



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 24, 2023

“Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.” Exhibit Opens Today at The Reagan Library

With opening weekend already sold out, the world-renowned exhibition is expected to be the most attended in the library’s 30+ year history

Simi Valley, CA – The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute officially unveiled their new traveling exhibition, “Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.” to a sold-out crowd today. The world-renowned exhibit made its West Coast premiere at the Reagan Library and is expected to be the most attended in the library’s 30+ year history. Timed-tickets to the remarkable exhibition on sale at www.ReaganLibrary.com/Auschwitz are limited and in high demand, particularly on weekends. Ahead of today’s opening, more than 35,000 people from 45 states purchased presale tickets.

Created by Spanish company Musealia together with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland, and now being toured through North America by World Heritage Exhibitions, the exhibit displays the largest and most comprehensive collection of artifacts linked to the history of this German Nazi concentration and extermination camp. The collection of more than 700 original artifacts was curated by a panel of experts that included Robert Jan van Pelt (Chief Curator), Michael Berenbaum and Paul Salmons, working in close collaboration with Piotr Setkiewicz, head of the Auschwitz Museum Research Center. In addition to the hundreds of objects displayed from the Auschwitz Memorial, over 20 other international museums and institutions have participated with special loans, such as Yad Vashem in Israel and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

Today’s debut of the 12,500 sq. ft. exhibition marks the first of four final North American stops. This exhibition was made possible by Presenting Underwriter Ambassador Gordon D. Sondland, Partnering Underwriter Michael & Susan Dell through the Dell Family Charitable Fund (DAF), Jill and Ed Moss, and other generous sponsors.

“In 1983, President Reagan spoke to Jewish Holocaust survivors and pledged that ‘we will never shut our eyes, never refuse to acknowledge the truth, no matter how unpleasant.’ This exhibition is a testament to his promise,” said John Heubusch, Executive Director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute. “Confronting the darkest moments in mankind’s history is often difficult, but also profoundly moving and instructive. Our hope is that as many as possible make their own pledge to visit this exhibition.”

Hundreds of personal items such as suitcases, eyeglasses, and shoes that belonged to Auschwitz deportees are on display in this exhibit, which offers an audio tour in both English and Spanish. Other artifacts include: three concrete posts that were part of the fence of the Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp; fragments of an original prisoners' barrack from the Auschwitz III-Monowitz camp; a desk and other possessions of the first and longest-serving Auschwitz commandant, Rudolf Höss; a gas mask used by the SS; as well as a German-made World War II-era Model 2 train car – the same model used to transport Jews to camps and ghettos.

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute has also made grants available for students to tour the exhibit at little to no cost. In doing so, the foundation hopes that younger generations can learn from history first-hand regardless of their background or financial situation and develop a greater understanding of the magnitude of the Holocaust. Thus far, more than 9,000 individual students and school groups have reserved tickets to tour the exhibition, with the majority receiving complimentary admission thanks to generous patrons of the foundation.

Emphasizing the importance of the exhibition today, Piotr Cywiński, Auschwitz Memorial Director, said: “We are approaching the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and antisemitic rhetoric is once again on the rise in our world. We all need a sobering reminder of the evils that are possible when this kind of hatred is allowed to fester in our society. The Auschwitz exhibition serves as this reminder and will help guide us toward a more responsible, peaceful, accepting future.”

“It can be difficult to comprehend the enormity of the Holocaust from a history textbook alone. This was part of the impetus behind this project: to bring visitors into an accessible narrative where they can confront the true reality of the Nazi regime and learn from their visit here,” said Luis Ferreiro, Director of Musealia. “We encourage visitors to take their time to process the powerful and devastating artifacts on display in the exhibition and leave with a new perspective that they can apply to their daily lives.”

