

# **COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS**



**Smithsonian  
Institution**

**APRIL 2020**

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY ACQUIRES PREMIER BUTTERFLY COLLECTION



The Kenneth Philip Collection of Arctic Lepidoptera arrived at the **National Museum of Natural History** (“NMNH”) in autumn 2019, including 43,200 pinned butterflies and moths from Alaska, Siberia, and other areas. Another 5,000 pinned specimens were shared with the Museum of the North, Fairbanks, Alaska for use by scientists at the University of Alaska. This collection is the

premier, comprehensive collection of Alaskan Lepidoptera. The Siberian collections were shared with institutions in Siberia and are otherwise barely represented in other museums. Most of the collections were made between 1970 and 2000 and resulted from a collaboration between the late astrophysicist/lepidopterist Ken Philip and the National Museum of Natural History Department of Entomology. Besides the evident scientific value of this collection, and that as the national museum NMNH has a mandate for the collections to be representative of the nation, the primary significance of the Philip Collection is the vast number of historical records of where and when species existed before and during the advent of global warming.

## “STEMMING THE TIDE” SYMPOSIUM, A RESOUNDING CALL TO ACTION FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE PROFESSIONALS



On March 5 and 6, the **Smithsonian American Art Museum** (“SAAM”) and the **Smithsonian’s National Collections Program** (“NCP”) co-organized an informative, inspirational, and action-oriented two-day symposium entitled *Stemming the Tide: Global Strategies for Sustaining Cultural Heritage Through Climate Change* at the Smithsonian. The event was part of the Smithsonian’s Earth Optimism programming in 2020 in celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day.

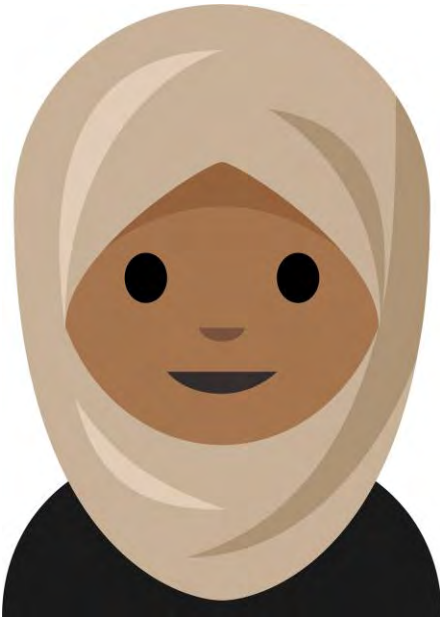
The objective of the symposium was to empower cultural heritage authorities, managers, and advocates to pursue more ambitious engagement and collaborative approaches to the climate crisis. With 250 registrants and 1,100 live web stream viewers representing 33 states and 25 countries ranging from the United Kingdom, Spain, and Greece to Canada, Mexico, and Trinidad and Tobago, the conference examined the impact of climate change on cultural heritage and communities worldwide, discussed the responsibilities of stewards of cultural heritage in fostering collaborative solutions, addressed urgent questions of equity and inclusion, and identified strategies that leverage cultural heritage for climate action.

On March 5, keynote and subject matter speakers presented information about what needs to be done to adapt to and combat climate change including innovative actions their organizations are currently implementing. The second day included dynamic breakout sessions—hosted at six Smithsonian museums and research centers—that explored six categories of cultural heritage identified by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (“ICOMOS”): Museums and Collections, Archaeological Sites, Built Heritage, Cultural Landscapes and Historic Urban Landscapes, Cultural Communities, and Intangible Cultural Heritage. The symposium concluded with a public program, *Heritage at Risk: A Dialogue on the Effects of Climate Change*, attended by more than 125 people. Moderated by the President of the International Institute of Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, the program panel of six specialists in the field of cultural heritage included the Elizabeth MacMillan Director of the National Museum of American History Anthea Hartig.

The symposium’s discussions will provide a framework from which the Smithsonian may consider future national and international programming and new Institutional initiatives toward greater sustainability of cultural heritage and the natural environment. The symposium proceedings will be published by the Smithsonian Scholarly Press by October.

*Stemming the Tide: Global Strategies for Sustaining Cultural Heritage Through Climate Change* was hosted by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and made possible with support from the Smithsonian’s National Collections Program, and the Provost’s One Smithsonian Symposia award.

## GUIDANCE IMAGES FOR THE PERSON WITH HEADSCARF EMOJI FROM THE COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM COLLECTION



New to the **Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum's** ("CHSDM") growing digital collection, the guidance images for the Person With Headscarf Emoji were proposed to Unicode Consortium in 2016 and approved that year. The design of the guidance images depict one of three iterations for the proposed emoji: the bust of a woman with black clothing and a beige headscarf; a beige headscarf in a ghost state with phantom wearer; and a beige scarf as a loose item of clothing. The three pictographs were designed by Aphelandra Messer for a Unicode Consortium proposal initiated by Rayouf Alhumedhi, in collaboration with Jennifer 8. Lee and Alexis Ohanian.

