



Kathleen Lawther

Tackling Terminology

MEG Keeping Connected

Content warnings: whole collection

- A blanket warning about what visitors may encounter in records
- This should be visible on the landing page before users access collections online
- Example: 'The Museum's catalogues include historic descriptions and representations that are factually inaccurate, racist and otherwise inappropriate.' [MAA]

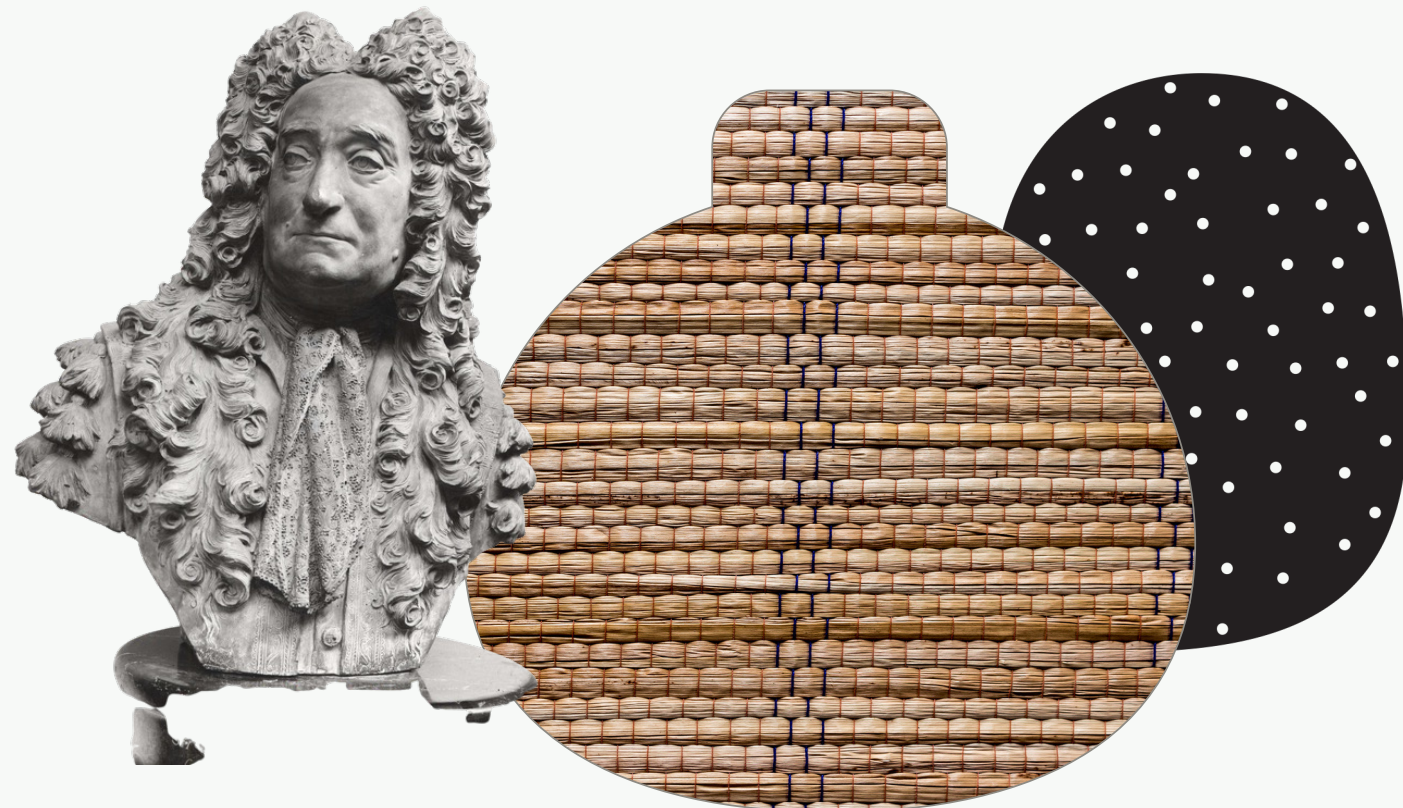


Content warnings: individual records

- Specific warnings at the start of a record where offensive content is reproduced
- Should be clear and descriptive of what the warning is about
- If possible give the viewer the option to avoid the offensive content:
'This record contains media that is considered offensive
[click through to] view media'
[V&A]



Explanatory notes about the collections



- The history of the collection:
'Our collections were first assembled in the early 20th century, following a racist, sexist and ableist system of cultural hierarchies.' [Wellcome Collection]
- The context of the database and/or records:
'It is a working database that includes information compiled over the life of the museum. Some of our records may contain offensive and discriminatory language, or reflect outdated ideas, practice and analysis.' [V&A]
- Why any offensive terms been reproduced:
'Black Cultural Archives includes among its collections the historical evidence of racism in Britain and elsewhere. As a result, this catalogue contains terms which are racially offensive. These are being used in the interest of historical accuracy...'

