

# AMELIA EARHART - THE HISTORICAL AND MYTHOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE

MATTHEW ARNOLD

DEC 4, 2020 - MAY 1, 2021

GALLERY B



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# ABOUT THE ARTIST

Matthew Arnold's photographic work explores our historical, personal, and cultural relationship to this increasingly small and complex world. He strives to connect the specificity and significance of history with the topography of the land on which the history is shaped and the experience of the individual on that land.

Arnold studied photography at the West Surrey College of Art and Design: London, England and is a graduate of The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA. He was also a Visiting Lecturer at Columbia University, in New York City in 2015. Matthew Arnold currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California.

Arnold's work has been exhibited and promoted widely across the United States and around the world in galleries and museums. A recent project was published as a monograph entitled, "Topography Is Fate—North African Battlefields of World War II," by the German publisher, Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg. It includes a foreword written by Hilary Roberts, the Curator of Photography at the Imperial War Museums in Britain as well as an essay by Natalie Zelt, the co-author and co-curator of "War/Photography: Images of Armed Conflict and Its Aftermath."



# ABOUT THE ARTIST

## MATTHEW ARNOLD PHOTOGRAPHY

Arnold has presented numerous solo exhibitions in recent years including “Topography Is Fate” as a solo exhibition at the Gravy Gallery in Philadelphia, the Happy Lucky No.1 Gallery in New York City as well as at the Metropolitan Gallery in Philadelphia (organized by The Center for Emerging Visual Artists where he was a Fellowship Finalist).

He will have his second solo exhibition at Happy Lucky No.1 Gallery for a new project entitled “Ghosts and the Longing for Amelia.” Ghosts is a multimedia project born of a long period of introspection, which created in the artist a new perspective on process, and a deeper understanding of how obstructions in the path of life can ultimately lead to a different and possibly more revelatory direction in the creative development of the artist.

In 2016 he was a finalist for the Renaissance Prize at the Getty Images Gallery in London. His work was exhibited at the Arsenale di Venezia, in Venice, Italy as part of the Premio Arte Laguna. It was also exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, Guatemala, as part of the GuatePhoto Festival where he also gave an artist talk about his “Topography Is Fate” project.

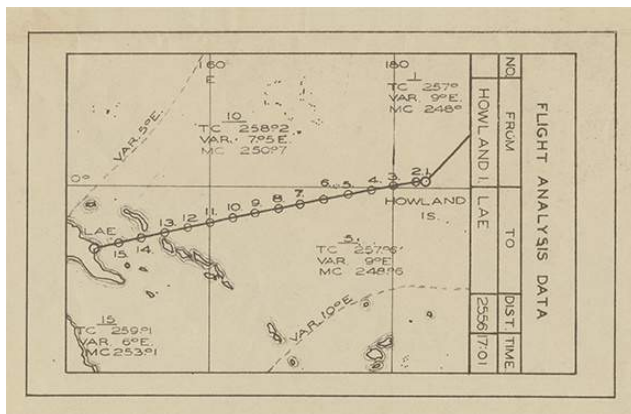
Arnold has been named a Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Traveling Fellow in 2014 and was named a Top 50 Emerging Photographer by LensCulture. He was named a Photolucida, Critical Mass 2014, Top 50 Photographer and again in 2020-- for his Amelia Earhart project. He exhibited in Guatemala as part of Guatephoto Festival 2015 and along with this exhibit he was selected to have a larger body of work exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in Guatemala City. His project was a Shortlist Candidate for the Vevey International Photo Award in 2015.

# AMELIA EARHART— THE HISTORICAL AND MYTHOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE

Just before dawn on July 2, 1937, Amelia Earhart and her navigator Fred Noonan took off from Lae, New Guinea in their heavily loaded Electra L-10E aircraft. The destination was Howland Island, a flat narrow bit of land, 6,500 feet long and 1,600 feet wide—intended to be used to land and refuel in order to continue on to Hawaii. This was to be the third to the last of 32 legs of her heroic but ill-fated attempt to be the first woman to circumnavigate the globe by airplane. Unfortunately she disappeared. The last confirmed radio transmission came when Earhart and Noonan said they were nearly 200 miles from Howland. There was no further contact.

83 years after Earhart's disappearance only theories remain, yet her legend survives in the many individuals still searching for evidence of what happened to her on that fateful day in 1937.

What is it that keeps us so captivated with Earhart? Is it an admiration for her bold fearlessness as an aviator in an industry and era dominated by men? Is the mythology surrounding her disappearance so intriguing because she disappeared in such a remote and unknown environment to most westerners? Is it the undeniable romance of an almost archetypal tragedy—a 20th century Icarus? Or is it because it occurred under such extraordinary circumstances, only a few years prior to the beginning of the Second World War





# EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

With his new photographic project, Matthew Arnold will document the environs that play host to the many theories which attempt to resolve the mystery of Amelia Earhart's disappearance.

