



**Press Release**

## **Queen Victoria's sapphire and diamond coronet among 80 new works joining Jewellery from April 2019**

**The William and Judith Bollinger Gallery**

**Reopening 11 April 2019**

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From 11 April 2019, Queen Victoria's sapphire and diamond coronet will go on permanent public display at the V&A for the first time as the centrepiece of the William and Judith Bollinger Gallery. The gallery – home to our world-class jewellery collection – is currently closed for a three-month refurbishment, with the coronet among eighty new pieces joining the display when it reopens.

Queen Victoria's sapphire and diamond coronet was acquired by the V&A in 2017, purchased through the generosity of William & Judith, and Douglas and James Bollinger as a gift to the Nation and the Commonwealth. One of Queen Victoria's most important jewels, it was designed for her by Prince Albert in 1840 – the royal couple's wedding year – and made by Joseph Kitching, partner at Kitching and Abud. Albert played a key role in arranging Victoria's jewels, and he based the coronet's design on the Saxon Rautenkranz, or circlet of rue, which runs diagonally across the coat of arms of Saxony. In 1842, Victoria wore the newly completed coronet in a famous portrait by Franz Xaver Winterhalter, the first he painted of her. It carried the image of the young queen around the world through replicas, copies and engravings. Over twenty years later, Victoria wore the coronet instead of her crown in 1866 when she felt able to open Parliament for the first time since Albert's death in 1861, with her crown carried on a cushion.

Together with the coronet, a superb collection of 49 Art Deco vanity cases will be joining the gallery as a loan and promised gift from Kashmira Bulsara in memory of her brother, Freddie Mercury. Taking inspiration from Modernism as well as Persia, Ancient Egypt, China and Japan, the cases in richly coloured hardstones, enamel and lacquer were made by, or for, Cartier, Lacroche, Van Cleef & Arpels, Charlton and other leading jewellers in Paris and New York. The collection will transform the presentation of the Art Deco period in the gallery.

Additions and new acquisitions are regularly incorporated into the display, with recent examples being Nicholas Snowman's gift of Fabergé, and Beyoncé's gift of a Papillon ring by Glenn Spiro. New in April 2019 will be thirty pieces ranging from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, comprising works by contemporary makers Ute Decker and Charlotte de Syllas working in Britain, Flóra Vági in Hungary, and Annamaria Zanella in Italy, among others. Pieces will include Christopher Thompson Royds' *Natura Morta* necklace with poppies of gold, enamel and diamonds, Gijs Bakker's *Porsche* bracelet in polyester, and a gold pendant of Paddington Bear by Cartier, created in 1975.

Over 4.2 million people have visited the William and Judith Bollinger Gallery at the V&A since it opened in 2008, and it's one of our most popular galleries, telling the story of European and Western jewellery from Ancient Greece and Rome to the present. The gallery's three-month refurbishment will renew the space for the next decade, with updates to the infrastructure and display. Interactives will also be enhanced, for example 'Hidden Treasures', which will include a photograph taken by Jay-Z of Beyoncé wearing the Papillon Ring, as well as a film showing the ring's fluttering wings in action. The architects for the refresh are Eva Jiricna and Georgina Papathanasiou (Atelier A&D), who led the creation of the gallery ten years ago.

The arrival of Queen Victoria's sapphire and diamond coronet on permanent public display in 2019 will mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the births of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The coronet will be a highlight of the V&A's bicentenary celebrations, alongside events, displays and new publications.

To celebrate the coronet's acquisition, Independent Opera, co-founded by William and Judith Bollinger, commissioned Joby Talbot to write a new cantata *A Sheen of Dew on Flowers*. The cantata will receive its first public performance at the Barbican on 11 April 2019, the day that the William and Judith Bollinger Gallery reopens to the public. The première will be performed by Britten Sinfonia and conducted by Natalie Murray Beale, Independent Opera's Creative Director.

**Richard Edgcumbe, Senior Curator at the V&A, said:** *"Queen Victoria's sapphire and diamond coronet is one of the great jewels of her reign. Designed by Prince Albert, it is an iconic symbol of their love, worn by Victoria as young queen and as widow. We are entirely indebted to William and Judith Bollinger and their sons for the gift of this masterpiece of the jeweller's art, which is so intimately associated with Victoria and Albert that it will become part of the identity of the V&A. Together with an array of eighty new acquisitions and loans made possible by the generosity of many supporters, the display of the coronet inaugurates the next phase in the life of a much-loved gallery."*

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## **Notes to Editors**

- The William and Judith Bollinger Gallery re-opens on 11 April 2019. Entrance is FREE
- A revised edition of *Jewels and Jewellery* by Clare Phillips will be published by Thames & Hudson to coincide with the reopening, featuring the coronet on the front cover
- *A Kind of Magic: Art Deco Vanity Cases* by Sarah Hue-Williams and Peter Edwards was published by Unicorn Press in 2017, exploring The Kashmira Bulsara Collection and announcing its promised gift to the V&A
- The architects for the refresh are Eva Jiricna and Georgina Papathanasiou (Atelier A&D)

## **About V&A FuturePlan**

FuturePlan is an ambitious programme of development which is transforming the V&A. The best contemporary designers are creating exciting new galleries and visitor facilities, while revealing and restoring the beauty of the original building. In the past 15 years, over 85% of the museum's public spaces have been transformed, improving access and allowing the collections to be more elegantly and intelligently displayed. By introducing bold new architectural interventions, FuturePlan aims to delight and to inspire new visitors, and to continue the museum's tradition of championing new talent.

[vam.ac.uk/info/futureplan](http://vam.ac.uk/info/futureplan)

## **About Atelier A&D**

Atelier A&D are a London based architectural design practice working across a range of residential, commercial, retail and art and cultural projects. Founded by Eva Jiricna and Georgina Papathanasiou, AA&D is a multidisciplinary practice aiming to design and deliver contemporary and design-led projects within the residential, cultural and commercial sector. The practice has a varied client base of investors, developers and private clients with whom we work closely from concept up to implementation of each project to achieve the highest quality of design and architectural beauty. Both Eva and Georgina bring to the practice their extensive experience in museum design, such as the original Jewellery refurbishment at the V&A as well as other galleries around the world and high profile temporary exhibitions.

**For further PRESS information about Jewellery please contact Sophie Steel on [s.steel@vam.ac.uk](mailto:s.steel@vam.ac.uk) / +44 (0)20 7942 2279 (not for publication). A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from [pressimages.vam.ac.uk](http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk)**