

2017 Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition



Museums rely on exhibition labels to inform visitors with clear, concise, and captivating writing.

Difficult to achieve, but well worth the effort, good labels advance the quality of museum discourse. By highlighting best practices and showcasing innovative work, the Excellence in Exhibition Label Writing Competition aims to inspire all of us to compose better labels.

Consider submitting your work and encourage others to participate! This year's panel of jurors includes label experts

representing CurCom, EdCom, NAME, and last year's competition winners. Recognized labels will be on display in the Marketplace of Ideas at the AAM Annual Meeting and Museum Expo in St. Louis.

The competition opens on Tuesday October 11 and closes Friday December 9, 2016.

The competition guidelines and online submission form are available at: <http://aam-us.org/about-us/grants-awards-and-competitions/excellence-in-label-writing>

John Russick Vice President for Interpretation and Education, Chicago History Museum

Elizabeth Wessells Master's Candidate in Museology at the University of Washington, Seattle





The 29th Annual Excellence in Exhibition Competition

The 29th Annual Excellence in Exhibition Competition recognizes outstanding achievement in the exhibition format from all types of museums, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, and any other types of non-commercial institutions offering exhibitions to the public.



**American
Alliance of
Museums**

The competition is the joint project of the following American Alliance of Museums Professional Networks (PNs): Curators Committee (CurCom), the National Association for Museum Exhibition (NAME), the Committee on Audience Research and Evaluation (CARE), and the Education Committee (EdCom). Each PN is represented by one competition judge who evaluates the submitted application materials against the Alliance's Standards for Museum Exhibitions and Indicators of Excellence.

Eligibility

Any non-commercial institution offering exhibitions to the public may participate. Exhibitions may have been designed by a commercial firm for a non-commercial institution. Each institution that enters must have a team member that is a member of the Alliance. The exhibition must have opened to the public between November 30, 2014 and November 30, 2016. To be eligible, exhibitions may not have previously won this competition. Exhibitions may be submitted only once to the competition.

Entry Fees


A \$75 fee is required for each exhibition entered. Make checks payable to the **American Alliance of Museums/Excellence in Exhibition**. For multiple entries, submit one check for the full amount. For questions on forms of payment, please contact the Competition Coordinator.

Notification and Awards

Each winning exhibition will be featured in a program session at the 2017 Alliance Annual Meeting in St. Louis, MO and a representative from each winning institution will be asked to do a short presentation. Winner(s) will also receive national recognition in the Alliance publication *Museum* as well as in the fall issue of *Exhibition*.

Competition Policies

The PN sponsors are not responsible for lost or damaged entries. All entry materials become the property of the PNs/AAM and cannot be returned. Entrants agree to allow Alliance and PN sponsors to use photographs of winning exhibitions, at no charge, in Alliance publications. Entrants warrant that they have the right to allow such use. Institutions will be credited in any published reference to winning entries. All materials (including the exhibition budget) will be displayed during the Marketplace of Ideas at the 2017 Alliance Annual Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri.



Competition Coordinator
Stacey Swigart
sswigart@pleasetouchmuseum.org

To Enter

Submit one copy of each entry on CD-ROM or flash drive and one copy in print format. Label the CD with the name of the institution and exhibition. To facilitate judging, please include each component in the order listed below in a single PDF document excluding the exhibition walk-through PowerPoint which should be a separate file. Please confine your answers to the word limits as indicated. Please check the AAM website for any changes in logistics prior to your final submission!

- 1. **Entry Form** (see next page)
- 2. **Institutional Profile** (500 words) Provide general information about your institution. This may include annual number of visitors, number of employees, a description of collections, titles of permanent exhibitions, number of special exhibitions opened annually, square footage of exhibition galleries, and/or other information relevant to your project.
- 3. **Narrative** (3,500 words maximum) The Alliance Council of Professional Networks has developed Standards for Museum Exhibitions and Indicators of Excellence. For each of the seven standards in the updated document, provide a narrative in 500 words or less describing how your exhibition reflects each of these standards, using specific examples, and why it represents excellence.
- 4. **Public Programs** (500 words) Describe the programs for school and/or public audiences including digital media, if appropriate, that were developed to accompany the exhibition, and explain how these worked in tandem with the exhibition's goals.
- 5. **Exhibition Staff** (500 words) List key in-house and contracted staff and describe their roles in the exhibition planning process.
- 6. **Exhibition Budget Worksheet** Only final exhibition budgets submitted in this format (next page) will be accepted.
- 7. **Labels** Include the introductory label (as you define it) and up to five additional labels that best communicate the look, feel, and content of the exhibition. Labels should be presented in graphic form as they appear in the exhibition, not just as text.
- 8. **Floor Plan** A single sheet keyed to the exhibition walkthrough. Include square footage and scale.
- 9. **Exhibition Walkthrough** In a PowerPoint document containing up to 20 images, provide a visual walkthrough of the exhibition. Each image should be clearly keyed to the exhibit floorplan. Include a 2-3 sentence explanation for each image in the PowerPoint notes. The purpose of the images is to give a sense of the exhibition as a whole. We strongly encourage you to submit images of the public interacting with your exhibition if possible.

2017 Excellence in Exhibition Entry Form



Please use one form per entry. You may reproduce this page.

I. Entrant Information

MUSEUM NAME		
ADDRESS		
CITY	STATE	ZIP
CONTACT PERSON		
PHONE	EMAIL	

II. Exhibition Information

EXHIBITION TITLE	
DATE OF EXHIBITION OPENING	DATE OF EXHIBITION CLOSING
INSTITUTION'S OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED FISCAL YEAR	
SQUARE FOOTAGE OF EXHIBITION	
TYPE OF EXHIBITION <input type="checkbox"/> TRAVELING <input type="checkbox"/> TEMPORARY <input type="checkbox"/> PERMANENT	
Is your institution a 501c-3? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Are you a member of the Alliance? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
IF NOT, PROVIDE THE NAME OF ONE ALLIANCE MEMBER ON YOUR EXHIBITION TEAM.	

III. Budget Worksheet

Direct Exhibition Costs

Fabrication and Installation construction of all exhibit elements including prototypes, media, interactives, mannequins, painting, photo reproduction, lighting supplies, and similar costs	\$
Staff Expenses 1. Salaries 2. Other (travel, books, office supplies, etc.)	\$
<input type="text"/> + <input type="text"/> = TOTAL STAFF EXPENSES	
Collections conservation, shipping, loans, storage, and other related expenses	\$
Consultants fees and expenses related to content experts, designers, evaluators, etc.	\$
A. Total Direct Exhibition Costs	\$

Additional Project Costs

Educational Programs and Materials presenters' honoraria and expenses, printing, curriculum materials, etc.	\$
Publications print and electronic materials including catalogues, gallery guides, websites	\$
Marketing advertising, publicity, and related costs	\$
B. Total Additional Project Costs	\$
GRAND TOTAL (A+B)	\$

Entry materials:

- Entry Form
- 1 CD-ROM or Flash Drive
- 1 print version

Send entry materials to:

Stacey Swigart, Curator
Please Touch Museum
4231 Avenue of the Republic
Philadelphia, PA 19131

Remit entry fee to:

American Alliance of Museums
c/o Excellence in Exhibitions
2451 Crystal Drive, Suite 1005
Arlington, VA 22202

PLEASE POSTMARK ENTRIES BY FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 2017