The work presented in this exhibition is from the first stage of Arnold's project—a five-week expedition to the outer-reaches of the Northern Mariana and Marshall Islands, photographing the seascapes and landscapes specific to the "Japanese Capture" theory. It is a theory which involves a forced landing in fortified Japanese territory followed by capture, imprisonment, and possible execution at the hands of their Imperial Navy.

This expedition is the culmination of over a year's worth of research, fundraising, and planning. While this may only be the beginning stage, the idea is to present each stage as its own entity so as to give weight to each theory of Earhart's demise.



# FUTURE EXHIBITIONS IN THIS SERIES BY MATTHEW ARNOLD

The complete breadth of this project will involve travel to multiple parts of the Central and South Pacific, photographing related seascapes and landscapes of these remote regions. As an example, The Phoenix Islands hold multiple theories to Earhart's disappearance including both the "Nikumaroro Theory" and the "Orona Theory" where she is believed to have succumbed to the elements after landing on these deserted islands. In Papua New Guinea Arnold will photograph both the "New Britain Island" and "Buka Island" theories, that suggest she crashed while attempting to return to New Guinea.

In photographing these remote regions, Arnold will give visual expression to each of the theories surrounding Earhart's disappearance. The images will illustrate his notion of both the historical and mythological landscape surrounding the hypotheses of a historic heroine's unknown fate in a distant land.



# ISLANDS SEARCHED AND THEORIES TO EXPLAIN THE DISAPPEARANCE

## Phoenix Islands, Howland Island

Earhart's destination was Howland Island, a flat narrow bit of land, 6,500 feet long and 1,600 feet wide—intended to be used to land and refuel, in order to continue on to Hawaii. This was to be the third to the last of 32 legs of her path around the world. She would have refueled and then flown on to Hawaii and then to Oakland, California to finish the journey.

STORIES TO BE CAPTURED | Earhart theory | Guano trade of 19th century | Kamehameha School for Boys

## Baker Island

Before researchers from TIGHAR determined Nikumoraru was the island that they believed Earhart landed on, Baker Island was a main search point.

STORIES TO BE CAPTURED | Earhart theory | Guano trade of 19th century

## MacKean Island

Before researchers from TIGHAR determined Nikumoraru was the island that they believed Earhart landed on, MacKean Island was also a search point.

STORIES TO BE CAPTURED | Earhart theory | Guano trade of 19th century

## Papua New Guinea, New Britain Island

"A man named David Billings was with an Australian army patrol on New Britain Island in 1945. The patrol was deep in the island's jungle and fleeing a contingent of Japanese soldiers in pursuit. One morning, the Australians came upon the wreckage of a twin-engine plane. On examining it, one of the soldiers found a metal tag on an exposed engine mount. On the tag were two identification codes: C/N 1055 and S3H1. A notation of the find, along with the two numbers, was made on a map that was carried by another of the soldiers. This evidence could be significant in that the C/N, or construction number, of Earhart's Electra was 1055. Additionally, the number S3H1 was the model of the Wasp engines that were allegedly installed in the Electra. Because the Japanese pursuit was closing in rapidly, the Australians had no time to inspect the plane further. A subsequent expedition was undertaken years later by one of the Australian soldiers in an attempt to relocate the plane, but it failed to do so."

STORIES TO BE CAPTURED | Earhart theory | Australian Army

(*Amelia Earhart: Beyond the Grave*, W.C. Jameson)



# ISLANDS SEARCHED AND THEORIES TO EXPLAIN THE DISAPPEARANCE

## Buka Island

A new but similar theory to the New Britain Island theory proposes that Earhart— running out of fuel— decided to return to Papua New Guinea but never made it to an airstrip and crashed into the lagoon on Buka Island. There has been a recent finding of an airplane in the lagoon that is similar in size and shape to Earhart's Electra but no evidence to prove that is in fact her airplane.

STORIES TO BE CAPTURED | Earhart theory | Marshall Islands and Northern Mariana Islands

## Mili Atoll

"The Mili Atoll theory differs from others in that numerous eyewitnesses reported the forced landing of an aircraft resembling the Electra at this cluster of coral and sand located at the southeasternmost atoll in the Marshall Islands group. So compelling are the eyewitness and other accounts that the Mili Atoll theory deserves close attention."

STORIES TO BE CAPTURED | Earhart theory | Japanese build up before World War II

(*Amelia Earhart: Beyond the Grave*, W. C. Jameson)

## Jaluit Atoll

A photograph was recently rediscovered that purports to show both Amelia Earhart and her navigator Fred Noonan standing on a dock while her plane is being towed into port behind the Japanese cargo ship, Kushimoro. The pair had previously been captured by Japanese soldiers after being forced to land on Mili Atoll.

STORIES TO BE CAPTURED | Earhart theory | Japanese build up before World War II

## Saipan Island

After Amelia Earhart and her navigator Fred Noonan were captured in the Marshall Islands, they were believed to have been taken to Saipan to be held in a prison. There are three schools of thought as to what happened to them after this. One theory states Earhart and Noonan died of dysentery while being held in the Japanese prison. Another that they were executed by the Japanese for being spies. A more unusual theory states that she was released by the Japanese after the war and lived out her days in the New York/New Jersey area under the pseudonym Irene Bolam.

STORIES TO BE CAPTURED | Earhart theory | Japanese and American build up before and during World War II

## Tinian Island

One theory of Earhart's and Noonan's deaths after being captured by the Japanese and brought to Saipan to be held in prison, is that they were both brought to the island of Tinian to be executed for being spies.

STORIES TO BE CAPTURED | Earhart theory | Japanese and American build up before and during World War II

# AMELIA EARHART, A RECORD SETTER



1922

Female altitude record of 4,267 meters (14,000 feet).



1928

First woman to fly across the Atlantic as a passenger in the Fokker F.VII Friendship.



1929

Female speed record.



1930

Female speed record.



1931

First woman to fly an autogiro.



1931

Autogiro altitude record of 5,612 meters (18,415 feet).



1932

First woman (and only the second person) to fly solo and nonstop across the Atlantic. First person to cross the Atlantic twice by air.



1932

First woman to fly solo and nonstop across the United States.



1933

Reset her transcontinental record.



1935

First person to fly solo from Honolulu, Hawaii, to the U.S. mainland (Oakland, California).



1935

Speed record between Mexico City and Washington, D.C.



1935

First person to fly solo from Mexico City to Newark, New Jersey.

# EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

## Let your pictures tell a story!

Choose a family photo or an old postcard as a way to think about how a story may have gotten started. Now think about how that place has changed and what things have influenced the changes you imagine. Use a camera to make an updated picture (you can also draw or paint the new image) telling the story of that place.

The Digital Watauga archive has thousands of historic photos of the area you could use for inspiration!

[Digital Watauga Archive](#)

[Matthew Arnold Photography](#)

[Matthew Arnold Instagram](#)

[Photolucida 2020 Award](#)





# BEHIND THE SCENES



# BEHIND THE SCENES



amelia earhart - the historical and mythological landscape



# FINAL INSTALLATION

[CLICK HERE FOR ADDITIONAL IMAGES](#)



amelia earhart - the historical and mythological landscape



# Walk with us through the gallery...



click [here](#) to join

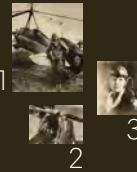
click [here](#) for additional images

# GALLERY GUIDE

## longing for amelia— the historical and mythological landscape

the marshal  
and northern  
marianas islands

matthew arnold  
december 4, 2020 – may 1, 2021



Just before dawn on July 2, 1937, Amelia Earhart and her navigator Fred Noonan took off from Lae, New Guinea in their heavily loaded Electra L-10E aircraft. The destination was Howland Island, a flat, narrow bit of land, 6500 feet long and 1600 feet wide, intended as a refueling stop before continuing to Hawaii. This was to be the third from the last of the 32 legs of her heroic but ill-fated attempt to be the first woman to circumnavigate the globe by airplane.

Eighty-three years after Earhart's disappearance, only theories remain, yet her legend survives in the many individuals still searching for evidence of what happened to her on that fateful day in 1937.

What is it that keeps us so captivated with Earhart? Is it an admiration for her bold fearlessness as an aviator in an era and industry dominated by men? Is the mythology surrounding her disappearance so intriguing because she disappeared in an environment so remote and unknown to most westerners? Or is it because it occurred during an extraordinary time - only a few tumultuous years prior to the onset of the Second World War.

This exhibition presents the beginning of Matthew Arnold's project to document the environs that play host to the many theories which attempt to resolve the mystery of Amelia Earhart's disappearance. In this first stage, Arnold embarked on a five-week expedition to the outer-reaches of the Northern Mariana and Marshall Islands, photographing the seascapes and landscapes specific to the "Japanese Capture" theory - a theory which involves Earhart's forced landing in fortified Japanese territory, followed by capture, imprisonment and possible execution at the hands of their Imperial Navy.

