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## **Smithsonian American Art Museum To Display Arts and Crafts Made by Japanese Americans in World War II Internment Camps at Its Renwick Gallery**

The Smithsonian American Art Museum will present “The Art of Gaman: Arts and Crafts from the Japanese American Internment Camps, 1942-1946” at its branch museum for craft and decorative arts, the Renwick Gallery, from March 5, 2010, through Jan. 30, 2011.

“The Art of Gaman” is organized by San Francisco-based author and guest curator Delphine Hirasuna with the cooperation of the San Francisco chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. It features more than 120 objects, the majority of which are on loan from former internees or their families. This exhibition presents an opportunity to educate a new generation of Americans about the internment experience and will provide a historical context through archival photographs and artifacts.

The exhibition is presented under the patronage of Norman Y. Mineta. Mineta, a former congressman and Regent of the Smithsonian, was interned at Heart Mountain in Wyoming.

Soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, almost all ethnic Japanese—more than two-thirds of whom were American citizens by birth—were ordered to leave their homes and move to 10 inland internment camps for the duration of World War II. While in these bleak camps, the internees used scraps and found materials to make furniture and other objects to beautify their surroundings. Arts and crafts became essential for simple creature comforts and emotional survival. These objects—tools, teapots, furniture, toys and games, musical instruments, pendants and pins, purses and ornamental displays—are physical manifestations of the art of “gaman,” a Japanese word that means to bear the seemingly unbearable with dignity and patience.

In 2006, the exhibition appeared at museums in California, Oregon and Connecticut. The presentation at the Renwick includes several additions that have not been seen publically, including works by Ruth Asawa, Jimmy Tsutomu Mirikitani, Isamu Noguchi, Henry Sugimoto and master woodworkers Gentaro and Shinzaburo Nishiura. The exhibition is based on Hirasuna’s book “The Art of Gaman,” published by Ten Speed Press.

The Renwick Gallery is located on Pennsylvania Avenue at 17th Street N.W. It is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except Dec. 25. Admission is free. Web site: [americanart.si.edu](http://americanart.si.edu).

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