

ANNUAL REVIEW 2017-18

# V&A









The Henry Cole Wing and café, the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter, designed by AL\_A © Hufton+Crow

Front cover: The Sackler Courtyard, the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter, designed by AL\_A © Hufton+Crow

The Exhibition Road Quarter has been generously supported by The Monument Trust, The Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation, The Headley Trust, Blavatnik Family Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Peter Williams and Heather Acton, the Friends of the V&A and many other donors

Back cover: Stairs, generously supported by Peter Williams and Heather Acton, leading to The Sainsbury Gallery

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YEAR AT A GLANCE



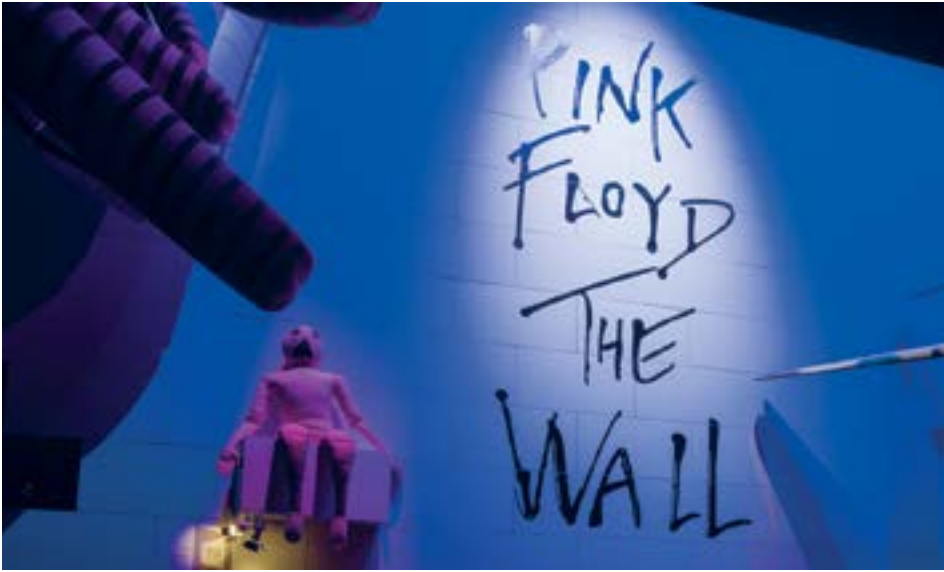
Record visitor figures for the V&A

For the first time in the museum’s history, the V&A attracted over four million visitors, with a total of 4,396,557 people visiting V&A South Kensington, the V&A Museum of Childhood and Blythe House. The V&A was also named TripAdvisor Museum of the Year.



Opera: Passion, Power and Politics

The first exhibition to open in the new Sainsbury Gallery was *Opera: Passion, Power and Politics*, a landmark celebration of the ultimate immersive art form, created in collaboration with the Royal Opera House, sponsored by Societe Generale, sound partner Bowers & Wilkins and generously supported by Blavatnik Family Foundation and The Taylor Family Foundation with further support from GRoW @ Annenberg, Bertelsmann and Cockayne – Grants for the Arts, a donor advised fund of The London Community Foundation and Dr Genevieve Davies and the American Friends of the V&A.



The Pink Floyd Exhibition: Their Mortal Remains

Extended by two weeks due to popular demand, the V&A’s *Pink Floyd* exhibition – presented by Pink Floyd, the V&A and Iconic Entertainment Studios, sound experience by Sennheiser – overtook *David Bowie is...* to become the most-visited music show ever held at the museum, attracting an audience of 352,189 people. The spectacular display explored the audio and visual culture of one of the most inventive groups of the last 50 years, culminating with the opportunity to experience the band’s final live performance in 2005.

V&A Exhibition Road Quarter opens its doors

The V&A’s most ambitious building project for over a century was unveiled on 30 June 2017 by the Duchess of Cambridge. Designed by Amanda Levete and her practice, AL\_A, the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter encompasses a new civic space for London, a new world-class gallery and an accessible entrance to the V&A from Exhibition Road. It was inaugurated with REVEAL festival, a week of digital and arts events featuring fashion designer Molly Goddard, artists Tomás Saraceno and Simon Heijdens, dancer Julie Cunningham and many more.



The new V&A Gallery

In December 2017, the V&A opened its first international gallery at Design Society in China’s fast-paced design hub, Shenzhen. The gallery is part of a unique partnership with China Merchants Shekou Holdings – the first of its kind between an international museum and a Chinese partner – where the V&A also provided professional advice, consultancy and training. The inaugural exhibition, *Values of Design*, featured 250 objects from the V&A’s collections. Presenting a broad exploration of the relationship of value and design, this marked the culmination of an international knowledge exchange programme, and three years of extensive research conducted in London and China, also resulting in 45 acquisitions for the V&A’s collections.



V&A launches DesignLab Nation education programme

This year the V&A launched one of its most far-reaching national projects, a three-year programme bringing together the museum, regional institutions and local design practitioners to deliver exciting new design education opportunities for key stage 3 and 4 students across the country. Loans from the V&A’s collections complement the programme and ensure that all visitors to the partner museums – not just the students – have the chance to experience the V&A’s collections first-hand.



Record-breaking weekend

The V&A enjoyed its busiest weekend and busiest single day ever during September 2017. The London Design Festival, which ran between 16 and 24 September, spearheaded the record-breaking period, with the museum as a whole welcoming 173,250 visitors. As the LDF festival hub, the V&A housed a broad range of specially commissioned installations and displays by some of the world’s most exciting designers, as well as a huge programme of events including talks, tours and workshops.

A new room for Members

A magnificent new space dedicated to V&A Members opened on the top floor of Aston Webb’s Grade I listed 1909 wing, designed by Carmody Groarke, made possible through the generosity of V&A Members. The top-lit gallery, formerly a study room and offices for the National Art Library, now bears a characteristic V&A mix of heritage, modernity and design ingenuity, with bespoke furniture and fittings. Its transformation includes a bar, café and restaurant for casual and formal dining, and large mirror installations reflect the galleries below and architecture and courtyard outside.





Collaborating in Coventry

Curators from the V&A's Asia department worked with staff at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum to create the special exhibition *Crafts of the Punjab*, which featured 85 exceptional objects from the V&A collection spanning the 2nd to the 19th century. Alongside a gold throne made for Ranjit Singh, the first Sikh Maharaja of the Punjab, highlights ranged from gold-inlaid steel artefacts to elaborate musical instruments.



Plywood: Material of the Modern World

This world-first exhibition, sponsored by MADE.COM, supported by the American Friends of the V&A, looked at the eclectic history of plywood, an “everyday” material that has enabled some of the most groundbreaking designs of the modern era – from second world war planes to the downloadable self-assembly WikiHouse. Considering the shifts in value associated with plywood, the show surpassed expectations for visitor figures, attracting 280,000 people.



The shop is reconceived

The V&A shop was transformed into a cutting-edge space that showcases the best in design, materials and innovation. The shop's new look aimed to uncover the true architectural skeleton of the site, retaining elements of its original structure while new display systems were added around it. The redesigned shop reveals the historic fabric of the building, and features both a jewellery pavilion and 'pocket studio' with a changing focus on materials throughout the year.



Winnie-the-Pooh delights families in their thousands

Audiences experienced the timeless and universal appeal of this much-loved bear through an exhibition, with support from the Unwin Charitable Trust with additional support from Old Possum's Practical Trust, that featured sketches, letters, photographs, cartoons, ceramics and fashion, including the original manuscript of *Winnie-the-Pooh* from the Wren Library at Trinity College. The exhibition revealed the story behind the creative partnership of AA Milne and EH Shepard and the factors contributing to the success and enduring popularity of the books and characters.



Prince's shoes are acquired for the V&A's collections

A pair of black satin shoes worn by the musical icon was acquired for the V&A's National Collection of Performing Arts. Prince was known for his flamboyant stage presence, extravagant dress and wide vocal range, and his career tells a strong design story involving complex iconography. Through costume choices, of which these shoes are an example, he frequently played with his visual identity and challenged traditional notions of masculinity, race and sexuality.



V&A partners with Google to reveal fashion secrets

The V&A collaborated with Google Arts and Culture to unlock the world of fashion, with a new virtual experience and online exhibitions detailing the incredible stories behind V&A collections. For the *We Wear Culture* project, the V&A's Vivienne Westwood corset from her 1990 Portrait collection was the centrepiece of a new virtual reality experience exploring how humans go to extraordinary lengths to refashion their bodies.



V&A Museum of Childhood Kids Takeover Day

For the first time in its history, the UK's leading museum dedicated to children was taken over by its audience. At the Kids in Museums Takeover Day in November, more than 50 children from Globe Primary School were given jobs that adults normally do across departments at the V&A Museum of Childhood, and offered their ideas for a better museum (such as gold front doors). BBC Radio 5 Live interviewed students about the day in a live news broadcast.



V&A unveils ReACH initiative

Launched at UNESCO in May 2017, ReACH (Reproduction of Art and Cultural Heritage) is a pioneering global programme exploring the role of reproductions for cultural heritage in the digital age. Spearheaded by the V&A, the programme rethinks our approach to reproducing, storing and sharing works of art and cultural heritage. One of its key aims is to share best practices concerning the production, storage and dissemination of reproductions and to use the information gathered to draft a new convention concerning the role of museums in this crucial debate.



# CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

This has been a particularly successful year for the V&A, with the highest number of visitors in the museum’s 166-year history. It has been encouraging to see every part of the museum coursing with people, visiting the special exhibitions and the permanent collections, attending lectures, taking part in our educational programmes, studying in the National Art library or sunbathing and paddling in the John Madejski Garden.

The opening of the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter by the Duchess of Cambridge, with its new Sainsbury Gallery, Sackler Courtyard and Blavatnik Hall, has helped the museum attract an influx of new supporters, and made it easier for visitors to explore galleries once distant from the museum entrance. It was a boost for museum staff, and for the Board of Trustees, when the V&A was named TripAdvisor Museum of the Year and the favourite museum of *Time Out* readers. The V&A Exhibition Road Quarter was named Cultural Project of the Year in the Architect’s Journal Architecture Awards.

A succession of excellent and diverse exhibitions kept the museum in the public eye: *Pink Floyd*, *Balenciaga*, *Plywood* and *Winnie-the-Pooh* were just four shows which exceeded our forecasts. Meanwhile the great *David Bowie is...* exhibition of 2013 reached its twelfth and final stop of its round-the-world tour in Brooklyn, and has now been seen by more than two million visitors.

It has been a year of museum building projects. The V&A Gallery at Shekou in Shenzhen, on the Pearl River Delta, opened to acclaim in December. V&A Dundee, on the banks of the Tay, will open in September. And we look forward to realising our plans for a V&A East in the Olympic Park, as part of the East Bank district.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank our many generous philanthropists, supporters and donors, both large and small, and our V&A Members who have supported our efforts so handsomely across the year. I would also like to thank the Director of the Museum, Dr Tristram Hunt, upon his first, very successful year at the V&A, and the whole of the Executive Board, Keepers, Curators, Development Team and staff for their endless efforts to keep the museum exciting, relevant, scholarly and respected.

