



## PRESS RELEASE

### **V&A announces DesignLab Nation, a national programme to support design education for 11 to 16 year olds, working with regional museums** [vam.ac.uk/designlab](http://vam.ac.uk/designlab) | #DesignLabNation

Today the V&A announces that it will use the Art Fund Museum of the Year 2016 prize money to fund an ambitious national schools programme, DesignLab Nation, to help revive art and design education in secondary schools.

From Bauhaus to Bowie, Mackintosh to McQueen, the V&A's collections and exhibitions celebrate the great heritage of design and making in Britain and around the world. Launching in September 2017, the V&A's DesignLab Nation programme will target 11-16 year olds in predominantly industrial areas, bringing together secondary schools in partnership with local museums and regional creative industries to inspire students, train teachers and preserve the essential role that Art, Design and Technology plays in education for young people. The V&A's pilot programme is designed to help support the new Design and Technology GCSE, beginning this September.

Working with Culture Coventry - Herbert Museum & Art Gallery and Coventry Transport Museum - and Blackburn Museum in the first year starting this September, the programme will expand to Sheffield and two additional locations in the following academic year. Loans from the V&A's collections, to be selected in consultation with project partners, will complement the programme and ensure that all visitors to the partner museums have the chance to experience the V&A's collections, first-hand in the context of their local history and creative clusters.

Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, said: "At a time when the creative industries are one of the UK's greatest national and economic assets, we want to inspire and support students and teachers as the new Design and Technology GCSE arrives this autumn. The V&A has a responsibility to protect and promote design education for the future. By bringing together local industry, museums and schools, DesignLab Nation will ensure that the V&A delivers on our founding purpose, to educate and inspire the artists, innovators, designers and creatives of tomorrow."

Each DesignLab Nation partnership will be delivered by specialists and professionals from local design practices, working closely with a local museum which will act as a 'hub' for these in-depth

secondary school projects. The partnership will deliver three DesignLab projects per area per year - 36 in total over the three years- and will focus on inspiring creativity amongst the next generation of designers.

The V&A will lend its collections, help recruit schools and design practitioners, develop each project with the local museum and provide a comprehensive programme of training and professional development for teachers. The programme will contribute to high-quality design education for Key Stage 3 and 4 students at a time when the UK is looking for the next generation of creative designers and innovators to build its world-class creative industries.

The V&A's DesignLab Nation will encourage young people to make their own contemporary responses to historical processes, and to gain an understanding of how collections from the past can inform new ideas. Skills will also be shared between partners throughout the programme, and over 1,000 students, 250+ teachers and regional museum staff involved in the projects will be invited to the V&A in London as part of the DesignLab Nation project. Creative Quarter, the V&A's annual careers' festival for school pupils, will also provide an opportunity each autumn to showcase the DesignLab Nation programme.

With 2.3 million objects and 19 national collections, the V&A lends more objects to more museums than any other national museum in the UK. DesignLab Nation builds on the V&A's widespread activity across the UK, with a focus on addressing a skills gap in the area of design and technology.

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#### **Notes to Editors**

- 1. For further PRESS information please contact the V&A press office on 0207 942 2502 or email [press.office@vam.ac.uk](mailto:press.office@vam.ac.uk).**
2. Through its national programmes, the V&A works collaboratively to reach audiences across the UK. In 2015/16, 185,000 people visited a V&A touring exhibition; we lent over 2,300 objects to 273 UK venues, more than any other DCMS sponsored museum; and the ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund awarded 116 grants totalling £1,022,218 enabling acquisitions valued at over £3,000,000 to go ahead.
3. Between 2016/17 over 20,000 young people benefitted from V&A programmes in the West Midlands and Yorkshire to increase school visits to museums. In Coventry, we reached 123% of the target for Arts Award uptake in the first three years of funding and these targets have continued to be exceeded in each subsequent year. In Pennine Lancashire, 87% of primary schools in the region have now visited a Pennine Lancashire Museums venue.

DesignLab will build on these partnerships, and believes that each city has a unique story to tell.

4. Blackburn has a rich history in cotton and textiles production, whilst innovations in metalworking have made Sheffield a centre of global industry for almost 300 years. And a few hundred miles away, Coventry was once the centre of the second largest car industry in the world. Today, Coventry's automotive industry is once again going from strength to strength, helping the city's wheels to turn once again. DesignLab Nation will work with local museum partners and schools, focusing on these areas of industry and manufacturing.
5. The V&A is working on an exhibition, 'Design of the Punjab' for The Herbert Museum & Art Gallery in Coventry, due to open in October 2017. We are currently set to lend 86 objects, centred around the theme of 19th century crafts from the Punjab. The team at Coventry will be putting together a lively outreach and activity programme to accompany the exhibition for schools and the local community.
6. From September 2017, DesignLab Nation will work with colleagues at Culture Coventry (Herbert Museum & Art Gallery and Coventry Transport Museum) to develop a series of projects linked to major industry both past and present from the ribbon industry, bicycles and transport industry. The latter is still thriving today and affords an invaluable opportunity to connect young people in the area to local industry.
7. From September 2017, DesignLab Nation will work with colleagues at Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery to explore the heritage of the cotton industry and Blackburn's role in the textiles trade dating back to the 18th century. The programme is well-timed to capitalise on Blackburn with Darwen Council's current priority, promoting the city as a centre for Making. Next month sees the inaugural National Festival of Making in Blackburn (6-7 May, <https://festivalofmaking.co.uk/>).