

# Where Do **Museum Exhibitions** Come From?

or (with apologies to Music Man)

My Daddy's got a barn! Let's put on a show!

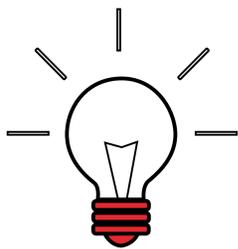
## How do you transform your research or creativity into a museum exhibition?

One way to categorize exhibitions is to see them on a continuum:

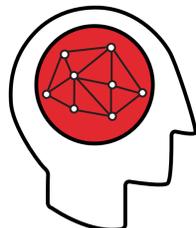
- At one end are exhibitions based on the museum's collection or your individual research and are public presentations of those objects or knowledge.
- At the other end are exhibitions that develop from topics of public interest, beginning with a story and assembling objects to support it.

Exhibitions are communication methods for informal learning. They tell a story that begins with a good idea. What will ultimately become an exhibition depends on a number of factors, including the museum's mission and the intended audience. GMD's mission is to use the power of design to foster improved quality of life for individuals and communities. Our audiences are the students, faculty, and staff of the College of Design, the wider design community, and the general public.

The ultimate goal of the exhibition is to answer the question: **So What?**



**1.** Start with an idea.



**2.** Think about it again.

*Who will see it?  
What do you want them to learn?*



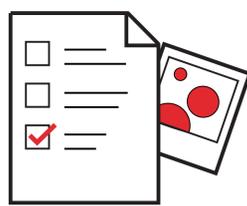
**3.** Where will it be exhibited?

*When? Will there be opportunities to partner with others?*



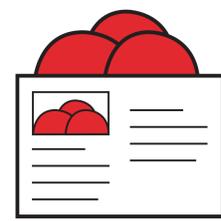
**4.** Develop an outline.

*Describe the major elements of the idea; begin the narrative.*



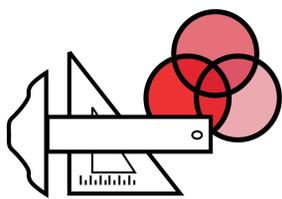
**5.** Assemble a checklist.

*List objects/photos/graphics.  
Do they need to be borrowed?  
Do you need permission to use them?*



**6.** Link objects and text.

*Pair the objects/photos/graphics to the outline with text (250 words on a text panel, 100 on an object label—we don't have patience for more!)*



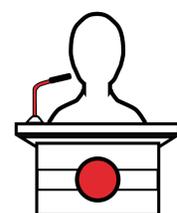
**7.** Work with designers

*Meet with graphic designers and exhibition designers to develop the collected parts into an exhibition.  
Will it be chronological? Thematic?  
Aesthetically random?*



**8.** What else?

*Will it have interactives?  
Feedback opportunities?*



**9.** Develop programs

*Programs are a great way to expand on the idea. Since the exhibition text is limited, programs and print are tools for you to share your full research.*

**10.** And the crowd goes *wild!*

## Think, Pair, Share: Share Your Ideas for Future Exhibitions

What bugs you? What worries you? What do you want to celebrate? Pick an idea that interests you or that you are researching, pick another or write it on the post-it.

Here are some topics to get you inspired:

Water	Pollution	Productivity
Health	Space travel	Respect
Food	Rural	Connection
Aging	Urban	Threats
Transportation	Sustainability	Equity
Media	Resilience	Learning
Climate	Beauty	Biology

Share your combos here. →