The complete breadth of this project will involve travel to multiple parts of the Central and South Pacific, photographing the topography of these remote places. With his photographs, historical ephemera of the era, and his "constructions" inspired by the history of Earhart's disappearance and the science of the search, Arnold will visualize each of the theories of that final flight - the work illustrating the idea of both the historical and mythological landscape of the varied hypotheses of a historic heroine's unknown fate in a distant land.

Archival images courtesy of Purdue University Libraries, Kames Archives and Special Collections, Southern Appalachian Archives, Mass Hill University, as well as the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

### 1. *Amelia Earhart in front of Autogiro*

Archival pigment print

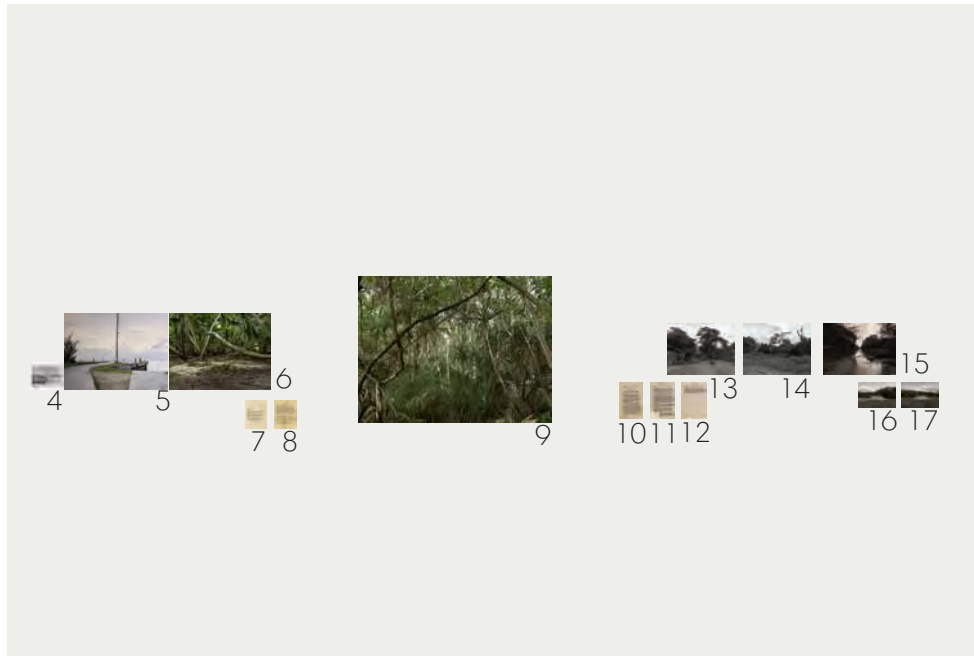
### 2. *Amelia Earhart in front of airplane*

Archival pigment print

### 3. *Old portrait of Amelia Earhart*

Archival pigment print

# GALLERY GUIDE



**4. Photograph purported to be Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan standing on dock, Jaluit Atoll, Marshall Islands**

Archival pigment print

**5. Site of dock where Earhart was presumed photographed after being captured by the Japanese Imperial Navy, Jabor Island, Jaluit Atoll, Marshall Islands**

