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# A Compilation of Guidelines for Filming

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The following is a compilation of guidelines from a number of museums: the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Art, and Hampton Court Palace, blended together and sorted into topics.

The point of pulling these all together was not to produce a rather daunting and stringent list, but to cover a wide range of situations that could be sorted through to suit a particular institution. Obviously, a large, basically empty, atrium will require less than an historic house with confined spaces and densely placed objects.

One can always establish rules with the option of flexibility on site / on set.

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## Introduction / general museum policy statement

The primary functions of the Museum are to preserve and interpret our cultural and historical heritage through research, collecting, education, and exhibition. Therefore, permission for filming at the Museum may be granted if production will not hinder operations or prohibit the general public from visiting and enjoying the facilities, grounds, and/or collections. It is extremely important that production companies respect the need to preserve and to protect Museum property.

## PRELIMINARY NEGOTIATIONS

In the application for filming the production company must state name of production, name of company, size of crew, and number of talent; number of police department personnel; number of equipment and support vehicles; and names of key personnel to be present on filming day.

A script must be submitted, with all final shooting scenes and production schedules for the Museum noted prior to granting permission to film. The Museum does not permit the filming of violent or sexually explicit scenes on the premises; therefore, scripts are reviewed for content, not purposes of censorship.

Set design shall be approved prior to the date of filming. All set alterations that affect the Museum facility (attaching decorations, movement of Museum property, use of lights or fountain) require approval of the Museum filming coordinator. The specific objects or display cases to be filmed must be specified in writing.

Structures and equipment must be broken down into manageable parts of less than 6 ft. in any dimension, to facilitate safe movement in and out of the Museum.

A walkthrough/scout with all necessary parties (Museum representative, location manager, first assistant director, director, producer, etc.) must be scheduled as far in advance as possible – if a two week advance walkthrough is possible,

that is advised. At the time of this walkthrough, all filming areas must be agreed upon, as well as building access, parking needs, and crew set-up areas.

An appropriate staff member from the curatorial or conservation department must be notified, at least 48 hours prior to filming/photographing in the galleries. The conservation department will determine which materials are sensitive and establish the maximum lighting levels and exposure times permitted for the individual works of art. (For a summary of these materials and their lighting limitations, see below.)

Production companies are required to have the unit production (crew) and location manager sign a copy of the guidelines to be placed on file at the location prior to the day of filming. It is the production company's responsibility to duplicate and distribute these guidelines to the production crew. The production company will be held responsible for the actions of their employees or subcontractors and their staff.

A floor plan schematic indicating the designated filming, set-up, no access areas, etc, will be provided by the Museum.

Filming and photography should be scheduled during periods when the facilities are closed to general public use.

## DURING FILMING

### Supervision

A person who is familiar with this document and is aware of all the Museum's requirements as specified in the guidelines should be designated by the production company. This person will be the contact for Museum staff should issues arise during the filming/photography. This person should have a signed copy of the contract on hand and should have direct influence over the production.

The contact person/location manager shall communicate only with the designated Museum representative. No requests are to be made of any other Museum staff, as they will not be addressed.

Depending on the size of the crew an appropriate number of Museum staff (curatorial, conservation/collection management, or guards) must be present to oversee activities.

All crew members must sign-in with security upon entering the Museum. After signing-in, they will receive a contractor's badge, which must be worn at all times.

Only those essential to the scene in production are permitted on a location. All other talent and crew must wait in a designated area until called.

Production crew members are limited to the areas designated for their use as noted in location itinerary. Any occupation of a non-designated Museum area requires the accompaniment of Museum security.

*or, in the most extreme case,*

All crew members are to be escorted by Museum staff AT ALL TIMES, both at the filming locations and while walking around the Museum.

### **General**

Film crew members may not handle Museum objects under any circumstances. Museum objects or gallery display cases or pedestals may only be moved by Museum collection staff and only if prior arrangements have been made. No members of the crew are allowed within two feet of a work of art.

