

# FACING EXCLUSION

Pioneering Activists Harry Hom Dow and Tien Fu Wu



A one-woman performance, adapted farce,  
and community conversation

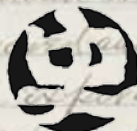
Featuring artist Christina R. Chan

March 17 & 18, 2017

ArtsEmerson/Paramount Center

Jackie Liebergott Black Box Theatre  
Boston, MA

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Chinese Historical Society  
of New England

Celebrating 25 Years! 1992-2017 | [chsne.org](http://chsne.org)




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Chinese Historical Society  
of New England

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Founded in 1992, the Chinese Historical Society of New England (CHSNE) is the **first educational organization dedicated solely to documenting, preserving, and promoting the history and legacy of Chinese immigration in New England**. CHSNE is the steward of a sizable collection and archive of relevant materials, including cultural artifacts, oral and printed materials, and other manifestations of Chinese-American legacy. Throughout the year, CHSNE hosts public lectures, art events, community receptions, and walking tours to facilitate engagement in local history.

Sign up for CHSNE's **mailing list** to hear about upcoming events

Find us on  [facebook.com/chsneboston](https://facebook.com/chsneboston)



Part of CHSNE's archive and collection

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- Free/discounted admission to CHSNE activities and programs
- Discounts on CHSNE publications
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- Access to CHSNE's archive and collection

Join online at [bit.ly/chsne-member](https://bit.ly/chsne-member)



## WELCOME

This year marks CHSNE's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I couldn't think of a better occasion to start our celebration of documenting, preserving, and promoting the history and legacy of Chinese immigration in New England than ***Facing Exclusion: Pioneering Activists Harry Hom Dow and Tien Fu Wu***.



*Facing Exclusion* reminds us of the importance of knowing our histories and their place in today's conversations. Harry Dow wrote his plays in the 1930s. It's a true testament to the enduring nature of theatre and politics that these 80-year-old scripts are still so relevant today. And for Women's History Month, we honor the life of Tien Fu Wu—a woman who endured great hardship and gave back so much to her community. We hope her testimony inspires and educates.

Thank you to ArtsEmerson's Community Curators program for this opportunity to showcase Chinese American voices on stage—providing support and trust throughout the process. It's taken a village to make *Facing Exclusion* possible. Foremost, a huge thank you to Christina R. Chan for her artistic direction and unwavering dedication to this production. Thank you to the support from Suffolk University: the Law School, the Moakley Archives, professors, and students for providing context—both historical and contemporary. To the actors, for breathing life into the scripts. And of course, the Dow family, for their engagement and encouragement throughout our research. Finally, thank you for coming today to see our show. I hope that it inspires fresh insight into timely historical conversations.

Enjoy the show and hope to see you at CHSNE's upcoming 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary events.

**Susan Chinsen**

Managing Director, CHSNE  
Community Curator, ArtsEmerson





Production of one of Harry H. Dow's plays, with Dow seated on the far left. 1938.  
Courtesy of Fred Dow

# Chinatown

## Heritage Partnership



## No Exclusion

**Peter & Laura Chan,  
Proud Chinese American  
Immigrant Citizens**

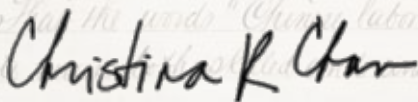
## A NOTE FROM FEATURED ARTIST CHRISTINA R. CHAN

I am honored and blessed to be part of a project that embraces my passion for telling the stories of the Asian American immigration experience and collaborating with community-minded organizations. Thank you to the Chinese Historical Society of New England, ArtsEmerson, The Boston Foundation, and the Boston Cultural Council for their support and this opportunity.

It is a big responsibility to take on work that is associated with such a beloved community figure, Harry Hom Dow. But it has also been a joy getting to know Harry through my research, talking to his relatives and working on his play. He was a pioneer with integrity, resilience and heart in the face of life altering hardships.

