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Citation: Wong, D. 2021. Promiscuous Care in Movement-Based Research: Lessons Learned from Collaborations in Manhattan's Chinatown. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, 14:2, 1–11. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/ijcre.v14i2.7765>

ISSN 1836-3393 | Published by UTS ePRESS | <http://ijcre.epress.lib.uts.edu.au>

RESEARCH ARTICLE (PEER-REVIEWED)

Promiscuous Care in Movement-Based Research: Lessons Learned from Collaborations in Manhattan's Chinatown

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/ijcre.v14i2.7765>

Article History: Received 15/06/2021; Revised 15/11/2021; Accepted 23/11/2021; Published 12/2021

Abstract

Decolonial and feminist studies scholars have long recognised the intricate ways in which the personal and academic are deeply interwoven and that the co-production of knowledge is essential for social transformation. This article examines the cultural organising of the Chinatown Art Brigade, an intergenerational collective of artists, activists, writers, educators and practitioners driven by the fundamental belief that cultural, material, and aesthetic modes of production have the power to combat gentrification. Specifically, I situate the collective within a longer lineage of Asian American cultural organising in Manhattan Chinatown and draw from years of movement-based research as a member of the collective. Incorporating personal reflection and interviews conducted with brigade members, this article speaks to how the themes of power, temporality and affectivity show up in movement-based research. How can we think more capaciously about academic and non-academic collaboration, to push the boundaries and explore new possibilities that honour the time, expertise and trauma of directly impacted communities? In reflecting on my work with the Chinatown Art Brigade, I discuss the nuances of intergenerational co-production of knowledge and interrogate how a feminist ethics of promiscuous care can uncover new possibilities for collaboration between cultural workers, organisers and movement-based scholars within and beyond the neoliberal academy.

Keywords

Promiscuous Care; Community Engagement; Displacement; Research Methods; Cultural Activism; Chinatown

Introduction

Although Manhattan Chinatown continues to be an important destination for Asian immigrants, it faces major transformation as a site of mass displacement. Being in such close proximity to Tribeca, SoHo, the Financial District and the East River waterfront promenade, Chinatown is often described as the ‘final frontier’ for redevelopment by city officials and real estate developers. In the years directly after 9/11, the city’s housing and land use policies under the Bloomberg administration accelerated the gentrification of Chinatown by allowing for upzoning and real estate developers to build without any accountability to existing residents ([Kwong & Stein 2015](#)). Between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of Asian residents living in Chinatown dropped by 18 per cent due to rent increases and forcible evictions ([CAA AV 2008](#)). Despite community protests, there have been dozens of luxury hotels and high-rise developments built in Chinatown without public hearings, environmental impact assessments, or input from residents ([Wong 2019](#)). Nearly 30 per cent of businesses in Chinatown are now classified as ‘high-end’, including clothing boutiques, upscale restaurants and galleries, in particular, artist-run spaces, white box galleries, pop-up spaces and arts nonprofits ([Li 2013](#)). As of 2015, 40 per cent of all new galleries had opened in Chinatown, outpacing Chelsea, Bushwick and Upper East Side ([Moy 2016](#)). A lion’s share of these galleries have opened in clusters along Delancey, Orchard, Grand and Chrystie Streets, contributing to speculation, increasing rents, and the displacement of longtime tenants and small businesses.

While much of the scholarship on gentrification interrogates the complicity of artists in the process of gentrification, I consider here the radical possibility of socially engaged artists in shaping the emancipatory future of neighbourhoods ([Deutsche 2002](#); [Deutsche & Ryan 1984](#); [Lin 2019](#); [Molotch, Harvey & Treskon 2009](#); [Zukin 1982](#)). In what follows, I centre the work of the Chinatown Art Brigade, an intergenerational collective of artists, activists, writers, educators and practitioners driven by the fundamental belief that cultural, material, and aesthetic modes of production have the power to combat gentrification. Specifically, I situate the formation of the collective within a longer lineage of Asian American cultural organising in Manhattan Chinatown, and draw on several years of involvement as an active member, as well as personal interviews with other collective members. I am particularly interested in exploring how the themes of power, temporality and affectivity show up in community-based research, and how we can dream more capaciously about academic and non-academic collaboration in order to push the boundaries and explore new possibilities that honour the time, expertise and trauma of those most impacted. I draw inspiration from decolonial, feminist and disability scholars who have written about how the personal and academic are deeply interwoven, and why knowledge production that centres the construction of care infrastructures is essential for deeper structural changes. I conclude by sharing lessons learned from my work with the brigade and discuss how a feminist ethics of promiscuous care can uncover new possibilities for collaboration with multiply marginalised communities.