Archival pigment print

**6. Coconut husks left behind from the harvesting of copra, Knox Atoll, Marshall Islands**

Archival pigment print

**7. Letter from Nina Paxton to Time Magazine**

Archival pigment print

**8. Letter from Nina Paxton to Time Magazine**

Archival pigment print

**9. Jungle, Aineman Island, Jaluit Atoll, Marshall Islands**

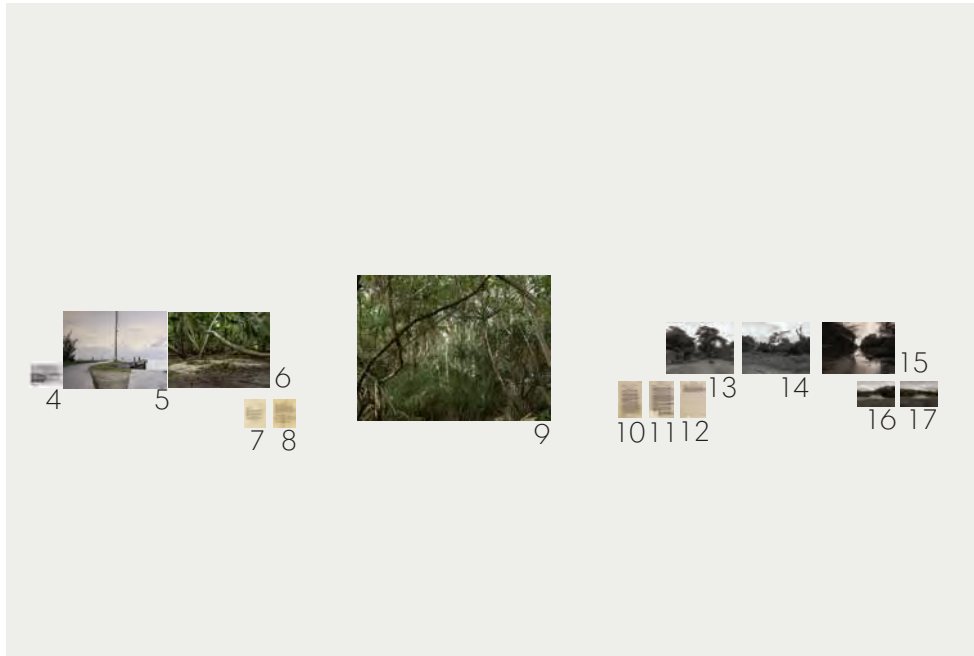
Archival pigment print

**10. Report on information that Earhart was a prisoner in the Marshall Islands "Message in a bottle..."**

January 7, 1939, Archival pigment print



# GALLERY GUIDE



**11. Report on information that Earhart was a prisoner in the Marshall Islands  
“Message in a bottle...”**

January 7, 1939, Archival pigment print

**12. Report on information that Earhart was a prisoner in the Marshall Islands  
“Message in a bottle...”**

January 7, 1939, Archival pigment print

**13. Garapan Prison, Saipan Island, Northern Mariana Islands**

Archival pigment print

**14. Amelia Earhart’s possible burial site, Saipan Island, Northern Mariana Islands**

Archival pigment print

**15. 17 Tinian Island, Northern Mariana Islands**

Archival pigment print

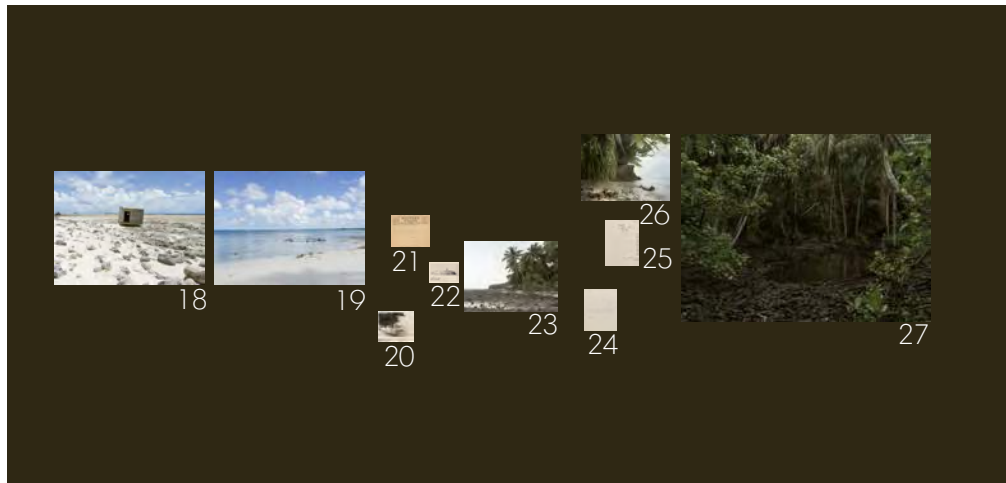
**16. No. 1 Bomb Loading Pit, North Field, American Airbase, Tinian Island, Northern Mariana Islands**

Archival pigment print

**17. No. 2 Bomb Loading Pit, North Field, American Airbase, Tinian Island, Northern Mariana Islands**

Archival pigment print

# GALLERY GUIDE



**18. Japanese pillbox dislodged by the sea, Taroa Island, Maloelap Atoll, Marshall Islands**

Archival pigment print

**19. American bomb crater on reef, Wotje Island, Wotje Atoll, Marshall Islands**

Archival pigment print

**20. Photograph of local Marshallese in the harbor of Jaluit Island, Jaluit Atoll, Marshall Islands**

c. 1930s, Archival pigment print

**21. Western Union Telegram to George Palmer Putnam, Amelia Earhart's husband, from the Secretary of the Navy**

Archival pigment print

**22. Diagram of Japanese bunker**

Archival pigment print

**23. Japanese pillbox on reef, Imiej Island, Jaluit Atoll, Marshall Islands**

Archival pigment print

**24. State Department communication to Navy Department, Tokyo "Search for missing flyers was terminated on afternoon of eighteen July..."**

