



LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY

LIBRARY NEWS

Peter V. Persic, Public Information Director 213 228-7555  
630 W. Fifth Street, Los Angeles CA 90071 • Fax: 213 228-7569

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **“Karsh 100: A Biography in Images,” an Exhibit to Celebrate the Centennial Birthday of Renowned Photographer Yousuf Karsh on Display Central Library’s First Floor Galleries, 630 W. Fifth St.**

***EXHIBIT OPEN THROUGH JANUARY 23, 2010***

In celebration of the centennial birthday of photographer Yousuf Karsh, known for photographing many of the world’s most renowned personalities of the 20th century, the exhibit “Karsh 100: A Biography in Images” is now on display at Central Library’s First Floor Galleries, 630 W. Fifth St., downtown Los Angeles. The exhibit is free and open to the public during regular library hours.

The exhibit was organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA) to represent a visual biography of Karsh, who made a career photographing some of the world’s most distinguished statesmen, artists, literary figures, musicians, scientists and actors. It includes the eminent photographer’s more prominent images alongside his lesser known.

“This exhibition is intended to show the range of Yousuf Karsh’s work by including not only his famous portraits but also the early efforts that led to the definition of his style and the special assignment work that he undertook once he achieved international success,” said Anne Havinga, MFA’s Estrellita and Yousuf Karsh Senior Curator of Photographs. “Yousuf Karsh had a close relationship with the MFA and he thought of Boston as his ‘spiritual’ home because of his apprenticeship in the 1920s with a Boston photographer. He thought of the MFA as his ‘university’ and it is for that reason that we have this important collection.”

The exhibit features Karsh’s early photographic forays including personal images, and assignment work from the 1950s that reveals the humanity with which he approached all people.

Born on Dec. 23, 1908, Karsh defined the fine art of the photographic portrait in the 20th century. As a teen, Karsh left his native Armenia and eventually settled in

(more)

## EXHIBITION: Page 2

Ottawa. His rise to international success began with a portrait of Winston Churchill. In an often-told story, Karsh was granted only two minutes to take the picture during a 1941 visit by the impatient British Prime Minister to Canada. The photo commissioned by the Canadian government has become the iconic representation of the statesman.

By the end of the 1940s, Karsh had become the world's most sought-after photographer of famous and powerful people because of the way he captured their inward power. His reportedly exquisite, gentlemanly manners and professionalism made sitters comfortable. Privileged individuals trusted him to record their likeness in a way that would protect their reputations. It allowed him to capture many of the definitive images that the world remembers. Karsh wrote of his fascination for the inward power of his sitters saying it was his goal to "photograph the great in spirit, whether they be famous or humble."

During his 60-year career, he held over 15,000 sittings and produced some 150,000 negatives. At the end of his life, Karsh moved to Boston, where he died at age 94 in 2002.

The exhibit, "Karsh 100: A Biography in Images," is free and open to the public during library hours: Monday through Thursday: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday: 1 to 5 p.m. The library is closed on holidays. For more information, visit [www.lapl.org/events](http://www.lapl.org/events) or call (213) 228-7500.

This exhibit is sponsored by Farmers Insurance Group with additional support from Helen and Peter Bing. Funding made possible by the Library Foundation of Los Angeles. To support the Los Angeles Public Library, call (213) 228-7500 or visit [www.lfla.org](http://www.lfla.org). For more information on the exhibition, visit [www.lapl.org/events/karsh](http://www.lapl.org/events/karsh).

The Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest urban population of any library in the country. Its Central Library, 71 branch libraries, more than six million books, and state-of-the-art technology provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for life-long learning.

The Central Library is located in Council District 9, represented by Councilmember Jan Perry.