From the Basement to the Brigade: Artist Collectives in Manhattan Chinatown

In the autumn of 2015, artists Tomie Arai, ManSee Kong and Betty Yu came together to form the Chinatown Art Brigade (CAB). As Asian American visual artists with roots in Chinatown movements, the brigade grew out of a series of informal conversations and from their individual relationships with CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities (CAA AV) over the span of two decades. Founded in 1986, CAA AV is a grassroots organisation in Manhattan Chinatown, established in the wake of anti-Asian violence in the 1980s, including the murder of Vincent Chin in 1982. The three women came together to discuss possibilities for the collective, and with guidance from CAA AV to strategise how CAB could produce cultural work that was accountable to those most impacted by gentrification ([Yu 2017](#)). Those dialogues were the beginning of the brigade as a collective, as Betty recalled: ‘Our goal as artists is to

work with CAAAV and to advance their tenants' rights work, solidarity work with them is central to our entire cultural production process' (Yu 2016). Similarly, Tomie, who has the most experience working in collectives, explained why the collaboration between CAB and CAAAV presented a new model of cultural organising: 'We are accountable to those most impacted. Past cultural collectives never worked directly with an organization the way we do, with constant contact, issue identification, and base building. We are still working to understand what it means to be accountable not only to the community but also to the people who are supporting us (Arai 2016). Importantly, CAB's work must be understood within a longer lineage of Asian American cultural organising in Chinatown, a neighbourhood that has been a hub for intergenerational collaboration through various artist collectives.

In 1969, a group of writers, artists, curators, musicians and activists met in the basement of a tenement building on Catherine Street to form what later became known as the Basement Workshop. Largely influenced by national conversations around Black Power, Third World Liberation, the anti-Vietnam War movement and local socio-cultural transformations in the city, early members of the Basement Workshop came together to exchange ideas about Asian Americanness and to produce place-specific cultural work that spoke to the material conditions of a fast changing Chinatown (Chiang 1988). Basement Workshop functioned as a community arts space and sponsored the Amerasia Creative Arts Program, which organised cultural programs, literary events, screenings, performances and exhibitions, and offered art workshops on film, silk screening, photography and choreography (Chang 2009; Ishizuka 2016; Maeda 2012). It also created a space for young Asian Americans in New York City to connect their individual artistic practices to broader structural issues facing their communities, such as poverty, healthcare access, housing, police brutality and militarisation. Fay Chiang, who was the director of Basement Workshop, wrote a short reflection titled 'Looking Back' about the work of the collective, she recalled: 'Many of the people involved were like myself: second generation Chinese Americans who had lived most of our lives in the boroughs, whose parents worked in laundries, sweatshops, shirt-press factories, or restaurants' (Chiang 1988). As a poet, visual artist and community activist, Fay became involved in Basement Workshop through Yellow Pearl and would later spend four decades of her life working to build an Asian American cultural movement in New York City.

Basement Workshop ran programs for at-risk Asian American youth and campaigned for special education programs for new immigrants and their children in Chinatown. Their work also included self-published DIY zines to promote representation in efforts to challenge portrayals of Asian Americans as model minorities, a term coined by sociologist William Petersen in 1966 that continues to have negative consequences today (Saval 2018). In 1976, Basement Workshop launched *Bridge* magazine, a quarterly Asian American movement publication aimed at building pan-Asian American political consciousness and identity. The collective also published bilingual newspapers, such as *Workers Viewpoint*, and the feminist graphic anthology *Yellow Pearl* (Chang 2009; Liu, Geron & Lai 2008). In an article written by Michelle Chen, whose parents were involved in student activism in Chinatown in the 1970s, she reflected: 'The Basement Workshop also had artistic renderings of Asians in America that complimented their activism in the neighborhood, as activists they organized demonstrations and street fairs' (Chen 2013). Basement Workshop inspired the formation of other collectives, such as Chinatown Health Fair (now known as Charles B. Wang Community Health Center), Asian American Art Center, Asian CineVision and the Museum of Chinese in America. Many of the artists involved with Basement Workshop later became community leaders and went on to found other Chinatown-based organisations and collectives, including the Godzilla: Asian American Arts Network and, more recently, the Chinatown Art Brigade.

