

**Call for Proposals**  
**First Annual Cambridge University Library/History of Art**  
**Student Curatorial Competition, 2013/14**

Cambridge University Library and the Department of History of Art are pleased to announce the first annual competition for a student in History of Art to curate an exhibition in the University Library. The competition is open to all undergraduates and graduates, working on any topic, and the exhibition can include visually engaging objects held in any department of the University Library. It is hoped that this annual exhibition will highlight little-known aspects of the collections while showcasing current research.

The exhibition will run for about 4 weeks, and be held in the Entrance Hall of the University Library, a venue that comprises two display cases (each 136.5L x 58W x 27H cm, with light bars in each corner approximately 7 cm in from the edges). They typically hold between 3 and 6 objects each, depending on size. Each exhibit is accompanied by a caption of 50-100 words, and in addition an introductory paragraph of 100-150 words, summarising the exhibition, is placed in each case.

There is no application form. Instead, applicants must submit text for the introductory panel and captions as they would appear in the exhibition, including the identification (as per the Newton catalogue entry or the relevant catalogue for non-print material), shelfmark and page or folio number (if relevant) of each exhibit. Up to four additional items can be suggested; the final selection of exhibits will depend on practicalities of layout and conservation concerns. For examples of the format of the introductory panels and captions, please see the current exhibition and past exhibitions on the University Library's exhibition programme, <https://exhibitions.lib.cam.ac.uk>.

The exhibits can be of any material or age as long as they are suitable for exhibition. Due to conservation concerns, items that are sensitive to light (e.g. photographs) and humidity (e.g. parchment and vellum) cannot be exhibited. Reproductions can be displayed only if they are not placeholders for the original objects: for instance, exhibitions of material on vellum consisting of new photographs of that material would not be eligible, but a historiographical exploration of facsimiles of such material would be eligible. For further information, please see the attached Guidelines.

The exhibition will be listed on the website of the University Library's exhibition programme, and it may be possible to replicate the exhibition online.

Applications should be submitted via Camtools ([https://camtools.cam.ac.uk/join/cul\\_hoa](https://camtools.cam.ac.uk/join/cul_hoa)) by 14 March 2014, and they will be considered by a panel of judges drawn from the University Library and Department of History of Art. The winning exhibition will run 23 June-19 July 2014. For enquiries regarding practicalities of mounting the display (e.g. relating to physical suitability of potential exhibits), please contact [exhibitions@lib.cam.ac.uk](mailto:exhibitions@lib.cam.ac.uk). For all other enquiries, please contact Francé Davies, Department Secretary, History of Art, at [France.Davies@aha.cam.ac.uk](mailto:France.Davies@aha.cam.ac.uk).

## **Guidelines for Mounting Displays in the Entrance Hall Display Cases**

### ***Schedule***

The dates for the History of Art display will be circulated in the competition announcement.

### ***Cases***

There are two cases, one on each side of the main revolving door into the Library Entrance Hall. The base area of each case measures 136.5 x 58 cm with light bars in each corner approximately 7 cm in from the edges. The cases have a vertical depth of 27 cm.

Ensure that you leave space for caption labels; if necessary these can be raised up on small stands, or mounted on a slope for better visibility. Displays usually have the most impact when they are not overcrowded. It is best to plan your display with flexibility in case the fall of the light means the exhibits need to be reorganised.

### ***Exhibits***

The Entrance Hall displays will usually feature items from the Library's Special Collections, and consist of strongly visual material or material likely to be of high interest to a wide audience.

When creating your exhibition proposal please be aware that the specialist reading rooms (Maps, Music, MSS, Rare Books) may have special requirements relating to the exhibition of their collections. If you require advice on the suitability of items, please ask the staff of those reading rooms or contact the Exhibitions Officers by emailing [exhibitions@lib.cam.ac.uk](mailto:exhibitions@lib.cam.ac.uk).

If you wish to borrow items from private collections, please let the Exhibitions Officers know as early as possible in the planning. Such items are not insured, and it is important that this is made clear to the lender. In general, the Library's policy is to avoid borrowing from outside sources for Entrance Hall displays, since the main aim is to publicise the Library's own collections.

The Entrance Hall cases are intended to display original materials, but the University Library can as an exceptional measure produce colour facsimiles of a very limited number of items if this is essential to the subject.

