

Thematic Exhibits:  
understanding the rules and  
the factors for success

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### **Objectives of the Seminar**

- Make clear the difference, *if any*,  
between the rules governing
  - thematic philately
  - the other philatelic classes
- Present three key factors  
for improving a thematic exhibit

### **Philately is characterized by two set of rules**

#### ➤ BASIC RULES

concerning the suitability of ITEMS as "collectible"

- Philatelic principles and customs  
e.g. perforation, paper thickness,  
forgeries/fakes

#### ➤ COMPETITIVE RULES

concerning the build-up and the evaluation of EXHIBITS  
shown at competitive exhibitions

- FIP GREV > FIP SREVs

### **Rules for Competitive Exhibits – Where are they defined?**

#### **How many Rules? They are just FIVE, defining**

- 4 The CONCEPT shown by the exhibit
- 4 The selection of MATERIAL  
– IN GENERAL
- 4 The selection of MATERIAL  
– AS REGARD TO THE CONCEPT

- 4 The selection of MATERIAL  
– RANGE AND QUALITY
- 4 The PRESENTATION of the exhibit

### **From the Concept to the Exhibit**

#### **Rule 1: The Concept shown by the Exhibit**

- 4 THE EXHIBIT SHALL SHOW A CLEAR CONCEPT OF THE SUBJECT TREATED
- 4 THE TITLE MUST DESCRIBE THE CONTENT OF THE EXHIBIT
- 4 THE CONCEPT SHALL BE LAID OUT IN AN INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT WHICH MUST BE WRITTEN IN ONE OF THE FIP OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

#### **Rule 1: The Concept shown by the Exhibit - Thematics**

- ❖ The treatment of a thematic exhibit comprises
  - The structure of the work (title & plan)
  - The elaboration of each point of the structure (development)
- ❖ The title with any subtitle defines the scope of the exhibit
- ❖ The plan
  - defines the structure of the exhibit and its subdivisions
  - covers all major aspects relevant to the title
  - should be entirely structured according to thematic criteria
- ❖ The order of the main chapters and their subdivisions should demonstrate the development of the plan rather than list its main aspects.
- ❖ The development means the elaboration of the theme in depth, aiming to achieve an arrangement of the material fully compliant with the plan

## **Rule 2: Selection of material – In general**

- 4 THE EXHIBIT SHALL CONSIST SOLELY OF RELEVANT PHILATELIC MATERIAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AND TEXT
- ❖ Each item must be
  - connected to the chosen theme
  - present its THEMATIC INFORMATION\* in the clearest & most effective way
- ✓ *Appropriate philatelic material is that which, for the purpose of transmitting mail or other postal communications, has been issued, intended for issue, or produced in the preparation for issue, used, or treated as valid for postage by governmental, local or private agencies, or by other duly commissioned or empowered authorities*
- ❖ *\*The elaboration utilises only the thematic information, POSTALLY AUTHORISED, available from:*
  - the purpose of issue or use of the item
  - the primary and secondary elements of the design of the item
  - other postal characteristics

## **Rule 3: Selection of material – As regard to the Concept**

- 4 THE MATERIAL SELECTED SHOULD BE FULLY CONSISTENT WITH THE SUBJECT CHOSEN
- 4 THE MATERIAL SELECTED MUST
  - 0 ENSURE CONTINUITY AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUBJECT
  - 0 EXPLAIN RELEVANT ASPECTS OF KNOWLEDGE & CONDITION
- 4 THE SELECTION SHOULD SHOW THE APPRECIATION OF THE EXHIBITOR

AS TO WHAT IS AVAILABLE  
IN THE CONTEXT OF CHOSEN SUBJECT

- ❖ *A thematic exhibit develops a theme according to a plan, demonstrating thematic and philatelic knowledge through the items chosen*
- ❖ *Such knowledge should result in*
  - *the best possible selection and arrangement of the material*
  - *the accuracy of the relevant thematic and philatelic text*

#### **Rule 4: Selection of material – Range and Quality**

- 4 THE SELECTION SHOULD INCLUDE  
THE FULLEST RANGE OF  
RELEVANT PHILATELIC MATERIAL OF  
THE HIGHEST AVAILABLE QUALITY

#### **Rule 5: Presentation**

- 4 THE PRESENTATION  
AND THE ACCOMPANYING TEXT OF THE EXHIBIT  
SHOULD BE
  - SIMPLE,
  - TASTEFUL,
  - WELL BALANCED
- 4 IT SHOULD ADD INFORMATION  
TO THAT PROVIDED BY THE MATERIAL  
AND SHOW
  - THE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE SUBJECT
  - THE PERSONAL RESEARCH OF THE EXHIBITOR

**Some believe that Thematic Philately has many rules...**

## Why this perception?

- Experts non aligned with FIP state-of-art
- Local "gurus"
- Misinterpretations
- Reported sentences
- Consequences of the statements on
  - APPROPRIATE PHILATELIC MATERIAL
  - POSTAL NATURE OF THEMATIC INFORMATION
  - ? *May I use this item ?*
  - ? *May I exploit this text or picture ?*
  - ? *May I window this stationery ?*