I became involved with CAB in the Spring of 2016 directly through my work with CAAAV. As an organisation, CAAAV has a long history of combating anti-Asian violence in all its forms, from evictions to police brutality to labour rights for sex workers, domestic workers, street vendors and garment workers. While still a graduate student at the time, I signed up to volunteer with CAAAV's Chinatown Tenants

Union (CTU) and became involved with their eviction defence and housing justice campaigns. Founded as a branch of CAAAV in 2005, CTU organises low-to-no income tenants in Chinatown around eviction and displacement. As a volunteer, I went door knocking twice a week in buildings to see if tenants had heat, water and access to basic repairs. It was common for tenants to be on the brink of being forcibly evicted from their homes or dealing with landlord harassment. At the same time, I saw the scope of creative resistance tactics that residents were using to combat gentrification, with the work of CAB at the forefront of the movement to stay. The cultural organising of CAB is instructive in broadening the scope of how we understand collaboration between cultural workers, organisers and movement-based scholars, especially around issues of urban dispossession.

In what follows, I draw inspiration from the work of decolonial, feminist and disability scholars to propose an ethics of promiscuous care as a framework for understanding the cultural organising of CAB and the importance of relational, experimental and restorative collaboration that disrupts the particular temporalities produced by the neoliberal university.

Towards a Praxis of Promiscuous Care

We live in a time of multiple crises that have exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, including asymmetrical relationships that differently marginalised communities have with precarity. From the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on unhoused people worldwide to preventable climate catastrophes in the Global South to the murder of unarmed Black men, women and children in the United States, we have witnessed the urgent need for alternative forms of care and mutual interdependencies. For marginalised communities that have to reckon with the impossibility of living in prolonged crises, we have also seen the emergence of more capacious notions of care in the form of mutual aid, coalitional alignments, and the redistribution of resources ([Hobart & Kneese 2020](#); [Spade 2020](#)). In this section, I draw inspiration from what The Care Collective calls an ethics of *promiscuous care* as a framework for collaborative praxis between cultural workers, organisers and movement-based scholars working alongside already vulnerable communities. In opposition to self-care, which some argue has been depoliticised under the neoliberal imperatives of individualism, promiscuous care, as an alternative, extends outwards in ways that challenge traditional conceptions of intimacy and kinship ([The Care Collective 2020](#)). As a framework for praxis, promiscuous care reimagines how collaboration can be a restorative experience vital to the deeper understanding and collective healing of Black, Brown, Indigenous, immigrant, queer, trans, disabled, poor and incarcerated communities.

In *The Care Manifesto* ([The Care Collective 2020](#)), the authors describe promiscuous care as multiplying who we care for and how we care, and put forth ‘an ethics that proliferates outwards to redefine caring relations from the most intimate to most distant’. As a framework for collaborative praxis, promiscuous care necessitates caring for one another in ways that are capacious and constructive of care infrastructures that reflect sustained community input and participation and that resist bureaucratised timeframes. There are numerous ways that we can radically democratise and build caring infrastructures so as to achieve more livable futures. They include mutual aid, expansion of public green space, cooperative housing, youth clubs, worker cooperatives, nurseries, libraries and neighbourhood support groups that allow communities to deepen coalitional alignments and gain access to material resources, space, skills and expertise. To foster an ethics of promiscuous care opens up the possibility for a sustainable model of cooperative knowledge production that foregrounds abundance, improvisation, embodiment and reciprocity as central to the collaborative process. As research becomes increasingly commodified, privatised and inaccessible due to the gatekeeping nature of the neoliberal academy, imbuing an ethics of promiscuous care in community collaboration enables us to imagine new ways of sharing knowledge that are more inclusive and alternative methods of researching, writing, publishing and knowing that are affective and alive.

