



CHRISTMAS AT THE V&A

3 December 2016 – 6 January 2017

@V_and_A @museumchildhood #vamXmas

This Christmas, the V&A will stage a month long celebration across the South Kensington and V&A Museum of Childhood sites. Inspired by the Museums' collections and the Victorian era in which the museums were founded, V&A Christmas 2016 will feature festive displays, activities, trails, concerts and performances.

Christmas Trees

StudioXAG have been specially selected to dress the museums, taking Victoria and Albert's Christmas as inspiration. Specially designed trees and hanging garlands will be installed across the museums, inspired by the V&A's collections.

Activities and performances

Christmas themed trails and regular tours across both sites will highlight key objects from the collections, taking visitors on a festive activity-filled journey to explore the museums. At South Kensington, a specially commissioned gallery play will celebrate Victorian Christmas traditions with live music, carols and dancing and will include extracts from Queen Victoria's personal letters. Families can enjoy free making and performance activities at the weekends and during the Christmas holidays. Local community choirs will perform weekly carols in the Grand Entrance of the V&A in South Kensington. At the Museum of Childhood, a Christmas designer market, Christmas Meet and Make craft session for adults, regular Christmas choir performances and a festive film season will all be staged to entertain families. For more details of events, check the V&A What's On section of the website; <https://shop.vam.ac.uk/whatson>

Displays

Special displays will highlight key objects relating to Christmas from the V&A's collection. At South Kensington, the origins and history of the Christmas card will be explored, including the first recognised Christmas card, designed by John Callcott Horsley in 1843 for V&A Director, Sir Henry Cole. A display in the Theatre and Performance gallery will look at Christmas on stage, from Sooty and Sweep to the pantomime Dame. Elsewhere, the Italian, 16th century Santa Chiara Chapel will be transformed into a traditional nativity scene with objects from a historical nativity set, the Presepio crib, lent from the Museum of Childhood. At the Museum of Childhood the historical practice of gift-giving will be explored in a display of objects ranging from the 19th century to today, a practice which expanded in Britain in the 19th century.

V&A Christmas Gifts

The V&A shop has an inspiring range of gifts for the perfect present including a V&A hamper containing Rococo chocolates and V&A gifts. The V&A membership, with a new pack designed by contemporary embroidery artist James Merry, includes free entry to V&A exhibitions for free (more information available here; <http://www.vam.ac.uk/membership/>). Visitors can take a trip back to the late 1960s with prints by renowned artists such as Hapshash and Alan Aldridge, or for those keen on fashion, some exclusive V&A Levi's jeans. For children there is a fun range of arts and crafts gifts, musical instruments and quilted toys while design enthusiasts will find a specialist collection of books on all aspects of the designed world.

Carnaby Christmas Lights

10 November 2016

Carnaby is collaborating with the V&A to create this year's Carnaby Christmas installations inspired by the V&A's exhibition *You Say You Want a Revolution? Records and Rebels 1966-1970* which features 'Swinging' Carnaby Street in 1966.

The V&A's Director of Learning and Visitor Experience, Emmajane Avery, said, "*We are delighted to present a Victorian Christmas in its spiritual home, the Victoria and Albert Museum. With Prince Albert both the vision for the V&A and our modern idea of Christmas were conceived, while Henry Cole, the V&A's first Director, sent the first commercial Christmas card. We are thrilled to be recapturing this vision through displays, activities and family events. We hope people will feel inspired to kick-start their Christmas with us at the V&A and to immerse themselves in some of the traditions of the Victorian period.*"

- Ends -

NOTES TO EDITORS

- More details on Christmas at the V&A will be available via the V&A website from 15 November and details of specific activities available via the What's On; <https://shop.vam.ac.uk/whatson>
- Some events are free and others are charging and must be booked via the V&A website.

For further PRESS information please contact Lily Booth on l.booth@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).

A selection of press images are available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk