

Supported by the 'Sloane Lab: Looking back to build future shared collections', an AHRC Towards a National Collection Discovery Project

A fully funded opportunity to collaborate with partners who are working to address new stories in their collections. With funding available to support a co-production and/or co-curation approach, the touring exhibition presents an opportunity to work directly with audiences to shape the exhibition at each venue.

This exhibition will take a collection made over 300 years ago to explore new connections and perspectives. Using a range of objects, including natural history rarities, books and artefacts from the collection of physician and naturalist Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753), we ask why was this collection created and what this – and other old collections – can offer to audiences today. Originally held in the British Museum, the immense and diverse Sloane collection is now spread across the British Museum, the British Library and Natural History Museum. With funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council [Sloane Lab](#) project, the touring exhibition will reconnect objects from the original collection to explore old and new stories.

Background

Sir Hans Sloane's collection was originally formed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when purposes of collecting included the production of medical, botanical and scientific knowledge (from a European-centric perspective), as well as economic and political advancement. Collectors amassed natural and man-made objects in their attempts to catalogue, organise, and understand the world. Today we ask how we can discover new connections, make meaning and creatively challenge and reimagine collections. What can collections offer to audiences now as a way of understanding the world? How, as Sloane intended in 1753, can collections engage 'the curious and the interested'?



Drawing of Cocoa tree with cacao pods and insects in Suriname, South America by Maria Sibylla Merian. 18th Century
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

Further support is available from the Sloane Lab Project Curator and Exhibition Programme Manager. Partners are also encouraged to include their own relevant collections, bringing new contexts and perspectives to the exhibition. Possible themes to explore include:

- Curiosity and creativity
- The environment and ecology
- Health and wellbeing
- Art and science
- Legacies of collecting, including absences

Key objectives

- To reconnect objects from the historical collection of Sir Hans Sloane
- To explore contemporary understandings of historical objects
- To encourage a co-curation approach to the development of exhibition content and programming
- To showcase the relevant collections of partner institutions
- To develop and build relationships with underrepresented communities

Tour Schedule

The British Museum is looking for three partners to host this Touring Exhibition for around three months each, during 2024.

On submitting an expression of interest form, partners will be shortlisted based on how best they align to the objectives of the exhibition. Staff from these venues will be invited to meet British Museum staff online to learn more about the programme before a final selection is made.

Sloane Lab

This touring exhibition is supported by the 'Sloane Lab: Looking back to build future shared collections', an AHRC Towards a National Collection Discovery Project. This is a digital project and partners have the opportunity to participate in project activities. For more information, visit the website: www.sloanelab.org.

Interpretation and design

In conjunction with The British Museum the tour venues will help co-design the exhibition in collaboration with community partners. Interpretation support will be provided. A funded design package will be provided.

Marketing, publicity and programming

The British Museum will provide several designed marketing assets to venues, creating a consistent yet flexible promotional identity for the tour. Other exhibition and marketing materials must include the British Museum's logo, and logos of any associated sponsors. Press releases and all other materials require sign off by the British Museum.

We will invite representatives from the touring venues to come together in person to discuss the tour and opportunities for collaboration. Programming around the exhibition will aim to explore the key objectives of the exhibition through a community participatory approach. British Museum staff may be available to support with such events during the exhibition on request.

Display specifications

Partner venues must conform to ACE Government Indemnity standards and have Government Indemnity Scheme specification display cases available, although it may be possible to borrow showcases from the British Museum. Venues will be asked to provide standard facility, security and

display case information by completing UKRG documentation.

Specific environmental requirements for the objects will be confirmed in due course. The exhibition space requirement will differ depending on co-production outcomes, but we expect a minimum of 20square meters to be needed.

Security

The ACE National Security Adviser will be consulted on security. The objects must be in a gallery with constant invigilation whilst open.

Shipping and installation

The objects will be transported by an approved fine art transport agent and accompanied by a British Museum courier. The exhibition will be installed by the courier with some support required from partner curatorial, conservation and technical staff.

Costs

The British Museum will cover the cost of object transportation, conservation, packing and mounts, and courier related travel and subsistence for the entirety of the tour. There is additional funding available to aid facilitation of the participatory work involved in developing the exhibition. An exhibition design package will be provided, there may be some elements of the 2D design production that will not be covered. Venues will be expected to cover the objects under the Minimum Liability arrangements outlined within the Government Indemnity Scheme guidelines.

Any approaches for additional sponsorship by tour partners must be cleared with the British Museum and the crediting of such sponsorship discussed.

If you are interested in hosting *For the curious and the interested* please complete the short expression of interest form below by 20 January 2023.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to be in touch:

Rosalyn Tyler

Sloane Lab Exhibition Programme Manager
RTyler@britishmuseum.org

Expression of interest

To register your initial interest in the exhibition, please answer the following brief questions:

- 1. Name and address of venue**
- 2. Proposed space to host the exhibition**
- 3. Why do you think your venue is suited to host this exhibition? (max 250 words)**
- 4. What impact will the exhibition bring to your venue and audience? (max 250 words)**
- 5. What community partners would you hope to collaborate with on this exhibition?**
- 6. The exhibition is available for approximately three months at each venue. The estimated periods are April-June, July-September and October-December 2024. Please indicate when your venue will be available to host the exhibition:**

Please submit your expression of interest to RTyler@britishmuseum.org by **20 January 2023**.