

Membership Newsletter
January 2018



Visitors in the Medieval and Renaissance Galleries © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Thank you

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V&A

Members' Support

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As I come to the end of my first year at the V&A I wanted to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks for all the support you give to the Museum. I have been truly humbled to hear about the generosity of the Members over the last year, which collectively, has enabled the conservation of the Wolsey Angels for display; the acquisition of Frémiet's dramatic terracotta sculpture *Gorilla defeating a Gladiator*; scholarships for students embarking on the joint RCA/V&A History of Design postgraduate programme; and new learning resources and programmes at the Museum of Childhood.

And in 165 years of Museum history, the past year has been one of the most significant in shaping the V&A's architecture. With Members contributing over £3 million to the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter, we now have a new entrance that is transforming the way people visit the Museum. We have also created a new Members' Room to provide you with more space in which to relax away from the busy galleries, enjoy refreshments, catch up with friends, and appreciate eye-catching views of the Sackler Courtyard.

This newsletter highlights just a few of the ways your support has contributed to our work. I hope you enjoy reading about these achievements and feel proud that you have directly contributed to these successes.

In 2018, we'll continue our civic mission to reinstate creative education through DesignLab Nation, showcase the greatest endeavours of human ingenuity, and spur the imaginations of our visitors and creative practitioners. Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to welcoming you to the V&A throughout the coming year.

Dr Tristram Hunt, Director, Victoria and Albert Museum



REVIEW

2016/17 Summary

Funds raised from membership related income have been supporting the work of the Museum for over 40 years and during the 2016-17 financial year over £2.3 million was allocated.

Both the Exhibition Road Quarter and the new Members' Room received significant grants, with both capital projects coming to fruition in 2017. Other projects such as a new uniform for the Visitor Experience team, designed by British designer Christopher Raeburn, new acquisitions and conservation projects and a range of education initiatives also received funding. These initiatives included funding for the V&A Museum of Childhood's Family Learning Officer and Early Years programme, scholarships for students on the RCA/V&A History of Design MA, where students work closely with V&A collections and curatorial expertise, and a place for a member of V&A staff on the prestigious Attingham Summer School, a three week residential development programme on historic houses.

New acquisitions included a number of pieces from *Collect: the International Art Fair for Contemporary Objects*, a 19th century Charles Lepec enamel plaque and a late 17th Century tapestry by Michael Mazarind (pictured) in the popular style of English tapestry known as 'Indian Manner'. Three scaled facsimiles of Pauline Bonaparte as Venus Victrix by Antonio Canova were also acquired and show the key stages in the process of reproducing the original sculpture, derived from a 3D scan, these beautiful examples will go on display later this year when Phase Two of the Cast Courts redevelopment project opens in November. After the highly successful campaign to purchase the Wolsey Angels in 2014, in which Members played a significant part, Members have also now contributed to their conservation which you can read more about below.

CONSERVATION

Update on the Wolsey Angels

Diana Heath, Senior Metals Conservator

The Wolsey Angels were recently rediscovered, having stood unrecognised on the gateposts of a stately home in Northamptonshire, perhaps for centuries. Rare examples of copper figures created for the Tudor court at the height of the Renaissance, they were made in England between 1524 and 1529 by the Italian sculptor, Benedetto da Rovezzano (1474-1554), to adorn a magnificent tomb commissioned by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey. After Wolsey's downfall, King Henry VIII appropriated the tomb parts for his own monument, which was never completed. The remnants of Henry's tomb were sold during the English Civil War, and the Angels disappeared. Not originally intended for outdoor exposure, their surfaces altered radically over time. The separation of each pair accounts for their difference in appearance, together with the loss of their wings.

Two angels have a brown appearance as a result of procedures carried out before they were acquired by the V&A, and solvents were used to remove layers of inappropriate coatings. The encrustations of copper corrosion, staining from rust, bird lime and dirt, were removed and stabilised using a combination of laser procedures and painstaking mechanical methods. Holes, cracks and old repairs occurring on all four Angels, were improved and stabilised using fillers, these areas were blended with pigments. Extensive material analysis and technical examination was carried out by the V&A Conservation Science Section and other international experts from leading institutions. The challenging conservation work was completed over a period of twenty one months, enlivening the

appearance of the Angels as details were revealed, and supporting vulnerable areas to ensure their future preservation.

The Angels are now on temporary loan, featuring in exhibitions in the cities of Wolsey's birth and death 'Thomas Wolsey: Ipswich's Greatest Son' at Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich until April 2018 then on to 'Wolsey Angels' at New Walk Art Gallery, Leicester until September 2018. They will then return to the V&A for display in Medieval and Renaissance, Room 63, The Edwin and Susan Davies Gallery.



