
Student Exhibition Advisory Group

The Student Exhibition Advisory Group provides oversight and support for the exhibition program that provides content for the Student Exhibition Corridor in Sterling Memorial Library. The membership comes from across the Yale University Library (YUL) system and is co-led by James Kessenides, Kaplanoff Librarian for American History & Kerri Sancomb, Exhibition Production Program Manager. The membership rotates annually, with members serving staggered two year terms. The Communications Manager for Public Relations/Writing, and the Library Exhibit Technicians are permanent committee members.

The Advisory Group performs these tasks:

- Increases use of SML exhibit venues by YUL staff, Yale faculty and students, and Yale-affiliated groups
- Coordinates communication about the programming and use of the SML exhibit corridor
- Reviews exhibition proposals to ensure that programming reflects and supports teaching and research at Yale
- Establishes and maintains appropriate guidelines for the use of exhibition venues and the handling of objects on display in SML
- Supports the Library Exhibits Advisor as needed

Learn more about the Student Exhibit Program in this article: [New exhibit opens Dec. 9 to celebrate 10 years of student curators at the Yale Library](#) [1]

Yale University Library Exhibitions Mission/Vision

The Yale University Library's Exhibitions Program will support and enhance research, teaching, and learning at Yale and for the world-wide scholarly community. Library exhibits:

- Highlight YUL expertise, collections, and services
- Contribute to making the Library the physical destination of choice for the Yale community
- Encourage collaboration among Library staff, researchers, faculty, students
- Offer opportunities for Library staff professional development
- Present a "borderless" view of the Library and its collections
- Uphold the highest standards for the care of collections on display and encourage good handling and preservation practices

Learn more about exhibitions in Sterling Library

[Current News](#) [2]

[Past Exhibitions](#) [3]

For Students

Student-Curated Exhibits at Yale Library in the Sterling Memorial Library Exhibition Corridor

Learn how to present your research using the unique narrative form of an exhibit. The library's exhibit staff will assist you to choose, describe, sequence, and arrange objects from the library's diverse collections.

For more details about the 2026/27 academic year opportunity visit our [Senior Exhibit Program at Yale Library](#) [4] page, open to Yale College Class of '27.

Senior Exhibit Program at Yale Library

[Senior Exhibit Program at Yale Library - Proposals due March 6, 2026](#)

This program provides one rising senior with training in curatorial skills and culminating in the production of a library exhibition based on the student's senior essay topic using materials from the Yale Library collections.

One Yale College junior will be selected to receive library funding, mentoring, and exhibit production support over the course of nine months to research, create and curate a professional-quality exhibit opening in spring of their senior year.

The selected student will be awarded a \$4,200 stipend to subsidize a five-week summer research period to be completed the summer between their junior and senior years. This research, which must be completed on Yale campus using YUL collections, will become the foundation for the content of the exhibit.

Program duration is from Summer 2026 (five-week research period between June 1 - September 1) through Spring 2027 (senior year research and production).

This opportunity is perfect for students who have experience researching with primary source materials, are curious about the curatorial process, enjoy working collaboratively, and whose senior essay subject can be strongly represented by physical objects from the YUL collections.

Learn more about previous senior exhibit fellows:

[2025 Anne Gross, curator of *Sensation!: Reported Bodies in 19th-Century American Media*](#) [5]

[2024 AJ Laird Whaling, curator of *Logbooks: Records of a Maritime Industr*](#) [6]y

[2023 Chucho Martinez, curator of *The Study of Things: George Kubler in Latin America*](#) [7]

[Review these guidelines](#) [8] to learn about the SML exhibit committee's proposal review criteria and get some tips for creating a strong proposal.

Information Sessions:

- sign up for [info sessions listed here](#) [9]

Proposal submission:

- Link will be provided in February 2026

Eligibility:

- Yale College Class of '27

Draft Timeline (dates subject to change):

- Proposals due: March 6, 2026
- Selected students notified late April 2026
- Summer internship: Curator selects five weeks between June 1 and September 1
- Exhibition development and production: September – April of senior year

- Opening reception: April 2027. On view: April – October 2027

If you are considering this opportunity:

- Review fellowship recipient [roles and responsibilities](#) [10], as well as deadlines and workflows.
- Discuss the opportunity with a [Faculty Advisor](#) [11]r and a [Librarian Exhibit Advisor](#) [12]. Your selected advisors must agree to work with and advise you throughout the year-long project.
- If you are unable to attend the information sessions or would like a refresher or reference to more details about the program, review the [Senior Exhibit Program information session slide deck](#) [13].