Promiscuous care introduces a temporal element to collaborative praxis that critiques linear, normative and progressive time. This is related to what Alison Kafer calls *crip time* as a means to enact alternative notions of temporality. She writes ‘rather than bend the bodies and minds to meet the clock, crip time bends the clock to meet disabled bodies and minds’ (Kafer 2013). It seems more apparent than ever that we need to adopt a feminist ethics of personal and collective care – making time to take care of ourselves, each other, and the communities with whom we write in solidarity. In discussing Audre Lorde’s *A Burst of Light* on the devastating effects of overextension, queer feminist disability studies scholars Jina B Kim and Sami Schalk propose a form of radical self-care that exists outside of capitalist temporalities and that simultaneously reckons with the ‘complexities of claiming time for ourselves to slow down, to take care, while also understanding the real urgency of our contemporary movement’ (Kim & Schalk 2021). Crucially, promiscuous care serves as a reminder that to slow down is an act of refusal to accept the capitalist pressures of hyper-productivity that often replicate harms and reinforce unrealistic expectations in collaborative work. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha writes in *Care Work*, crip time is also about making time to tend to each other’s needs, desires, dreams and visions – it is about building *care webs* that create collective access so that those most precarious are able to fully participate in the work with autonomy and dignity (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018). When we prioritise restoration as central to collaborative processes, we find ways to dream bigger. In what follows, I interrogate the cultural organising of CAB through an ethics of promiscuous care, and specifically focus on a project called ‘Here To Stay’ as a rich, local exploration of what it means to prioritise the construction of caring infrastructures in collaboration.

