



ART INDUSTRY CONTEXTS AT THE NGV

**ALIGNS WITH VCE STUDIO ARTS UNIT 4: STUDIO PRACTICE
AND ART INDUSTRY CONTEXTS AREA OF STUDY 3, OUTCOME 3**

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA	2
2 EXHIBITION PREPARATION	6
3 EXHIBITION PRESENTATION	12
4 CONSERVATION	18
5 EXHIBITION PROMOTION	28
NOTES	38
FURTHER RESOURCES	39
APPENDIX: MATERIALS CONSERVATION	40
GLOSSARY	44



ART INDUSTRY CONTEXTS AT THE NGV

This resource supports VCE Studio Arts students to compare the methods used by artists and considerations of curators, conservators, registrars and exhibition designers in the preparation, presentation, conservation and promotion of artworks in exhibitions at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV). Designed to be used in conjunction with an exhibition visit, this resource aligns with the key knowledge and key skills as outlined in Unit 4: Studio practice and art industry contexts, Area of Study 3, Outcome 3.

KEY KNOWLEDGE

- the methods and intentions of public art galleries and museums, commercial and private galleries, university art galleries, artist run spaces, alternative art spaces, outdoor spaces and online galleries in exhibiting artworks
- the curatorial considerations, exhibition design and promotional methods involved in preparing and displaying artworks in current exhibitions
- the methods used by and considerations of artists and curators working in galleries in conservation of artworks, including lighting, temperature, storage, transportation and presentation of specific artworks in current exhibitions
- the processes associated with the production, presentation, conservation and promotion of specific artworks in current exhibitions
- the characteristics of different types of gallery spaces visited in the current year of study
- appropriate terminology.

KEY SKILLS

- identify and describe the characteristics of different types of gallery spaces visited in the current year of study
- describe and compare the methods of and intentions in exhibiting artworks in public art galleries and museums, commercial and private galleries, artist run spaces, alternative art spaces, university art galleries and museums, outdoor spaces and online galleries, which have been visited in the year of study
- analyse how specific artworks are presented in different exhibitions and demonstrate an understanding of the artists' and gallery curators' intentions
- analyse and evaluate curatorial considerations, exhibition design and promotional methods involved in preparing and presenting specific artworks for display
- analyse and evaluate methods and considerations involved in the conservation of specific artworks related to exhibitions visited in the current year of study
- employ appropriate terminology.

1 INTRODUCTION TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA (NGV)

The National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) is Australia's first public gallery. It was founded in 1861 to collect, conserve, interpret and exhibit the state's artworks and bring art to the people of Victoria. Today it is a dynamic and vibrant community asset which contributes to the cultural, educational, social and economic wellbeing of Victorians. The state collection comprises approximately 75,000 works illustrating the history and development of Australian, Indigenous and international art and design. In an average year, 2–3 million people visit the NGV and five million access the website¹. The NGV Collection is displayed across two buildings in Melbourne's CBD (Figure 1.1 & 1.2).



FIGURE 1.1
NGV International (NGVI) on St Kilda Road houses the international collection and major exhibitions

FIGURE 1.2
The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia (NGVA) in Federation Square is the home of Australian art, presenting Indigenous and non-Indigenous art from the colonial period to the present day

THE VISION

The NGV vision is 'Creating an inspiring future: enriching our understanding of art and life'.² The Gallery aims to achieve this through diverse acquisitions, research, innovative displays and use of digital technologies, careful conservation and collection management, as well as a dynamic range of programs and activities inspired by the NGV Collection and exhibitions. This accessible, welcoming, and engaging approach contributes to community wellbeing, helps build a sense of community and connects diverse audiences with art, artists, and ideas.

FUNDING AND ACQUISITIONS

Entry to the NGV is free, but entry fees are charged for some exhibitions. NGV revenue comes from a combination of government grants, exhibition and event ticket sales, merchandising, memberships, cash donations, appeals, philanthropy and partnerships with businesses, groups and individuals.

For more about the NGV Vision, governance, funding and acquisitions you might like to refer to the NGV Annual Report and NGV Foundation Annual report on the NGV website.³



FIGURE 1.3
Philanthropists, like the late Loti Smorgon AO and Victor Smorgon AC, support the NGV by donating artworks and funds for acquisitions. For example, this 2015 work by Ai Weiwei was acquired for the NGV Collection in 2017 using funds donated by the Smorgon family.

Ai Weiwei
Dropping a Han Dynasty urn 2015
plastic on composition board
(a-c) 240.4 x 641.3 cm (overall)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund, 2017
2015.553.a-c
© Ai Weiwei Studio

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions and displays are comprised of works of art and design from the NGV Collection and loans from other museums, organisations or individuals. During 2018–19 forty-five exhibitions were held across NGV International and The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia⁴. Exhibitions feature diverse artists, periods, **aesthetics**, ideas, themes and materials. They range from the art of ancient China to the work of young, emerging local artists such as the

annual Top Arts exhibition of VCE Studio Arts and VCE Art students' work. They include **Collection displays**, exhibitions showcasing individual artists, exhibitions around a theme, and blockbuster exhibitions like the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series. The largest exhibition held by the Gallery to date was the 2017/18 NGV Triennial which attracted more than 1.23 million visitors⁵.



FIGURE 1.4
Installation views of the entrance to
Civilization: The Way We Live Now at NGVA

In the Gallery

MISSION AND VISION IN ACTION

- 1 Before your visit, find the most recent NGV Annual Report on the NGV website. Look for the NGV's strategic framework, including the Gallery's mission, vision, goals and strategies.
- 2 Visit the NGV in person (or explore the website) and discover the range of exhibitions on display.
- 3 Choose two contrasting exhibitions and consider the following:



THE NGV TEAM

The NGV employs close to four hundred staff who work across departments that include Curatorial, Conservation, Design, Audience Engagement and Learning, Publications, Multimedia, Media and Public Affairs, Marketing, Cataloguing, Registration, Photography, Fundraising and Events, Exhibitions and Collections Operations amongst others.

All teams collaborate to maintain the NGV Collection and to present the NGV's many exhibitions and displays. Each department or team has a specialised role for example:

- The Curatorial team are the experts on the art and design from their specialised area, and conceive exhibitions and displays that bring out ideas and stories around the work
- The Exhibition Design team create exhibition settings which display the artworks according to the curatorial theme or idea
- The Conservation team ensures works in the Collection are well cared for and those on display are presented safely and at their best.

2 EXHIBITION PREPARATION

Preparation for NGV exhibitions begins with concept development and a proposal. Curators propose ideas based on their research, strengths of the Collection, new ideas and emerging international movements. When making decisions about which exhibitions to run, the Executive Management Team (EMT) and curatorial staff consider each exhibition's cultural value and educational potential, how it fits with NGV's vision and the overall offering, how it will appeal to the NGV's broad audience and entice both regular and new visitors.

EXHIBITION THEME

Every exhibition is underpinned by a main theme or idea. The **exhibition theme** provides a framework to tell a unique, engaging and accessible story about the artist(s), their time and their work. To develop the exhibition theme and content, exhibition curators use their expert knowledge of the artist(s) and their practice(s) collaborating with them, where possible. Some exhibition themes are developed in partnership with other national and international cultural institutions and curators. The curator's explanation of the works selected and how they are arranged in an exhibition is sometimes called the **curatorial rationale**.

Artworks are carefully selected and arranged to highlight recurring ideas, subject matter, or materials and techniques. For example, in **retrospective** or historical exhibitions, the structure often follows a **chronological grouping** to demonstrate stages of an artist's development or provide historical context. An exhibition of an emerging or mid-career artist's work might be arranged according to key ideas the artist has pursued, by style or medium, or to provide the viewer with a series of sensory or conceptual experiences.

Collection displays include works from the NGV Collection which have been grouped to highlight ideas, eras, styles or themes. For example, poster design from Japan, Venetian glass, toxic materials used in art and design, or Surrealism. As with larger exhibitions, elements or ideas from the artworks are used to create an exhibition design that enhances or helps to tell the story of the works.

Scenario

COLLECTION DISPLAYS AT THE NGV



FIGURE 2.1

The NGV Salon features a dense arrangement of paintings that fills the walls of the gallery from corner to corner and almost floor to ceiling, with the centre of the room occupied by groupings of bronze sculptures of figures and animals⁶.

The 'Salon hang' reflects the way works were hung in the official exhibitions of the royal art academies of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries (Figure 2.1). At the time, the taste of the academies was for representational works with a classical, historical, biblical or narrative theme. Deep maroon walls, fashionable in the 19th century, highlight the golden frames and accentuate the works. Carefully focused lighting illuminates the paintings. In this format, traditional wall labels would be difficult to read and visually intrusive, so information is available on touch screens instead.

The NGV Salon arrangement required careful planning both to ensure the display looked good and to communicate the complex display to the art installers who hung the works. To see the process of hanging the works in the Salon visit www.ngv.vic.gov.au/multimedia/hanging-the-ngv-salon/

How does the Salon hang contrast with other display spaces you have visited in the NGV and other galleries?