If you are just getting started...

Learning how to do research in the collections is the first step toward any exhibit opportunity.

- Start by getting to know your [Personal Librarian](#) [14] or [subject specialist](#) [15], as well as archivists and collection specialists.
- Explore and discover the collections at [Archives at Yale](#) [16].
- Get ideas by looking at previous years' exhibits via the [SML Exhibits LibGuide](#). [3]
- Learn about opportunities to create [online exhibits at Yale University Library](#) [17].

Send questions to kerri.sancomb@yale.edu [18]

Guide for Yale Library Senior Exhibit Program application

Proposals are reviewed by members of the Student Exhibit Advisory Group. The group's members represent a range of subject expertise, viewpoints, and have experience producing exhibits. Based on our collective knowledge and experience, we will use the following criteria in reviewing proposals for the Yale Library Senior Exhibit Program.

Selected exhibition proposals will be clearly executable in the given timeframe, and the Advisory Group will look for the following elements during the selection process:

- Thorough and careful original research
- Thoughtful analysis of library collection materials
- Compelling and innovative research subjects
- Visually engaging collection materials

- A focus on underutilized collections
- Chosen topic is different from recent exhibitions, if topic has been recently exhibited, is the topic presented from a unique point of view

In addition, the Advisory Group will give preference to proposals that provide evidence of the following student qualifications:

- Excellent organizational skills;
- Ability to manage cascading or overlapping deadlines;
- Demonstrated ability to conduct self-directed research during summer research fellowship and early fall semester for exhibit development

?Examples of what is included in a strong proposal:

- Shows an in-depth exploration of a significant collection or draws from multiple collections in the Yale University Library.
- Shows evidence of previous experience working with [primary source materials](#) [19].
- Shows strong familiarity with the subject discipline. For example, if your topic is about bookplates, you should be familiar with research in the history of art.
- Evidence of time already spent with the collection and/or letters of support needs to indicate that applicant has the time and ability to develop the project more fully.
- Outlines how the narrative of the thesis will be furthered through the elements of the exhibition (labels, visual elements, collections materials, facsimiles where needed, etc.).
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Demonstrates a clear understanding of responsibilities and timeframe of the exhibit project independent of the senior thesis project for their department.

?Proposals must be accompanied by letters of support from both a faculty advisor and a librarian advisor. Letters of support should:

- Demonstrate a strong connection between the subject of the proposal and the faculty advisor
- Agree to the responsibilities outlined for the [faculty advisor](#) [20] and the [librarian advisor](#) [21].
- Attest to the student's past success in the subject discipline.
- Speak to the student's ability to successfully complete the project in the timeframe allotted.

?What makes a good exhibit in the Sterling Library exhibition corridor?

- A strong narrative.
- Strong visual elements that further the thesis or narrative of the exhibit. Fluidity between the elements telling a strong story.
- Use of a variety of library collections material to tell a story. For example, an exhibit with manuscript documents, photographs, prints, and bound material will be stronger than an exhibit with only textual collection materials.

Keep these points in mind as you think about items to include in your exhibit:

- Use of originals may be limited for collections that are fragile or vulnerable to light damage.
- Most special collections materials can only be shown in reproduction.
- Proposed objects should consider the spatial limitations of the exhibition cases.

?*The Sterling Library Exhibit corridor is not presently equipped to incorporate multimedia.

Contact Kerri Sancomb, Student Exhibit Advisory Group Chair with any questions. kerri.sancomb@yale.edu [18]

Team Roles and Responsibilities

The exhibit team is comprised of the following. Click on each to view that member's role and responsibilities.

[Curator](#) [10]

[Faculty Advisor](#) [11]

[Librarian Exhibits Advisor](#) [12]

[Exhibition Production Program Manager](#) [22]

[Library Exhibits Technician](#) [23]

Curator

Curator: Roles and Responsibilities

- Works with Exhibits Unit to establish exhibition production schedule that agrees with student's academic calendar
- Works independently to meet agreed upon deadlines and communicates any delays or complications in a timely manner
- Adheres to Yale University Library exhibition best practices and department policies regarding research, exhibitions, and loans.
- Seeks research assistance of a librarian if needed
- Develops theme and focus of exhibition and case outline
- Selects all materials to be exhibited and provides a complete item the Exhibits Technician
- Creates final case layout of all objects to be exhibited
- Completes all exhibition text and works with Faculty Advisor and Librarian Exhibits Advisor on edits and revisions
- Works with Exhibits Unit to manage reprographic services needed to create exhibit reproductions or facsimiles, or for digital files needed for exhibit publicity

Online-exhibit related only: Work with advisors to complete the Copyright Fair Use worksheet if needed: https://ogc.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Fair-Use-Tool-Website-7-2020_fillable.pdf [24]

Exhibition Production Program Manager

Exhibition Production Program Manager: Roles and Responsibilities

- Leads the production, installation, and maintenance of exhibits across the YUL system, including BRBL, Haas Arts Library, Lewis Walpole Library, Manuscripts and Archives, and Sterling Memorial Library. Works directly with curators, librarians, archivists, Library staff, faculty, and students in planning and designing exhibit installations.
- Chairs Sterling Memorial Library exhibits committee and manages centralized master production calendar.
- Reviews items selected for exhibition with individual curators to determine physical and environmental display concerns and needs. Refers items to conservators and coordinates treatment work with master production schedule. Works closely with Preservation Field Services Librarian ensure that in-house exhibition environments meet preservation standards.
- Performs research and makes recommendations to exhibit curators regarding appropriate mounts and displays to be used and fabricated for their exhibits.
- Creates and maintains exhibition documentation, customized exhibition production plans/checklists, selection tracking tools, spatial visualization tools, and label copy templates.
- Provides manuals and mentoring for student exhibition curators.
- Designs and fabricates mounts, mats, frames, book cradles for a wide array of Library collection materials predominantly held in the Library's special collections.
- Oversees staff, student assistants and outside contractors involved in exhibit projects. Provides training and guidance to non-Library exhibit curators in Library policy, protocols, and standards for the safe display of Library materials.

- Oversees the management, documentation, and transportation of loans for SML exhibitions. With YUL conservators, organizes and supervises the proper handling, packing and unpacking of art objects loaned between YUL libraries and collections for SML venues.
- Acts as liaison to Library Communication Office on branding and label/copy standards and production. Communicates schedules for exhibitions and related events.
- Provides training for Librarian and Faculty Advisors as needed.

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Faculty Advisor

Faculty Advisor: Roles and Responsibilities

The Faculty Advisor will work with the Curator for the entirety of the exhibit production period to assist with:

- Establishing an exhibition production schedule that agrees with the student's academic calendar
- Defining the parameters and expectations for how the exhibit work will contribute to their final senior project
- Developing the theme and focus of the exhibit and case outline
- Contributing subject expertise and serving as a resource for content development
- Reviewing and editing exhibit text drafts with focus on subject overview and accuracy
- Selecting items (optional)

Online-exhibit related only: Advising on best practices in the field of study for completion of the Copyright Fair Use worksheet provided by the Yale Office of the General Counsel

Library Exhibits Advisor

Librarian Exhibits Advisor: Roles and Responsibilities

The Librarian Exhibits Advisor should focus on these key responsibilities:

- Mentoring the student during the exhibit research process.
- Connecting the student with relevant YUL staff and collections.
- Meeting regularly with the student to track progress on the exhibit.
- Guiding the student through specific exhibit preparation tasks.
- Communicating as needed with the student's academic advisor for the project.

The Librarian Exhibits Advisor will work with Curator for the entirety of the exhibit production period to assist with:

- Introducing the student curator to relevant YUL departments and guidelines at the beginning of the exhibition process to ensure all Yale University Library exhibition practices and department policies are adhered to
- Establishing routine check in meetings to closely monitor progress to ensure deadlines will be met
- Developing the theme and focus of the exhibit and case outline
- Contributing subject expertise and serving as a resource for content development
- Reviewing and proofing all draft exhibition text with attention to content and style

- Offering guidance, along with Exhibits Unit and Director of Communications and Marketing, when working with the Designer, on overall exhibit design and PR Package elements
- Selecting items (optional)
- Online-exhibit related only: Advising on best practices in the field of study for completion of the Copyright Fair Use worksheet provided by the Yale Office of the General Counsel

