

## PROCEDURES FOR OUTWARD LOAN

The Museum was founded in 1683 and is the oldest museum in the United Kingdom and one of the oldest in the world. The Ashmolean recognizes its privileged status as custodian of many antiquities and works of art of international importance and regularly contributes to exhibitions in the UK and internationally through an active program of loans from the collection.

Loan requests are subject to a formal assessment procedure. Applications are reviewed by the Director, curatorial and conservation staff. All requests are then put to the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum (trustees) for approval. The Visitors meet five times a year, generally in February, April, July, October and November.

This document explains how to apply to borrow works of art and outlines the standard procedures plus conditions which a borrower will be expected to meet for the loan to proceed.

### Preliminaries

The borrowing authority must be a publicly administered Museum or recognized educational, cultural, scientific, or other approved body, whose corporate legal responsibility can be relied on.

The Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum do not generally agree to loans travelling to more than three locations and for more than a total of eight months. Works on paper or textiles will not be lent to more than two venues or for more than six months. The Ashmolean Museum does however consider applications for long term loans of other materials.

No object can be loaned which, by reason of its physical condition, cannot be handled or transported safely, or which could deteriorate through changes of temperature or relative humidity.

### The scope of the collection

The Museum consists of five curatorial departments – The Departments of Antiquities, Western Art, Eastern Art, the Heberden Coin Room and the Cast Gallery. The collection of the Department of Antiquities covers the Lower Palaeolithic to the Victorian era and incorporates the surviving parts of the Museum's earliest collections,



donated to the University by Elias Ashmole in 1683. The Department of Western Art holds major collections of European (including Russian) paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture, applied arts, and musical instruments from the Middle Ages to the present day. The Department of Eastern Art includes Indian, Tibetan, South-east Asian, Chinese, and Islamic works of international importance and one of the most extensive collections of Japanese art in the West. The Heberden Coin Room houses a systematic and comprehensive collection of some three hundred thousand coins and medals and is a leading international centre for teaching and research in numismatics and monetary history. The Cast Gallery collection comprises casts from works around the world mainly from Roman and Greek originals.

Basic information about the collection, including catalogue records and images of parts of the collection can be found on the Ashmolean Museum web site at [www.ashmolean.org](http://www.ashmolean.org)

The Ashmolean Museum welcomes early discussions and, where possible, an actual visit to view works under consideration. Our curatorial staff will be pleased to advise you about the selection and general availability of works for loan and the Registrars' Department can be contacted with any queries regarding the proposed loan. If you arrange to visit the Museum to help with your selection, ask the curator assisting you for catalogue and location details and accession number. This information can be added to your formal request and will help us speed the assessment process.

## **Formal request**

A minimum of 12 months' notice is required by the Museum for UK loans and a minimum of 18 months' notice is required for International loans. In addition there will be a cap of seven objects within each loan and restrictions on the availability of some types of object. It is important to give as much advance notice as possible when requesting key works in the collection or where a significant conservation input may be required. Changes to the venues, dates or additional venues will not normally be considered later than two months before the opening at the first venue.

The formal request should be made by the Director of the requesting institution or the exhibition curator or organiser and sent to the Director of the Ashmolean Museum, Dr Alexander Sturgis. Dr Sturgis will confer with the relevant Curatorial Department and Head of Conservation who will assess the application and the works requested for loan.

The request should include the following information:

- title of the exhibition



- exhibition venue/s and dates, details of the organizing venue of a touring exhibition
- name, address, telephone, fax number and email address of the exhibition organiser
- name, address, telephone, fax number and email address for the person organizing the exhibition at each venue of a touring exhibition
- theme of the exhibition and reasons for the selection of Ashmolean works and their importance to the exhibition
- list of works requested. Include as much information as possible to support the quick identification and processing of your request. This would normally include, as a minimum details of:

- Museum Accession or Catalogue Number;
- Artist / Maker / Origin
- Title / Description and Dates
- Medium / Material

Borrowers must provide a Facilities Report with details of security, environmental conditions and display proposals for the loans. This must include full contact details of the person coordinating the practical issues of the loan. All venues of a touring exhibition must provide a Facilities Report with this information, including contact details.

Your request will be acknowledged by the Director who will advise you when you will be informed of the Visitors' decision.

Objects that are on long term loan to the Ashmolean Museum should be requested in the same way. The Ashmolean Museum will discuss the loan request with the owner of the objects directly. If the owner wishes to lend, the Ashmolean Museum will administer the loan in the same way as comparable materials from its own collection.

## Assessment Procedure

The assessment procedure includes consideration of the relevance of the works requested to the exhibition, whether a work is already committed to another borrower or central to displays in the Ashmolean. A conservation assessment will also be undertaken to determine if the work is too fragile to travel or requires considerable conservation treatment to prepare it for loan.

