



The Online Collection of the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust (<http://collection.mjhnyc.org/>) expands public education about the Holocaust and Jewish Heritage by browsing artifacts and discovering their interconnections in a dynamic and user-friendly online environment. This web resource facilitates browsing through a collection of approximately 9,000 artifacts by employing a largely visual display. Many of the artifacts in the Online Collection have never been displayed and are available only on this website.

The focus of the interface design is ease-of-use and the ability for people with the most basic Internet connection to gain access. The visual interface encourages non-linear browsing by helping users to draw connections between objects through displaying artifacts with similar subjects and objects that were donated by the same people or families. The website also enables users to examine objects more closely than they can behind glass in the Museum. For example, users can read the small type on the telegram that young Awiwa Finkelstejn sent her father in anticipation of being reunited with the only other surviving member of her family after the war. It says simply, “I am going to you today. Kisses.” The ability to examine objects more closely helps the Museum to better serve its diverse audiences, including older visitors, middle and high school age students learning about the Holocaust in class, and their teachers.

These connections foster an understanding of the journey of Jewish individuals through history as well as a connection to other individuals and historical events. The website draws on the Museum’s central mission: teaching the lessons of modern Jewish history and the Holocaust to people of all ages and backgrounds, and bringing to life Jewish heritage through the stories of individuals who experienced those historic events by making them personal and accessible to the visitor. The value of these artifacts lies in the stories that they tell both individually and collectively. Yet, in spite of each object’s undeniable capacity to reveal stories of hope, struggle, and survival, an ongoing challenge for this website is that a substantial component of the collection is not aesthetically pleasing. For example, the living will written by Johann Eisler in which he entrusts all of his remaining possessions to his former high school girlfriend, Eva Czezowiczka looks like a simple scrap of paper. However, alongside Eisler’s drawings, food ration cards, and greeting cards written to his mother from his internment in the Terezin ghetto, the user can piece together the poignant story of a talented man. Through its focus on the stories behind each artifact and the interconnections between them, the Online Collection offers a lens through which the Museum’s audience can find inspiration to explore Jewish heritage and the Holocaust in a deep and personal way.

Importantly, the Online Collection offers information unavailable in the Museum, notably through web-only descriptions of artifacts. Museum staff contributes new and expanded descriptions on an ongoing basis. Each online description is designed to stand on its own in contrast to the objects in the Museum which are intended to be viewed in the particular context of the gallery. The online artifact texts are written to be viewed in a variety of contexts as well as independently. By necessity, in-gallery texts are kept brief to accommodate visitor fatigue and to focus the visitor on the overall message of the exhibit.

In the coming years the Museum will integrate visitor feedback to expand the Online Collection’s capabilities, which will focus on integrating user contributions to the Museum’s online content, which itself will become a medium for users to share their experiences with friends and family. The Museum is in a continuing process of placing the remaining 16,000 artifacts in the collection online, as well as new artifacts from Holocaust survivors, liberators, immigrants, and their families.

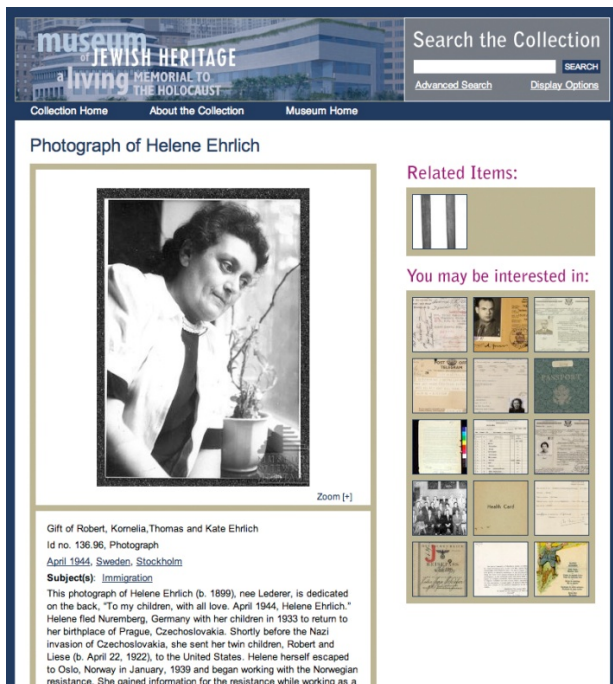
Tour of the Online Collection



Homepage (<http://collection.mjhnyc.org>):