**Nicholas Coleridge CBE**  
*Chairman, V&A*



Light Sgraffito on the Henry Cole Wing during REVEAL festival inaugurated the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter. Photo © Hydar Dewachi





## DIRECTOR’S FOREWORD

The V&A has been shaped by both civic and global ambitions since its foundation. Our international story – the legacy of the 1851 Great Exhibition, the Germanic influence of our founder Prince Albert, our collection’s global origins – is shared with a national purpose of education and access, initially designed to equip industry with the tools of design. One hundred and sixty-six years on, the V&A’s civic mission continues to inspire our work, in a response that remains local, national and global. As TS Eliot once suggested: “The past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past”.

In our promotion of the designed world, we support all forms of museum learning, both on-site and well beyond our walls. We are deepening our regional connections through loans, national partnerships and skill-sharing. Over the last year, Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s throne travelled to Coventry; Chippendale’s wallpapers to Leeds; and Turner’s drawings to Woking. And we’re returning to our roots – championing design education and the creative industries – by supporting the teaching of the new Design & Technology GCSE with DesignLab Nation. This new programme is designed to support students through the professional development of teachers, bolstering the education provision of local museums and sharing our collections.

At the same time, we’re spreading our wings across international waters, creating exciting networks with colleagues and connecting to communities across the globe: from training courses for professionals, leading the debate on digital technology and heritage protection at UNESCO, to touring exhibitions that have reached every continent world-

wide. And, with the opening of the V&A’s first international gallery at Design Society in the dynamic design megacity of Shenzhen, this important global story is expanding and evolving. The V&A is connecting people and places across oceans – *David Bowie is...* being just one great example – while creating common understandings and shared experiences back at home. With our international collections, our visitors celebrate myriad cultures every day at the V&A.

The V&A is uniquely placed to fulfil this widespread civic ambition, possessing the wonderful ability to unite people with the designed world. Today we are using our collections to broaden our understanding of the world around us, and it is the strength of these cultural connections – the local, the national and the global – that ultimately confirm the V&A as the world’s leading museum of art, design and performance.

**Dr Tristram Hunt**

*Director, V&A*





Installation view of *The Pink Floyd Exhibition: Their Mortal Remains*

## 2017-18 EXHIBITIONS AND DISPLAYS



Tom Hunter, *Arnold Circus Chalk*, 2015 © Tom Hunter

### Searching for Ghosts

11 February 2017 – 21 January 2018  
*V&A Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green*

Encompassing photographs, a community arts project and a large-scale sculpture, this exhibition provided a haunting look at east London social housing. Photographer Tom Hunter embarked on an intergenerational journey of discovery, working with residents young and old to explore the “living memory” of places such as Hackney’s demolished Holly Street Estate.

Curator: Teresa Hare Duke with Tom Hunter (photographer)

### The Pink Floyd Exhibition: Their Mortal Remains

13 May 2017 – 15 October 2017  
*Presented by Pink Floyd, the V&A and Iconic Entertainment Studios*  
*Sound experience by Sennheiser*

The first international retrospective of one of the world’s most iconic and influential bands, this exhibition was an immersive, multi-sensory, theatrical journey through Pink Floyd’s extraordinary world, 50 years since the band released its first single.

Curators: Victoria Broackes and Anna Landreth Strong



**Prix Pictet: Space**

6 May 2017 – 28 May 2017

This exhibition featured shortlisted works from one of the world’s leading prizes for photography, drawing attention to global issues of sustainability. The theme embraced subjects as diverse as overpopulation, territorial dispute, air pollution, cyberspace, and the fragility of the planet’s great wildernesses.

Jury: Sir David King, Valérie Belin, Martin Barnes, Philippe Bertherat, Jan Dalley, Emmanuelle de l’Écotais, Dambisa Moyo, Sebastião Salgado, Wang Shu



Larissa from the series *Heat Maps* , 2016 by Richard Mosse, winner of the 2017 Prix Pictet © Prix Pictet Space

**Balenciaga: Shaping Fashion**

27 May 2017 – 18 February 2018

*Sponsored by American Express*

Cristóbal Balenciaga’s exquisite craftsmanship and groundbreaking designs shaped modern fashion. This exhibition examined his work and legacy, with over 100 pieces crafted by the master of couture, his protégées and contemporary fashion designers working in the same innovative tradition.

Curator: Cassie Davies-Strodder



Installation view of *Balenciaga: Shaping Fashion*

**Plywood: Material of the Modern World**

15 July 2017 – 12 November 2017

*Sponsored by MADE.COM*

Light, strong and versatile, plywood was the surprising material celebrated in this world-first exhibition. From cars to aeroplanes, furniture to architecture, hand-making to digital manufacture, the exhibition revealed how plywood has revolutionised design over the past 150 years.

Curators: Christopher Wilk and Elizabeth Bisley  
*Supported by the American Friends of the V&A*



Installation view of *Plywood: Material of the Modern World*

**Michael Morpurgo: A Lifetime in Stories**

22 July 2017 – 25 February 2018

*V&A Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green*

Michael Morpurgo is one of Britain’s best-loved story makers and this unique exhibition showcased the notebooks and manuscripts that became the classics we know today, including *War Horse*, *Private Peaceful*, *Kensuke’s Kingdom* and *Farm Boy*. Using atmospheric soundscapes, the exhibition explored familiar themes in Morpurgo’s storytelling: war, animals and friendship. Curator: Seven Stories, The National Centre for Children’s Books



Installation view of *Michael Morpurgo: A Lifetime in Stories* with Joey, puppet from National Theatre Production of *War Horse*, given by Handspring Puppet Company

**Opera: Passion, Power and Politics**

30 September 2017 – 25 February 2018

*Sponsored by Societe Generale*

*Sound partner Bowers & Wilkins*

*Generously supported by Blavatnik Family Foundation and The Taylor Family Foundation*

The only exhibition ever to explore opera on a grand scale, this immersive display took in key moments in the history of European opera – from its roots in Renaissance Italy to its present-day form – and focused on seven operatic premieres in seven cities.

Curator: Kate Bailey  
*With further support from GRoW @ Annenberg, Bertelsmann and Cockayne – Grants for the Arts, a donor-advised fund of The London Community Foundation, Dr Genevieve Davies and the American Friends of the V&A*  
*In collaboration with the Royal Opera House*



Installation view of *Opera: Passion, Power and Politics*

**Winnie-the-Pooh: Exploring a Classic**

9 December 2017 – 8 April 2018

*With support from the Unwin Charitable Trust*

This multi-sensory and playful exhibition explored the magical world of Winnie-the-Pooh – one of the most adored fictional characters of all time. It looked at the inspiration behind AA Milne’s stories and his creative partnership with illustrator EH Shepard, and the factors contributing to the books’ enduring popularity.

Curators: Emma Laws and Annemarie Bircough  
*With additional support from Old Possum’s Practical Trust*



Visitors enjoy *Winnie-the-Pooh: Exploring a Classic*



**Ocean Liners: Speed and Style**

3 February 2018 – 17 June 2018

*Sponsored by Viking Cruises*

Telling the extraordinary design stories of international ocean liners and their cultural impact over more than a century, this exhibition shone a light on the romantic and remarkable age of ocean travel and showed how these impressive vessels helped shape the modern world.

Curator: Ghislaine Wood and Anna Ferrari



Installation view of *Ocean Liners: Speed and Style*

**Dream On**

10 February 2018 – 20 January 2019

*V&A Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green*

Exploring dreams, the unconscious and a world of imagination between sleep and wakefulness, this exhibition weaves together new work by internationally renowned ceramist Christie Brown, a co-created sculptural installation by young people from St George's Hospital Tooting and a photography project with primary school children from Lauriston School Hackney.

Curator: Teresa Hare Duke



Installation view of *Dream On*

**Century of the Child: Nordic Design for Children 1900 to Today**

30 March 2018 – 2 September 2018

*V&A Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green*

From BRIO to LEGO, Marimekko and the Moomins, this exhibition gathered the best and most progressive Nordic designs, architecture and art for children, reaching from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day.

Curator: Stephen Nicholls

*This exhibition was created by Museum Vandalorum, Sweden, in collaboration with Design Museum Danmark and Design Museum Helsinki.*



Installation view of *Century of the Child: Nordic Design for Children 1900 to Today* with Kay Bojesen Monkeys, 1951

**DISPLAYS**

**Silver Speaks**

8 March 2016 – 2 July 2017

With support from Arts Council England in collaboration with the Goldsmiths' Company

**Beatrix Potter's London**

28 July 2016 – 20 June 2017

**David Garrick: Book Collector**

20 September 2016 – 1 May 2017

**Garnitures: Vase Sets from National Trust Houses**

11 October 2016 – 30 April 2017

Supported by The Headley Trust  
Organised in collaboration with the National Trust

**Iron and Gold: The Intricate Ornament of the Zuloagas**

4 October 2016 – 1 September 2017

**Another Russia: Post-Soviet Printmaking**

8 December 2016 – 15 August 2017

**Printing a New World**

3 February 2017 – 30 June 2018

**Ephemeral Architecture**

10 December 2016 – 16 April 2017

**A B C Photography**

*V&A Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green*

11 February 2017 – 4 June 2017

**The History of Europe – Told by its Theatres**

23 March 2017 – 3 September 2017

**Place (Village)**

*V&A Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green*

New permanent installation, on display from 25 March 2017

**Rachel Kneebone at the V&A**

1 April 2017 – 14 January 2018

**Purple Clay: Chinese Teapots for Scholarly Tastes**

28 April 2017 – 15 September 2017

**Building the Royal Albert Hall**

6 May 2017 – 7 January 2018

Supported by the Royal Albert Hall

**Designing the V&A**

6 May 2017 – 7 January 2018

**V&A Illustration Awards 2017**

16 May 2017 – 20 August 2017

Supported by the Enid Linder Foundation and the Moira Gemmill Memorial Fund

**Contemporary Korean Ceramics**

19 May 2017 – 11 February 2018

Supported by the Korea Foundation  
Additional support provided by Samsung

**The Ephemera Effect: Hokusai's Great Wave**

25 May 2017 – 1 October 2017

**Seen But Not Heard**

10 June 2017 – 19 November 2017

**Into the Woods: Trees in British Book Illustration**

22 June 2017 – 28 January 2018

**Door to Design: Year 1**

1 July 2017 – 22 October 2017

Supported by John Lyon's Charity and the Heritage Lottery Fund

**Testimonial: The Life Story of a Monumental Vase**

17 July 2017 – 31 July 2018

**Woman's Hour Craft Prize**

7 September 2017 – 5 February 2018

In collaboration with BBC Radio 4 and the Crafts Council

**Eclectic: The Julie and Robert Breckman Collections at the V&A**

11 September 2017 – 24 June 2018

**Lustrous Surfaces: Lacquer in Asia and Beyond**

14 October 2017 – 16 September 2018

With thanks to the Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation and Toshiba International Foundation

**Poppies**

1 November 2017 – 21 November 2018

**Chinese Snuff Bottles in the V&A**

1 November 2017 – 31 May 2018

**Into the Woods: Trees in Photography**

18 November 2017 to 22 April 2018

**Anthony Crickmay: Photographing People and Performance**

21 November 2017 – 10 June 2018

**Sister Brother**

*V&A Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green*

25 November 2017 – 20 May 2018

**The Artful Book: 70 Years of the Folio Society**

22 December 2017 – 1 May 2018

**V&A Exhibition Road Quarter: Resident Artists Respond**

5 January 2018 – 15 April 2018

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund

**Printing a Modern World: Commercial Graphics in the 1930s**

3 February 2018 – 19 August 2018

**Without Walls: Disability and Innovation in Building Design**

10 February 2018 – 21 October 2018

In collaboration with Accentuate History of Place, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund

**Myth and Mortality: The Fairytale World of Carolein Smit**

20 March 2018 – 30 September 2018

Supported by the Mondriaan Fund; the Royal Netherlands Embassy; Dinko Valerio and Hester Eriks

**Rapid Response Collecting**

Ongoing





The Sackler Courtyard, the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter, designed by AL\_A © Hufton+Crow

# BUILDING THE FUTURE

THE MUSEUM’S BIGGEST ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTION IN 100 YEARS  
BRINGS A NEW WAVE OF VISITORS TO THE V&A



The Aston Webb Screen, the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter, designed by AL\_A © Hufton+Crow

This year was transformative for the V&A. Not only did it break visitor records, welcoming more than four million people through its doors in South Kensington, and 400,000 at the V&A Museum of Childhood, but it also saw the completion of the museum’s largest and most exciting architectural intervention in over a century. The V&A Exhibition Road Quarter opened in June 2017 after six years of design and construction and £55m of investment, creating a new way for people to enter and interact with the museum and an entirely new civic space for London.

