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Stunning new V&A Members' Room opens today in former historic study room

All-day brasserie, bar, and Friday evening set dinner menu

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Today, Monday 25th September, the V&A opens its new Members' room, a characteristic V&A mix of heritage, modernity and design ingenuity. The innovative design by architects Carmody Groarke converts a magnificent top-lit gallery on the top floor of Aston Webb's Grade I Listed 1909 wing into a beautiful new dedicated space for V&A Members within the Museum in South Kensington, outfitted with bespoke designed furniture and fittings.

Formerly a study room between 1916-1921, and later the National Art Library offices, the transformation returns this room to its core principles as a place for contemplation, creative thought and enjoyment. Reinventing this vast space, the room brings cutting edge design together with contemporary furniture and interior decoration, whilst accentuating the qualities of the original building.

The new space gives Members a unique experience in the heart of the Museum for convivial interaction and comfort with a striking viewpoint overlooking the recently unveiled porcelain tiled Sackler Courtyard, as part of the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter, and towards the Henry Cole building.

Members are able to enjoy a full range of casual and formal dining options provided by Benugo with table service. The hospitality offers range from hot and cold breakfast options, dedicated lunch menu, kids' choices for families, an all-day café offer including cakes, and cream teas, a bar, and for the first time, a Friday evening set menu.

The new room is a cornerstone offer as part of a range of V&A Membership benefits that include free entry to exhibitions, a 10% discount in the V&A Shop, a range of dedicated events and subscription to the V&A Magazine. Following hugely popular exhibitions such as *David Bowie Is*, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* and *Pink Floyd: Their Mortal Remains*, and the launch of the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter this summer, the Museum has increased its visitor figures and gained the support of a significant number of new Members. The new

V&A Members' Room reflects the important role that Members play in supporting the Museums activities and collections.

Designed by Carmody Groarke, the creative adaption of the original gallery is part of the natural continuum of the Museum fabric; new designs subtly restore and retain existing character whilst bespoke lighting and furniture bring visitors closer to brilliant design.

Tim Reeve, Deputy Director, says:

Our V&A members help underpin the success of the Museum, and we are thrilled to be opening such a beautifully designed new space for them right at the heart of the V&A. This summer has been the most popular in the V&A's history, and we hope that our ever-expanding membership enjoy all that this wonderful new space has to offer, and look forward to welcoming current and future members to eat, drink, relax and explore with us in a Members' Room to compare with the very best.

Andy Groarke, Director of Carmody Groarke, says:

We are very proud to have delivered this important project as part of the V&A's Future Plan. Through every step in the process, the V&A have supported and encouraged us to create a unique architectural response to the overall gallery space as well as the details which make up its new character. We look forward to the Members being welcomed into the Room for events, celebrations, refreshment or relaxation as part of their visit to the Museum.

Key characteristics have been drawn from the rich and vibrant material palette seen throughout the V&A, combining the architect's contemporary approach with staples of original parquet, terrazzo and marble, providing a mixture of formal and informal areas within the overall space.

The floor has been created using reclaimed parquet flooring taken from across the Museum and raised by almost half a metre to give views from the large existing windows to The Sackler Courtyard, the world's first porcelain public courtyard, paved in 11,000 handmade tiles which opened this June.

The centrepiece of the Members' Room is a monolithic terrazzo bar, a contemporary interpretation of the white marble entrance staircase to the room. The bar includes prosecco on tap, a range of bottled beers, wine, and bespoke cocktails including a unique Queen Victoria and Prince Albert cocktail, inspired by the Museum's royal namesakes.

Sitting above the 20th century collections, the furniture provides a subtle link to the era, including a recommissioning of Finnish architect Alvar Aalto's stackable 403 armchair from the early 1930s. Other pieces include chairs and marble coffee tables designed by Carmody Groarke and bar stools by HAY.

Large mirror installations create new perspectives to view the Museum, both inside and outside, via a light well that connects to the existing galleries below and original gallery light fittings have been reinterpreted in the design of a new fluted-glass luminaire hanging in glowing clusters overhead, designed by Carmody Groarke.

A beautiful Alessi tea service, designed by Kristiina Lassus, brings hints of designer Richard Sapper up to the present day. The crockery is from Stoke-on-Trent based manufacturer Churchill's, and the cutlery from Jasper Morrison's cutlery collaboration with Muji.

The new Members' Reception Desk is located downstairs in the former Exhibition Road Entrance Lobby, recently remodelled by Reed Watts Architects.

The new V&A Members' Room has been made possible by the generosity of V&A Members.

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A selection of press imagery is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk

Notes to Editors

About the V&A

The V&A is the world's leading Museum of art, design and performance 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

V&A Membership

Membership of the V&A starts at £57 with a range of options for bringing guests and concessions for the over 60s and under 26. Benefits include exclusive access to the Members' Room, free entry to all V&A exhibitions and much more. Join today online at vam.ac.uk/membership, call 020 7942 2271 or sign up in the Museum.

Members' Room opening times:

Saturday to Thursday 10.00 – 17.30

Friday 10.00-21.30

See the Members' Events Programme for information on special out-of-hours events

Carmody Groarke

Carmody Groarke is a London-based architectural studio of 40 staff, established by Kevin Carmody and Andy Groarke in 2006. Since its formation the practice has gained a strong reputation for working internationally on a wide range of arts, cultural, heritage and residential projects, both new build and within the context of historic buildings.

Completed projects include the new Architecture Gallery at the Grade II* listed RIBA headquarters, the permanent memorial to the 7 July London bombings in Hyde Park, Frieze (London) Art Fair 2011-2013, Maggie's Cancer Care Centre, Clatterbridge, Merseyside, a workshop for sculptor Antony Gormley and a contemporary gallery for White Cube at Glyndebourne. Current projects include a new build Museum on the shores of Lake Windermere in the Lake District National Park, major renovations for of the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester, and a 19-storey hotel tower in Westminster.

Opera: Passion, Power and Politics

In collaboration with the Royal Opera House

Sponsored by Societe Generale

The Sainsbury Gallery | 30 September 2017 – 25 February 2018

vam.ac.uk/opera | [#Operapassion](https://twitter.com/Operapassion)

The first exhibition to be presented in The Sainsbury Gallery will create a vivid and immersive journey through nearly 400 years of opera, exploring its passion, power and politics. Opera: Passion, Power and Politics, in collaboration with the Royal Opera House, will be the only exhibition ever to explore opera on a grand scale. It will immerse visitors in some key moments of the history of European opera from its roots in Renaissance Italy to its present-day form, by focusing on seven operatic premieres in seven cities. It will reveal how opera brings together multiple art forms to create a multi-sensory work of art, and show how social, political, artistic and economic factors interact with great moments in the history of opera to tell a story of Europe over hundreds of years.

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