



1020 O Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • [www.californiamuseum.org](http://www.californiamuseum.org)  
(916) 653-7524 • fax: (916) 653-0314

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Nancy Mallory, Mallory & Associates  
(916) 646-1545  
[nancy@mallorypr.com](mailto:nancy@mallorypr.com)

**The California Museum Presents**  
**The Purse & The Person:**  
**A Century of Women's Purses**

*Museum hosts purse drive to help empower women in need*

**Sacramento, California — (June 24, 2010)** The California Museum is proud to present *The Purse & The Person: A Century of Women's Purses*, scheduled to open Saturday, July 3, and run through Sunday, September 26, 2010. This exhibit uses purses and their contents as a window on the changing roles of women over the past hundred years - from Edwardian matron to 1980s Superwoman. Major themes of the 20th century - prosperity, hardship, war, peace, women's rights - are clearly visible among these purses and their contents.

In conjunction with the opening of *The Purse & The Person* exhibit, The California Museum will host a purse drive with donations going to St. John's Shelter for Women & Children. Visitors who purchase a ticket to the Museum and donate a new or slightly used purse, will receive one free admission. The "Bring a Purse, Bring a Friend" campaign runs through the month of July.

"A purse is a symbol of a woman's economic power. No matter where a woman is on the social ladder, she understands that a purse represents the ability to buy things and provide for oneself," said Claudia French, executive director of The California Museum. "The goal of this purse drive is to provide support to the residents of St. John's Shelter for Women & Children and help empower these women."

*The Purse and the Person* brings together life stories buried right under our noses — in the purses carried by our mothers and grandmothers. Developed from a private

-more-

collection of over 3,000 purses and accessories, this exhibition looks at purses from the inside out, examining day-to-day life reflected in a very personal, very female artifact cache – a woman’s handbag.

“Purses provide a peek into history. This exhibit tells the story of what we took with us and why,” said Amanda Meeker, deputy director of The California Museum. “The exhibition will showcase more than 100 purses with hundreds of accessories that span a century. Visitors will connect to this colorful and captivating exhibit that appeals to the fashion-conscious, the scholarly, the curious, and all who appreciate history,” said Meeker.

While some women may be defined by what is inside their purses, others may be interpreted by what’s not. The rouge pot of a 1920s flapper denoted youth and freedom, while the absence of make-up may be an expression of freedom for the counter-culture youth of a later generation. The twentieth century saw the purse evolve into an accessory as indispensable to most women as their shoes. Several areas of the exhibition help visitors to explore purses as fashion statements and as idiosyncratic expressions of personality in all their wide range of shapes, colors, sizes, and materials. These traveling bags carrying memories of home and souvenirs of the road provide snapshots as revealing as any travel journal or postcard.

The showing here in Sacramento is part of a nine city national tour over a three year period containing approximately one hundred purses, and hundreds of additional artifacts and photographs. The tour was developed and managed by Smith Kramer Fine Art Services, an exhibition tour development company in Kansas City, Missouri.

For more information, visit [www.CaliforniaMuseum.org/exhibits/upcoming](http://www.CaliforniaMuseum.org/exhibits/upcoming).

###

### **About The California Museum**

*The California Museum - home of the California Hall of Fame and California Legacy Trails - engages, educates and enlightens people about California's rich history and its unique contribution to the world through ideas, innovation, art and culture. Through captivating, interactive and innovative experiences, the Museum seeks to inspire men, women and children to dream the California dream and dare to make their mark on history. Open Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. Noon-5 p.m.; Adults \$8.50, Students/Seniors (with valid I.D.) \$7, Children 6-13 \$6.00; Free for Children 5 and Younger. Parking is free on the weekends. [www.CaliforniaMuseum.org](http://www.CaliforniaMuseum.org).*