



**NEWS RELEASE: Thursday 14 March**

## **AOC win competition to lead fit-out of V&A Museum of Childhood redevelopment**

East London-based architecture and design practice AOC have won a competition for the fit-out of the most ambitious transformation of the V&A Museum of Childhood in its 145-history. This Autumn, AOC will unveil concept designs that reimagine how visitors experience this much-loved institution, including three new gallery spaces, to transform it into a world-leading museum of design and creativity for children, families and young people.

As lead designers for the redevelopment project, AOC are engaging a team of sub-consultants including a materials specialist, a digital strategist and a furniture designer and will work closely with the appointed architects for the base-build, De Matos Ryan.

AOC will develop their plans to meet the needs of young people in the 21st century, to build creative confidence and equip them with skills and knowledge critical in today's fast-changing world. The V&A's world-class collections are at the heart of this new mission. The redevelopment will significantly increase the number of objects currently on display and will draw on the full scope of the V&A's collections of art, design and performance.

**Geoff Shearcroft, Director of AOC:** *"The transformation of the historic V&A Museum of Childhood provides a fantastic opportunity to develop new ways for young people and their families to explore and engage with the V&A's world-class collections in the twenty-first century. We are looking forward to developing a public building that is both an essential civic space for Bethnal Green and a physically and socially interactive museum for multi-generational and inter-cultural audiences."*

**Philippa Simpson, V&A Director of Design and FuturePlan:** *"The V&A are thrilled to be working with AOC on this seminal project. Their response to our challenging brief outlined an exciting and ambitious approach to working openly with our community and our wider audience, as well as a deep understanding of the museum as a vehicle for social change. They will play a critical role in realizing the V&A's mission to create a museum filled with joy and optimism, a place where everyone can see the potential of design to change the world."*

The project to transform the museum is in its second year and is currently in the design and content development phase. Co-design with school children, families, teachers, community groups will continue to be championed throughout the project and carried forward into future programming and operations after the museum relaunches.

It builds on recent initiatives including *A Pirate's Life For Me* (runs until 22 April 2019), designed collaboratively with children, and Kids Takeover Day in which local primary school children take over operations of the museum for the day.

In May 2019, Gina Koutsika will join the V&A Museum of Childhood as Creative and Skills Director. Working within the V&A Learning Department and with the V&A's curatorial and design teams, Koutsika will oversee delivery of the project and develop an expanded and refocused exhibition and events programme to match the ambition of the redevelopment project. Her approach will be informed by the latest research in child psychology, designing for play and education.

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, V&A Gallery at Design Society in Shenzhen and V&A 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](mailto:c.poust@vam.ac.uk). Previous press releases on the V&A Museum of Childhood transformation can be found [here](#). Press images can be downloaded from [pressimages.vam.ac.uk](http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk).**

#### **About AOC**

AOC is a practice of architects and designers established in 2005. Based in East London, the studio is best known for its public buildings, cultural institutions, educational projects and exhibition designs. The practice has experience working with public and private collections, such as the Reading Room at Wellcome Collection, to create civic spaces that are physically and socially interactive. They have built a reputation for the quality of their designs, winning RIBA, Design Museum Designs of the Year and New London awards. Current projects include the redevelopment of The National Archives' brutalist icon in Kew; and Somerset House Studios, the transformation of the Grade I-listed former Inland Revenue offices into a contemporary arts centre.

#### **About the V&A Museum of Childhood**

The V&A Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green is part of the V&A family of sites and the UK's National Museum of Childhood. It is the largest institution of its kind in the world and holds in trust the nation's childhood collections, with a unique story to tell as East London's first museum. In October 2018, the museum announced plans for a transformative redevelopment project that will enable the much-loved institution to become a world-leading museum of design and creativity for children, families and young people. This new vision and purpose will address a growing deficit in design education, crisis in play and highlight the essential role that creativity plays in developing skills needed for the future.