

Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum
TRAVELING EXHIBITION

ART OF THE AIRPORT TOWER

EXHIBIT OVERVIEW

Art of the Airport Tower is a photographic journey to airports in the U.S. and around the world. Smithsonian photographer Carolyn Russo explores the varied forms and functions of air traffic control towers throughout aviation history, making these ordinary structures extraordinary: more than mere aviation artifacts, they are monumental abstractions, symbols of cultural expression, and testimonies of technological change.

50 striking photographs, informative captions, an introduction by Smithsonian commercial aviation specialist F. Robert van der Linden and essay by the National Air Traffic Controllers Association examine the history and evolution of airport towers to contextualize Russo's work.

The first impression travelers have when they reach a new city or country may well be the tower; as such, it is often an embodiment of important symbols and values. For example, at the Stockholm- Arlanda Airport in Sweden, two lookout points perch like birds at the top of the control tower in reference to two protective ravens from Nordic mythology. The Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport in China features wavy structures designed to look like scrolls of silk delicately sheltering passengers below.

Historical towers, such as the Ford Island Tower, which withstood attacks on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, provides a glimpse into earlier aviation eras, gives perspective to the changing technology and designs, and calls for their preservation.

The Art of the Airport Tower exhibition premieres at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. November 11, 2015 – November 2016. The traveling tour begins in December 2016.

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<http://airandspace.si.edu/exhibitions/airport-towers/>