Purchased with the support of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund, a gift in memory of Melvin R. Seiden, the Friends of the V&A, the Ruddock Foundation for the Arts, the American Friends of the V&A, and many other generous donors thanks to a major public appeal in 2014.

Top: Tapestry by Michael Mazarind (detail) © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Left: One of the Wolsey Angels before restoration.
Above: After restoration ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Members' Support

PREVIEW

2017/18 – the story so far...

With your help the Museum has been able to make several important acquisitions this year, including three engravings by Stanley Anderson showing rural craftsmen at work, *The Basket-Maker*, *The Purbeck Quarrymen* and *The Hedger*. Also purchased is a watercolour by the important 19th-century portrait painter John Partridge, an artist previously not represented in the V&A collection, and a Minton plate probably designed and made for Prince Albert as it features his full arms and royal insignia. Prince Albert was known to have had a close relationship with Herbert Minton, son of Thomas Minton.

Some of you may have already spotted some recent Members' acquisitions out on display. If you visited last year's *Plywood: Material of the Modern World* exhibition you will have seen two striking posters, an advertisement for the 1933 Chicago World's Fair designed by Weimer Pursell, and *Wood Flies to War*, designed for the US Army Bureau of Public Relations during the Second World War. Another poster, this time featuring the *Normandie* liner designed for Compagnie Générale Transatlantique by Cassandre, will be on show in the upcoming major exhibition *Ocean Liners: Speed and Style*, sponsored by Viking Cruises – be sure to look out for this when you visit.

One of our more unusual recent acquisitions, *Gorilla defeating a Gladiator* by Emmanuel Frémiet, will soon be on display in the Members' Reception Area at the foot of staircase G. You can read more about this interesting piece in the article opposite. Look out for articles in subsequent newsletters for notifications on the display of objects acquired with the support of Members.

SUPPORT

Contributing in more ways than one...

Whether you're a longstanding Member or new to V&A Membership – we hope hearing how your support contributes to the life and success of the Museum will enhance your experience of being so closely connected to the V&A.

Each year, Members increase their subscription contributions through a variety of different channels. It is probably no surprise to learn that Members are the Museum's most avid shoppers, spending over £1m a year on a wide range of products inspired by the Museum's collection – with jewellery and special exhibition merchandise topping the popularity list.

It is always a delight to see such high levels of engagement among Members with our learning activities, particularly the V&A's renowned short courses on illuminated manuscripts, fashion and jewellery. This year alone over 10k Members have attended evening talks by leaders from across the creative world.

We rely a great deal on your generous support through donations – helping to fund conservation, research, scholarships, access to the arts, and other important projects. In recent years Members have contributed over £100k to our annual fundraising appeals in support of projects such as the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter, the acquisition of the Wolsey Angels and the painting of the Château du Juvisy (currently on display in the Europe 1600–1815 galleries). Legacy and in-memory gifts, large or small, also continue to make a huge contribution to the life of the Museum. Thank you for your continued support, generosity and engagement – we look forward to being able to welcome you on your next visit.

Contributing Members, who through an enhanced annual donation, allow us to do even more with our world-class collections of art, design and performance, are a small but increasing group. At £300 Contributing Membership is a great way of increasing your annual contribution. If you are interested in finding out more about Contributing Membership or to upgrade, please contact us at membership@vam.ac.uk or on 020 7942 2271.

ACQUISITION

Gorilla defeating a Gladiator

Alicia Robinson, Senior Curator, Sculpture, Metalworks, Ceramics and Glass

Gorilla defeating a Gladiator ('*Rétiare et Gorille*')
Emmanuel Frémiet (1824–1910)
France (Paris), 1876
Terracotta, cast and modelled

Purchased with support from V&A Members, and the Captain H.B. Murray and Dr W.L. Hildburgh bequests.



This is one of the most visually arresting sculptures exhibited in mid-19th century Europe. Frémiet, a masterly sculptor of small-scale animals and soldiers, greatly unsettled viewers with his larger depictions of dramatic combats between man and beast. In this example, the wounded gorilla – not the gladiator – is triumphant. At this date Europeans had only recently become aware of gorillas, though orangutans and chimpanzees were already known about, and observational and anthropological studies, by Charles Darwin and others, were redefining the place of humans within the natural world. The first gorilla to be brought alive to Europe lived and died in Scarborough, England, in 1855, as part of Mrs Wombwell's menagerie.

African legends told of the abduction of women by gorillas, a theme echoed in publications by imaginative European writers. In 1859 Frémiet alarmed the Jury of the official Salon exhibition in Paris by submitting a *Gorilla carrying off a Negress*. It was rejected, but given a last minute reprieve for viewing in the entrance area. Frémiet labelled it simply *Gorille Femelle* (female), but viewers assumed it was male, and abducting a female, and it caused great controversy.