It has been 25 years since "Unbinding Our Lives" was created for the 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act and performed at the Old South Meeting House. After a residency at the BCA, I toured the country performing. After 15 years, I packed up the costumes and props...put away forever I thought. It is sort of bittersweet to perform Tien Fu Wu. Her story is unfortunately still relevant: an estimated 27 million people worldwide are bought and sold, held captive, brutalized, exploited for profit.<sup>1</sup>

I hope you find tonight's program educational, entertaining, and inspiring. Let's keep the conversation going about who is welcomed in America.



**Christina R. Chan**

Director, Playwright, & Tien Fu Wu



Chan as Tien Fu Wu in 1999. Photography by Ryan Johnson, Ball State Daily News

The Boston  
Foundation **tBf**

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Cockburn, "21<sup>st</sup> Century Slaves," *National Geographic Magazine*, September 2003.





**south cove**  
community health center  
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in partnership with  
**ARTSEMERSON AND ITS COMMUNITY CURATORS PROGRAM**  
present

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### **SLIDESHOW**

By Professor Micky Lee

and her Research Methods in Communication class  
at Suffolk University

### **OPENNING REMARKS**

### **THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT**

Video excerpt from a documentary coming soon to PBS

### **UNBINDING OUR LIVES: TIEN FU WU**

A one-woman performance

### **NUTZACRACKIN' IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION**

An adapted farce

### **PANEL DISCUSSION AND COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

### **AUDIENCE REFLECTION**

By Professor Micky Lee  
at Suffolk University

## PANELISTS

### **PATRICIA REEVE | PANEL MODERATOR (FRIDAY)**

Patricia Reeve is Chair and Associate Professor of the Department of History at Suffolk University. Her research interests include working-class and labor history and the histories of gender and women.

### **ELISA CHOI | PANEL MODERATOR (SATURDAY)**

Dr. Elisa Choi has been a long-time active member of numerous AAPI community organizations, and an ardent arts and AAPI community advocate. Currently, Dr. Choi is the Chairperson of the Commonwealth of MA Asian American Commission and serves on the Board of Directors of Company One Theatre, whose mission is to “change the face of Boston theatre by uniting the city’s diverse communities through innovative, socially provocative performance and developing civically engaged artists.”

### **CHRISTINA R. CHAN | PANELIST**

For Christina’s bio, see page 16.

### **STEPHANIE FAN | PANELIST (SATURDAY)**

Stephanie Fan grew up in Chinatown and is a longtime board member and volunteer for the Chinese Historical Society of New England. Her father and maternal grandparents immigrated during the Exclusion period.

### **PAUL W. LEE | PANELIST (FRIDAY)**

Paul Lee grew up in Chinatown and is a founder and the current Board President of Asian Community Development Corporation which is dedicated to building affordable housing and working to preserve Asian American communities. His parents immigrated from China in the 1940s. He is a lawyer who practiced corporate law for over 30 years at Goodwin Procter in Boston.

### **RAGINI SHAH | PANELIST**

Ragini Shah is a Clinical Professor of Law at Suffolk University Law School, the founder of Suffolk’s first Immigration Clinic, and on the board of the Student Immigration Movement. Her scholarship examines the effectiveness of enforcement in the immigration context focusing on rights for undocumented youth, and the connections between international trade and migration.



Excluded from the "Golden Gate of Liberty," 1882, Library of Congress



# THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT OF 1882

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first major law restricting immigration to the United States. The law initially halted Chinese immigration for ten years before renewal in 1892 and becoming permanent in 1902.

The laws were enacted in part as a response to economic fears

from native-born American workers who attributed unemployment and depressed wages to Chinese workers whom they also considered to be racially inferior. In the 1850s, Chinese immigrants were willing to work for low wages and provided cheap labor on the California Gold Rush, the First Transcontinental Railroad, and various factories across the US. The animosity towards Chinese immigrants increased when California Governor John Bigler publicly announced that the “coolios” were to blame for lower wages. Californians responded by adopting a new Constitution in 1879 that banned the Chinese from employment.

