ARTIST STATEMENT
BY MING FAY

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My work evolves around a surrealistic fantasy of real and imagined objects from nature. They are symbolic of life and life continuum. The use of naturalistic objects as symbols has been deeply rooted in the Oriental culture.

Public art is for the public, people of all ages and background should be able to enjoy and get inspired by the existence of such artwork.

#1 Everlasting Triangel

The traffic triangle between Canal, Baxter and Walker Streets is a true crossroad of multi-ethnic gathering. The area is known for its street market of fresh produce and fruits. In Chinese culture, orange is a symbol for good luck, peach for longevity, pears for prosperity, and pomegranate for posterity. I chose these four fruits as an imagery for a piece of sculpture.

From *Public Art in Chinatown*
(Asian American Arts Centre, 1988)

A RECENT SATURDAY NIGHT
BY JOHN YAU FROM *CROSSING CANAL STREET*
BY JOHN YAU (BELLEVUE PRESS, 1976)

New Land Old Land Middle Kingdom
The China Pearl Shanghai Sun Luck

The sign outside the door-
open 24 hours a day-
reads: Coca Cola Kim Toy Luncheon

On the corner: beneath the sign:
near the window: leaning along the wall:
scattered: men are gathered like pigeons
on warm afternoons in eaves and sills.
It is spring-time to talk again
on the streets.
Squirrels . nervous
as they turn, talk quickly,
gold teeth flashing here & there
among the faces.

A few stragglers, "late nighters," whatever
drifting in, stopping
to swoop up
the corpus of bones,
sinews of blood,
torn flesh
wrapped in dull-colored comics
dropping the silver
into the hand of the boy.
This news & weather going untouched
by the men standing there.
Around the corner, another sign
on another window.

Kuo Min Tang Chinese Nationalist Party

The light burns in this room
all night long, the framed picture
of the puppet who pulls strings
stares from the wall:
empty chairs lined up, desk,
television set, & flags,
many of them, dangling
from wires strung across the ceiling.

New Land Old Land

The sign is painted in gold

The men outside are still chattering

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT OF GOOD LUCK FENG SHUI

LUCKY STONE • FENG SHUI
JADE CRYSTAL CRAFT, FENG SHUI PRODUCT
WWW.NYMAGICFENGSHUI.COM
Mr. Robert
Feng Shui Consultant
234-238 Canal Street #109 - #110
New York, NY 10013 • Tel: 212-274-0299

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING ON CANAL STREET?
Over 10 years in the same shop.
HOW DID YOU START STUDYING FENG SHUI?
When I started the shop, I started studying feng shui. Feng shui is a couple thousand years old. It comes from China. It can make people have the best luck. Some people get ill, some people have bad luck, and they don't know what caused it. If you know feng shui, you can learn exactly why or how it happened. So I try to help people to have good luck and good health.
WHEN YOU CHOSE THE LOCATION FOR YOUR SHOP, WERE YOU THINKING ABOUT THE FENG SHUI OF THIS SITE?
Yes. This location is really good. It's facing to the subway and it's a corner shop. The corner has a four way orientation. There are two ways for people to come in. So it's the choicest direction. Before I came here, however, all of the previous owners never stayed long. Each only stayed about one year. They quit because they couldn't make money. It's because if you look at the door you can see that it's blocked by the streetlamp. Also, this store is facing the other building corner. So after I rented it, I made the center an island. This island directs the energy in my store to go around and around. Due to this, I've lasted about 15 years.
WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
I don't know! But I know that if I've created good feng shui in my store, then I can stay. Even now, when everybody's gone and closed up shop, I'll try to stay longer. I don't make much money, but I try to stay.
WE'RE INTERESTED IN THIS AREA BECAUSE IT'S IN THE SHAPE OF A TRIANGLE. YOU MENTIONED THAT THE CORNER IS VERY POWERFUL BECAUSE IT HAS ENERGY FROM ALL DIRECTIONS. ARE THERE FENG SHUI IDEAS ABOUT THIS PLOT OF LAND HERE? OR ABOUT CANAL STREET?
OK. So the triangle has two aspects: when you make good feng shui it can be very very good for business, but if you don't make good feng shui, then the business will go bad. It depends on the year or the owner's personal astrology, their luck. Based on this, a triangle building can be good luck. If the owner gets good luck it will be very good, but if they have bad luck it will be very bad. Before, this triangle was very very busy. The second floor was all full and the basement was all full. Even the sidewalk was full. This was about 10 years ago. It was very busy. But after the government, the city mayor, declared that owners cannot sell counterfeit bags, business went down. The second floor is gone, the basement is gone. They say the basement is illegal. But before there was a lot of traffic. After the government called the counterfeits "bad," the business went down.
WERE YOU HERE WHEN THAT HAPPENED? WE LEARNED THAT THE MAYOR HAD AN EVENT HERE.
Yes. I was here. The mayor was inside right here. I don't know what's true or not true but I heard that the landlord and the mayor fought, but the landlord won the case. But winning doesn't mean you win. Now you don't see counterfeits here.
WHAT MAKES A BUILDING OWNER HAVE GOOD LUCK OR BAD LUCK?
That is the big question. To know how to make an owner have good luck or bad luck we need to know the owner's astrology. What's their birthday, etcetera. And you need to see the site, what direction it faces, and then you can try to make it better.
IF WE FIND OUT THE LANDLORD'S BIRTHDAY, CAN YOU TELL US HOW TO MAKE THE FENG SHUI BETTER?
No... please don't do that!
CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PAIRING THESE TWO FRUIT SCULPTURES?
That's a tangerine and a pear. "Gut" is a tangerine, which also means good luck, and "lei" means pear, but also get more money. The sound in Cantonese is the same. So we say "dai gut, dai lei" (big tangerine, big pear") and that also means "good luck and make money!"