This V&A *Gorilla Defeating a Gladiator* was accepted by the Salon Jury in 1876 with its academic title, *Rétiare et Gorille*. A Retiarus was a Roman gladiator equipped for combat only with a trident, a net, and sometimes a shoulder guard and these details are carefully rendered here. The dramatic theatricality of this work is complemented by other renowned combat sculptures in the V&A, such as Giambologna's *Samson Slaying the Philistine*, and Bernini's *Neptune and Triton*. Yet whereas in these examples the 'hero' is clear, here there is considerable ambivalence about who is the true victor. This reflects early debates about how gorillas were treated, although conservation issues only came to the fore decades after this sculpture captured the attention of a public fascinated by this new mammalian discovery.

Left: *Gorilla defeating a Gladiator* © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

LEGACY

Remembering Ann Callaway and her generous support

The V&A would like to recognise the tremendous support that long-standing Member Ann Callaway has given to the Museum in her lifetime and with a gift in her Will.

In June last year the V&A received the sad news of Ann Callaway's death. Ann was very fond of the V&A. She had been an enthusiastic Member of the Museum for over twelve years and derived great delight from the objects and how they illustrated different civilisations. Following a career teaching history, and a second career in the corporate world managing European Human Resources for Unilever, Ann pursued her love of history, studying art history and the V&A's collections well into her retirement.

During her lifetime, Ann supported the successful renovation of the Museum's Medieval and Renaissance Galleries in 2009, which today are seen by thousands of visitors a year. As a Member, Ann's support enabled the Museum to provide scholarships for students studying at the V&A, present exhibitions such as *Constable: The Making of a Master* and acquire objects such as the Royal Mantel Clock. The Trustees were therefore touched and extremely grateful to learn of the donation generously left to the V&A in Ann's Will.

Ann's gift is a wonderful and thoughtful gesture that will help secure the future stability of the V&A and for that, we are sincerely thankful.



Above: Ormolu Mantel Clock © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

In keeping with all legacy gifts to The V&A Foundation, Ann's support will help fund conservation, curation, exhibitions, education programmes and important acquisitions, thereby ensuring that generations of visitors to come will be able to enjoy the V&A collections just as she did.

Members' Benefits

MEMBERS' ROOM

A beautiful space dedicated for Members

Occupying a magnificent top-lit gallery, the room offers Members an alternative space to the main Café in which to pause for a drink or dine from the bespoke all-day menu. You can discover the room in a different light each time you visit – whether enjoying a morning coffee, lunch, a cream tea, or dinner and a cocktail on a Friday evening. The room has been designed with a mixed pattern of use in mind, with areas for convivial interaction, dining and both reading and study. There are a selection of books and magazines available throughout the room.

Key characteristics have been drawn from the rich and vibrant material palette seen throughout the V&A. The floor, raised by almost half a metre to give views from the large existing windows, uses reclaimed parquet flooring taken from across the Museum. A monolithic terrazzo bar is undoubtedly the centrepiece of the room and includes a bespoke menu including unique Queen Victoria and Prince Albert cocktails. Other design features include specially commissioned contemporary furniture and lighting by architects Carmody Groarke and a beautiful Alessi tea service, providing a subtle nod to the 20th Century collections on display in the galleries below. Large mirror installations throughout create new perspectives to view the Museum, both inside and out.

Thank you to the more than 30,000 people who have already visited the new Members' Room, many enjoying repeat visits, and we look forward to welcoming more of you in the year ahead. As with all new ventures we have been collating feedback and will be using any common themes from your comments to inform the evolution of the room.

Please look out for details in our monthly e-newsletter on exclusive out-of-hours events held in the Members' Room, as well as changing monthly special offers on food and drink.



How do I get there?

The Members' Room is located on the fifth floor and is accessible via staircase G or Lift F (for step free access) near the Fashion Galleries. For convenience we recommend entering the Museum via The Sackler Courtyard or the Tunnel Entrance.

Who can I bring in with me?

Members can bring in as many guests as their membership type allows and all Members can bring up to four children in with them. If you need to check your level of membership, simply check the back of your Membership Card or ask at any of our Membership Desks.

Can I book a table?

Seating and tables are taken on a first come, first served basis. Members are not currently able to make bookings, though we will be reviewing this later in the year and will notify Members should this change. Please note a 'Please wait to be seated' policy may be in operation during peak busy times.