What might the curatorial rationale be for the Salon?

What challenges might the display have presented when designing the exhibition?

What issues might the hang present for audiences engaging with the work and what measures might be taken to address these?

ARTWORK SELECTION

In addition to relevance to the overarching exhibition theme, curators must also consider other complex factors and variables when selecting artworks. Artworks in exhibitions are often loaned from museums, individual owners, art dealers, and private collections from all over the world so many practicalities must be taken into consideration. Figure 2.2 provides examples of curatorial considerations during exhibition preparation.

FIGURE 2.2
Curatorial considerations in artwork selection

CONSIDERATION	EXAMPLE
Strength of example	Does the work exemplify the theme or idea? Is it a significant example of the artist's style or interests? Is it iconic? Will it support the theme of the exhibition?
Breadth of practice	Does the work show how the artist's style or the main theme of the exhibition (or a sub-section of it) was applied across different media? Are there a range of creative expressions of the theme?
Exhibition history & exposure	Will it expose audiences to something not previously seen? Has the work been on display recently? Is it new to the audience? Newer works or those which haven't recently been shown may be prioritised over those which have been exhibited frequently.
Diversity	Are we representing new voices? For exhibitions which focus on a topic rather than a single artist, curators aim to include exhibitors from diverse backgrounds. Curators aim to tell stories previously unheard or less prominent.
Budget	Fewer, more costly, works or more, less expensive, works? Ticketed exhibitions such as the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces series have a larger exhibition budget and can offset costs through sponsorship, ticket sales, retailing and other funding and operations. Collection exhibitions often have more limited resources, so decisions are made on what is required to tell the strongest exhibition story.
Transportation logistics	Where is the work coming from? What is required to get it to the NGV? Freightling valuable works from multiple locations involves careful planning and coordination.
Artwork location	Where will the work be placed in the Gallery or exhibition? How does the placement of the works, and their relationship to each other in the exhibition space, assist in communicating the theme of the exhibition?
Size and weight	How easily can we move and accommodate the work? Large and heavy works make a grand statement and attract audience attention. However, they are often difficult to transport and labour intensive to install. The floor on upper levels of the Gallery can't support extremely heavy works safely. Many small works can fit into an exhibition space, and they also travel much more economically and easily. However, they can be difficult for large audiences to view.
Value	What measures will need to be taken to protect the work? High value works have higher insurance and security costs and often require additional measures to transport, store and display.
Physical condition	How much special attention does the work require to make it display ready? Fragile works need custom travel crates for transport and may have special handling needs. Some works require extensive conservation treatment to stabilise surfaces or treat pests or repair damage. They may also require maintenance during the exhibition and to prepare them for return transportation.
Presentation requirements	Does the work require special presentation? Lenders may request specific climate conditions (ie. temperature and relative humidity ranges), ask for special display cases or mounting systems, or to limit lighting if the work is light sensitive. Other requirements might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• custom supports• complex audio-visual equipment• electrical works may need to be reworked to meet Australian safety standards• additional security measures (e.g. a stanchion or plinth)• large areas for display• special health and safety measures.
Availability	How easy is it to loan the work? Many institutions around the world compete for iconic artworks and some works on the exhibition wish list may be unavailable because they are on display elsewhere. Some works rarely leave their home because they are a "destination piece" ie. an attraction for the museum that owns them.

Scenario

DEVELOPING AN EXHIBITION THEME

When developing an exhibition that paired two major international artists, the EMT and curatorial team were aware that each artist had been widely celebrated in many solo exhibitions around the world. Because the artists individually had broad appeal, the exhibition risked telling a story which was too familiar to the NGV audience. Consequently, the team decided to present the artists in tandem, exploring the intersecting points of their art and lives in a world-first exhibition. This sharpened the curators' focus as they developed the narrative of the exhibition.



PROCESSES

Major exhibitions such as the Melbourne Winter Masterpieces and summer exhibitions are scheduled 3–4 years in advance. This is to allow enough time for the exhibition preparation process, including research, development and consolidation, loan requests and **loan agreements** to be issued, writing for the exhibition catalogue, transport logistics, and funding applications. Art galleries such as the NGV have registrars who track the Gallery's inventory of art, whether on display, in storage, in treatment or on loan; and deal with international shipping and customs procedures when the works travel. They also manage incoming and outgoing objects of art from other locations.

THE CHECKLIST

During the exhibition preparation process, curators use planning tools to guide their decisions on how artworks will be arranged. The document that lists every single object and work of art included in an exhibition is called the **checklist**. The checklist is a reference document for every team that works on the exhibition. The checklist provides the definitive title of the artwork, its date of production, the name of the artist, the dimensions of the work and other essential information. The checklist often includes a reference image of the work.

EXHIBITION MODELS

Exhibition models are scaled versions of the exhibition space and contain scaled images of the works (Figure 2.3). They are used by the curatorial and exhibition design teams to experiment with the layout and to communicate ideas to the various Gallery teams working on different aspects of the exhibition. Layouts of the exhibition are also realised in 2D plans and elevations.

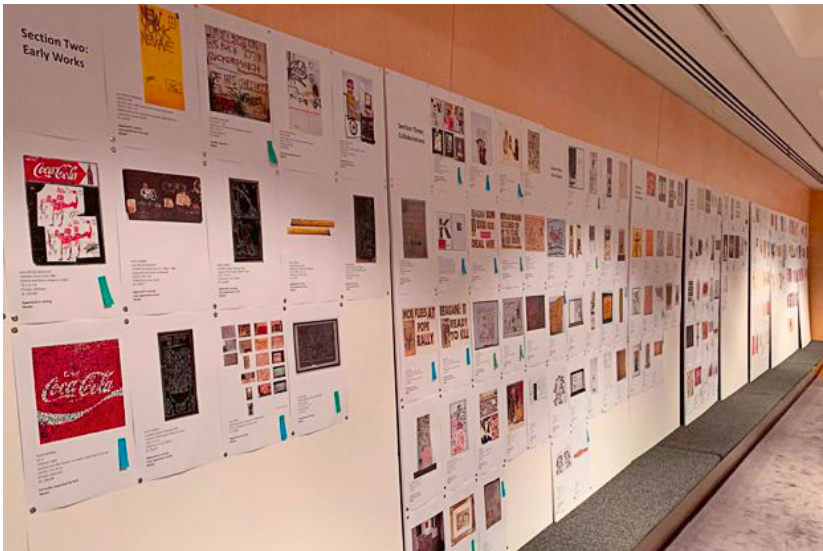


FIGURE 2.3
Exhibition models (usually made at a scale of 1:50) and visual checklists are central to planning an exhibition.

LOAN AGREEMENTS

For exhibitions where loaned artworks are required, curators locate potential loans in national and international cultural institution's collections or private holdings. They do this by using records of those collections which might be in exhibition catalogues, online collection databases, artist **catalogue raisonnés**, or by contacting curators at other museums. Once a target artwork has been identified, the Director sends a formal loan request letter to the owner. If the owner agrees to lending the artwork, the request is formalised with a loan agreement.

LEGAL AND FINANCIAL PROTECTION

As a member of Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan register (PCOL)⁷, the NGV undertakes **provenance** research to establish the chain of ownership, previous exhibitions and auction results for works from overseas lenders with gaps in their recorded history. This is to ensure that the artwork is authentic and was acquired by its owner lawfully, and not the subject of theft, colonial theft, or cultural looting.

Owing to the value of the artworks and risks in their transportation and public display, exhibition insurance can be prohibitively expensive. If appropriate, the NGV will also apply for insurance funding from The Australian Government International Exhibitions Insurance (AGIEI) Program⁸.

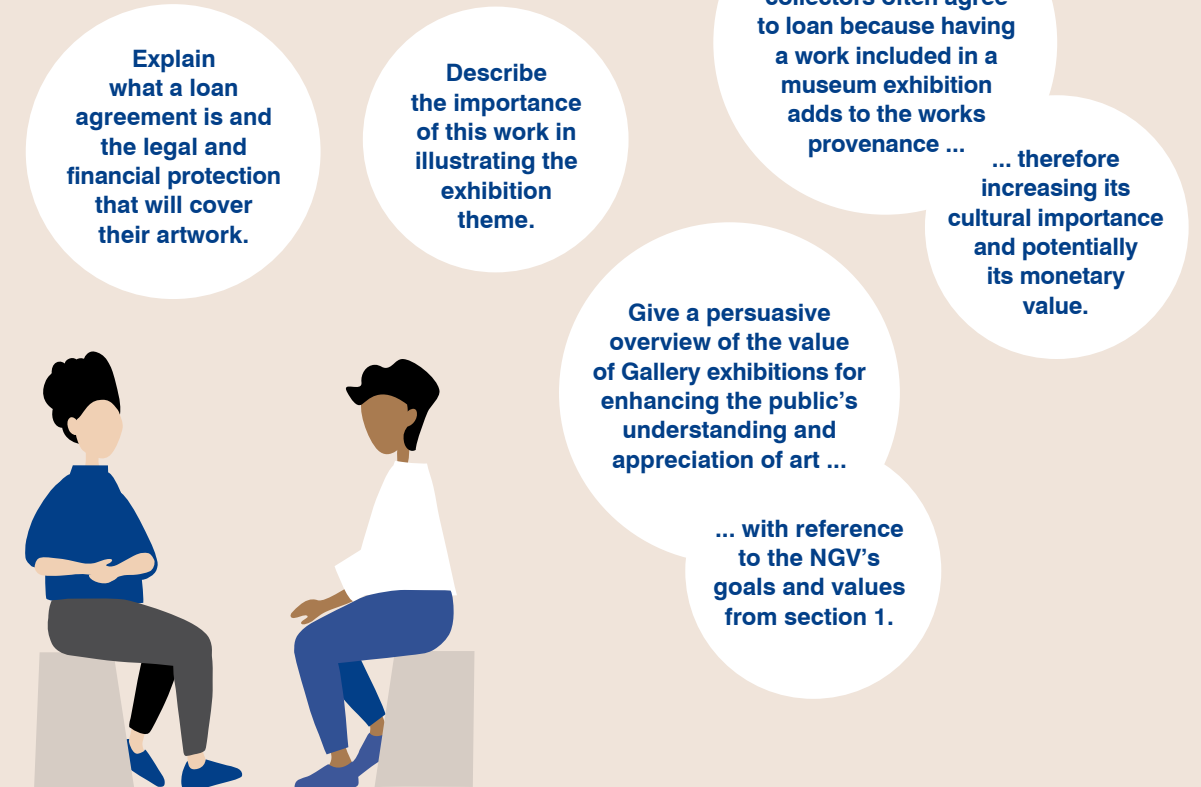
Scenario

IN CONVERSATION WITH A PRIVATE COLLECTOR

The curatorial team are developing the checklist for a mid-career retrospective of a living artist based in Melbourne. One section of the exhibition will be dedicated to a very early period in the artist's career. The curatorial team have successfully guaranteed loans on several works related to this period and have identified one more artwork which would link together the room. The private owner of the work has never lent to an exhibition before and isn't familiar with the loan process.

Imagine you are the curator in conversation with the owner:

What else could the curators do to enhance the exhibition if they are unsuccessful in securing the artwork?



3 EXHIBITION PRESENTATION

The way artworks are presented in a gallery space influences the viewer’s interpretation or experience of the work. Exhibitions are carefully designed to emphasise the narrative or story they are aiming to tell.

DESIGNING AN EXHIBITION

The Exhibition Design team redesign and modify the physical aspects of the gallery space to enhance the audience experience of artworks. The physical and ambient design of the space creates a structure for a narrative to unfold, emphasising the thematic placement of works. Design modifications can be **aesthetic** or **structural**.

Figure 3.1 outlines some considerations in a successful exhibition design.

While this table provides a general summary of the varied and complex considerations accounted for by exhibition designers, each exhibition is unique and requires a different approach to the challenge of balancing decisions and considerations.

FIGURE 3.1
Exhibition design factors

FACTORS	EXAMPLE
Theme	Each theme may have a dedicated room or space with specific audio-visual materials, structural materials, graphics, or colours employed to enhance the audience’s understanding of the theme.
Artist’s intention	Artist’s intentions often inform and influence exhibition design. Sometimes artists provide instructions about how they intend their work to be displayed, hung or framed. For example, an artist may have intended for their series of paintings to be densely hung with minimal plain space on the walls or they may request that no other artworks are hung near their artworks. In cases where communication with the artist not possible, the curator’s knowledge of the artist and display precedents may inform exhibition designers’ decisions. (Figure 3.2)
Sightlines	Sightlines are the long views between exhibition spaces that visually link them. Structural features like corners, corridors and openings are commonly used to create connections between works and emphasise meaning. Specific attention is given to particularly significant artworks, to ensure they occupy prominent sightlines.
Colour	Colour creates connections or distinctions between spaces, along with the placement of works along sightlines, it is often used to emphasise and signpost the flow of the exhibition.
Scale	When designing an exhibition, the scale of the artworks needs to be considered. For example, large artworks need to be in spaces which suit their scale, often in rooms with high ceilings.
Multimedia	Projectors are positioned discretely to obtain an uninterrupted path of light to the gallery walls. Artworks with sound also influence the spatial design of an exhibition. They must be positioned with consideration to their impact on the interpretation of works nearby.
Lighting	Lighting designers are experts at lighting exhibition spaces to protect the artworks, to highlight specific works or areas, to create a mood, and to guide the viewer. Lighting can include wall washes, grazing, spotlighting, specially lit display cases or directional lighting. (Figure 3.3)
Conservation factors	Environmental factors need to be considered when designing an exhibition to ensure the conservation of works. For example, textiles, photographs and works on paper are sensitive to light and need to be kept in areas with low lighting. Sculptures made from bronze or stone are less sensitive to light so are more likely to be placed in areas with brighter light. (Read more about conservation in section 4).
Contractual Requirements	For artworks which have been lent to the exhibition, the owner may stipulate specific display requirements to keep their artwork safe. For example, on a plinth or in a glass case.
Budget	In addition to the exhibition design, the exhibition budget is divided across insurance, transportation, security, marketing and other operational expenses.
Branding and marketing	Defining features of the exhibition branding and design, such as the exhibition masthead, hero images, key colours, or typeface often run through the exhibition space, retail and ticketing areas to create a cohesive look and feel wherever the audience may interact with the exhibition. (Read more about marketing in section 5).
Audience journey	The arrangement of physical space impacts the audience journey and flow of people through the exhibition. Bottlenecks can appear at the start or in popular sections, which need to be pre-empted with larger viewing spaces and wide corridors.
Health and safety	As well as the safety of the artworks, much consideration is given to the safety and comfort of the audience. The size and placement of labels, the placement of plinths and barriers to avoid accident and injury, ventilation, entry and escape points, emergency management are all considered in the design process.
Disability access	Exhibition designers consider physical access requirements, like ramps and spaces for wheelchairs or appropriate seating in the exhibition space.
Audience participation	In many large exhibitions, and where possible, the team design specific opportunities for audience engagement, including through social media.
Kids spaces	Specially designed exhibitions for young children to encourage participation and engagement from all audience sectors





FIGURE 3.2

Installation view Ron Mueck's *Mass*, 2016–2017. Artist Ron Mueck worked with curators, conservators and the exhibition design team selecting a wall colour and lighting to highlight his work in an arrangement that considered the safety of viewers and artworks, as well as the effect and message of the work.^{9 & 10}



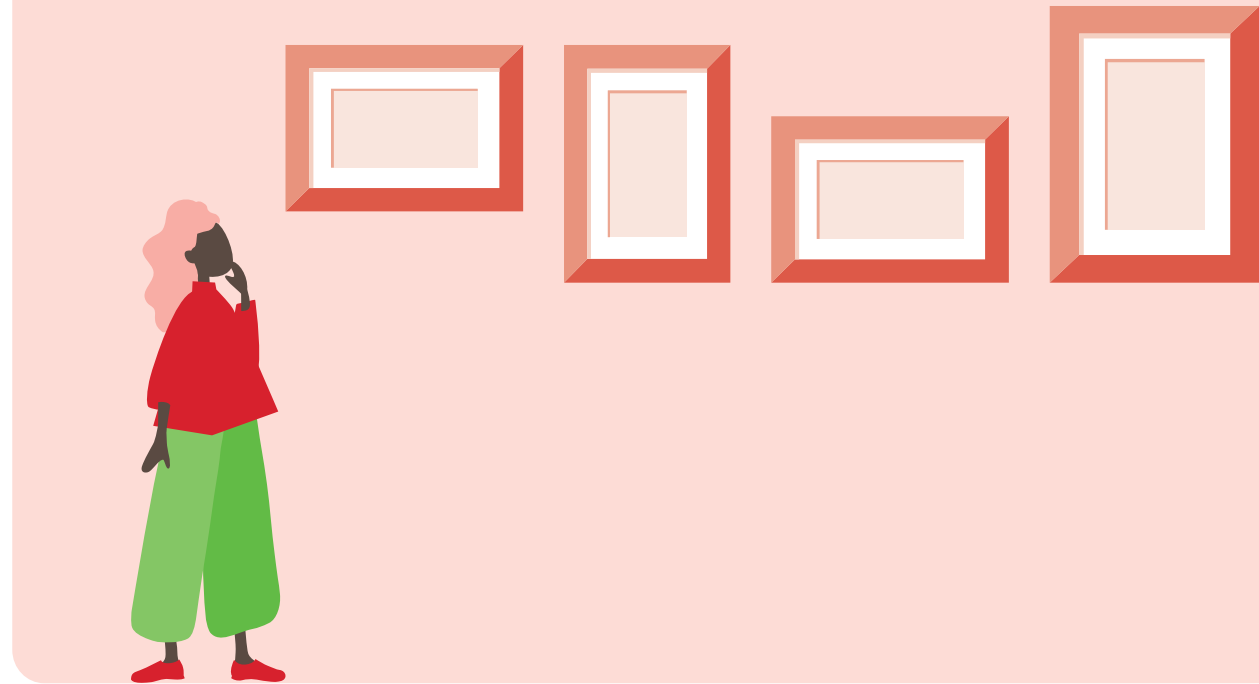
FIGURE 3.3

Glass display cases protected the terracotta warriors and horses in *Terracotta Warriors: Guardians of Immortality* | Cai Guo-Qiang: *The Transient Landscape*. Mirrors allowed the viewer to see the object from all angles and created the illusion of more figures. Custom made supports inside the cases ensured the objects were firmly supported. Contemporary artist Cai Guo-Qiang's work *Murmuration (Landscape)*, 2019, consisted of 10,000 porcelain birds which were suspended individually from a framework on the ceiling. The installation juxtaposed a contemporary voice with the historical works to create a dialogue between the past and present and served as a wayfinding device to lead visitors through the exhibition.^{11 & 12}

In the Gallery

When you are visiting an exhibition, take a moment to consider the aesthetic qualities of the exhibition space itself.