Commitment to action

- Shows that the museum is aware of the issue and is working on improving the records.
- Example: 'Art UK does not support racist terminology. We are working with the collection that owns this work towards amending this artwork record.'
- Any commitment to action should be realistic, honest and transparent
- How does this work relate to the museum's mission statement and any commitment they have made to anti-racist action?

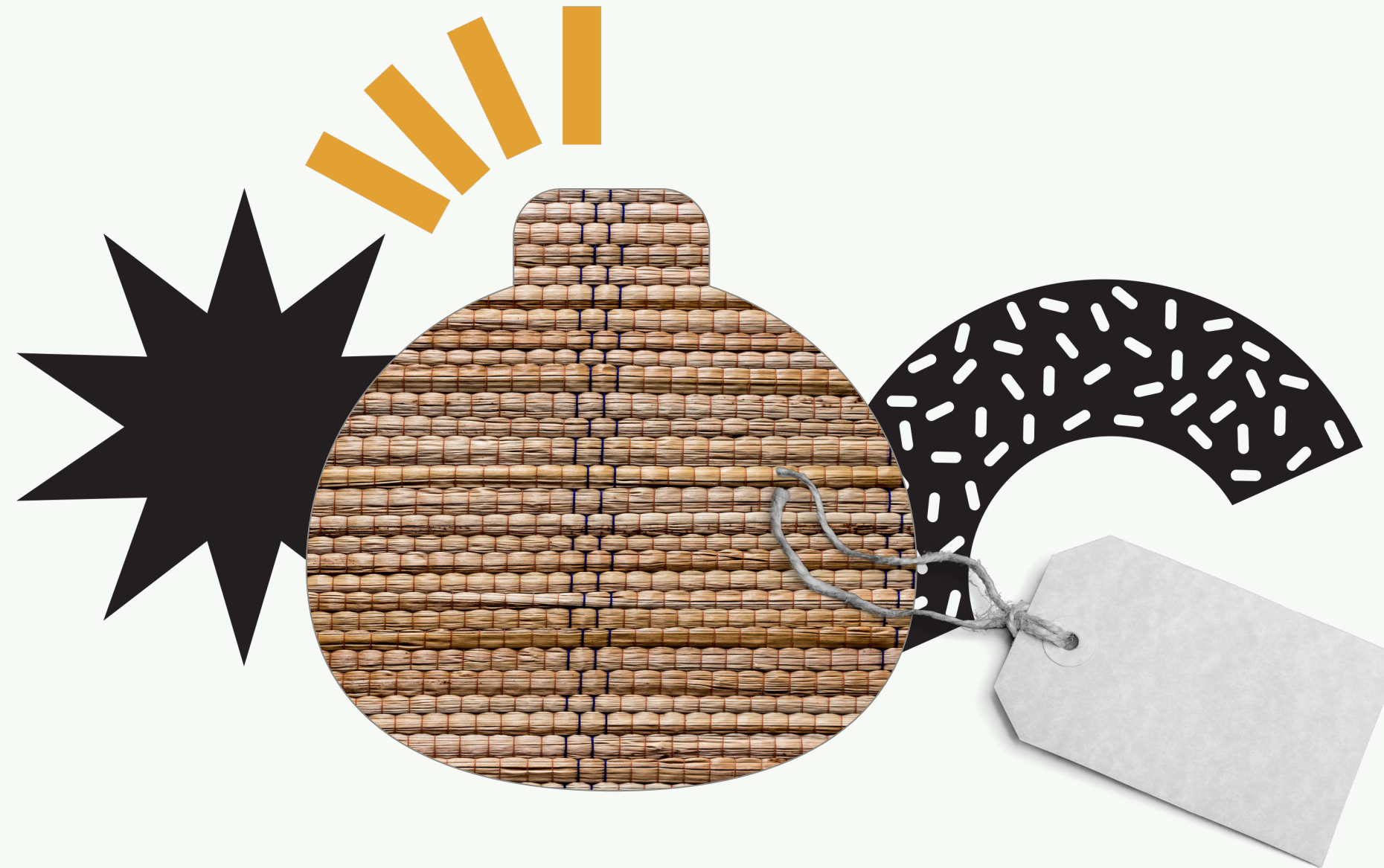




Invitation to feedback



- Shows that the museum is open to criticism and to new perspectives
- Should include a clear call to action - a contact form or email address so it is easy for users to feedback
- Example: 'Does this text contain inaccurate information or language that you feel we should improve or change? We would like to hear from you.' [Tate]



Get in touch:

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