Design guidelines

The British Museum

March 2012

About the British Museum

The British Museum exists to promote dialogue and understanding. The collection allows people across the whole world to understand other cultures, other ways of thinking, and how they are connected to each other.

The collection spans from the dawn of human history over two million years ago to the present. The Museum is a unique resource for the world due to the breadth and depth of its collection. As such, it is a place for debate, and is committed to allowing a wide public to re-examine cultural identities and explore the complex network of interconnected human cultures.

The Museum's visual language

The British Museum's visual language is a system designed to visually represent the Museum. It reflects and reinforces the Museum's values and core purpose. In line with the Museum's positioning in the wider world, it is strong and confident, visually demonstrating that the Museum is a single organisation with a shared outlook and goals.

Key elements of the design are:

- a single Museum logo, undiluted by 'sub-brands'
- typefaces (fonts), Baskerville and Akzidenz Grotesk
- the choice of objects from the collection to represent the brief
- a strong and consistent design style

Logo and fonts

The logo is adapted from the font Baskerville, designed by John Baskerville during the same period in which the Museum was founded, in 1753. This reference to the Museum's 250-year history has a gravitas and authority suitable for the Museum. Baskerville is also the Museum's official serif font in designed work.

The majority of designed work uses the Museum's official sans serif font, Akzidenz Grotesk. In contrast to Baskerville, it adds a contemporary and modern feel representative of the Museum's current activities and profile in the world.

In non-designed work (e.g. emails, correspondence) and on the website, the Museum uses Arial font.

The grid system and text hierarchy

The design styling is based on a nine-column grid. This is the graphic device or scaffolding by which all the elements of the design are structured. The logo is sized in relation to the grid, but can be positioned anywhere in the design within the nine-column grid.

There is a clear hierarchy of text sizes. This establishes a relationship between different types of information and their relative importance. See examples later in this document.

Objects, photography and extra copy

The choice and use of images of objects in the Museum's collection are the most important element of the design. Choosing the right object is critical to the strength of the design, and different objects are used to distinguish different activities on offer. The design system has been created to always respect and protect objects by ensuring text or the Museum's logo is never placed over them.

Colour

On marketing materials, black or dark backgrounds are used for special (i.e. charging) exhibitions and white or pale backgrounds are used for core activities and free offers such as galleries and free exhibitions and displays. The neutral background allows the colours in the object to stand out. One-off special events, such as one-day events, can use a coloured background to reflect the ephemeral nature of the activity. The text will use two colours. The default for the first colour is black or white, depending on the background colour. The second colour will be chosen to complement the object image. However, the designer has some flexibility in text colour choice – for example it is acceptable to use two shades of blue instead of black and blue.

The overall design system

As stated above, the logo can be positioned anywhere in the design within the nine-column grid. This is because all the other elements in the design system work together to create a strong visual language which is not reliant on a consistent logo positioning. It is important that the design system itself becomes recognisable, not the individual elements.

The design system is simple and pared back, and this allows the object to be the most important element, resulting in a strong look and feel. There are no designed sub-brands (such as 'objects in focus') – these are simply written in text. There are no 'personalities' for exhibitions or individual activities – the strength of the object represents the activity and sets each one apart.

The following pages contain examples of how the design system works in practice. The use of all the design elements repeatedly and consistently reinforces the design style, essentially creating the Museum's visual language.

Logo use

The British Museum logo is the copyrighted trademark of the Trustees of the British Museum. The logo is a specific graphic and must never be recreated in any way, including by typing out in text.

The British Museum

The minimum width of the logo is 25mm.

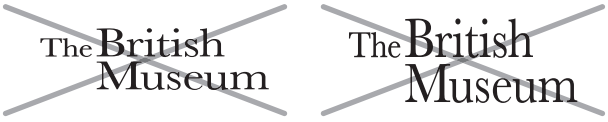
The logo can only be produced in black or white.

The British Museum

The British Museum

There must be clear space between the logo and other design elements. Clear space is measured by the width of the 'M' in Museum. Design elements are symbols, rules, wording, illustration or photographic edges.

Never distort the logo by stretching or squashing, or adding to it, or cropping it in any way.



Ensure the logo is clearly legible. Do not reverse out of a pale colour or a busy background.

The logo can only be issued for use by the Marketing Department. All uses of the logo must be approved by the Marketing Department and are subject to the *Conditions for use of the British Museum logo (commercial or non-commercial)*.

Marketing Department
+44 (0)20 7323 8354
logo@britishmuseum.org

Logo use in limited space

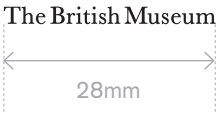
This version of the logo has been optically adjusted for use at small sizes. The minimum width of this version of the logo is 16mm.

Where the format does not allow use of the stacked version, a single line version can be used. The minimum width of this version of the logo is 50mm.

The stacked version is the preferred choice.

This version of the single line logo has been optically adjusted for when the single line version has to appear smaller than 50mm wide. The minimum width of this version of the logo is 28mm.

The stacked version is the preferred choice.



Fonts

Sans serif.
For use in designed material.
Akzidenz Grotesk Pro from Berthold.

Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk Pro. Light
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk Pro. Light Italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk Pro. Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk Pro. Regular italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk Pro. Medium
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk Pro. Medium italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk Pro. Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk Pro. Bold italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk Pro. Super
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk Pro. Super italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Fonts will not be supplied externally as this would be a breach of the font licence agreement. External contacts working on behalf of the Museum (designers/ printers etc) are required to purchase the fonts to ensure they have the correct font licence.

Fonts (cont.)

Serif.
For use in designed material. Baskerville Pro from Monotype.

Baskerville MT Pro. Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Baskerville MT Pro. Regular italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Baskerville MT Pro. Semibold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Baskerville MT Pro. Semibold italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Fonts will not be supplied externally as this would be a breach of the font licence agreement. External contacts working on behalf of the Museum (designers/ printers etc) are required to purchase the fonts to ensure they have the correct font licence.

Sans serif.
For use on digital applications,website, on-screen presentations and Microsoft Office templates.

Arial is a standard cross-platform font available worldwide.

