,” Gary Woo wrote in a vibrant, near-calligraphic script in a handmade book describing his directions in research into balance, turbulence, art, and the cosmos.”

“Gary’s 1960 de Young Museum solo exhibition was described by the *San Francisco Chronicle’s* preeminent art critic Alfred Frankenstein as “a many-sided, ripe, and totally rewarding fusion of Eastern and Western ways in art.” Here “fusion” must be restored to its atomic-age meaning: adding considered, nearly-overpowering yet focused energy to the most basic, elemental particles—for Gary Woo, line and color—and releasing an entirely new state of



Artist Gary Woo at work in 1985. Courtesy Yolanda Garfias Woo.

being, tied to and yet beyond only human scale.”

“Herself an artist and educator, his wife and lifelong partner Yolanda Garfias Woo shares the multi-world perspectives of a deeply rooted Chinese American experience, and the new and innovative explorations made possible by deep study of traditional cultural forms and their enactment by the ancestors before us,” noted CHSA’s Director of Archives and Exhibits, Dr. Anna Naruta, in the project statement for Yolanda’s publication with CHSA in partnership with Oakland Museum

of California and City Lights Foundation.

Yolanda reflects about Gary:

“Gary was a shy man and an inspired painter who never seemed to run out of ideas. He always painted... no matter what. As we began our life together, I determined that my main role was to see that he would never have to stop painting. We lived on the income gained from paintings he sold all through my university years.

When I began teaching, I was able to relieve this financial burden. Every birthday and Christmas (as well as for ‘no reason’ celebrations during the year), I bought him paint, canvas, and rice paper. In this way he never ran out of materials. Our life was completely centered around the arts, education, and painting.”

“Now he has left me with an enormous legacy and the responsibility of caring for all the work he left behind. I have never doubted his value as an artist, and whenever the public saw his work, they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## *A Meeting of Two Souls* Gallery and Illustrated Talk and Booksigning



Yolanda Garfias Woo at the Oakland Museum of California. Courtesy R. Vekony.

Artist Yolanda Garfias Woo shared on Saturday, October 19 about the deep connections between Chinese and Mexican traditional cultures, as shown in her ofrenda for her late husband, the painter Gary Woo.

A 2 pm gallery talk was followed by a 3 pm illustrated talk and booksigning for *A Meeting of Two Souls: A Tribute to Gary Woo, A Painter’s Painter* by Yolanda Garfias Woo (published by CHSA with Oakland Museum of California and City Lights Foundation, 2008).

“Audience members were powerfully moved

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



# Glamour & Grace Gala 2008

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

comprised of *The Chinese of California, Remembering 1882*, and *To Enjoy and Defend Our American Citizenship*. This triumvirate of exhibits is a first voice institution representing the Chinese American fight for equality.

Mistress of Ceremonies Cynthia Gouw, a multiple Emmy-award winning journalist, lawyer, actress, and cover girl, as well as Miss Chinatown USA 1984, presided over the evening's activities. ☞

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*Gala attendees enjoy a glorious evening of food, wine, and merriment. Photo by Leland Wong.*

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## Glamour & Grace Gala 2008



Laurene Wu McClain, daughter of CHSA founder Thomas Wu; Pianist & Composer Jon Jang; and Saxophonist & Flutist Francis Wong.



Lynn Bunim, AT&T Executive Director of External Affairs; Sue Lee, CHSA Executive Director; and Julian Chang.



Long-time CHSA supporters Annie Soo and Him Mark Lai converse during a quiet moment.



Gimmy Park Li; Dr. Anna Naruta, CHSA Director of Archives; Judy Hu, CHSA Communications Manager; and Mistress of Ceremonies Cynthia Gouw.



Buck Gee, VP of Cisco Systems; Sheryle Bolton, President of the Indian Creek Group; and Mary Hackenbrach, Sr. Assistant Attorney General, California Department of Justice.



Valerie Wylie; Artist Yolanda Garfias Woo; and Peter Wiley, Chairman of John Wiley & Sons.

All gala photos by Leland Wong.

## Spirit of Japantown San Jose Street Festival



CHSA Artist-in-Residence Charlie Chin at the Spirit of Japantown. Photo by Jennifer Yu.

CHSA participated in the "Spirit of Japantown San Jose" Street Festival in the South Bay on Saturday, October 4.

Located in the heart of San Jose Japantown in the eight blocks surrounding 5th & Jackson streets, the festival featured arts and crafts, car exhibitions, antiques, fine arts, food and products from Japan, a Hawaiian section, a kids activity zone, and plenty of entertainment.

CHSA Artist-in-Residence Charlie Chin performed original songs in the afternoon at the CHSA booth, which also featured exhibit materials. Colorful cultural booths as well as clips from the films "Homebase: A Chinatown Called Heinlenville" and "Ping Pong Playa," both by Academy-award winning director Jessica Yu, were featured at the festival.

Presented by the Japantown Community Congress of San Jose (JCCsj), the street celebration took place in one of the last three major Japantowns that remain in the United States. 🇺🇸

## Gary Woo

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

re-affirmed my belief. My hope and dream now is for his work to find its way into major museums, publications and collections. I hope his work can be established in such a way, that when I am gone, it will not be lost. He created so much beauty that my daily question is: How can I share this with the world?"

Following the 50-year retrospective of Gary Woo's work in 2004, with the new publication *A Meeting of Two Souls: A Tribute to Gary Woo, A Painter's Painter*, CHSA continues to join with scholars and culture-bearers to document and make accessible to the public these essential works, as part of CHSA's work creating broad-based conversations exploring the experiences of Chinese Americans and the Chinese legacy of the United States.

Gary's work is also featured in the new exhibition, *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900-1970* at the M.H. de Young Museum in San Francisco from October 25, 2008 to January 18, 2009. ☯

## A Meeting of Two Souls

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3



*A close perspective of A Meeting of Two Souls: A Special Ofrenda for Gary Woo. Courtesy Yolanda Garfias Woo.*

by Yolanda's talk," said Barbara Henry, Chief Curator of Education at the Oakland Museum of California. "They learned much about Gary's life as an exceptional painter, their unique bond as life long soul mates and partners, and her own work as an anthropologist and artist. This was all evident, too, in the ofrenda she created in honor of Gary for our exhibition, 'Evolution of a Sacred Space: Días de los Muertos 2008.'

"The work reflects a fusion of their Chinese and Mexican traditions that permeated their creative lives together as artists. It also speaks to the evolution of the Días de los Muertos tradition in California in incorporating the cultural references and experiences that reflect the rich life and contributions of a very

special artist and human being who touched so many lives."

*A Meeting of Two Souls: A Special Ofrenda for Gary Woo* by Yolanda Garfias Woo was on display at the Oakland Museum of California Días de los Muertos exhibition from October 8 through December 7, 2008. ☯

## "The Chinese of California"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



*Sue Lee, CHSA Executive Director, speaks passionately about the success of the exhibit. Photo by Dr. Donald Cheu.*

experience by telling the story through the voices of Chinese Californians themselves as they join countless other immigrants in defining what it means to be a Californian and an American.

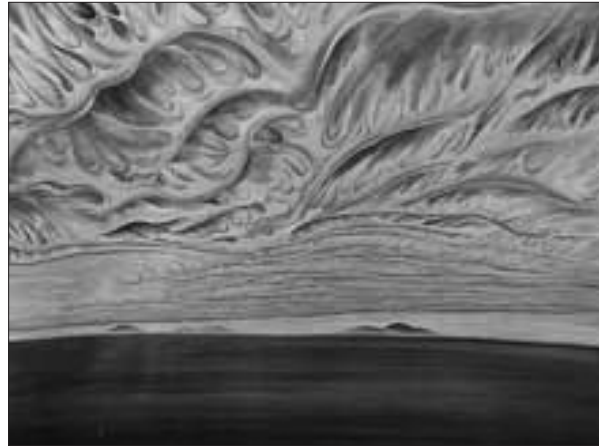
"Partnering with The Bancroft Library and California Historical Society [was] a milestone," said Sue Lee, CHSA's Executive Director. "A collaboration between all our institutions recognizes this relevant topic. Beyond the discrimination, this exhibit is a humanizing story about people who are struggling to survive and succeed—concepts that every immigrant arriving in America strives for." ☯



## *Shifting Currents, 1900-1970* Asian/American/Modern Art

The first comprehensive exhibition to explore the rich history of work produced by artists of Asian ancestry in America, *Shifting Currents, 1900-1970* brings together 95 masterworks created during the first seven decades of the 20th century, shedding new light on some of the most important cultural contributions of Asian Americans during this period.