Designed by Stirling Prize-winning British architect Amanda Levete and her practice AL\_A, the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter provides a new entrance to the V&A from Exhibition Road, on which many of the museum’s Albertopolis neighbour institutions reside. Visitors are met with bold and bright new spaces: the expansive Sackler Courtyard, the beautiful Blavatnik Hall welcome area, and a new world-class gallery space in the subterranean Sainsbury Gallery – now one of the largest exhibition spaces in the UK.

Aiming to create “an exceptional place for London”, Amanda Levete said that the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter “is a reflection of the pioneering identity of the V&A, and continues its mission of innovation into the 21st century”. Transforming the flow of people from street to museum – people may now enter directly at ground level through remodelled 19th-century arches, in addition to using the doors on Cromwell Road – the expansion looks to encourage a wider demographic to visit and provide new ways to engage with the museum. It is the culmination of the V&A’s

long-held ambition to transform its west wing into an accessible space with a purpose-built gallery for the museum’s programme of major temporary exhibitions.

“It’s completely relaxed and open,” says Director of Design and FuturePlan Pip Simpson of the museum’s new way in, and reveals the expansion “has had a genuine impact” on engagement. The decision to have visitors greeted by a spacious, free-flowing room with screens available on the walls in the Blavatnik Hall, rather than employees behind a desk, was for her “one of the most interesting discoveries. It’s beautiful, it’s functional, it [has] brought visitors in.” Rather than being funnelled through a busy, one-track entrance process, visitors have control over their journey and room to take in their surroundings. Roaming staff provide information if needed.

The piazza-like Sackler Courtyard with its new café is a place for visitors to gather, relax and plan a visit. “I think all museums and cultural institutions have a civic responsibility, a sense of ‘this is for you, the general public, to enjoy’”, says the V&A Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer Tim Reeve. He calls the new courtyard “a fantastic open air space; it enables you to pause, it enables you to reflect and at the same time it reconnects the public with the buildings, surrounded by the Henry Cole Wing, that were closed off for decades and could not be appreciated from certain angles.”

The Sackler Courtyard has also already hosted a range of events and performances. For REVEAL festival, a multi-arts inauguration for the V&A’s new spaces in June 2017, it welcomed in institutions from the South Kensington cultural quarter including the Royal Albert Hall’s Albert Band, and hosted performances from the likes of award-winning hip hop choreographer Botis Seva, who created a new work with alumni from the National Youth Dance Company.

Opening in September 2017, The Sainsbury Gallery’s dramatic inaugural exhibition *Opera: Passion, Power and Politics* was widely acclaimed. At 1,100 sq m and with no supporting columns or walls, the space is entirely flexible and has a remarkable angular ceiling, visible through an oculus in the courtyard above that also brings natural light down into the gallery.

Sitting directly beneath the new Sackler Courtyard and the west wing of the V&A, genuine innovation underpinned its excavation: keeping the Grade I listed buildings above – and the collections they housed – safe was “the big engineering challenge,” says Simpson. “When we started the design work on the scheme, the technology didn’t even exist,” she says. Involving careful sequencing and work with Arup, the appropriate technology was developed “almost in tandem with the design”. And as a major part of the V&A’s story is design, says Tim Reeve, “the challenges we



were dealing with there are an important part of what we try to communicate to visitors. It's nice to have a project of our own that really raised the profiles of those disciplines, particularly on the engineering side."

The groundbreaking construction is made visible to the public partly by a beam and columns painted in vivid orange that holds the whole wing up. Hidden within the gallery wall is a single raking column, supporting the full weight of the courtyard; its dramatic raking angle was precisely calculated as the only one that could bear the weight of the historic buildings above; it is this column that bears the load of the original façade of the museum and the weight of the courtyard. Project engineers Arup worked to discover the angle that could support this load in a single structure. Inside The Sainsbury Gallery itself, a particular shade of grey was chosen for the walls, to provide a feeling of "encompassing" visitors. "For the kinds of exhibitions we put on, which are immersive and theatrical, having a white ceiling and white walls does not work," says Simpson.

Smart reverse-engineering also supports the working life of the new gallery. Rather than map out the space first, the architects "lived as an object" in order to understand what processes an object goes through before it enters an exhibition. Inbuilt rooms for unpacking, conservation, mounting and other tasks on a floor below The Sainsbury Gallery mean it is "cheaper, greener and easier to mount shows", says Simpson.

With an eye on a museum space fit for the future, the new quarter includes many references to the V&A's history. Visitors arrive through an imposing stone "screen" designed by the architect Aston Webb in 1909 to hide Victorian boilers from view along Exhibition Road. The structure endured bomb damage during the second world war, and was removed entirely during the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter build, its masonry carefully stored. The majority is now reinstated in its original position, retaining its wartime damage, but with openings at street level to allow the free flow of people into The Sackler Courtyard within. Eleven sets of new metal gates adorn the new openings, designed by AL\_A and manufactured with perforations that trace the imprint of shrapnel on the stonework, and the Royal Crest in the central gate.

Inviting people through these openings is the gleaming Sackler Courtyard, the world's first such public space to be clad entirely in porcelain, in acknowledgment of the rich collections of ceramics at the V&A. "In deliberately choosing a very ancient material," Leveté said, "What we've done with the courtyard ... [is to provide a] merging of technology, craftsmanship, and artistry, and that's very much what the collection of the V&A does."

Around 14,000 handmade porcelain tiles were constructed for the space by Koninklijke Tichelaar Makkum, a

Dutch company established in 1572, which is behind such high-profile international architectural projects as the innovative terracotta façade of the Museum of Arts and Design in New York. Tichelaar gave their entire factory over to manufacturing the frost-proof tiles for the V&A, in more than 100 sizes and formats, over a period of several months. "It was a really special collaboration," says Simpson. "The idea [was for] a design process that is not just led by designers but is a collaboration between manufacturers, designers, architects and the main contractor."

These tiles are only one of many "labours of love" in the project, says Simpson. The mosaics in The Blavatnik Hall entrance were hand-made by a female artistic collective in Italy, a nod to the decorative tiled floors in the museum created by 19th-century female prisoners.

Connecting the newly displayed Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Galleries of Buddhist Art and the Dorothy and Michael Hintze Sculpture Galleries, The Blavatnik Hall is designed to be airy and generous, giving views through to the John Madejski Garden. Expected to welcome around half of the V&A's annual visitors, it leads to a new shop, the historic Ceramic Staircase and The Sackler Centre for arts education.

A core part of the transformation was to reveal beautiful and architecturally significant façades and details that had never previously been seen by the public. These include decoration on the side of the Henry Cole Wing in *sgraffito* – a Renaissance technique where imagery is created by scraping in light plaster layered over dark – created by the first art students at the museum in the late 19th century. For the first time in 135 years, these can now be viewed from The Sackler Courtyard, as can more Edwardian baroque architecture by Aston Webb on the west side of former museum staff residences.

On its launch, Leveté said the new quarter "reimagines the museum as an urban project", and would "redefine the V&A's relationship with the street and the public." Tim Reeve underlines the importance of a point of arrival to the V&A from Exhibition Road in particular. "With the amazing constellation of institutions up and down the road, it's fundamental to the idea of Albertopolis." With this accessible new face looking out directly at its cultural community, centred by a public pedestrianised area, the possibilities for use of the museum and new collaborations to emanate from it have been transformed.

*The Exhibition Road Quarter has been generously supported by The Monument Trust, The Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation, The Headley Trust, Blavatnik Family Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Peter Williams and Heather Acton, the Friends of the V&A and many other donors.*



The Sainsbury Gallery, the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter, designed by AL\_A © Hufton+Crow





Students from Globe Primary School greet Rushanara Ali, Member of Parliament for Bethnal Green and Bow, Kids Takeover Day, 17 November 2017

## SERIOUSLY FUN

HOW THE V&A MUSEUM OF CHILDHOOD IS PUTTING YOUNG PEOPLE FRONT AND CENTRE

This year the V&A Museum of Childhood was gifted the final five monkeys of the Reddaway monkey collection, homemade toys that inhabited an imaginary world created by two brothers in the 1960s. Notebooks detailing the monkeys' political struggles, religious views and theatrical performances were donated in 2013. The final monkeys – Andelusia, Asia, Apex, Cloaky and Angustura – completed the donation by Richard Reddaway and Clare Reddaway in memory of Michael Jay Reddaway. "It's an extensive, imaginary 'monkey' world," says museum director Rhian Harris, "and evidence of children's own creative and imaginary capabilities, and also their understanding".

The acquisition reflects the V&A Museum of Childhood's ambition to "put children's voices and agency right at the heart of the museum." Last year, more than 40,000 children participated in storytelling, arts and crafts events at the museum. Over a third of visitors were under 15 years old. As part of Kids In Museums National Takeover Day, the museum worked with over 45 children from Globe Primary School who "took over" roles in every department of the museum. Four "mini-directors" welcomed Rushanara Ali, the MP for Bethnal Green and Bow. Two young press officers wrote a press release about the day and took over the museum's Twitter feed, while students brought a new level of interactivity to the shop floor via bubble blowing demonstrations.

In addition to being playful, says Harris, the day "was about listening to children and taking their views seriously. The day was empowering for the museum staff as well as the children – we learnt a lot from them and are considering areas that we might change in response to their comments. The day was also well supported by the entire Globe School community, with parents, classmates and teachers coming throughout the day to a museum run by children".

While it is the UK's National Museum of Childhood and the largest institution of its kind globally, visited by 400,000 people this year, the V&A Museum of Childhood is very much a local museum, with a committed community programme. Two thirds of visitors to the museum come from London. The 2017–18 display *Searching for Ghosts* demonstrated its longstanding community project model. Aiming to inspire local people and support social cohesion, a celebrated artist – this time photographer Tom Hunter – brought two groups of local residents together, children and elders, to explore memories and realities of living in east London council estates. Opening in February 2018, the exhibition *Dream On* explored unconscious realms and the imaginary potential of objects, featuring ceramics by the artist Christie Brown alongside photographs of local school students restaging remembered dreams. Both exhibitions were housed in the dedicated community gallery, though Harris says, "the process is as important as the outcome."

