

“Chinatown Art Galleries Join Together for First Fridays” by Susan Carpenter

Spectrum News 1

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/arts/2022/08/04/chinatown-art-galleries-join-together-for-first-fridays>

August 5, 2022



First Fridays is a new event for Chinatown's galleries, shops and restaurants to stay open on the first Friday night of every month. (Spectrum News/Susan Carpenter)

Chinatown Art Galleries Join Together for First Fridays

By Susan Carpenter

LOS ANGELES – Casual visitors to Chinatown’s Chung King Road would be forgiven for believing the original shops’ signage promising arts, gifts, jade and jewelry to those who pass through their doors.

But for in-the-know art fans, the tucked-away street in Chinatown Plaza is a destination for some of the city’s best small galleries, many of which will be open at the same time as part of Chinatown First Fridays.

“Chinatown Art Galleries Join Together for First Fridays” by Susan Carpenter

Spectrum News 1

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/arts/2022/08/04/chinatown-art-galleries-join-together-for-first-fridays>

August 5, 2022



“Chinatown Art Galleries Join Together for First Fridays” by Susan Carpenter

Spectrum News 1

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/arts/2022/08/04/chinatown-art-galleries-join-together-for-first-fridays>

August 5, 2022

“There’s always been chat about trying to sync our opening nights together,” said Paige Wery, director of Tierra del Sol gallery and co-creator of Chinatown First Fridays. “It’s hard to do logistically because everyone has artists coming in at different times from different parts of town or the country and the world, so we just said, ‘Wouldn’t it be great if we all had a unifying thing that we could all get behind?’”

That unifying thing has now been formalized into an event that is launching Friday night with 14 galleries and shops that will be open from 5 p.m. until at least 8 p.m. Participating galleries include the immersive Cakeland space; Charlie James Gallery, currently featuring a group show of 40+ Latinx artists; Tierra del Sol, a nonprofit that shows the works of artists with disabilities; and Noon Projects, now showcasing portraits from the Echo Park artist Matt Momchilov.

“Chinatown Art Galleries Join Together for First Fridays” by Susan Carpenter

Spectrum News 1

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/arts/2022/08/04/chinatown-art-galleries-join-together-for-first-fridays>

August 5, 2022



“Chinatown is a community-minded neighborhood. That’s why I chose to open the gallery here,” said First Fridays co-creator and Noon Projects gallery owner Ryan Noon.

“Chinatown Art Galleries Join Together for First Fridays” by Susan Carpenter

Spectrum News 1

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/arts/2022/08/04/chinatown-art-galleries-join-together-for-first-fridays>

August 5, 2022

A Portland transplant and Chinatown newcomer, Noon opened his gallery in February to showcase artists whose work focuses on queerness, the divine, the natural world, craft and social practices.

“When we get visitors to the gallery, they always say, ‘I love coming to Chinatown,’” Noon said. “We were just trying to harness that energy and give a space where you could come and make a night of it.”



Chinatown is home to a variety of businesses new and old, many of which are also participating in the First Fridays kickoff. The publisher-gallerists Fulcrum Press, Franchise and Tomorrow Today will all be open, along with the natural wine and organic flower shop Heaven’s Market and the clothing shops KKCO, Eckhaus Latta and Magma Vintage.

“Chinatown Art Galleries Join Together for First Fridays” by Susan Carpenter

Spectrum News 1

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/arts/2022/08/04/chinatown-art-galleries-join-together-for-first-fridays>

August 5, 2022

While Chinatown’s restaurants and bars aren’t officially part of First Fridays, Wery and Noon encourage visitors to sample some of the area’s acclaimed dining and bars, from relative newcomers like the Pearl River Deli and Angry Egret Dinette to Chinatown stalwarts Foo-Chow, Full House Seafood and Pho 87.

Chinatown’s history as an art hub dates back to the late 1990s, when students from Pasadena’s Art Center College of Design formed the Black Dragon Society and began renting spaces in the neighborhood to show their work. While galleries have come and gone in the years since, by Wery and Noon’s count, there are now 18 galleries in the 0.91-square-mile Chinatown neighborhood northeast of downtown.



“Chinatown Art Galleries Join Together for First Fridays” by Susan Carpenter

Spectrum News 1

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/arts/2022/08/04/chinatown-art-galleries-join-together-for-first-fridays>

August 5, 2022

Chung King Road is especially vibrant, with 10 galleries currently operating along the colorful car-free street decorated with taverna lights and red paper lanterns.

“It really does have a magical feel to it and a community feel to it that doesn’t happen very often in Los Angeles. I think we’re all craving that right now after being in lockdown,” Wery said. “First Fridays is an opportunity to bring everybody together and get to know each other.”