



News Release

V&A acquires Xbox adaptive controller set to revolutionise accessibility in videogaming

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Today the V&A announces it has acquired an Xbox Adaptive Controller as part of its Rapid Response Collecting programme. As the first adaptive controller designed and manufactured at large-scale by a leading technology company, it represents a landmark moment in videogame play, and demonstrates how design can be harnessed to encourage inclusivity. From today,

the controller is on display in the museum's Rapid Response Collecting gallery, which explores how current global events, political changes and pop cultural phenomena impact, or are influenced by, design, art, architecture and technology.

Developed by Microsoft in consultation with players with limited mobility, and charities including SpecialEffect (UK) and AbleGamers (US), the Xbox Adaptive Controller was created in reaction to a lack of well-designed and reasonably-priced equipment available for gamers with disabilities on the mass-market. Designed to increase access, it allows users with a range of abilities to play videogames.

To create the controller, Microsoft staged hackathons, ran test labs and collaborated with users as part of the design process. The controller allows players to custom programme its two large buttons and plug in additional switches, pads and buttons to suit individual needs. It also enables the use of more than one game controller at a time and can be fitted to the body to give users the possibility to play with the chin or feet, for example.

Corinna Gardner, Senior Curator of Design and Digital at the V&A, said: "The objects we bring into the museum through our Rapid Response Collecting programme are evidence of social, technological and economic change. Videogames are part of our lived reality today, and the Xbox Adaptive Controller marks an important design moment. It is an example of a leading

technology company embracing accessibility and collaborative design processes to create innovative and inclusive design for videogame play. Developed to increase the options available to players with a range of abilities, it is an industry-first and illustrates the power of design to affect change.”

The acquisition coincides with the V&A’s major new exhibition *Videogames: Design/ Play/ Disrupt*. Opening on 8 September, the exhibition explores the innovative and rapidly changing design field of videogames. Beginning in the mid-2000s, when major technological advancements, such as increased access to broadband, social media and newly available means of making, transformed the way games are designed, discussed and played, it celebrates one of the most important design fields of our time.

Other recent V&A Rapid Response Collecting acquisitions include the mosquito emoji launched in June 2018. Championed by organisations including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, the emoji of one of the most dangerous animals in the world was designed to give healthcare professionals a way to communicate quickly and across language barriers about the presence of the insect. A further recent addition are Snapchat’s ‘Spectacles’, camera-enabled sunglasses which received a mixed reception on release. Units remained unsold as early adopters stopped using them soon after purchase and others reported ongoing unease about the privacy implications of the head-worn devices.

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Notes to Editors

- The FREE Rapid Response Collecting display is in the V&A’s Gallery 74a and is curated by Corinna Gardner, Senior Curator of Design and Digital
- V&A’s Design, Architecture and Digital Department is dedicated to collecting the design practice of today. It builds upon the V&A’s industrial design heritage dating back to 1851, and further strengthens the museum’s reputation as the UK’s leading public resource for the study of design
- The V&A has the **national collection for digital art** and has been actively acquiring this type of work since the 1960s. It holds the significant collections The Computer Arts Society Collection and The Patric Prince archive which together form the basis of the UK’s emerging national collection of computer art. The display, *Chance and Control: Art in the Age of Computers*, runs at the V&A until 18 November 2018
- The V&A is open daily from 10.00 to 17.45 and until 22.00 on Fridays

For further PRESS information about *Rapid Response Collecting* please contact Laura Mitchell in the V&A press office on +44(0)20 3949 4509 or email l.mitchell@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).

A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk