

Niu Yie (or My People in the Apple)

Biography is not destiny, but the easy explanation for these pictures made in New York's Chinatown is that I am a Chinese immigrant living in New York. I therefore seek out others like me, whether consciously or not.

Photographers have been taking pictures of Chinatown for a long time, the earliest probably being Arnold Genthe in San Francisco more than 100 years ago. To my knowledge, however, they have all been outsiders. And the pictures look that way.

To me, Chinatown is no more "exotic" than Midtown or Tribeca. It's just another part of New York.

The true explanation for these pictures, though, may be less lofty. I work next to Chinatown and lunchtime is often my only time to photograph.