Arial. Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

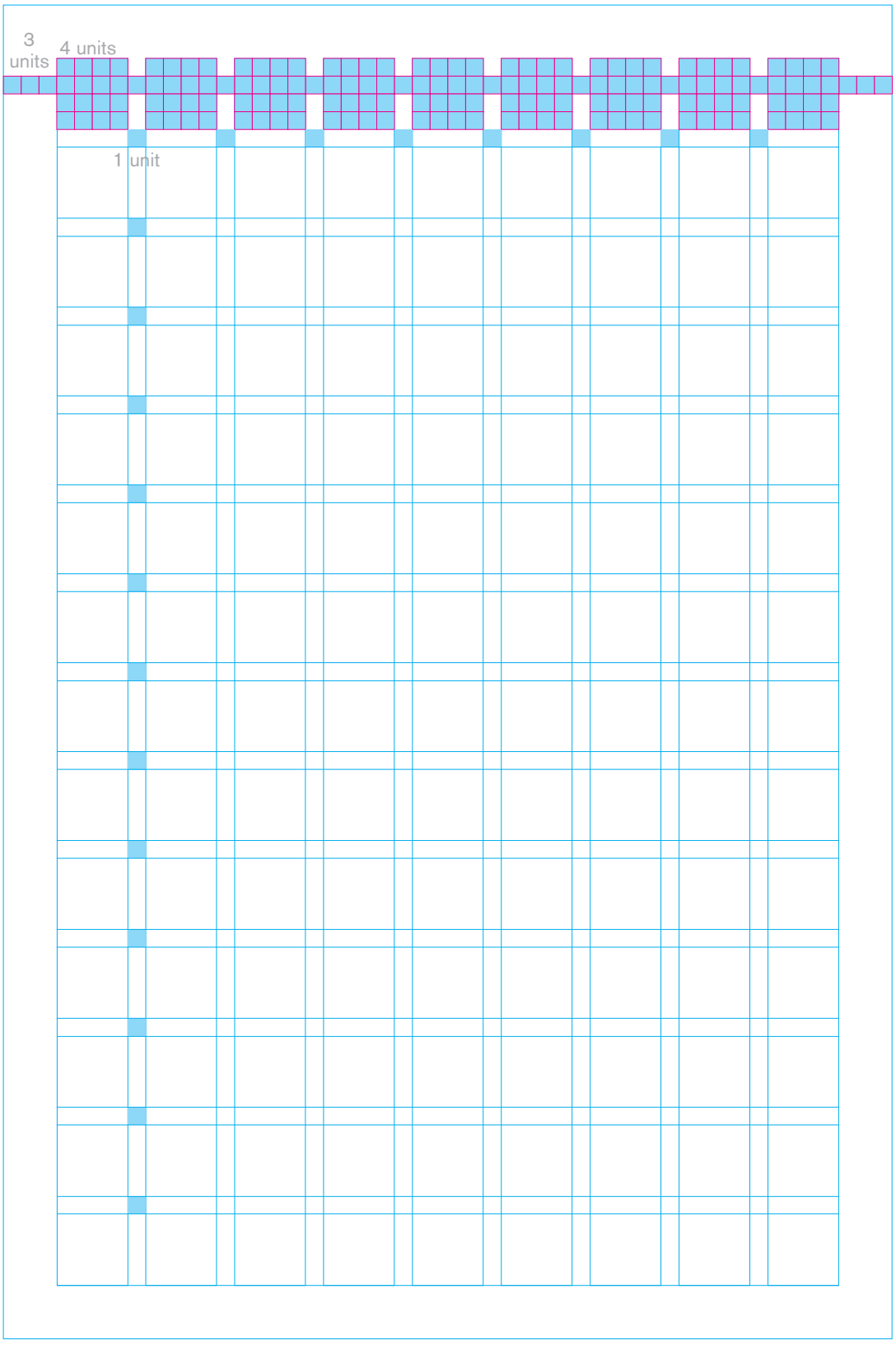
Arial. Regular italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Arial. Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Arial. Bold italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwyxz 0123456789

Nine-column grid

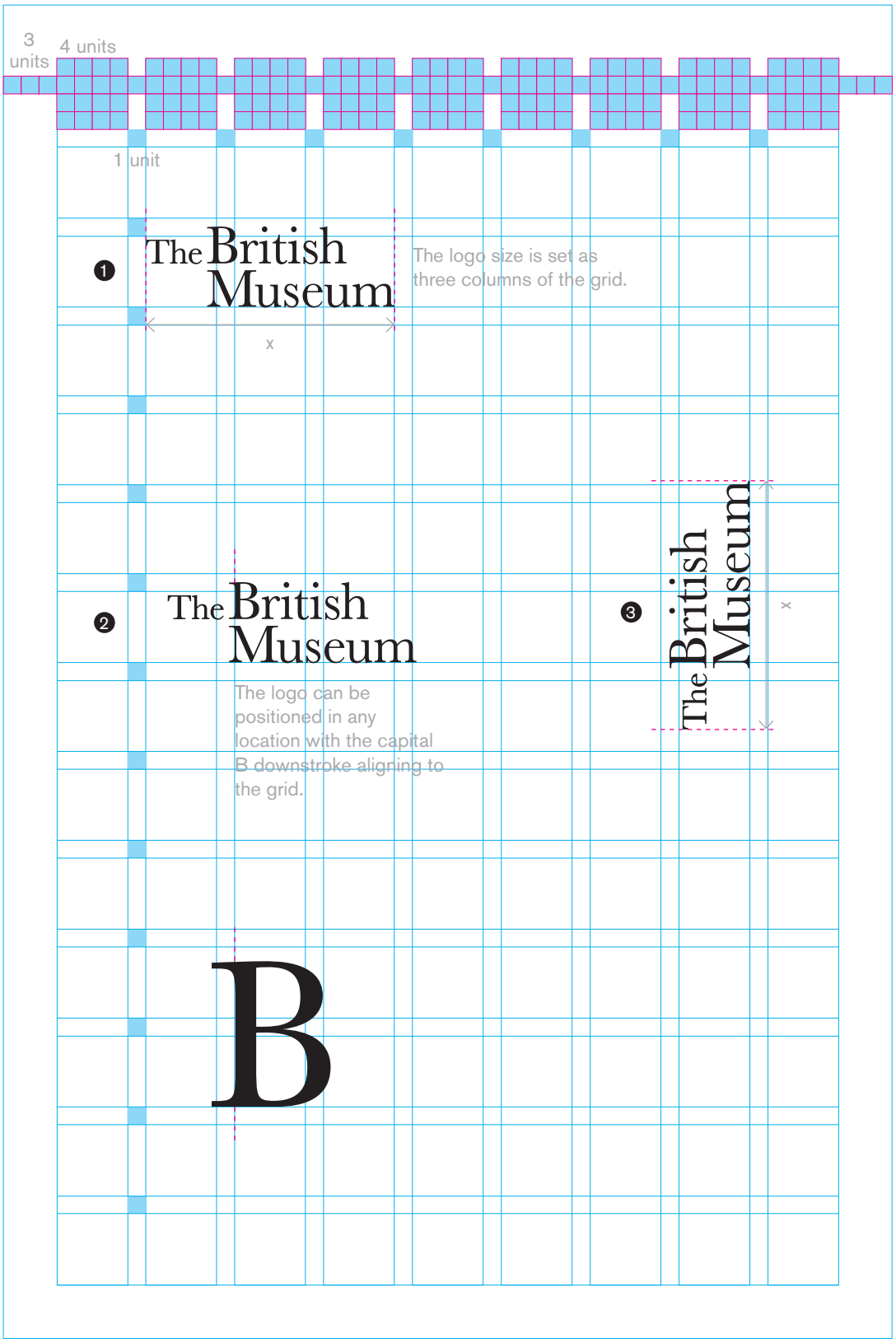
Nine-column grid



The nine-column grid is set up as 50 units across the width; 3 units for the margins, 4 for each column and one for each gutter. This can then be easily applied to any format.

Logo size on portrait formats

Logo size



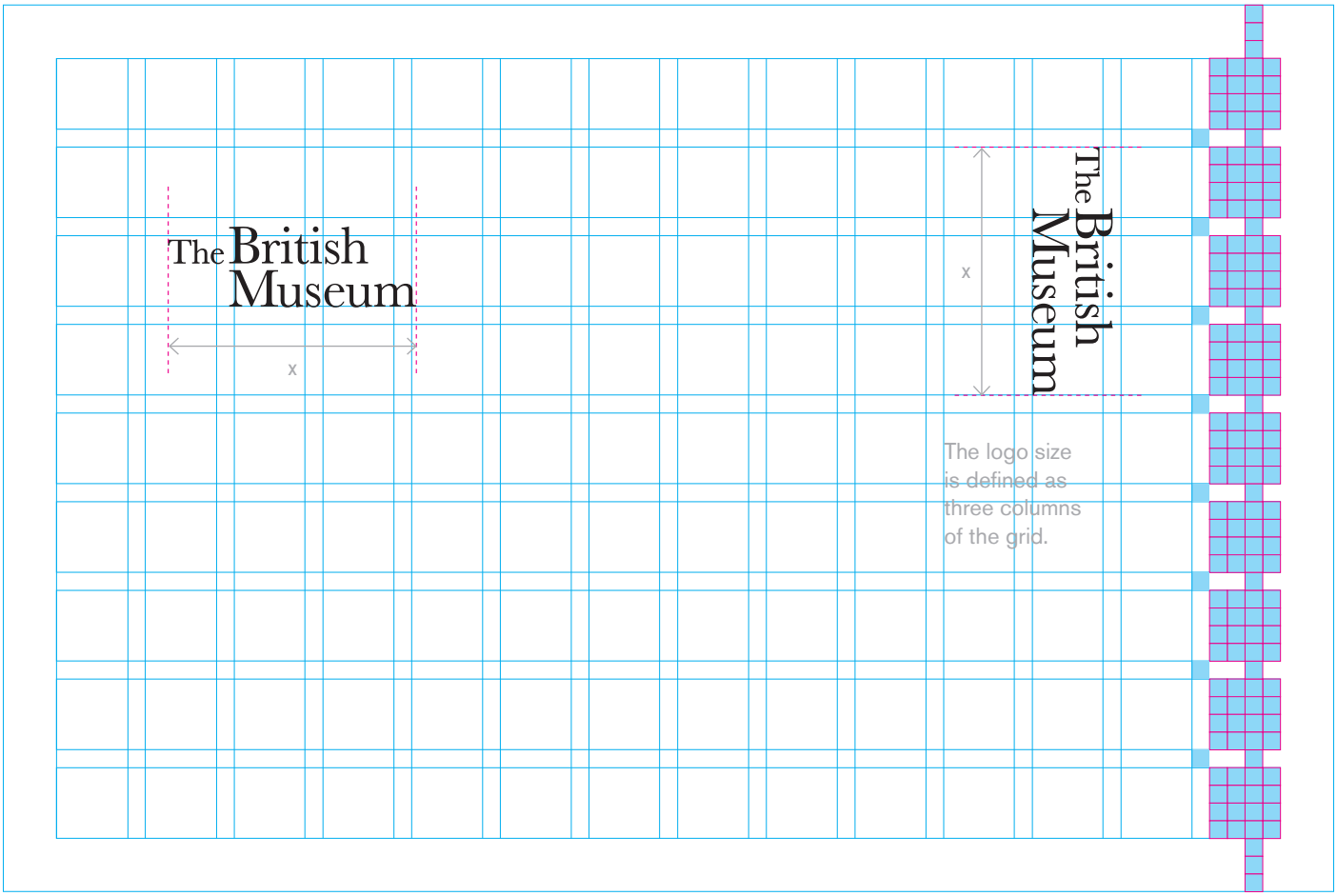
❶
On portrait formats, the logo size is defined as three columns of the grid.

❷
The logo can then be positioned in any location with the capital B aligning to the grid.

❸
The logo can be used vertically. The size is still defined as three columns of the grid. It can be positioned in any location with the capital B aligning to the grid horizontally.

Logo size on landscape formats

Logo size



On landscape formats, the logo size is defined as three columns of the grid across the shorter edge of the format. The logo can then be positioned in any location with the capital B aligning to the grid on the long edge.

