



# HANNAH SCOTT NHD STATE EXHIBIT

The Safekeepers of History: A Monumental Stand for Cultural Preservation During the  
Second World War

# Full Exhibit



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# The Fine Art of Looting

Hitler Swears  
To Stamp Out  
'Evils' in Arts

GOERING LAUNCHES  
THE NAZI ART PURGE

Orders Reich Chamber of Art  
Public Exhibits to Get Rid  
of 'Un-German' Works

MODERNISTS ARE 'TARGET'

Reichs Chamber of Art  
Legal Force and Enforcing  
Rights in Movement

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In 1937 the Nazis seized 16,000 Jewish-created, modern, and abstract artworks in Germany, condemning them in the Degenerate Art Exhibition. After "purifying" Germany's culture, Nazi interests expanded to invaded countries.

Prized and Despised

"Around us you see these fragments of  
creativity, of nobility, of good-for-nothingness  
and degeneracy. We are all shocked and  
disgusted by the sight." —Adolf Ziegler, Nazi  
Party Member (L.A.)

The German looting unit, Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, systematically plundered Europe "based on three principles: the moral and material enrichment of the German nation; the material enrichment of individual Germans, predominantly Party bosses;" and to furnish Hitler's proposed Führermuseum (MFAA Field Report, 1945).

Priceless Art Burned  
By Nazis, Says Britain

to the Associated Press

LONDON, Feb. 5.—A German  
bombing squad in Italy has  
wrecked a priceless  
work of art and important  
archives of European history  
dating from 1518 to 1811, reports  
a line by Italian authorities to  
open them. War Minister Benito  
Mussolini said the House of  
Cavour today.

POLISH UNDERGROUND REPORTS HOW  
GERMANS PILLAGED WORKS OF ART

The Polish Underground

The Polish Underground

The Polish Underground

The Polish Underground

The Polish Underground

The Polish Underground

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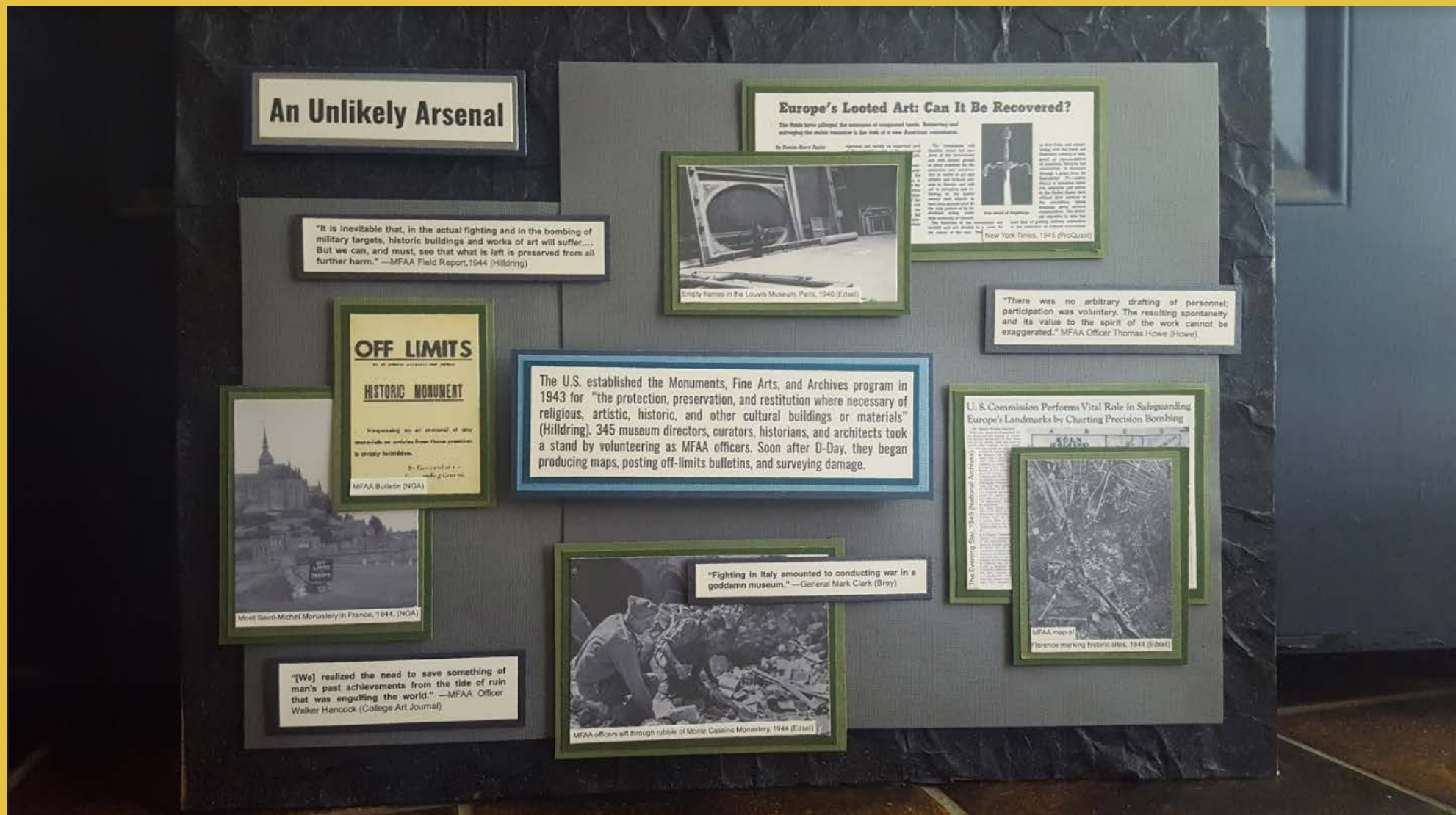
"The Army is interested in extinguishing fires only  
in such buildings as may be used for Army billets...  
All the rest to be destroyed; no historical or artistic  
building in the East to be of any value whatsoever."  
—Order issued by Field Marshal Walter von Reichenau  
and approved by Adolf Hitler (L.A.)

