

Loans Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy covers all loans of objects for exhibition both outgoing from and incoming to the British Museum, for any duration. It covers the entire range of loans from single objects to travelling exhibitions of a large number of objects. It does not apply to movements of objects outside the British Museum for conservation or study purposes.
- 1.2 The Trustees of the British Museum makes loans under powers conferred by section 4 of the British Museum Act of 1963. This states that:

The British Museum may lend for public exhibition (whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere) any object comprised in the collections of the Museum: provided that in deciding whether or not to lend any such object, and in determining the time for which, and the conditions subject to which, any such object is to be lent, the British Museum shall have regard to the interests of students and other persons visiting the Museum, to the physical condition and degree of rarity of the object in question, and to any risks to which it is likely to be exposed.

No loan can be made that overrides the intentions of the Act.

- 1.3 The policy should be read in conjunction with *The British Museum Policy on Display*, *The British Museum Policy on Storage, Conservation and Documentation*, *The British Museum Policy on Acquisition* and *The British Museum Policy on Human Remains*.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The Trustees of the British Museum make loans for the following reasons:
- to further knowledge, understanding and scholarship relating to the works in its care;
 - to make the collections more widely accessible within the UK and throughout the world;
 - to increase national and international co-operation by the exchange of material and exhibitions;
 - to enhance the reputation of the British Museum and its good standing nationally and internationally.
- 2.2 The Museum's visiting public expects some key objects to be on display in London and it may be presumed that such objects will not normally be lent.
- 2.3 The Trustees of the British Museum will not make loans in circumstances that would be damaging to the Museum's standing and reputation.
- 2.4 The Trustees of the British Museum will only lend in circumstances when the perceived risks to the well-being of the object are considered reasonable and when the borrower provides reasonable assurance that the objects will be returned to the Museum at the end of the loan period.

- 2.5 The Trustees of the British Museum will not lend to any exhibition which includes objects that are known to have been stolen, illegally exported or illegally excavated.
- 2.6 The Trustees of the British Museum will lend only to properly established organisations and to proper venues, whether run publicly or privately, and usually only to exhibitions that are open to the general public.
- 2.7 In order to secure a loan from the Trustees of the British Museum, borrowers will have to demonstrate that the works they have requested form an essential part of their display, and that the exhibition itself is coherently thought through and intellectually valid.
- 2.8 In requesting loans the Trustees of the British Museum will observe the same principles as it applies to outgoing loans and acquisitions. In particular, the Trustees will require proof of the Lender's title to the object and will not accept the loan for display or exhibition of any object where it has good cause to believe that:
- the current holder is not legitimately entitled to retain the object;
 - the current holder cannot loan the object to the Museum free from encumbrances; or
 - the object was stolen, illegally exported or illegally imported.

4 September 2008