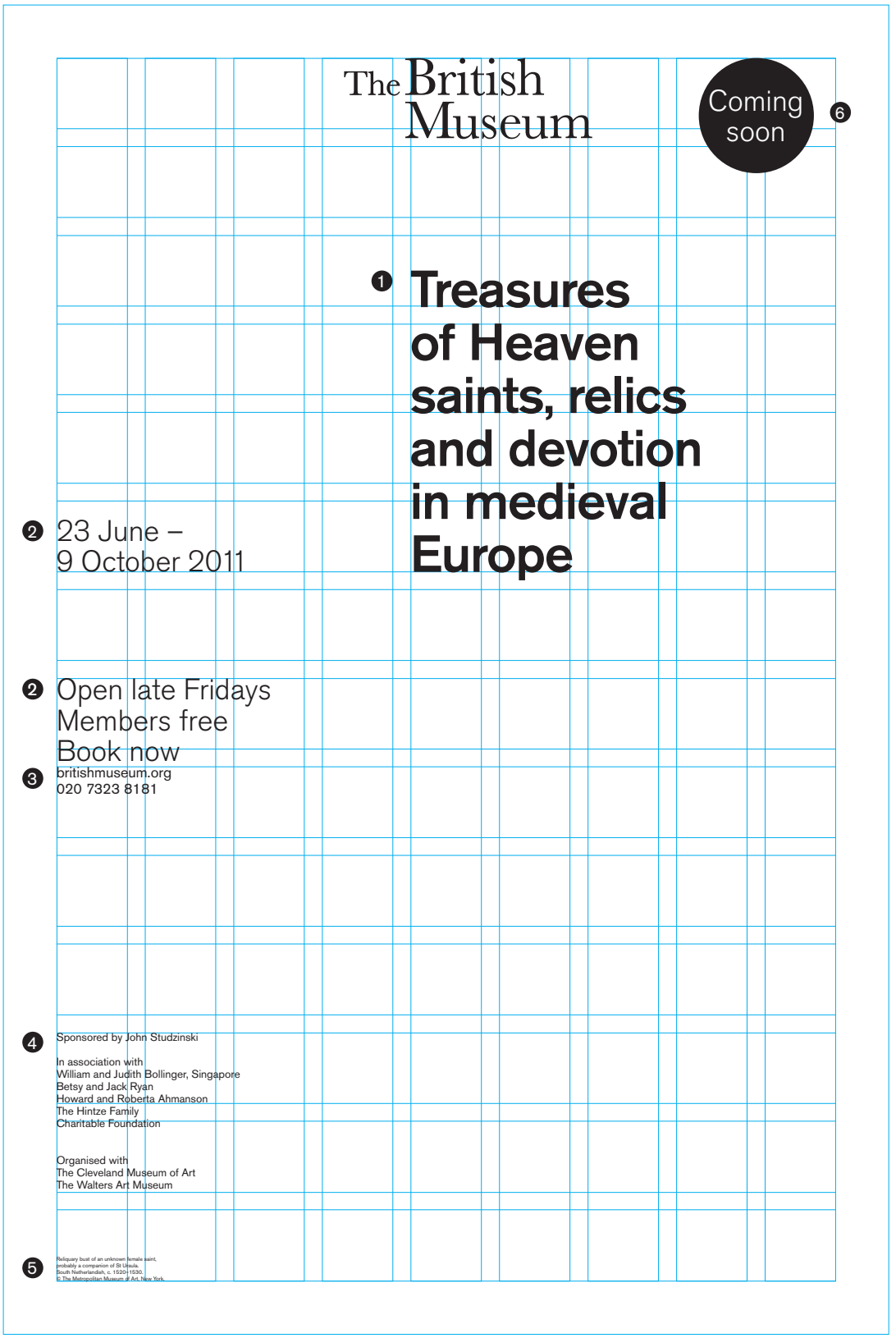
On unusual formats the logo size will be defined on a case-by-case basis, as a multiple of one column of the nine-column grid.

On-site poster: font sizes and hierarchy

On-site poster format: 508mm wide x 762mm high, shown with the nine-column grid applied.

Ideally, all font sizes used are multiples of 3.

Text should be ranged left or right, not centred, except text in a circle defacer. In general, use sentence case; do not use all upper case, all lower case or small caps.



1
84pt Akzidenz Grotesk Pro Medium

2
48pt Akzidenz Grotesk Pro Light

3
24pt Akzidenz Grotesk Pro Regular

4
18pt Akzidenz Grotesk Pro Regular

5
9pt Akzidenz Grotesk Pro Regular

6
48pt Akzidenz Grotesk Pro Light, Circle diameter: 66mm

Poster

On-site poster for paying exhibition.

Poster

On-site poster for paying exhibition.

The British Museum

The BP exhibition

Fra Angelico to Leonardo Italian Renaissance drawings

22 April –
25 July 2010

Supported by BP

bp

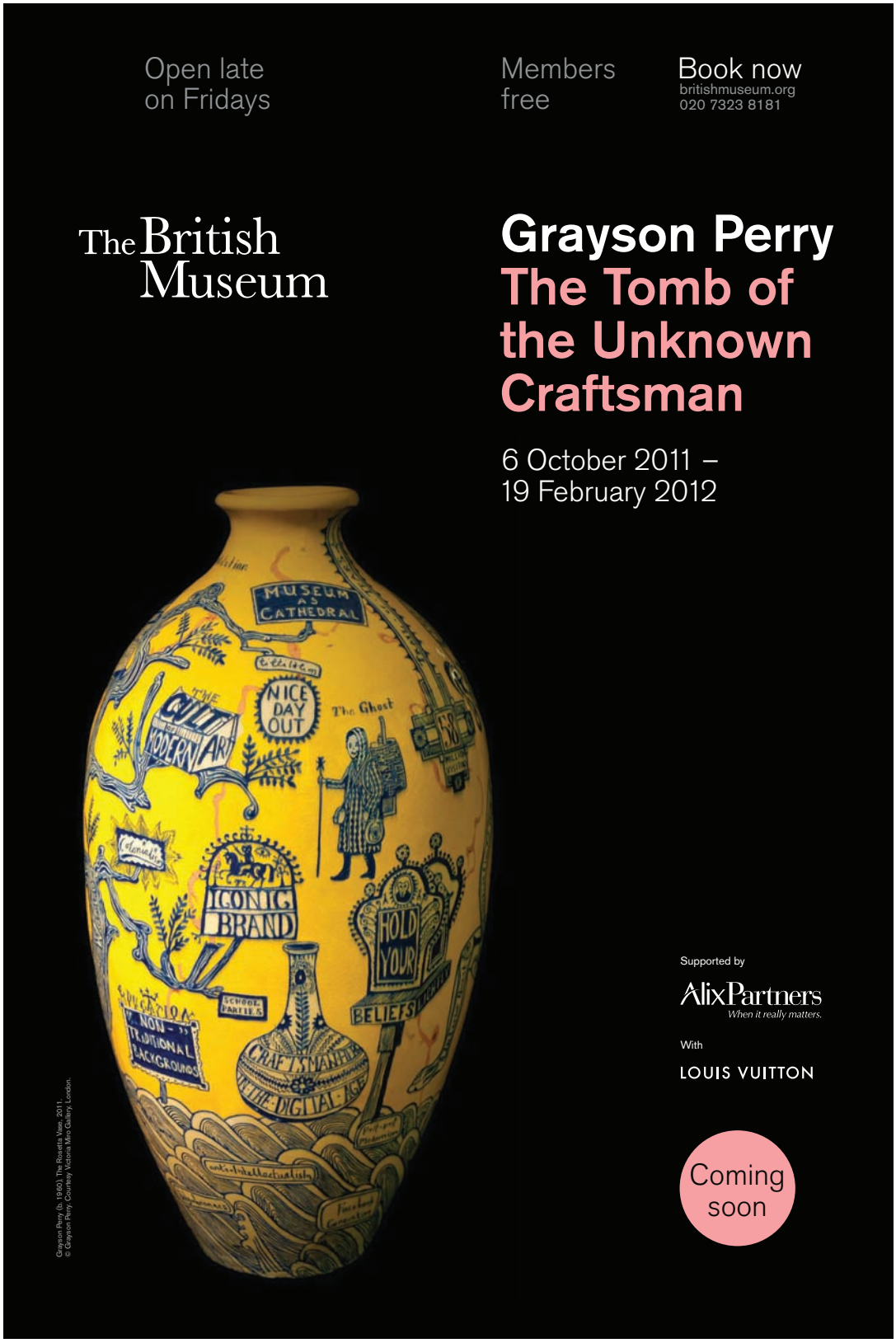
Open late Fridays
Members free
Book now
britishmuseum.org
020 7323 8181

Coming soon

Andrea del Verrocchio,
Head of a woman. Charcoal,
heightened with lead white, c. 1475.
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

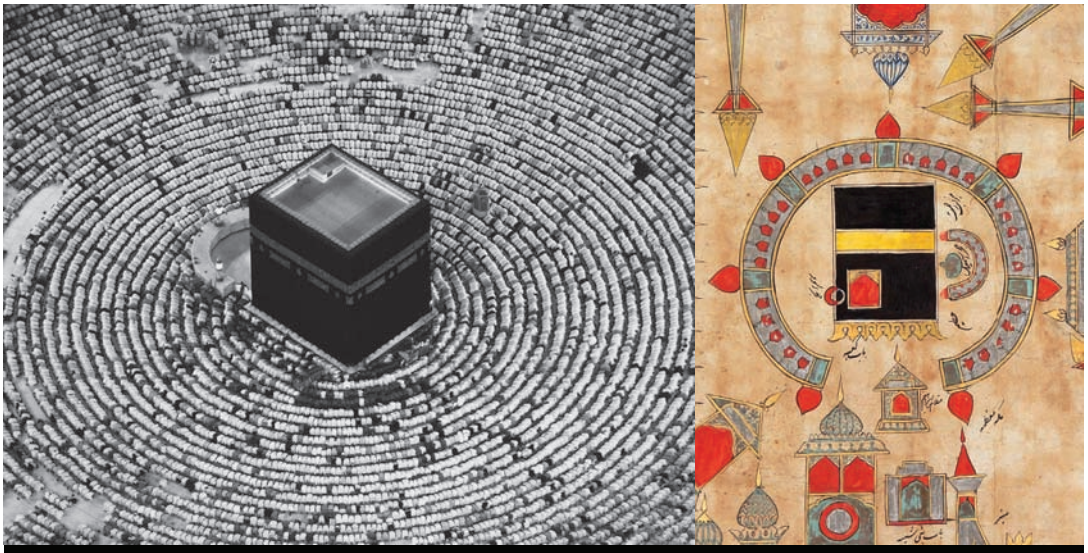
Poster

On-site poster for paying exhibition.



Poster

On-site poster for paying exhibition.



The British Museum

Coming soon

Hajj
journey to the heart of Islam

26 January –
15 April 2012

Open late Fridays
Members free
Book now

britishmuseum.org
020 7323 8181

HSBC Amanah has supported the exhibition's international reach outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Left: The Ka'ba. AP/PA.
Right: Hajj certificate (detail). 17th–18th century AD.
Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art (Khalili Family Trust).

In partnership with

مكتبة الملك عبد العزيز العامة

King Abdulaziz Public Library
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Poster

On-site poster for free exhibition.

The British Museum

The power of dogu ceramic figures from ancient Japan

10 September
– 22 November 2009

Open late Fridays
Room 91
britishmuseum.org

Free

Sponsored by
Mitsubishi Corporation

Co-organised with Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan

In collaboration with Tokyo National Museum

A Japan-UK 150 Event

Masked dogu from Nakappara, Nagano Prefecture, Japan. 1500–1000 BC.
On loan from the Chino City Board of Education. Designated 'Important Cultural Property' by the Japanese Government.

Poster

On-site poster for 'Objects in focus' exhibition.