## Left Panel Top Section



# Left Panel Middle Section





Left Panel Bottom Section

# Full Middle Panel



Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives officers of World War II stood against destructive Nazi looting by safeguarding more than 5 million of Europe's monuments and artworks. Through their unprecedented activism, MFAA officers set a standard to restitute historic works endangered during armed conflict, which ultimately laid the groundwork for modern cultural preservation organizations and provenance research alliances.



## Middle Panel Top Section





## Middle Panel Middle Section







# Full Right Panel



# THE VICTORS Return the Spoils

## Standing in Defiance



Looted art treasures returning to Florence, 1945 (National Archives)

"I found little or no sympathy in the [American] Army for German works of art... Finding stolen objects was, of course, more spectacular, but it was of equal importance that the great German and German-owned works of art be protected." —MFAA Officer James Rorimer (Rorimer)

"To save the culture of your allies is a small thing. To cherish the culture of your enemy, to risk your life and the life of other men to save it, to give it all back to them as soon as the battle was won... It was unheard of, but that is exactly what... [the] Monuments Men intended to do." —Robert Edsel, Founder of the Monuments Men Foundation (Edsel)

While the Soviets confiscated discovered art for war reparations, the MFAA took a stand to restitute works, even those of German origin. When monuments officers received orders to ship 202 German paintings to the U.S., they penned the Wiesbaden Manifesto—the only act of protest by officers during World War II. They declared, "We wish to state that, from our own knowledge, no historical grievance will rankle so long or be the cause of so much justified bitterness as the removal for any reason of a part of the heritage of any nation, even if that heritage may be interpreted as a prize of war" (Farmer).

## Right Panel Top Section

## Help from the Heartland: Kansas City's Monuments Men



Paul Gardner  
MFAA Officer & Director at  
Nelson-Atkins  
(1933-1953)



Laurence Sickman  
MFAA Officer, Curator of Asian  
Art & Director at Nelson-Atkins  
(1953-1977)



Patrick J. Kelleher  
Curator of European Art at  
Nelson-Atkins  
(1954-1959)

"These men brought to their military duties the same passion for art and culture that made them so valuable to the Nelson-Atkins. They took their responsibilities as protectors of these monuments very seriously." —MacKenzie Mallon, Researcher in European Painting and Sculpture Department, Nelson-Atkins (Nelson-Atkins)

"The Nelson-Atkins has a rich history which is only enhanced by the individuals who have worked there. These Monuments Men protected historical artifacts from destruction and saved these treasures for future generations. I am proud to introduce legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the men and women who fought to preserve this priceless history."  
—Missouri Senator Roy Blunt (Nelson-Atkins)