Who Did You Displace to be Here? Here to Stay Mobile Projections

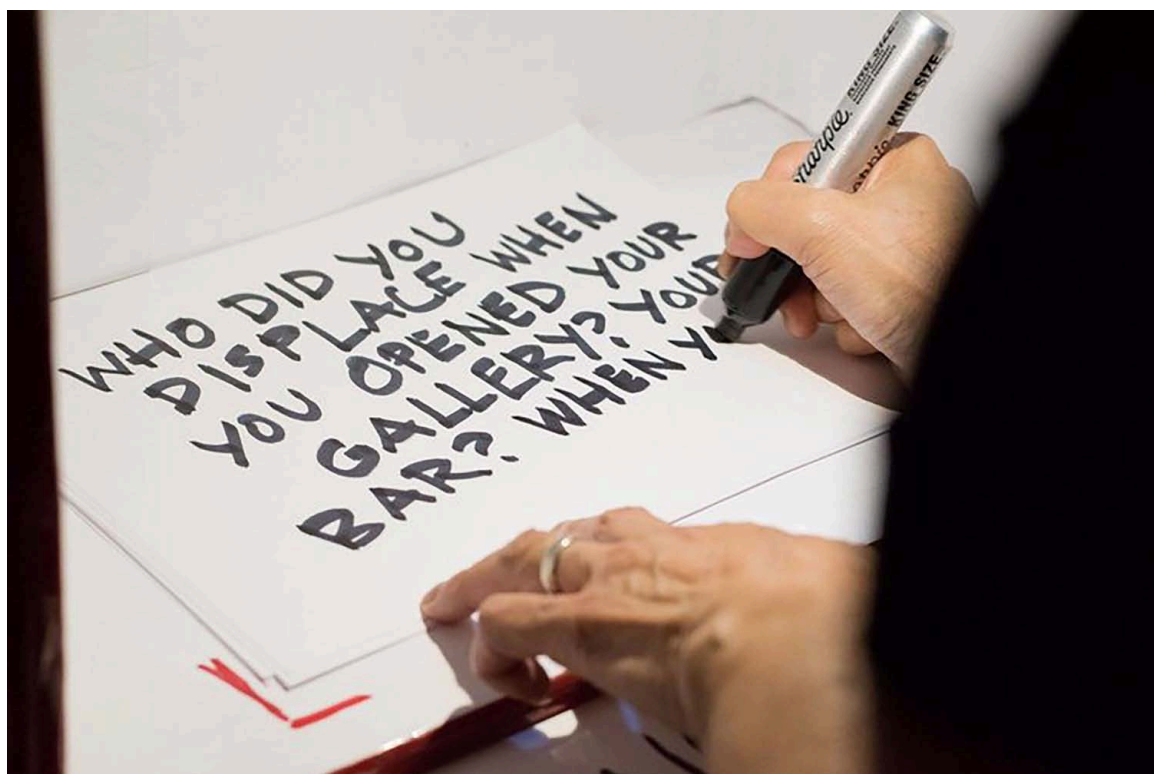


Figure 1. Chinatown Art Brigade member writing on the People’s Pad (Photo: KahEan Chang)

In the summer of 2016, CAB grew to include other artists, educators, activists and residents, including Mimi Yaw, Liz Moy, Emily Chow Bluck, Huiying B Chan, KahEan Chang, Linda Luu, Anna Ozbek,

Lena Sze, Louis Chan, Daphne Xu, Si Wang and myself. The conversations with CAAAV continued for months before culminating in a project titled 'Here To Stay', which involved a series of workshops with CTU tenants and a large-scale outdoor projection. The goals of this collaborative project were twofold: to visually chronicle narratives of displacement and to amplify the Chinatown community-led rezoning plan that would increase tenant protections. On a humid night in August, dozens of residents crowded around the Middle School M.S. 131 on Hester Street. There were crowds of youth and elders standing around the building and pointing up towards the illuminated images, graphics and hand-drawn messages that were live projected from the top of a parked van. The content came from oral histories, photos, graphics and videos that were slowly gathered over the span of an entire summer during a series of collaborative workshops with CTU tenants. According to Betty, these workshops were critical in determining the overall project direction and pace of collaboration: 'Through placekeeping walks, mapping, photography, story circles, drawing exercises, together we created what would be projected onto the buildings in Chinatown. It wasn't like we were "parachuting" in to extract from the people, the process of co-creation was important' (Yu 2016).

The first workshop held that summer was in the form of a story circle. The meeting was held on a Sunday afternoon and a group of 15 people sat around a table to share personal experiences with gentrification. The purpose of the story circle was to offer everyone a chance to share their immediate housing concerns and to curate a space for creative intervention. The story circle also provided the opportunity for CAB members and CTU tenants to become familiar with one another and to deepen relationships across age and language. Many of the CTU tenants shared their personal experiences with eviction and how they became involved with housing justice work in Chinatown. The younger CAB members shared about their connections to the neighbourhood and identified gentrification-related changes that they had observed over the years, including the increased presence of police on the streets. In another workshop, the CAB co-founders shared their own artistic practice and described how cultural modes of production could support the broader movement for housing justice. The group then participated in a collaborative mapping exercise, which involved locating places in Chinatown with which people had deep connections, including specific buildings, parks, and grocers. During the mapping exercise, attendees collaboratively created a map of all the locations and named it the People's Placekeeping Tour of Chinatown, a play on words that exposed the place-making tactics used by developers to gentrify neighbourhoods.

The place-keeping walk took place shortly after the mapping workshop. During the walk, Liz Moy, who is a lifelong resident of Chinatown, took the group to where she grew up on Bayard Street, next to the Chinatown Ice Cream Factory, and then to her family business on Bowery Street. Mimi Yaw walked everyone to where she and her mother live on Canal Street and spoke about the many struggles they have had to endure with the landlord who has tried to evict them numerous times under the guise of renovating the building. Mimi invited everyone to her apartment and, while walking up three flights of stairs, explained what inspired her to become a member of CTU. Ms Zheng, who started out with CTU in 2005 as an intern, brought the group to the garment factory that she worked in for three decades as a seamstress and then to her apartment on Delancey Street. Ms Zheng spoke in Mandarin about how she successfully formed a tenants association in her building to fight back against the landlord. There were others who also shared their stories during the place-keeping walk. Betty reflected on the process afterwards: 'We made stops at places that tourists do not know or care about. Like, the first unionized restaurant in Chinatown or the theater called Music Palace where we used to pay three dollars and watch movies. These places are coded and filled with memories, it's important that personal associations are well preserved for future generations' (Yu 2016). The purpose of the place-keeping walk was to cultivate community knowledge and collect stories and visuals to be projected onto buildings as narratives of resistance.