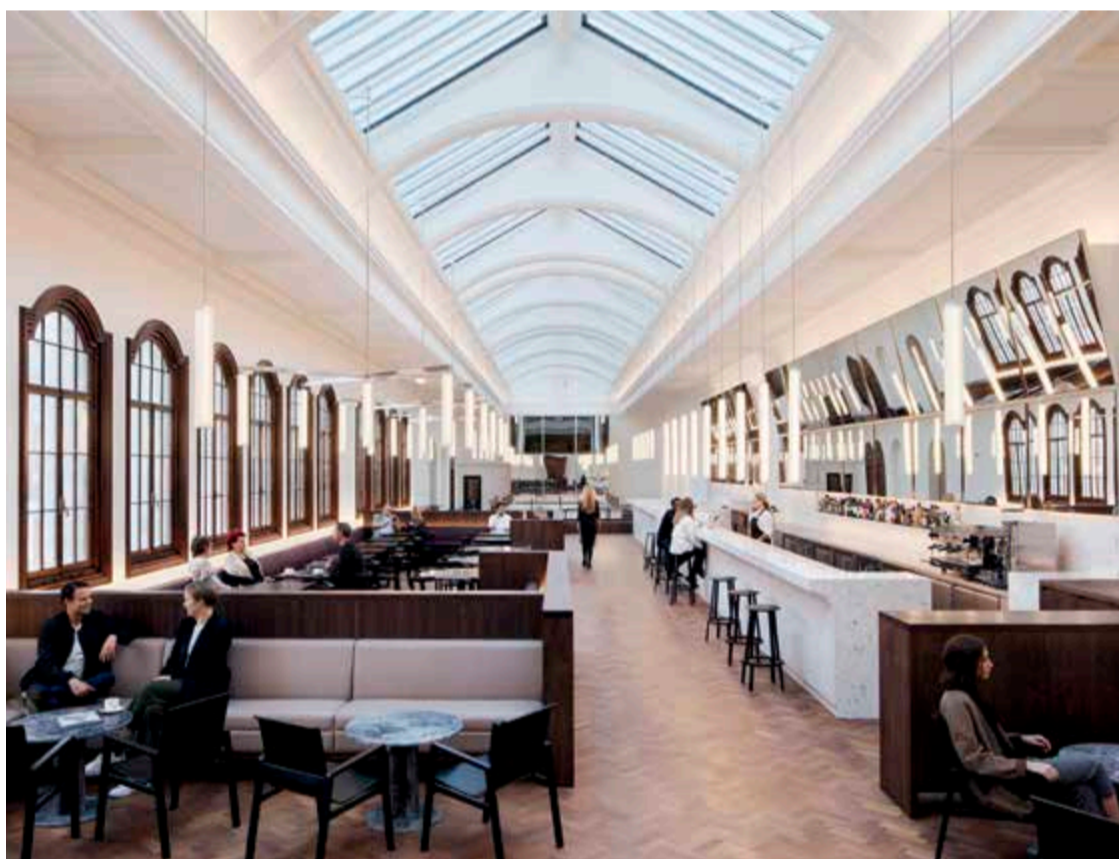
Opening Times

Saturday to Thursday 10.00–17.30 (kitchen closes 16.00), last orders at the bar 17.00.

Friday 10.00–21.30 (kitchen closes 20.30), last orders at the bar 21.15.

Please contact us at membership@vam.ac.uk to sign up for our newsletter. Menu changes seasonally - for a sample menu visit: vam.ac.uk/info/membership

Above and left: V&A new Members' Room © Rory Gardiner



Membership Advisory Group (MAG)

The purpose of the Membership Advisory Group is to represent the interests of Members and provide a forum for discussion. The group is consultative rather than decision making and meet each year in October, February, April and July. Meetings will provide a forum for discussion and a clear channel of communication back to the V&A, a consultation group when deciding terms and benefits offered to V&A Members, and a chance for the Museum to hear Members views regarding areas of support and other matters.

If you would like to propose a topic or question for discussion, please send your request to membership@vam.ac.uk with MAG in the subject field. If you wish to be considered for future places on the group then please look out for notification in this newsletter or in our monthly e-newsletter. Please email us if you would like to subscribe to our Members' E-newsletter. Profiles of each member of the MAG can be found on our website.

Members' Benefits

Free entry to all exhibitions

Experience more with unlimited visits and no need to book.

Previews

Be first to see new exhibitions and galleries at exclusive previews the day before they open to the public.

Members' Room

Encounter a different perspective at the heart of your Museum.

(See above for opening hours)

Events

Enjoy priority booking for evening talks by leaders from across the creative world. Celebrate our experts, the collections and the building itself with other like-minded Members with access to exclusive Members-only tours, curator talks and special out-of-hour events.

V&A Magazine

Discover more with your subscription delivered directly to your door three times a year – look out for the next issue in March.

Updates

Delve deeper and stay in the know with our quarterly newsletter and monthly emails – email us at membership@vam.ac.uk to sign up to our e-newsletter.

Bringing your family with you

Spark the imagination of the next generation of V&A Members with free access for up to four children (under 18) to all exhibitions and Members' Previews.

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