Design Brief: African Collections Futures Report

What is African Collections Futures?
Based at the Fitzwilliam Museum, African Collections Futures seeks to develop a better sense of where Africa-related objects and materials are across the University of Cambridge, what kinds of engagements scholars, African research and heritage institutions, and African diaspora and communities of origin have with these objects, and what more can be done. The scope covers the nine institutions (eight museums and the botanic garden) that make up the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM), the University Library, and less well-known collections such as those in various university departments and affiliated institutions. Research includes levels of cataloguing, digitisation, and ease of access to collections in addition to exploring the collections’ contexts (including histories of acquisition). With research encompassing all the countries and island nations of Africa, from pre-history to the present, African Collections Futures covers tens of thousands of items, including material culture, archival materials, and plant and animal specimens. This project will serve as an introduction to African collections at Cambridge, signposting further areas for research, collaboration, and community engagement. The outcomes of this project will be published in a report in late 2024, with a summary report that will be disseminated to members of the public. The visual design for that summary report is the main purpose of this call.

What are we trying to achieve?
The report will lay out the findings of African Collections Futures for a broad public audience, specifically African people on the continent, in the UK, and the wider diaspora. Material arrived at Cambridge in a variety of ways, from exchanges and purchases, excavations to expeditions. Some of the materials were acquired through violent or exploitative means, and much of the local context, African labour and expertise underpinning the collections remains hidden. We hope that the report will be used as a starting point for a wide range of individuals and groups – from university scholars to museum professionals, students in schools to African diaspora community groups – to engage with the African collections at Cambridge. We hope that the report will be shared widely, particularly via social media, and encourage conversations, questions, museum visits, and future research proposals.

Who are we talking to?
• African people (particularly those aged 16-30) on the continent and in the diaspora interested in African history and culture.
• Academics, researchers, and museum professionals working on African collections, in Africa, the UK and beyond.
• Individuals with African heritage, and non-Africans interested in African history and culture.

Campaign vision and feel
The summary report should be vibrant and reflect the diversity of African materials at Cambridge – from the cultural artefacts to the specimens from the natural world (see visual brief), the Cambridge museums in which they are currently housed, and images of people interacting with, analysing, and responding to, objects. As this summary report will primarily be disseminated online, through WhatsApp and other social media, it should be optimised for viewing on a small screen with low bandwidth.

Materials to be delivered
• Title page for full report
• 10,000-word summary report (text to be provided) for digital and print publication
  o Including graphics, maps, object images, pull quotes
• Social media graphics (including Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook)
  o E.g., quotations from the report, static object highlights
• Digital banners for the project website (within www.ccc.cam.ac.uk)

Key Dates
• Responses invited by: 30th August 2024
• Chemistry meetings between 3-5th September 2024
• Designer appointed: 6th September 2024
• Final artwork deadline: Early October 2024

Budget
Up to £3000
This includes all design work, revisions, and final submissions.

See attached for a mood board.

Please submit a CV and portfolio by **23:59 30th August 2024**

Please note we do not require creative ideas to be included at this stage.

Detailed timings and text/image client supply deadlines will be worked through with the appointed designer.
We particularly welcome responses from designers with African heritage.

Contact details for any questions:
Eva Namusoke - enn21@cam.ac.uk
Senior Curator, African Collections Futures
Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge
www.ccc.cam.ac.uk/themes/african-collection-futures/
African Collections Futures

Mood Board
Contents

• Creative references
• Object highlights
Creative references

Welcome To African Digital Heritage

https://africandigitalheritage.org//
Creative references

Creative references
Creative references

https://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk/photographs/433538
Object Highlights

Coffin of Chief of scribes of the temple of Amun Re, Nespawershefyt, E.1.1822.c, Fitzwilliam Museum

Chief’s hat from Uzeba Town, Edo State, Nigeria, Z 12588, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Umdhela; i-Gqokwe. Ox hide shield carried by women at certain dances. 1933.461, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
War knife with broad blade decorated with cut-out panels and incised ornament. E 1911.55.126, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Gourd container covered in beadwork in panels of dark and light blue, white and red. Z 23516 A, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
f. 4v Coloured picture of St. George and the dragon, and f. 6r, from Service Book, Ethiopia, 18th Century, Classmark : Add. 3682, University Library

Title: Sir Apolo Kagwa (d. 1927), Principal Minister (1914 -1926), formerly Regent of Buganda, Approx. 1900 -1927, Classmark : CMS 29/7, Royal Commonwealth Society, University Library

Nymphaea Thermarum, wild-derived. Accession no: 20200906, Cambridge University Botanic Garden
Barbara Hepworth, Fugue  
M.61-1984, Fitzwilliam Museum

Museum labels for ‘Akwe.’ Small spinning top made from a spherical seed or nut with a handle.’ Z 12183, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology