

THE
NATIONAL
GALLERY

POLICIES &
PROCEDURES



EXHIBITION POLICY

July 2024

Exhibition Policy

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Overview

Our exhibitions aim to bring great paintings and other works of art to the Gallery and to display and interpret them to the highest possible standards in a balanced and stimulating programme in order to increase understanding and engagement with the collection. In this way National Gallery exhibitions support the Gallery's vision to 'connect great art with people, and people with great art'.

The main audiences for the policy are the Gallery's employees, Executive Committee and Trustees; and the Gallery's audiences.

The Gallery aims to be open and transparent in how it manages its collection and intends to make this framework available to the public and other institutions on our website. This approach is in line with other collecting institutions in the UK.

Contents

Overview	2
Contents	3
1 Exhibition aims	4
2 Exhibitions scope and subject matter	4
3 Audiences	5
4 Financial contribution	5
5 Decision making and reporting process	5
6 Risk management	5
7 Procedures	6
8 Legal basis	8
9 Additional policies	8

1 Exhibition aims

- 1.1 Our exhibitions aim to bring great paintings and other works of art to the Gallery and to display and interpret them to the highest possible standards in a balanced and stimulating programme in order to increase understanding and engagement with the collection. In this way National Gallery exhibitions support the Gallery's vision to 'connect great art with people, and people with great art'.
- 1.2 The aims of the exhibitions programme are:
- Engage audiences in a strategic and sustainable manner
 - Maintain and enhance the Gallery's reputation, which speaks to the Gallery's diverse audiences, and a variety of current and future supporters and stakeholders
 - To present well-conceived exhibitions which enhance and explore the Gallery's permanent collection
 - Maximise resource and contribute to the Gallery's income

2 Exhibitions scope and subject matter

- 2.1 Our exhibitions aim to increase the understanding of and engagement with the Gallery's collection in particular and with historical paintings in general. Exhibitions will frequently include major works from the collection, and show them in a variety of ways: illuminating the work of a single artist; taking a thematic approach; placing art works or artists in a particular historical context; putting painting in the context of other arts; presenting a collector of art or the history of collecting at the Gallery or elsewhere; presenting the techniques of painting and the research the Gallery undertakes into those techniques.
- 2.2 Exhibitions may also relate to the collection in other ways: showing the work of an artist or groups of artists not represented in the collection but whose work illuminates it and the period of the Gallery's collection; presenting an important collection of art; presenting a contemporary artist's response to the collection, in particular through the Modern and Contemporary programme; showing the history of the National Gallery; Our exhibitions are underpinned by the highest scholarly standards in the selection and arrangement of the exhibits, and in accompanying catalogues, digital information, films, colloquia and conferences. They offer the opportunity to extend and present new scholarship, notably in the area of the scientific study of paintings as physical objects for which the gallery is renowned.

3 Audiences

- 3.1 Our exhibitions programme aims to attract a wide range of audiences. In Trafalgar Square the programme enables us to ‘broaden our audiences and provide an exceptional visitor experience’ as well as to keep the Gallery at the forefront of public notice in the UK and abroad. Our touring exhibition programme makes the collection available to a wide public throughout the UK as part of our national programmes. Developing exhibitions in partnership with museums in the UK and abroad enables the Gallery to play its full part in the national and international museum community.

4 Financial contribution

- 4.1 Paying exhibitions make an important financial contribution to the Gallery’s income generating activities – directly through ticket sales and also through the exhibition associated publications and merchandise sold by NGG; exhibition visits may also drive increases to general revenue.

5 Decision making and reporting process

- 5.1 Decisions to proceed with exhibitions are taken by the Exhibition Planning Group. The updated exhibitions programme is presented annually to the Board of Trustees.
- 5.2 Exhibition budgets and expected attendance figures are considered and agreed by the Exhibition Financial Planning Group, before final Exhibition Business plans are presented to the Executive Committee.

6 Risk management

- 6.1 The risks arising from the exhibitions programme are:
- Failure to achieve objectives or targets, as set out in the Gallery Plan and Audience Strategy. Late programming of exhibitions may significantly reduce the chances of raising sponsorship and securing loans.
 - Works of art borrowed for an exhibition may be damaged or lost, bringing the Gallery into disrepute and giving rise to claims.

- An exhibition might incur negative criticism and publicity of a kind which could damage the reputation of the Gallery.
- Poor budgeting and cost control could result in overspends.
- Lower than estimated visitor attendance to charging exhibitions could result in worse financial outcome than forecast.
- An exhibition might prove so popular that additional pressure is placed on the Gallery facilities, booking, and enquiry systems.
- High levels of borrowing may result in excessive reciprocal loan requests to the Gallery, which it may not be possible to meet without detriment to the collection and visitors.

6.2 The procedures summarised below are designed to minimise these risks.

7 Procedures

7.1 Procedures for borrowing works for exhibitions are covered in the Loans In Policy. Procedures for loans of National Gallery paintings to travelling exhibitions organised by the Gallery are covered in the Loans Out Policy.

