



# Board of Trustees

Minutes  
VABT(18)85

Date: 29 November 2018

Time: 14.00-16.30

Venue: The Boardroom, Victoria and Albert Museum

Present: Nicholas Coleridge CBE (Chair) Kavita Puri  
Ben Elliot Caroline Silver  
Robert Glick Sir John Sorrell  
Andrew Hochhauser QC Dr Paul Thompson  
Nick Hoffman Edmund de Waal OBE  
Steven Murphy Nigel Webb  
Professor Lynda Nead Anthony Misquitta (*Secretary to the Board & General Counsel*)

In attendance Dr Tristram Hunt, Director  
Dr Antonia Boström, Director of Collections  
Sophie Brendel, Director of Marketing, Communications & Visitor Experience  
Dr Helen Charman, Director of Learning & National Programmes  
Heather Francis, Director of Finance & Resources  
Jane Lawson, Director of Development  
Tim Reeve, Deputy Director & Chief Operating Officer  
Dr Pip Simpson, Director of Design, Estate & FuturePlan  
Alex Stitt, Director of Commercial, Digital & Exhibitions  
Catherine Ince, Chief Curator, V&A East (for item 5)  
Dr Tommy Wide, Programme Manager, Smithsonian in London (for item 5)  
Dr Jacques Schuhmacher, Curator, Rosalinde & Arthur Gilbert Collection (for item 6)  
Christopher Wilk, Keeper, Furniture, Textiles & Fashion Department (for item 7)

Apologies: Dame Theresa Sackler

Minute taker: Julia Downer, Directorate Office Manager & Governance Officer

## 1. Welcome and Declarations of Interests

1.1 Nicholas Coleridge (NC) welcomed Trustees to the meeting and noted the apologies.

1.2 The following declarations of interest were recorded in relation to V&A East:

- Robert Glick is a Trustee of Sadler's Wells
- Andrew Hochhauser is a Governor of the University of the Arts London
- Kavita Puri has made the following declaration: *To the extent that the BBC is involved in discussions concerning the Stratford Waterfront, whilst I work at the BBC I have no involvement in or influence over those discussions.*

## 2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 2.1 The minutes for the previous meeting, held on 25 September 2018, were approved by the Board.

## 3. Matters Arising

- 3.1 The Board recorded thanks to Heather Francis (HF) who is leaving the museum to take up the post of Chief Financial Officer at the University of the Arts, London.  
Dr Philippa Simpson has been appointed as Director of Design, Estate & FuturePlan.  
James Robinson, Director of Burrell Renaissance, will be joining the V&A as Keeper of Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics & Glass.  
Rhian Harris, Director of the Museum of Childhood, has left the V&A.
- 3.2 The Board congratulated all involved in the very successful re-opening of the Cast Courts.
- 3.3 **Action point:** information is to be circulated to Trustees on revenue generated from non-commercial Image licensing.

## 4. Director's Report

- 4.1 Tristram Hunt (TH) presented an overview of the key V&A activities since the previous meeting.
- 4.2 Following the opening in September 2018, V&A Dundee has received very high numbers of visitors. The next phase of the public programme has been announced, which will include the V&A exhibition *Videogames: Design/Play/Disrupt*.
- 4.3 The 2017-18 performance indicators for DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries have been published. These demonstrate the V&A's strong regional engagement, with more loans to UK venues than any other museum.
- 4.4 The Board was briefed on the forward planning being undertaken by the museum regarding possible outcomes for Brexit, and its potential impact on aspects of the work of the V&A.
- 4.5 TH updated Trustees on the public programme of current and future exhibitions. With the sell-out *Frida Kahlo: Making Herself Up* having closed recently, TH congratulated all involved on its execution, particularly the Visitor Experience Department. *Fashioned from Nature* and *Videogames: Design/Play/Disrupt* continue to draw decent numbers of visitors.

Trustees were apprised of plans for future exhibitions. Alongside *Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams*, an exhibition on the work of *Tim Walker* will link to the new Photography Centre, opened by HRH The Duchess of Cambridge, Royal Patron of the V&A, to huge critical and public acclaim. The Trustees welcomed the wide-ranging programme, which offers a mix of scholarly and accessible exhibitions.

The Board discussed mechanisms for forecasting visitor numbers for exhibitions, taking account of touring exhibitions as well as those shown at South Kensington.

4.6 Trustees discussed the Director's Report.

**Action point:** Trustees asked for an overview of the V&A/RCA History of Design MA course as a future agenda item.

## 5. **V&A East – Waterfront Project & Content**

5.1 Catherine Ince, Chief Curator, V&A East, (CI) and Dr Tommy Wide, Programme Manager, Smithsonian London, (TW) joined the meeting.

5.2 Tim Reeve (TR) updated the Board on progress since the last meeting. The V&A had unveiled plans for the two interconnected sites at V&A East to the press on 1 November 2018. The architects, Liz Diller, Sheila O'Donnell and John Tuomey, had shared details of the Waterfront Museum, in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution, and the Collection and Research Centre (CRC) at Here East.

Other updates included the CRC RIBA Stage 3 design development, sign-off of the Waterfront Museum RIBA Stage 3 and the submission of the planning application for East Bank. The preliminary submission of the Full Business Case to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has taken place. Priorities to allow the completion of RIBA Stage 3 at the CRC include finalising the necessary environmental conditions, finalising storage layouts and a decision on the lighting approach for the Collections Hall. A new phase of audience research is underway, as is work on the development of a brand identity for V&A East, including the Smithsonian partnership.

5.3 TH reminded the Board of the vision and mission for V&A East. The project will revolutionise access to the V&A's collections through innovative partnerships and collaborations, including the Smithsonian Institution, with a focus on reaching young, diverse and disadvantaged audiences in a culturally responsive way.

5.4 CI presented an overview of the layout of the Waterfront Museum building and its curatorial content, and briefed Trustees on how the design will align with the mission statement. Architectural objects will be identified for the circulation spaces as part of a "Ribbon of Design" running throughout the building.

5.5 TW introduced the co-curated gallery concepts, which will combine the arts, sciences and humanities through a rolling programme including live events. The exhibition programme will incorporate co-curated V&A and Smithsonian exhibitions, including the first to open at the new museum.

CI and TW were thanked for their presentation.

## 6. **Provenance Research at the V&A**

The minutes of this item of business are confidential and exempt from public disclosure under sections 43(i) and 43(ii) of the Freedom of Information Act. They are included in the Confidential Annex to these minutes.

15.15 Steven Murphy left the meeting.

## **7. Overview of the Furniture, Textiles, & Fashion Department**

- 7.1 Christopher Wilk (CW) joined the meeting to present an overview of the work of the Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Department
- 7.2 Formed in 2001, the scope of the department is considerable, including the largest and most wide-ranging textile collection in the world. The department has an active acquisitions programme for objects of national and international significance, and is a major lender to local, national and international institutions.
- 7.3 Recent exhibitions curated by the department include *Plywood: Material of the Modern World*, *Balenciaga: Shaping Fashion* and currently *Fashioned from Nature*, all of which have been very successful. The department is working on *Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams* and *Mary Quant*.
- 7.4 CW outlined the plans underway for the move of furniture, textiles and fashion objects from Blythe House to V&A East, particularly to the Collection and Research Centre, which is prompting extensive cataloguing and digitisation of objects.

The Board thanked CW for his presentation.

## **8. Chairman's Report**

- 8.1 The Chair informed the Trustees of matters relating to the governance of the Board:
- Review of the performance of the Chair: positive feedback had been provided by the Board to Mark Damazer in his role as the senior Trustee.
  - Review of the effectiveness of the Board and the Executive Board by Trustees: good levels of satisfaction were reported in both instances.
  - Review of the Board's effectiveness by the Executive Board: feedback had been shared with the Chair, which showed that views were aligned between Trustees and the Executive Board regarding the key challenges faced by the museum.

## **9. Development Report**

- 9.1 Robert Glick (RG) updated Trustees on the activities of the Development Department and the status of current sponsorship and fundraising initiatives. It was felt that the museum is on track for achieving its targets.

## **10. Reports from Committees**

### **10.1 Trustees' Audit Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2018 were circulated at the meeting. Andrew Hochhauser commented that the financial structure of the museum is in good order, and thanked HF for her work as she leaves the museum.

- 10.2 **Trustees' FuturePlan and V&A East Committee**  
This new committee, an amalgamation of the Buildings Strategy Committee and the V&A East Committee reflects changing priorities within the FuturePlan programme, and will be chaired by Nigel Webb. The Board gave its approval for the formation of the Committee. The minutes of the first meeting held on 19 November 2018 were circulated at the meeting.
- 10.3 **Trustees' Finance Committee**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2018 were circulated at the meeting. Caroline Silver drew attention to the cash-flow for current programmes, including the build-up costs for V&A East, which are being monitored by the Finance Committee.
- 10.4 **Trustees' Investment Committee**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2018 were circulated at the meeting.
- 10.5 **Trustees' Research Advisory Committee**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November had been circulated previously. Professor Lynda Nead is chair of this committee as Margot Finn's term as a Trustee has come to an end.
- 11. **Any Other Business**
  - 11.1 The next meeting will be held on 31 January 2019 at South Kensington.
  - 11.2 There was no further business.

Julia Downer  
29 November 2018

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Signed  
Nicholas Coleridge, Chair