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Seeking Silicon Valley Through Two New Shows at the San Jose ICA

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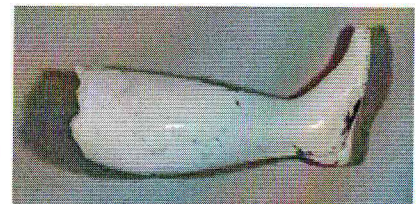
Archival photograph showing arson fire destroying San Jose's Market Street Chinatown
(History San Jose)



One of the works on view in the group show, *Chico and Chang*
(Courtesy of the Artist and REna Braunsten Gallery, San Francisco)

(ArtfixDaily.com)

In conjunction with the 2012 ZERO1 Biennial, The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) is pleased to present two new exhibitions opening in May and June 2012: *City Beneath The City*, an exhibition of artifacts from the original excavation of San Jose's Market Street Chinatown site; and *Chico & Chang: A Look at the Impact of Latino and Asian Cultures on California's Visual Landscape*.



One of artifacts on display in
City Beneath The City at the
San Jose ICA
(History San Jose)

***City Beneath the City* (Installation by Rene Yung)**
May 26 – September 16, 2012
in the Focus Gallery
Opening Reception: Friday, June 15, 6pm-8pm

In response to the ZERO1 art and technology biennial thematic *Seeking Silicon Valley*, *City Beneath The City* exposes a history of the valley before it was dubbed Silicon Valley. Whereas Silicon Valley is obsessed with the next technology that will revolutionize our lives, this project will look to the past in order to understand the significance of Silicon Valley today.

City Beneath the City is designed by artist Rene Yung and presented in partnership with The Chinese Historical and Cultural Project, History San José and Stanford Archaeology Center. The installation will include a collection of artifacts including ceramic bowls, glassware and vessel fragments that will be presented to render a physical and tactile field. This visual experience seeks to elicit an emotional response, drawing on the viewers' memories and assumptions about what these domestic, fractured and

historic objects may represent in the context of a contemporary art space. Through supporting materials including maps, photography, and wall labels, a surprising narrative of a once thriving Chinatown in downtown San Jose, where these objects were once from, will unfold for the viewer. By presenting this installation in a contemporary art space and within the context of the ZER01 biennial's thematic Seeking Silicon Valley, the project curators aim to inspire dialogue on issues ranging from immigration policies, labor, minority struggles, land and urban development.

"The installation mines the intersection between cultural history and the institutional histories surrounding these artifacts, to let nuanced meaning emerge from their interstices and speak of the layered intermingling of the personal, the political, the cultural and the historical," explains artist Rene Yung. "These artifacts are of great importance to the community. Through this installation I want to bring these buried objects to light, by making palpable the fragile thread through time that links the day-to-day lives of the early Chinese settlers in San Jose, and this moment in time in Silicon Valley," notes Yung.

At the height of its existence, the Market Street Chinatown, located at the intersections of Market and San Fernando Streets in downtown San José (a ten minute walk from the ICA), was the largest Chinese community anywhere in the U.S. outside of San Francisco. It flourished both economically and culturally from the 1860s until it was destroyed in an arson fire in 1887. Nearly a century later, the site of Market Street Chinatown was redeveloped to build the Fairmont Hotel and the Silicon Valley Financial Center. Archeologists unearthed what was left at the location only to discover one of the most important excavation sites of Overseas Chinese materials in the United States at the time.

As a western territory and wild frontier, the Bay Area has promised opportunity throughout its history, whether in gold, agriculture or technology. Along with these successes, however, are stories of class struggle and racial bias which are often excluded from the mainstream narrative. In presenting artifacts from the Market Street Chinatown, *City Beneath the City* will provide a space to reflect on the past – including the remarkable lives and struggles of those early settlers and laborers – in order to imagine the future possibilities for the region.

Chico & Chang: A Look at the Impact of Latino and Asian Cultures on California's Visual Landscape.

June 16 – September 16, 2012, in the Main Gallery & Cardinale Project Room

Opening Reception: Friday, June 15, 6pm-8pm

Originally curated by Kevin B. Chen for Intersection for the Arts in San Francisco, *Chico & Chang* explores the interwoven and sometimes incongruous cultures of two of California's largest populations, the Latino and Asian communities. From a low-rider rickshaw to work made by "Dreamers," undocumented youth who are fighting to gain legal status, *Chico and Chang* examines the impact of Asian and Latino cultures on the changing face of California through sculpture, video, illustration and painting. Posing complex questions about the assumption and construction of culture, the work in this exhibition provides opportunities to see where the boundaries of these two immigrant populations begin, intersect and sometimes collide.

Chico & Chang features work by Pablo Cristi, Sergio De La Torre, Takehito Etani, Ana Teresa Fernandez, Clement Hanami, Mike Lai, Angelica Muro & Juan Luna-Avin, Favianna Rodriguez, Lordy Rodriguez, Tracey Snelling and Charlene Tan.

City Beneath The City and *Chico & Chang* are presented in conjunction with the 2012 ZER01 Biennial.

City Beneath the City is funded in part by Stanford University, including the Department of Anthropology, the Stanford Archaeology Center, the Program on Asian American Studies, the Program on Urban Studies, the Office of the Senior Associate Dean of the Social Sciences, and the Stanford Institute for Creativity and the Arts. *Chico & Chang* is funded in part by a grant from the Silicon Valley Community Foundation Donor Circle for the Arts.

The ICA gratefully acknowledges support from the Adobe Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Endowment (an advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation), the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and members of the ICA. The ICA is also supported in part by a Cultural Affairs grant from the City of San Jose and by a grant from Arts Council Silicon Valley, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara and the California Arts Council.

About San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art:

The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) is an energetic art space located in downtown San Jose dedicated to making contemporary art accessible and exciting to audiences of all ages and backgrounds. The ICA has long been committed to presenting exhibitions that include visually compelling and conceptually challenging contemporary art, as well as a variety of educational programs intended to help our audiences reflect upon these works. Exhibitions are presented in three galleries and the space is activated by opening receptions, First Friday gallery walks, after-dark programming in the front windows, panel discussions, printmaking workshops, brown bag lunches and impromptu conversations in the galleries. The ICA is a member-supported, non-profit organization. Admission to the gallery is free.

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