7.2 The exhibition programme is decided at the Exhibitions Planning Meetings, working far enough in advance to allow sufficient time for fund-raising and all aspects of planning. The meeting group consider whether an exhibition is likely to contribute to the aims listed above or whether it risks damaging the Gallery's reputation. Exhibition proposals are approved or not based on suitability, feasibility and cost. The forward exhibitions programme is put before the Board annually.

7.3 Exhibition income and expenditure forecasts are made for the Gallery Plan. The Data and Insight team provide attendance estimates and Commercial Services recommend ticket prices. Final exhibition budgets, including income and attendance targets, are approved at Exhibition Financial Planning Group.

7.4 The Exhibitions department co-ordinates the planning and implementation of the programme, handles loan requests and manages the exhibition budgets, with responsibility for various areas being delegated to other Gallery departments as follows:

- **Art Handling:** installation and de-installation; unpacking and packing
- **Building:** lighting; climate-control
- **Communications:** marketing, press and media campaigns
- **Conservation:** conservation support and advice
- **Curators:** academic content; selection and negotiation of loans
- **Creative:** 2D & 3D exhibition design, print design and production; signage
- **Development:** sponsorship and events

- **Digital:** website; digital public-facing products and services; evaluation
- **Learning:** associated programme of events
- **Finance:** review of income and expenditure
- **Framing:** glazing and framing support
- **Operations:** cleaning; security and supervision of exhibition rooms and queues;
- **NGG:** membership; ticketing; catalogue; merchandise; reproduction permissions
- **Photographic:** photographic support
- **Registrars:** registrarial support for collection works

- 7.5 Forward planning meetings are held early in the planning process to agree overall strategy for each exhibition and its promotion. Progress meetings are held at regular intervals with representatives of the whole Gallery team to monitor progress, exchange information and mitigate risks.
- 7.6 When a guest curator is employed on an External Services basis, the Exhibitions Department negotiates a contract stipulating responsibilities, deadlines, fee and expenses.
- 7.7 When an exhibition is organised in collaboration with other institutions in the UK or abroad, the Exhibitions Department negotiates an exhibition contract stipulating responsibilities, dates, and insurance and financial arrangements.
- 7.8 Schedules are set by the Exhibitions Department for production of exhibition materials and the installation. Detailed schedules are the responsibility of the relevant department (e.g. Communications, Learning).
- 7.9 A budget for loans of works of art is agreed between the curator and the Exhibitions Department. The proposed exhibition contents are tested against the available space (on plans and models), to ensure that works can be safely and adequately displayed for viewing by the public, and the exhibition selection is modified accordingly.
- 7.10 Initial loan inquiries will normally be made by the curator. Loan request letters are prepared for the Director's signature by the Exhibitions Department and the curator. The exhibition selection is revised in response to the outcome of loan requests and monitored against the available space and the budget. All loan requests should normally have been submitted by one year in advance of the opening of the exhibition. Once a loan has been agreed, the Exhibitions Department organises all arrangements pertaining to the loan, including transport, insurance, condition checking, installation and de-installation.
- 7.11 The installation design is agreed between the curator and the Exhibitions department, who ensures lenders' requirements are observed, and by Operations. The Creative department is responsible for tendering of the design, appointment and management of the contractor, liaison with the Building Department, and ensuring that Gallery policies pertaining to external contractors

are observed. All construction work should be completed and all air-conditioning services operating normally before loans are moved into the exhibition spaces.

- 7.12 Works of art in exhibitions are lit in compliance with the lenders' requirements for light levels.
- 7.13 Once works of art are moved into the space, the space is supervised by Security. During installation and de-installation of loans the Exhibitions Manager in conjunction with Security is responsible for controlling access to the exhibition spaces. Only those with legitimate business in the galleries are admitted.
- 7.14 Arrangements for advance ticket sales and for dealing with enquiries and visitors to the exhibition are made taking account of the anticipated popularity of the exhibition and the level of demand for information and tickets.
- 7.15 During public hours, temporary exhibitions are supervised by Security on the same basis as the permanent collection. If the rooms become too crowded for the safety of the artworks or the public, Security, in consultation with Exhibitions and Operations will control entry to reduce crowding. In the case of charging exhibitions, timed tickets will be issued to control numbers for the safety of the public and artworks.
- 7.16 Environmental conditions are maintained to the agreed parameters by the Building Department. If at any time during the period of the exhibition and its installation and de-installation conditions move outside those parameters, the Exhibitions Manager and Conservation are immediately informed so that they
- 7.17 Visitor research is conducted for exhibitions to monitor visitors' reactions and is discussed at internal debrief meetings, which includes updates across departments on the exhibition.

8 Legal basis

- Museums and Galleries Act 1992
- DCMS Protection national cultural objects
- DCMS immunity from seizure provision

9 Additional policies

- 9.1 This policy adheres to the Gallery's Collections Management Policy framework – the Collections Information and Access Policy; the Conservation and Collections Care Policy; and the Collections Due Diligence Policy.
- Exhibitions strategy

- Exhibitions Risk Management Statement.
- Audience strategy
- Access policy 2024
- Access plan 2024
- Display policy 2014
- Loans in policy
- Due Diligence
- Documentation manual