



Media only: Michele Urie (202) 633-2950

Aug. 13, 2009

Media Web site: <http://newsdesk.si.edu>

Smithsonian's John Marshall Film Collection Added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

The John Marshall Ju/'hoan Bushman Film and Video Collection, 1950 – 2000, held in the Human Studies Film Archives at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, has been added to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Memory of the World Register. John Kennedy Marshall (1932 – 2005) was an American anthropologist and acclaimed documentary filmmaker.

The Marshall collection was one of 35 items chosen for its exceptional value as part of world documentary heritage. This designation places it within the esteemed company of the diary of Anne Frank, the Magna Carta and the League of Nations Archives. The collection is only the fourth documentary property held in a U.S. archive or library to be added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

In October, the museum will launch a Web site dedicated to the John Marshall Ju/'hoan Bushman Film and Video Collection.

Considered one of the seminal visual anthropology projects of the 20th century, Marshall's collection provides a unique example of sustained audiovisual documentation of one cultural group, the Ju/'hoansi of the Kalahari Desert in northeastern Namibia, spanning half a century. It is an unparalleled historical record not only of an indigenous people's traditional way of life and ties to the land but of the transformation of their life in the rapidly changing political and economic landscape that developed in concert with the struggle for Namibian independence.

"The career of John Kennedy Marshall spanned a remarkable 50-plus years during which he became an innovator in the technical production of films as well as a leading voice in the ethics of ethnographic filmmaking," said Jake Homiak, director of the museum's Anthropology Collections and

Archives Program. “During his lifelong association with the Ju/’hoansi (Bushmen) he became an advocate for those he documented, using his films as tools for education and empowerment.”

The Marshall collection contains 767 hours of unedited film and video footage, as well as edited films and videos (both published and unpublished), audio tapes, still photographs, maps, study guides for edited films, published and unpublished writing by Marshall and others and production files that include letters, shot logs, translations, transcriptions, editing logs, treatments and proposals spanning from 1950 to 2000. The collection also includes several books and numerous journal articles that have been written about Marshall’s films and methods.

The museum’s Human Studies Film Archives, founded in 1975, is an internationally recognized center devoted to collecting, preserving and disseminating a broad range of moving-image materials documenting past and present world cultures. The archives promotes the importance of moving-image materials as an integral part of the anthropological record, and the collections and resources support research on specific cultures, the development of ethnographic film and the broad study of visual culture.

The archives’ holdings consist of more than 8 million feet of film and 1,000 hours of video material in all major moving-image analog and digital formats and more than 250,000 still photographs associated with the collections. The archives also collects a wide variety of supplementary material pertaining to its holdings, including audio recordings, field notes, translations, shot logs, lecture notes, scripts, promotional materials and voice-over annotations.

More details about the museum’s Marshall collection may be found at <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/naa/fa/marshall.pdf>.

Marshall’s edited films are distributed by Documentary Educational Resources and may be found at <http://www.der.org/films/king-series.html>.

UNESCO’s Web site, <http://unesco.org>, contains additional information about the Memory of the World Register and a full list of inscriptions for 2009.

###