



## **GUIDENCE NOTES FOR RESIDENCY APPLICANTS //**

Since the V&A's inception, supporting contemporary artists, designers and makers has been at the heart of the museum's vision. The V&A only accepts applicants 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:

Which residency is right for you?

The V&A Residency Programme is comprised of yearly residencies linked to the V&A Learning Department, as well as two V&A Research Institute (VARI) residencies per year, which are co-led by Learning and VARI.

Learning offers three residencies and has on-site studios in the museum: a dedicated ceramics studio in our Ceramics galleries and two interdisciplinary studios in the Sackler Centre for arts education. Residencies are public facing and you will be expected to work actively with visitors through educational activities, as well as developing your personal practice. 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. However, many of our alumni comment about the value of this experience, encouraging them to become more confident and articulate in describing their work and sharing of ideas with a variety of audiences.

V&A Research Institute (VARI) offers two kinds of residency. The 12-month '*embedded residency*' invites practitioners to work on-site at the V&A in South Kensington and to critically examine ways of rethinking the V&A from the inside through research, public engagement and practice. The 3-month '*offsite residency*' invite practitioners who have a socially engaged practice and draw from the V&A's vast collections and expertise in order to build relationships with diverse practitioner communities in East London in anticipation of the opening of V&A East in 2021.

Both VARI residencies offer an opportunity for practitioners to reflect critically on institutional practices and to help transform the museum into an active site for discussion and participation. As with the Learning residencies, both VARI residencies entail public-facing work and assume that practitioners are comfortable sharing work in progress.

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). However, sometimes we open a theme out more widely and invite multidisciplinary practitioners to submit proposals. Residencies usually link up with major exhibitions or current research projects, and we also integrate the strategic aims for the museum into the process, encouraging a collaborative dialogue around practice and cultural space.

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. Due to the nature of the programme, practitioners need to be self-motivated and proactive individuals, with a collaborative and mature approach to their work and others. 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 work? Have you experience of working with small and medium-sized organisations and 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 also need regular rest days within the working week and 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).

Partners are welcome to join residents in their accommodation, provided you are able to cover the financial cost within your funds or bursary. They are not able to work in the V&A studio however, and children are not allowed in the studios due to health & safety regulations (unless an appropriate public event is taking place).

### 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 vast collections to carry out research, learn new skills and create new work that pushes boundaries of creative practice;
- Inspire and invite public interest and engagement in creative practice and making;
- Disrupt business as usual in the museum, offering critique and fresh perspectives that encourage the institution's innovation and evolution within the arts and culture;
- Offer professional development to the selected practitioner in public engagement and arts education as well as access to museum staff expertise;
- Create links between the V&A's collections and contemporary art, craft and design practice both nationally and internationally;
- Undertake an imaginative participatory programme to engage the public (this could include workshops, open studios, talks, mass participation events, family art activities, student projects, etc) in order to fuel imagination and curiosity into potential careers in the creative industries;
- Raise the profile of contemporary practice in the selected discipline.

In addition to the aims above, VARI Residencies aim to:

- Enable practitioners to work collaboratively with other members of the V&A Research Institute and wider museum communities;
- Build bridges between multiple constituencies, knowledge bases and creative practices in different parts of London;
- Foster critical reflection on the museum's institutional practices and its role as a site for active discussion and participation.

### Residency code of practice: A Commitment to Respectful Dialogue

Once a candidate is selected, the museum will invite the practitioner to sign a commitment to professional practice. This is an agreement between the museum and resident that outlines the approach we expect from the practitioner as well as the programme staff. This can be found at the end of the application form.

For more information about our residencies, open calls, open studios, news and alumni visit: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/residencies> or email: [j.sturrock@vam.ac.uk](mailto:j.sturrock@vam.ac.uk)