

EXHIBITION ADVISORY

Exhibition: *Making In Between: Contemporary Chinese American Ceramics*

On View: March 14 – August 23, 2020

Reception: March 14, 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm • Talk @ 7:00 p.m.

[High-resolution Images](#) • [Press Release \(pdf\)](#) • [Web](#) • [Reception](#)



Image: Wanxin Zhang, *Two Treasures*, *Self Portrait*, *Mandarin Warrior*, *Mao with Red Babies*, *Mulan with Pussy Hat*, 2018, various dimensions, approximately 26 inches tall, ceramic

(Pomona, Calif.—October 18, 2019) *Making In Between: Contemporary Chinese American Ceramics* examines the works of six first- and second-generation Chinese American ceramic artists from the United States and provides a basis for dialog and inter-cultural exchange during an era fraught with international tensions.

Jennifer Ling Datchuk (b. 1980) is a child of a Chinese immigrant and grandchild of Russian and Irish immigrants. Her work transports the familiar to the strange, imbuing common domestic items with symbolic questions of identity, place, and belonging.

“My work has always dealt with identity, with the sense of being in-between, an imposter,

neither fully Chinese nor Caucasian. I have learned to live with the constant question about my appearance: "What are you?"

Datchuk holds an MFA from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and a BFA from Kent State University. She has participated in artist residencies at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien (Germany) and the European Ceramic Work Center (Netherlands), Vermont Studio Center (USA), and The Pottery Workshop (China). She was awarded the 2017 Emerging Voices Award from the American Craft Council.

Sin-ying Ho (b. 1963) was raised in Hong Kong before immigrating to Canada in 1992 and New York thereafter. Ho overlays figurative decals created digitally in New York on traditional ceramic forms she produces in China. Her works are amalgams of ceramic pieces fired and glazed separately, brought together as a melting pot of artistic and personal identity.

"Migration, transplanting, and growing up in a colony like Hong Kong generates a sense of displacement and involves a constant negotiation of my identity.... As the world moves towards greater globalization, many nationalities and cultures will merge together and evolve into an unknown global culture. I reference my own experience being Chinese and living in North America with the cultural collisions I have endured. This cross-cultural experience speaks to a universal phenomenon."

After receiving a degree in ceramics from Sheridan College in Ontario, Canada, in 1995, she earned a BFA in ceramics from the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design in Halifax and an MFA from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

Beth Lo (b. 1949) was born in Lafayette, Indiana, shortly after her parents emigrated from China. Water, a central element in many of her works, is represented with a blue/green celadon glaze, conjuring the frustration, alienation, and disaster Lo experienced during her childhood.

The birth of her son in 1987 marked a turning point in her work, which now uses calligraphy and traditional Chinese form and iconography to examine the intersection of heritage, identity, motherhood, and parenting.

Lo received a Bachelor of General Studies from the University of Michigan and an MFA from the University of Montana. She received a United States Artists \$50,000 fellowship and a Visual Artists Fellowship Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her work has been exhibited and collected by museums internationally.

Cathy Lu (b. 1984) grew up as part of the only Chinese American family in a Miami, Florida, neighborhood that was home to Cuban exiles and immigrants. "I'm uncomfortable with the phrase Asian American because I've always felt that having been born here, I'm just 'American,' but I understand that I will never be seen that way. I've always been surprised about how people react by the way I look – assuming that I can or can't speak Chinese or English. If I'm in Noe Valley washing my clothes at the laundromat, people will sometimes assume I work there."

Lu's work explores the idea that food can be a language of home, and it deconstructs the way food (fruits, sauces, spices, and more) creates a sense of identity and belonging. By manipulating traditional imagery of Chinese art and presentation, she unpacks what it means to be trans-cultural, and how ideas of cultural "authenticity" and "tradition" interface with contemporary trans-cultural experiences.

Lu received her BA and BFA from Tufts University and The School of the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston MA) and her MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute.

Stephanie H. Shih (b. 1986) was raised with one younger brother by Chinese-Taiwanese parents whose love of home cooking laid the foundation of her fascination with food. "Food carries meaning for everyone but especially people who have only known life in the diaspora, whose identities are tied to a figurative homeland that exists only in the memories and experiences that this set of people [has] had."

Her work went viral in July of 2018 when she posted photos of a new body of work – rows and rows of identical ceramic dumplings, folded and arranged by hand. Responses came from all corners of the country and from diverse communities, all united by deep nostalgia. "I think it feels important to me to create space because we don't have a shared physical place. We have to create dialogue and that becomes the space that we have...this is ours and it's just for us."

Her work has been exhibited at Wieden+Kennedy, Portland, Oregon, Chinese Cultural Center, San Francisco, Hashimoto Contemporary, San Francisco, and Pioneer Works, Brooklyn. She lives and works in New York City.

Wanxin Zhang (b. 1961) was born and educated in China and graduated from the prestigious LuXun Academy of Fine Art in sculpture in 1985. A successful state artist, Zhang discovered the work of Robert Rauschenberg at the Beijing Art Museum in 1985, "before [which], [he] had no idea what was possible to express in modern art, or what it could look like."

In 1992, he relocated to San Francisco with his wife and young child knowing little English and driven by his desire to pursue an artistic career. He immersed himself in the regional art scene, influenced by Manuel Neri, Robert Arneson, and Viola Frey. "As a Chinese person, clay is in my blood. Clay and ceramics have been an integral part of Chinese culture for millennia...At the same time, having distance from China is what freed me to utilize these materials to fit my personal narrative."

Zhang has had numerous solo museum exhibitions, including exhibitions at the Museum of Craft and Design (San Francisco), Holter Museum of Art (Helena), Bellevue Arts Museum (Bellevue) and Arizona State University Art Museum. His work is held in public collections throughout China, Japan, and the United States.

Making In Between: Contemporary Chinese American Ceramics is curated by Beth Ann Gerstein, Executive Director of the American Museum of Ceramic Art.

In conjunction with the exhibition, AMOCA members can attend an exhibit-specific curator walkthrough on May 9, 2020. For the duration of the exhibition, AMOCA's educational programs, including K-12 tours, will have age-appropriate educational materials available. On April 11, 2020, *Family Day* participants will experience hands-on activities relating to this topic and special tours.

Education programs are made possible in part by the Ruth and Joseph C. Reed Foundation for the Arts and the DEW Foundation.

The exhibition will be featured on the Museum's website, as well on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter using the hashtag #makinginbetween

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October 18, 2019

CALENDAR LISTING

Making In Between: Contemporary Chinese American Ceramics opens at the American Museum of Ceramic Art, 399 N Garey Ave, Pomona, CA 91767 on March 14, 2020, 6-9 PM with a talk at 7 PM. The exhibition runs through August 23, 2020. The museum is open Wednesday-Sunday, Noon to 5 PM. For more information: www.amoca.org/makinginbetween or (909) 865-3146 or communications@amoca.org.

Credit

This exhibition is organized by the American Museum of Ceramic Art.

About AMOCA

The American Museum of Ceramic Art was founded in 2003, in Pomona, California. The mission of the museum is to champion the art, history, creation, and technology of ceramics through exhibitions, collections, outreach, and studio programming.

Museum Hours

Wednesday through Sunday, Noon–5 PM

Admission

General \$7, Student/Senior \$5, Members & under 12 Free

Location

American Museum of Ceramic Art
399 North Garey Avenue, Pomona, CA
91767 (909) 865-3146 • www.amoca.org

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For immediate release.

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