

Exhibition Proposal

The Exhibition Proposal assignment is a semester-long project that asks you to think expansively about the history of art over the past 500-plus years. It is an opportunity to delve deeper into topics explored across time periods, cultures and geographic regions that you find particularly interesting and/or important, while building skills in effective art historical research and critical analysis.

Premise

Museum and gallery exhibitions hold a crucial place in the art historical world. They are a point of intersection between scholars/specialists and the public, and they often significantly contribute to the popular and critical attitudes toward a specific artist, an art historical movement or concept, or a larger aspect of human experience. Exhibitions typically attempt to construct a narrative around a theme or topic that is conveyed through the artworks selected for display and their organization within the space of the museum, augmented with accompanying texts such as gallery labels and exhibition catalogues. These components (artworks, organization and texts) dictate the exhibition's critical reception, and become its legacy long after the exhibition itself has been dismantled.

Assignment

There are four (4) parts to this assignment, due throughout the semester:

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| 1. Selection of Theme/Topic | DUE: 2/6 via Canvas discussion board |
| 2. Preliminary Exhibition Checklist | DUE: 2/22 in hard copy |
| 3. Annotated Bibliography | DUE: 4/12 in hard copy |
| 4. Final Exhibition Proposal | DUE: 5/3 in hard copy |

Instructions

- 1. Selection of Theme/Topic:** Your starting point for this assignment is identification of the theme or topic on which you will focus, around which you will craft your proposal. The exhibition topic you decide to work on should be specific enough to be cohesive, and possible to explore from a variety of angles. Topics can focus on a specific artist, movement, region and time period, or issue. Sample topics are listed below for your reference; please note they represent just a small sampling of possibilities, and are meant to help and inspire but not in any way limit you. While these topics are broad, your exhibition should frame a specific aspect or point of view on that topic.

Sample Topics/Themes:

- Jan van Eyck
- Katsushika Hokusai
- Postimpressionism
- Rinpa
- Japonisme
- The Benin Kingdom in the 18th Century
- Art of the American Southwest, 1500-1850
- Women Artists before the Industrial Revolution
- Color
- Protest

Along with a theme/topic, you should also propose at this time a working title for your exhibition. The title should announce the theme of the exhibition, it should entice potential audiences to want to see the exhibition and find out more, and it should indicate the perspective on that theme you plan to explore. A short list of effective titles is included below for your reference; again, these are meant simply to help and inspire you.

Recent Exhibition Titles:

- *Linking Asia: Art, Trade and Devotion* (Denver Art Museum)
- *Gauguin: Artist as Alchemist* (Art Institute of Chicago)
- *Art and China After 1989: Theater of the World* (Guggenheim Museum)
- *Power Plays* (Musée du Louvre)

This initial step is truly meant as a starting point. You need only to state your intended topic/theme and come up with a working title. Please **follow the instructions on the Canvas discussion board** for formatting.

In terms of developing your topic, good preliminary sources are the textbook and museum websites. Many museums have extensive and well-maintained websites that announce and archive upcoming, current and past exhibitions. You can find a list of useful museum websites in the Art and Art History Research Guide on the Auraria Library website: <http://guides.auraria.edu/c.php?g=323355&p=2166046>.

2. **Preliminary Exhibition Checklist:** After selecting a topic, you should begin to compile a list of artworks that relate to your theme that you would consider including in your exhibition. The checklist should consist of **twenty (20) artworks** (of any type) that relate to your theme. It should also be illustrated (meaning you need to include an image of each work). In this preliminary list, you want to begin to think about the potential relationships between artworks, and about the different ways artworks individually or in combination support different aspects of your theme.

Formatting:

The checklist should be presented as a numbered list, and include the following information for each artwork: Artist name, title of work, culture, date, medium, dimensions. Please follow the example below for the structure of your checklist. A template is available on Canvas (Files → Exhibition Project → Checklist Template) that you can download and use.

No.	Artwork Info
1	Edvard Munch <i>Tête-à-tête</i> Norwegian, 1894 Etching with drypoint and burnishing; third state of three 22 x 32.7 cm (plate); 34.3 x 46.9 cm (sheet)

Image



3. **Annotated Bibliography:** You will reevaluate and refine your initial theme and checklist through examination of exhibition catalogues and critical reviews of exhibitions related to your theme. You must draw upon **at least three (3) catalogues and three (3) reviews**. You will summarize and critique these sources and the perspectives on your theme they lend in the form of an annotated bibliography. This document should list publication information for each source, formatted according to Chicago Manual of Style guidelines. Each bibliographic entry should include an annotation, consisting of 2-3 paragraphs summarizing the source's content and position/argument, and addressing its relation to your theme.

There are several resources related to the content, structure and formatting of annotated bibliographies available on Canvas:

- Files → Writing Resources → Citation Guidelines (explanation of Chicago Manual of Style format for common sources, with examples for bibliographic entries)
 - Files → Exhibition Project → Sample Annotated Bibliography (document modeling a sample bibliographic entry and annotation for an exhibition catalogue and an exhibition review)
4. **Final Exhibition Proposal:** Your final submission for this project will consist of three (3) components:
- A finalized title that clearly and accurately communicates the theme and perspective you have built over the semester
 - A finalized illustrated checklist of twenty (20) artworks arranged in the order in which you would want viewers to encounter them in the exhibition and visualizing connections between artworks you would highlight
 - A 500-word statement (akin to an introductory wall panel in a museum exhibition, or the introduction in an exhibition catalogue) explaining the proposed exhibition's content and organization. A sample text is available on Canvas for guidance (Files → Exhibition Project → Sample Statement).

Grade Breakdown

The entire assignment is out of 100 points, and is worth 25% of your overall course grade. The four parts of the assignment are weighted as follows:

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| 1. Selection of Theme/Topic | 5 points |
| 2. Preliminary Exhibition Checklist | 20 points |
| 3. Annotated Bibliography | 30 points |
| 4. Final Exhibition Proposal | 45 points |