Drawing large audiences this year, *Michael Morpurgo: A Lifetime in Stories* travelled from Seven Stories in Newcastle upon Tyne. The show's "storytelling space" was well used, says Harris, and while reflecting on the major themes in Morpurgo's work, "really it was about trying to encourage children to think about creating stories and writing themselves." As the National Centre for Children's Books and one of the V&A Museum of Childhood's key national partners, exhibitions travel from Seven Stories regularly. "Hosting a Seven Stories exhibition is a great way to show children's literature alongside our collections of the material culture of childhood. Their exhibitions follow a similar model to ours – creating an immersive, experimental environment, using original illustrations and writing within it," Harris says.

Sending collections, expertise and exhibitions around the country is also central to the V&A Museum of Childhood and three of the five exhibitions that the V&A toured nationally in 2017–18 originated here. "An important part of our national engagement strategy is touring the majority of our exhibitions to at least five or six UK venues," Harris says. Each exhibition is conceived from the beginning with in-built flexibility for touring, and V&A Museum of Childhood staff provide a "turnkey" service for touring venues, travelling with the objects and installing exhibitions on site.

A new approach has optimised the museum's national reach in 2017–18. "We are introducing a second tier of touring exhibitions for the UK's smaller venues, fulfilling a demand that exists for V&A exhibitions," Harris says. Tailoring shows to meet this demand, including *Clangers, Bagpuss and Co* and *Game Plan: Board Games Rediscovered*, has given the opportunity for smaller regional venues such as the River & Rowing Museum, Henley and the Burton at Bideford to present world-class V&A objects and shows to their audiences this year.

*Small Stories: At Home in a Dolls' House* also travelled to the last three venues on its international tour, reaching the Castle Museum, Norwich and the Weston Park Museum in Sheffield before opening in Prague's Museum of Decorative Arts in February 2018. A hugely popular show, it drew on the public's fascination with dolls' houses, which remain the most searched for objects on the V&A Museum of Childhood's website. One of the finest in the world, its collection of dolls' houses was joined this year by a rare early British example. The Forster Baby House, acquired with support from V&A Members, is a Palladian-style house in mahogany dated to the 1720s and likely of London mercantile origin. Now its earliest British dolls' house, this is one of the museum's most important acquisitions of the last 20 years.





## OPENING NEW DOORS

REVEAL FESTIVAL INAUGURATED THE V&A'S EXHIBITION ROAD QUARTER AND OFFERED A FRESH TAKE ON THE MUSEUM

A week-long festival of special cultural programming celebrated the opening of the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter, featuring art and design, performances, fashion shows and family activities. Through a mix of unique site-specific commissions and one-off events, including collaborations with neighbouring Albertopolis institutions, the series encouraged new audiences to come into the museum and brought its world-renowned architecture and collections to life in unexpected ways.

The REVEAL festival was conceived as a way to showcase the diversity of approaches to design in the V&A at a crucial moment in the museum's history, says Catherine Ince, senior curator at the V&A and member of the festival's curatorial team. "It was all about revealing new ways into the museum; revealing new works, new ways of looking and the mix of people that make this museum what it is."

The festival opened with a collaboration with global online music platform Boiler Room, which became one of the most successful Friday Lates of the year – an "epic launch", says Ince. The evening featured an original piece of music by underground electronic duo Overmono with dance choreographed by the English National Ballet, filmed overnight at the V&A to create a stunning six-and-a-half minute video melding dance, art and music.

Boiler Room's collaboration attracted a huge audience, including many people from beyond the museum's typical reach. "It was huge," says Ince. "The garden was full and the queue went all the way down to the Brompton Road Boots. It was great fun."

Throughout the week, the V&A was transformed by artistic interventions that included floating "Aerocene" sculptures by Tomás Saraceno, which are emission-free and activated by solar and infrared radiation; an immersive experience of augmented natural light by artist Simon Heijdens, one of the first site-specific commissions for the new Sainsbury Gallery; Ron Arad and Zandra Rhodes "drawing with light" on V&A façades; a new dance commission from the celebrated Julie Cunningham and hip hop from Botis Seva and the National Youth Dance Company Alumni.

In the spirit of Albertopolis, the Victorian vision of a city of arts and sciences in South Kensington, the V&A also collaborated on a range of events and activities with local museums and institutions. The Royal Albert Hall's Albert Band

marched from Princes Gate Mews to the V&A, while the Royal College of Music performed in the museum's Norfolk House Music Room. Young visitors explored wearable tech with Imperial College scientists, built a "Stego-jigsaw-rus" with Natural History Museum staff, and made their own scribbling machines (or "Doodle Bugs") in the John Madejski Garden courtesy of the Science Museum.

London-based designer Molly Goddard closed the festival with four catwalk shows in the new Sainsbury Gallery, showing off her signature colourful designs as part of the museum's popular *Fashion in Motion* series. Goddard specialises in traditional techniques such as hand pleating, smocking and crocheting, and blends these with contemporary shapes and forms. "Molly took a blank space in the museum and transformed it into a set inspired by objects in the collection," says Ince. "Her fashion designs interacted with the V&A's sculptures in an amazing way."

REVEAL surpassed expectations by drawing in 70,000 visitors. True to the pioneering vision of Albertopolis, the festival welcomed first-time visitors into a space in which vital elements of contemporary culture rub up against the history of human design. For regular visitors to the V&A, it was a week in which the familiar was completely transformed. Neither group may look at a museum in the same way again.

Above: Molly Goddard, Fashion in Motion, The Sainsbury Gallery.

Below: Botis Seva and the National Youth Dance Company, The Sackler Courtyard © Hydar Dewachi





# WELCOME TO CHINA

THE LAUNCH OF DESIGN SOCIETY IN SHEKOU IS A LANDMARK FOR THE V&A AND THE MUSEUM WORLD



Above: Exterior of Design Society, Sea World Culture and Arts Center © Design Society.  
Opposite: Design Society hosts a designer-led workshop for Shenzhen children based on V&A objects; *Values of Design* at V&A Gallery, Design Society

On 2 December 2017, the V&A opened its first international gallery at Design Society in the city of Shenzhen on the Pearl River Delta, one of the fastest growing design and technology hubs in the world. The opening of Design Society also marked the realisation of a unique partnership between a major UK national museum and a Chinese state-owned company: the pioneering collaboration between the V&A and China Merchants Shekou Holdings (CMSK) is the first of its kind between an international museum and a Chinese partner.

Design Society is a major milestone in this collaboration, a new cultural hub dedicated to design and located in the fast-changing port district of Shekou. In the Sea World Culture and Arts Center, a purpose-built cultural destination operated by Design Society and designed by Maki & Associates, the V&A Gallery was inaugurated by the site-specific exhibition *Values of Design* featuring over 250 objects from the V&A's collections. Two exhibitions will also tour from the V&A to Design Society in the coming years.

The collaboration with CMSK has encompassed an international programme of knowledge exchange, with the V&A providing professional advice, consultancy and training

to help establish Design Society as a cultural platform. The V&A has worked extensively with the Design Society team to build a local network, engaging with creative practices, museum professionals, educators and the local community, and to connect with university design schools, local and international schools, makerspaces, museums, and designer studios in cities across China.

After being embedded in Shenzhen for the past three years, the V&A has also expanded its collection to reflect a new dialogue with the wider design world, adding 45 new objects. These include a version of WeChat (Weixin), the most widely used social platform in China. Acquired by the V&A in September 2017 it makes the V&A the world's first museum to collect a social media application.





# INNOVATING OVERSEAS

by TIM REEVE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR

THE V&A IS KEEPING PACE INTERNATIONALLY WITH DISTINCTIVE PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

*David Bowie is...* is about to execute its final pirouette. A zeitgeisty, shape-shifting, record-breaking exhibition phenomenon that began on 23 March 2013 in London will complete its global odyssey on 15 July 2018 in Brooklyn, New York – the place that David Bowie called home, and where he died in 2016. Having entranced an audience of two million across eleven countries and five continents across 1,913 days, what legacy does it leave for the V&A's international programme and brand? This extraordinary blending of scenography and scholarship with innovative lighting technology and sound experience by Sennheiser to create a wholly immersive experience – a performance as much as an exhibition – has since inspired *You Say You Want a Revolution? Records and Rebels, 1966-70*, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty*, *The Pink Floyd Exhibition: Their Mortal Remains* and many more. It has left an indelible imprint on the cultural landscape, as a piece of exhibition making and brand marketing, and has inspired a global audience. But that landscape has evolved in the intervening years, and so have we.

At around the time that *David Bowie is...* closed its doors at South Kensington, David Cameron piloted one of the largest ever UK delegations on a trade mission to China. A few days before he left, he visited the V&A's *Masterpieces of Chinese Painting 700–1900*, conducting his major interview with Chinese media in the gallery itself, before offering the V&A a seat on the plane as he left the building. Along with the National Theatre, the British Film Institute and the British Council, the V&A helped bring a dash of cultural impact to a hard political backdrop, signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the China Merchants Group in Beijing to be the Founding Partner of Design Society. When *David Bowie is...* was heading to its final stop in New York just four years later, the V&A Gallery at Design Society in Shenzhen was opening its *Values of Design* exhibition to an excited and curious new audience.

So, we have not been standing idle, but neither have our museum partners and competitors. The Serpentine and the Barbican are now open in Beijing; the Centre Pompidou in Malaga and Shanghai; and, in a particularly ambitious and uncompromising statement of intent, Jean Nouvel's dreamy new Louvre Abu Dhabi was opened by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed and Emmanuel Macron just a few weeks before Design Society. While we haven't opened our own building

in Shenzhen, we shipped a similar number of objects from the V&A's collection to Shenzhen as travelled from Paris to Abu Dhabi – and added 45 more from the Pearl River Delta studios and factories. This is a scale of engagement of which we should be proud. Not that we would wish to rule out a more permanent and committed architectural presence in a strategically and historically important part of the world, but there is a flexibility, responsiveness, relevance, pace and tactical opportunism in the V&A's approach that seems appropriate to the way the museum engages internationally.

Alongside our *grands projets*, the activities of V&A internationally presented a rich and diverse picture. During the last financial year, V&A touring exhibitions were visited by nearly 700,000 people worldwide (a total of over four million in the last five years); 1,000 objects from the V&A collection were lent to 110 international venues; over 200 museum professionals from 70 countries have benefitted from courses at the V&A Academy – from *Curating Fashion* to the *Enterprising Museum* – including 19 delegates from Nanjing Museums alone; over 60,000 copies of V&A books were sold to international audiences last year, in seven languages; and 1,200 new licensing agreements are now in place for products in 72 countries. These statistics are impressive, even before we count the number of academic and other conferences attended, articles written, papers delivered, delegations received and advice given.

At first glance, the V&A's broad presence on the international stage might not appear to have the discipline that is typical of its other operations. But the V&A is at its best when it is innovating and experimenting, and where it leaves itself space to do so by not locking itself into the responsibilities of bricks and mortar and long-term contracts.

