

Exhibition 1: Discussion Summary

There was a great deal of discussion over how conservators fit into the exhibition planning process. The group decides to describe the series of events that would take place in the development of an exhibit created from the institutional holdings and that would not travel. The general consensus over the events involved and the sequencing is as follows:

Planning / Meeting / Determining feasibility

Curators float idea for an exhibition and discuss with exhibition staff. Meetings are held to develop checklists and determine feasibility of creating the exhibit with the objects involved. The process is iterative in that multiple meetings may be held.

Inputs:

- Existing documentation including condition reports, exhibition history.
- Outputs: exhibition checklist

Creation of Project Schedule / Receipt of checklist

Project schedule is developed. This will undergo tweaks throughout project but final date is fixed early on. Checklist of items is delivered to conservators.

Condition Assessment

The condition of items on the checklist is assessed by direct inspection and consultation of condition reports

Vendor Selection / Staff assignment

If no conservation staff exists, vendor selection is made, otherwise conservation staff is assigned to project based on appropriate skill sets

Movement

Objects are moved to curatorial divisions, conservation departments, preparator's department, etc. Movements of objects occur throughout the project lifecycle.

Treatment Proposal / Approval / Execution / Documentation

- OUTput: Items requiring conservation treatments are identified. Treatment proposals are generated,
- Output: Approvals are secured for items that can be included in the exhibition.
- Treatments on items requiring conservation are executed. This includes the full set of processes that are involved in the treatment and documentation of treatments, including condition photography for Before, During After, treatments.
- Output: Documentation of treatments

Photography for publication

Photography for publication is carried out. This is distinguished from treatment documentation photographs, standard condition photographs etc, that would have occurred in previous step

Mounts

Fabrication of mounts for all types of objects. According to specifications of conservator or done under supervision of conservator.

Gallery preparation

Establishment of correct environmental conditions for objects on display

Installation

Installation of exhibition

Environmental monitoring

This process is continuous throughout exhibition period.

Outputs: humidity/ temperature/ light level readings, cumulatively monitored

De-installation

Outputs: condition reports

Output: Cumulative exposure to environmental threats documented

Packaging/return to storage

Output: movement records, exhibition history

Return of items to storage

File documentation

Put all documentation of exhibition history including all forementioned outputs in file. This is the end of the process.

Related notes:

The confirmation of an object's suitability for exhibition and/or loan often depends on the institutional memory of a senior conservator. As a result, an object can be denied approval for exhibition and/or loan for many years with no documented reason.

Group did not include 'crating issues' in our model related to exhibitions