fig.2

fig.3

"POLICE BRUTALITY IN THE NEW CHINATOWN"
CAAAV

STREET VENDORS IN CHINATOWN

The same economic boom that gave rise to Chinatown gangs during the 1970s has also spurred the growth of the informal economic trades, the most popular of which has been street vending. As mentioned earlier, the influx of cheap immigrant labor into Chinatown led to mass proletarianization in the garment and restaurant industries over the past thirty years. Paralleling this growing workforce was an expanding street-vending industry that had become a vital commercial resource to the new Chinatown worker. Workers rely on food vendors for a quick lunch, or for something to take home to their children after a long day of work. Much like the sweatshop workers to whom they sell their goods, food vendors work a difficult twelve-hour shift. Yet, unlike the sweatshop worker, the vendor is located in public or semipublic spaces, and must therefore frequently interact with the general public as well as the police.

[...]

The most glaring act of police harassment of vendors came in the fall of 1998, as the "Triangle Vendors"—those who vend on a triangular-shaped pedestrian mall located at the intersection of Baxter and Canal Streets—were being forced from their spots. The enforcers of the removal claimed that the vendors were to be blamed for street congestion, which gives rise to traffic accidents and incidents of pickpocketing, and hence posed a threat to public safety. Outraged over the absurdity of the charge, the vendors, many of whom had worked on the triangle for over ten years, refused to leave the site. The NYPD ticketed and confiscated their carts, citing them with "sidewalk obstruction" and "refusal to move". Vendors interviewed by CAAAV reported that those who spoke up in protest were punished with additional tickets.

In addition to the food vendors, the NYPD has also targeted the vendors who sell watches, bags, perfumes, and miscellaneous items along Chinatown's busiest strip, Canal Street. On any given day, one can witness a Midtown South Task Force van parked in plain view outside a watch or perfume-vending stall, which, vendors say, the police indiscriminately raid, confiscating merchandise and cash. The NYPD justified these raids under the pretext that Canal Street vendors violate trademark laws by selling counterfeit items under such brand names as Guess, Gucci, and Ralph Lauren. While there are few, if any, New Yorkers or Chinatown tourists who actually believe they are buying a genuine brand-name item, the police routinely raid the vending stalls. According to the Canal Street vendors, the police simply come into the stalls with garbage bags and confiscate merchandise and cash. No vouchers are made out for goods that are seized; and after the raid is complete, the vendors are never told what happens to the merchandise.

Zero Tolerance: Quality of Life and the New Police Brutality in New York City (New York; London: New York University Press, 2001).

fig.2

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg rejoiced on Tuesday after the police and city agents shut down 32 shops in Lower Manhattan that were selling counterfeit versions of luxury products. John Marshall Mantel for The New York Times

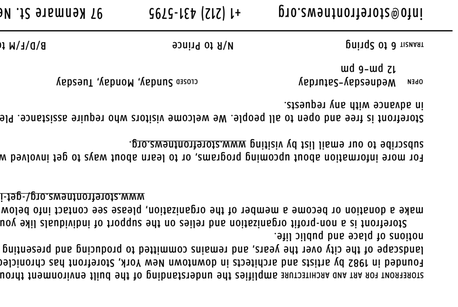

fig.3

fig .1
"good luck and make money!"
by Canal Street
Research Association

fig .2
News Clipping of 2008
Counterfeit Bust

fig .3
Ming Fay, *Monumental Fruit*
(sketch) from *Public Art in Chinatown* (Asian American Arts Centre, 1988)

#newlandplaza @canal_street_research @storefrontnyc
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NEW LAND PLAZA: YOU CAN'T BEAT A NEW YORK ORIGINAL

by Canal Street Research Association

MARCH 1ST — MAY 20TH, 2023

Canal Street has long been the epicenter of counterfeit goods in New York City—a thoroughfare cutting through historically immigrant neighborhoods that has become a destination where tourists, as well as New Yorkers, engage with a unique economy. For some time, this confluence of global trade routes has been made possible by a clandestine setup: ground-floor storefronts that operated as NYC souvenir shops up front, but held secret compartments for bootleg luxury merchandise in the back.

This slippery meeting of legitimate and illegitimate, real and fake, has been a guiding lie of tourist office entity set up by poetic research unit Canal Street Research Association, a fictional office entity set up by poetic research unit Canal Street Research Association, a fictional office entity set up by poetic research unit Canal Street Research Association, a fictional

WARNING:

This retailer is not authorized or licensed to sell Louis Vuitton, Burberry, Givenchy, Kenzo, Loewe, Celine or Marc Jacobs Merchandise.

THE NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATES ANY SALE OR PURCHASE OF COUNTERFEIT MERCHANDISE AT THIS LOCATION.

COUNTERFEITING IS CRIMINALLY AND CIVILLY PUNISHABLE
UNDER FEDERAL AND STATE LAY BY UP TO 10 YEARS
OF IMPRESIONMENT AND $2,000,000 IN FINES.

TO REPORT THE OFFER FOR SALE OF
COUNTERFEIT MERCHANDISE
please call ~~1-866-884-8866~~
(646) 504-4983*

*Signs like this one are posted around New Land Plaza, vestiges of the 2008 Counterfeit Triangle bust. Canal Street Research Association here repurposes one of the signs, replacing the number for reporting illicit sales with their own number, thereby inviting anyone to contribute research on the "Counterfeit Triangle."