

Environmental Sustainability and Collections Care

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Climates Within and Without: Confronting Climate Emergency in Museums

#ecology #museum
#sustainability

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By Kirsty Robertson

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NY Times 24 October 2022

passage, Rubio notes that the energy consumption of the New York storage facility for the MoMA “is actually higher than that of a large hospital ..., which means that keeping artworks alive demands more energy than caring for human bodies.” [4] Without even accounting for the cycle of changing exhibitions, the shipping of works, and the travel of museum staff and audiences, the very existence of museums is an extractive proposition. And the more that wildfires, floods, hurricanes, power outages, and even particulate pollution and dirt brought in by audiences present threats to artworks and artefacts deemed worth of protection, the more energy is demanded to protect them.

Energy Use

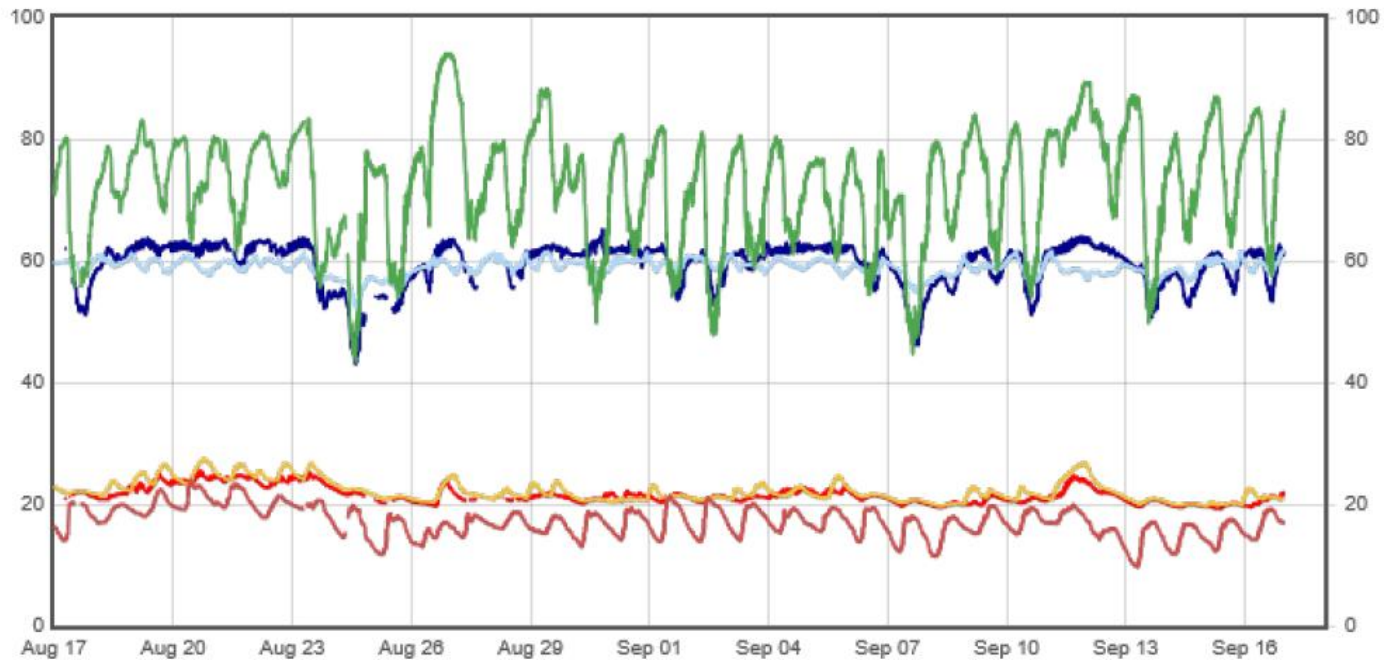
Energy Use

A well-maintained building is the first step in providing the right environment for the collections inside.



Energy Use

Understand the different environments in your building. Some areas may provide a more suitable environment than others.



Energy Use

Understand your collections.

- Do you need to rationalise?
- What are your collections made of?
- What environmental conditions do they actually need?
- Can we all be a little more pragmatic about implementing guidelines?



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As Energy Costs Bite, Museums Rethink a Conservation Credo

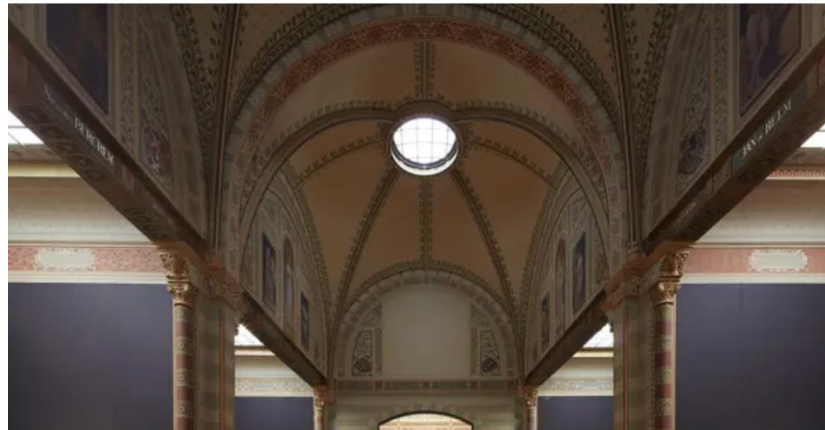
Tight climate controls have become the norm to protect artworks and artifacts. But as heating and electricity prices soar, Europe's museums administrators are wondering whether the rules need to be so strict.