On the homepage featured items rotate every time the page is refreshed. These items can be curated to promote an upcoming exhibition or public program or to highlight a topical theme for our audiences to explore.

Clicking on any of the images on the homepage allows the user to explore that artifact.



Clicking on an Image:

Clicking on the image of the woman second from the right in the top row of the previous image takes the user to a photograph of Helene Ehrlich (http://collection.mjhnyc.org/index.php?g=detail&object_id=9205).

There users can learn about Helene’s experience of providing information to the Norwegian Resistance while working as a cleaning woman in a building housing German military personnel. Users can also discover the message on the back of the photograph which reads “To my children, with all love. April 1944, Helene Ehrlich.”

They can also see the skis donated by Helene’s family, under the “Related Items” category.

Support Materials

Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Museum of Jewish Heritage. At the top, there is a search bar labeled "Search the Collection" with options for "Advanced Search" and "Display Options". Below the search bar, the main content area is titled "Skis Used by Helene Ehrlich". On the left, there is a large image of a pair of skis with a "Zoom [+]" button below it. To the right of the image, there are sections for "Related Items:" and "You may be interested in:" which display a grid of smaller artifact thumbnails. Below the main image, there is a detailed description of the artifact, including its provenance and historical context.

Gift of Robert, Komella, Thomas and Kate Ehrlich
Id no. 135.96.1-2, Other
March 01 to June 30 1941
Subject(s): [Response to Persecution](#)

Helene Ehrlich (b. 1899), nee Lederer, used these skis to escape from Norway to Sweden in the winter of 1941. Helene fled Nuremberg, Germany with her children in 1933 to return to her birthplace of Prague, Czechoslovakia. Shortly before the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia, she sent her twin children, Robert and Liese (b. April 22, 1922) to the United States. Helene herself escaped to Oslo, Norway in January, 1939 and began working with the Norwegian resistance. She gained information for the resistance while working as a cleaning woman in a

Online Description:

Reading the description of the skis tells the users more about Helene. They can discover that in 1941, Helene learned that her underground work had been discovered. She used these skis to escape over the German-patrolled border between Switzerland and Sweden. The description continues that in March, 1946 Helene immigrated to the United States and was reunited with her children.

From this description, users can learn of similar stories or discover other artifacts from Scandinavia by clicking on the artifacts in the "You may be interested in:" category on the right side of the page.

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Museum of Jewish Heritage. At the top, there is a search bar labeled "Search the Collection" with options for "Advanced Search" and "Display Options". Below the search bar, the main content area is divided into two sections: "Discover the Collection" and "Highlights From Our Collection". The "Discover the Collection" section includes a brief overview of the museum's collection and a "Featured Item" section featuring a notebook titled "Notebook of Ida Labi". The "Highlights From Our Collection" section features a grid of various artifact thumbnails, including photographs, documents, and historical items. At the bottom of the page, there is a credit line for the photography.

Discover the Collection

The Museum features artifacts related to Jewish history and modern Jewish life. The materials displayed online are highlights from our collection of nearly 25,000 objects. Visit this site regularly to learn more about Jewish heritage as we introduce new items and expand our artifact descriptions.

Featured Item

Notebook of Ida Labi
Other
More ▶

Highlights From Our Collection

Some of the most powerful and uplifting stories told in the Museum are also featured in the book "To Life: 36 Stories of Memory and Hope" <http://www.museumjewishheritage.com/to-life-to-life.html>. Here is a brief look into some of those stories.

