SUMMER SHOWCASE 2020

guidelines

Please read these guidelines carefully before completing your proposal

Introduction

We are seeking creative proposals to exhibit at the 2020 Summer Showcase!

Taking place from 19-20 June (with a Private View on the evening of 18 June), our free public festival celebrates the outstanding humanities and social science research shaping our world.

Up to 15 interactive exhibits, based on research funded by the British Academy (or the British International Research Institutes) will be given a space in the British Academy’s building during the festival run.

This is a fantastic public engagement opportunity for award holders to share their research findings with different audiences.

Deadline for applications: Wednesday 20 November 2019

Who attends the Showcase?

In 2019, we welcomed 1900 visitors to the Showcase, with 515 attending the Private View and 1385 attending the public days (including 245 school children). 38% of public visitors were age 18 to 34. In 2020 we are looking to attract the following audiences:

Thursday 18 June, 5-9pm: Private View - this exclusive event will allow exhibitors to showcase their research to an invited audience ranging from parliamentarians and university Vice-Chancellors to senior staff working for cultural organisations and press.

Friday 19 June, 10-4pm: A ‘schools friendly’ day geared towards secondary school students (14+), particularly sixth form students, with a related programme of events. In 2019 the schools day was guest-curated by broadcaster Dan Snow.

Friday 19 June, 6-9pm: A social evening aimed at younger audiences in their 20s and 30s and a wider public.

Saturday 20 June, 11-5pm: The Showcase will be open to the wider public, and will particularly appeal to lifelong learners, higher education students, people in their 20s and 30s, families etc.

The exhibits

Up to 15 interactive exhibits, based on research funded by the British Academy (or the British International Research Institutes) will be given a space in the British Academy’s building during the festival run. Successful exhibitors will be expected to staff their displays (with support from co-exhibitors) and explain their research to visitors in accessible terms. Activities to accompany displays are welcomed and encouraged.
What exhibits were selected in 2018 and 2019?

An eclectic mix of exhibits from across our disciplines were selected in 2018 and 2019, including:

- **Is 3D cinema only good for spectacle and novelty, or can it do more?**
  An exhibit that explored 3D technology through VR headsets, 3D films and handling objects including a stereoscope.

- **What can our ancestors teach us about sleeping well?**
  A museum-style display featuring a bed, sleep related props and scent jars. Visitors could also take part in a drop-in workshop to make their own scent bag to take home.

- **How is 3D printing changing lives?**
  Featuring 3D printing demonstrations, visitors and researchers discussed the potential for 3D printing technology.

The full list of 2019 exhibitors can be found here: [www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/events/summershowcase/2019](http://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/events/summershowcase/2019)

What exhibits are we looking for in 2020?

97% of public visitors, 93% of school students and all teachers rated their overall impressions of the Showcase above average. Visitors of all types particularly enjoyed: the high quality, in-depth nature of their interactions with exhibitors; the variety of research presented; and the interactive nature of many of the exhibits. They welcomed the fact that many exhibitors were clearly passionate not only about their research but also about wanting to share it with non-specialists.

The Academy is keen to repeat the success of the 2018 and 2019 Showcases. We are therefore looking for a range of displays from across our disciplines, which preferably include interactive and/or hands-on elements. We appreciate that it may not be appropriate – or possible – for all research to be presented in this way, and we encourage proposers to suggest formats that lend themselves to their research while bearing in mind the needs of public audiences.

Formats might include:

- **An installation or set design** for visitors to interact with. *N.B. As the Academy is a listed building we are keen to avoid complicated built stands. Smaller built displays, or larger installations that do not include complex builds would be welcomed.*

- **Props or interactive models** to visually showcase research.

- **Digital displays**, e.g.: projections of film clips; listening booths to share audio; computer game stations; VR headsets to provide 3D imagery.

- **Professional photography displays**

Activities to accompany displays are welcomed and encouraged. These could range from pop-up performances, sensory experiences and voting boxes to experiments, workshops or hands-on activities. You may also choose to use this opportunity to inform your research.

We suggest that you liaise with your university's public engagement team before submitting your proposal. The challenge is to take specialist knowledge in your subject area and to share this in ways that will be appealing and engaging to non-specialist audiences.

Co-exhibitors

During busier periods, there might be over 10 people around your exhibit. Each exhibitor should therefore have two co-exhibitors with them for the duration of the Showcase as visitors expect to
interact with the academics behind the research and ask them questions about their work. This set-up will also allow exhibitors to take breaks. Co-exhibitors can be co-applicants, colleagues, charity partners, students etc. Proposers must secure the permission of any individuals listed as a co-researcher or potential co-exhibitor on their application form. (N.B. we can help you source support staff if useful).

What does the British Academy provide?

- **The venue** (each exhibitor will be allocated a space in our building during the Showcase)

- **The exhibits** - a small fund will be set aside for each exhibit (if required). For the exhibits mentioned on p.2, the Academy covered all costs associated with these as follows:
  
  - A built wall to display 3D posters; the hire of 5 VR headsets, the hire of a 3D TV to show films; the hire of benches to view films. All other equipment (including handling objects) were brought by the exhibitor.
  
  - The purchase of a bed as the lead prop; Tudor sleep props and scent jars for audiences to smell; the hire of a TV to show a film. Materials for a drop-in workshop.
  
  - Materials for the 3D printing demonstrations.

All exhibits will also have a designed panel and information boards, providing visitors with an overview of the display.

*N.B. while we have a limited budget for each exhibit, proposers can still be ambitious in their application forms. We therefore encourage applicants to suggest a core idea, and then add details or a wish list that would further enhance the exhibit.*

- **Two nights’ accommodation and standard UK travel for each exhibitor and their two co-exhibitors.** N.B. Three nights’ accommodation will be offered to some exhibitors, dependant on their location.

- **A small travel fund has also been set aside to support the participation of one award holder based outside of the UK.** This will allow a scholar and their team based overseas to participate in the event. Three nights’ accommodation will also be provided.

- **Food and drink for exhibitors** will be provided at the Academy during the Showcase.

- **An extensive promotional campaign** to attract visitors, to reach those who cannot attend the Showcase, and to widely promote the event, the research on show and the academics behind the projects will start in Spring 2020. Exhibitors will be invited to help further the reach of the festival through a variety of digital channels, such as blog posts and curated digital content. The Academy’s media team will also be proactive in seeking profile and feature opportunities.

- **British Academy staff time and expertise** – the events team will help exhibitors to create their displays, manage the event to ensure everything runs smoothly, and will be on hand at the Showcase to support the exhibitors. AV staff will be available on each day of the Showcase and will assist with the planning of digital displays in the lead up to the event.

- **Public engagement training for exhibitors** will be provided as a free day-long masterclass in Spring 2020. This event will include sessions on planning & logistics, audiences and evaluation (including a brief session on impact).
Why should you apply?

- **Share your research with different audiences**, including sixth form students and lifelong learners. At the Private View, you will also get to present your research and network with influencers, potential funders, policy makers, senior staff working for cultural organisations, university Vice-Chancellors and press.

- **Inspire the next generation.** In 2019, over 40% of our visitors were under 35 and over 200 were school children. The Showcase is therefore ideal for reaching a younger audience.

- **Raise your profile.** The Showcase will be promoted widely through digital channels and in the media - successful exhibitors will reach thousands more people than just those who attend the event.

- **Get public opinions.** Find out what people think about your research and gain valuable feedback. We also share with you the results of our public evaluation, making it easy to see your immediate impact.

- **Get lasting benefits.** We provide expert public engagement training you can take back to your research team and/or use when taking part in other events in the future.

- **Our help at every stage.** Using our experience, we support and advise you from start to finish, from planning and bringing your exhibit to life to IT support and logistics.

The feedback from the 2018 and 2019 exhibitors was excellent, with comments as follows:

*Both the responses of guests and conversations with other exhibitors have given me ideas for developing this research and for other projects.* (2018 exhibitor)

*The showcase provided visitor access and contact. Potential diversity in the demographics of visitors (including school ages) are important because we routinely access university students but not a more general audience (beyond internet users).* (2018 exhibitor)

*Excellent opportunities to have discussions with groups and individuals who would not usually engage with research. Everything was amazing!* (2019 exhibitor)

*The level of audience engagement, interest and enthusiasm was surprisingly high. It made for a really productive, two-way experience. The range of exhibits, activities, talks etc. was amazing and also a real strength of the showcase.* (2019 exhibitor)

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**Selection criteria**

Submitted applications will be passed to the Summer Showcase working group, chaired by the British Academy’s Vice-President of Public Engagement, for review. The working group are looking for current award holders whose work is sufficiently advanced, or past award holders still in the process of disseminating their research findings. They will select up to 15 exhibits, based on:

- How well the exhibit has been conceived.

- The accessibility of the research on show. Will the subject matter be of interest to broad audiences? Is there potential for interactive and hands-on elements, which are favoured by the intended audiences?

- How the exhibit, and the research behind the exhibit, will translate to digital audiences and potentially generate interest from the media.
Subject spread and diversity. The British Academy is committed to showcasing a diverse community of scholars across the humanities and social sciences. The working group will be looking for a mix of exhibits which stem from different funding streams and span different subject areas. The Showcase also seeks to include researchers at different career stages and from different universities across the UK.

Ahead of the working group’s meeting in December, members will grade the applications based on the above. In their meeting, they will decide which proposals are successful, with the outcome conveyed to applicants in mid-late December.

Feedback is not a feature of the Summer Showcase scheme, and the Academy is regretfully unable to enter into correspondence regarding the decisions of the working group.

Timeline

- **Deadline: Wednesday 20 November 2019**: apply through FlexiGrant via the British Academy website.
- **Late November**: Applications circulated to the working group for review.
- **Early-mid December 2019**: the working group meet to select the successful exhibits.
- **End of December**: Proposers to be informed of the outcome.

Frequently Asked Questions

**Q.** I am not funded by the British Academy (BA) or one of the British International Research Institutes (BIRI), can I apply?
**A.** All proposers must have received funding from the BA or BIRI.

**Q.** My research doesn’t lend itself to an interactive/hands on display. Should I still apply?
**A.** Yes. We appreciate that it is not appropriate for all exhibits to be interactive. We ask all proposers to suggest displays that suit their research while bearing in mind the needs of public audiences.

**Q.** Does the Showcase have a theme?
**A.** No. The Showcase highlights how much audiences enjoyed the eclectic nature of research on display.

**Q.** I don’t have any co-exhibitors in mind, can you help?
**A.** Yes. We understand that some researchers won’t have co-researchers, charity partners, or students who could assist during the Showcase. Your proposal will not be affected by the omission of co-exhibitors, and if successful the Academy will help you to secure support ahead of the event.

**Q.** I have more than two co-exhibitors. If I am successful, can I bring them to the Showcase?
**A.** The Academy can only support the travel and accommodation costs of two co-exhibitors per display. You are welcome to bring more support staff if you (or your university) can cover these costs.

**Q.** My exhibit is going to be costly. Is it worth applying?
Yes. While we only have a small funding pot for each exhibit we are keen to receive proposals for ambitious and innovative displays. The working group may decide to include fewer than 15 exhibits to help fund a costly proposal, or we may be able to free up funds if other exhibits are cheaper. If your university can help cover the cost of your display, we can of course credit them on the display panel and related marketing literature.

**Q.** If my proposal is successful, can I make changes to the exhibit at a later date?
**A.** Yes. Successful proposers will be expected to create an exhibit similar to what the working group approved. However, changes are acceptable, and the Academy’s events team will work with you to develop your proposal and suggest ways to enhance it (where appropriate).

**Q.** I am not available for the duration of the Showcase, can I still apply?
**A.** No. Exhibitors are expected to be on hand to explain their research for the duration of the
Showcase, Thursday 18 June – Saturday 20 June 2020 (noting that exhibitors can of course take breaks).

The Academy is committed to supporting academics who may be unable to present across the whole three days due to medical reasons, childcare arrangements etc. and we can liaise with you to ensure that your display is covered by co-exhibitors during the times you are not available. However, those who are unable to present due to reasons such as conflicting diary engagements will not be considered.

Q. What should I do if I have a query about the application process?
A. Email your query to summershowcase@thebritishacademy.ac.uk

Q. If I am not successful, can the working group offer feedback?
A. Feedback is not a feature of the Summer Showcase scheme, and the Academy is regretfully unable to enter into correspondence regarding the decisions of the working group.