Archival pigment print

**25. Letter to the Secretary of State from the Japanese Ambassador to the United States**

July, 1937, Archival pigment print

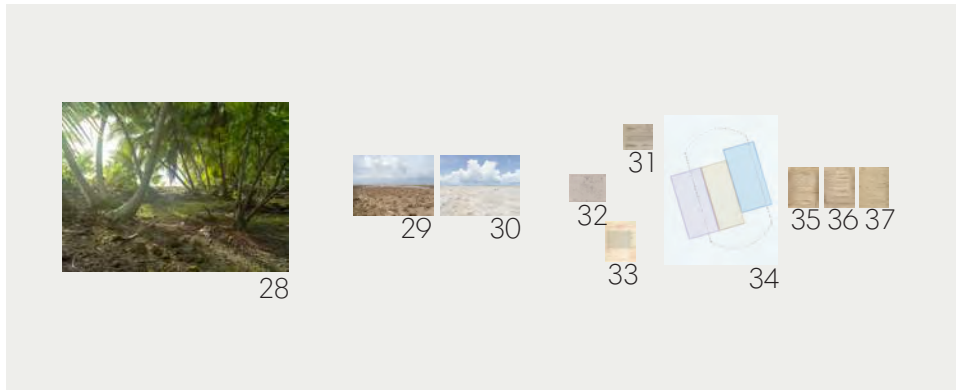
**26. Japanese built seawall, Aineman Island, Jaluit Atoll, Marshall Islands**

Archival pigment print

**27. American bomb crater in jungle, Wotje Island, Wotje Atoll, Marshall Islands**

Archival pigment print

# GALLERY GUIDE



**28. Site of discovered wheel-cover, believed to be from Earhart's plane, Enedrik-Kan Island, Mili Atoll, Marshall Islands**

Archival pigment print

**29. Arc formed by water on reef, Enedrik-Kan Island, Mili Atoll, Marshall Islands**

Archival pigment print

**30. Reef, Taroa Island, Maloelap Atoll, Marshall Islands**

Archival pigment print

**31. Naval Intelligence message "Intercepts of ragged transmission indicate possibility Earhart plane still afloat ..."**

