



## News Release

### **V&A Appoints new Director of Learning and National Programmes**

March 2018

The V&A is pleased to announce that Dr Helen Charman FRSA, Director of Learning and Research at the Design Museum, London, will join the V&A this month as Director of Learning and National Programmes. The department offers a variety of ways to engage with V&A collections and expertise in South Kensington, Bethnal Green and through our National Programme. Our learning events and resources create unique learning experiences for primary, secondary, college students and teachers. The V&A Learning Academy offers adult courses as well as training for professionals in the culture and heritage sector, both nationally and internationally.

Dr Helen Charman will lead a newly defined department that builds upon the V&A's founding principles as a hub for the design school movement. Henry Cole, the V&A's first Director, declared that the V&A should be a "schoolroom for everyone". Its mission was to improve the standards of British industry by educating designers, manufacturers and consumers in art and science. Dr Charman's appointment underscores the V&A's new focus on supporting design education across the country - as we revive our founding mission to inspire innovation, at a time when creative subjects are under such pressure in the schools curriculum. The remit of the Learning Department is to provide access and interpretation to the V&A's collections. We lend our collection and expertise to more UK partners than any other museum. With the opening of V&A Dundee in September, this National activity will now be more formally aligned with learning activities.

Tristram Hunt, V&A Director said: *"I am delighted to welcome Helen Charman to the V&A as our new Director of Learning and National Programmes. Helen is an exceptional leader in museum education. Her range of experience means that she is well placed to lead our team of world experts in the field of education and deepening our national partnerships."*

Helen Charman said: *"I'm honoured to be joining the V&A as Director of Learning and National Programmes at a critical moment for creative and cultural learning nationally. The capacity of*

*design to problem solve, and act as a responsive and optimistic force for change, cannot be underestimated. Building on the V&A's world class exhibition and learning programmes, national remit and unique collection presents an unrivalled opportunity for art and design education nationally., The V&A's distinctive history, purpose and potential is strongly positioned to help tackle the challenges and meet the needs of today's complex world through the power of education and applied creativity in the museum context and beyond."*

Dr Helen Charman is Director of Learning and Research at the Design Museum, London, where she has worked since 2007, most recently as part of the directorate team that successfully mobilised the museum in its new home in Kensington. A cultural learning professional and a passionate advocate for the critical role of art and design in education,, Helen has 25 years' experience in museum and gallery education, including previous positions as Head of Learning and Access at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney and Senior Curator: Education at Tate Modern. She is a member of the Steering Group for the Cultural Learning Alliance, the Advisory Board for Chelsea Physic Garden, a Governor at Forest Hill School in South East London, and a former trustee of Engage, the National Association for Gallery Education.

Dr Charman holds degrees from Oxford University (BA Hons English Literature), and the University of London (MA History of Art and Doctorate in Education). She currently teaches on the University of London's MA Museum and Gallery Education, the Southbank Centre/Kings College MA Education in Arts and Cultural Settings and the Design Museum/Kingston University's MA Curating Contemporary Design.

Helen writes and speaks regularly on art and design education and cultural learning. She is the co-author of the Art Gallery Handbook (Tate), founding editor of the education blog designerlylearning (2011-2016), and a participant on the first Museum Association 'Transformers' programme in 2014 focusing on the social and civic value of museums. Alongside professional practice and publication in cultural learning she has a keen interest in development education and has worked on several projects overseas.

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