



## V&A announces acquisition of an exquisitely designed and crafted pair of Prince's shoes

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Embargoed until the 24 October 2017



The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London has acquired a pair of black, satin, floral patterned shoes designed for and worn by Prince. The shoes' zips use Prince's iconic logo as the tag, meaning 'love symbol #2', which Prince famously changed his name to in 1993. This unique design resembles the Mars and Venues symbols signifying male and female as one

These shoes demonstrate the important role costume plays in the iconography of the contemporary rock and pop performer. Known for his energetic stage leaps, Prince's shoes had special metal braces fitted between the heel and outersole as reinforcements to sustain the physicality of his performance. This creative solution, almost invisible to the audience's eye, supports the shoe's structure and ensures no discomfort to the wearer, which is testament to the design and craft skills necessary for a world class performer. The V&A is the leading museum for art, design and performance, and the shoes will join the V&A's National Collection of Performing Arts that houses rock and pop costumes such as outfits designed for and worn by Elton John, Mick Jagger and the Beatles.

Prince Rogers Nelson (1958 – 2016) was an American singer-songwriter, actor, multi-instrumentalist, philanthropist, dancer, designer and record producer, who was known for his eclectic work, flamboyant stage presence, extravagant dress and make-up and wide vocal range. He was a musical innovator who released 39 studio albums between 1978 and 2015, selling over 100 million records worldwide, making him one of the best-selling artists of all time. Prince's career tells a strong design story of complex iconography. Prince's albums were always accompanied with a powerful visual image, and he used costume and artwork to play with his visual identity. Prince's albums were always accompanied with a powerful visual image, and he used costume and artwork to play with his visual identity, frequently challenging traditional notions of masculinity, race and sexuality. Standing at 5ft 2in, his high heeled shoes were an intrinsic part of performer and performance.

Geoffrey Marsh, Director the V&A's Theatre and Performance Collections, said, "This important acquisition not only records the dedication of one of the world's great performers but highlights the range of design and craft skills necessary for large stage shows. The UK is a centre for creative skills and a prime purpose of the V&A is to inspire visitors to discover their own creativity and the opportunities that offers. We hope seeing these shoes will encourage people to consider the creative opportunities of shoe design as a career, as well

as educate visitors on how skilled craftsmanship and design can be used to support the art of performance.”

The shoes will go on public display in the Theatre and Performance gallery of the V&A on 24 October 2017.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

### **About the V&A**

The V&A is the world’s leading museum of art and design 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 5000 years of human creativity in virtually every medium and from many parts of the world, continue to intrigue, inspire and inform.

### **About the V&A’s Theatre and Performance Collection**

The V&A’s Theatre and Performance collections document current practice and the history of all areas of performing arts in the UK, including drama, dance, opera, circus, puppetry, comedy, musical theatre, costume, set design, pantomime, popular music and more. The collection was founded in the 1920s when private collector, Gabrielle Enthoven, donated her extensive collection of theatrical designs, memorabilia, books and photographs to the Museum. Since then the collection has continued to grow to include significant objects and works of art, books, manuscripts, audio-visual recordings and ephemera, as well as the archives of performing arts companies, performers, directors, stage designers and private collectors.

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