



## **V&A and HTC VIVE Arts announce innovative virtual reality event to celebrate *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser***

- **V&A and HTC VIVE Arts to stage the museum's first-ever VR event on 22 October, offering a curator presentation, live visual effects and a unique exhibition preview for global audiences**
- **Event will coincide with the launch of exhibition tickets on sale and premiere of *Curious Alice: an at-home VR experience transporting visitors into the wonderful world of Wonderland***
- **V&A to stage *A Curious Game of Croquet*: a special VR experience on VIVE Cosmos within the exhibition**
- **VR experience created by PRELOADED based on new artworks created by Icelandic artist Kristjana S. Williams, specially commissioned for the V&A's exhibition publication; available to buy now**

Through an innovative new partnership, the V&A and HTC VIVE Arts invite audiences from around the world on a mind-bending trip into the wonderful world of Wonderland. Coinciding with the release of tickets on sale for the museum's eagerly anticipated exhibition *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser* – opening 27 March 2021 – an immersive virtual reality (VR) public event will provide a sneak preview of the exhibition bringing environments and exhibits to life, guided by the show's curator Kate Bailey.

Taking place at 2pm (BST) / 9pm (CST) on 22 October 2020, the preview will be free to attend and will be the first live VR event hosted by the V&A, extending its exhibition content beyond the museum doors to take on a new life in a digital world. This special cultural event will be accessible to global audiences with or without a VR headset. Audiences will be able to participate through the VR platform ENGAGE using a Windows PC or Android device or join a Recorded Live of the event, to be broadcast on the V&A's Youtube.

As museums such as the V&A and others around the world slowly begin to reopen to the public, this uncertain period has demonstrated the power of digital innovation to engage and creatively inspire a global community. Working with the latest technologies, the V&A and HTC VIVE Arts will offer a new way for visitors to enjoy the museum and this landmark exhibition, taking an imaginative, interactive journey to celebrate one of the most iconic and inspiring stories of all time. This major partnership reflects the museum's commitment to creating impactful digital experiences that enable people around the world to access its programme, both now whilst travel remains restricted, and into the future.

This unique event, created in collaboration with the V&A, HTC VIVE Arts, immersive games studio PRELOADED and producers ENGAGE, will take place over forty-five minutes in a bespoke environment inspired by the V&A's physical museum space and the fantastical landscapes of Wonderland. Through ENGAGE's advanced technology, participants will be able to join the event as avatars, interacting with one another in VR. The performative showcase will give audiences a taste of the forthcoming exhibition exploring the five sections within the show, charting the evolution of Alice in Wonderland from its origins over 158 years ago, to the global cultural phenomenon it is today. Embracing the dreamlike qualities of the classic novel, the setting will transform and adapt throughout the preview, including live visual effects such as the pool of tears and a hallway of doors.

**Following the event, audiences will be able to delve further into Wonderland as the V&A and HTC VIVE Arts announce:**

- ***Curious Alice* – a special, at-home experience** released 22 October 2020 to coincide with the preview. This will feature enriched animation as well as additional scenes and narrative elements, including the presence of the iconic 'white rabbit' as your own personal companion. Based on Icelandic artist Kristjana S. Williams' specially commissioned illustrations for the exhibition's publication, this new VR experience will be available in English and traditional Chinese. *Curious Alice* will be available for users to download through VIVEPORT, as well as through other major online VR platforms for £3.99.
- ***A Curious Game of Croquet* – a VR experience produced by immersive games studio PRELOADED on VIVE Cosmos headsets within the exhibition**, when it opens March 2021. Located in the exhibition's 'Staging Alice' section – exploring the many interpretations of Alice across stage and screen – visitors will be transported 'Down the Rabbit-Hole' into a hall of doors, before emerging into 'The Queen's Croquet Ground' to pit their wits in a game of croquet like no other.