Floors, and in certain circumstances also doorways and walls, must be protected from accidental scratching and gouging when moving the components of a structure in and out of the Museum and during installation and take-down. The contractor is to provide protection materials.

No smoking, food, and/or liquids (even in sealed containers) of any kind, are permitted in the galleries or near works of art. (Although one museum does allow bottled water in designated areas within the museum.)

No atmosphere-generating equipment, such as a fog machine, is allowed in any gallery or collection area.

Flammable and noxious substances are not permitted on Museum grounds.

### **Equipment**

Cameras on dollies, tripods and camera booms with wheels, or ladders are not allowed in the exhibition areas without the prior written permission of the Museum. All equipment on wheels must have locking systems to prevent them from moving when not in use. And must never be unattended. (One museum does not allow the use of tracks, dollies, or boom mics in the galleries at all, and approval to use this equipment elsewhere must be obtained in advance.)

During filming, hand held booms or microphones must be carefully supervised to prevent bumping into artworks. The Museum strongly encourages the use of Lavalier microphones (wireless).

The crew must place cardboard or other barrier material on the floors to protect the surface onto which equipment is unloaded. If necessary, Museum staff should place stanchions (or a similar barrier) around the art in set-up areas.

Cables and wires must run along the walls if possible and must either be secured with tape or sandbags. (Note: Cables are not to be taped to any of the hardwood floors.)

All equipment must be placed specified distances (usually at least 10 ft.) from art as determined by a conservation representative to prevent equipment from accidentally falling onto art work.

Crew carrying equipment should walk single file through the Museum's galleries. No hand carrying of large equipment. If necessary, hand trucks can be provided.

Items measuring 4 ft. or bigger in any dimension must be carried by no less than two individuals.

When moving a tripod or light stand, it must be carried vertically.

All stands should have rubber or nylon tips at their feet and need to be steadied at the base with sandbags. Lead weights are not recommended.

All equipment not in use shall be stored in a non-intrusive, non-threatening area.

### **Lighting**

Museum electrician(s) shall be consulted prior to use of power in the facility, and a staff engineer shall be present when additional lights require access to Museum's power.

The Museum may designate that certain sensitive objects be illuminated at extremely low light levels. These materials must not be exposed to quartz iodide or halogen lights, due to the extreme heat they produce. The following lighting measurements are guidelines for understanding the sensitivity of materials. Actual lighting and exposure times for filming and photography must be determined by Museum staff.

Five foot-candles or 50 lux or less must be used for all sensitive works of art, including, but not limited to:

Paper: discolored acidic paper or colored paper; paper fans; watercolors and gouache; brown inks and washes; pastels; Japanese prints; photographic papers and emulsions (including but not limited to albumen emulsions); salted paper prints (calotypes); cyanotypes; hand colored prints; color photographic processes; gelatin emulsions.

Textiles: tapestries and rugs; costumes; embroideries; silks; linen wrapped mummies.

Contemporary Paintings: paintings with exposed canvas supports (i.e., Morris Louis).

Other: tempera paintings; Indian and Islamic paintings; paintings with light collage elements; illuminated manuscripts; Asian scrolls and screens; collodion emulsions (including ambrotypes and tintypes); basketry and similar organic materials; papyrus; Urushi (Japanese lacquer).

Fifteen (15) foot candles or 150 lux or less must be used for the following works: paintings, decorative art and ethnographic objects; ivory and bone inlays; leather surfaces; polychrome sculpture; modern sculpture and furniture with plastic elements; painted wood; furniture; books; leather bindings.

Artifacts and specimens deemed light sensitive by the conservator may only be filmed using available light.

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## A Compilation of Guidelines for Filming, continued

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Lights may not be left on continuously or unnecessarily. Camera setup, camera focusing, and scene blocking should be done in available light only. Lights should be turned on only for final placement, exposure readings, and actual filming.

Light should be reflected or bounced whenever possible rather than aimed directly at an object.

**Time limit:** To prevent heating of surfaces during shooting, lighting with hot lights on any one object will be done for no more than 10 minutes at a time with a 15 minute rest period between lightings. Heat and light measurements using a hand held meter should be monitored by both the crew and Museum staff.

If glare from external lights cannot be eliminated from objects in vitrines or behind glass, objects should be filmed using available gallery lighting and/or by shooting at an angle, or through the use of polarizing filters or polarized light sources.

**Screens and Filters:** Screens must be used on tungsten, incandescent spot, or flood lights to control heat and protect object(s) from flying glass as a result of exploding bulbs. UV filters and heavy Pyrex and wire screens must be used on all light sources when possible to minimize exposure and contain debris should a tube explode. This is mandatory for quartz iodide, halogen, tungsten, and all continuous light sources. Fire retardant scrims must be used.

**Electronic flash:** Flash units must be at least 10 feet from the object being filmed/photographed, and far enough away from adjacent objects so that if a unit falls, it will not touch objects or walls. Flash units must be filtered to absorb all radiation wavelengths shorter than 380 nanometers (using, for example, Rosco UV Filter, Therma-shield).

Museum authorized staff may at any time require film crews to turn off the lights if there is heat building up near sensitive works of art or if there is any increase in ambient temperature.

Care must be taken not to alter the relative humidity in climate-controlled galleries. It must be monitored during filming. This is dependent on the types of objects being filmed in the gallery. Measurements will be taken at the surface of the art by a staff member to determine safe limits.

**Maximum power levels:** Equipment using more than 20 amps is not permitted (check with staff electrician prior to shooting if necessary).

### Miscellaneous

The Museum reserves the right document, by still photograph, any film shoot occurring on its property. These photographs will be placed in the Museum's files for archival purposes, and any use of them will be cleared with the representatives for the film.

Production companies may not use any Museum equipment, supplies, or other facilities unless designated by the film coordinator.

The film company must have a fire inspector on duty.

All rubbish is to be removed by the function's contractor before leaving the area.

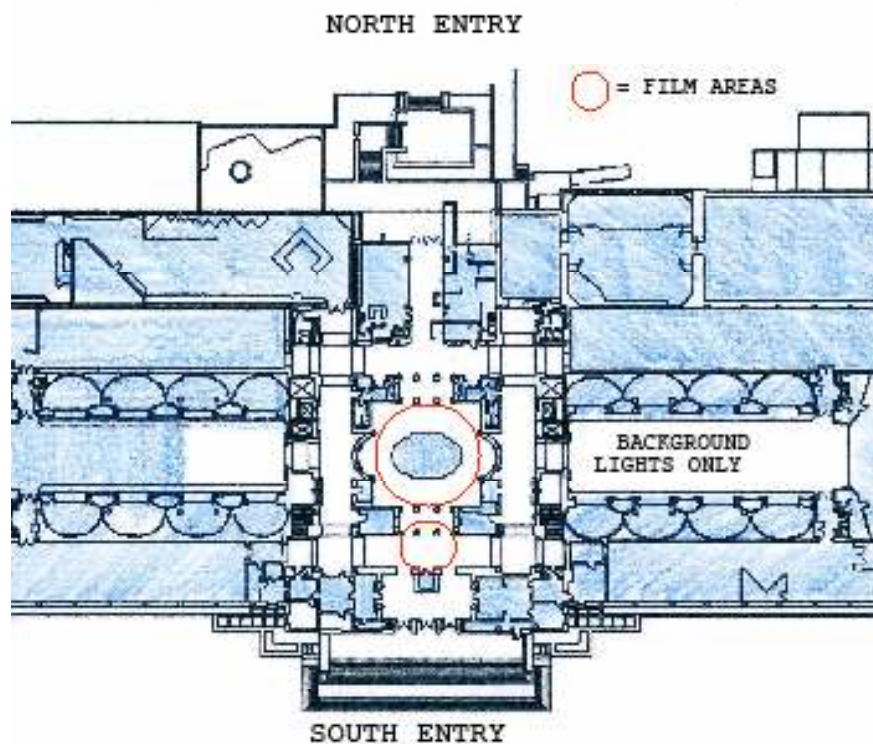
*and finally,*

### Enforcement

Any individual who fails to comply with the guidelines or whose behavior otherwise puts collection materials at risk will be asked to leave the premises.