Not many cultural institutions, for example, would (or perhaps even could) credibly consider a partnership with Swire Properties to tour an exhibition about shoes to the newly opened HKRI Taikoo Hui fashion and lifestyle complex in Shanghai – a joint venture between HKR International and Swire Properties – and then to Sino-Ocean Taikoo Li in Chengdu, TaiKoo Hui in Guangzhou and Taikoo Li Sanlitun in Beijing, before finally finishing its tour at Pacific Place in Hong Kong. The standing of our fashion collections, the vibrant nature of our exhibition-making, the quasi-commercial founding mission of our institution, our support for the creative industries globally and – maybe most important of all – our eye for the different and entrepreneurial in our choice of partners, all make this possible. Being prepared to take our collections and ideas to new and surprising places, connecting with audiences that we may not otherwise engage, is part of what makes our international work distinctive.

Opposite: *David Bowie is...* has reached eleven countries and five continents. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto



If what marks this aspect of our work out is commercial in nature, leveraging the power and quality of a cultural brand carefully nurtured over 166 years of collecting, research and innovation, then it is more than matched by the innovative nature of our cultural collaborations. The V&A's unique status as a museum engaged in a series of special projects with the Venice Biennale has seen us curating applied arts pavilions in 2016 – with *A World of Fragile Parts* supported by Volkswagen Group – and in 2018 – with *A Ruin in Reverse*. The meeting of two long-standing cultural institutions has afforded us the platform to explore the threat posed to cultural heritage in conflict zones across the world, to look at modern methods of copying to preserve, record and to reconstruct, and to revisit the charter on copies to reflect the 21st-century landscape through ReACH – all evidence of a museum combining historicism with modernity to constantly reinvent its contemporary purpose.

Second, V&A Dundee will open in September, with the V&A one of five founding partners in establishing a new design museum to chronicle the impact of Scottish designers on the world. Along with Dundee City Council, the universities of Dundee and Abertay and Scottish Enterprise, the V&A brand, collections and curatorial know-how is made concrete by Kengo Kuma's breathtaking new centrepiece of Dundee's regeneration ambitions. Operated by Design Dundee Limited, an innovative new vehicle to partner that with Design Society, exhibitions from the V&A will sit alongside the new Scottish Design Galleries, with the painstakingly and beautifully restored Mackintosh Oak Room at its heart.

The V&A's international work is as idiosyncratic as it is strategic, as innovative as it is traditional, and at the same time tactical and opportunistic. What marks us out is the diversity of our global network, and our ability to be innovative and to take risks in identifying new types of partnership which allow us to promote our ideas, our collections and our brand to existing and new audiences. Now is not the time to pause for breath: *David Bowie is...* will not be the high-water mark of the V&A's ability to create exhibition experiences that have not been seen in museums before, and with the partnerships we have cultivated – from Shenzhen to Venice to Dundee to Washington – the real journey has just begun.

*You Say You Want a Revolution? Records and Rebels, 1966-70, in partnership with Levi's®, sound experience by Sennheiser, with additional support from GRoW @ Annenberg, Fenwick and Sasson; Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty, in partnership with Swarovski, supported by American Express, with thanks to M·A·C Cosmetics, technology partner Samsung; The Pink Floyd Exhibition: Their Mortal Remains, presented by Pink Floyd, the V&A and Iconic Entertainment Studios, sound experience by Sennheiser*



Exterior of Design Society, Sea World Culture and Arts Center © Design Society





# THE CASE FOR CREATIVITY

by **TRISTRAM HUNT, DIRECTOR**

WHY THE V&A IS STRIVING TO SUPPORT ARTS EDUCATION ACROSS THE COUNTRY

“Art isn’t just entertaining or decorative. It is life-giving.” These wise words were spoken by Vincent Nichols, the Archbishop of Westminster, after he saw the Sistine Chapel’s awe-inspiring tapestries united for the first time with their original life-size studies: the Raphael Cartoons. Even the great artist himself never saw his magnificent paintings next to the finished tapestries. In this seminal moment back in 2010 at the V&A, the Archbishop’s proclamation articulated art’s life-enriching power.

Art and design, with their complex visual, material, cultural and social meanings, can inspire, amaze, stimulate, educate, alleviate and facilitate. But this comes not just from observing creative masters, who refine their craft into works of perfection. This “life-giving” force springs equally from each simple act of imagination, design, creation and experimentation – something we encourage and observe every day at the V&A. There is extraordinary happiness and satisfaction in designing and creating. It is a fundamental human desire. These life-enriching qualities are boundless, a universal source of great personal joy and fulfilment. They are also the building blocks for essential life skills such as resilience, confidence, self-expression and motivation, and a powerful tool for positive social change.

What is more, participation in arts activities has far-reaching benefits spanning seemingly unconnected facets of life. The Cultural Learning Alliance recently reported that learning through arts and culture can increase cognitive abilities and improve attainment in other subjects such as maths and English. It also found that students who study arts subjects are more likely to get a degree, more likely to stay in employment, more likely to vote and more likely to report good health. An American study similarly discovered that the arts foster scientific success: the more accomplished a scientist is, the more likely they are to have an artistic hobby. The breadth of these positive appraisals are compelling.

Equally persuasive is the recognition that by studying arts subjects, people develop the vital skills needed for future jobs. The arts make us more employable and are set to make us even more so in the future. Nesta’s 2017 report *The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030* ranked skills according to those most likely to lead to job growth in the UK. It prioritised judgement and decision-making, fluency of ideas, active learning, learning strategies and originality abilities, all developed by studying arts subjects.

Demand for these essential future skills is only expected to grow in the face of workplace automation, which the Bank of England has predicted could cause the loss of 15 million British jobs. But the human brain is far more imaginative, intuitive, better at persuasion, empathy, original thought and storytelling than computers. With the realities of everyday artificial intelligence now clearly on the horizon, our unique creativity is an immunisation against this robotic takeover.

In fact, by 2030 there are projected to be one million new creative jobs, with 1,000 new jobs created every week. The UK’s creative industries are thriving. The sector is the fastest growing part of the UK’s economy, and British creativity is globally coveted. With this demand for design skills extending way beyond the creative industries, employers right across the UK economy – from construction and engineering to IT and finance – are relying on a creative workforce for their future success.

However, just as the case for creative education is most compelling, just as creative jobs are in record demand and the sector is celebrated globally, creativity’s place in our schools looks most uncertain. This troubling state of affairs is at once highly perplexing and deeply concerning. In 2015–2016 there was a decline of 8% in arts GCSE entries in the UK. This dropped by a further 9% between 2016 and 2017. This means that since the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) performance measure in 2010, which downgrades creative subjects from its national assessment criteria, arts GCSE uptake has fallen by 28%. The rippling effects of this educational demotion are now being revealed. A recent BBC survey found that a staggering nine in 10 schools have cut back on lesson time, staff or facilities in at least one creative subject. The widespread perception created among teachers, parents and young people is that the arts do not equate with success. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. With GCSE entries for arts subjects at their lowest level in a decade, there is a real danger of us destroying something we are very good at.

I believe that museums have a civic duty to fill this void, and at the V&A we have decided to take a stand. As the national museum of art, design and performance, born of the 19th-century design school movement, the V&A has a social and cultural imperative to address this crisis. True to our founding mission, we understand the importance of nurturing creative and technical ability. We want the V&A to be a national incubator for creativity and 21st-century design skills. Using the museum’s outstanding collections and harnessing our innovative and inclusive learning expertise, we want to create a place where the next generation of creative leaders, designers, makers, innovators and entrepreneurs can thrive.

Opposite: DesignLab Nation project launch, September 2017





Above: A workshop at the V&A's 2017 Digital Design Weekend  
Right: Visitors at the V&A's 2017 Digital Kids event

So we are actively reinvesting in young people's creative futures, supporting all forms of museum learning across our sites. We champion the value of object-based learning, reaching over 400,000 learners in 2016–17. We use our beautiful and intriguing objects to tell the story of art and design, and to inspire contemporary makers and designers. As the late Sir Anthony Caro, one of the world's great sculptors, once declared: "We artists go to the V&A for sustenance." We provide a safe place for creative endeavour. Just as they did over 100 years ago, today's creators endlessly draw on the V&A for admiration and inspiration.

But our ambition is now much greater. Over the coming five years, when it comes to the future of design and technology, the V&A will become the natural home in the UK for innovative teaching aids and digital resources, collections-based learning, continuing professional development for teachers, educational partnership for local authority museums and a research hub and best-practice centre for design and technology education.

With design and technology (D&T) GCSE uptake suffering the most – a reduction of 43% since 2010 – we have initiated DesignLab Nation to support the teaching of the relaunched D&T GCSE. This programme is linking up with regional museums, secondary schools and local industry in communities with a strong manufacturing heritage facing the challenge of globalisation. Our aim is to support stu-

dents by investing in the educational and curatorial provision of local museums, assisting the professional development of teachers and sharing our collections. Object loans are now on display at Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery and Coventry Transport Museum, and from September our pilot programme will extend to Sheffield, Stoke-on-Trent and Sunderland. DesignLab Nation is led by local practitioners from across the creative industries, supporting and encouraging design thinking through hands-on making and practical workshops. As the original site for the Government School of Design in the 1840s, we are proud to return to the V&A's founding purpose.

With so much less space for creativity in our schools, and school leaders ready to dismiss it as "marginal", we aim to return the lifeblood of design teaching. We are championing the haptic power of objects, encouraging experimentation and problem-solving, and inspiring curiosity. Museums should not be afraid. We shouldn't confine our great learning programmes to museum walls; we should use our civic capital to make a difference in communities which need our cultural capital the most. Arts subjects have for too long been viewed as the soft option in schools, and we at the V&A are ready to expel the myth that art and design are "just entertaining or decorative". Creativity is fuelling our economy, securing our futures, and making our lives richer. Creativity is certainly life-giving.







# DESIGNS ON TEACHING

THE V&A'S NEW NATIONWIDE LEARNING PROJECT AIMS TO ENGAGE STUDENTS AND POLICYMAKERS



Above and left: Students from Coundon Court School in DesignLab Nation sessions run with the Coventry Transport Museum, Culture Coventry and the artist Julia Snowdin

Design education is one of the founding missions of the V&A. Established at a time when art education was being rethought on a national scale, following fears about a decline in the quality of British design, the South Kensington Museum became a centre for a new type of national design education, training teachers and lending its collection across the country.

That founding vision is at the heart of DesignLab Nation, a new national programme launched by the V&A in September 2017 to support design education for secondary school students. Working in five predominantly industrial areas – Coventry, Stoke-on-Trent, Sheffield, Blackburn and Sunderland – the project brings together local schools, museums and creative industries to inspire young people to imagine the possibilities of design.

“It is about thinking through the role of the museum today,” says Cara Williams, Schools Programme Manager at the V&A. “What should we be doing as the national museum of art and design to support education? One of the main things is training teachers, so that they can up-skill their young people and inspire the next generation.”

The programme is a natural extension of the V&A’s ten-year-old DesignLab initiative, which gives secondary school students access to the museum collections as well as professional artists and designers in in-depth learning sessions. In addition to inspiring and educating, its remit is to promote new and innovative ways of teaching design.

On joining the museum, Tristram Hunt highlighted the need for a national schools programme, and, Williams

says, “We jumped at the chance to propose extending the DesignLab programme across the country.” She explains that one of the most important aspects of DesignLab Nation is its collaborative nature and response to the specific needs of each region it operates in, harnessing the strength of Britain’s regional industries by working with local design professionals and specialists. “It’s not trying to be really dictatorial, one-way traffic,” she says. “We don’t want to bus people in. The idea is to create networks within each region.”