The British Museum

Objects in focus

Swimming reindeer

11 February –
11 April 2010

Free
Open late Fridays
Room 3
britishmuseum.org

Carved from a mammoth tusk, 13,000 years old

The Asahi Shimbun displays

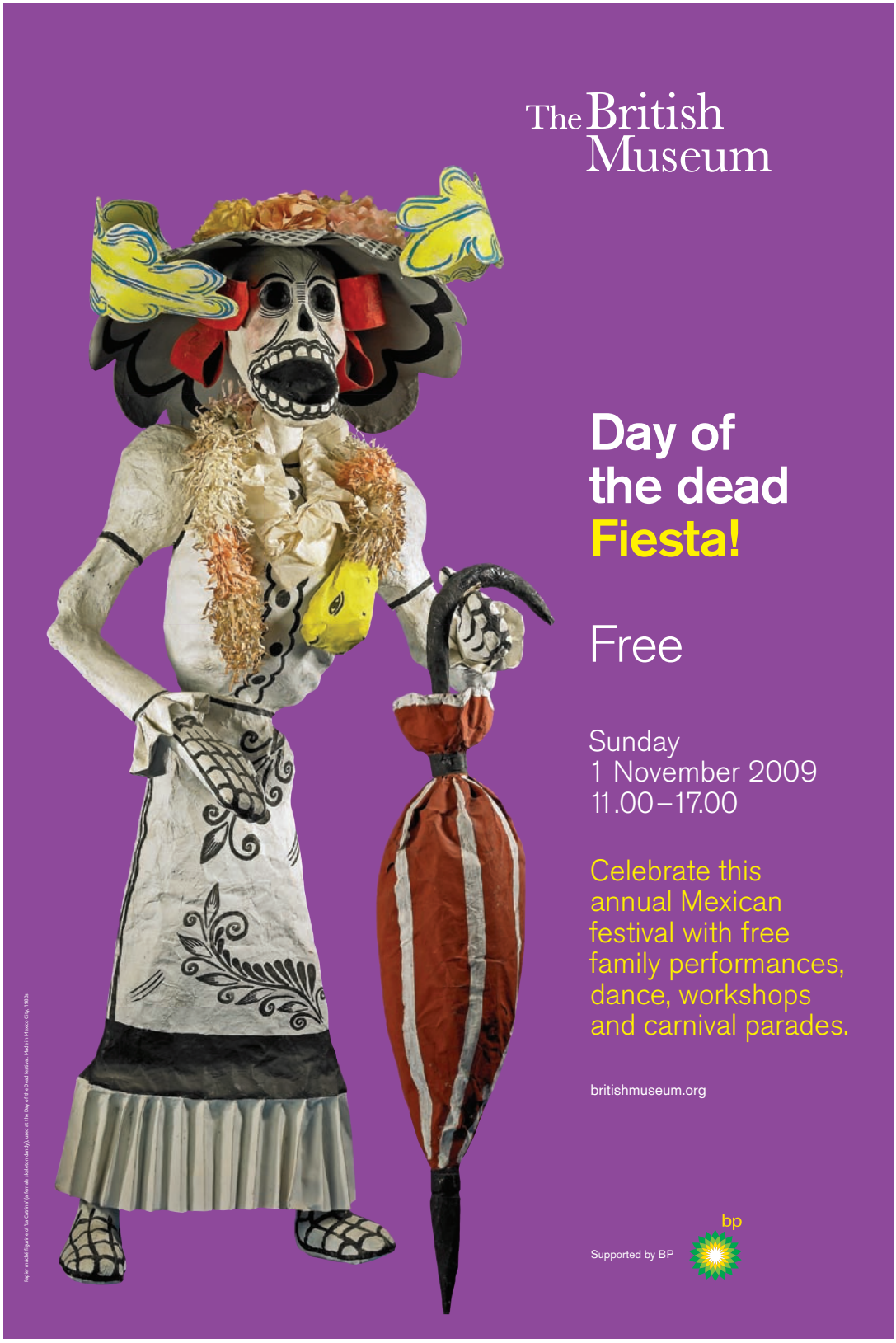
Carving of the tip of a mammoth tusk depicting swimming reindeer. Late Ice Age, about 13,000 years old. Found at Montastruc, central-southern France. Photo of reindeer. © B&C Alexander/Arcticphoto.

Supported by

The Asahi Shimbun
JAPAN'S LEADING NATIONAL NEWSPAPER

Poster

On-site poster for one-off special event.

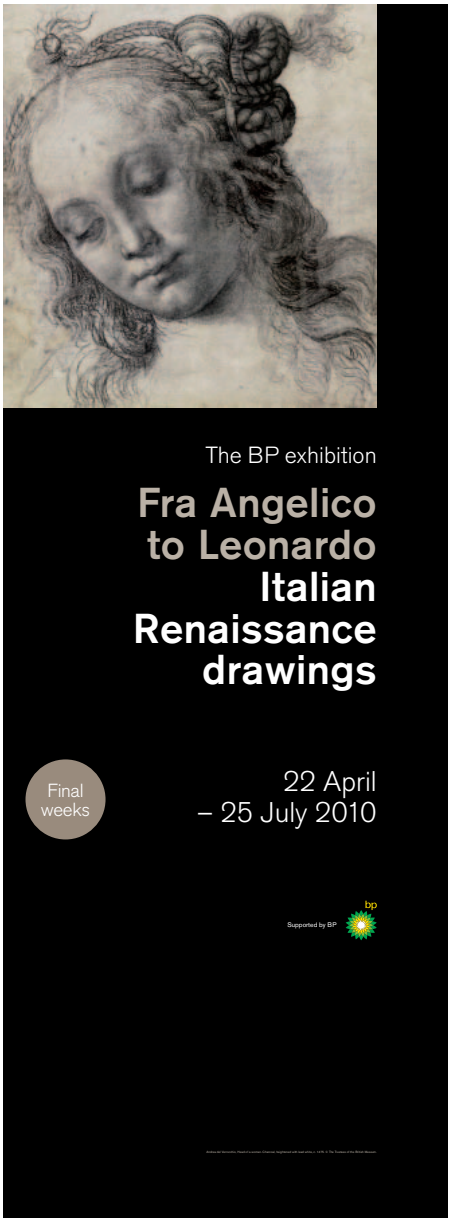


Poster

Off-site poster for campaign promotion.

Promotional signage

On-site large scale promotional signage.



Printed stationery

Letterhead, compliment slip and business card.

The size of the logo on printed stationery is 80% of three of the columns of the nine-column grid on an A4 format.

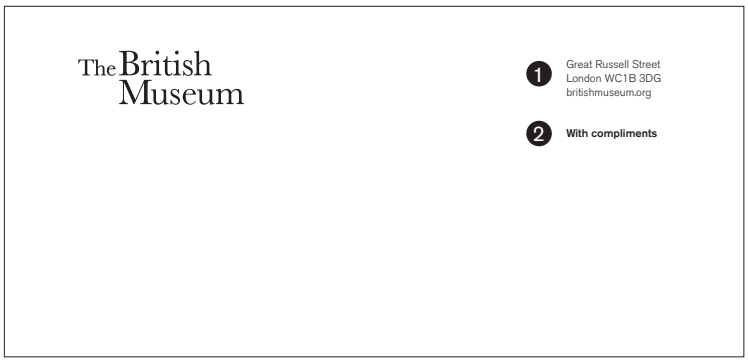
The size of the logo on the business card is four columns of the nine-column grid.

1

1
9pt Akzidenz Grotesk Pro Light

2
9pt Akzidenz Grotesk Pro Medium

3
Microsoft Office templated letter text 10pt Arial Regular



Website

Home page

Leaflets

Visitor-facing leaflets.

Map

The British Museum

Find your way around the Museum, discover some of the most famous objects, and explore the unique collection with talks, tours and more.

britishmuseum.org

What's on
November – December 2011

The British Museum

Step into Grayson Perry's imaginary world, discover Japanese manga at the British Museum, uncover the hidden secrets of Herculaneum, and find out more about the Star of Bethlehem.

britishmuseum.org

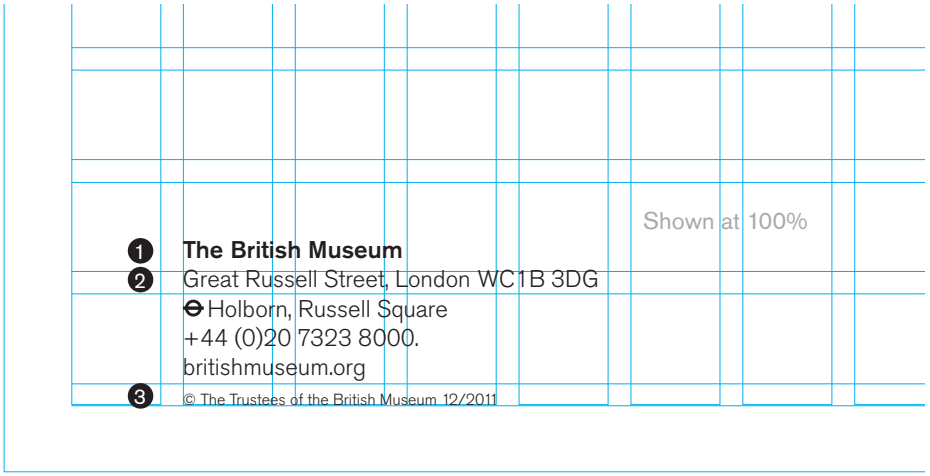
Address lock up

Text position and type sizes of address details for use on the back page of A4, A5 and A6 formats. This shows the full content which can change depending on usage.

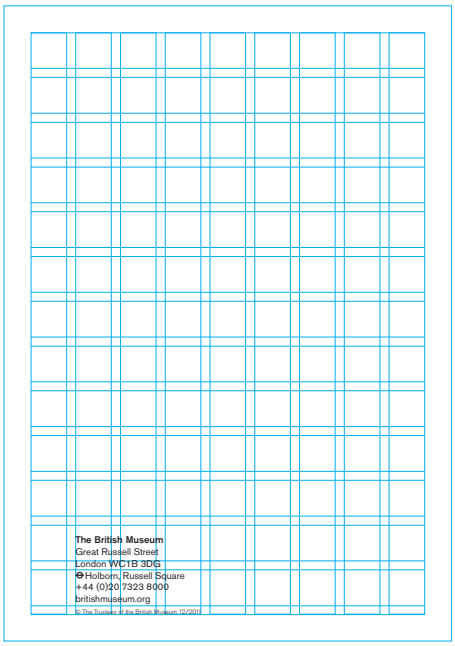
1
9/11pt Akzidenz Grotesk Pro Medium

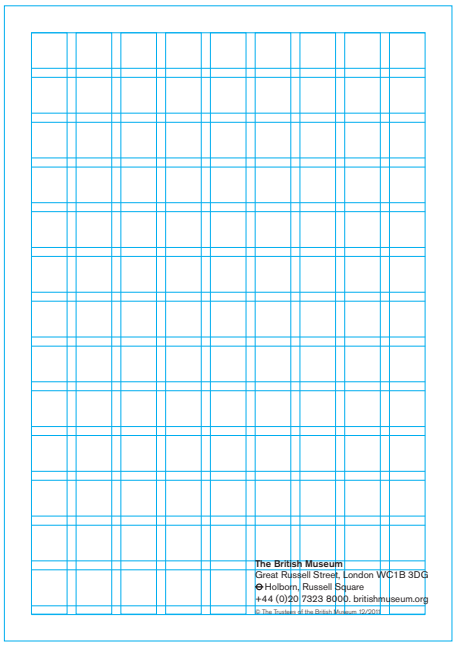
2
9/11pt Akzidenz Grotesk Pro Regular

3
6/11pt Akzidenz Grotesk Pro Light



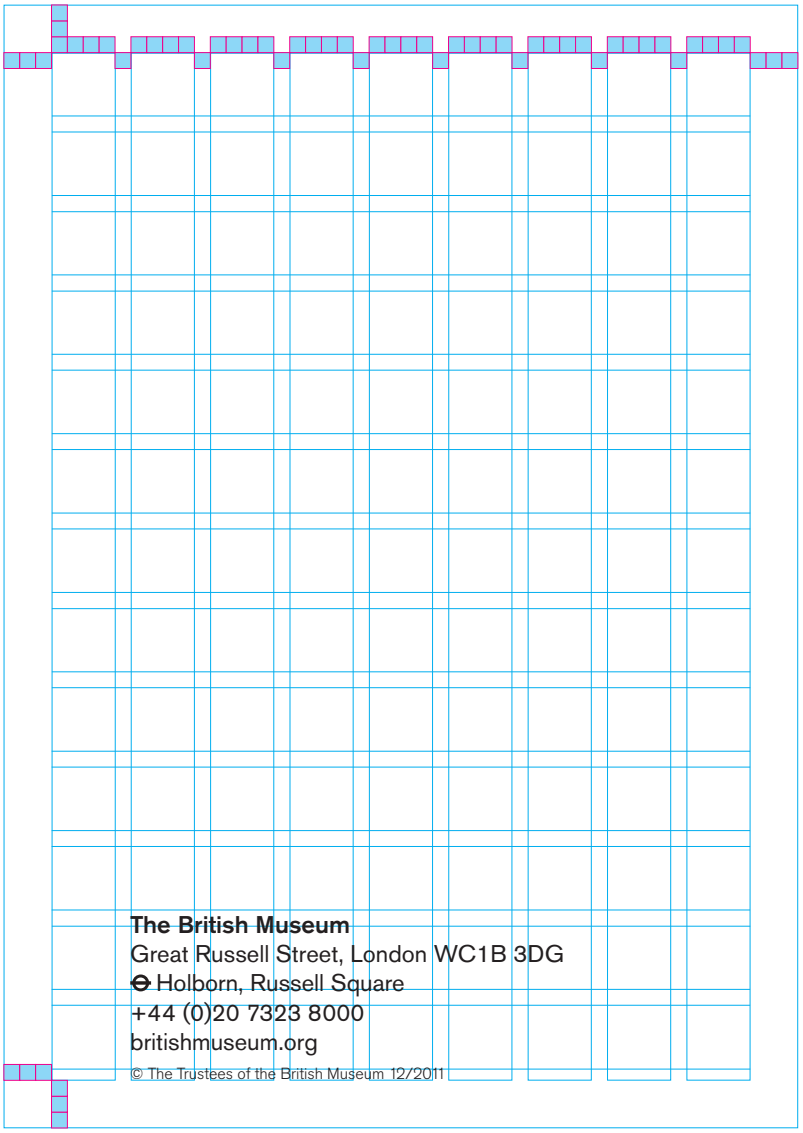
Position shown relative to a whole page on an A5 format. The address lock up is the sign off at the end of the page. It should align to one of the vertical grid lines (see nine-column grid details) and be positioned on the lower part of the page, preferably at the foot.





Address lock up and copyright

Shown on A6 at actual size.



3 units of the grid make up the outer margin. Address lock up to sit on the outer gridline.