Archival pigment print

**32. Earhart search grid**

July, 1937, Archival pigment print

**33. US Coast Guard Dispatch "Itasca Earhart search up to this time negative results..."**

Archival pigment print

**34. Earhart search grid over ocean**

Archival pigment print, pencil

**35. US Coast Guard Cutter Itasca radio log of Earhart's approach to Howland Island, July 2, 1937**

Archival pigment print

**36. US Coast Guard Cutter Itasca radio log of Earhart's approach to Howland Island, July 2, 1937**

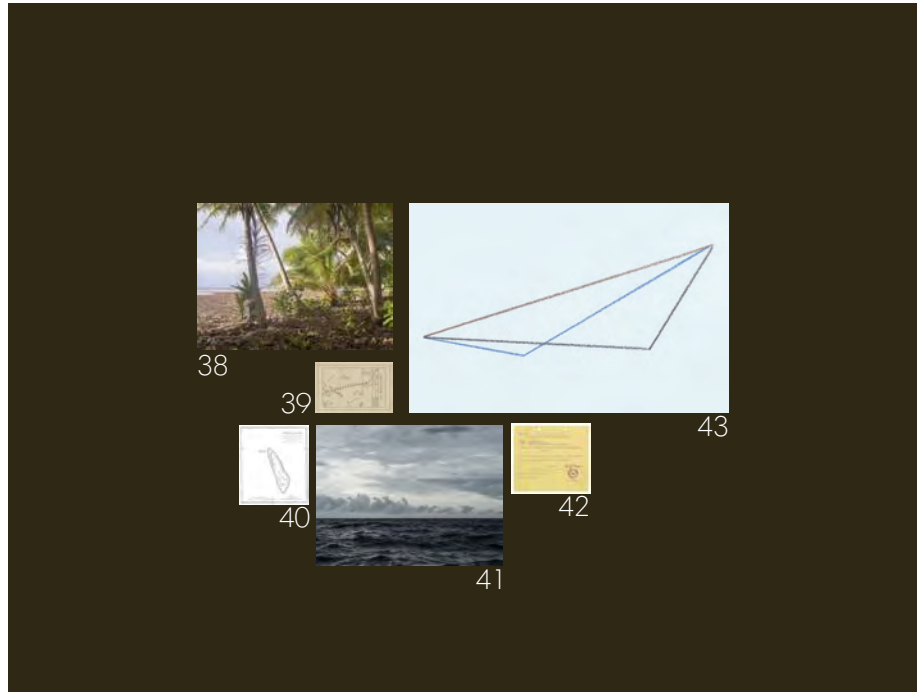
Archival pigment print

**37. US Coast Guard Cutter Itasca radio log of Earhart's approach to Howland Island, July 2, 1937**

Archival pigment print



# GALLERY GUIDE



**38. *The edge of the jungle, Enedrik-Kan Island, Mili Atoll, Marshall Islands***

Archival pigment print

**39. *Chart of Earhart's path to Howland Island***

Archival pigment print

**40. *Map of Howland Island***

Archival pigment print

**41. *The Pacific, on the way to Jaluit Atoll, Marshall Islands***

Archival pigment print

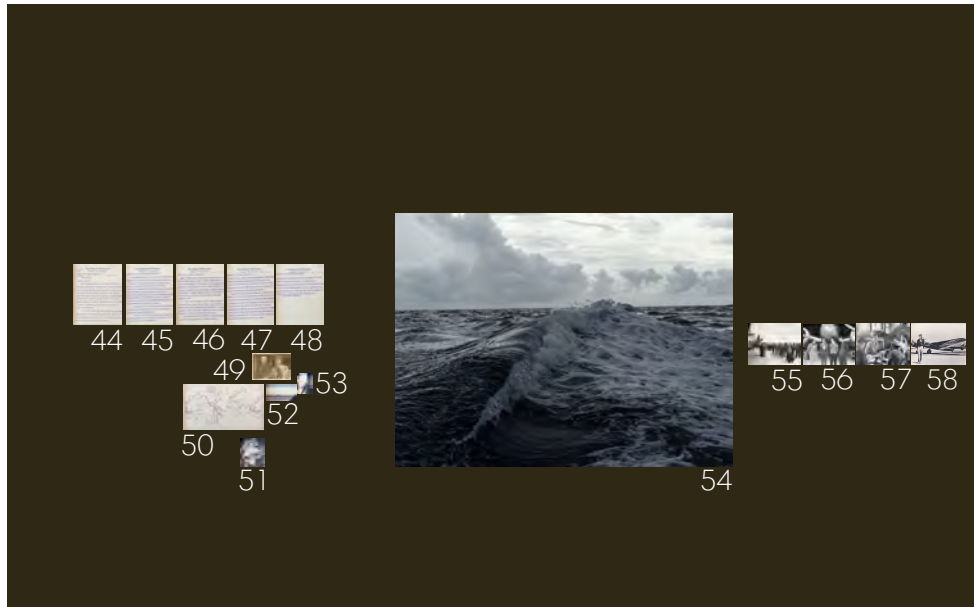
**42. *Naval message "Earhart unreported Howland ..."***

Archival pigment print

**43. *Fuel Consumption Flight Path Study, No. 1***

Archival pigment print, pencil

# GALLERY GUIDE



**44. Press Telegram “Amelia Earhart’s equatorial flight around the world, now terminated dramatically if not tragically in mid-Pacific”**

Archival pigment print

**45. Press Telegram “Amelia Earhart’s equatorial flight around the world, now terminated dramatically if not tragically in mid-Pacific”**

Archival pigment print

**46. Press Telegram “Amelia Earhart’s equatorial flight around the world, now terminated dramatically if not tragically in mid-Pacific”**

Archival pigment print

**47. Press Telegram “Amelia Earhart’s equatorial flight around the world, now terminated dramatically if not tragically in mid-Pacific”**

Archival pigment print, wood frame

**48. Press Telegram “Amelia Earhart’s equatorial flight around the world, now terminated dramatically if not tragically in mid-Pacific”**

Archival pigment print

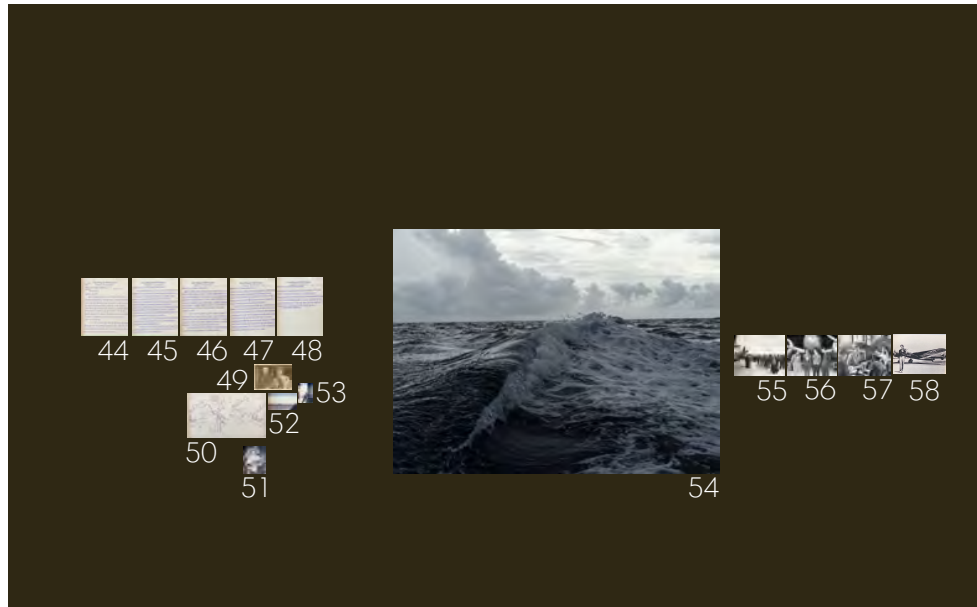
**49. Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan, Bandoeng, Java**

