

Guidance notes for V&A Residency Programme applicants

Last updated April 2019

A large, stylized logo consisting of the letters 'V', '&', and 'A' in a teal color. The 'V' is a simple, bold, sans-serif shape. The '&' is a more decorative, calligraphic font with a loop. The 'A' is also a simple, bold, sans-serif shape. The entire logo is centered horizontally and occupies the lower half of the page.

The V&A only accepts applications in response to an Open Call for Applications. For each open call, we define a particular area of the collections or a specific theme or medium we would like the resident to explore.

Before you start writing an application, it might be helpful to consider whether you are eligible, and at the right point in your career to undertake such a commitment.

Consider the following points:

Is this residency right for you?

The V&A Residency Programme is public-facing and you will be expected to work actively with visitors through educational activities. Most residents lead a schools workshop, and many work with a wide variety of audiences. You can see the extent of the V&A's Learning Programme on the website. Residents are also required to open their studio to the public or show their work in progress to visitors in the galleries. If you don't enjoy working with the public, and are not comfortable sharing your work in progress, then this particular Residency is probably not for you.

In which discipline do you work?

The V&A normally advertises residencies for specific disciplines in art and design (for example, fashion design, digital design, sound art, animation, photography, calligraphy, and ceramics). Residencies usually link up with major exhibitions, research projects or strategic aims for the Museum.

Are you interested in the V&A collections?

Are you fascinated by the idea of having behind the scenes access to collections, to have the opportunity to study historical and contemporary objects closely and to develop your creative practice in response to the Museum's holdings? The V&A are keen to hear proposals on re-interpreting and representing their collections and for the research journeys you might wish to take.

Are you at the right stage in your career?

Unless otherwise stated, the V&A Residency programme is largely aimed at mid-career UK based artists and designers who have worked independently for a number of years and have substantial experience in working within the discipline stated. Are you at a point where you want to have some time and head space to focus upon a new direction in your practice, or develop new skills that will support new work? Have you experience of working with small and medium-sized organisations and think you are ready to work with a large institution like the V&A?

Can you make the commitment?

You will want to make the most of the opportunity if you are offered a Residency. It is understood that you may have some commitments and might need to continue with some commercial practice or teaching while undertaking the residency, and we encourage you to relocate these to the Museum if possible. We hope that you will be at the Museum for much of the working week, and often at weekends for Open Studio sessions or to lead learning activities while recognising that you need regular rest days within the working week as well as some time off!

International Residencies

Most of the V&A Residencies are aimed at UK based practitioners, that is, those currently living and working (with a UK work permit) in the UK. If the residency is marked as an International Residency, then non UK nationals or those living outside of the UK may apply. Successful applicants will need to apply for a UK visa through the usual process, but the V&A will support an application. For international Residencies, the V&A will cover the cost of one standard return air or rail fare and some funds to pay for shipping of work. The Museum will aim to help you find accommodation but you would need to pay the rent either out of your own funds or the bursary (including a deposit on the property).

Preparing an application

You should consider that the main aims of the residency programme are to:

- Enable the selected practitioner to draw upon the V&A's collections to carry out research, learn new skills and create new work;
- Inspire public interest in creative practice and making;
- Offer professional development to the selected practitioner in public engagement and arts education;
- Create links between the V&A's collections and contemporary art, craft and design practice;
- Undertake an imaginative participatory programme to engage the public (this could include workshops, open studios, talks, mass participation events, family art activities, student projects, seminars etc.);
- Raise the profile of contemporary practice in the selected discipline.