

V&A Museum of Childhood to be transformed into a world-leading museum of design and creativity for children and families

'In life what we need is joy!' – The V&A Children's Forum

Today, V&A Director Tristram Hunt revealed details of a transformative redevelopment project for the V&A Museum of Childhood that will enable the much-loved institution to become a world-leading museum of design and creativity for children, families and young people.

Developed in collaboration with local children, it will create immersive galleries and flexible learning studios, invigorate the outdoor landscape, reveal and celebrate the building's Grade II* listed Victorian architecture, and significantly improve visitor experience.

The new V&A Museum of Childhood will inspire curiosity and build creative confidence among future generations, with an expanded programme of immersive exhibitions, events and learning activities that empower young people with creative skills and champion learning through play. Four new interactive galleries showcasing pioneering child-centred design will maximise the number of objects on display from the V&A's world-leading collections of art, design and performance, and the National Childhood Collection.

Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, said: *"The V&A Museum of Childhood is beloved by its local community with a unique and wonderful story to tell as East London's first museum. This flagship project for the V&A will unlock the V&A Museum of Childhood's huge potential to fire imagination, spark ingenuity, and become the world's most joyful museum for children, families and young people. It will support art and design education and help fulfil the museum's ambition to inspire future generations of artists, designers, architects, engineers and makers."*

Award-winning architectural practice De Matos Ryan have worked closely with visitors and non-museum goers, local community groups, teachers and schoolchildren from Globe and Bangabandhu primary schools, to develop the concept designs.

These include:

- *The Kaleidoscope*: a new interactive installation for the Main Hall inspired by optical toys from the V&A's world-leading collection of art, design and performance and the National Collection of Childhood.
- A re-landscaped outdoor play space designed to encourage interaction from the moment of arrival.

- A new lower ground entrance to improve access for school groups and guests with buggies, leading to improved facilities to help them prepare for their visit.
- Restoring the original Victorian fabric and details of the building.

Working closely and collaboratively with schools and the local community builds on recent initiatives such as Kids Takeover Day, in which local primary school children take over operations of the museum for the day. The V&A Museum of Childhood has also been working closely with The Children’s Forum to shape the upcoming exhibition *A Pirate’s Life For Me*.

Angus Morrogh-Ryan and Jose Esteves de Matos, Directors, De Matos Ryan, said: *“This is an exciting prospect for everyone involved, and for the evolution of innovative museums for children and families of the future. For co-design with children to be meaningful requires courage and trust – the initial ideas we’ve uncovered, working with our community groups and the V&A – are hugely exciting and reveal the museum’s true potential.”*

One of East London’s most iconic cultural buildings, the V&A Museum of Childhood has been rooted in its local community since its foundation as the Bethnal Green Museum in 1872. It sits at the heart of the fastest growing part of the city, bordering Hackney, Shoreditch and Tech City.

Rushanara Ali, MP for Bethnal Green and Bow, said: *“The V&A Museum of Childhood is the jewel in the V&A’s crown. It sits in a borough with iconic status for its vibrancy, culture and creativity, and extraordinary history, but also the highest levels of child poverty in the country. By equipping children and young people with skills and confidence needed for a career in the creative sector – one of the fastest growing parts of the UK economy – this redevelopment will help the museum really fulfil its potential to help transform the life chances of children from my constituency and around the country.”*

Anne Longfield, the Children’s Commissioner for England, said: *“Children’s play is a serious business. As well as having fun, play is how children discover the world around them, develop their creativity, learn new skills, and grow in confidence into rounded adults. That’s why I’m so pleased the V&A Museum of Childhood is being redeveloped so that generations of children will continue to take advantage of new and exciting spaces where they can use their imaginations to play and to learn.”*

The V&A Museum of Childhood is inviting feedback on the proposals through a series of events and an exhibition during half term on 20, 21 and 24 October 2018. For more information, or to sign up for regular updates on the plans, go to www.vam.ac.uk/moc.

The V&A Museum of Childhood is an integral member of the V&A family of museums and galleries – alongside the V&A in South Kensington, Shenzhen and Dundee. With two new sites planned for the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, including a museum on Stratford Waterfront

and Collections and Research Centre, the V&A is defining a new and exciting future in East London.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors:

For further press information please contact Catherine Poust on 0207 942 2683 or email c.poust@vam.ac.uk.

Press images can be downloaded from pressimages.vam.ac.uk.