c. June 1937, Archival pigment print

**50. Proposed navigational chart for Amelia Earhart by Clarence S. Williams, Los Angeles, California**

c. 1937, Archival pigment print

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**51. Amelia Earhart's last haircut before her around the world flight**  
Archival pigment print

**52. View of the Electra, probably during takeoff**  
c. 1937, Archival pigment print

**53. Fred Noonan in a rocking chair**  
c. 1937, Archival pigment print

**54. Wave, on the way to Mili Atoll, Marshall Islands**  
Archival pigment print

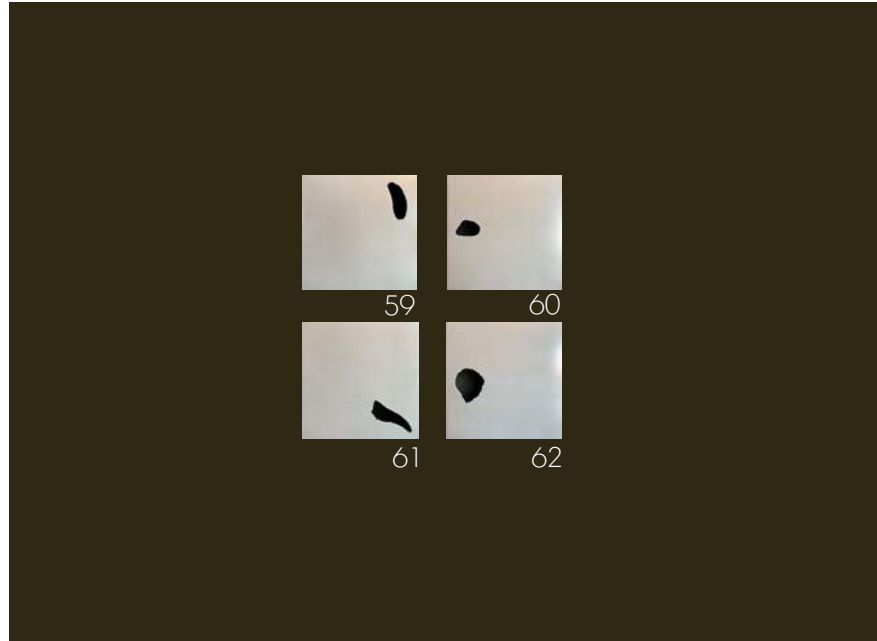
**55. Paul Mantz, Amelia Earhart, Harry Manning and Fred Noonan being photographed in front of Earhart's plane, Oakland Airport, California**  
c. March 17, 1937, Archival pigment print

**56. Paul Mantz, Amelia Earhart, Harry Manning and Fred Noonan being photographed in front of Earhart's plane, Oakland Airport, California**  
c. March 17, 1937, Archival pigment print

**57. Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan at a luncheon, Caripito Airport**  
June 2, 1937, Archival pigment print

**58. Amelia Earhart with her Lockheed Electra**  
Archival pigment print

# GALLERY GUIDE



**59. Sea, No. 1** ( $0^{\circ} 48' 24''$  N,  $176^{\circ} 36' 59''$  W)  
Galvanized steel

**60. Sea, No. 2** ( $0^{\circ} 11' 41''$  N,  $176^{\circ} 28' 46''$  W)  
Galvanized steel

**61. Sea, No. 3** ( $4.68^{\circ}$  S,  $174.517^{\circ}$  W)  
Galvanized steel

**62. Sea, No. 4** ( $3^{\circ}36'$  S,  $174^{\circ} 07'$  W)  
Galvanized steel



# GALLERY GUIDE

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64



65



66

**63. Fuel Consumption Flight Path Study, No. 2**  
Steel

**64. Inverted Bathymetric Grid**  
Black walnut wood

**65. Search Grid, No. 2**  
Cell cast acrylic

**66. Island**  
Cell cast acrylic, sand



# THANK YOU

FROM THE TURCHIN CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University engages visitors from the university, community, nation and beyond in creating unique experiences through dynamic and accessible exhibition, education, outreach and collection programs. These programs inspire and support a lifelong engagement with the visual arts and create opportunities for participants to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