The Librarian Exhibits Advisor will work with the Exhibits Unit to:

- Establish the exhibition production schedule
- Consult on case layouts during Item and Case Layout Reviews

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Library Exhibits Technician

Library Exhibits Technician: Roles and Responsibilities

- Assists in the production, installation, and maintenance of exhibits across the YUL system, including BRBL, Haas Arts Library, Lewis Walpole Library, Manuscripts and Archives, and Sterling Memorial Library.
- Works directly with curators, librarians, archivists, Library staff, faculty, and students in planning and designing exhibit installations.
- Participates in item selection for exhibition with individual curators to determine physical and environmental display concerns and needs. Refers items to conservators and coordinates treatment work with master production schedule. Responsible for maintaining exhibit item list on project SharePoint site.
- Responsible for maintaining Exhibit Production Calendar and creating Outlook meeting appointments and reminders for all necessary deadlines.
- Maintains exhibition documentation, customized exhibition production inventory lists, selection tracking tools, spatial visualization tools, and label copy templates.

- Provides manuals and mentoring for exhibition curators.
- Coordinates all digitization requests and workflows.
- Designs and fabricates mounts, mats, frames, and book cradles for a wide array of Library collection materials predominantly held in the Library's special collections.
- Oversees the tracking and transportation of loans for SML exhibitions. With YUL conservators, organizes and supervises the proper handling, packing, and unpacking of art objects loaned between YUL libraries and collections for SML venues.

For Faculty

Ways faculty can get involved with exhibits at Sterling Memorial Library (SML):

- Encourage highly motivated and committed students in their junior year to submit a proposal (a link will be provided in February 2026) for the Yale Library Senior Exhibit Program
- Be a faculty advisor for a [Senior Exhibit Program](#) [25]
- Review responsibilities here: [Senior Exhibit Program Advisor](#) [11]
- Spread the word about new exhibit opportunities in SML to colleagues across campus
- Attend an [information session](#) [26]

Ways students can benefit from curating exhibits in the library:

Academic/research skills:

- Provides a cohesive picture for the student of their academic support network: academic advisor, library specialists, IT specialists
- Develops a familiarity with physical library collections and spaces
- Provides experience researching with primary source materials
- Facilitates interactions with Yale University Library (YUL) staff
- Supports use of online resources to enhance research skills
- Encourages cross-disciplinary and cross-collection research and investigation
- Supplements traditional research outputs such as papers, essays, blogs, or web sites

Life skills:

- Accountability and self confidence
- Project management and organizational skills
- Communication skills and experience

For Library Staff

Ways library staff can get involved with exhibits at SML:

- Encourage highly motivated and committed students in their junior year to submit a proposal for the [Yale Library Senior Exhibit Program](#) [27].
- Volunteer to be a Librarian Exhibit Advisor and mentor a student curator through the research and object selection of an exhibit.
- Spread the word about new exhibit opportunities in SML to our colleagues across campus.
- Talk to your department head about serving on the exhibits committee in the future.
- Learn about [online exhibits at Yale University Library](#) [17]

Librarian Exhibit Advisor

Open to all professional library staff with supervisor's approval, the Librarian Exhibit Advisor is a rotating volunteer support role for exhibit production in the Sterling Library Corridor. This person will offer guidance in content development to student curators and exhibit curators with little or no experience with SML exhibitions.

This opportunity has numerous benefits both for individual professional growth and in support of the library's mission to support and enhance research, teaching, and learning at Yale. The Exhibits Production Manager will provide training for each new librarian exhibit advisor, and when necessary connect new exhibit advisors with other library staff who have prior exhibit experience.

Review exhibit advisor responsibilities for each project here: [Senior Exhibit Program Advisor](#) [28]

If you have specific questions about being a librarian exhibit advisor please contact [Kerri Sancomb](#) [29], Exhibits Production Program Manager.

Sterling Memorial Library Exhibition Corridor

Sterling Memorial Library Exhibition Corridor hosts exhibit opportunities each year supporting student research and Yale library collections. Topics and curators are selected by the [Student Exhibition Advisory Group](#) [30] from proposals submitted by prospective curators.

Exhibits may feature materials from any Yale University Library collection. The library provides funding and staff support for production. Materials requiring special display conditions or security may be presented in facsimile.

