

# Featured objects

All fourteen objects featured in this report are part of the museum collection at the Backåkra museum, Skåne. Backåkra is a Swedish farmhouse, dating back to the 19th century, and was purchased by Dag Hammarskjöld in 1947. The house was after his death bequeathed to the Swedish Tourist Association (STF), which later had the farm converted into a museum. The museum today manages a collection of approximately 400 objects, containing artefacts, sculptures, gifts, paintings and furniture that all used to belong to Dag Hammarskjöld. Today, part of this collection is on display at the museum in southern Sweden.

The order of objects follows the order in which they are presented in the report.



## **Hollow form – Barbara Hepworth**

The sculpture Hollow form was crafted by the British sculptor Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) and was created especially for Dag Hammarskjöld in 1960. It was made from guaiacum, the world's hardest and heaviest wood (known to man), indigenous to the Caribbean and northern parts of South America.<sup>1</sup> The sculpture measures 800 × 455 × 350 millimeters.<sup>2</sup>



## **Dragon sculptures – Wilhelm Kåge**

Two sculptures in the form of dragons, crafted in the material faience (tin-glazed pottery). They were created by the Swedish designer, ceramicist, graphic artist and painter Wilhelm Kåge (1889-1960). Date of creation and acquirement by Dag Hammarskjöld is unknown. Height 110 millimeters.<sup>3</sup>

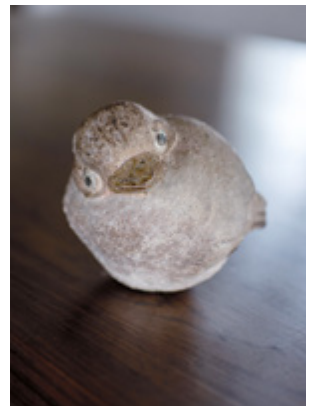
#### **The ice axe**

The ice axe was given to Dag Hammarskjöld by Sherpa Tenzing Norgay (1914-1986), a Nepalese climber, in 1954.<sup>4</sup> The axe was used by Tenzing when he was the first to climb the summit of Mount Everest, together with Edmund Hillary, in May 1953. There is an inscription on a silver plate on the lower end of the axe saying: 'To his excellency Dag Hammarskjöld Secretary General, United Nations So you may climb to even greater heights Sherpa Tenzing June 1954'. The axe is 860 millimeters long and 300 millimeters wide.<sup>5</sup>



#### **The Bird of Truth – Tyra Lundgren**

This sculpture, created by Swedish sculptor and ceramicist Tyra Lundgren (1897-1979), depicts a bird made of stoneware. Dag Hammarskjöld acquired the sculpture after meeting Tyra Lundgren at her exhibition in New York in 1958. The sculpture, named 'The Bird of Truth,' was placed on Dag Hammarskjöld's desk. It is said that he would turn the bird towards his guest whenever he sensed dishonesty in the person sitting opposite him.<sup>6</sup> The sculpture is 95 millimeters in height.<sup>7</sup>



#### **The camel saddle**

A camel saddle, made of leather and wood. The details of how Dag Hammarskjöld acquired the saddle are not certain, but it was probably a gift he received during a trip to Gaza in 1957, or during his Christmas trip to the Middle East in 1958. It measures 535 × 700 × 500 millimeters.<sup>8</sup>





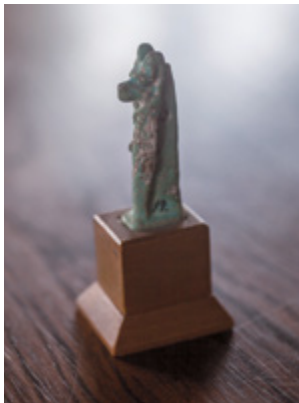
#### **The Sami knife**

A Sami knife of north Sami model<sup>9</sup>, with a shaft of horn and an inlay of either leather or birch bark. Its scabbard of horn and leather is decorated on the one side with traditional patterns of zigzag bands and rhomboids. The other side has a reindeer harnessed in front of a manned sledge. The blade itself is 200 millimeters and inside the sheath it is 250 millimeters. Process of acquisition and creation is unknown.<sup>10</sup>



#### **The B-48 chair – Jacob Kjær**

This chair, a B-48 model, was designed by Danish furniture designer and cabinet maker Jacob Kjær (1896-1957). The B-48 is very similar to Kjær's other model, the B-37, more commonly known as the UN chair. The B-37 was designed in 1949 for the UN Headquarters in New York. Hammarskjöld purchased the two B-48 chairs in 1954 and placed them in his New York apartment. Unlike the UN chairs, these are made of green leather instead of blue. The chairs were made of beech, with a seat and backrest.<sup>11</sup> The measurements are 770 millimeters high, 620 millimeters wide and 560 millimeters deep.<sup>12</sup>

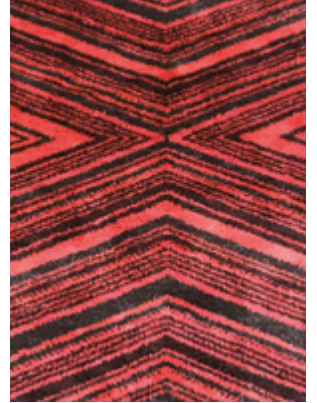


#### **Anubis**

The Anubis statuette was purchased by Dag Hammarskjöld in Cairo 1956.<sup>13</sup> It is 35 millimeters in height<sup>14</sup>, made of clay and glazed in a light turquoise colour, its age unknown. Hammarskjöld acquired the statue after learning about its symbolics through his friend Alexis Léger, a French diplomat and later known as the poet Saint-John Perse. Anubis was, according to Léger, the 'patron of obstetricians and God of good maieutics' (letter from Léger till Hammarskjöld in March 1956). Between the two friends, Anubis became the symbol of new ideas and projects and thus, important in their diplomatic careers.<sup>15</sup>

### **Tiger pelt – Barbro Nilsson**

The tiger pelt was created by Swedish designer Barbro Nilsson (1899-1983) for Dag Hammarskjöld's New York apartment. Hammarskjöld initiated the creation process through a Swedish association named Handarbetets Vänner (Friends of Handicraft), who delivered textiles together with the Märta Måås-Fjetterström Studio. The order was placed in June 1953 and the carpet left Stockholm for New York in January 1954.<sup>16</sup> The carpet is red and black, 3100 millimeters long and 2530 millimeters wide, and created using the traditional weaving technique called flossa.<sup>17</sup>



### **The Halda typewriter**

The Halda travel typewriter followed Dag Hammarskjöld on his travels, and it was on this he wrote parts of his journal, later published as 'Waymarks'.<sup>18</sup> Halda is a Swedish company, founded in 1887 by entrepreneur Henning Hammarlund in the town Strängsta in Blekinge county, which started producing typewriters in the first half of the 20th century.<sup>19</sup> The typewriter is green with a red stripe and has a matching lid. The roller is 245 millimeters.<sup>20</sup>



### **The Tissot clock**

The desk clock, made from the Swiss brand Tissot, is an eight-day movement watch. It measures 120 × 170 millimeters.<sup>21</sup>





#### **The map cabinet**

The map cabinet was given to Dag Hammarskjöld by the National Geographical Society in 1961. Every American president since Roosevelt has owned such a cabinet. Hammarskjöld received it in gratitude for an article he wrote about his trip to Nepal in 1959, published in the National Geographical Magazine in January 1961. On the cover of the cabinet is Hammarskjöld's picture of the Gauri Shankar peak in the Himalayas.<sup>22</sup> The cabinet is made of wood and consists of 24 maps on 19 rolls. It is 830 millimeters high and 1100 millimeters long.<sup>23</sup>



#### **The Chinese vase**

The Chinese vase was a gift from the Chinese premier Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) in 1955, sent to Hammarskjöld shortly after his fiftieth birthday.<sup>24</sup> The vase is a copy of an 18th century vase, made of porcelain, decorated with blue and white floral decorations. The vase stands on an accompanying carved plinth in wood, slightly damaged. It is 400 millimeters high.<sup>25</sup>



#### **The Maori bookends**

The bookends, consisting of two pieces, were a gift to Dag Hammarskjöld from his bodyguard Bill Ranallo (1922-1961) in 1956. Ranallo bought the bookends on a UN trip to New Zealand with the Secretary-General, well aware of Hammarskjöld's fondness of books. The bookends are traditional Maori wood carving (also known as whakairo) and are in the form of a mask with pearl eyes. The wood is probably rimu (*Dacrydium cupressinum*). The bookends are 160 millimeters in height and 95 millimeters wide.<sup>26</sup>

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Erlandsson and Erlandsson, 'Dag Hammarskjöld's Backåkra, The Magic of the Place and the History of its Objects', (Malmö, Bokförlaget Arena, 2021), pp 157, 163–164.
- <sup>2</sup> Backåkra Foundation, Inventory catalogue, 2020, p 86.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid, p 189.
- <sup>4</sup> Erlandsson and Erlandsson (note 1), pp 120.
- <sup>5</sup> Backåkra Foundation (note 2), p 142.
- <sup>6</sup> Erlandsson and Erlandsson (note 1), pp 145–146.
- <sup>7</sup> Backåkra Foundation (note 2), p 33.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid, p 81.
- <sup>9</sup> Sunna Kuoljok, 'Archivist and registrar', (Ajtte museum, Jokkmokk, 2024).
- <sup>10</sup> Backåkra Foundation (note 2), p 126.
- <sup>11</sup> Erlandsson and Erlandsson (note 1), pp 150–152.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid, p 178.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, p 127.
- <sup>14</sup> Backåkra Foundation (note2), p 33.
- <sup>15</sup> Erlandsson and Erlandsson (note 1), pp 127–131.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid, pp 146–149.
- <sup>17</sup> Backåkra Foundation (note 2), p 201.
- <sup>18</sup> Erlandsson and Erlandsson (note 1), p 172.
- <sup>19</sup> Karlshamns fastigheter, 'Halda Utvecklingscentrum', <https://karlshamnsfastigheter.se/property/halda-utvecklingscentrum/>.
- <sup>20</sup> Backåkra Foundation (note 2), p 333.
- <sup>21</sup> Erlandsson and Erlandsson (note 1), pp 123.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid, p 142.
- <sup>23</sup> Backåkra Foundation (note 2), p 96.
- <sup>24</sup> Erlandsson and Erlandsson (note 1), p 124.
- <sup>25</sup> Backåkra Foundation (note 2), p 64.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid, p 131.