The Trustees of the British Museum own the copyright for anything produced by Museum employees in the course of their job. It is not a legal requirement to assert copyright by including it, but the Museum's policy is to include the following line on all materials that can be carried off site, for example, a printed leaflet.

© The Trustees of the British Museum 12/2011

Put the date in the format mm/yyyy.

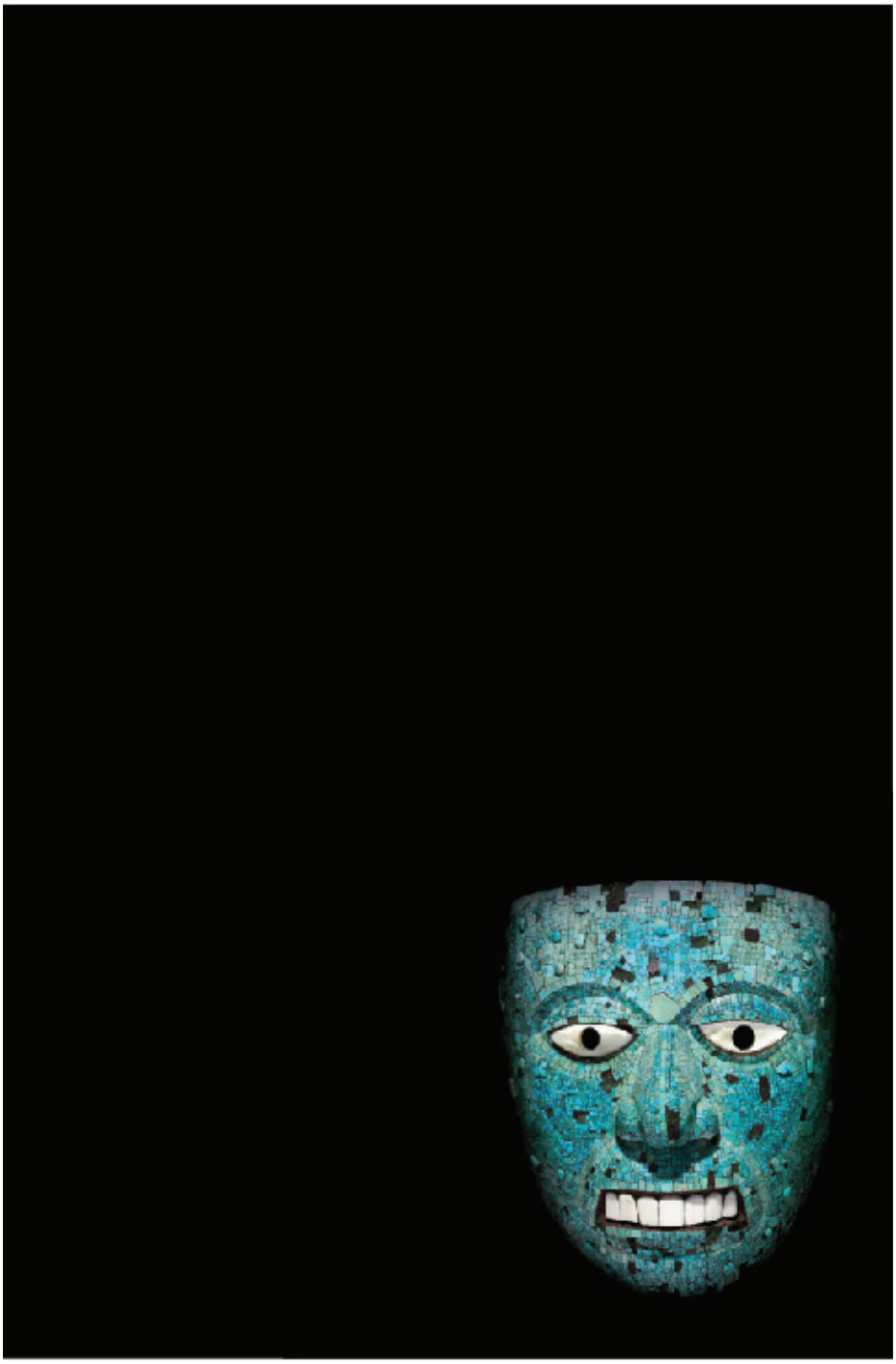
Choice of objects and photography

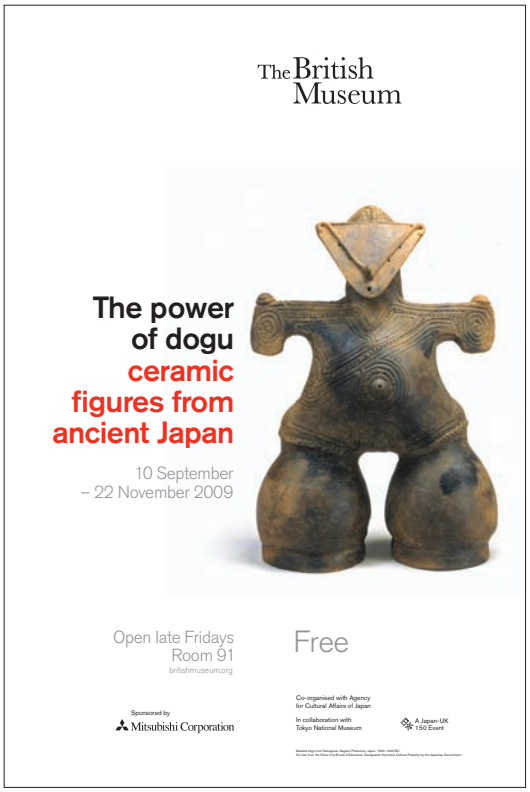
The choice of an object to use on a marketing campaign is critical to the impact and is what differentiates each activity. The object needs to be relevant, but must also be chosen with marketing needs uppermost in mind. The way objects are photographed and then used is also vital to the success of this process and for a consistent representation of the Museum's collection.

Do not flip, colourise, retouch or use photographic filters on any images, and be considerate about cropping images.

Some objects carry living sacred, spiritual or social status beyond their life today as objects in the Museum. It is important to be sensitive about objects which may cause offence through inappropriate use or context.

Objects should be treated with respect and never be 'reinterpreted' to suit a selling or marketing message or idea. This should be decided in conjunction with curatorial staff.



Logos of sponsors and external partners

The size and position of logos of sponsors and external partners in relation to the British Museum logo is determined in consultation with the Development Department for each campaign and then applied consistently. The solution must follow design guidelines of the British Museum and the other parties. The Development Department will confirm the accompanying wording (Sponsored by, Supported by). It is usual to have a different proportion relationship for small use (A5 and smaller) to maintain legibility.