



News Release

The Future Starts Here

Supported by Volkswagen Group

The Sainsbury Gallery

12 May – 4 November 2018

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The V&A will explore the power of design in shaping the world of tomorrow in its major spring exhibition. From portraits of Chelsea Manning generated by her DNA, a chargeable shirt which can power a smartphone, objects printed by the world's first zero gravity printer to a global seed bank to prevent loss of plant species in the event of a crisis, *The Future Starts Here* will bring together ground-breaking technologies and designs currently in development in studios and laboratories around the world.

Drawing upon international research, and working closely with a range of companies, universities, practitioners and advisors, the V&A will seek to represent this new picture of an advancing future with more than 100 objects, many of which have never been on public display. *The Future Starts Here* will explore the impact these objects may have on the body, the home, politics, cities, and the planet. Visitors will be guided by a series of ethical and speculative questions to connect the subject matter to the choices that everyone has in their everyday lives.

Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, said: *"From the very beginning, the V&A has championed pioneering art, science, design and technology. Now in the midst of the digital revolution, this eagerly anticipated exhibition delves into our fast accelerating future of artificial intelligence, synthetic biology and space exploration. The V&A is taking live experiments about our future society from the studio and lab into the museum. This is the first major exhibition produced by our Design, Architecture and Digital department, and revives our founding principle to forefront cutting-edge art and design."*

From smart appliances to satellites, artificial intelligence to internet culture, this will be the first opportunity to not only see projects of major corporations such as Google and Apple, but to understand them alongside alternative futures presented by smaller institutions and independent designers. A highlight will be the public display of Facebook's *Aquila* aircraft,

part of a solar-powered high-altitude platform station (HAPS) system which is in early development as part of Facebook's efforts to bring affordable connectivity to unconnected regions around the world. Alongside this will be Jalila Essaidi's *Living Network* project, which imagines a future of the internet as a world wide web of trees, allowing communication over great distances. The exhibition will also include specially commissioned works by Miranda July, Stamen, Tellart, Marco Ferrari and Kei Kreutler.

Technological developments effect change at different scales and the exhibition will be arranged around four main themes that increase in scale: Home, Public, Planetary and Afterlife. Asking questions such as *Are We Human? And We're all connected but do we feel lonely?*, the first gallery will focus on a domestic setting, where smart devices are changing notions of privacy and turning the home into a broadcasting station from which we share our lives through social media. This section will consider what the impact of digital connectivity on solitariness and relationships, as captured in Hanif Shoaei's poignant photograph that depicts the artist in bed with his wife, both glued to their phone screens.

The increasingly blurred lines between humanity and technology will be examined with projects such as powered clothing company Superflex's 'super suits', created in collaboration with Yves Béhar, which combine the latest innovations in robotics, biomechanics and apparel design to create an extra set of muscles people can wear every day. On display will also be the adaptations of a 70-year-old quadruple amputee who created a series of personalised tools to help with everyday tasks, such as writing a thank you note, putting on make-up and removing jar lids. Bento Lab is the first complete portable DNA laboratory, allowing anyone to experiment with simple DNA analysis, whether a beginner or a professional.

In the next section, visitors will evaluate if democracy still works with projects showing new strategies for collective decision-making and alternative ideas for improving public services. These include a full scale model of Luchtsingel, a crowd-funded pedestrian bridge in Rotterdam and the 'Super Citizen' suit belonging to Antanas Mockus, former mayor of Bogotá, Colombia. His signature red and yellow spandex ensemble, emblazoned with the initial 'C' for 'Citizen', symbolised his belief in the power of citizens to effect change. Through strategies, such as self-organised traffic management and voluntary taxes, Mockus managed to encourage citizens to take responsibility for their city, and in doing so, reduced crime and accidents by over 40%.

The ways in which urban areas are being designed to address some of the greatest challenges faced today will be considered, including climate change, religious intolerance and housing crises. Foster + Partners' model of their 6 million m² Masdar City in Abu Dhabi, the world's first carbon-neutral, zero-waste city will be shown alongside maquettes of Kuehn Malvezzi's House

of One in Berlin, a three-faith house of worship providing a space for people of different faiths to gather and engage in respectful dialogue.

Many designers are developing solutions and interventions in response to increasing strain on the earth's resources. Projects like Tomás Saraceno's *Aerocene Explorer*, a solar-powered, balloon-like sculpture which uses open-source techniques to collect atmospheric data will consider whether damage to the planet can be undone through design. Cesar Jung Harada's *Protei* is an un-manned and un-polluting ship that detects and cleans up oil spills, an alternative to current skimming methods that compromise workers' health, contribute to pollution and which are expensive to power.

With equipment becoming increasingly affordable, access to space is much more available to individuals, institutions and private companies. On display from the V&A's collection will be a CubeSat, a 10cm³ low-cost satellite that is adaptable to meet different investigative and budgetary needs. International Space Station astronauts in space have been using the world's first zero-gravity 3D-printer to create custom tools, such as spanners, out in space, rather than having to transport them from Earth. This technology points towards the possibility of factories to be installed in space. A selection of these objects have been 3D-printed and will be on show.

The final part of the exhibition will explore the initiatives underway to mitigate the increased threats to both the natural world and civilisation. Highlights will include an architectural model of the *Svalbard Global Seed Vault*, nicknamed the "Doomsday Vault", which contains crates of seeds from all over the world, to protect them from natural and man-made disasters. Also on display will be an example of external 5D data storage developed at the University of Southampton; capable of surviving for billions of years, potentially more than the human species. These small glass discs are already being used to store major documents from human history, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and The Magna Carta.

The Future Starts Here will consider scientific solutions to the prospect of immortality. Around 2,000 people worldwide have signed up for life extension services, to be stored in liquid nitrogen after death, with a view to being brought back to life in the future. A Cryonics Alert Bracelet is provided to anyone that signs up to the Alcor Life Extension Foundation; an example will be shown alongside Taryn Simon's striking photograph of the Cryonics Institute in Michigan.

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITORS

- *The Future Starts Here* will run from 12 May to 4 November 2018 in the Sainsbury Gallery
- Advance tickets are £15. V&A members go free.
- Advance bookings can be made by calling 0207 942 2000 (booking fee applies). Tickets released online soon at vam.ac.uk/thefuturestartshere
- The exhibition is accompanied by a new V&A publication and a series of related events, courses and creative workshops
- *The Future Starts Here* is curated by Rory Hyde and Mariana Pestana
- The exhibition is designed by Andrés Jaque/Office for Political Innovation, with original films by Superflux and graphics by 2x4

Design, Architecture and Digital Department

The Design, Architecture and Digital department 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.

Corporate support for the V&A is more vital than ever. Please help us by acknowledging the exhibition sponsor, Volkswagen Group.

About Volkswagen Group

The Volkswagen Group with its headquarters in Wolfsburg is one of the world's leading automobile manufacturers. With its "TOGETHER – Strategy 2025" future program, the Volkswagen Group is paving the way for the biggest change process in its history: the realignment to become a globally leading provider of sustainable mobility. The Group comprises twelve brands from seven European countries and is fully committed to its corporate social responsibility, which includes substantial support for forward-looking initiatives within the field of culture and the arts, two fundamental elements of a dynamic society. Volkswagen strives to enable as many people as possible to interact with culture inspiring creativity. Working together with partners, Volkswagen is oriented towards encouraging a cross-generational debate with the arts and culture, which encompasses new technological potential and changing social needs.

For further PRESS information about *The Future Starts Here* please contact Madeline Adeane on madeline@reesandco.com / +44 (0)20 3137 8776 (not for publication). A selection of press images are available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk

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