



## News Release

### **V&A Appoints new Keeper of Design, Architecture and Digital**

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The V&A is pleased to announce that Dr Christopher Turner, Director of the London Design Biennale and Deputy Director of the London Design Festival, will join the Museum in October 2017 as Keeper of Design, Architecture and Digital (DAD). The department represents the Museum's collections, expertise and programming for architecture and urbanism, product and digital design.

Christopher will lead a department that is only a few years old but builds upon the V&A's industrial design heritage dating back to the Great Exhibition of 1851. It is dedicated to enhancing the V&A's reputation as the UK's leading public resource for the study of contemporary design and its impact on society, and for stimulating new modes of collection, curation and public engagement. The department is also responsible for the Museum's Rapid Response Gallery, which displays items collected as evidence of social, political and economic change, forming a permanent legacy of objects that represent the world we live in today. Recent acquisitions include a flag designed for the first ever Refugee team to compete in the 2016 Olympic Games, and a Pussyhat worn at the 2017 Women's March on Washington.

Previous exhibitions by the department include 'All of This Belongs to You' in 2015 examining the role of public institutions in contemporary life and what it means to be responsible for a national collection; and the Engineering Season in 2016 which included the first major retrospective exhibition on Ove Arup, the most influential engineer of the 20th century. Programmed by the department's curators, Friday Late is the original late night event celebrating all aspects of contemporary visual culture and design in society. The Department is also leading on the V&A collaboration with La Biennale di Venezia on the Pavilion of Applied Arts as part of the Architecture Biennale in Venice.

Tristram Hunt, V&A Director said: *"I am delighted to welcome Christopher Turner to the V&A as our new Keeper of the Design, Architecture and Digital department. Christopher has a wealth of exceptional experience in the design world, both as an editor of leading arts titles, as well as*

*championing the very best of international contemporary design to audiences in London through the London Design Festival and the London Design Biennale. This range of experience means that he is perfectly placed to lead our team of world experts in the fields of architecture, product design and digital design. He already has an established association with the V&A through the London Design Festival, which has collaborated with the Museum as a central hub for nine years. I would like to thank Corinna Gardner for her invaluable contribution to the department and her leadership as Acting Keeper this past year."*

Christopher Turner said: *"The V&A is at an incredible moment in its history. It is expanding, both in South Kensington and regionally, and has an ambitious international programme. The opportunity to contribute to this growth, and to lead a team of curators who are setting the agenda in the debate around contemporary design, is extremely exciting."*

Dr Christopher Turner is Director of the London Design Biennale, which brought 37 countries from six continents to Somerset House in 2016 to exhibit installations on the theme Utopia By Design. He worked with the V&A on the UK entry, as well as with other leading international institutions including the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian, Moscow Design Museum, Triennale Museum, Indian Design Forum, Japan Foundation, and MAK, Vienna.

Christopher set the theme for the 2018 edition of the Biennale, Emotional States, exploring the relationship between design and well-being, and will continue to oversee the event as Artistic Director.

He is also the Deputy Director of the London Design Festival, a city-wide celebration of design with over 500 events a year, including several landmark projects, and a special programme of installations and exhibits throughout the V&A. As well as helping to curate, commission, fund, and deliver these projects, he runs the Global Design Forum at the Museum.

Previously, Christopher was editor of Icon, the leading architecture and design publication, and editor-in-chief of Modern Painters in New York. He is still an editor of Cabinet, an arts and cultural quarterly also based in New York, for whom he has curated exhibitions at Cabinet's Brooklyn gallery, and Manifesta 7, the Arnolfini Gallery and Architecture Association.

Christopher studied Archaeology, Anthropology and Art History at Cambridge and has a PhD from the London Consortium, University of London. He set up the Central Cities Institute at the University of Westminster, an urban think-tank that investigated the inner city, and was a research scholar at Columbia University. He has lectured internationally and taught at Birkbeck College, University of London and the Architectural Association.

His book, 'Adventures in the Orgasmatron: How the Sexual Revolution Came to America' was a New Yorker and Economist 'Book of the Year', and a winner of the Royal Society of Literature / Jerwood Prize. He has published a guide to contemporary architecture aimed at young adults, and written several book essays. Christopher is also a regular contributor to the London Review of Books, Times Literary Supplement, Tate Etc., Icon, Architectural Record, Apollo, Cabinet and Guardian on architecture, design and culture.

Corinna Gardner has been Acting Keeper of Design, Architecture and Digital over the past year, overseeing projects such as Rapid Response Collecting and programming the week-long REVEAL Festival of free events to celebrate the opening of the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter.

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