



## **GUIDANCE 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. Please consider the following points:

### **Which residency is right for you?**

The V&A Residency Programme is linked to the V&A Learning and National Programmes Department. Our core residency programme runs for 9-months (September/October to June/July). Residencies are public-facing, and you will be expected to work actively with visitors through educational activities, as well as develop your personal practice. We encourage practitioners to emphasise audiences or groups they are interested in working with, and we endeavour to explore options that we can embed into their time with the Museum. Previous residents have engaged with Schools or Families and, in other instances, with our Adult Learning or the Research teams. Through the V&A's Learning Programme, we aim to draw from our collections to inspire careers in the creative industries as well as future design and artistic practice. You can see the extent of the V&A's Learning Programme on the website.

At South Kensington, the Learning Department has on-site studios. We have two flexible studio spaces for inter-disciplinary practice in our Sackler Centre for arts education and a ceramic studio embedded in the galleries. Residents are required to open their studio to the public or show their work in progress to visitors in the galleries through Open Studio events. If you don't enjoy working with the public and are not comfortable sharing your work in progress, then this residency programme 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 ideas with a variety of audiences.

### **In which discipline do you work?**

We typically advertise residencies for specific art, design or performance disciplines (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. We 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, having the opportunity to study historical and contemporary objects closely and 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 we otherwise state, the V&A Residency Programme is usually 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 pro-active 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 headspace to focus upon a new direction in your practice or develop new skills that will support work? Have you experienced 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. We hope that you will be at the museum for at least 2 days in the working week, and at regular weekends for planned Open Studio events 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, those currently living and working (with Permission to work) in the UK. If the residency is marked as an International Residency, then non-UK nationals or those living outside 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 the 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). If the residency is not marked as an International Residency, it is aimed at UK-based practitioners only.

Only named residents are able to work in the V&A studio 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 and create new work that pushes boundaries of creative practice;
- Inspire and invite public interest and engagement in creative practice and making;
- Offer 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 in order to fuel imagination and curiosity into potential careers in the creative industries;
- Raise the profile of contemporary practice in the selected discipline.

## **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 commitment is an agreement between the museum and the resident that outlines the approach we expect from the practitioner and the programme staff.

For more information about our residencies, open calls, open studios, news and alumni, visit:

**<https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/residencies> or email: [residencyprogramme@vam.ac.uk](mailto:residencyprogramme@vam.ac.uk)**