

Press release:
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Everyone invited to help redesign the new V&A Museum of Childhood



Gill Lambert, Architect, AOC, with children from Globe Primary School, Bethnal Green (c) Getty / Jeff Spicer

In preparation for the transformation of the iconic and beloved V&A Museum of Childhood, an entire gallery has been transformed into a working design studio. Visitors are invited to feedback on work in progress, test out display ideas, talk with the team and shape the future of this much-loved building. With a mandate set by local school children to become the world's 'most joyful' museum, the V&A Museum of Childhood is working with local architecture and design practice AOC to develop new galleries and experiences that celebrate the power of design and creativity.

Open Studio offers visitors unparalleled insight and involvement into the museum's exciting and ambitious redevelopment plans through a 'test lab' which will experiment with new ways of displaying objects for children, families and young people, as well as workshops and special events. In *Open Studio*, visitors are encouraged to physically hold and interact with objects from the V&A collection and to propose design and curatorial ideas for the new galleries.

To celebrate its opening, *Open Studio* will host a pop-up display over 10 days from Friday 14 June as part of the London Festival of Architecture and Refugee Week. Made in collaboration with Catja de Haas Architects and Oxfam, *the Giant Dolls' Houses Project* is an installation of fantastical shoebox rooms. Originally produced by refugees in Jordan around themes of home and community, visitors will be encouraged to create their own shoeboxes. Details of workshops for families can be found [here](#).

Gina Koutsika, Creative and Skills Director of the V&A Museum of Childhood, said: "Through *Open Studio*, we hope to create a space that sparks excitement, curiosity and a sense of ownership in our mission to create internationally renowned powerhouse of design and creativity for children, families and young people. *Open Studio* will help us realise our mandate, set by local schoolchildren, to become the world's 'most joyful' museum and ensure we relaunch as an essential civic space for our local community."

The transformation project is now in its second year, with content development and design underway. *Open Studio* will play a key role in the fit-out of the museum, led by AOC. Their first concept designs, which will include an overall redesign of the museum and three new galleries, will be revealed this Autumn. The most ambitious redevelopment in the museum's 147-year-history, the V&A Museum of Childhood is reinventing itself for the needs of children today.

The new V&A Museum of Childhood will inspire curiosity and build creative confidence among future generations, with an expanded programme of immersive exhibitions, events and learning activities that empower young people with creative skills and champion learning through play. In October 2018, De Matos Ryan, architects for the base-build, revealed proposals for:

- The Kaleidoscope, a feature staircase for the Main Hall inspired by optical toys.
- A re-landscaped front entrance to improve visitors' interaction on arrival.
- A new lower ground entrance to improve access for school groups and families with buggies.
- New expanded learning studios.
- Essential renovation and restructuring of the museum's infrastructure including new lighting, acoustics, environmental control systems and circulation.

Open Studio further demonstrates the museum's commitment towards co-design – the practice by which visitors become active, creative participants. Children, teachers, families and community groups are all central to the transformation of the new V&A Museum of Childhood.

ENDS.

For further press information please contact Catherine Poust on 0207 942 2683 or email 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.

Notes to Editors:

Open Studio is open every day of the week and free to visit.

Dolls' House in a Shoebox workshop:

15 June 2019, 12:00 – 16:00

Admission Free

A family event in the Open Studio Workshop space encouraging visitors to make their own shoebox responses to the display. The workshop is free and is being run by Lala Thorpe from Artescape.

Gina Koutsika joined the V&A Museum of Childhood in May 2019 as Creative and Skills Director. Working within the V&A learning, curatorial and design teams, Koutsika is overseeing delivery of the project and developing an expanded and refocused exhibition and events programme that matches the ambition of the redevelopment. Her approach is informed by the latest research in child psychology, designing for play and education.

More information about the museum's transformation project can be found [here](#).