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HIGHLIGHTS

from the

**NATIONAL
COLLECTIONS**

World War II Collections/National Museum of American History and Archives of American Art

In 2014, the National Museum of American History (NMAH) and the Archives of American Art opened new exhibitions that highlight collections related to World War II. Both exhibitions have received wide press coverage and substantial website activity. NMAH's *Camilla's Purse*, on view in the Albert Small Documents Gallery until May 4, 2014, examines the life of Holocaust survivor Camilla Gottlieb through a display of letters, official documents, and personal possessions. The records, collected and secured by Gottlieb in a black leather purse, tell the story of an ordinary life upended by crisis and imprisonment but ultimately resulting in a new life in America. The purse's contents include Gottlieb's identification card, citizenship record, and traditional Jewish wedding contract—reminders of the secure home life her family enjoyed before the Germans invaded and annexed Austria in 1938. Faced with growing anti-Semitism, Gottlieb and her husband, Hermann, tried to leave the country but were impeded by immigration laws. In 1942, they were deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp in Czechoslovakia, where Hermann died before Russian forces liberated the camp in 1945. Gottlieb preserved records of her ordeal by keeping items such as food-ration coupons and an original train ticket stub to the Theresienstadt concentration camp. Following liberation, she emigrated to the United States in 1946; documents from this period, such as a letter to the Immigration and Naturalization Service and an emigrant entrance clearance form, also are included in the exhibit.

Another dramatic reminder of World War II is found in the Archives of American Art exhibition *Monuments Men: On the Front Line to Save Europe's Art, 1942–1946*, on view in the Lawrence A. Fleischman Gallery at the Donald W. Reynolds Center through April 20, 2014. The exhibit tells the story of an unlikely team of soldiers charged with identifying and protecting European cultural sites, monuments, and buildings from Allied bombing. Officially named the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives (MFAA) Section, this U.S. Army unit included art curators, scholars, architects, librarians, and archivists from the U.S. and Britain who were known as the "Monuments Men." The Archives of American Art holds the personal papers of Monuments Men S. Lane Faison, Walker Hancock, Walter Horn, Thomas Carr Howe, James J. Rorimer, George Leslie Stout, and Otto Wittman, as well as their oral history interviews, excerpts of which are included in the exhibit.

Beyond Bollywood/Asian Pacific American Center

On February 27, 2014, the Asian Pacific American Center (APAC) opened *Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation*. On display in the National Museum of Natural History, the groundbreaking 5,000-square-foot exhibition tells the story of America through the experience of South Asian Indian Americans. During the preparation of the exhibition, APAC acquired several iconic objects that have been accessioned by the National Museum of American History (NMAH). Among them is the turban of Balbir Singh Sodhi, who was shot to death in front of his Mesa, Arizona, gas station on September 15, 2001, by a man who told the police, "I stand for America all the way." Representing one of the first reported acts of retaliation against individuals of South Asian descent in the United States following the events of September 11, 2001, Mr. Sodhi's turban reflects an important part of this complex chapter in

the American story. The turban and other personal effects (including a diary kept by Mr. Sodhi, his wallet, and a flyer for a memorial honoring him after he was killed) were donated to APAC by Mr. Sodhi's family and accessioned into the collection of NMAH. Also accessioned in connection with the exhibition are campaign materials related to Dalip Singh Saund, a California farmer, mathematician, and judge from Imperial County, who in 1957 became the first Asian, Indian, and person of non-Abrahamic faith elected to Congress. He served until 1963, staunchly supporting civil rights and the United States Agency for International Development. Campaign materials and Saund's book *A Congressman from India* were donated by his grandson Eric Saund.

***Yousuf Karsh: American Portraits*/National Portrait Gallery**

The National Portrait recently received an extraordinary gift of 109 portraits created by internationally renowned photographer Yousuf Karsh (1908–2002). Donated by the photographer's wife, Estrellita Karsh, the collection includes iconic images of Americans who have distinguished themselves in fields as diverse as business, medicine, entertainment, science, politics, and the arts. To showcase this significant gift to its collection, the Portrait Gallery is presenting the two-part exhibition *Yousuf Karsh: American Portraits*, which remains on view through November 2, 2014. Among the portraits featured in this show are those of artist Georgia O'Keeffe, physician and virologist Jonas Salk, actress Ingrid Bergman, physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, businesswoman Elizabeth Arden, labor leader John L. Lewis, baseball great Jackie Robinson, composer Aaron Copland, first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, architect I.M. Pei, and the Apollo XI astronauts.

Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center Turns 10/National Air and Space Museum

The Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, the only Smithsonian facility built with private funds, marked its 10th year of operation on December 15, 2013. Opened in conjunction with the nation's Centennial of Flight in 2003, the center has expanded in all areas: size, scope of collections, displays, programs, and educational activities. As of November 30, 2013, more than 13 million people have visited the facility. When it opened, the center had less than 500 artifacts on display, and today there are more than 3,000. That first year, only one of its massive exhibition hangars—the Boeing Aviation Hangar—housed displays. A year later, the James S. McDonnell Space Hangar opened. In 2008, construction began on a second wing of the center. Completed in 2011, the wing includes the Mary Baker Engen Restoration Hangar, the archives, and collections storage and operations units. Several annual events have been introduced, as well as family days, science activities, lectures, and concert series. The Udvar-Hazy Center is the second-most visited aviation museum in the country—second to the National Air and Space Museum's (NASM) flagship building in Washington, D.C.—and Virginia's most popular museum. It is named for aerospace executive Steven F. Udvar-Hazy, who donated \$65 million for its construction. The center's 10th anniversary was officially celebrated with an open house on January 25, 2014. The daylong event featured a behind-the-scenes look at artifacts and archival materials and included presentations on how the museum preserves, cares for, and displays its collection of aircraft, spacecraft, and related objects. The Udvar-Hazy Center is unique among museum facilities in that it follows a "displayed storage" exhibition plan. Another unique feature of the facility is that visitors can watch collections specialists at work from a mezzanine above the restoration hangar.

California Gray Whale Skeleton Acquisition/National Museum of Natural History

The Natural History Museum collected the complete skeleton of 38-foot-long 30-ton Californian gray whale spotted floating near Camano Island State Park in Puget Island, Washington, with the help of volunteers from the Puget Sound Marine Mammal Stranding Network. Until now, the museum did not have a California gray whale skeleton in its research collection. To salvage the whale's skeleton, the bones were lashed to plastic pallets, placed in open-top plastic drums, and submerged back into the ocean near the Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island, for a number of months. This allowed fish, crabs, and other sea creatures to feast on the excess bits of meat and connective tissue still attached to the bones. Later, the bones were recovered, dried, and barnacles removed by hand. Once ready for shipment, the bones were transported aboard a C-130 on a military training logistics flight from Whidbey Island to Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, where museum staff moved the bones to their new home in the museum's offsite storage facility at the Museum Support Center, in Suitland, Maryland.

Pan-Institutional Update: 3-D Collection Released and 3-D Explorer Launched

The Smithsonian is a leader in using 3-D technology to make museum collections and scientific specimens more widely available for use and study. In November 2013, the unveiling of the Smithsonian X 3D Collection and 3-D explorer kicked off the two-day Smithsonian X 3D Conference, which focused on the current state, and future, of the Institution's 3-D program. The Smithsonian X 3D explorer and the initial objects scanned show how this technology will transform the work of museums and research institutions. The collection features objects that highlight different applications of 3-D capture and printing, as well as digital delivery methods for 3-D data in research, education, and conservation. Examples include:

- *The Wright Flyer* (NASM): This 3-D scan allows users to see fine details of the artifact, providing a window into the Wrights' inventive genius and understanding of the principles of flight.
- *Cassiopeia A Supernova Remnant* (Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory): This multi-wavelength 3-D reconstruction of Cassiopeia A uses X-ray data from NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory, infrared data from NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope, and optical data from NOAO's 4-meter telescope at Kitt Peak and the Michigan-Dartmouth-MIT 2.4-meter telescope.
- *Fossil Whale* (NMNH): Smithsonian paleontologists and 3-D staff conducted time-sensitive, on-site documentation of whale skeletons in Chile to capture essential data about their arrangement and condition before they were removed and the site was paved over.
- *Cosmic Buddha* (Freer and Sackler Galleries): To study low-relief compositions, scholars have traditionally made rubbings with black ink on white paper to give stronger contrast to outlines. Used with a wide variety of imaging techniques, 3-D scanning gives designs more clarity.

To examine objects scanned using 3-D technology, the Smithsonian and San Francisco-based Autodesk created the Smithsonian X 3D explorer, which allows users to rotate, measure, and adjust the color and lighting of objects, as well as create guided tours of models using a storytelling feature. The explorer also can be embedded on non-Smithsonian websites, blogs, and social media. In addition to being able to view objects using the explorer, raw 3-D data of objects will be available for downloading for personal and noncommercial use. Teachers and other educators can use the data to create 3-D models of these objects for use in their classrooms.