To incorporate the materials collected from the workshops and place-keeping walk in the projections, CAB worked with CTU tenants to create a slideshow montage using materials that could be projected onto a Chinatown building. The series of workshops leading up to the projections allowed tenants to develop

their own visual direction and storytelling skills. Tomie recalled working with a CTU tenant leader who was very active in the production process: ‘David is a creative person, I mean he independently took photographs of the conditions in his apartment, created photo albums, burned these discs with the images, and designed posters for actions’ (Arai 2016). After several back and forth feedback sessions with the CTU tenants during their monthly meetings, the result was a slideshow that included dozens of images, messages, chants and slogans that came from the place-keeping walk, story circle and mapping workshops. The feedback sessions were critical leading up to the projections because they helped to identify a clear message and a target audience, which included other Chinatown residents and elected officials. Many of the projections were quotes from the place-keeping walk; others in the slideshow were of tenant demands that included uplifting active building campaigns and the community-led rezoning plan. To ensure language accessibility and the interconnectedness of gentrification struggles in Chinatown, Two Bridges and the Lower East Side neighbourhoods, many of the projected messages were translated to English, Chinese and Spanish.

On the night of the projections, residents stopped to observe the words and images that illuminated the building. Those who were walking by were also invited to write their own personal messages on a People’s Pad, which was live projected onto the building. Reflecting on the goals of the projections, Betty shared: ‘We hope to project messages onto buildings to reach more tenants. I imagine tenants who are facing eviction can feel extremely alone. We are reaffirming that their experiences are not isolated and that residents are fighting back. We are also sending messages to gentrifiers by asking critical questions like who did you displace to be here?’ (Yu 2016). Cathy Dang, who was Executive Director of CAAAV at the time, felt it was important that the projections were able to create dialogue between the organisers and the tenants. She recalled: ‘There were hundreds of residents playing Mahjong and weren’t paying us that much mind but once the projections were on the building wall everyone stopped to look. It gave us a chance to have conversations with residents and to hand them flyers about our rezoning townhall’ (Yu 2016). For others, the most memorable moments came from the reactions on people’s faces. Tomie recalled: ‘I remember there was a crowd of people in the park looking up at the projections and there were smiles, I felt at that moment that we had not only succeeded in sharing a message but somehow it was also a sense of celebration, a sense of common purpose’ (Arai 2016). At one point in the evening, CTU tenants participated in karaoke together and rewrote lyrics to a well-known Chinese song and sang it lightheartedly in public.