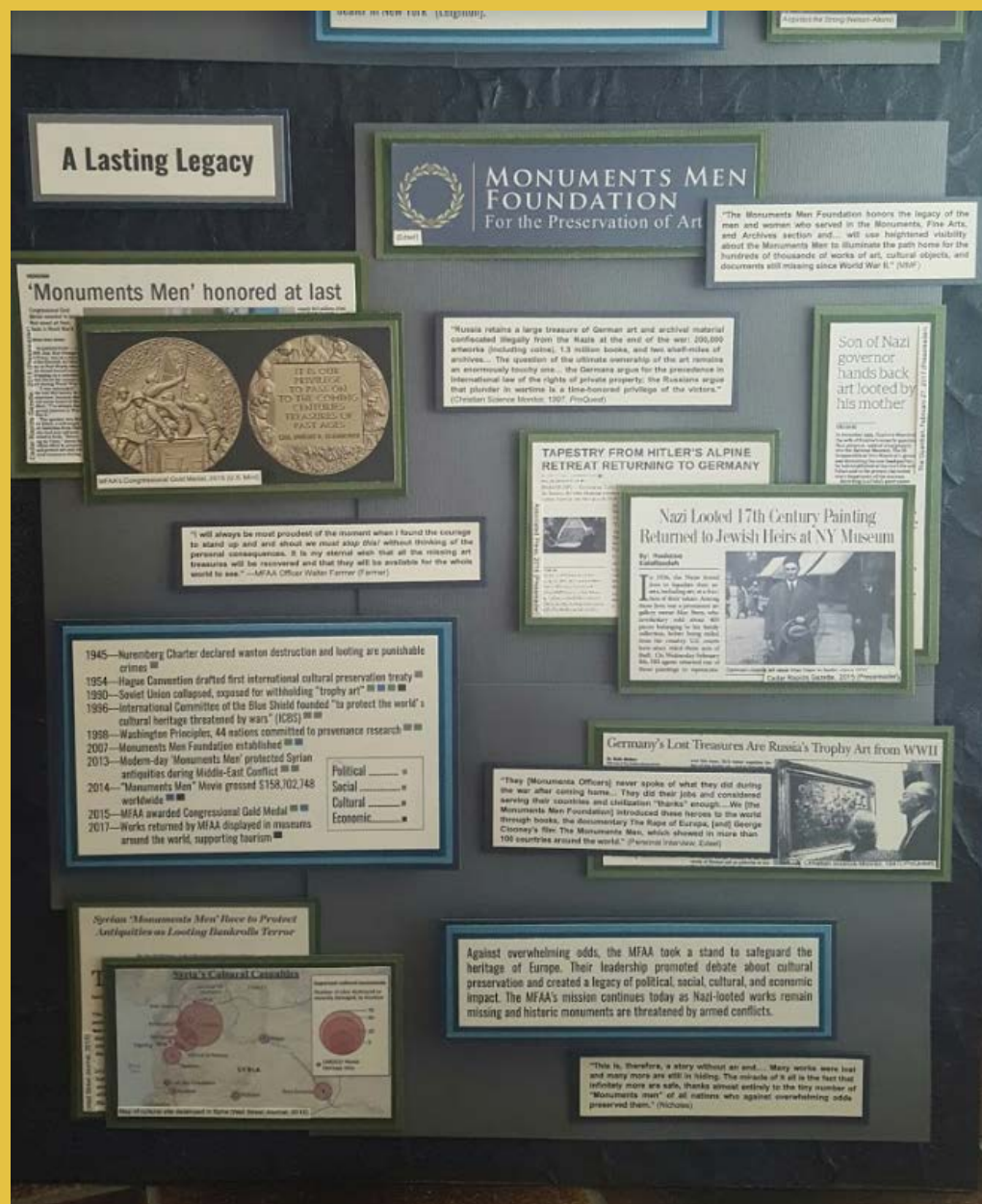
Once returning home MFAA officers assumed leadership positions in cultural institutions, including the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, subsequently expanding their legacy to American communities. "One of the finest examples of 18th century portraiture at the Nelson-Atkins, Nicolas de Largillière's *Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland*, was found by the Monuments Men in a salt mine in Alt Aussee, Austria, and returned to Clarice de Rothschild, whose family owned the painting. It was purchased by the Nelson-Atkins in 1954 after Rothschild sold it to an art dealer in New York" (Leighton).



Augustus the Strong (Nelson-Atkins)

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