Photography by Peter Goldberg with additional photographs by Richard P. Goodbody, Inc.

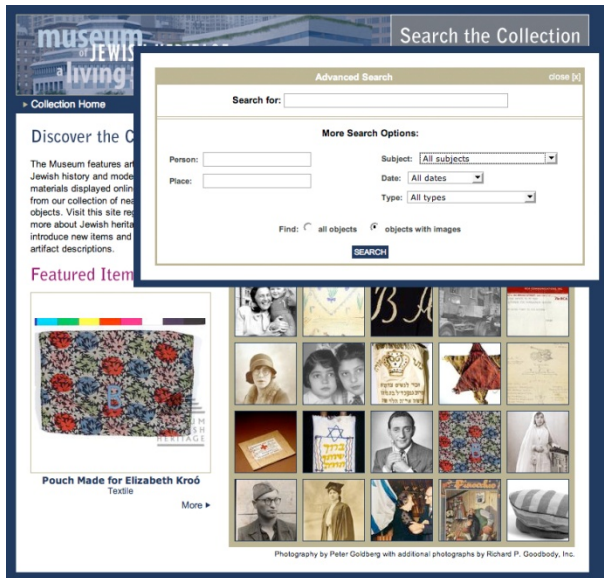
Searching for Information:

To start a search, a user simply types search words in to the "Search the Collection" field which is available on all pages of the website.

The website's interface helps users both to search for information in different ways and display search results in a variety of formats.

Support Materials

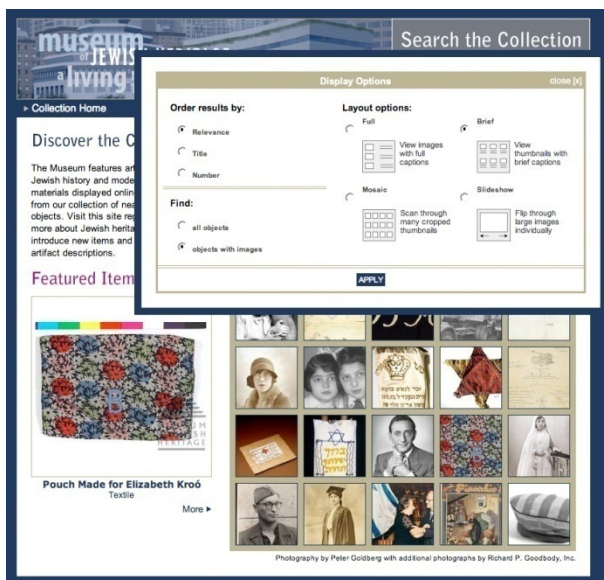
Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust



Advanced Search:

Other methods of searching are available through the “Advanced Search” link. There, users can search for persons or places, browse lists of subjects, important time periods, or search for different types of objects.

Users can also expand their search by displaying all records, or choose to view only records with images.



Display Options:

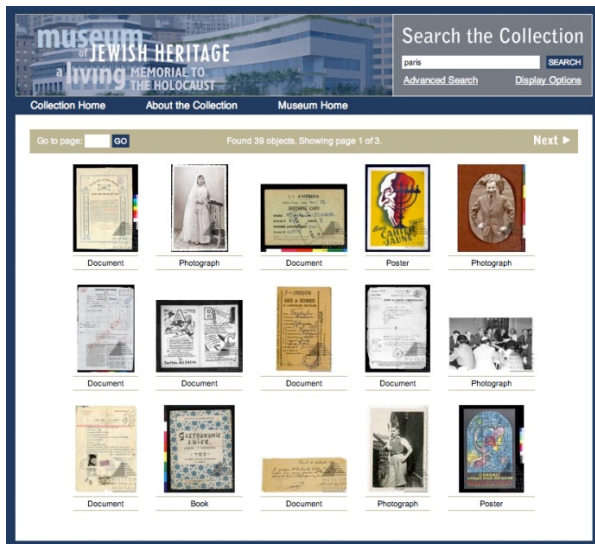
The Display Options allow users to view the results of their searches in multiple ways. The ability to adjust these options accommodates the website’s audience of diverse ages, backgrounds, and levels of comfort with technology.

