

# let's talk EXHIBITING

David Piercey, FRPSC

## EXHIBITING THEMATICS (Part 1)

The formation and organization of a thematic exhibit is perhaps one of the most challenging projects an exhibitor may face. Not only must one pay attention to the philatelic material and display it in a manner that reflects on the requirements for Treatment and Philatelic Importance, Philatelic Knowledge/Personal Study and Research, and Condition and Rarity, one must

also be able to demonstrate one's Thematic Knowledge.

Whereas other forms of exhibits weight Philatelic Knowledge/Personal Study and Research at 35 per cent for its philatelic content, a thematic exhibit has both Philatelic Knowledge and Thematic Knowledge, considered parallel and equal, combined together in this percentage of the weighting. Thus one must be able to demonstrate both,



and equally well, in a thematic exhibit, in order to be considered for a higher medal-level award.


Selection of material thus becomes paramount in any thematic exhibit. Not only must the material shown be directly related to the topic, attempts must be made to show rare or difficult-to-acquire material, to include classic as well as modern material, to develop links aligned to your topic with material not immediately obvious for your topic, and to select from as wide an array of philatelic elements as well. (More on elements will be discussed in Part 2 of this series.) Without thus demonstrating such efforts, you may not receive strong acknowledgement in Philatelic Importance, Philatelic Knowledge, or Condition and Rarity. Such is the bane of thematic exhibitors – always on the lookout for such material in order to improve one's exhibit.

Unlike traditional exhibits, however, the topic one chooses for a thematic exhibit allows the exhibitor complete freedom to define the purpose and scope of the exhibit. For example, there are many ways to develop a thematic exhibit on "horses", so the exhibitor must determine the story line, and the contents, of what he or she wants to include within this story line. In fact, "horses" is so broad a topic that one might decide to concen-

**FROGS & TOADS,**  
their relevance to humans.

The purpose of this exhibit is to describe some Family characteristics of Frogs and Toads and their roles in Science, Literature, The Arts and other creative works of humans.

●● Indicates an item of special interest.



**GROßER VORENTWURF FÜR  
DAS MARKENMOTIV „LAUBFROSCH“  
DER ÖSTERREICHISCHEN POST (1990)**

*Hannes Margreiter*

(Anura is the order of Frogs)  
Most people are unaware of the many contributions made by Frogs and Toads to our world. They are the least harmful to humans of any major Zoological Class.

They destroy harmful insects, acting as a check on our competitors for food and become food for humans when grown to sufficient size.

Miracle drugs and medicines have been discovered in their body fluids. Invaluable scientific knowledge has been gained through studies of their blood and hearts that has saved human lives.

Their elegant shapes and brilliant colors have been copied on art objects since prehistoric times; and they have been immortalized by renowned authors, artists and composers.

Many species of the Anura are in danger of extinction. Their disappearance is a warning signal to human that he/she must restore the ecological balance of his/her environment or his/her world will cease to exist.

Tree Frog  
Final preliminary drawing by Hannes Margreiter  
(Austria's WIEN '90 postal card issued 29.8.90)

Frogs & Toads,  
their relevance to humans.  
Exhibit Plan

Title, Plan	Pages	Total
1 History:	2	2
1.1 Distribution	4	6
1.2 Classification	2	
2 Life-cycle:		10
2.1 Eggs & Tadpoles	3	
2.2 Frogs & Toads	4	
2.3 Predators	3	
3 Anatomy:		7
3.1 The Body	2	
3.2 The head	3	
3.3 Hands & Feet	3	
4 Family Characteristics:		9
4.1 Vocalization	3	
4.2 Genetics Trails	6	
5 Frogs & Science:		5
5.1 Medicine & Experiments	3	
5.2 Inventions	2	
6 Frogs in Literature:		11
6.1 Beast Fables	3	
6.2 Poetry & Prose	5	
6.3 Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Legends, 3		
7 The Arts:		5
7.1 Drama	3	
7.2 Art Object	2	
8 Heterodoxy: Myth, Superstition & Magic		6
9 Imagery		2
10 Names & Nicknames:		8
10.1 People	2	
10.2 Places	3	
10.3 Things	3	
11 Habitats:		5
11.1 Frogs & Humans	3	
11.2 Destruction by Humans	2	
12 Wildlife Preservation		4
	Total	80

a table of contents which shows the organization of the chapters in a book. The headers of your exhibit pages, the section and subsection titles, then follow along in the same order at the top of each page sequentially through the exhibit, and each page includes your thematic text, the philatelic items you are choosing to display to visually demonstrate your thematic text, and your philatelic knowledge of your selected items. Here it is a good idea to keep your thematic text and your philatelic text separate and perhaps have them in different font styles or types so the viewer can see the differences.

Attached with this column are the Title Page and Plan Page from Sam Chiu's five-frame gold medal thematic exhibit "Frogs and Toads: Their Relevance to Humans". He uses his Title Page to maximum effect, including a showpiece item - a pre-production artist's preliminary drawing which was used on a 1990 postal stationery card from Austria. His purpose is clearly articulated, and his text amplifies what he intends to show.

His Plan Page, the second page of his exhibit, then lays out the structure by which he has decided to develop his theme. He uses a standard multi-level list scheme to format his plan, including the subsections he will survey under each section. Major sections are devoted to topics like "Life Cycle", "Anatomy", "Frogs and Science", "Frogs in Literature", "in the Arts", and etc., until he is satisfied he had told his intended story. Interestingly, he has also tried to whet our appetite for what he will be showing by including seven different philatelic items around his outline, which are in fact also examples of different philatelic elements - a pictorial meter, an imperforate stamp, a regular stamp, a specimen stamp, a pictorial cancel and a postally used example. ☒

trate on "horses in war", "the domestication of the horse", "the evolution of the horse", "dressage", or any other such defining topic that will allow you to develop the theme and story line of what you want to tell us about "horses". In fact, how you then tell your story allows you to then demonstrate the thematic knowledge, your personal study and research on your topic, which you want the viewer to understand about your topic, and which you want the judges to acknowledge.

Along with such freedom in thematic development comes the responsibility to describe in sufficient detail, on the Title Page and the Plan Page (and in the Synopsis), the purpose and full scope of

what you are exhibiting, lest judges take you to task for not including something they think is important (and what they might want to include if they were to attempt a similar exhibit). This is tricky, and may involve more textual information than in a traditional exhibit. Whatever you do, a few non-philatelic references on your chosen topic also become necessary in the Synopsis.

The Plan Page is unique to thematic exhibiting, as it is a second page, to be shown immediately after the Title Page, which outlines in multilevel list format the various sections or subsections you are including in the storyline of the topic you are showing. It is much like