



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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PHOTO CALL

**11.00 AM, WEDNESDAY 1 APRIL 2015
MAIN LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
GEORGE SQUARE EH8 9LJ**

Nothing borrowed ... all is blue in library's archive exhibition

Forty objects associated with the colour blue – including vivid lithographs by the celebrated artist Marc Chagall – feature in a new exhibition at the University of Edinburgh.

The artworks by the Russian-born artist – praised by Picasso for his use of colour – are part of his *Bible Series*, which Chagall completed after escaping Nazi Germany during World War II. They are now considered to be among his most significant work.

All of the items in the exhibition have been gathered from the University's collections to showcase ways in which blue has captivated cultures throughout history.

Also on show is a sample of one of the most sought-after stones in the ancient world. Lapis lazuli produced a pigment so pure it was considered mythical and it was used in the funeral mask of Tutankhamun and Cleopatra's eye makeup.

Specimens from University's natural history collection, including a painstakingly preserved Blue Morpho butterfly and a South American tree snake will also feature in the exhibition, which takes place in the University's Main Library.

Ornate pages from an 18th century Qur'an and portrayals of the Virgin Mary in a 15th century Bible demonstrate the cross-cultural use of blue as a sacred colour.

Other highlights include a painted Viennese horn and an architectural blueprint for the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, produced in 1924.

Curator Emma Smith said: "Blue has delighted and captivated humanity for thousands of years. It has been used to describe the depth of the sea or the colour of the sky. Despite this, it only occurs in nature very rarely and is the most difficult natural pigment to obtain. We are thrilled to explore the story of this fascinating colour through our collections."

The exhibition runs from 2 April-27 June 2015 at the University's Main Library Exhibition Gallery. Opening times: Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm and Saturday, 10am-1pm. Admission is free.

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