Each of the initiative’s industry partners has been invited to participate in the programme because they have a strong industrial heritage in the area in question, and they include some of the country’s most prestigious designers and design-industries.

Partners work closely with a local museum that acts as a “hub” for schools across the area. Together, they put on workshops and events to engage young people with design from the regional industry and from the V&A’s collection, giving access to an unprecedented wealth of expertise. In Blackburn, for instance, a local textile designer will run practical projects.

With a focus on hands-on design, the programme gives young people practical experience in the world of design and aims to spark an interest in working in the industry. “It’s very much about making the career pathway more accessible,” says Williams. “Design can be seen as unattainable. It can be hard to know how you would actually become a designer.” Getting young people to work directly with practitioners is about them finding out about the routes to entry that do exist, and so breaking these barriers down.





Printmaker Sarah Hardacre (left) with students from Darwen Aldridge Community Academy at the Blackburn Museum

The V&A collections are central to the project. As creative subjects come under threat in schools, and budget constraints make long-distance visits to museums difficult, taking the V&A's world-class objects to regional museums will make the collections hugely more accessible. The objects on display are all in public galleries, so anyone going to those museums can see them. Many of the objects are also being seen in the places where they were first developed or manufactured. In Blackburn, 20th-century textiles are on display alongside the machinery used to make them, while the Coventry Transport Museum shows objects that reveal the city's innovations in vehicle design.

Like the original DesignLab initiative, this project is also an opportunity to test out different models of design teaching, which will then inform and help other teachers in the area. "We aim to develop an exciting, practical way of teaching design in a classroom using museum objects," Williams says. "Teacher training is so important, and it's really under threat at the moment." Initially, DesignLab Nation will focus on three schools in each region, after which key findings – and local networks of design practitioners – will be shared with other teachers at training events.

The project faces two key challenges in its ambition to change the face of design education for the next generation. One is to help teachers, especially those who have been working for a long time, to transition to a new approach. "It's important that they have all the help they need as they think about adapting and improving design education in a way that feels organic," says Williams.

The other is to influence education at a higher level. The V&A is holding round-table discussions with key organisations such as the Design Council, including its chief executive Sarah Weir, to explore important policy points and is developing a network of "keyed-in professionals across industry and education policy," Williams says.

"The two sides of the project work in tandem," she continues, "and that is probably one of the most exciting aspects of it. The work we are doing with teachers and schools, as well as giving young people unprecedented access to a world-class collection, gives us a unique vantage point to influence education policy. That is so important. Behind every decision we make in the programme is the question: 'How can we use this to implement and influence change?'"

*The V&A was awarded Art Fund Museum of the Year 2016. The prize money has been used to support DesignLab Nation. DesignLab Nation was also supported in 2016/17 by The Foyle Foundation.*





Dharmachakra “Wheel of Law”, stone, 7th - 8th century, gift from John and Fausta Eskenazi in honour of the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, in the new Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Galleries of Buddhist Art

# RETHINKING BUDDHIST ART

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW ROBERT H. N. HO FAMILY FOUNDATION GALLERIES OF BUDDHIST ART



View of the new Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Galleries of Buddhist Art

From ancient Chinese ceramics to Alexander McQueen evening dresses, the V&A’s permanent collections display 5,000 years’ worth of human ingenuity. Caring for that collection and displaying it in its best light is a crucial part of what makes the V&A the world’s leading museum of art, design and performance.

This year saw the completion of a major new exhibition space for the V&A’s world-renowned Buddhist art collection. The redeveloped Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Galleries of Buddhist Art occupy four rooms, three of which were closed in autumn 2013 to allow for the creation of the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter. They now unite the most significant Buddhist sculptures from across Asia for the first time.

At the heart of the galleries are two new monumental works. One of these is a dharmachakra or “wheel of law” from late seventh- or eighth-century Thailand, a gift to the museum from John and Fausta Eskenazi in honour of the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation. The other is a spectacular 11th-century stone relief from Bangladesh, on loan for the first time. The galleries also now display previously unseen objects or those that have been in store for a long time, such as two beautiful 19th-century thangkas or banner paintings, around 9ft long, originally made to hang in Thai monasteries.

The new galleries also represent a complete rethink of how Buddhist art is presented in the V&A. Displays are now configured around distinct themes that combine heterogeneous types of image, rather than grouped by geographical areas or historical periods. This allows for connections to be made between objects from across the V&A Asia collections. A terracotta Buddha from Pakistan now neighbours a stone Buddha from the cave temples at Xiangtshang, China. Both from the sixth century and visually similar, their juxtaposition illustrates the central Asian routes of exchange that linked India and China in the first millenium.

Conservation work carried out while the galleries were closed removed dirt and protective varnishes, revealing the original surfaces of many of the objects. This process has led to remarkable discoveries about the inner structure and composition of some of the pieces and has transformed the appearance of the works on show. A new approach to display has also improved visibility; for instance the spectacular three-metre-high Mandalay Shrine, a rare surviving piece from the now-destroyed royal palace at Mandalay in Burma, is on display in a new non-reflective glass casing.



ACQUISITIONS



The V&A's collections represent the best of historical and contemporary design. Developing the V&A's collections is essential to ensure the ongoing evolution of one of the world's leading museums of art, design and performance.

The V&A currently looks after 2.32 million objects, library items and archives in its collections. In 2017–18, 25,897 items were added to the collection, with a total value of £7.5 million. Of this, the cost of objects purchased was £6.8 million, made possible by funding largely from external sources, including generous support from Art Fund, V&A Members, National Heritage Memorial Fund, and many private donors. The value of objects donated, either directly or via the Acceptance in Lieu scheme, was £0.7 million.

The V&A continues to play a significant role in the fight to save key heritage objects for the nation, safeguarding their future in national public collections. The continued acquisition of historical and contemporary design objects adds to the overall understanding of the collections and challenges established interpretations of particular periods, styles or movements.

**Puffa jacket and stretch nylon trousers**  
Demna Gvasalia for Balenciaga, Autumn/Winter 2016, polyester, stretch nylon  
Purchase funded by the Lee Alexander McQueen Fund for Fashion



**51 designs for Examples of Chinese Ornament**  
Owen Jones, 1867, London, pencil, gouache and gold paint on paper  
Purchased with support from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Art Fund, V&A Members and The Belvedere Trust

**Casting**  
Kang Yiyun, 2016, London, digital projection mapping  
Purchase supported by Samsung



**Armchair from the Yanagi Sōri Collection, model YD261A**  
Designed by Sōri Yanagi, 1978, Tokyo, manufactured by Hida Sangyō, Takayama, 2016, oak, clear urethane finish  
Given by Hida Sangyō Co. Ltd



**Royal Photographic Society Collection**  
270,000 photographs and negatives, 6,000 cameras and related equipment, 26,000 books and journals  
William Henry Fox Talbot, *Astrantia Major – the "Melancholy Gentleman"*, 1838, photogenic drawing contact negative



**Lightning Fields, 225**  
Hiroshi Sugimoto, 2009, gelatin silver print  
Purchased by the Photographs Acquisition Group



**The Forster baby house**  
c.1720, mahogany and pine with glazed windows  
Purchased with the support of V&A Members and the Hugh Phillips Bequest

**"Ollie Beak" hand puppet**  
Made by Peter and Joan Firmin, 1962, mixed materials including wool and chicken feathers  
Given by Sean Whyton





**Lidded vase**  
Attributed to Namikawa Yasuyuki,  
c.1870, Kyoto, copper body with applied  
cloisonné enamels and silver wire  
  
Purchased by the Edwin Davies Fund



**Gorilla Defeating a Gladiator**  
Emmanuel Frémiet, 1876, terracotta,  
cast and modelled  
  
Purchased with support from the Murray and  
Hildburgh bequests and V&A Members



**Bacchus embroidery**  
c. 1683, wool and silk on a linen canvas  
  
Purchased with support from V&A Members



**Vivien Leigh's Best Actress Oscar  
for *A Streetcar Named Desire*, 1951**  
Designed by Cedric Gibbons, 1928,  
bronze coated in 24-karat gold  
  
Given by the Farrington Family, in memory of  
Suzanne Farrington. Oscar statuette © A.M.P.A.S. ®



**Moulded plywood chair**  
Designed by Ray Komai, 1949, Manufactured  
by J.G. Furniture Co., Brooklyn, New York, c.1950,  
moulded 5-ply walnut-faced plywood and  
tubular steel frame  
  
Purchased with support from the American Friends of  
the V&A through the generosity of Mark McDonald



**Fragment of Robin Hood Gardens**  
Alison and Peter Smithson, architects  
  
Purchased from the London Borough of Tower  
Hamlets. Photo courtesy of Neil Bingham



**Felix Dennis OZ Archive**  
Original cover artwork by Martin Sharp for  
OZ 16: "The Magic Theatre", 1968  
  
Purchased with support from Art Fund and V&A Members



**Corbyn T-shirt**  
Designed by Bristol Street Wear, May  
2017, white t-shirt printed with a red  
Nike Swoosh logo beneath Jeremy  
Corbyn's surname  
  
Purchased by the V&A



**Radical Love**  
Heather Dewey Hagborg and Chelsea Manning, 2016, source file /  
prints / envelope and DNA collecting tools (swab, plastic envelope)  
/ correspondence between Manning and Dewey-Hagborg  
  
Purchased with support from V&A Members



**Matching Pair**  
Grayson Perry, 2017, glazed ceramic  
  
Purchased with support from the Ruddock Foundation  
for the Arts, V&A Members, Sarah Nichols, the William  
Brake Charitable Trust and an anonymous donor





# TREASURES FROM BLYTHE HOUSE

THE V&A’S HISTORIC STOREHOUSE HOLDS OVER TWO MILLION OBJECTS – AND THE MUSEUM IS GETTING READY TO GIVE THEM ALL A NEW HOME



Above: Suzanne Smith, manager of V&A Clothworkers’ Centre for the Study and Conservation of Textiles and Fashion, with 17th-century casket  
Opposite page: The Clothworkers’ Centre, at Blythe House, for the study and conservation of Textiles and Fashion

The collections on display at the V&A South Kensington and the V&A Museum of Childhood are just the tip of the iceberg. As the world’s largest museum of art, design and performance, the V&A holds an unparalleled permanent collection of over 2.32 million objects, but half of them are in fact held at Blythe House, the V&A’s study and research centre in Olympia in west London. It is home to many of the treasures not currently on display, including the archives of over 1,000 individuals and organisations relating to art, design, performance and the history of the V&A, and contains treasures ranging from architectural fragments, tapestries and carpets to underwear, costumes from Hollywood films and contemporary haute couture.

Originally built as the headquarters of the Post Office Savings Bank, the vast Grade II Edwardian building was opened for business in 1903. Since 1984, the V&A has occupied a third of the building, and opened the doors to researchers and students for the first time in October 1985.

Blythe House is home to the V&A Clothworkers’ Centre for the Study and Conservation of Textiles and Fashion, a flexible, purpose-built space where students and visitors can examine the V&A’s unrivalled textile collection close-up. Suzanne Smith is the manager of the Clothworkers’ Centre,

and says her favourite object in here is an exquisite casket in wood overlaid with textile, probably made by a girl of 12 or 13 in the early- to mid-1600s to round off her embroidery tutelage. “It’s the iPhone of the early 17th century”, says Suzanne. “It would have contained all her precious memories and keepsakes – everything she needed.” Letter-writing equipment and jewellery would have been stashed in its secure, hidden drawers.

