

V&A acquires a Corbyn t-shirt designed by Bristol-based label Bristol Street Wear

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Today, the V&A announces that it has acquired a t-shirt designed by Bristol-based label, Bristol Street Wear.

Bristol Street Wear released the Corbyn t-shirt for sale online on 9 May 2017 after the 2017 General Election was called. The object speaks to how young voters were engaged in a way not seen at previous election campaigns. Rising in popularity through social media, online communities took on Corbyn as an anti-hero figure, touting his apparent lack of interest in marketing, fashion and branding as a sign of genuine political engagement and trustworthiness. The Bristol Street Wear Facebook and Instagram accounts make frequent reference to 'our boy Jeremy', as well as video and photographic footage of fans wearing their t-shirt,

often standing next to Corbyn. The design's popularity was picked up during the general election campaign season of May – June 2017 by the media, including receiving major publicity at the Manchester One Love concert and at the 2017 Glastonbury Festival.

The t-shirt is now on display in the Museum's Rapid Response Collecting gallery which explores how global events, moments of political and social change, and pop cultural phenomena bear on design, architecture and technology.

The design is part of a practice often used by street wear brands called 'bootlegging', whereby recognisable brand identities (such as a logos or slogans) are repurposed for subversive effect. The t-shirt bears an altered version of the classic (1971) Nike Swoosh logo, with the word Nike replaced with the last name of the present leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn. The shirt now reads Corbyn with the swoosh logo emblazoned underneath, both in red ink. The V&A has a similar type of t-shirt within Fashion and Textiles Street Style collection, where the Nike logo

is appropriated to read Dike. The team behind Bristol Street Wear have generously gifted the t-shirt to the V&A.

Corinna Gardner, Acting Keeper of the V&A's Design, Architecture and Digital Department, said: "The Corbyn logo t-shirt is a timely addition to our Rapid Response collection. Inherently digital in its translation of online culture and memes into material form, the t-shirt enables us to ask questions about the role of data and social media in the recent election campaign. Added to this, it captures the current vogue for slogan tees and the growing influence of street wear brands."

Bristol Street Wear, spokesperson said: "It's great to see the typically dismissed art form, 'bootlegs' given pride of place at the V&A. This T-shirt spoke to so many people. It was immediate, it was fun, it started debates, it was censored and it even got us into trouble - everything good art should."

Other V&A Rapid Response Collecting acquisitions include a Pussyhat from the 2017 Women's March, a flag designed for the first ever Refugee team to compete in the 2016 Olympic Games, a tile from the exterior of Grayson Perry's 2015 House for Essex and 3D-printed titanium handlebar used by cyclist Bradley Wiggins's for his Hour Record attempt on 7 June 2015.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

- The FREE display is in the V&A's Gallery 74a and is curated by Corinna Gardner, Acting Keeper of the V&A's Design, Architecture and Digital Department
- V&A's Design, Architecture and Digital Department builds upon the V&A's industrial design heritage dating back to 1851. It is dedicated to enhancing the V&A's reputation as the UK's leading public resource for the study of design
- The V&A is open daily from 10.00 to 17.45 and until 22.00 on Fridays

For further PRESS information about *Rapid Response Collecting* please contact the V&A press office on +44 (0) 20 7942 2502 or email press.office@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).

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