The Ashmolean will not normally lend works to exhibitions which tour to more than three venues. *Works on paper* are generally only available for loans to two venues of a touring exhibition or for a display period with a maximum of six months.



## **Loan Decision**

If the loan is refused, the Director will advise of the reasons for the refusal. If the Visitors approve the loan, the Director will write to confirm approval after their meeting

## **Procedure for Loan**

Following approval by the Visitors, the Registrars' Department will send a copy of the Museum Loan Agreement and a letter outlining procedures and indicating costs of loan preparation. The agreement will include catalogue details of the loan, valuations for insurance purposes and details of courier and display requirements. Each venue of a touring exhibition must sign and return a copy of this Agreement. The loan cannot proceed until a copy of the loan agreement has been signed and returned to the Ashmolean Registrars' Department for each borrowing venue, together with a Facilities Report. A signed copy of the Agreement must be returned by each venue of a touring exhibition and the exhibition organiser, where this is a separate party.

If there is a change to the dates or any of the venues of a touring exhibition, contact the Ashmolean Registrars' Department with details as any change must be put to the Ashmolean Museum Visitors for approval.

The borrowing authority must be a publicly administered Museum or recognised educational, cultural, scientific, or other approved body, whose corporate legal responsibility can be relied on. The signatory of the loan agreement must be authorised by their institution to sign the agreement.

The terms of the loan agreement will be written in English and this text must not be altered.

The Ashmolean Museum will not complete the Inward loan forms of the Borrower but the Registrars Department will be pleased to provide additional information that is not supplied in the Ashmolean agreement.

## **Display and case design**

The borrower must provide details of the display case/s to be used for Ashmolean Museum loans at least three months before the start of the exhibition. Include details of the construction and locking mechanism of the proposed display cases.

The case must be completely secure, access being controlled by a means of locks or panels fixed with security screws secured into position once installation has taken place. For certain loans the Ashmolean Museum may additionally specify that the



case is fitted with an alarm. Lights should be housed in a separate compartment to the work of art with an UV absorbent filter between the lamps and the work of art. Access to the lights must not involve opening the case. Where required by the Ashmolean Museum the display case should be fitted with alarms, which respond to vibration, and to interference with locking mechanisms.

## **Environmental conditions – relative humidity, light levels, temperature and food and drink**

A stable storage and display environment must be provided for Ashmolean Museum objects on loan. Unless otherwise indicated in the loan agreement, temperature should normally be in the range of 16° - 24°C. Relative humidity should generally be in the range of 40% - 60% with fluctuations of no more than 10% in 24 hours. Works on paper are categorised as sensitive items and generally require a relative humidity range of 45 – 55% with maximum cumulative movement of 10% in 24 hours and temperature range 18 - 22°C fluctuation in 24 hours. All humidity and heating controls must operate 24 hours and lights must be turned off when the exhibition is closed.

Direct sunlight must be excluded from the display area to limit changes to room temperature and humidity in addition to restrictions on light levels. More vulnerable objects, such as works on paper and textiles must be displayed under artificial light at no more than 50 lux and daylight should be fully excluded. Paintings should be displayed at a maximum level of 150 lux. Specific light levels will be provided with the loan agreement. UV filters should be used to reduce the level to less than 75 microwatts per lumen of total visible radiation.

No food or drink is to be consumed and there must be no smoking in any storage or display area housing Ashmolean Museum loans. In areas of heavy pollution, measures must be taken to exclude or reduce levels of gaseous pollution.

Objects must not be placed near sources of heat, cold or strong air-currents such as radiators, fireplaces, dehumidifiers, air-conditioning outlets or intakes, external walls or windows.

## **Security and safety of works of art**

Trained museum staff, in sufficient numbers to protect the loan, must be in constant attendance at all times when the exhibition is open to the public and during installation/de-installation. During installation/de-installation, only those individuals directly involved in the preparation of the exhibition should be admitted into the exhibition space and preparation areas.



No conservation work, framing, unframing, remounting, or any other treatment or repair of the work may take place without the written approval from the Ashmolean Museum Registrars' Department.

Works on paper will be glazed under Perspex and paintings will be glazed under laminated non-reflective glass prior to loan. Works must not be unglazed or removed from their display frames under any circumstances without prior consultation and written approval from the Ashmolean Museum Registrars' Department.

Except for packing, condition checking and installation, works of art may not be handled. Works should only be handled by trained gallery/museum staff and recognized fine art packers and shippers.

Works of art may not be subjected to any form of scientific examination or conservation treatment.

## Image requests

All image requests should be made through our Picture Library ([picture.library@ashmus.ox.ac.uk](mailto:picture.library@ashmus.ox.ac.uk)). Please contact them directly with details of any photographic requirements. If new photography is required, you will have to meet the additional cost. For full details of current charges for image reproduction, please see <http://www.ashmolean.org/ordering-images>

## Registrar Contacts

**Christina Gernon**, Senior Registrar

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