- What is your first impression of the look, feel and mood of the exhibition space?
- What clues do you see in the space about the ideas or themes being explored in the exhibition?
- What design elements work together to create the ambience (for example colour, repetition, space). In what way do these design elements reflect the ideas and intentions of the artist?
- How does the quality of light in the space affect the atmosphere? How does the lighting relate to the themes or ideas in the artworks?
- Describe the aesthetic qualities of any physical structures supporting the artworks, for example plinths, walls or shelves. Why do you think they have been designed in this way?
- What further evidence can you find of decisions made by exhibition designers? What was the reasoning behind the decisions?
- How does the exhibition space influence your visiting experience and your interpretation of the artworks?



(above left)
Ron Mueck
Mass 2016–2017
 synthetic polymer paint on fibreglass
 (1–100) 550.0 x 1487.0 x 5081.8 cm (variable)
 (installation)
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
 Felton Bequest, 2018
 2018.791.1–100
 © Ron Mueck

DIDACTICS AND LABELS

Didactics are sections of explanatory text which help the visitor to understand the grouping of artworks in the exhibition. They are written by curators and are highly visible in the exhibition space. Curators also write **labels** for individual artworks which usually appear to the left of an artwork. They include the title, creation date, artist's biographical information, materials used, and information about ownership. Curators may write **extended labels** which enrich the viewer's interpretation and understanding of key works. Usually limited to 100 words, extended labels provide further biographical, historical or conceptual context or draw the audience's attention to noteworthy features of an artwork. The language used in the extended labels is accessible so that a wide range of visitors can understand the meaning.

KIDS LABELS

The NGV aims to make art accessible to as wide an audience as possible. For this reason, specific labels are also written for kids. Curators work closely with the Kids team to craft labels which communicate information in clear and friendly language to spark children's curiosity. Kids labels sit beneath the main label at a child friendly height.

FIGURE 3.4

This is an extended label from *Collecting Comme*. The text guides the viewer's interpretation of the work.¹³

Comme des Garçons, Tokyo
fashion house
Japan est. 1969
Rei Kawakubo
designer
Japan born 1942

Cape, shorts, socks and boots
2014 *Blood and Roses* collection,
spring–summer 2015
cotton, polyester, synthetic leather,
nylon, plastic, elastic, rubber

Collection of Takamasa Takahashi

After fifty years in fashion, Rei Kawakubo remains one of the most radical and visionary designers working today. In September 2013, she began a ten-season project that sought to, as she put it, 'break the idea of clothes' with increasingly abstract and inventive forms. This outfit from the *Blood and Roses* collection incorporates recurring elements in Kawakubo's work – flowers and the colour red. The collection is symbolic of war and conflict, and its visceral palette and unorthodox volumes are expressive of Kawakubo's pursuit of creative freedom.

VIRTUAL TOURS

The Gallery has documented a range of existing exhibitions for online access. These **virtual tours** replicate the physical space of existing exhibitions so that they can be experienced remotely. These 3D scans of exhibition spaces are supplemented by audio guides and multi-media content. They differ from **online exhibitions** which are designed to present artworks digitally in a virtual space, with no physical counterpart.

Go to www.ngv.vic.gov.au/virtual-tours/ to explore the virtual tours currently on offer at NGV.

Scenario

A RADICAL DESIGN APPROACH

The NGV team is preparing an exhibition of a designer who has revolutionised the field of fashion for over 30 years. They aim to present an exhibition in the spirit of the designer's wildly inventive creative processes and bold pieces. Some of the team's initial discussions have highlighted the intentional wear and tear featured in the clothes and the celebration of manufacturing errors in their production. The deadpan glamour of early 90s catwalk shows has also been mentioned as a source of inspiration. Given the constraints of the modestly sized gallery space, the exhibition design team will also need to be creative in a design which can accommodate the large number of works intended for display.

Imagine you are an exhibition designer:

How would you create the atmosphere of a catwalk show and capture the spirit of the fashion designer in the design of this exhibition?

Consider the addition of moving image, sound, paint, and lighting.

How might the single gallery space be modified to accommodate the large number of works?

What other exhibition design factors would you have to consider in your design approach?

How might your design approach impact the audience's experience of the exhibition and understanding of the designs?

In the Gallery

AN INVESTIGATION OF A LABEL

Choose an artwork in the exhibition which has an extended label:

- What information does the label include? How does it inform your interpretation of the work?
- What clues does the label provide about the exhibition theme? And how this work serves to support it?
- What tone or voice is coming through on the didactics and labels? What kind of language has the curator used?



4 CONSERVATION

Conservation is the process of caring for cultural material such as artworks. Conservation includes examination, documentation and research, as well as **preservation (preventive conservation)**, and **restoration** (treatment) of artworks.^{14&15} The guiding principle for Exhibition Conservators is to return an artwork in the same condition that it was lent and prevent deterioration or damage to artworks through preventive conservation. This includes ensuring appropriate environmental conditions; handling and maintenance procedures for storage, exhibition, packing, transport and use; integrated pest management; planning for emergencies; and reformatting or duplicating material where appropriate.

THE CONDITION REPORT

Before an artwork travels and upon its arrival at the Gallery, a **conservator** or lender will closely inspect the work's physical condition and fill out a baseline **condition report** (Figure 4.1). For a painting on canvas, the condition report would document all surface marks, accretions or scratches or larger structural damage like dents or warping (Figure 4.2). Conservators will look for any movement in the canvas caused by environmental changes, such as overall slackness or bulging in the corners. Conservators also take lots of photographs of the work as evidence to support the findings of the report. At the end of an exhibition, conservators will check the condition against the incoming condition report and detail any changes which occurred during the exhibition.



FIGURE 4.1

An exhibition conservator inspects the physical condition of a work against the condition report



FIGURE 4.2

Cracks and marks are measured and documented

TRANSIT, STORAGE AND INSTALLATION

TRANSIT

Packing and shipping artworks to and from the NGV, whether locally, nationally or internationally, is a carefully managed process. Artworks are generally couriered with a custodian, either a representative appointed by the lender or commonly a conservator or another NGV staff member. This can include travelling on trucks, both cargo and passenger planes or ships to monitor and ensure the work’s safe travel and delivery.

Artworks travelling a long distance are packed in specially designed wooden crates with internal insulation, cushioning and bracing designed to minimise any internal movement and withstand climatic changes. Works travelling internationally must be cleared by Australian Customs and Quarantine. The NGV has special arrangements so that works arriving internationally can be cleared by customs and quarantine officers on site, with conservators on hand to note any treatment requirements.

FIGURE 4.3
Insulated travel cases
for paintings



FIGURE 4.4

Conservation considerations for
packing and shipping artworks

MEDIA	CONSIDERATIONS
Paintings	Paintings are generally transported upright in custom made crates that are sealed and insulated. The crates contain internal supports including conservation quality (chemically inert) materials like foam to support and protect the painting from vibration and shock. Double crating (a crate within a crate) gives further protection for international travel. Paintings are wrapped and sealed before crating. Crates are secured with screws, rather than nails to minimise the vibration to the work and damage to the crate.
Works on paper	Works on paper, if framed, travel upright but otherwise are ideally transported stacked and flat in archival boxes, mounted in archival quality mounts, with a protective layer of glassine paper or tissue. The work should be adequately supported; protected against vibration and impact; and protected against climatic extremes and fluctuations.
Textiles (e.g. rugs)	Textiles and garments often require custom padding to protect them and prevent movement in transit. Costumes that are very old or fragile, need to travel flat. Large 2D textiles like banners or rugs are usually rolled around a large diameter tube.
Artworks with multiple parts	Works made up of multiple pieces often must be disassembled and put back together at either end of the journey.
Large and heavy works	Artworks which are large or heavy to transport may need to be partially dismantled and reconstructed inside the gallery walls. For example, <i>GONE</i> , a 7½ metre bronze sculpture by New York artist KAWS was shipped in multiple pieces direct from a Seattle foundry to the NGV and reconstructed in the Gallery for an exhibition in 2020.
Toxic materials	Some materials used in artworks that were once thought to be safe are now known to be hazardous, such as mercury, lead, nickel, cadmium, and chromium – metal compounds used in paint – and arsenic which was used to make green dyes and pigments, but also as a preservative for natural specimens. Objects may also have been subjected to past fumigation treatment and have residues which may be hazardous. Conservators are responsible for labelling potentially hazardous works and ensuring they are appropriately handled and stored.
Biological and organic materials	Sometimes artworks are composed of “high risk” biological materials or organic matter. Conservators must ensure that these works can be legally imported under Australia’s strict biosecurity laws. Customs and quarantine officials work closely with conservation and registration staff to ensure incoming works meet the stringent requirements.



