



V&A launch open-call for homemade signs and rainbow drawings created during lockdown

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The V&A has today announced an open-call for homemade signs created during lockdown to enter its permanent collection. From rainbow signs created by children to shop signs and hand-written notes posted in public spaces, the V&A is seeking signs that have been created by individuals and communities in response to the current isolation measures.

During social distancing, homemade signs have become commonplace on our streets. Whether they state temporary closure of a business, express messages of hope or critique, or raise awareness for a good cause, these signs have become a prominent way for us to communicate with the outside world during lockdown. By collecting such artefacts, the V&A aims to create and preserve a rich portrait of life under lockdown expressed through visual imagery.

Joining UK road signs, public transport maps and street posters, the selected signs will also offer a valuable insight into the history of signage on our streets and the role of printed material in an increasingly digital world.

Brendan Cormier, Design Curator, co-leading the initiative, said: *“Due to social distancing measures, what we’ve seen during this crisis is an enormous amount of written communication taking place in the public sphere from home windows to shop fronts. The sum effect of these signs are that communities are organizing and expressing themselves through the means they have available; by doing so it forms a powerful reflection of the crisis itself.”*

Variations of rainbow drawings and imagery, which have been produced by children over the past few weeks as a message of hope and support, will be collected as an important symbol of children's creativity and their voice within our society, especially during adversity. The acquired rainbow signs will join over 40,000 child-related objects in the V&A's collection including toys, costumes and digital media.

Gina Koutsika V&A Museum of Childhood Director said: *“The global pandemic has sequestered children in their homes. Across the UK, inspired by global projects, and encouraged by their teachers and parents, they have been crafting rainbow images to hang in their windows. Bringing cheer to others in what is a disconcerting and potentially frightening time, this is exactly the kind of project to build creative confidence that the new Museum of Childhood is exhorting in its audiences.”*

Beginning a major redevelopment post-lockdown, the V&A Museum of Childhood will reopen as a world-leading centre dedicated to empowering child-creativity and this initiative provides the first steps towards this new mission. The new Museum of Childhood, through its collections and displays, will champion learning through play, making and design, equipping young people with the creative skills and confidence to thrive in the 21st century.

In order to help us build this collection, members of the public are encouraged to submit images of their homemade signs via the email address homemadesigns@vam.ac.uk. Expert curators from across the museum will decide on homemade signs that enter the collection. Everyone can also take part in the discussion on social media by sharing signs they have seen and using the #homemadesigns.

This activity will form an important part of the museum's work in documenting the crisis, alongside its Pandemic Objects blog series and forthcoming acquisitions for the Rapid Response collection.

- Ends -

For further PRESS information please contact the V&A press office, press.office@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).