Emoji are picture-based characters used in digital communications. Since their origins in Japan in 1997, emoji have come to be recognized as a visual communication system, offering the ability to add emotional nuance to digital text and providing universal ways to express information. In 2007 and 2009, Google and Apple petitioned Unicode Consortium, the global regulator that maintains text standards across digital devices, to accept emoji as a language system for standardization. By 2010, Unicode recognized emoji as a communication system and Apple introduced the first emoji keyboard in 2011.

Today, each pictograph added to the emoji keyboard is overseen by Unicode Consortium. Anyone can propose a new emoji. The formal proposals are submitted to the Consortium for review by the Emoji Subcommittee and can take up to two years to be approved. The proposal must include guidance images, such as those proposed here for acquisition, along with technical information about the proposed emoji, including expected usage level, search, image distinctiveness, suitability, compatibility within the emoji system, and more. Once an emoji is approved by Unicode, the guidance image is shared with vendors (including Apple, Google, Microsoft, Samsung, Twitter, Facebook, and more) to render the emoji based on their device, platform, aesthetics, and operating standards.

The Person With Headscarf Emoji was initiated by Rayouf Alhumedhi, at the time a 15-year-old Muslim student living in Berlin, Germany. In a group chat with friends, each of Alhumedhi's friends used an emoji to represent themselves, but there wasn't an emoji to represent Alhumedhi, who is Muslim and wears a hijab. (She previously used the Man With Turban Emoji and Woman Emoji, connected by Left-Right Arrow Emoji.) This led her to draft a proposal that caught the attention of Jennifer 8. Lee, vice-chair of the Unicode Emoji Subcommittee and co-founder of Emojination, a group that seeks to make emoji more inclusive and representative. Lee collaborated with Alhumedhi to strengthen the proposal and commissioned Messer to design the guidance images.

In Messer's design, she rendered the Person With Headscarf guidance images as flat, vector-based works following the Google emoji scheme, rather than in the shaded, semi-realistic scheme common in Apple emoji. Emoji appear on a white background on emoji keyboards; in text conversations they often appear on gray or blue backgrounds, thus Messer avoided using these colors in her design. The proportions of emoji "keys" are a square, with the glyphs needing to take up as much room as possible in that square so they are distinguishable

*Guidance images, Person With Headscarf Emoji, 2016; Concept by Rayouf Alhumedhi (Saudi, born 2001), designed by Aphelandra Messer (American, born 1993), with Jennifer 8. Lee (American, born 1976), Emojination (San Francisco, California, USA, founded 2015), and Alexis Ohanian (American, born 1983); SVG and PNG files; Gift of Emojination; 2020-1-1*

at incredibly small scale on emoji keyboards. Messer also uses color to make a proposed guidance image stand out to Unicode reviewers. She started with a woman wearing a purple hijab, but after review by Alhumedhi and Lee, they changed the hijab to a neutral beige color to be more applicable across cultures. Messer also created clothing options in case Unicode preferred to approve the hijab as a piece of clothing.

As a language system, there are a few things that emoji do well. They effectively represent nouns that are objects, verbs that are active, and emotional states, but adjectives are difficult in emoji. Significantly, there are no glyphs for “I” or “you.” This is likely a driver for users to want emoji that represent them on the keyboard. The Person With Headscarf Emoji guidance images represent a key step towards diversifying the people and cultures available on the emoji keyboard, signifying emoji’s global spectrum of users.

## “ZEN MOTORCYCLE” TAKES FINAL JOURNEY IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

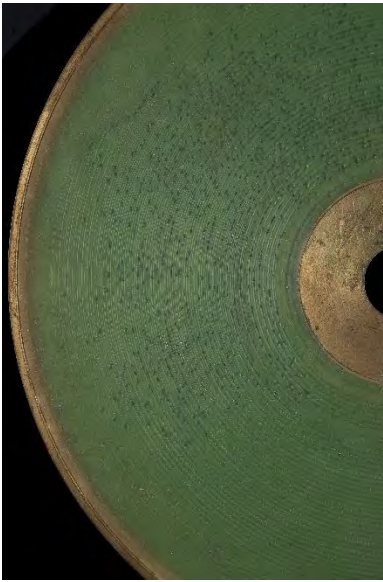


The **National Museum of American History** (“NMAH”) is now the new home of American author Robert M. Pirsig’s 1966 Honda Super Hawk motorcycle featured in his book, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values*. Pirsig’s book, originally published by William Morrow in 1974, has sold more than 5 million copies and has been translated into 27 languages. The inspiration for the book stemmed from a month-long summer motorcycle road trip Pirsig (1928–2017) took with his 11-year-old son Chris in 1968, which became a personal and philosophical odyssey into fundamental questions of life.