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Display Options: Full View

This “Full” view shows a search for all artifacts that have to do with “Paris.” It helps students and researchers by offering the beginning of artifact labels which users to decide if they want to explore further.

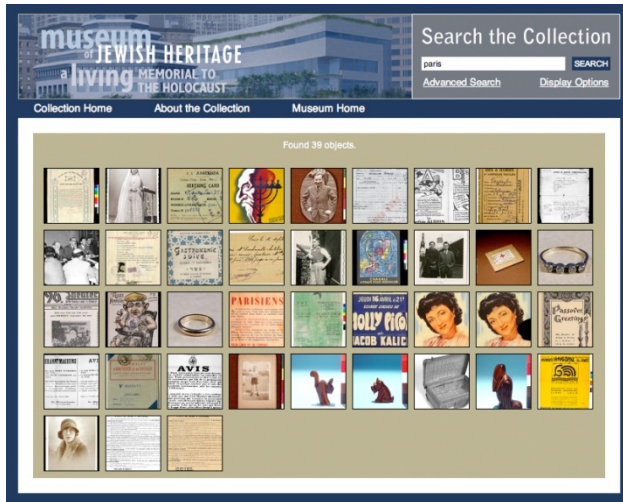


Display Options: Brief View

The “Brief” view facilitates quick identification of objects as well as a view of the entire artifact image.

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Display Options: Mosaic View

The “Mosaic” view displays neatly cropped images in an entirely visual display. This allows the users to glance over the most number of images at one time. It is especially useful to users who want to browse through the collection quickly by sight.



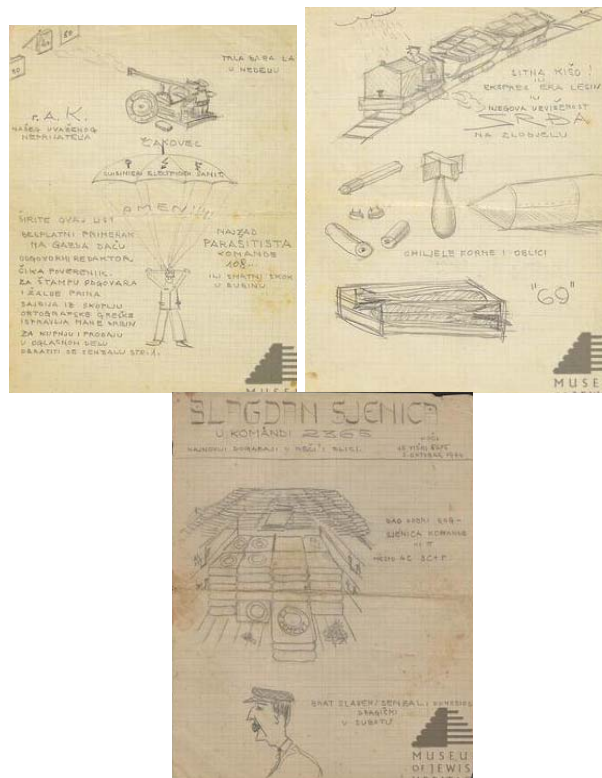
Display Options: Slideshow View

The “Slideshow” view offers a large view of the artifact images allowing the viewer to quickly click through images. This view accommodates users who might have poor eyesight and require large images.



Zooming:

Clicking on any image allows users to zoom into and closely examine artifacts. The delicate embossing on this charity box is visible when users pan and zoom into the image.



Multiple Images of Artifacts

By clicking a next button, users can view artifacts which contain multiple images. For example, users can view several pages of the humorous and satirical diary kept by Vladimir Knezic while he worked as a forced laborer in a POW camp in Nazi Germany.