Sterling Library Exhibition Corridor

Exhibits in the Exhibition Corridor are curated by students, based on their own research with materials from any Yale library collection.

- In the spring, the Yale Library Senior Exhibition Fellowship is curated by one senior using all five exhibition cases to present a capstone project

[See examples of past exhibits in the Exhibition Corridor.](#) [3]

Email questions to kerri.sancomb@yale.edu [18].

Student Exhibition Advisory Group

Name, Job Title	Term and role (if applicable)
Deborah Cannarella, Writer/Public Relations Manager [31]	Permanent Member
Megan Czekaj, Library Exhibit Technician [32], Conservation & Exhibit Strategies [33]	Permanent Member
Sarah Davis, Library Exhibition Technician, Conservation & Exhibit Strategies [34]	Permanent Member
Madeleine Glennon, Assistant Director, Development [35]	Permanent Member
James Kessenides, Kaplanoff Librarian for American History [36]	Committee Co-Chair, P
Jessica Pigza, Associate Director, Arts Library Special Collections [37]	Two-year term
Kerri Sancomb, Exhibits Production Program Manager, Conservation and Exhibit Strategies [38]	Committee Co-Chair, P

Information Sessions

Senior Exhibit Program at Yale Library

Join library staff to learn about the Senior Exhibit Program at Yale Library. During this 60 minute Zoom information session you will learn tips for creating a successful proposal, what goes into creating physical exhibit and have an opportunity to ask questions related to your own proposal.

Wendesday, December 10 at 12pm [sign up here](#) [39]

Wednesday, December 11 at 12pm [sign up here](#) [40]

The [advisory group members](#) [41] are available for one on one assistance.

Source URL: <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group>

Links

[1] <https://library.yale.edu/news/new-exhibition-opens-dec-9-celebrate-10-years-student-curators-yale-library> [2] <https://library.yale.edu/exhibitions> [3] https://guides.library.yale.edu/past_sterling_library_exhibits/exhibit_corridor [4] <https://web.library.yale.edu/sml-exhibition-committee/students> [5] <https://library.yale.edu/news/senior-exhibit-fellow-anne-gross-25-explores-psychological-effects-media-new-exhibition> [6] <https://library.yale.edu/news/senior-exhibit-fellow-aj-laird-24-tracking-whaling-vessels-archive> [7] <https://news.yale.edu/2023/04/28/creating-exhibit-lyrical-and-epigrammatic> [8] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/guide-yale-library-senior-exhibit-program-application> [9] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/information-sessions> [10] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/roles-and-responsibilities/curator> [11] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/roles-and-responsibilities/faculty-advisor> [12] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/roles-and-responsibilities/library-exhibits-advisor> [13]

[https://web.library.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/2026_27_Senior_Exhibit_Program_Info_session%20\(1\).pdf](https://web.library.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/2026_27_Senior_Exhibit_Program_Info_session%20(1).pdf) [14]
<http://web.library.yale.edu/pl> [15] <https://web.library.yale.edu/subject-specialists> [16] <http://archives.yale.edu> [17]
<http://guides.library.yale.edu/omeka> [18] mailto:kerri.sancomb@yale.edu [19] <http://primarysources.yale.edu/> [20] <https://web.library.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Faculty%20Advisor%20Senior%20exhibit%20production%20responsibilities.pdf> [21]
[https://web.library.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Librarian%20Exhibits%20Advisor%20responsibilities\(1\).pdf](https://web.library.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Librarian%20Exhibits%20Advisor%20responsibilities(1).pdf) [22] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/roles-and-responsibilities/exhibition-program-production-manager> [23] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/roles-and-responsibilities/library-exhibits-technician> [24]
https://ogc.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Fair-Use-Tool-Website-7-2020_fillable.pdf [25]
<http://web.library.yale.edu/sml-exhibits-committee/students> [26] <http://web.library.yale.edu/information-sessions> [27]
<http://web.library.yale.edu/students> [28] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/team-roles-and-responsibilities/faculty-advisor> [29]
<http://resources.library.yale.edu/StaffDirectory/detail.aspx?q=510> [30] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group> [31] <https://library.yale.edu/people/deborah-cannarella> [32] <https://library.yale.edu/people/megan-czekaj> [33] <http://library.yale.edu/people/megan-czekaj> [34] <https://library.yale.edu/people/sarah-davis> [35]
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