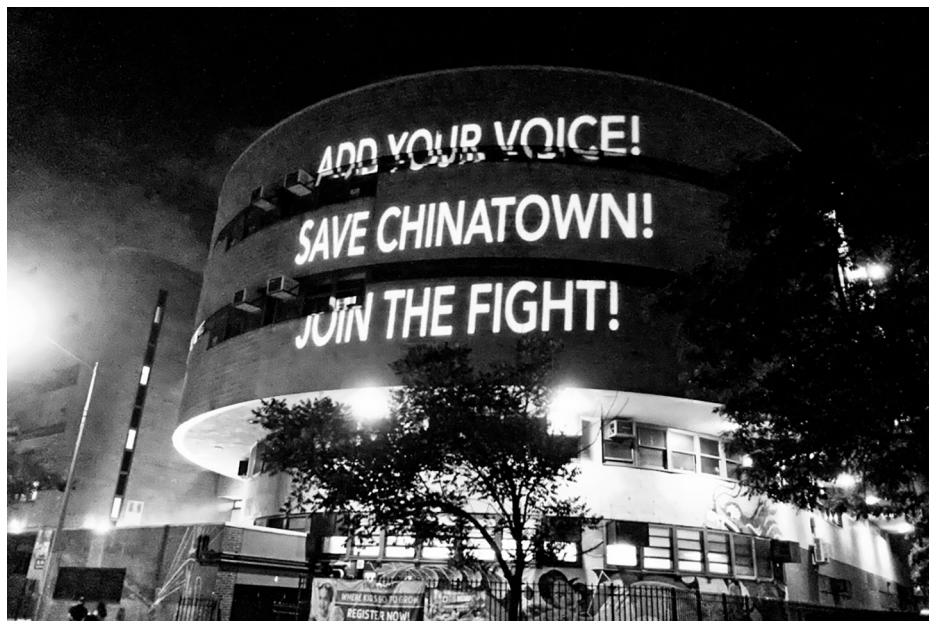


Figure 2. Projections on the M.S. 131 building on Hester Street (Photo: KahEan Chang)

Lessons Learned from Intergenerational Collaboration

CAB's work offers an alternative model for cultural workers, public scholars and organisers in the academy to collaborate on community-driven projects that move in tandem with grassroots campaigns and are responsive to the material needs of those most impacted by displacement. Over the years, the brigade has grown as a collective and has worked on various other collaborative projects, including the 'Placekeeping in Chinatown Augmented Reality Project' and the 'Housing for the People Mapping Project'. The latter involves a bilingual map that illustrates housing victories and grassroots campaigns in Chinatown, Two Bridges and the Lower East Side. The collective also took the 'Here to Stay' project to Philadelphia, collaborating with VietLead and the 'Chinese Youth Organizing Project' of Asian Americans United on a series of youth-led workshops that culminated in an outdoor projection event around the intersecting issues of immigration, displacement and deportation. The collective is now a part of a national network of organisers, artists, tenants and practitioners from Los Angeles, Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Seattle Chinatowns invested in making connections between gentrification, sex work decriminalisation and abolition. However, as with any collaborative process, there are challenges that demand deeper engagement and critical reflection. In what follows, I draw from lessons learned from working in partnership with non-English-speaking and immigrant tenants that can serve as guidance for those pursuing similar collaborative projects.

One of the main challenges we confronted early on was honouring the time of tenants and learning how to recalibrate as necessary. As a collective, we realised that we had to respect whatever time tenants had to commit to the project and remain flexible about the pace of the collaboration. The dangerous and precarious housing circumstances that many tenants faced often meant that they related to time differently in daily life – time was always discussed in scarcity terms of 'buying time', 'stalling time' or 'being out of time'. In addition, many CTU tenants were already attending other meetings, working through the weekends, taking on caregiving duties and navigating their own housing struggles. We were constantly checking in with CAAAV and CTU tenants to figure out how to reshape certain aspects of the workshop series to better reflect the time constraints and individual capacities of the tenants. Betty reflected on the importance of flexibility in collaboration: 'Instead of asking tenants, especially elders, to come to us, we went to them. If there were tenants organizing meetings or active building campaigns, we met them there and supported their efforts by helping them make banners or sharing creative tools to amplify their fight. We were taking cues from them. They were the ones leading the direction for the project. We learned how to lend ourselves up' (Yu 2016). Creating flexible timeframes also involved building networks of collective care to open up more time, including for childcare, economic access, interpretation, transportation, nourishment and other forms of material support, to encourage tenants to fully participate in the work with autonomy.

Another lesson learned was how to cope with the emotional stress that results from creative collaboration and requires recovery from what is traumatic. As [Mindi Fullilove \(2004\)](#) writes, loss through displacement leads to what she calls 'root shock' or the 'destruction of one's emotional ecosystem', which can induce a visceral traumatic stress reaction. For some tenants and CAB members, the hypervisible projections were manifestations and reminders of ongoing loss due to gentrification. Many of the images shown were of places that no longer exist in the neighbourhood, including photos of Music Palace, the dried goods store on Elizabeth Street and other historical landmarks. Tomie recounted that, for her, one of the most difficult moments involved responding to the flash flood of emotions that the projections evoked for people: 'For someone who has lived in Chinatown their entire lives, these places can mean a lot to them. I remember a man who was having a tough time after seeing a projection of the theatre. I think that image carried weight because his grandfather used to take him. This creative process opens wounds and so for me if we invite this trauma back into someone's life we have to be there to help them pick up the pieces' ([Arai 2016](#)). Even when individuals have not experienced first-hand trauma, legacies of loss and grief from displacement can

be transmitted across generations or from living in proximity. This realisation led us to explore trauma-informed approaches to cultural organising in Chinatown and to commit to individual and collective forms of healing justice, a movement that first emerged from the Atlanta-based Kindred South Healing Justice Collective in 2006.

