

## News Release

### First-ever Birkin bag and Mulberry handbags owned by Kate Moss and Alexa Chung to feature in V&A exhibition *Bags: Inside Out*

*Sponsored by Mulberry*

Gallery 40, V&A

Opens 21 November 2020, tickets on sale today

[vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/bags](http://vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/bags) | #BagsInsideOut



The first-ever made Hermès Birkin bag owned by Jane Birkin and Mulberry handbags worn by Kate Moss and Alexa Chung will join almost 300 standout pieces as part of the V&A's next major fashion exhibition *Bags: Inside Out*, opening 21 November. Tickets for the exhibition are on sale from today, 15 September with the museum also increasing opening hours to 5 days per week (Wednesday – Sunday) from tomorrow, following popular demand since reopening.

The exhibition will be UK's most comprehensive exhibition dedicated to the ultimate accessory. From designer handbags to despatch boxes, vanity cases to military rucksacks, it will explore our longstanding fascination with the bag. With an exclusive look inside the world of the factory and atelier; *Bags: Inside Out* provides an unprecedented look at this global obsession.

Actress and singer Jane Birkin and the former executive chairman of Hermès Jean-Louis Dumas met by chance on a flight from Paris to London. Jane complained about how she could not find a bag suitable to carry her belongings and to fit her needs as a young mother. Dumas was inspired to sketch on an aeroplane sickness-bag a supple rectangular holdall with a burnished flap and saddle stitching. The bag was named after Jane and quickly became a sensation by appealing to women who were looking for something spacious and fashionable. The 'Birkin' has since become an undeniable symbol of wealth and luxury. The Birkin bag from 1984 that will feature in the exhibition was the first ever made and, unlike the ones that followed, is also equipped with a shoulder strap. Bearing her initials, it was heavily used by Jane Birkin and shows residue of adhesive from the stickers she liked to apply to it. The bag was donated by Jane Birkin for an auction to support the fight against AIDS in 1994 and was acquired in 2000 by Catherine B, Hermès and Chanel bags collector and owner of "Les 3 Marches" boutique in Paris.

*Lucia Savi, Curator of Bags: Inside Out at the V&A said: "The 'Birkin' is one of the most sought-after and celebrated handbags of the 20th and 21st century. We are thrilled that we will display the very first piece made for Jane Birkin which started this long-lasting fascination. This is a truly unique bag which was used and reused by its former owner and shows signs of wear on its surface. These very personal details remind us that bags are status symbols, but also practical companions to our everyday life."*

The Mulberry Bayswater is one of the brand's most iconic handbags, as popular today as it was when it launched in 2003. Designed by Nicholas Knightly, the Bayswater unites the very best of Mulberry's craft skills and heritage influences. Supermodel Kate Moss was one of the bags first celebrity fans and has carried many different styles and colours over the years - including the example that will feature in the exhibition.

The Alexa, launched in 2010, was inspired by British style icon Alexa Chung who was often photographed carrying a well-loved Mulberry Elkington satchel. This caught the eye of the Mulberry design team and Chung's effortlessly chic style influenced the shape and leather choices for this new bag. The Alexa played a key role in the revival of the 'It Bag' and quickly became one of the most coveted bags of a generation.

*Lucia Savi said: "The Bayswater and Alexa bags are two of Mulberry's most recognisable and timeless designs. We are delighted to include these bags in the exhibition, owned by Kate Moss and Alexa Chung. Kate Moss was often seen carrying Mulberry bags including this Bayswater – her association with this design helped it to become the quintessential icon it is today. The Alexa was inspired by British broadcaster and model Alexa Chung carrying a Mulberry men's briefcase and the result was a practical and fashionable leather satchel for women. It is a modern example of how celebrities can inspire bag design."*

Previously announced bags that will also feature in the exhibition include a large embroidered burse used to protect the silver matrix of Elizabeth I's Great Seal of England, a gas mask bag owned by HRH Queen Mary during the Second World War, Winston Churchill's red despatch box and the Fendi 'Baguette' bag worn by and stolen from Sarah Jessica Parker in one of *Sex and the City's* most famous scenes.

- ENDS -

#### **Notes to Editors**

- The exhibition *Bags: Inside Out*, Sponsored by Mulberry, opens November 21 2020. Tickets from £12 on sale today, September 15 2020.
- The V&A will be open 5 days per week (Wednesday – Sunday) from September 16 2020. Free timed tickets are available from the V&A website.
- The exhibition has been curated for the V&A by Lucia Savi. It will be accompanied by a richly illustrated new V&A publication.
- The exhibition is the latest in the V&A's series of revelatory fashion exhibitions and follows *Mary Quant* (2019-2020), *Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams* (2019), *Balenciaga: Shaping Fashion* (2017 – 18), *Undressed: A Brief History of Underwear* (2016 – 2017), *Shoes: Pleasure and Pain* (2015 – 2016), *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* (2015) and *Club to Catwalk: London Fashion in the 1980s* (2013 – 2014)

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## **About Mulberry**

Founded in 1971, Mulberry creates luxury lifestyle goods that playfully interpret heritage and celebrate intelligent creativity. We take great pride in creating objects that are made to last, to be loved and passed onto the next generation. Originally a family-run business, today we have grown to be the largest manufacturer of luxury leather goods in the UK with factories in Somerset and a design studio in London. Mulberry's bags, jewellery and accessories are available in over 120 stores worldwide and through the digital flagship [mulberry.com](http://mulberry.com).

**For further PRESS information about *Bags: Inside Out* please contact Callum Walker on [c.walker@vam.ac.uk](mailto:c.walker@vam.ac.uk). A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from [pressimages.vam.ac.uk](http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk)**