

Downloading Exhibitions II – Designing for Small Museums

Excerpts from presentation

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Getting Started

The Exhibition Designer's role in the development of an exhibition is that of a communicator, using a variety of appropriate display and interpretive techniques to communicate the ideas that the curator wishes to express.

The Design Concept becomes the linking thread running through the whole display, creating an exhibition that is both unified in its visual appearance as well as the ideas it presents

Before you employ a design consultant:

- Formulate a statement about what the exhibition is about – a big idea
- Develop a range of themes or stories that will support this idea
- Start to think about what objects and images are available from the collection to illustrate these stories – is an exhibition the best way to present this information?
- Would it be more suited to a book, film or lecture series?
- At this stage it is also important to define some physical limitations
 - Gallery size
 - Budget

The Design Process

The design process is broadly the systematic solving of a series of interrelated problems with one universal solution. The first thing a designer does when given a design problem is to develop a design concept based on the exhibition's big idea

The Design Process involves:

- Develop a design concept based on the exhibition's "big idea"
- Assign exhibition themes to floor plan This is the transition from the theoretical to the practical, for the first time the exhibition team's ideas are limited by a hard, quantifiable thing – the availability of space.
- Looking at the stories and themes to be presented, the designer in consultation with the curator comes up with interpretive strategies that will best communicate these ideas.
- Develop groupings of objects based on stories
- Design of exhibition furniture
- Graphic Design. This involves the development of a graphic ID and key images. It is also the time for the exhibition team to gather all relevant images, gain copyright permission and have any additional images shot. It is imperative that images be of a quality suitable for reproduction ie. 35mm transparency at the very least, large format slides better.
- Devise ways of presenting the objects that will show their relevance to the exhibition theme and the development of conservation approved object supports.
- Design detailing, workshop drawings
- Finalise graphic design – Story labels - Object labels.