STORAGE

At any time only a fraction of the NGV Collection is on display. Most works spend the majority of their time in storage. The NGV has various storage areas and facilities specially designed to house the Collection, with systems for collection storage and management.

Light sensitive materials like prints, drawings and photographs are stored and transported in **solander boxes** (Figure 4.5). Within these hardcover boxes, works are stacked horizontally in acid free mounts. The hinged lid attached to the base of the solander box clamps shut creating an airtight, darkened and PH neutral microclimate. Larger flat works are stored in either sliding racks – vertical screens which move on guide rails (Figure 4.6) – or rigid timber slots in crates called tills.

Fashion and textiles items are stored flat, wrapped or cushioned in archival boxes (Figure 4.7) or in drawers, or in custom storage units or supports. Large or complex sculptural works require custom made storage solutions¹⁶.



FIGURE 4.5
Solander boxes in the photography storage area



FIGURE 4.6
Sliding screens are used to store large, framed 2D works



FIGURE 4.7
Fashion and textiles items stored in archival boxes

TEMPORARY STORAGE

Before they are presented for an exhibition, artworks loaned from other locations must be acclimatised to NGV conditions. Artworks are taken to the gallery space and left in their travelling crates to gradually acclimatise over a period of at least 24 hours. After this period of acclimatisation, works may be safely unpacked and displayed.

INSTALLATION

Art handlers assist with the installation of works in the Gallery. Like conservators, they have been specially trained to carefully handle artworks. They move artworks one at a time, often using trolleys or A-frames, and avoid doing this more than once in the exhibition space. When hanging, suspending or mounting works, handlers will carry them from their strongest points with clean hands, or cotton or nitrile gloves depending on their materials¹⁷.



FIGURE 4.8
Artworks are supported when they are being handled and gloves are worn to minimise the transfer of dirt and oils

Scenario

RESPECTING THE OBJECT, RESPECTING THE ARTIST

A private owner has agreed to lend their work to the NGV for a forthcoming survey show of a Melbourne artist. The artwork was originally synthesized in a laboratory from the same composite of metals found in rocks from the moon. It is brittle and has many parts varying in shape and size. Though the private owner had this work displayed in an enclosed case in their home, the exhibition's curator is aware that the work was presented quite differently at the commercial gallery when it was first shown.

Based on what you've learnt so far about exhibition preparation and conservation:

What might the conservation team do in order to ensure this artwork's safe passage?

Why do you think it is important to preserve artworks in their original state?

The many parts of this artwork mean it could be displayed in potentially infinite ways.

How might the curator ensure that the artist's intentions were honoured?

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Creating the right conditions in the Gallery helps to prevent change and deterioration in the artworks. NGV staff take great care to ensure that galleries are kept clear and clean to deter pests and that they meet agreed conservation standards related to the climate in which artworks are stored and displayed.

TEMPERATURE AND RELATIVE HUMIDITY

The best gallery climate for maintaining works of art has as little fluctuation in temperature and humidity as possible. If the humidity level is too high (too much moisture in the air), mould can grow and speed up the process of deterioration. If humidity is too low, materials like paper and wood may split, warp or become brittle.

Optimum temperature and humidity conditions for different materials vary considerably. When many different materials are on display together a compromise is reached that minimises risk to most material types. Amongst art conservation experts, it is generally agreed that a temperature of approximately 20 degrees Celsius +/- 2 degrees, with a **relative humidity** (RH) of 50% +/- 10% is the most suitable to accommodate the conservation needs of different materials and the comfort of staff and visitors¹⁸.

Temperatures and humidity across the NGV Galleries and storage spaces are monitored and logged using a Building Automated System that can adjust for seasonal variations in climate and weather. Entrance points to the Galleries are designed to minimise dramatic fluctuations in temperature for the works on display.

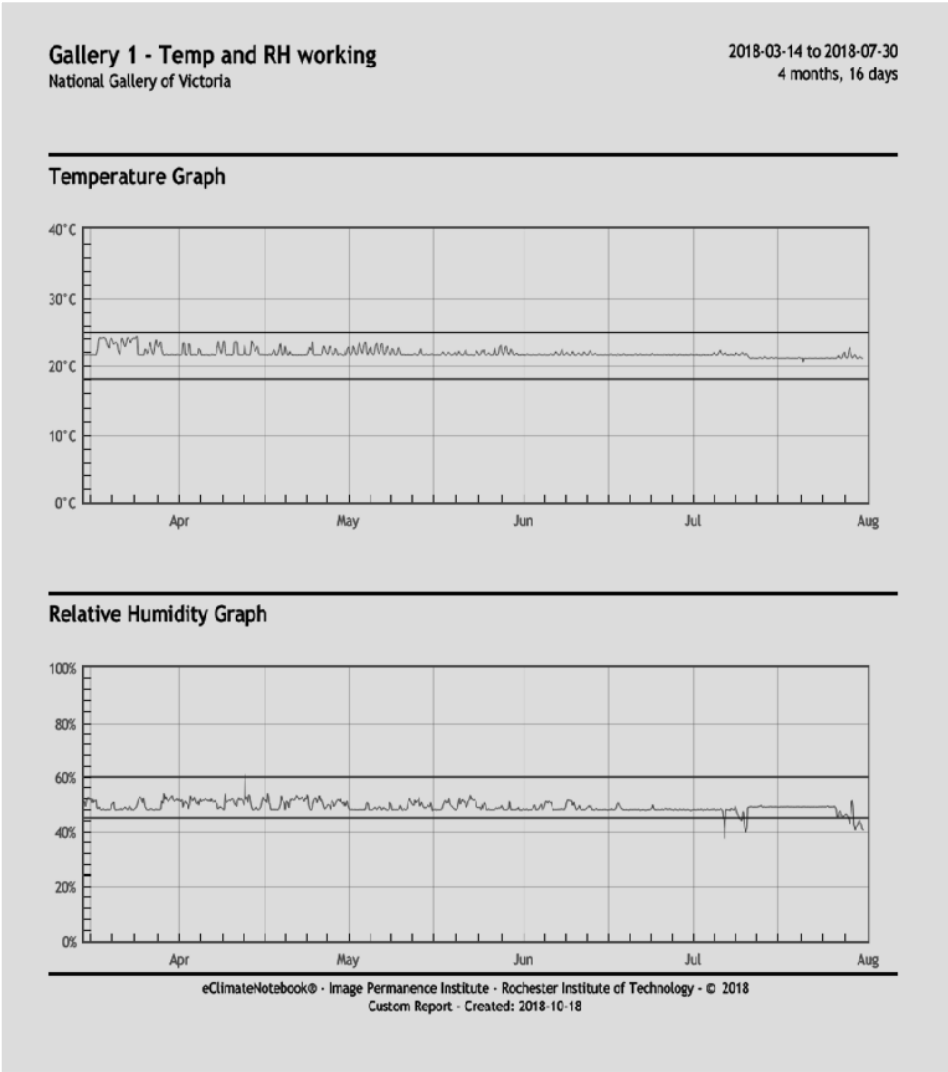


FIGURE 4.9
Graphs showing the temperature and relative humidity of gallery spaces

LIGHTING

Although we need light to view art, exposure to light can adversely affect artworks causing discolouration, deterioration or permanent damage. Light levels are measured in **lux**. The maximum lux level for the display of an artwork is dependent on the materials it is composed of:

- works on paper, photographs and textiles are highly **light-sensitive** and prolonged light exposure can cause fading, brittleness and discolouration – 50 lux
- paintings are less light sensitive – 250 lux
- ceramic, glass, metal and stone – significantly higher lux levels¹⁹

To protect artworks, technicians limit the light exposure to ultraviolet (UV) and infrared (IR) parts of the spectrum. Light exposure can be reduced using UV filters on glass cases, and framing and lights with reduced UV such as LEDs, incandescent or tungsten lights, instead of lights such as fluorescent lights which emit high levels of UV radiation. Sensors and timers reduce unnecessary light exposure and works can also be covered when not being viewed.²⁰

When positioning works in exhibition spaces, consideration is given to the appropriate light levels for each work. Works placed adjacent to each other usually have similar light level requirements. Works on paper may need to be swapped during an exhibition so that individual works can be 'rested' away from exposure to harmful light.