Finally in 1882, President Chester A. Arthur passed the Chinese Exclusion Act which specifically excluded “skilled and unskilled laborers and Chinese employed in mining.” In addition to barring immigration, the law also prohibited Chinese immigrants from becoming US citizens and subjected American-born Chinese people to strict stipulations concerning their legal rights and movement.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed by the Magnuson Act in 1943, which capped Chinese immigration to only 105 individuals per year. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 eliminated national-origins policy and Chinese immigration to the US was effectively opened again after over 80 years of restrictions.<sup>1</sup>

-Summary by Binglei Zhou, CHSNE Intern

<sup>1</sup> “Chinese Exclusion Act,” *Aspiration, Acculturation, and Impact: Immigration to the United States, 1789-1930* (Harvard University Library Open Collections Program).



The Magic Washer / The Chinese Must Go, c. 1886, Library of Congress

# SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

thanks CHSNE for putting  
Harry Dow in the spotlight



Harry Dow was the first  
Asian-American to pass  
the Massachusetts Bar  
and was the first Chinese  
graduate (class of 1929)  
from Suffolk Law School



SUFFOLK  
UNIVERSITY  
BOSTON

## HARRY HOM DOW 譚金源

Harry Hom Dow (1904-1985) was born in Hudson, Massachusetts to recent immigrants Hom Soon Dow and Alice Dow. Soon after, the family moved from Hudson to Shawmut Avenue in Boston's South End. After the death of Dow's father in 1916 and a faulty real estate deal that threatened his family's laundry business, he vowed to study law as a means to protect his family and others facing injustice. In 1925, Dow started at Suffolk Law School, all while working at his family's laundry and taking on a full-time job as translator for the U.S. Bureau of Immigration. He graduated with honors in 1929 and soon became the first Asian-American to pass the Massachusetts Bar exam. Dow declared, "I hope to champion the cause of the Chinese in this country."<sup>1</sup>



Harry Dow in the early 1980s. Suffolk Law Alumni Magazine

After nearly two decades of employment with the Bureau of Immigration, the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 provided Dow with an opportunity—he opened a private practice specializing in immigration. He spent years helping Chinese community members apply for citizenship, travel to and from China, and reunite with their families. By the mid-1950s, Dow operated law offices on Bayard Street in New York City and Chauncy Street in Boston. Unfortunately, Dow's law career abruptly ended in 1958 when he became the victim of a McCarthy-era smear campaign. His son, Fred Dow remembers, "Nobody would return his calls...He was tainted."<sup>2</sup>

Even so, Dow continued to use his legal skills in the community and joined the battle against the urban renewal of Boston's South End. In 1968, the Boston Redevelopment Agency (renamed the Boston Planning and Development Agency in 2016) planned to demolish an extensive area of the South End to build luxury housing. Instead, with Dow's assistance, the Emergency Tenants Council was able to facilitate the building of Villa Victoria, a low-income housing development. In his later years, Dow served on the boards of over a dozen local organizations, including the South End Neighborhood Action Program, Greater Boston Legal Services, and South Cove Community Health Center. Today, Dow's advocacy for social justice and the Asian American community is carried on through the Asian American Lawyer's Association of Massachusetts's Harry H. Dow Memorial Legal Assistance Fund, Suffolk Law's Annual Harry H. Dow Lecture on Immigration Law and their Harry H. Dow Memorial Award.

-Summary by Jack Kayyem, CHSNE Intern

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Gearty and Meaghan Agnew, "A Singular Career, A Shared Ethos," Suffolk Law Alumni Magazine, Fall 2008, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Gearty and Agnew, "A Singular Career, A Shared Ethos," 15.





紐英崙華人歷史協會  
Chinese Historical Society  
of New England

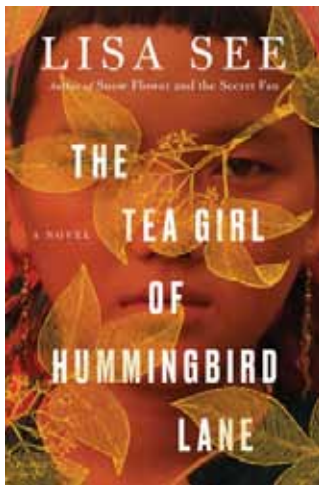
Celebrating 25 Years | 1992-2017 | [chsne.org](http://chsne.org)

## Lunch with author Lisa See

*The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*

Book talk, signing, & reception

Tuesday, March 28, 12:00PM-1:30PM  
One Chinatown/BCNC | 99 Albany St, Boston



**Reserve your seats today: [chsne.org/lisa-see](http://chsne.org/lisa-see)**

In partnership with the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC), CHSNE will present a lunchtime conversation with #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Lisa See on her new novel, *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*. A powerful story about two women separated by circumstance, culture, and distance, *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane* is an unforgettable portrait of a little known region and its people and a celebration of the bonds of family.



Boston Chinatown  
Neighborhood Center  
波士頓華埠社區中心



## TIENT FU WU

Tien Fu Wu (1887-1975) was brought to the United States from China when she was six years old. After gambling away all of their family's fortune, Wu's father sold her as a *mui tsai* (servant girl). On that fateful day, Wu recalls "my own father... had every inclination to sell me, and he...locked me in the cabin while he was negotiating my deal."<sup>1</sup>

In San Francisco, Wu was moved from one abusive host to another. In 1894, a bystander witnessed her condition and reported it to Mission workers at the local Occidental Mission Home for Girls (renamed the Cameron House in 1942). Founded by the Presbyterian Church in 1874, this Mission Home served to facilitate the safe immigration of the thousands of young, undocumented Asian immigrants vulnerable to slavery and prostitution. Thanks to the Mission Home, Wu was one of the lucky few to survive and later used her newfound freedom to give back to her peers.

At the Mission Home, Wu assisted with rescues, appeared in court against brothel agents, and even flew across the country to Boston in order to facilitate a wedding or reunite a family. However, she was given little authority over the actions of the Mission Home. Nonetheless, Wu was intelligent, motivated, and willing to work to free Chinese indentured servants despite the risk. By the early 1900s, she had saved up enough money to return to China in a fruitless attempt to find her relatives. Having no known family, Wu spent most of her life at the Mission Home. Her activism payed off and by the 1920s the *mui tsai* system was almost completely eradicated. She continued her work at the Mission Home until 1952 when she moved to Palo Alto, California to live out the rest of her life. Wu passed away in 1975 and was buried beside Donaldina Cameron, the Mission Home superintendent. Today, we remember Tien Fu Wu as a resilient and charitable woman who gave back to her community.



Tien Fu Wu, Courtesy of the Cameron House Archives

-Summary by Jack Kayyem, CHSNE Intern

<sup>1</sup> Arnold Genthe and John Kuo Wei Tchen, *Genthe's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown* (Courier Corporation, 2013), 96.

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## **Pioneering Activists Harry Hom Dow and Tien Fu Wu**

A one-woman performance, adapted farce, and community conversation

FEATURED ARTIST	<b>CHRISTINA R. CHAN</b>
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	<b>SUSAN CHINSEN</b>
PRODUCERS	<b>JESSICA WONG CAMHI</b>
	<b>JUSTINA CHU</b>
	<b>FREDERICK HOM DOW</b>
	<b>NICOLE OLUSANYA</b>
ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR	<b>NICKY LEE</b>
VISUAL ARTIST	<b>WEN-TI TSEN</b>
MUSIC COORDINATOR	<b>LUDOW</b>
VIDEOS	<b>ALAN KWAN</b>
	<b>HOWLROUND</b>

## **UNBINDING OUR LIVES: TIEN FU WU**

DIRECTORS	<b>VICTORIA MARCH</b>
	<b>ROS THOMAS-CLARK</b>
WRITTEN BY	<b>GERALYN HORTON</b>
RESEARCHER	<b>CHRISTINA R. CHAN</b>
CAST	
TIEN FU WU	<b>CHRISTINA R. CHAN</b>

## **NUTZACRACKIN' IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION**

DIRECTOR	<b>CHRISTINA R. CHAN</b>
ORIGINAL SCRIPT WRITTEN BY	<b>HARRY HOM DOW</b>
SCRIPT ADAPTED BY	<b>CHRISTINA R. CHAN</b>
STAGE MANAGER	<b>NATALIE SOLOMON</b>
CAST	
CHIEF INSPECTOR	<b>TIM CORBETT</b>
HARRY H. DOW	<b>ALEXANDER HOLDEN</b>
MISS FRENCH	<b>SOPHIA KOEVARY</b>
MULLOY	<b>JOSH SANTORA</b>
ROSEN	<b>DANNY MOURINO</b>
YUNG	<b>ERIC CHEUNG</b>

