

Imagining our Ideal Chinatown and Housing Justice (by Chinatown Art Brigade)
August 2016

These drawings were created during “Here To Stay,” Chinatown Art Brigade’s eight-week long intensive workshop series, which took place in the summer of 2016 and included participation from members of CAAAV’s Chinatown Tenants Union, community residents, activists, and artists.

On August 13th, 2016, CAB workshop leaders led a creative exercise designed to help participants brainstorm and re-imagine a future worth fighting for in Chinatown and the Lower East Side. Instead of merely responding and reacting to current conditions in Chinatown, the activity encouraged community participants to imagine housing justice without limitations.

The community members were given a large sheet of butcher paper and markers, and were asked to respond to three prompts through drawings and illustrations. First, they were asked to draw “Our current conditions/ state of our reality” on the bottom left corner of the paper; then they were asked to draw “The community’s future: What does the ideal utopia look like?” on the top right corner, and finally Step 3 asked them to draw in between the corners “imagining the transition and pathways to get from the current situation to the ideal future.” We encouraged them to use their imagination to connect the two stages, drawing out the path to get from point A to point B. We asked them “What would need to happen?”