On a much grander scale but no less intricate is a 2.7-metre length of furnishing fabric currently being photographed in the largest room in this building, the home of the V&A’s textile and fashion study collection. Kieron Boyle controls a camera attached to the ceiling to capture the large piece, by British textile designer Shirley Craven, in fine detail. His work is part of a major project to digitally photograph the 250,000 objects held at Blythe House before the centre moves 10 miles from its historic home in Kensington to the new V&A East site at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford.

Those who visit and use the study collection are varied and numerous. The Clothworkers’ Centre attracts over 3,000 people a year, among them students, academics, designers, craftspeople and, increasingly, genealogists. Special interest groups are also frequent visitors – such as a recent Central



Saint Martins project group called “Exploding Fashion” that included a fashion historian, a curator, and pattern cutters who came to study dress patterns “from the inside out”.

Not only will the collection’s new space serve visitors in new ways; its digitisation is providing a much broader kind of access to the thousands of objects it houses in remarkable detail. Kieran explains the method of photography he is using, which can involve painstakingly stitching multiple images of one object together. “We can use it to see how many threads make up a tapestry, for example. It’s the kind of detail you could barely see with the naked eye.” These images will be made available to researchers the world over on the V&A Search the Collections website.

Blythe House currently holds nearly 4,000 large rolled textiles such as carpets and tapestries. Over 66% of these have until now held only text catalogue entries, with no accompanying image at all. Caven says, “Some of our curators who are new to the V&A – maybe they’ve joined in the last ten years – have not seen these objects unrolled before.” For V&A staff, the growing new collection of digital images of these holdings is an “amazing new resource; it has improved curatorial knowledge of what we have.”

The V&A introduced a new Digital Asset Management System in 2018 to support the 250mb digital photograph files, enabling the museum to make high-resolution images available to museum staff for the first time. And cataloguing is being streamlined and homogenised, with barcodes added to every object in Blythe House “This is the first time we’re using this technology,” says Caven. “Our numbers our quite complex for us, so this is going to take out human error.”

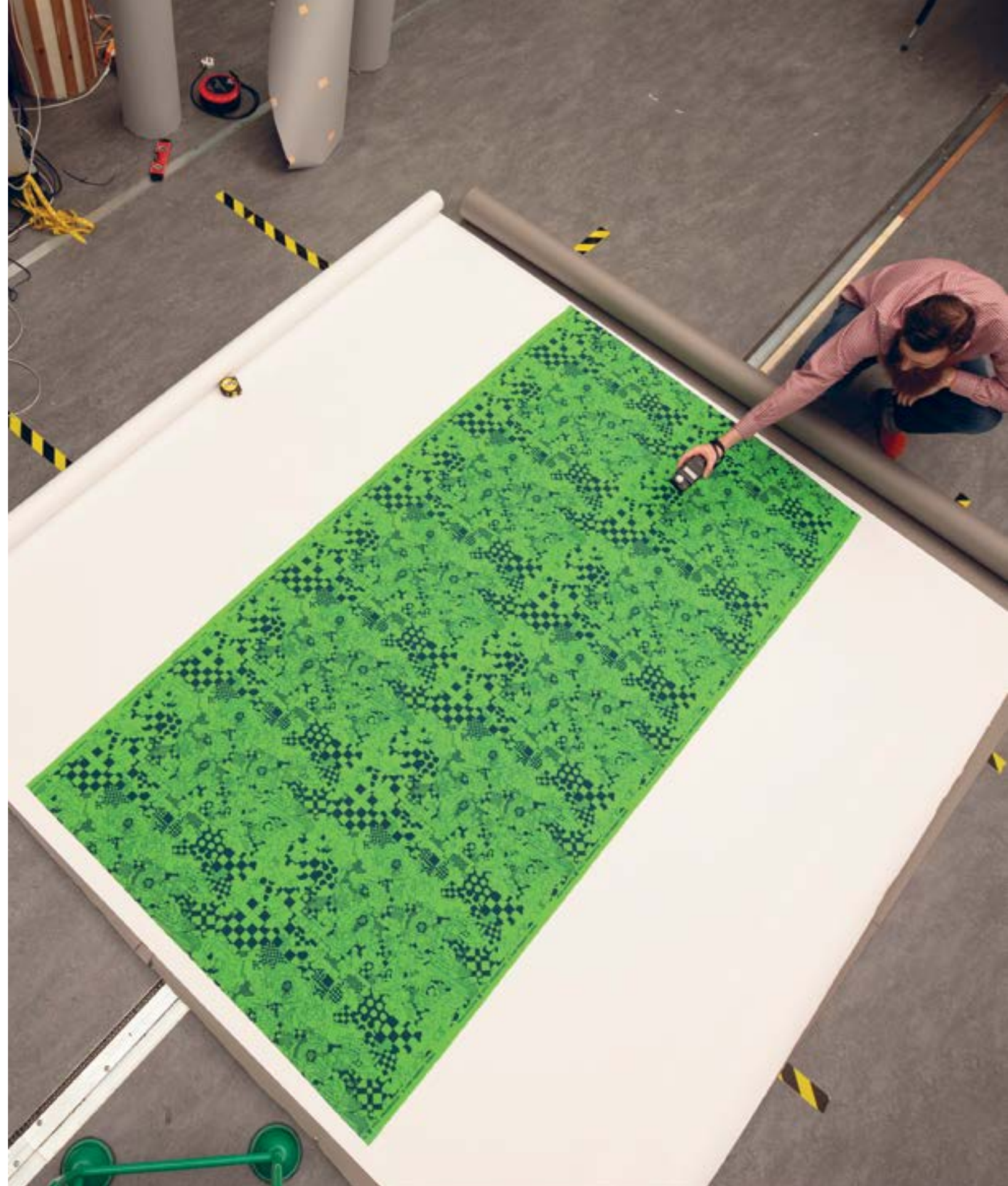
Work to prepare objects for transfer to the Research and Collection Centre in Stratford is also underway. Austeja Gudziunaite and Olly Nicolaysen are among the V&A technicians updating storage for objects in the lace collection, one of the finest of its kind, in anticipation of the move. Pieces range from the familiar – christening clothes and frilly handkerchief borders – to the unexpected, such as intricate cuffs made from human hair and probably worn as *memento moris*.

Austeja and Olly are introducing new plastic containers for lace objects, using an ultrasonic spot welder to create a seal that is foolproof, easily opened and resealed, allows for air flow and eliminates the need to fold and crease small

fragments. “This is a really requested collection,” Olly says. “So it’s really good if we can get [pieces] out flat because it means it’s easy for people to see and take measurements.” Long fragments are rolled around cylinders wrapped in surgical gauze.

Elsewhere, new technology being used as part of the audit includes a machine developed by the space agency that can scan an object and cut a piece of packing foam to its exact proportions – including a finger hole for easy access. This space-age technology is the shape of things to come. Not only is it ensuring that the V&A’s collections will be perfectly preserved for future generations of visitors to the archives at V&A East, but the digitisation and careful cataloguing also means that a whole new wave of visitors – through Search the Collections and the V&A’s online resources – will have unprecedented access to these treasures.

Kieron Boyle, photographer on the V&A Blythe House Decant project, with *Bix* by Shirley Caven (1968)







V&A Dundee. Photo: Ross Fraser Mclean

# THE NATIONAL PICTURE

THE V&A CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING AND COLLABORATION ACROSS THE UK

From its beginnings as the Museum of Manufactures in 1852 to today’s pioneering collection, the V&A has always been a hub for art and design for the whole country. It was the first museum to establish a national lending programme, sharing its collection with institutions across the country. Today, the museum continues its mission to support nation-wide cultural innovation through a host of projects, from loans and touring exhibitions to training programmes and curatorial collaborations.

### NATION IN NUMBERS

- Number of objects on short-term loan: 1,530
- Number of objects on long-term loan: 1,446
- Number of UK venues to receive loans: 241
- In 2017–18, five exhibitions toured to 11 UK venues

& Museum was among the touring exhibitions that opened up the V&A’s world-class collections to audiences around the country, and paved the way for building strong relationships with national museums.

*Pop Art in Print*, a display of international graphic works from the V&A collection by artists including Andy Warhol and Ed Ruscha was enjoyed by some 15,000 visitors at the Chester Library – only one of its three touring venues. And a youthful trio of exhibitions shed light on childhood: *Clangers, Bagpuss and Co.* went to Ipswich, Sissinghurst Castle and the River & Rowing Museum in Henley; the popular *Small Stories: At Home in a Dolls’ House* travelled to the Castle Museum, Norwich and the Weston Park Museum in Sheffield; while *Game Plan: Board Games Rediscovered* made its playful appearance at the Maidstone Museum and the Sea City Museum, Southampton.

### WELCOME TO DUNDEE

On 15 September 2018, the doors will open to Scotland’s first design museum. Designed by acclaimed architect Kengo Kuma and described by him as “a living room for the city”, V&A Dundee draws inspiration from the local landscape and reconnects the city with its River Tay waterfront. With practical completion achieved on 26 January 2018 and the opening date now set, the project is on track to finish on time and on budget. Born partly from a strong historic relationship between the V&A and the University of Dundee, the museum will play a role in the redevelopment of this historic port city.

Inaugurating V&A Dundee’s programme is the V&A exhibition *Ocean Liners: Speed and Style*, presented alongside the Scottish Design Galleries whose highlights include the magnificent Charles Rennie Mackintosh Oak Room. Home to V&A Dundee’s permanent collection, these galleries are at the heart of the new museum and celebrate the influence of Scottish design at home and abroad. They explore the design process, the international diaspora of Scottish design and the role of design to effect societal change. Around 300 beautiful and innovative objects represent a wide range of decorative arts disciplines – from furniture, metalwork and ceramics to fashion, engineering and digital design. Most objects come from the world-renowned V&A collections and have never been displayed in Scotland before, while others are loaned from collections and designers across Scotland.

### SHARING THE COLLECTION

At the heart of the V&A is a mission to share its collection with everyone, and a core part of this is in loaning works out across the country. In the year 2017–18 the V&A lent to 241 UK venues. V&A objects were seen in museums nationwide and taken to five UK regions to inspire young people as part of the DesignLab Nation teaching programme.

One major loan was the celebrated Wolsey Angels, seen this year for the first time outside London. The four Renaissance bronze sculptures, saved for the nation thanks to support from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, 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 donors thanks to a major appeal in 2014, were taken to Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich, where an exhibition told the story of Cardinal Wolsey through the remarkable angels he designed for his own tomb. The angels moved to the New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester, in April 2018 before their return to the V&A.

### ACROSS THE COUNTRY

A gold throne made for the first Sikh Maharaja of the Punjab travelled to Coventry this year with other treasures from the V&A’s South Asia collections, where they were seen by more 20,990 people. *Crafts of the Punjab* at the Herbert Art Gallery



CURATORIAL COLLABORATIONS

The V&A has forged creative partnerships with institutions up and down the country, including curatorial collaborations with a host of regional museums. In Coventry, *Crafts of the Punjab* was created especially for the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum by staff of the V&A's Asia department and featured 85 objects, including some that had never been exhibited before.