## Which are the areas for improvement ?

Judging activities have shown that

- 4 The correct and comprehensive selection of material is the cornerstone for improving treatment
- 4 Plan and development, in most cases, offer the biggest opportunity for further growth *whereas exhibitors insist on buying more items for that plan & development*
- 4 The effort of the exhibitor can be communicated better to the public and to the jurors, who sometimes must search and gather up the thread of the story as the same it is not evident

## The Three Key Factors for improving an Exhibit

### 1. Thematic Knowledge – Why it is Important

Thematic knowledge enables

- Shaping the concept into the plan
- Breaking down the plan into
  - chapters,
  - paragraphs,

- pages,
- details
- Selecting the most appropriate items for each detail and validating the thematic information presented by "new" items
- Widening the thematic analysis towards innovative Plan and Development

## **1. Philatelic Knowledge – Why it is important**

### **It is VITAL for deciding if (and why) an item can be used**

It is important for

- Understanding the priorities for selecting items
  - By type of items
  - By country, period, postal service
  - By historical significance
  - By technical characteristics (stamps, stationery)
  - By service characteristics (regulations, routes, rates)
  - By quality
  - By philatelic importance
- Supporting the assessment of border line material
  - Role of "issuing" entity
  - Type of items
  - Type of service involved,
  - Etc.
- Enabling Philatelic Studies
- Suggesting thematic exploitation of postal characteristics

## **1. Philatelic Knowledge – Task of the Exhibitor**

- Exhibitors must take full control of Philatelic Knowledge,
- Their task is to justify each item
  - Find the postal information
  - Resolve issues with experts of the country/area
  - Double-check information from trade publications

- Beware of "similar" situations: they could be different
- Ensure against exposures for forgeries
- Jurors' task is to assess (NOT to provide) this justification

## **2. Innovation – Why it is important**

It demonstrates the ability of the exhibitor to present own personal elaboration of the theme

- It is the mean to personalize both Plan and Development by considering
  - ◻ Environment
  - ◻ Causes and Effects
  - ◻ Consequences
  - ◻ Relationships, etc.
- It can transform an exhibit from a sequence of classified items into an "original" story

## **2. Innovation – How it can be shown**

It can be shown by:

- Introduction of new themes
  - ◻ A new theme, by itself, is not sufficient, when not sustained by an innovative plan & development
- New approaches for known themes
  - ◻ E.g. Historical approach, that widens the scope for analysis
- New aspects of an established or known theme
  - ◻ New chapters, paragraphs
- New thematic application of material
  - ◻ To support new thematic facts

### **3. Organisation of the Exhibit – The Story Line**

- Each exhibit presents the concept according to a logic, that develops along a STORY LINE
  - philatelic (traditional, postal history, etc.)
  - thematic (our class)
- This represents a thread (*file rouge, roter Faden*) linking each page, each item to the previous and to the following one
- The flow of the thread must be continuous:
  - no breaks
  - no jumps
  - no loops

### **3. Organisation of the Exhibit - Why it is important**

- Presentation means a consistent, clear, clean layout, to make "transparent" the organisation of the exhibit
- Hence Organisation includes and supersedes Presentation, as it means the overall arrangement of the items according to the plan in order to
  - Demonstrate the title
  - Make evident the story line
    - . In every page (correct sequencing)
    - . Through the pages
  - Explain the contribution of items which are not self-explanatory
  - Provide philatelic details whenever necessary
- A good organisation of the exhibit represents the best way that the exhibitor has for communicating

HIS/HER THOUGHTS, KNOWLEDGE, PERSONAL  
RESEARCH  
TO THE PUBLIC AND TO THE JURORS

### **3. Organisation of the Exhibit – How it is implemented**

- The plan page should tell the viewer how the exhibit is organised
- Headings (titles & subtitles) matching the plan should present the development of the story line along the pages, without useless repetitions (but "running titles" could help to track the plan)
- Page titles should be unique so that the story can easily be followed at this level
- Items should be placed in the page following strictly the story line, without considerations based on item size (or other criteria)
- Captions should be direct and short, aiming at the best understanding of the items and, if the case, of their philatelic peculiarities
- *Some exhibitors place a thematic text at the beginning of each page aiming at giving the overview of the page, so that the sequence of these texts present clearly the whole story.*

## **Two different plans on "Radio & Aviation" (1910-1930)**

- 4 History of Aircraft
- 4 History of Radio
- 4 Radio-equipped Aircrafts
- 4 Flight tracking & Traffic Control
- 4 The Industry
- 4 Business Shows
- 4 Ship show the benefits of Radio
- 4 Balloons & Airships try Radio
- 4 At last, radio on Aeroplane!
- 4 The Big Test: World War I
- 4 The Birth of Commercial & Postal Aviation
- 4 Technology Jewels
- 4 Success and Drama at the North Pole
- 4 Flights, Radio, News & Business