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**Smithsonian Exhibition On Asian Pacific American History Coming to  
Heart Mountain Interpretive Center**  
*Exhibit is first of its kind to celebrate Asian Pacific Americans*

Asian and Pacific Americans make up more than 5 percent of the U.S. population—more than 17 million people—and those numbers are growing. Their ancestral roots represent more than 50 percent of the world, extending from East Asia to Southeast Asia, and from South Asia to the Pacific Islands and Polynesia.

In commemoration of this important history, “I Want the Wide American Earth: An Asian Pacific American Story” will open at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, September 19 as part of a 13-city national tour. In this first exhibition of its kind, the Smithsonian celebrates Asian Pacific American history across diverse cultures and explores how Asian Pacific Americans have shaped and been shaped by the course of the nation’s history. “I Want the Wide American Earth” tells the rich and complex stories of the very first Asian immigrants, including their participation in key moments in American history: Asian immigrants panned in the Gold Rush, hammered ties in the Transcontinental Railroad, fought on both sides in the Civil War and helped build the nation’s agricultural system.

Through the decades, Asian immigrants struggled against legal exclusion, civil rights violations and unlawful detention, such as the 120,000 Japanese who were interred during World War II. Since the 1960s, vibrant new communities, pan-Asian, Pacific Islander and cross-cultural in make-up, have blossomed.

“It is an honor to feature this exhibit,” said Brian Liesinger, Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Executive Director. “These narratives represent Asian Pacific American achievement, influence—and, unfortunately, suffering—which continue to shape our country and contribute to a richer, more diverse, American identity of today.”

The banner exhibition is complemented by an e-book, which is a 14-page illustrated adaption of the exhibition. Produced in collaboration with SI Universe Media, creators of the first-ever Asian Pacific American comics anthology, the e-book will tell the Asian Pacific American story in

graphic narrative, featuring work by seven Asian Pacific American comic artists. The e-book is free to [download](#) and viewable on all tablet devices and e-readers.

The exhibit also features a free mobile tour app (available on the App Store under “Wide Earth”), which includes interviews with authors Maxine Hong Kingston and Monique Truong; U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta; Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center director Konrad Ng; activist Deepa Iyer; and U.S. retired major general Antonio Taguba. A set of educational posters based on the exhibition will be distributed to schools and other learning and cultural institutions and organizations to serve as a resource for learning Asian Pacific American history and culture. The poster set is also available for download at <http://www.sites.si.edu/>.

“I Want the Wide American Earth” was created by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and curated by Lawrence-Ming Bui Davis, Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center Initiative coordinator. The exhibition is supported by a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. [SITES](#) has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people for more than 60 years. SITES connects Americans to their cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history.

The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center produces programs and exhibitions featuring the Asian Pacific American experience. It shares the challenges and stories of America’s fastest-growing communities. It connects treasures and scholars with the public, celebrates long-lived traditions and explores contemporary expressions. The stories it tells are vital to a deeper understanding of the nation and a richer appreciation of Asian Pacific cultures. Visit [www.apa.si.edu](http://www.apa.si.edu) for more information.

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*Located between Cody and Powell, Wyo. on Highway 14a, the Heart Mountain World War II Japanese American Confinement Site features an Interpretive Center that is open daily from 10 am to 5 pm. Admission is \$7.00 for Adults, \$5.00 for seniors and students and children under 12 are free. For more information please call (307) 754-8000 or visit [www.HeartMountain.org](http://www.HeartMountain.org).*