Simon Sladen, the V&A's senior curator in Theatre and Performance, is on the academic advisory board for the Blackpool Museum Project, and works with them as they prepare to open their new museum, helping to develop narratives and discuss loans from the V&A's Theatre and Performance collections.

In York, the V&A has a longstanding collaboration with Fairfax House, and this year collaborated on the exhibition *Made in York: Inventing & Enlightening the Georgian City*. Alongside the loan of a number of objects, the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund awarded a major grant towards Fairfax House's acquisition of the King David Panel, a 17th-century boxwood carving by Grinling Gibbons. At York's *Festival of Ideas*, five speakers from the V&A discussed topics as varied as "When the V&A and Science Museum Were One" and "Recreating 18th-Century Interiors at the V&A".

BUILDING REGIONAL COLLECTIONS

The Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund supports the purchase of a wide range of material for the permanent collections of non-nationally funded organisations in England and Wales. With the help of the fund, a rare Arts and Crafts clock by the British architect Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott will return to Bedford after a gap of over 100 years, going on permanent display at the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery. In Newcastle, the Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums acquired an important stoneware pot by contemporary ceramics artist Kate Malone called *Ebullient Magma* (2017) was acquired to mark the centenary of the opening of the Shipley Art Gallery in Gateshead in 1917.

From Aberystwyth to Norwich and from Penzance to Newcastle, the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund supported a total of 73 organisations with 112 grants totalling £793,539. This work has enabled the acquisitions of works with a total value of £3.3 million to go ahead.



Left: Installation view of *Crafts of the Punjab* at the Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry. Courtesy of Herbert Art Gallery & Museum.

Opposite: The King David Panel by Grinling Gibbons, c.1668–70 (detail). Reproduced courtesy of Fairfax House, York. Photo: Jeremy Phillips







# REACHING OUT

THE V&A’S COLLABORATIVE NEW REACH INITIATIVE RETHINKS THE WAY MUSEUMS SHARE ARTEFACTS IN THE DIGITAL AGE



Above: Delegates at the ReACH launch in Paris, May 2017.  
Opposite: *The Other Nefertiti* by Jan Nikolai Nelles and Nora Al-Badri on show in *A World of Fragile Parts*, 2016. Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia

Retrace Howard Carter’s steps and discover King Tutankhamun’s tomb in virtual reality, or download a 3D scan of the Venus de Milo and “remix” it for your own creative ends; these are just a taste of the changing ways in which we can share in our cultural heritage today.

It is in this climate that the V&A launched its Reproduction of Art and Cultural Heritage (ReACH) initiative, supported by the Peri Charitable Foundation, in May 2017 at the Unesco Paris headquarters. A collaboration between global museum and heritage organisations, the initiative published a declaration on 8 December 2017 outlining best practice in the use of technology to reproduce artefacts, particularly those endangered by threats such as climate change, conflict, mass tourism and other natural or man-made disasters. Celebrating “open access” and declaring tools such as VR “a revolutionary opportunity to enhance learning, creativity and innovation”, ReACH also gave due focus to the ethical and legal questions that copies and sharing entail.

A remix with specific connotations sits atop the Fourth Plinth in London’s Trafalgar square this year: Michael Rakowitz’s life-sized copy of an ancient Assyrian winged god sculpture from Nineveh, destroyed by Islamic State in 2015. The ReACH initiative partly emerges from *A World of Fragile*

*Parts*, supported by Volkswagen Group, the V&A’s project for the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale that addressed the need for records in the face of cultural destruction, alongside questions around the right to reproduce historic works, the history of copying and the technical possibilities for reproduction today.

The ReACH declaration also commemorates the 150th anniversary of a document by the V&A’s original director Henry Cole. His 1867 *Convention for Promoting Universally Reproductions of Works of Art for the Benefits of Museums of All Countries* was signed by eleven royal families across Europe, and aimed to encourage museums to use the technology of the day to share historic artefacts “for public instruction”. It preceded an era of enthusiastic use of photography, plaster casts and electrolytes to reproduce and share great works for those without the means to see the originals.

The V&A Cast Courts are an example of this drive. “I don’t think people have traditionally equated our Search the Collections website with the Cast Courts,” says Brendan Cormier, V&A curator and lead researcher for ReACH, “but it is fulfilling to a certain extent that role. The question is, how do we unpack that and how do we harness the strength of these new digital tools to continue reaching people with cultural heritage?”



To answer these questions, a network of partners was drawn together. It included the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, the Louvre in Paris and Louvre Abu Dhabi, the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, the Warburg Institute in London, the Palace Museum in Beijing, the Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage at Yale University and Factum Arte in Madrid. Roundtable discussions were held in Washington, DC in St Petersburg, Abu Dhabi, Beijing and London with representatives from partners and external technology, heritage and culture experts. “Henry Cole likely wrote his [Convention] alone in the space of an afternoon,” says Cormier, “we wanted to modernise, and have it massively co-written between institutions”.

The writing of the declaration was iterative and happened in sessions after each roundtable, drawing on the multiple voices of participants. The final document lays out an overall vision, “that works of art and cultural heritage should be preserved and shared as widely as possible throughout the world” and guidelines on copying, sharing and documentation. Institutions or staff with resources and skills are encouraged to support and if possible train “other cultural institutions in the world who lack such means”, and attention is given to the accelerating rate of technological development. The declaration states: “Works should be recorded in a manner that renders them likely to be retrievable and reproducible even if technology changes”. Records of what is being reproduced, and how, should be kept, and “not

rely on technologies that may become obsolete”. Essentially, Cormier says, “it is a road map for how museums should be dealing with digital reproductions in the future”.

Following the ReACH declaration, exactly what should be digitally documented is also under scrutiny at the V&A. Importantly, Cormier says, “Not everything in our collection deserves to be 3D scanned.” Curators have identified 25 initial objects to document using cutting-edge 3D technology, acting as a test case.

The results of a complex and groundbreaking international effort, the ReACH declaration is not intended as an end in itself. Tristram Hunt describes it as a “blueprint” and said at its launch in December, “we don’t care if it is ripped apart, reworked, renounced”, the important thing being that a dialogue had begun. ReACH project director Anaïs Aguerre wrote that its value is in creating a positive model, by demonstrating “the new power of collaboration and the importance of working collaboratively to address those global issues that no individual or institution on its own could tackle”.

Delegates at the ReACH launch in Paris, May 2017



Construction of the plaster cast version of Trajan's Column for the Victoria and Albert Museum's Cast Courts in 1873



FINANCIAL REVIEW

		2017–18 £m	2016–17 £m
Grant in Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Total government funding was £37.8 million, following both a one-off increase in our core allocation and a higher drawdown of additional funds for our planned move from Blythe House in the previous year.</li></ul>	37.8	40.3
Fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>During a successful period of fundraising, a total of £19.4 million was raised directly for the museum. In addition, £3.4 million was generated by the V&amp;A Membership scheme, following the merger of the Friends of the V&amp;A with the museum on 1 April 2017.</li><li>Of the overall income, £6.8 million was raised towards the V&amp;A's ongoing major capital programme. Following the successful opening of the V&amp;A Exhibition Road Quarter by HRH Duchess of Cambridge in June 2017, we turned our attention to progressing our next priority projects, including the second phase of the Cast Courts restoration project and Photography Centre, for which a number of generous gifts were received.</li><li>An extraordinary act of generosity from William Bollinger saved Queen Victoria's sapphire coronet for the nation and it was kindly gifted to the V&amp;A. We are delighted it will go on display in the refreshed William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery in 2019.</li><li>Membership of the Director's Circle and Young Patrons' Circle continued to grow and provided vital unrestricted income for the Museum.</li><li>The exhibitions programme attracted significant sponsorship funding from both returning and new supporters, while the museum's venue hire business generated over £1.7million in turnover.</li></ul>	22.8	26.2
Trading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Commercial activities delivered a total contribution of £5.6m in the period, a 17% increase on last year. The main driver of growth was The Pink Floyd Exhibition: Their Mortal Remains.</li><li>The year also saw the launch of a new design for the V&amp;A shop, a new café in the V&amp;A Exhibition Road Quarter, the new V&amp;A Members' Room and a new exhibition shop outside The Sainsbury Gallery.</li><li>Our Publishing division enjoyed enormous success with international co-editions for the Pink Floyd and Bowie catalogues driving contribution to over £800k.</li><li>Image licensing delivered considerable success as this part of the website was relaunched to bring it in line with the overall digital brand experience. Our brand licensing enjoyed considerable international growth, and we signed a number of key agreements in China and Japan which will deliver long term strategic growth.</li></ul>	21.7	16.0
Admissions & exhibition fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2017–18 was a record year for the V&amp;A. For the first time in the museum's history, the V&amp;A attracted over 4 million visitors, with a total of 4,396,557 people visiting V&amp;A South Kensington, V&amp;A Museum of Childhood and Blythe House.</li><li>The opening of the new V&amp;A Exhibition Road Quarter drew in audiences, as well as our immersive, thought-provoking and informative exhibitions; highlights this year included Balenciaga: Shaping Fashion and The Pink Floyd Exhibition: Their Mortal Remains.</li></ul>	6.0	5.9
Donated Objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The V&amp;A is grateful for the many objects donated to the Museum in 2017-18. Highlights include an exquisite 'papillon' ring designed by London-based jeweller G (Glenn Spiro), which, shaped like a butterfly, flutters with the movement of the wearer's hand. The ring was generously given to the V&amp;A by the Knowles-Carter family. The museum also received a scroll painting entitled <i>Spring Bursts Out of Peace</i>, made by Yu Jigao as a gift to the V&amp;A from the Yu Jigao Yishu Jijinhui (Yu Jigao Art Foundation).</li></ul>	0.8	4.1
Other		3.9	2.9
Total		93.0	95.4

SUPPORT

The V&A would like to pay special tribute to the following past and present major benefactors for their exceptional support

- The Al Thani Collection
- American Express\*
- The American Friends of the V&A
- The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- Art Fund
- Arts and Humanities Research Council
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- The Bern Schwartz Family Foundation\*
- Blavatnik Family Foundation\*
- William and Judith Bollinger
- Julie and Robert Breckman
- The Canadian Friends of the V&A
- Vladimir Caruana and Ivan Booth
- Clore Duffield Foundation
- The Clothworkers' Foundation
- The Curtain Foundation
- Dr and Mrs Edwin Davies CBE
- Dr Genevieve Davies
- The Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation\*\*
- DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- Sir Harry Djanogly CBE
- The Enid Linder Foundation
- EY
- The Foyle Foundation
- Garfield Weston Foundation
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- The Getty Foundation
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- Gilbert Trust for the Arts
- Lydia and Manfred Gorvy\*
- Mr and Mrs Gerard Griffin
- The Headley Trust
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- The Hintze Family Charitable Foundation
- The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation

- Andrew Hochhauser QC
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- Mohammed Abdul Latif Jameel KBE
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- Parasol Foundation Trust
- Peri Charitable Foundation
- The Porter Foundation
- Hans and Märit Rausing
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- Mr T.T. Tsui
- V&A Members
- Volkswagen Group
- Wartski
- Dr Susan Weber\*
- The A.H. Whiteley Family
- Peter Williams and Heather Acton
- The Wolfson Foundation
- Würth Group
- And others who wish to remain anonymous

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