Finally, one of the power asymmetries we encountered in collaboration involved language access and English language dominance. There were concerns about language accessibility, not only in terms of working across multiple dialects of spoken Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin, Fujianese, Wenzhounese, Taishanese, Shanghainese), but also coming up with new ways to talk about art that resonated with working-class Chinese immigrants and elders. For the project to be accessible from start to finish, it was crucial for CAB, as a collective, to recognise that language justice was central to the cultural production process. In following the core principles laid out by the Highlander Center and groups like Antena Aire, we saw language justice as a political commitment and one that would guide the pace of collaboration – from brainstorming sessions and project development to art-making and public-facing events like the place-keeping walk and the outdoor projections. During each step of the process, we worked with interpreters and found multiple ways to communicate with each other, often in ways that might not have been imaginable otherwise. In an interview, ManSee shared her reflections on the immediacy of language justice in collaborative work: ‘We are exploring the idea of creating an interpreter’s collective that would be centered around language justice and social justice. This was an idea that came out of our work, as part of the Brigade’ (Kong 2016). In February 2017, ManSee and a few other CAB members went on to form the 共鳴 Gòngmíng Chinese Interpreters Collective, a group of individuals based in New York City who provide interpretation, translation and language capacity building from a movement-based perspective.

On Building Aftercare Practices

I conclude with some reflections on engaged practice that continue to inform my community collaborations. First is the importance of developing what oral historian Piper Anderson calls *aftercare practices* to ensure that trauma evoked from conversations during the collaboration are not stored within the body. During several workshops that CAB held with tenants, the conversation centred around the physical, emotional and health consequences of evictions, which can cause retraumatisation, either consciously or unconsciously. It was important as a collective to develop our own aftercare practices throughout the collaborative process and to carve out spaces for participants to transform, intervene in, or process trauma without shame or judgement. Over time, some of the aftercare practices that we developed as a collective involved staying in Chinatown for a meal together, peeling fruits to share with one another, ending the day with a walk around the neighbourhood, or checking in on someone the next day. To pursue collaborative work is exhausting; it is not easy and much of it is trial and error plus persistence. It requires sustained relationship building, deep listening, and the ability to move at the speed of trust as the guiding compass. These aftercare practices were essential in deepening connections and feelings of trust that seeded further opportunities for collaboration. These reflections are also instructive for university ethics review processes, which tend to focus on the well-being of participants as a project unfolds, more consideration should be placed on what happens once a project concludes and on developing aftercare practices.

Lately, I have been reflecting on access in community collaborations as a sphere of care, especially in terms of developing multiple embodied approaches to thinking with communities about shaping knowledge that create deeper structural interventions. Over the years, CAB has collaborated with CTU tenants on other projects situated at the intersection of housing justice, language access and innovative technologies, including the Placekeeping in Chinatown Augmented Reality Project, which was later transformed into a large-scale interactive mural with multimedia components. The augmented reality map, along with the mural, remain accessible to anyone who wishes to interact, and they sit in stark contrast

to much of the knowledge produced within academia that becomes only accessible to those who have institutional access or can afford to pay. It is critical to imagine experimental ways to democratise knowledge and to iterate more capacious ways of knowing, creating, writing and sharing with the communities with whom we write in solidarity. I have found what oral historian Crystal Baik calls a *praxis of promiscuous writing* to be instructive, she writes that ‘antithetical to an approach that is casual or indifferent, promiscuous writing foregrounds that our work is meaningful in reach and impact only when it is generous, pleasurable, experimental, relational, and multiple—in form, genre, and context’ (Baik 2021). To produce knowledge that disrupts the parameters of the neoliberal academy requires us to push the boundaries and explore new possibilities for collaboration—and be open to the possibility that what we produce together now can become life forms of their own far into the future.

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