### ***Conservation***

Conservation work should be kept to a minimum, so please try to select exhibits in reasonable condition. The Conservation Department should always be consulted well in advance of the display, so that they can carry out any necessary conservation work and advise on display problems; please consider which material is likely to need such treatment at an early stage of planning and leave plenty of time for work to be done.

The Conservators may refuse to allow items to be displayed where this could damage them. Please note that photographic prints and negatives, and manuscripts or books printed on vellum, may not be displayed in the Entrance Hall cases. Volumes with vellum bindings, and items with hand-coloured illustrations, will be considered on an individual basis.

The University Library will provide cushions, strapping and card cradles for books being displayed horizontally. You are welcome to suggest items which could be displayed in an angled or semi-upright position for visual variety; please consult the Exhibitions Officers as soon as possible as a small number of custom-made cradles can be provided with sufficient notice.

***Text***

All text and labels should be of a uniform style, using the same type. The labels do not have to be of uniform size and shape: some variety is advisable, as it may help break up the line of the cases, facilitate the better arrangement of the items and add to the visual attraction of the display. It is a good idea to break up your text into manageable portions, rather than giving one long text for each case: it is less off-putting for browsing passers-by, and it also makes it easier to link each item displayed to the appropriate text.

Try to maintain the same basic format for each label by giving the same information and treating it in a uniform way. If you decide, for example, to put the first author's name in direct order, don't put the next three in inverted form. Examples of labels in the preferred style are given below. You do not have to follow this style, which may not be appropriate for your material, but please be consistent in whatever you do. Always supply library classmarks (or other location information) whenever possible, as this helps readers who may be interested in retrieving the material at a later date.

A short introductory paragraph explaining the exhibition should also be provided; this will be put into both cases, as visitors may view either of the cases first.

Labels should always be proof-read by a second person. However carefully you check, you will not spot all the errors yourself; your brain knows what the text *should* say and it will read this rather than what it *does* say!

***Preferred style for labels***

**[Caption if required]**

**Name in direct order**

*The title in italics: do not capitalise every word*

Place: publisher etc., date

Descriptive text.

**Classmark or other location**

*e.g.*

**William Sanderson**

*Graphice: the use of the pen and pensil ...*

London: printed for Robert Crofts, 1658

The Stowe Library copy. The plate displayed, 'A promontory of land, like a man's head', is one of two plates by Hollar.

**Sss.41.15**

**or**

**The death of an Emperor**

**Jean Dubois**

*Napoléon à Saint Helena*

Paris: Garnier, 1965

Open at a reproduction of a contemporary engraving by an unknown artist, showing the death bed of Napoleon. The man to the left of the bed is the Governor of Saint Helena.

**9000.c.81**

***Mounting the display***

The Exhibitions Officers will mount the display in the cases, with help from Conservation staff if needed. If you cannot be present at the time chosen for the exhibition changeover, please ensure that you have given the Exhibitions Officers a diagram of your display, including the location of all captions, so that it can be mounted in your absence. The Exhibitions Officers will ensure that all captions are printed and books mounted onto cradles as required. They will also be able to adjust the lighting in the case to suit the items on display. If you have specific requirements (*e.g.* items to be spot-lit if possible) please ensure this has been discussed before the mounting begins. The lighting system is flexible, but the University Library will need advance warning to bring all relevant components to ensure the display can be mounted in as short a time as possible.

***Publicity***

The University Library does not produce printed catalogues for displays in the Entrance Hall cases. It is usually possible to combine the text of the labels to produce a handlist for anyone who asks for a copy; you may wish to put a caption in one of the cases explaining this and giving your contact details for interested visitors.

You should also produce a short paragraph of introductory text, as the University Library will promote the display on the Virtual Exhibitions website (<https://exhibitions.lib.cam.ac.uk/>) the 'What's On' section of the Library homepage, the Special Collections blog (<https://specialcollections.blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/>), and the electronic display screens around the Library. This text can be identical to or derived from the introductory text in the exhibition.

The Exhibitions Officers will photograph one of the exhibits to use for this publicity and your recommendations are welcome; if copyright is likely to be an issue the University Library would be grateful for suggestions of alternative images that could be used. The Entrance Hall cases are publicly accessible, so you are welcome to advertise the display externally as you see fit. Academic curators may wish to publicise their displays extensively for impact scores.

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