

Conditions of Loans In

Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM)

1. Introduction

RAMM is one of the UK's leading regional museums. It opened to the public in 1868 in Exeter and has acquired internationally important collections that now number in excess of 1 million objects and specimens. The diverse collection includes fine and decorative art, costume, ethnography (world cultures), archaeology, local history, geology and zoology. More details on RAMM's collections and their development are available in the Collections Development Policy 2014-19 (available on request from Collections Team staff).

2. Borrowing policy

RAMM regularly borrows objects and specimens from other institutions and individuals particularly for exhibitions (or occasionally for specified work such as research, conservation and analysis) as a way of making important collections available to our audience. In recent years the museum has curated major exhibitions drawing in loans from many UK national and regional museums and private lenders. We only consider time specified loans in to RAMM and no longer agree to deposits of 'long-term' loans.

RAMM needs to balance the work involved in these loans with its own very considerable work programme. To justify bringing loans into RAMM, we must be convinced that there is evidence of increased public benefit and/or engaging new audiences. Costs for the loan will generally be borne by RAMM as the borrower, therefore all loan requests are subject to a formal procedure.

3. Informal Enquiries

Prior to approaching lenders RAMM staff are encouraged to research loans well in advance. Most institutions have collections information online that can be assessed. It is good practice to make a visit to the holding institution to view and discuss objects under consideration, including the provenance of the loan items and the circumstances of their acquisition.

4. Formal Requests

If, after carrying out preliminary enquiries, a loan is to be requested, then a formal request should be made in writing from RAMM's Museum Manager. It is desirable that request letters be received by the lending institution considerably ahead of the loan period. This varies from institution to institution, but for significant artworks may be as much as two years. The letter should provide as much information as possible, with the following elements essential:

- ▶ Precise details of the required object(s)
- ▶ Name and contact details of borrower
- ▶ Purpose of loan (if it is an exhibition please include the title and a summary of the content)
- ▶ Proposed dates of loan
- ▶ Details of proposed indemnity or insurance provisions (high value items will need to be covered by the Government Indemnity Scheme submitted a minimum of 3 months prior to the exhibition opening see <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/cultural-property/protecting-cultural-objects/government-indemnity-scheme/>)
- ▶ If in a public venue, provide estimates of expected audience

5. Notice and Approval

The formal loan request will be assessed by the lender. It may be agreed by a curator, director, collections manager or a board of trustees; consequently, approval and notification times vary considerably. During this period RAMM may need to provide details of environmental conditions, insurance/indemnity, security, method of display and transport.

6. Loan Agreement

If a loan is agreed in principle, the lender will reply with a formal letter and possibly a loan agreement form confirming environmental conditions, security, display, photography and reproduction, insurance/indemnity, courier arrangements and any special conditions pertaining to the loan. At this stage they will also provide a cost for the loan. Generally transport, insurance and bespoke packing cases (sometimes constructed by a third party) will be covered by RAMM. Once the loan form is signed we are committed to the loan and covering the lender's costs.

7. Documentation

An Entry form must be correctly completed and countersigned and filed when the loan passes into RAMM's care.

8. Damage

Any damage or loss that has occurred at RAMM must be reported immediately to the named representative. In the unlikely event that an object is damaged during a loan, RAMM, as the borrower, will be expected to cover the costs of an inspection visit and potentially conservation work and the return of the loaned objects. Any serious breaches of security, even when not directly affecting loans, should be reported to the lender.

10. Acknowledgement

The lender must be acknowledged on the exhibit labels and in any catalogue, unless they have asked to be treated as anonymous or private.

11. Termination

Termination of a proposed loan must be made in writing. Unfortunately, even if cancelled for valid reasons, we would normally be charged for expenses already incurred, such as conservation, packing and framing.

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