

June 13, 2016

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### **Smithsonian Intends To Create Permanent Exhibition Space in London With the Victoria and Albert Museum**

The Smithsonian and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) announced plans today to work together to create a major new international collaboration. The institutions have agreed to develop, over the course of this year, a plan for a jointly organized permanent gallery space as a key part of V&A East, and together will form an important component of a new cultural complex being created in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in East London, the site of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The project would mark the first time in its 170-year history that the Smithsonian has committed to a long-term permanent gallery presence in another country, as well as a program of temporary exhibitions and displays.

*“Through a collaboration with one of the world’s great museums, we will be able to inspire and educate more people than ever before,”* said Smithsonian Secretary David Skorton. *“With the V&A in London, we can build bridges to other countries and continents and share our work with the world.”*

Exhibitions and related programming for the space will be developed jointly by the Smithsonian and the V&A, with the goal of staging Smithsonian exhibitions as part of the V&A East’s overall program. Although planning is in its earliest stages, Skorton expects the permanent gallery space will have broad global significance and draw from both organizations’ collections and expertise in science and the arts and humanities and where they intersect.

*“This would not be a ‘Smithsonian outpost in London,’”* Skorton said. *“It would be a collaboration with the V&A, giving both of us opportunities to engage with diverse audiences in innovative ways. What we learn through this collaboration will enable us to better tell our stories not only in London, but in the United States and around the world.”*

*“Working very closely with the Smithsonian, as well as the other partners in and around the Olympic Park, is one of the key reasons the V&A is committed to developing a new museum, and this proposed collaboration represents an exciting opportunity for us to explore the synergies between two world-class institutions and their collections and knowledge,”* said V&A Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer Tim Reeve.

The announcement today is the product of an initiative that began in January 2015 between the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), which is overseeing the development of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, and the Smithsonian and the V&A.

*“We appreciate the LLDC’s original invitation to participate in this forward-thinking initiative and the V&A for helping to make our participation a reality,”* said Al Horvath, the Smithsonian’s Under Secretary for Finance and Administration, who has led the project for the Smithsonian. *“We are extremely grateful to Mayor of London Sadiq Khan for continuing the city’s commitment to the East London project and to former Mayor Boris Johnson for his steadfast support.”*

*“Growing London’s cultural sector is one of my core priorities as mayor, so I welcome this trans-Atlantic collaboration between two of the world’s most prestigious institutions,”* said Khan. *“These plans would create an exciting new cultural destination in East London, which will help many more people enjoy the extraordinary collections managed by the Smithsonian and the V&A. It is great news for everyone who wants to see London’s cultural and creative sectors even bigger and better.”*

The Smithsonian exhibits and programs will be supported by contributions from the private sector, with the help of Foundation for FutureLondon, a new charity established for Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, which coordinates fundraising for the overall project. Other partners at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park are Sadler’s Wells, University College London and London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London. LLDC expects the facilities to open in 2021.

*“We are delighted to have helped bring this world-leading partnership together, and we look forward to working closely with both institutions as the project moves forward,”* said Foundation for FutureLondon Director Andrea Stark.

## **About the Smithsonian**

Since its founding in 1846, the Smithsonian has been committed to inspiring generations through knowledge and discovery. The Smithsonian is the world’s largest museum, education and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park and nine research facilities. There are 6,400 Smithsonian employees and 5,400 volunteers. There were 28 million visits to the Smithsonian in 2015. The total number of objects, works of art and specimens at

the Smithsonian is estimated at nearly 138 million, including more than 127 million specimens and artifacts at the National Museum of Natural History. [www.smithsonian.org](http://www.smithsonian.org)

### **About the V&A**

The V&A is the world's leading museum of art and design with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity. It was established to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, the V&A's collections, which span over 5,000 years of human creativity in virtually every medium and from many parts of the world, continue to intrigue, inspire and inform. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

### **About Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Foundation for FutureLondon and LLDC**

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is a place unlike any other. It is spread across 560 acres of beautiful parklands with historic waterways, famous sporting venues and a vibrant arts and events program.

The Foundation for FutureLondon has been established to support the new cultural and education district being created in the Park. [www.future.london](http://www.future.london)

The London Legacy Development Corporation promotes and delivers physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration in the Park and the surrounding area by maximizing the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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