



## News Release

# V&A DesignLab Nation rolled out to Coventry and Blackburn

[vam.ac.uk/designlab](http://vam.ac.uk/designlab) | [#V&ADesignLab](https://twitter.com/V&ADesignLab)

Starting in January 2018, the V&A's national DesignLab Nation programme will bring together secondary schools, local museums and locally based industry and designers to inspire and preserve the essential role of Art, Design and Technology education. DesignLab Nation will work with schools in traditionally industrial areas extending the reach of the V&A's Schools Programme beyond London. Working in partnership with Culture Coventry and Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery in 2018, DesignLab Nation will expand to include collaborations with The Potteries Museum in Stoke, Museums Sheffield, and The National Glass Centre in Sunderland in years two and three.

From Bauhaus to Bowie, Michaelangelo to McQueen, the V&A's collections and exhibitions celebrate the great heritage of design and making in Britain and around the world. Loans selected in consultation with the DesignLab Nation partners, ensure that all visitors to the partner museums have the chance to experience the V&A's collections, first-hand in the context of their regional history and creative clusters.

**Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, said:** "As our creative economy grows, international competition accelerates, and the provision of creative subjects in schools is squeezed, art and design education is needed more than ever. By bringing together local industry, museums and schools, DesignLab Nation will ensure that the V&A works with communities across the country to educate and inspire the artists, innovators and designers of tomorrow."

The theme for Blackburn in year one is textiles, to reflect the rich legacy of the region's successful cotton industry during the industrial revolution. Fabrics designed by Ashley Havinden, Lucienne Day, Marion Dorn and Tibor Reich have been loaned to The Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery. It will be the first time that textiles have been displayed in the Museum.

The theme for Coventry in year one is innovation. Coventry was once one of the largest car industries in the world, and its automotive industry is once again going from strength to strength. Loan objects to Coventry Transport Museum have been selected as examples of

outstanding innovation and design, and include works by eminent designers such as Charles and Ray Eames and Robert Foster.

DesignLab Nation will encourage young people to make their own contemporary responses to historical processes, and to gain an understanding of how collections from the past can inform new ideas.

As well as lending its collections, the V&A has helped recruit schools and design practitioners, and worked to develop each project with the museums. It will also provide a comprehensive programme of training and professional development for teachers involved in the programme and from other schools in each area.

Each DesignLab Nation partnership will be delivered by specialists and professionals from local design practices, working closely with the local partner museum which will act as a 'hub' for these in-depth secondary school projects. The partnership will deliver three DesignLab projects per area per year - 36 in total over the three years- and will focus on inspiring creativity amongst the next generation of designers.

**Francis Ranford, Acting Deputy CEO of Culture Coventry, said:** “We are continually exploring innovative ways to engage new and existing audiences in the significance of Art, Design and Technology. Our wide-ranging exhibitions, events and schools programmes are accessible to all members of the public and aim to establish long-lasting connections which inspire and develop creativity. National partnerships such as DesignLab Nation particularly help us to achieve this by extending our reach into schools usually out of our reach.

**Councillor Damian Talbot, Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Young People at Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, said:** “We’re delighted to be working with the V&A and to have been chosen to host such prestigious textile pieces. It is fantastic that young people are being encouraged to explore the rich manufacturing history of this area that continues to this day, and is something that is celebrated by the wonderful National Festival of Making. This project gives them an opportunity to see how they can develop skills, which could potentially be used in the areas of design and making that could contribute to the continuing success of our local creative and manufacturing industries.”

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**For further PRESS information please contact the V&A press office on 0207 942 2502 or email [press.office@vam.ac.uk](mailto:press.office@vam.ac.uk).**

## Notes to Editors

1. Objects will be on display at The Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery from 15 January – 29 July 2018 and at Coventry Transport Museum from 25 January – 29 July 2018. Both displays are free to visit.
2. With a collection of over 2.3 million objects, the V&A is proud to lend to more partners than any other national museum in the UK. In 2016/17, 104,667 people visited a V&A touring exhibition in the UK. Between 2016/17 over 20,000 young people benefitted from V&A programmes in the West Midlands and Yorkshire to increase school visits to museums. In Pennine Lancashire, 87% of primary schools in the region have now visited a Pennine Lancashire Museums venue.
3. The V&A has lent 86 objects to the Herbert Museum and Art Gallery's 'Crafts of the Punjab' exhibition in Coventry, open until 21 January 2018, which is focused on 19th century crafts from the Punjab.