

BLUE HERON OVERHEAD

BY ANGEL LUO

H
a
l
b
e
r
d
s

The figure of a bird was and is a staple in art - more specifically - in ancient ink paintings and silk embroidery. There is something about the lone figures that command awe and respect. Something that inherently makes us try to capture a moment.

F
e
l
t

Blue Herons are one of the most common types of feathered creatures to appear in Chinese art, with their distant slim figures in flight and near water. They have a certain beauty that stuns observers, and a nature that seems to resonate with other species.

P
a
p
e
r
D
r
a
g
o
n

Sometimes while hunting, Herons engage in a practice called “canopy feeding”, where they lure fish into their area by extending their wings and creating a space of shade. This image and method stands as a stark example of their independence - in mind and

character - despite inherently being a group animal.

In Chinese culture, It's somewhat common for people to congregate in groups: building large families and staying close generation after generation. The first immigrants in Chinatown likely had to break away from this type of collective culture in order to integrate into American society - which values freedom and independence.

This garment is meant to be a representation of the characters of those who inhabit Chinatown - those who have ended up adapting to life alone despite having been previously surrounded by others. The structure is held up by the wearer, as a symbolic sort of gesture similar to a person carrying heavy weight on their shoulders - the weight of thousands of years of unforgotten history and the hidden fear for the future. The blades and axes embedded in the wings of the structure reference China's violent history in its chase for an empire in connection to Chinatown's similar struggle in terms of gangs. The bright flash of paper that wraps around the body is a reminder of Chinatown's new influence on worldwide culture even while being separate from China. Despite everything, The wings show little distress, ready to take on another century of uncertainty.



HISTORY AND NATURE

