

Dear Nancy and MOCA Board Members,

We are at an impasse. MOCA and Godzilla members in the exhibition cannot agree on the necessary steps to move forward with the exhibition. There must be an acknowledgment that this is a less than ideal place for a partnership.

There was no response to Godzilla's email request on February 9 to post MOCA's statement on the NUBC website to demonstrate the Museum's solidarity with the movement to oppose the jail plan.

Yes, MOCA published a statement on the Chinatown jail on January 28, 2021. Many Godzilla members were glad to see this finally, after the announcement in October 2019 of the BBJ document detailing the community mitigation that awarded future funding to MOCA.

But to blanketly declare there is "no need to convene a town hall on this topic" or to further participate in additional community public civil discourse because of "alignment between MOCA and the Godzilla signatories on this issue" will not bridge this impasse. There still is no alignment.

If there really is alignment, it should be clear that MOCA needs to do more than publish the attached statement on its website. MOCA needs to detail additional steps the Institution is willing to offer to participate in to make the community whole again. Because Godzilla is part of MOCA's community.

Questions of MOCA's position toward plans for construction of a massive new jail tower in Chinatown to replace the Manhattan Detention Complex arose during planning for the exhibition. This put individual Godzilla artists, who strongly identify with residents and organizations who are in opposition to the proposed construction and its effects on the community, into a position of dropping out of the exhibition or resistant to be part of the exhibition until a statement of MOCA's stance was released.

Following the January 28, 2021 statement by MOCA proclaiming "MOCA IS AND HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNALTERABLY OPPOSED TO BUILDING A JAIL IN CHINATOWN," members of Godzilla discussed whether this would be enough.

But as stated in Godzilla's February 9 email, the actual work of openly and publicly convening with the community has yet to be done.

For Godzilla members to move forward in partnership with MOCA during the exhibition, there needs to be a clear commitment to active public discourse on the jail project. We are in a time of re-examining all institutions, including museums. MOCA and Godzilla artists have had differences of opinion about MOCA's engagement with the Chinatown community that need to be examined through additional public forums – Godzilla signatories suggested a town hall --

and there may be other public programs that may achieve this alignment. All of us must face these issues together and not shirk from uncomfortable realities that may divide us.

You welcomed our ideas on this topic. A proposal of substance from MOCA for the needed public -- and civil -- discourse would allow us to move past this impasse. If this can be achieved, the publishing of a joint press release stating MOCA and Godzilla's opposition to the jail and plans for public discourse could allow for the exhibition to go forward in good faith. This true partnership would build on MOCA's venerable pride of place in the Chinatown community.

Godzilla's goal is to nurture MOCA's position which "allows all of us to move forward continuing our respective roles in preserving Chinatown's place, history, and character."

We look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Diyani Achjadi  
John Allen  
Mel Chin  
Colin Lee  
Stefani Mar  
Helen Oji

P.S., Please respond as soon as possible and by next Wednesday, March 10 at the latest.