## **PANEL DISCUSSION**

MODERATORS	<b>PATRICIA REEVE (FRIDAY)</b>
	<b>ELISA CHOI (SATURDAY)</b>

PANELISTS	<b>RAGINI SHAH</b>
	<b>CHRISTINA R. CHAN (FRIDAY &amp; SATURDAY)</b>
	<b>PAUL W. LEE (FRIDAY)</b>
	<b>STEPHANIE FAN (SATURDAY)</b>

## ACTOR BIOS



### **CHRISTINA R. CHAN | TIEN FU WU**

Christina's passion as an artist and activist is to tell the stories of Asian American immigrants and Asian American women. Currently, she is a semifinalist for the 2017 Eugene O'Neill Playwrights' Conference. Christina was a 2016 Company One Theater Playwright Fellow. Her plays have been produced at the Boston Center for the Arts, Museum of Fine Arts, Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center and other venues. Christina is a member of the Screen Actors Guild and is Actors' Equity Eligible.

She is a co-founder of The Breaking Silences Project, a multifaceted artistic project that educates and raises awareness about the high suicide and depression rates among Asian American girls and young women.

Christina received her theater training from Trinity Rep Conservatory in Providence, RI and the Royale National Theater in London. She holds a BA from Simmons College.

Unbinding Our Lives: Three Chinese Immigrant Women in 19th century America—Mary Tape, Tien Fu Wu, Polly Bemis by G.L. Horton, created for Christina R Chan, was first performed by her in 1992 at the Old South Meeting House on the 110th Anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act and then toured for 15 years around the country. In honor of its 25th anniversary, this performance gives life to Tien Fu Wu's story.



### **ERIC CHEUNG | YUNG**

Eric Cheung's early experiences with plays include George Kittredge in a high school production of "The Philadelphia Story," and Bart Ling in Bevan Lew's "Three Tea Cups." Since then, he's had myriad performing experiences, including stand-up (NBC's Stand Up for Diversity Showcase) and his own benefit showcase for the 2004 Tsunami victims, improv at iO West, and sketch as a regular on The Comedy Studio's "Erin Judge Presents..." and as a cadet sitting behind Kirk in Star Trek (2009). You may have heard him in audiobooks for Learning Ally, or on and off the air promoting WGBH.



### **TIM CORBETT | CHIEF INSPECTOR**

Tim has been involved in performing, acting and voice-over work for several years. Since 2013, Tim has been portraying historical characters at Boston's Old State House for visitors from all over the world. He has also performed in local community theatre, appearing as Howie Newsome in Theatre to Go's production of Our Town in Melrose, MA. Tim pursues photography seriously, and truly enjoys the thrill of capturing strong images from the world around us.



## ACTOR BIOS



### ALEXANDER HOLDEN | HARRY H. DOW

Alexander has always been interested in performing, dating back to when he was growing up in Japan. His love of music and stage led him to study vocal performance at Carnegie Mellon University. Alexander's past performances include Lead Drummer in Little Brown Jag (Jozenji Street Music Festival), The Married Widow (Bear Valley Music Festival), Bobby in Cabaret (Theater III), Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof (Flintrige Preparatory School), and King in The King and I. In recent years, Alexander has enjoyed creating music and performing as a DJ, and will be featured in a Sam Adams commercial (forthcoming) and a Progress Digital app.



### SOPHIA KOEVARY | MISS FRENCH

Sophia received her BA in theater from Drew University and studied abroad at London Dramatic Academy. She has worked with Artists Theater of Boston, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Company One, Garden Rose Theater, Maiden Phoenix, Fresh Ink, Femme Vitale, TC squared, and more. She is a proud Equity Membership Candidate and studies and performs improv with Comedy Sportz Boston. Currently she's writing her first play, to be workshopped with TC Squared Theater Company. She is also an accomplished artist and costume designer.



