

CREATIVE CAREERS

Getting started in museums and galleries

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Writer of Influence Exhibition Proposal

Context

The exhibition is a key element of a larger DCMS / DCSF funded Strategic Commissioning project aimed at children and young people. It is the third year of the project which has looked at key themes for the Gallery: Identity, Celebrity and Achievement. Previous and current exhibitions include *Family Album* and *Comedians: From 1940 to Now*. The project has seen a different model of curation where partners in collaboration with the Gallery have consulted with young people to develop exhibitions that have been extremely popular both with the target audience as well as having a broad reach. (*Family Album* had over 110,000 visitors and *Comedians* 89,000 to date).

Hand in hand with the exhibition is the development of a pioneering digital resource for the new Creative & Media Diploma currently being introduced into schools across the country. The resource aimed at students aged 14 – 19 and their teachers will have at its heart the process of making an exhibition. By *Using Comedians* and *Influence: Writers to Lyricists* as case studies for the resource, the exhibitions will have a legacy far beyond the showing of the exhibitions themselves. The other strands of the programme include local learning programmes and teacher CPD.

Exhibition proposal

At the heart of this exhibition is the importance of *influence*, which we will examine in two ways. The first will focus upon the influence of people, considering how different writers have affected each other (Shakespeare, Dylan Thomas, Malorie Blackman), the second will look at social influence and the ways in which external events can affect writers (H G Wells, T S Eliot, George Eliot, John Lennon).

The exhibition will aim to introduce a fresh perspective to some well-known and much loved works and favourite literary figures from the National Portrait Gallery collection. The show will include writers, playwrights, authors, poets and lyricists from the 15th century through to the present day and will include a range of media. The exhibition will comprise small groupings of work which will be cross-chronological. Through careful research we will aim to make surprising and interesting connections between writers. Interpretation will carefully present the balance of one influence over another. By viewing writers in a different context, we would like to encourage our audience towards writers they may not have considered before.

The list of works has been put together by young people from the partner institutions as writers who they feel are important to themselves and their lives. As the key audience for the exhibition is 14-19 year olds, we feel that examining influence would be a good way of engaging young people and encouraging them to think about all the influences that have played a part in making them who they are.

The works have been selected according to two criteria: the significance of the sitter or artist and the medium, style or technique.