Guide to Archives Center Shopping Bag Collection

NMAH.AC.0570
Vanessa Broussard Simmons
December 12, 1996
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Archives Center Shopping Bag Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.0570
Date: circa 1980-2004
Extent: 4 Cubic feet (9 boxes)
Creator: Archives Center, NMAH, SI.
Language: English
Summary: Shopping bags from a variety of businesses, including department stores, museums, book stores, libraries, hotels, banks, and specialty shops. Additional material will be added to this collection periodically.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
Immediate source of acquisition unknown.

Provenance
This collection was artificially created.

Processing Information
Collection processed by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, December 12, 1996.

Preferred Citation
Archives Center Shopping Bag Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access
Collection open for research.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction
Fees for commercial reproduction. However, there are copyright and trademark restrictions.
Biographical / Historical

Many businesses have opted to use shopping bags as a less expensive form of advertisement rather than print ads or television commercials. These advertisements reflect the creative aspects of the businesses and can often convey the message of a brand. The bags are made of a variety of materials including cloth, heavy paper, and plastic. In addition, retail stores, restaurants, book stores, museums, libraries, coffee houses, grocery stores, and social groups create the shopping bag with the hope that the consumer will reuse it.

Scope and Contents

The shopping bags in this collection represent a number of department stores, book stores, antique stores, banks, libraries, museums, art institutes, toy stores, hotels, etc. and were gathered from a number of sources since it is difficult to get a wide regional selection. The Archives Center maintains these bags however in one collection to show the breadth and the range of the collection. The research value of these bags is as an advertising approach. It presents a view of how certain businesses choose to represent themselves. The designs of the bags, however, are not taken lightly. The graphics and designs on the bags can represent three months of work.

The shopping bags are arranged in alphabetical order by name of business since they were collected to relate to advertising more so than their relationship to art or graphic design. Researchers interested in a particular type of art style or technique or one artist should consult the shopping bag collection at the Cooper Hewitt Museum where they are collected as art forms.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
- Department stores
- Libraries and museums
- Museums
- Taverns (Inns)
- advertising -- Business ephemera

Types of Materials:
- Shopping bags
- Trademarks
## Container Listing

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<td>Box 4, Folder 1</td>
<td>Abercrombie &amp; Fitch, Clothes and Sporting Goods, 1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 1</td>
<td>Abraham &amp; Straus, Department Store</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 1</td>
<td>Adirondack Museum, Museum Gift Shop, New York, 2000</td>
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<td>Box 7, Folder 1</td>
<td>Altmans of Orchard Street, New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 1</td>
<td>American Airlines Bistro, Restaurant, 2000</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 1</td>
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<td>Anne Taylor, Woman's Clothing Store</td>
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<td>Arche Chaussures, Shoe Store</td>
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<td>Aubergine, Bethesda, Maryland, 1998</td>
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<td>Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Museum, Auburn, Indiana</td>
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<td>B. Altmans &amp; Company</td>
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<td>Barnes and Noble, Books and Magazines, 1975</td>
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<td>Barnes and Noble, Books and Magazines</td>
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<td>Pier 1 Imports, House wares</td>
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<td>Saks Fifth Ave, Clothing Store</td>
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<td>Salvatore's, Shoe Store, Pittsfield, Massachusetts</td>
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Smithsonian Craft Show, Gifts, Washington DC

Stage Deli, Deli, New York City


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Sutton Place Gourmet, Grocery Store, Washington DC

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