

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*](#) [1]

[2024 AJ Laird Whaling, curator of *Logbooks: Records of a Maritime Industr*](#) [2]y

[2023 Chucho Martinez, curator of *The Study of Things: George Kubler in Latin America*](#) [3]

[Review these guidelines](#) [4] 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](#) [5]

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

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- 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](#) [6], as well as deadlines and workflows.
- Discuss the opportunity with a [Faculty Advisor](#) [7]r and a [Librarian Exhibit Advisor](#) [8]. 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](#) [9].

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](#) [10] or [subject specialist](#) [11], as well as archivists and collection specialists.
- Explore and discover the collections at [Archives at Yale](#) [12].
- Get ideas by looking at previous years' exhibits via the [SML Exhibits LibGuide](#). [13]
- Learn about opportunities to create [online exhibits at Yale University Library](#) [14].

Send questions to kerri.sancomb@yale.edu [15]

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](#) [16].
- 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](#) [17] and the [librarian advisor](#) [18].
- 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 [15]

Team Roles and Responsibilities

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

[Curator](#) [6]

[Faculty Advisor](#) [7]

[Librarian Exhibits Advisor](#) [8]

[Exhibition Production Program Manager](#) [19]

[Library Exhibits Technician](#) [20]

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 [21]

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.

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- 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.

Source URL: <https://web.library.yale.edu/sml-exhibition-committee/students>

Links

[1] <https://library.yale.edu/news/senior-exhibit-fellow-anne-gross-25-explores-psychological-effects-media-new-exhibition> [2] <https://library.yale.edu/news/senior-exhibit-fellow-aj-laird-24-tracking-whaling-vessels-archive> [3] <https://news.yale.edu/2023/04/28/creating-exhibit-lyrical-and-epigrammatic> [4] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/guide-yale-library-senior-exhibit-program-application> [5] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/information-sessions> [6] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/roles-and-responsibilities/curator> [7] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/roles-and-responsibilities/faculty-advisor> [8] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/roles-and-responsibilities/library-exhibits-advisor> [9] [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) [10] <http://web.library.yale.edu/pl> [11] <https://web.library.yale.edu/subject-specialists> [12] <http://archives.yale.edu> [13] https://guides.library.yale.edu/past_sterling_library_exhibits/exhibit_corridor [14] <http://guides.library.yale.edu/omeka> [15] <https://web.library.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Faculty%20Advisor%20Senior%20exhibit%20production%20responsibilities.pdf> [16] <http://primarysources.yale.edu/> [17] [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) [18] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/roles-and-responsibilities/exhibition-program-production-manager> [19] <https://web.library.yale.edu/student-exhibition-advisory-group/students/senior-exhibit-program-yale-library/roles-and-responsibilities/library-exhibits-technician> [20] https://ogc.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Fair-Use-Tool-Website-7-2020_fillable.pdf [21]