### DANNY MOURINO | ROSEN

Boston native and Boston Arts Academy alumnus, Danny Mourino made his professional debut in the 2003 Boston Fringe Theatre Festival, performing in Inner City Blues with Tri-Cord Productions. Other credits include Clara's Old Man at the African American Theatre Festival, The Last Days of Judas Iscariot and Splendor with Company One. Danny has also performed with the theatre company, TC Squared and The Boston Playwright's Theatre. Currently, Danny plays the part of Diego in The Pineapple Diaries, a Boston based web series already in its second season and was recently part of the Praxis Stage production, Incident at Vichy.



### JOSHUA SANTORA | MULLOY

Josh is a professional actor/director for TC Squared Theatre Company and Company One. After a world tour of The Great War Theatre Project: Messengers of a Bitter Truth, Joshua's remarkable talents were most recently witnessed at the TC Squared production of Everyman: Revisited at the M.T.C.



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Photo: Guozijian, Beijing (北京國子監)



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---

The Harry H. Dow Memorial Legal Assistance Fund

Congratulates

Chinese Historical Society of New England

on the production of **Facing Exclusion**

Thank you for honoring Harry Dow's legacy and sparking conversation regarding the Chinese Exclusion Act

*The Harry H. Dow Memorial Legal Assistance Fund was founded in 1985 by members of the Dow family and Asian American Lawyers of Massachusetts. Our mission is to provide resources to ensure access to the legal system for Asian Americans who are deprived of justice because of barriers such as language, race, culture, poverty or immigration status.*



## PRODUCTION BIOS

### **SUSAN CHINSEN | EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Susan Chinsen is the Managing Director of CHSNE; Establishing Director of the Boston Asian American Film Festival, now in its ninth season; and Outreach Consultant with Center for Asian American Media for *The Chinese Exclusion Act*. She is a long-time Boston area resident and an ABC (African Born Chinese).

### **JESSICA WONG CAMHI | PRODUCER**

Jess is a National Park Service Community Assistance Fellow working at the Chinese Historical Society of New England. She is a multiracial second-generation Chinese American.

### **JUSTINA CHU | PRODUCER**

Justina Chu is a long time resident in Boston and originally came to America as an international student from Macau. At Suffolk University, she is actively engaged in various projects to celebrate Harry Dow's legacy.

### **FREDERICK HOM DOW | PRODUCER**

Fred Dow, one of Harry H. Dow's six children, grew up in New York's Chinatown and Boston's South End. He recently retired from the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education. He is past president and a trustee of the Harry H. Dow Memorial Legal Assistance Fund which supports legal services for indigent Asian Americans. Fred views educational opportunity and access and promoting the Asian American experience as his life's work.

### **LU DOW | MUSIC COORDINATOR**

LuDow, aka Lukas, is a Chinese-American rapper, songwriter and performer. He is also Harry Dow's grandson and a Boston-area native. You can find his work online at <https://www.facebook.com/ludowmusic>.

### **MICKY LEE | ENGAGEMENT FACILITATOR**

Micky Lee is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism and the Program Director of Asian Studies at Suffolk University. Her students in Research Methods in Communication class are writing scripts about New England and the Chinese Exclusion Act. She is a Hong Kong native.

### **WEN-TI TSEN | VISUAL ARTIST**

Wen-ti Tsen is a painter and public artist. He was born in China, lived in Paris and London before coming to the U.S. to study at Boston Museum School. Since the mid-1970s, he has been engaged in making art that explores cultural connections in the forms of personal paintings, public site sculptures and community art projects.

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AND, I HAVE NO COMPLAINTS." @SAMIFAITH**

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**I AM LITERALLY EATING MY WEIGHT IN  
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our sincere thanks and gratitude to the individuals and organizations who have generously made donations, gifts of in-kind services, and volunteered their time in support of Facing Exclusion and CHSNE.

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Liz Cheng  
Jose Colon

Sherry Dong  
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**Best wishes for a successful performance of *Facing Exclusion: Pioneering Activists Harry H. Dow and Tien Fu Wu.***

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