As they rode along the 5,700 miles from the Twin Cities of Minnesota to San Francisco and back, Pirsig became better acquainted with his son and himself. The book kick-started an international cultural movement to rethink how people interact with technology and find balance in life. The object is the most famous forgotten motorcycle in American history and literature, which was owned by a trailblazer in motorcycle touring and documenting its celebration of freedom and the open road. In addition to presenting his philosophical ideas, *Zen* was a testament to Pirsig’s patience and perseverance, as the autobiographical novel was rejected by 121 publishers before being picked up by Morrow. Since then, the text has formed the core of college courses, and dedicated fans have retraced the novel’s cross-country trip.

Stored for decades in the family’s New England garage and recently mechanically restored, the motorcycle was a gift from Pirsig’s widow, Wendy K. Pirsig. In addition to the motorcycle, the donation included Pirsig’s leather jacket, maps, shop manual and other gear from the 1968 ride, together with a manuscript copy and signed first edition of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. Pirsig’s favorite toolboxes, with tools for maintaining his bike and other vehicles as well as tools he made himself, were also part of the donation.

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY RECEIVES SAVES AMERICA'S TREASURES GRANT



The **National Museum of American History** (“NMAH”) received a \$488,000 grant from the Department of Interior, National Park Service (“NPS”) through the Save America’s Treasures (“SAT”) grant program, for conserving sound recordings from Alexander Graham Bell’s Washington, D.C., Volta Laboratory. Dating from 1881 to 1892, they are among the earliest recordings ever made.

This is one of 41 grants awarded in fall 2019, totaling \$12.6 million, given in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. With Save America’s Treasures funds, organizations and agencies conserve significant U.S. cultural and historic treasures that illustrate, interpret, and are associated with the great events, ideas, and individuals that contribute to the nation’s history and culture. The Alexander Graham Bell Foundation in Baddeck, Nova Scotia, Canada, has pledged matching funds.

The NMAH, through an ongoing collaborative project with the Library of Congress and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (“Berkeley Lab”), has recovered sound from 20 experimental Volta Laboratory recordings in 2011, 2013, and 2019, including the only documented recording of Bell’s voice. The earlier conservation work received funding from the Grammy Foundation, Smithsonian Women’s Committee, and the Smithsonian Scholarly Studies program. The SAT grant will permit the continuation of this project, enabling the team to work with the museum’s collection of nearly 300 more experimental recordings from Bell’s laboratory and with additional Bell recordings in the collections at Parks Canada’s Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site in Baddeck. This project will revive sounds from recordings in two Bell collections and reunite the collections digitally, thereby enhancing what we know about the earliest days of experiments with recorded sound.

## CENTER FOR FOLKLIFE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE RECEIVES \$1.5 MILLION PHILANTHROPIC GIFT



The **Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage** (“CFCH”) has recently received \$1.5 million from Ferring Pharmaceuticals for its Cultural Sustainability Program. Ferring’s latest contribution, and the CFCH’s largest gift to date, provides the resources necessary to build long-term infrastructure for the Center’s Cultural Sustainability Program.

For more than 50 years, CFCH has worked with communities across the United States and around the world to document, preserve, and present their cultural heritage to diverse audiences. Through this work, The

Center has seen a common and alarming thread: a significant and accelerating decline in cultural vitality. Globalization connects people in new ways, but it is also a major threat to the world’s cultural diversity. Social and economic forces pressure traditional cultures to assimilate. Urbanization, political oppression, war, genocide, climate change, and mass production of culture wreak havoc on Indigenous communities and their individual members’ sense of identity and belonging. What is at stake is enormous: the extinction of Indigenous languages, art and craft, traditions, and economic self-sufficiency.

The Cultural Sustainability Program works with communities to design and implement strategies to sustain their languages and cultural heritage. Community needs drive the work, which uses the CFCH’s knowledge, experience and networks to find solutions based on specific social, economic, and cultural contexts. The program seeks to understand and mitigate threats to cultural sustainability; scale the CFCH’s impact through partnerships, convenings and thought leadership; and transform public understanding about cultural diversity. This gift will allow the Center to scale the impact of their Cultural Sustainability Program.

As part of the program, CFCH recently developed a “Shared Stewardship of Collections” policy for sound recordings, photographs, and moving images. With these guidelines, which were reviewed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues on three continents, the Center aims to foster sustained dialogue with source communities, promote greater engagement, and shared responsibility for the respectful management of the intangible cultural heritage in its care, and ensure culturally appropriate collections care, interpretation, display, and public access of these collections.