The exhibition attests to the impact of Asian culture in America by both immigrant and native-born artists. Major highlights include the 1960s Fluxus innovations of media artists Nam June Paik and Yoko Ono; the first museum exhibition of immense public art works by Tseng Yuho and Dong Kingman; and the opportunity to consider together



Setting Sun, Sacramento Valley,  
ca. 1925 by Chiura Obata.

the revolutionary abstraction of Yun Gee, Alfonso Ossorio, and Isamu Noguchi.

The exhibition also premieres important works by artists Mine Okubo and George Matsusaboro Hibi created during the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. In addition, treasures such as a 1968 folding screen by Chang

Dai-chien and calligraphy by Martin Wong make this exhibition important and critical for anyone interested in American art.

It is important to note that strict immigration legislation of the era means that works by Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Korean American artists are predominant; other Asian American communities for artistic expression came later in the century, when these laws were relaxed.

*Shifting Currents* will be on display at the M.H. de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park, 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, San Francisco, through January 18, 2009. CHSA is proud to have been a part of the Audience Development Committee for this exhibit. ☯

## **“Uncle Toisan” at the de Young Museum**

Artist-in-Residence Charlie Chin gave a special, work-in-progress performance of his newest *History Alive!* feature, “Uncle Toisan,” at the M.H. de Young Museum in San Francisco on November 21.

“Uncle Toisan” features the stories of several individuals with challenging experiences as a Chinese immigrant to the United States. He is an eyewitness to Chinese American history who bridges the Exclusion Era (1882–1943) experience, the modern post-civil rights experience (1965–current) and emergence of Asian American consciousness.

Uncle Toisan enters the country as a 17-year-old “paper son” and perseveres through a two-month detention at Angel Island Immigration



Charlie Chin as “Uncle Toisan.”  
Photo by Judy Hu.

Station. Drafted to serve in Europe during World War II, he returns from the battlefield to face discrimination at home as a laborer in the restaurants and laundries of San Francisco Chinatown.

However, Uncle Toisan witnesses and experiences the tremendous changes in Chinatown stemming from the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the final lifting of the Exclusion Act, the growth of Asian American political empowerment, and the changing demographics of California due to the post-Vietnam rounds of immigration.

This “Uncle Toisan” performance is part of the Friday Nights at the de Young event running through the *Asian/American/Modern Art: Shifting Currents, 1900-1970* exhibit. ☯

# The Legacy Circle



*The main exhibit at CHSA welcomes thousands of visitors to the museum every year. Photo by Dr. Donald Cheu.*

The Legacy Circle recognizes and honors those generous individuals whose estate and life income gifts will provide future support for CHSA. The Circle is open to all those who provide support for CHSA in their estate plans, through wills, trusts, life income gifts, IRAs, retirement plans, life insurance policies, and other vehicles. Membership does not involve dues or obligations of any kind, and information is never shared with others.

CHSA holds special events for members of the Circle, including performances and lectures delivered by CHSA artist-in-residence and other special guests. Members who have given permission to list their names will be recognized in the *CHSA Bulletin* and in other publications. If you wish to join the Legacy Circle, please contact Judy Hu at [judy@chsa.org](mailto:judy@chsa.org) or (415) 391-1188 x107. ☎

The *CHSA Bulletin* is published quarterly. To contribute articles about Chinese American community and historical news and events, please submit articles to [judy@chsa.org](mailto:judy@chsa.org).

Writer & Editor: Judy Hu || Design: Elaine Joe

CHSA will be closed for the holidays from December 16, 2008 to January 5, 2009. We will see you next year beginning January 6, 2009!



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