**Kate Bailey, Senior Curator of Theatre and Performance at the V&A said:** *“Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser reflects the global impact and legacy of the Alice books across creative disciplines. Since their creation the Alice books, with their mind-blowing ideas and concepts, have been a source of inspiration for new technologies from silent film to CGI. It has been an extraordinary adventure to work with HTC VIVE Arts and PRELOADED to take our exhibition into a playful new dimension of VR. Alice’s impossible journey through a fantastical universe becomes possible in this exciting new creative platform. From rabbit holes to mirrors, flamingoes to hedgehogs, wonderland is the perfect world for VR and the V&A is delighted to be pioneering our first ever VR event. We look forward to sharing a preview of the exhibition ahead of welcoming visitors to Alice at the V&A next year.”*

**Victoria Chang, Director of VIVE Arts at HTC said:** *“VIVE Arts is delighted to partner with the V&A, the world’s leading museum for art and design and performance, to present its first VR event and launch a remarkable new VR experience. Together, we’re bringing the fantasy and imagination of Alice in Wonderland to audiences around the world, ahead of the exhibition next year. The unprecedented circumstances in 2020 have demonstrated how technology can inspire and connect us, and we are proud to support the V&A, and to help further its mission to broaden access to the museum, using bold new models to transform how art and culture is experienced. Virtual reality as an immersive, experimental medium is the perfect complement to the concept of Wonderland and we hope audiences at home will enjoy their journey into the exhibition.”*

**ENDS.**

**Press contacts:**

**HTC VIVE Arts**

Sophie Balfour-Lynn, Account Manager, Sutton PR  
sophiebl@suttoncomms.com

**V&A**

Catherine Poust, Communications Manager  
c.poust@vam.ac.uk

## **Notes to Editors**

**General VR exhibition teaser event details:** 22 October 2020, 14:00 (BST)

The V&A's special exhibition teaser in Virtual Reality is free to attend, and open to the public. To enter Wonderland, you will need to download the free ENGAGE app, register your account, and create your own avatar before the event. A Recorded Live will also be made available via Youtube. To attend the general event please register [here](#).

**Extended event option for media:** 22 October 2020, 13:30 (BST)

Media are invited to hear speeches from the Director of the V&A prior to the curator preview and participate in Q&A following. Please RSVP via the V&A's Press Office [press.office@vam.ac.uk] for further details and joining instructions.

### **About Alice: *Curiouser and Curiouser***

Supported by HTC Vive with further support from Unwin Charitable Trust

*Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser* will celebrate one of the most iconic, imaginative and inspiring stories of all time. Offering an immersive and mind-bending journey down the rabbit hole, this fantastical exhibition will explore Alice in Wonderland's origins, adaptations and reinventions over 158 years, charting its evolution from manuscript to a global phenomenon beloved by all ages.

It will be accompanied by a major new V&A publication, featuring specially commissioned illustrations by Kristjana S. Williams and contributors including Stephen Fry, Tim Walker, Little Simz and Chris Riddell. It is available to buy on the V&A's Shop [here](#).

*Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser* will open to the public at the V&A in London from 27 March to 31 December 2021.

### **About the V&A**

The V&A is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance, with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity. It was established to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, the V&A's collections, which span over 5000 years of human creativity in virtually every medium and from many parts of the world, continue to intrigue, inspire and inform. vam.ac.uk

### **About HTC VIVE Arts**

VIVE Arts harnesses cutting-edge technology to transform the way culture is experienced, delivering one-of-a-kind projects that can be accessed anywhere in the world. It fosters digital innovation, working with leading artists, museums and cultural organisations to create immersive artworks and exhibits using the latest technology. Since its launch in 2017, VIVE Arts has established nearly 50 partnerships with leading cultural institutions and organisations including Tate Modern in London, The Louvre, Musée d'Orsay and Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, the American Museum of Natural History in New York, the National Palace Museum in Taipei, the ArtScience Museum in Singapore as well as the Venice Biennale Arte. For further information, please visit: [arts.vive.com](http://arts.vive.com)



### **About PRELOADED**

PRELOADED is a BAFTA-winning games studio using emerging technologies to create playful, purposeful experiences for all. They partner with global brands including McDonald's, BBC and LEGO and technology partners such as Magic Leap, HTC Vive and Google, to create content and platforms which inspire, educate, and connect audiences with the stories and subjects that matter. Their work has been recognised internationally by awards bodies, including BAFTA, SXSW (Best in Show), BIMA (Best in Show) & Serious Play. Founded in 2000, PRELOADED is part of Learning Technologies Group (LTG).