“By showcasing the history of the Holocaust through stories, images, and material items, this exhibit contributes to a deep body of historical preservation that honors the memory of those killed in the Holocaust, survivors, and their descendants. It is important work that I am honored to have a part in,” said John Norman, President of World Heritage Exhibitions. “*Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.* speaks to the deep and lasting impact that history has on our present. I truly believe this is one of the most moving and significant exhibitions of our generation and its tenure at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library speaks to this. Not only is it worth visiting, whether you are near or far, but it is worth returning to and considering deeply: this is not just an exhibition, but a story of horror and of survival.”

Touching on the personal nature of this exhibit and his impetus to serve as the Presenting Underwriter, former Ambassador to the European Union Gordon D. Sondland said, “My parents fled Germany during the Holocaust, escaping to Uruguay and then emigrating to Washington state where I was born in the 1950s. Anti-Semitism in America is at the highest level I have seen in my

lifetime, and the numbers agree. In the last six years, antisemitic acts have tripled, and the Anti-Defamation League has declared a state of emergency. In this cultural moment, this exhibit is a timely reminder of what hate can become.”

To learn more about this exhibit and purchase tickets today, please visit www.ReaganLibrary.com/Auschwitz.

About the Reagan Foundation and Institute:

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute is the sole nonprofit organization created by President Reagan charged with continuing his legacy and sharing his principles - individual liberty, economic opportunity, global democracy and national pride. The Foundation is a non-partisan organization which sustains the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, CA, the Reagan Center for Public Affairs, the Presidential Learning Center, The Air Force One Pavilion, the award-winning Discovery Center and the Reagan Institute, which carries out the Foundation’s mission in Washington, D.C.

The Reagan Library houses over 55 million pages of Gubernatorial, Presidential and personal papers and over 60,000 gifts and artifacts chronicling the lives of Ronald and Nancy Reagan. It also serves as the final resting place of America’s 40th President and former First Lady Nancy Reagan.

About Musealia:

Musealia is an independent Spanish company that creates and manages global touring exhibitions, which inspire us all to explore the past, understand the present and shape our collective future. With more than 20 years of international experience, our exhibitions are characterized by their strong narrative character, their historical rigor, educational value and emotional impact. More than 70 museums and institutions in countries such as the United States, Mexico, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, Estonia, Poland or Spain have hosted our exhibitions.

About the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum:

Fulfilling the wish of survivors, on July 2, 1947, the Polish parliament created the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum on the site of two preserved parts of the former German Nazi camp: Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau. The Memorial today includes an Archive and a Collections department, and undertakes research, conservation, and publishing activities. It is, above all, an education center that teaches visitors about the history of Auschwitz and the Shoah. More than 2 million people visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum every year.

About World Heritage Exhibitions:

World Heritage Exhibitions (WHE) is renowned for producing, promoting, and designing the finest quality museum content on the globe. Their exhibitions have captivated, educated, and inspired visitors in virtually every major market on the planet. With a combined 150 years of exhibition experience, the WHE executive team has been responsible for touring many of the world’s most valuable treasures, including objects from King Tutankhamun’s tomb, relics from Cleopatra’s Royal Palace, artifacts from the Titanic, items from the discovery of Pompeii, and more. Their exhibitions

have now been enjoyed by over 30 million people spanning six continents, and their collective expertise has come together in one of the industry's most influential touring exhibition companies.

In 2021, World Heritage Exhibitions became a part of NEON, a global leader in immersive experiences that is responsible for the touring phenomena “Marvel Avengers S.T.A.T.I.O.N.,” “AVATAR: The Experience,” “Jurassic World: The Exhibition,” and more. WHE and NEON have brought their expertise together to launch the awe-inspiring, artifact-based exhibitions “Ramses the Great and the Gold of the Pharaohs” and “Machu Picchu and the Golden Empires of Peru.” Coupled with some of the most successful artifact exhibitions on tour: “Mummies of the World: The Exhibition;” “Pompeii: The Exhibition;” “Victoria the T. rex;” and “Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away,” their collective exhibition and I.P. portfolio now highlight some of the most significant items and events in history with many of the most sought-after I.P. properties.

###