The Museum reserves the right to suspend production and declare the permit null and void if any of the stated procedures are violated. In such cases location fee will be prorated and unused amount refunded. By signing the agreement permittee agrees to pay all staff time and material costs accumulated.

Floorplan for the shoot described on the opposite page.



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## Sample of a production company filming request

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TO: Museum co-ordinator

DATE:

FROM: Location management company

### FILMING REQUEST

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

Please review the following request for filming:

**NAME OF PRODUCTION:** Television Pilot "Untitled Project"

**PRODUCTION COMPANY:**

**DESCRIPTION OF PRODUCTION AND BUILDING USE:**

The scene that will be filmed is of a mother and daughter meeting in the American Natural History Museum in New York. They sit in front of the Dueling Dinosaurs and have a conversation. A copy of the script has been faxed to you for your reference.

Areas use for filming: South Entrance and Grand Foyer.

The doors to the North American Mammal Hall will be open so the camera can see inside as background. The production would like to place some small lights inside these rooms so it does not look completely black. The camera will be placed just inside the door of the African Mammal Hall looking out into the Grand Foyer. The camera will never see inside the African Mammal Hall. The same type of camera crane that has been used before will be used by this production. The production has asked if one of the carts can remain in the Grand Foyer during filming.

Areas used for load-in, load-out, equipment storage, etc.: Load in and out shall take place through the North and South entrances and the west loading dock. A generator will be placed outside the south entrance. Prep only may take place during the public hours beginning at 4 PM. During all public hours, all equipment and cables will not block or cross any halls, doorways, or entrances, will be stored in a safe, taped off area in the corner of the Grand Foyer. The production will restore and vacate the Museum before it opens at 9:30 AM on Friday and 10:00 AM on Saturday.

Number of cast & crew: Cast: 2, Extras: 35, Crew: 85, although most will not be inside the Museum.

Changing out of lights for color correction required: Lights will be placed above the large molding near the ceiling in the Grand Foyer as has been done in the past. A scissor lift will be used for this task. The production has asked for the Museum's Audio/Visual Coordinator to remove the 2 large S4 lights in the middle of the Dueling Dinosaurs and to replace them afterwards. The production has asked for the Museum's Audio/Visual Coordinator to remove the glass gels from the spotlights around the edge of the Dueling Dinosaurs so they may place their plastic gels over these lights.

Special lights & equipment that are not included in Guidelines: None.

Please refer to the attached floor plan and floor plan explanation. Shaded areas are off-limits to production personnel.

A copy of the Filming Guidelines has been provided to the production and the production has agreed to work within these Guidelines. The Filming Guidelines are included in the Filming Contract with the production.

**DATES NEEDED:**

Set Preparation: Thurs., 3/22, 4 PM – 4 AM (12 hours)

Filming, Set Striking & Location Clean-up: Fri., 3/23, 4 PM – 6 AM (14 hours)

**MUSEUM STAFF REQUIREMENTS:** The production will probably not work the full length of time listed above and should finish a couple hours earlier each night.

Security Guards: For times listed above we will need 4 Security Guards – one for the loading dock (starting at 4 PM), and then the North entrance, South entrance, and relief (starting at 5 PM). In addition, there will be one Guard required during the public hours on Friday, for any equipment and set dressing.

One Building Engineer will be required for freight elevator for all times listed above.

One Conservator will be required for all times listed above.

All production personnel must vacate the Museum no later than 9:30 AM on Friday and 10:00 AM on Saturday, and equipment and set dressing will be stored in a safe manner without blocking any public access during public hours.