FIGURE 4.10
Installation shot from *Marking Time*. In this example, works with similar lighting requirements have been grouped together to unify and highlight thematic groupings.



FIGURE 4.11

Lighting in the gallery space for *Japanese Modernism*. Focused lighting illuminates specific objects in cases or on plinths, while direct lighting is avoided for the textiles which are light sensitive. The recessed wall display of decorative glassware is lit brightly to emphasise the translucent colour, shape and pattern of each glass.

For more detail on materials conservation refer to the Appendix.

In the Gallery

CONDITION REPORT

Find an artwork in the exhibition space.

- Write the name of the artist, artwork title, and date
- Evaluate the placement of the artwork in the exhibition from a conservation standpoint: what are the potential threats and hazards and what measures have been taken to protect/support the work?
- What other physical structures are supporting the safe presentation of the artwork? For example, framing, plinths, transparent protective surfaces like glass.
- Imagine you are writing a condition report for this artwork. Detail the condition of its surface and structure. What else would you put in the report?



5 EXHIBITION PROMOTION

Exhibitions are promoted to excite and attract a diverse range of local and international audiences to the NGV. Marketing activity and promotional materials are primarily designed to attract audiences to an exhibition and can also impact their expectations and how they interpret the artworks within it.

THE MARKETING CAMPAIGN

The Marketing team must develop an effective **marketing campaign** to promote each exhibition and give the exhibition a distinct identity to attract a range of audiences. The campaign is organised using a marketing plan which identifies target audiences, schedules and budgets the promotional activities designed to generate awareness and drive visitation to the exhibition.

IDENTITY

The Marketing team consider how an exhibition's identity, its unique features and selling points, can be presented to appeal to different target audiences. Together with the graphic design team and with input from curators, they carefully develop messaging and a visual style for all exhibition marketing material. The aim is for NGV's brand identity to be consistent while creating a unique and appealing look and feel for each exhibition.

One of the most crucial factors is choosing the right **hero image** for the exhibition identity and resulting campaign creative. A hero image is usually an important artwork from the exhibition which is reproduced in promotional material. Hero images must be iconic or intriguing and capture the essence of the exhibition theme.

FIGURE 5.1

The first subway in the East, 1927,
by Hisui Sugiura is a hero image for
NGV's exhibition *Japanese Modernism*.
What does it suggest about the
exhibition theme?

Hisui Sugiura
The first subway in the East 1927
colour lithograph
91.0 x 62.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2018
2018.1504
© Estate of Hisui Sugiura



VISIBILITY

Marketing activity appears in diverse locations, different media and formats to maximise awareness and visitation to an exhibition (Figure 5.2 & 5.3). When developing the marketing plan, the team consider key moments in the visitor experience including:

- before the visit to the Gallery begins (advertising, news, media, NGV website engagement, social media)
- during the Gallery experience (arrival and exhibition experience, customer service, onsite brochures and signage, café and retail)
- through ongoing engagement (social media, eNews, recommendations to friends)



FIGURE 5.2
The exhibition masthead for *Terracotta Warriors: Guardians of Immortality* | *Cai Guo-Qiang: The Transient Landscape* on a digital billboard in Melbourne CBD and in print media

FIGURE 5.3

Common types of promotional material and where they are typically found

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FORMAT
Masthead and Campaign Creative	A masthead refers to how the exhibition title is designed for print and digital advertising as well as Gallery signage and sometimes exhibition publications and merchandise. Hero images, fonts, text size, formatting, messaging, general layout and hierarchies are carefully chosen for the campaign creative to convey the exhibition in a distinctive way that is also consistent with the NGV's brand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Print and digital advertising• NGV website• NGV building banners• Internal gallery screens and signage• Marketing collateral• Merchandise
Print Media	The Marketing team negotiates advertising rates and schedules, and develops the creative for ads that appear in selected local, interstate and international publications to promote the exhibition. The media team send out media releases and pitch newsworthy angles and opportunities to broadcast, print and digital media outlets. This document details the key features of an exhibition so that journalists or bloggers can report on and review the exhibition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newspapers• Magazines• Tourism / visitor guides• Event guides
Advertisements	Short multimedia advertisements are produced by the Marketing and Multimedia teams for television, cinema, radio and targeted digital campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Television• Cinema• Radio• Websites• Display banners• Online video• Catch-up / TV on demand
Out of Home and Transit	Decisions are made on where to advertise considering available budget, target audience, the reach of different media (how many people will see it) as well as frequency. A key task for the Marketing team is negotiating media costs and partnerships to drive maximum value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Billboards• Digital billboards• Public transport (trains/buses/tram wraps)• Street posters• Flags• Brand activations
Social Media	The NGV produces organic social media content as well as paid ads for different target audiences and phases throughout a campaign. Exhibitions are also designed with features and messaging that encourages visitors to photograph and share their experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instagram• Facebook• Twitter• YouTube• LinkedIn• WeChat• Weibo

ARTIST INTENTIONS

Whilst the teams at the NGV devise creative ways to promote exhibitions, they must also respect copyright requirements and the intentions of the exhibiting artist(s). Permission is always sought for the use of artworks in a promotional context, either from the artists themselves or the estates who represent them.

Scenario

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media plays a critical role in the success of NGV’s marketing campaigns and continuing engagement with an ever-growing online audience. Often short video clips are developed specifically for social media promotion alongside still photography of individual artworks and gallery spaces, and visitor regrams. The Marketing team are always looking to be innovative with content and explore new angles, themes and storytelling. Spaces in exhibitions themselves are sometimes designed to create organic social media activity, such as through visually interesting selfies in unusual lighting or in participatory artworks. In 2018, Instagram named NGV the fifth most hash-tagged destination in Australia (no.1 in Victoria).²¹

Find a post about an exhibition on an NGV social media channel such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or WeChat:

What information does the post provide about the exhibition? What does it suggest about the exhibition theme?

What image or video appears in the post? Why might the Marketing team have chosen to feature this visual element?

Who do you think the target audience for the exhibition is? Justify your answer based on the content of the post.

What is the caption? How does it entice the audience to engage with the exhibition?



AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING

The NGV Audience Engagement and Learning teams engage and connect audiences with the exhibition content. Programs, experiences, publications and digital content are developed for different audiences such as students, teachers, families, NGV members, young people, international visitors and visitors with diverse needs.

Lectures, guided tours, art making workshops, creative learning opportunities and special events explore exhibition themes and ideas in more depth. Exhibition publications, multimedia guides, website essays, articles, learning resources, videos and NGV Magazine also provide information which enriches interpretation of artworks and supports learning about art.



FIGURE 5.4
Exhibition publications explore NGV exhibitions and collections in detail and often feature essays from curators, experts, art historians and social commentators that aim to add new perspectives and understandings.

Interpretive materials and experiences also ensure the exhibition is accessible for diverse audiences. Audio description recordings, captioned videos and resources for people with autism including social scripts and sensory maps showing areas of stimuli or places to rest are available on the NGV website here www.ngv.vic.gov.au/plan-your-visit/access/. Relaxed sessions provide an opportunity for visitors with autism, sensory sensitivities or disability to have a quieter Gallery experience, with fewer people and reduced noise. Audio describing, Auslan tours and tours in languages other than English are also offered.

Titles published by the National Gallery of Victoria
Stylist: Nat Turnbull

Targeted towards younger audiences, NGV Friday Nights events offer a more relaxed and social reason to engage with an exhibition featuring live music, bars, dining and late-night access. The marketing team develop a special marketing campaign to promote these events in tandem with the primary exhibition campaign.

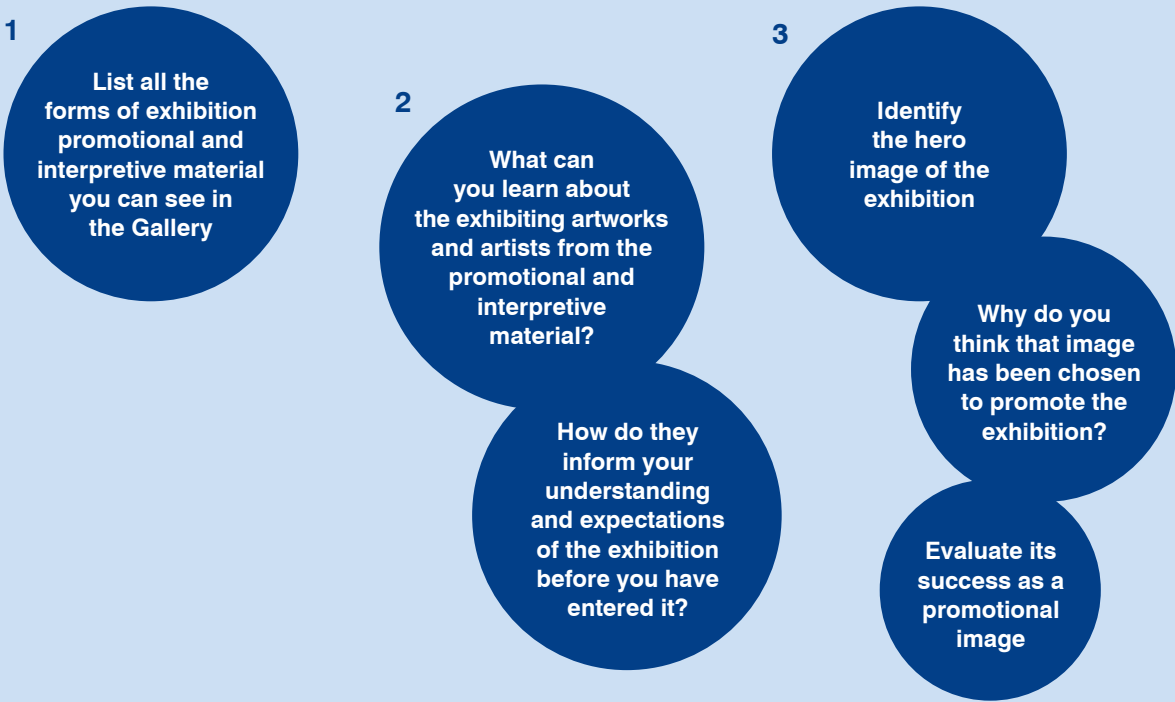
FIGURE 5.5
An NGV Friday Nights marketing campaign for *Keith Haring | Jean-Michel Basquiat: Crossing Lines* featured on a banner outside NGV International



In the Gallery

IT'S ALL AROUND YOU

On your gallery visit, look around you for evidence of how an exhibition has been promoted. Don't limit your search to gallery spaces, remember to look out for promotion outside the Gallery, in the café, information desk and NGV design store.



NOTES

FURTHER RESOURCES

APPENDIX: MATERIALS
CONSERVATION

GLOSSARY

NOTES

1 Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, *NGV Annual Report 2018/19*, 2019, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NGV-ANNUAL-REPORT-2018_19.pdf>, accessed 31 July 2020, p.12.

2 Ibid.

3 National Gallery of Victoria, 'About the NGV: Reports and Documents', *NGV*, Victorian Government, <<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/about/reports-and-documents/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

4 Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, *NGV Annual Report 2018/19*, 2019, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NGV-ANNUAL-REPORT-2018_19.pdf>, accessed 31 July 2020, p.12.

5 Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, *NGV Annual Report 2017/18*, 2018, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/NGV-ANNUAL-REPORT-2017_18.pdf> p.10>, accessed 31 July 2020.

6 National Gallery of Victoria, 'Virtual Tours: NGV Salon', 2020, *NGV*, Victorian Government, <<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/virtual-tours/salon-hang/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

7 Australian Government, 'Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan Scheme', 2020, *Australian Government*, Commonwealth of Australia, <<https://www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/protection-cultural-objects-loan-scheme>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

8 Australian Government, 'Australian Government International Exhibitions Insurance Program', 2020, *Australian Government*, Commonwealth of Australia, <<https://www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/australian-government-international-exhibitions-insurance-program>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

9 Jessica Stewart, '100 Gigantic Skulls Spill Through the Vast Halls of a Museum', 2017, *My Modern Met*, <<https://mymodernmet.com/ron-mueck-mass-skull-sculptures/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

10 National Gallery of Victoria, 'Ron Mueck's largest work to date revealed at NGV today', 2017, *Vimeo*, <<https://vimeo.com/247425802>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

11 National Gallery of Victoria, 'Terracotta Warriors & Cai Guo-Qiang', *NGV*, Victorian Government, <<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/terracotta-warriors-cai-guo-qiang/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

12 National Gallery of Victoria, 'Watch Cai Quo-Qiang: The transient landscape 360° experience', *NGV*, Victorian Government, <<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/multimedia/cai-guo-qiang-the-transient-landscape-360-experience/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

13 National Gallery of Victoria, 'Collecting Comme', 2019, *NGV*, Victorian Government, <<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/collecting-commes/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

14 National Gallery of Victoria, 'Conservation', *NGV*, Victorian Government, <<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/conservation/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

15 Australian Institute for Conservation of Cultural Material, 'Code of Ethics and Code of Practice', 2020, *AICCM*, <<https://aiccm.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CODE-OF-ETHICS-AND-CODE-OF-PRACTICE-Australian-Institute-for-Conservation-of-Cultural-Material-1.pdf>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

16 Australian Institute for Conservation of Cultural Material, 'ReCollections Caring for Collections across Australia: Handling, Transportation, Storage and Display', 2020, *AICCM*, <https://aiccm.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Handling_Storage_transport_Display.pdf>, accessed 31 July 2020.

17 Ibid. p.11

18 Australian Institute for Conservation of Cultural Material, 'Environmental guidelines', 2019, *AICCM*, <<https://aiccm.org.au/conservation/environmental-guidelines/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

19 Sarah Slade, 'Conservation and Lighting', 2003, *Museums Australia (Victoria)*, <https://amagavic.org.au/assets/Info_Sheet_3_Conservation_and_Lighting.pdf>, accessed 31 July 2020.

20 Ibid.

21 Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, *NGV Annual Report 2018/19*, 2019, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NGV-ANNUAL-REPORT-2018_19.pdf>, accessed 31 July 2020, p.10.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- National Gallery of Victoria, 'Collection Conservation', *NGV*, Victorian Government, <www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/conservation/>, accessed 31 July 2020.
- National Gallery of Victoria, 'Watch: Welcome to the NGV', 2020, *NGV*, Victorian Government, <<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/multimedia/welcome-to-ngv/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.
- National Gallery of Victoria, 'Collection: Provenance', *NGV*, Victorian Government, <www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/provenance/>, accessed 31 July 2020.
- National Gallery of Victoria, 'Channel', 2020, *NGV*, Victorian Government, <<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/channel/watch/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.
- National Gallery of Victoria, 'Learning resources: Exhibition Resources', 2020, *NGV*, Victorian Government, <<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/learn/resources/exhibition-resources/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.
- National Gallery of Victoria, 'Behind the scenes at the NGV: Masterpieces from the Hermitage The Legacy of Catherine the Great', 2015, *NGV*, Victorian Government, <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/school_resource/masterpieces-from-the-hermitage-the-legacy-of-catherine-the-great/>, accessed 31 July 2020.
- National Gallery of Victoria, 'Watch Hanging the NGV Salon | Go behind the scenes', *NGV*, Victorian Government, <<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/multimedia/hanging-the-ngv-salon/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.
- Australian Institute for Conservation of Cultural Material, 'Visual Glossary', *AICCM*, <<https://aiccm.org.au/visual-glossary>>, accessed 31 July 2020.
- Australian Institute for Conservation of Cultural Material, 'Audiovisual and digital', *AICCM*, <<https://aiccm.org.au/carer-guide/audiovisual-and-digital/>>, accessed 31 July 2020.

APPENDIX: MATERIALS CONSERVATION

MATERIAL / MEDIUM	LIGHT LEVELS / TEMPERATURE / RELATIVE HUMIDITY	ISSUES	HAZARDS	TREATMENTS	PREVENTION
WORKS ON PAPER (photography, prints and drawings, books)	50 lux 20°C ± 2°C 50–55 % RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tears, punctures• Swelling• Warping• Cockling – wrinkling or puckering• Foxing – brown discolorations or spot stains• Fading• Soiling• Staining• Grazing – surfaces eaten by insects such as silverfish and booklice• Bleaching• Bleeding• Skinning– removal of the top layer of a material (e.g. paper) due to physical action such as the removal of sticky tape.• Brittleness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Humidity• Light• Dirt• Dust• Insects and Pollutants• Chemical instability• Chemical damage• Impact• Human factors such as poor handling, storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surface cleaning• Reduction of creases• Repair of tears and holes• Reinforcement of paper supports• Replacement of mounting materials, tapes and adhesives• Stabilisation of paper through washing• Reduction of stains and foxing• Consolidation of flaking materials using conservation adhesives. Retouching / repair to areas of loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Display and store works in a cool, dry environment.• Restrict dust, insects and pollutants by using storage boxes and frames that provide a good seal against the environment.• Use archival quality, acid-free framing and storage materials.• Minimise light exposure:• Display works in low light levels, minimise natural daylight and strong light sources. Install UV filters on fluorescent tubes, windows and glazing in frames.• Use lighting which filters out UV to display works• Reduce the exposure time by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">> changing displays regularly,> turning pages of books regularly> fitting curtains to display cases> fitting time-switches and/or movement sensors on room or display case lighting> excluding all light when the museum is closed
PAINTING	250 lux 20°C ± 2°C 50% ± 5% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flaking, lifting paint• Tears• Damaged support• Cracking• Discolouration• Yellowing and darkening of varnishes• Discolouration of pigments• Blanching – clear varnish becoming white	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temperature fluctuations• Humidity• Light• Dirt• Dust• Insects and Pollutants• Chemical instability• Chemical damage• Physical vibration and impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stabilisation• Repair• Consolidation• Cleaning• Varnish removal• Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimise natural daylight and use light which filters out UV to display works• Maintain stable environmental conditions• Restrict dust, insects and pollutants
FASHION AND TEXTILES	50 lux 20°C ± 2°C 50% ± 5% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stains• Mould and mildew• Fading• Discolouration• Degradation/deterioration of fibres• Tears• Holes• Shredding – chemical deterioration making the fabric brittle and prone to crumbling or severe damage caused by light exposure or insects, resulting in similar losses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mould• Mildew• Moisture• Insect and pests: moths, silverfish, rodents• Ultraviolet radiation• Chemical deterioration• Bodily secretions: oils, sweat• Wear and tear	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brush vacuuming• Stain removal• Dry and wet cleaning• Securing of loose threads• Patches• Repairs to tears and seams• Stabilisation/lining prior to cleaning or storage• Preparation of display/storage mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Store items using acid free, archival quality materials and systems that provide a good seal against the environment.• Use padded hangers or specially constructed mannequins/ supports to support garments and minimise damage during storage or transit.• Handle textiles using gloves• Display and store works in a cool, dry environment• Restrict dust, insects and pollutants• Display works in low light levels, minimise natural daylight and strong light sources. Install UV filters on fluorescent tubes, windows and glazing in frames.• Use lighting which filters out UV to display works
METAL	Unrestricted lux Less than 50% RH (eg. bronze from antiquity needs low RH) 20°C ± 2°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oxidation• Incrustation• Mineral deposits• Tarnishing• Pitting• Discolouration• Blooming• Corrosion• Breakages• Dents• Scratches• Brittleness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pollutants• Animals• Metal polishes• Gaseous materials• Chemicals• Mishandling• Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repair of breaks• Consolidation• Application of protective coatings• Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Store and display in chemically inert environments• Handle with gloves to avoid the transfer of oils

MATERIAL / MEDIUM	LIGHT LEVELS / TEMPERATURE / RELATIVE HUMIDITY	ISSUES	HAZARDS	TREATMENTS	PREVENTION
PLASTICS	50–100 lux 30–50% RH 20°C ± 2°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chalking (outer surface oxidises and becomes dry and powdery, reducing the surface lustre or sheen)• Buckling• Warpage• Dimensional changes• Cracking• Surface deposits• Discoloration• Variations in gloss• Shrinking• Compression• Embrittlement• Distortion• Stickiness• Malodour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UV light• Chemical exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repair of breaks• Consolidation• Application of protective coatings• Cleaning	<p>Store plastics with adsorbents (a material which will allow a liquid, gas or dissolved solid to adhere to its surface) to slow degradation by adsorbing either gases that initiate degradation or those that accelerate breakdown</p> <p>Store in reduced light and temperature</p>
WOOD	150 lux 40–60% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boring (insect holes)• Drying and shrinking• Rotting• Mould growth• Cracking, splitting• Discolouration• Dirt stains• Water damage• Wear and tear• Breakage• Warping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insects/pests• Low relative humidity (dry air)• High relative humidity (damp air)• Exposure to ultra-violet radiation• Impact and stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stabilisation• Repair• Consolidation• Cleaning• Varnish removal• Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimise fluctuations in temperature or relative humidity• Reduce direct exposure to light• Display and store works in a cool, dry environment.• Restrict exposure to dust and pollutants• Establish a pest management system Monitor for insect activity – frass/ exit holes left by insects.
FILM AND DIGITAL MEDIA	50 lux 15°C ± 5°C 30–50% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical deterioration• Data loss• Technical obsolescence• Softening (due to exposure to sunlight, electric light)• Vinegar syndrome – a condition of acetate film decay characterised by shrinkage, embrittlement and the generation of acetic acid vapour, which smells like vinegar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor handling• Badly maintained or malfunctioning equipment Sub optimal storage• Heat• Humidity• Light• Pollutants and chemical damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Duplication: re-recording of film or audio-visual material onto another carrier of the same format. Creation of a replica copy for preservation or access purposes.• Migration: movement of the recorded content to a different format for preservation purposes. This could be a digital migration e.g. the digital transfer of content from its original hardware/software to a new file format, or a physical migration, such as the digitisation of motion picture film.• Emulation: the re-creation of the obsolete technology or hardware on a new operating system, simulating an experience of the original media. This is often used for the conservation of early video games.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Duplication, migration and emulation of content to preserve it• Protect from UV light and exposure to pests and pollutants• Display and store works in a cool, dry environment• Minimise fluctuations in temperature or relative humidity

For museums such as the National Gallery of Victoria, responsible for collections containing diverse material types, it is not always feasible to create specific display and storage environments with ideal conditions for each specific material. Environmental sustainability and the cost of maintaining the collection are also important considerations. International conservation experts have agreed to guidelines for the safe display of objects within general museum collections. The NGV adheres to these guidelines with:

- **Relative Humidity:** 50% ± 5 with no more than 10% change in 24 hours
- **Temperature:** 20–24°C ± 2°C (set point 21.5°C) with no more than 4°C change in 24 hours

For areas that are not frequented by staff and/or visitors (such as storage areas), the temperature may be kept lower, but works are always given time to acclimatise gradually between areas of different temperature to limit any stress and fatigue in different materials caused by dramatic fluctuations in temperature and humidity.

GLOSSARY

Aesthetic A theory or idea of what is visually, and materially appealing.

Catalogue raisonn  An annotated list of all the known works produced by an artist.

Checklist A document which catalogues the name, materials, dimensions, and owner locations of artworks intended for display in an exhibition.

Chronological grouping When artworks are arranged in order of the time in which they were made.

Collection display An exhibition which showcases works from a galleries' collection, grouped to highlight ideas, eras, styles or themes.

Condition report A document which records the present physical condition of an artwork.

Conservation The process of caring for cultural material such as artworks including examination, documentation, research, preservation, restoration, treatment and preventive conservation of artworks.

Conservator A person who is responsible for the care, restoration and repair of artworks and artefacts.

Curator A specialist who oversees the collection, interpretation and presentation of artworks and artefacts. At the NGV, there are curators who specialise in different areas of the collection such as Contemporary Art, Textiles, and Indigenous Art.

Curatorial rationale The curator's explanation of the works selected and how they are arranged in an exhibition.

Didactic The explanatory labels that provide information which helps the viewer understand the grouping of artworks in the exhibition.

Exhibition model A scale model of the exhibition space, often constructed from foamboard, which is used as a planning tool by curators and exhibition designers.

Exhibition theme The story that unfolds through the arrangement of artworks in the gallery space.

Extended label In addition to the standard label information, extended labels include interpretive commentary about the work

Hero image An image of an artist or an artwork which is reproduced on promotional materials to promote an exhibition.

Label A small text label placed to the left of an artwork which details the artwork title, creation date, artist's biographical information, materials used, information about ownership/ provenance.

Light-sensitive Vulnerable to the effects of light.

Loan agreement A formal contract between a lender of an artwork and a borrowing institution.

Lux A single unit of illumination.

Marketing campaign A strategic plan to promote the exhibition through different types of media and events.

Masthead A printed or digital banner with text and images promoting the exhibition.

Media release A document that provides key information and details about an upcoming exhibition to media outlets so that they can promote it to the public.

Online exhibition Exhibitions which present artworks digitally in a virtual space, with no physical counterpart.

Plinth A freestanding base or surface upon which artworks are displayed.

Preservation Prolonging the existence of an artwork or object by minimising chemical and physical deterioration and damage.

Preventive conservation Aims to prevent deterioration or damage to a work by controlling its environment.

Provenance The history of ownership of an object or artwork

Relative humidity The ratio of the amount of water vapor present in the air to the greatest amount possible at the same temperature

Restoration Treatment or intervention to enhance the interpretation of an artwork. Restoration may involve reassembly of broken components, cleaning off extra material, or re-integration using new materials.

Retrospective A generally comprehensive exhibition, compilation, or performance survey of the work of an artist over a span of years

Sightline A line of sight between the audience and the artwork in the gallery space. Exhibition designers and curators pay close attention to how one artwork relates to the other in the line of sight.

Solander box A protective often leather-covered and book-shaped case for artworks usually with a slide-on top that completely covers the contents

Thematic grouping When artworks are arranged according to specific themes or groups of ideas.

Virtual tour 3D scans which replicate the physical space of existing exhibitions so that they can be experienced remotely.

NGV SCHOOLS PROGRAM PARTNERS

THE
EDUCATION
STATE

VICTORIA
State
Government

Education
and Training

CATHOLIC
EDUCATION
MELBOURNE

CANSON®

OFFICIAL SUPPLIER

The NGV warmly thanks Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family for their support of the NGV School Support Program. The NGV gratefully acknowledges the Packer Family and Crown Resorts Foundations for their support of NGV Kids exhibitions, and student and teacher programs and resources.