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Energy Use



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Environmental sustainability - reducing museums' carbon footprint

NMDC recognises that museums need to approach long-term collections care in a way that does not require excessive use of energy, whilst recognising their duty of care to collections.

There is general agreement within the international museums community that it is time to shift policies for environmental control, loan conditions and the guidance given to architects and engineers from the prescription of close control of ambient conditions throughout buildings and exhibition galleries to a more mutual understanding of the real conservation needs of different categories of object, which have widely different requirements and may have been exposed to very different environmental conditions in the past.

The Bizot Group - the group of the world's leading museums - agreed the Bizot Green Protocol in 2015. NMDC adopted these standards and hope they act as guidance for the rest of the museum sector.

Museums Matter

Encouraging investment

Supporting learning

Working internationally

Partnerships

Policy and projects

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Supporting our members

All-Party Parliamentary Group
for Museums

Environmental Conditions – Temporary suspension of the minimum requirement for Temperature until 31 March 2023

(Updated 16 December 2022)

To support museums with rising energy costs throughout the winter months, Arts Council England has agreed, with DCMS, to suspend the minimum temperature requirement for the next four months December – March.

The standard requirement for temperature is: 16 °C– 24 °C with a maximum fluctuation of 4 °C within 24 hours. The minimum requirement of 16 °C will be suspended to 31st March 2023.

Energy Use

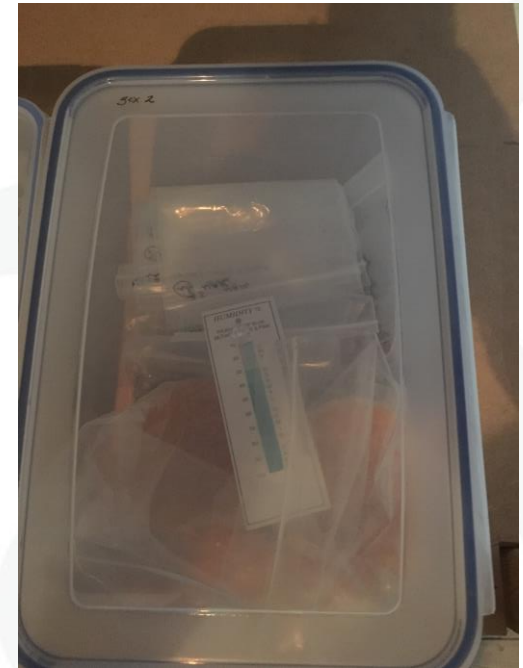
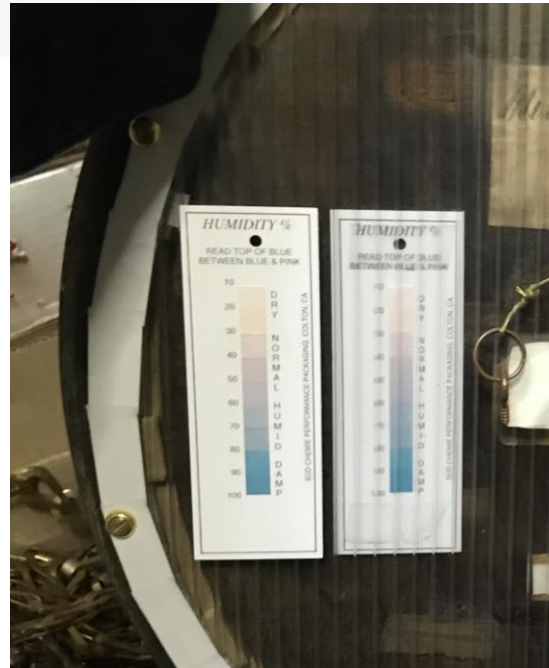
GIS environmental conditions review

Background

The GIS guidelines, published by the Arts Council and DCMS, set out how organisations are required to manage risk for an indemnity to be approved, and in the event of an incident, a claim to be made. Included in the guidelines is an assessment of environmental data from the borrowing institutions of the conditions in which the objects on loan will be kept, such as relative humidity, temperature and light lux and UV levels. This is to minimise the risk of claims under the scheme.

Energy Use

Do you need to control the environment in the whole room?



Goppian.com

Spencer
& Fry

Energy Use

Consider the energy use of different environmental control methods

- HVAC
- Heating
- Conservation heating
- Dehumidification
- Silica gel/ Proisorb

Can you reduce internal moisture sources?

Can buffering materials help?

Can people work in an alternative (warm) space?

- Lighting – controlled natural light, LEDs

Energy sources

Materials

- Are they needed?
 - Gloves
- Can you reuse something?
 - Jam jars, plastic containers, bubblewrap
- Can it be hired/ purchased second hand?
- Can it be reused?
- Can it be recycled?
- Is it provided by an environmentally responsible company?
- Can you buy locally?
- Can you combine orders to reduce transport?

Chemicals

Are chemicals needed?

Consider alternatives for cleaning and insect pest management.

If chemicals are needed, some are greener than others

<https://www.siconserve.org/greener-solvents/greener-solvents-hand-book/>

Actions

Sustainability Group

Write on website/ blog/twitter etc. actions you are taking

Discuss at museum groups/ forums things you have done

Resources

<https://mduk.org.uk/roots-and-branches/>

www.icon.org.uk/groups/environmental-sustainability-network/about-the-network

www.kiculture.org

<https://www.siconsolve.org/greener-solvents/greener-solvents-hand-book/>

Workshop

In small groups discuss what 3 things your museum could do in the next 3 months to be more environmentally sustainable.

Who will be responsible for these actions?

Write in your diary/ calendar for 23rd May to review your progress.