

Smithsonian Spotlight (Series 4)

4 X 1 HOUR and 2 X 30 MINUTES

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. Human Origins

Take a tour through the Smithsonian's Hall of Human Origins. More than 285 early-human fossils and artefacts from 48 different countries tell the story of our six-million-year-old history. Discover how we came to be the conscious, adaptable species we are today as host Susan Spencer explores how we've evolved in order to survive an era of dramatic climate change. Will our greatest human trait, our adaptability, be enough to ensure our continued survival?

2. Bots or Bodies

In 1969, Apollo 11 astronauts and a Russian robot rover raced each other to reach the moon first. More than 40 years later, the debate of man vs machine rages on: which is better equipped to handle the rigors and risks of space exploration? Technological advances will allow astronauts to travel farther than ever, and Mars is in our sights. But should Man make that trip? Are we pushing the boundaries, or pushing our luck?

3. Denying the Moon Landing

The 1960s were a turbulent decade full of civil unrest and political backlash. The Apollo Moon landing galvanized most of our polarized nation, but to some, the Vietnam War and Watergate scandal created suspicion of the government's motives. These mounting suspicions led some to doubt that America's moon landings were even real. Apollo astronauts and scientific experts reflect on NASA's glorious achievement, and the shock of having their accomplishments questioned 40 years later.

4. Design Triennial

Get a behind-the-scenes, first-hand look at good design for great causes. We enter the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, where curators have assembled a remarkable collection of ground-breaking innovations that are making the world safer, more comfortable, and energy efficient. The exhibition asks 'Why Design Now?' The inventions we explore answer that question by showing off pioneering, elegant and compassionate solutions to some of the many problems facing today's world.

5. Picture Perfect

It's a photo opportunity of a lifetime. Since 2003, Smithsonian Magazine has run an annual contest, offering photographers the chance to have their winning pictures exhibited at the Smithsonian Castle in Washington, DC and published in the print edition of its magazine. In that time, hundreds of thousands of shutterbugs from over 90 countries have submitted their best shots, but only a handful can win. We join judges behind the scenes and a winning photographer behind the lens to answer the question: what makes a simple picture a work of art?

6. Museum in the Making

Starting a museum is a monumental task. Join us for the first glimpses of Smithsonian's newest museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, slated to open in 2015. Founding Director Lonnie Bunch guides us through the daily challenges, from designing the building to selecting and collecting the artefacts that will tell the story of America through the lens of the 400-year-long African American experience. From Harriett Tubman's prayer hymnal to Louis Armstrong's trumpet, the vast array of stories and artefacts will serve to collectively tell a triumphant story of resiliency, strength, optimism, and hope.