

News Release
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V&A announces new sustainability plan with net zero target for 2035

Today the V&A unveils its most comprehensive sustainability action plan to date, announcing a range of commitments that will reduce the negative environmental impact of how the museum delivers its world-leading programmes and operates its buildings.

Published [here](#), the V&A's sustainability action plan focuses on understanding influences across the whole organisation and beyond, centred around 'Place', 'People' and 'Programme', outlining a new holistic, systems-thinking approach to embedding sustainability within V&A operations. Progress will be regularly assessed through monitoring by the V&A's Executive Board and Trustees, with results published annually. Developed through extensive consultation by the V&A's first dedicated Sustainability Lead, Sara Kassam, the headline commitments are:

- Reduce the negative environmental impact of the V&A's operations and estate, with a new target to be net zero by 2035.
- Embed sustainable decision making and practices across all aspects of museum activity, working closely with V&A staff, partners and sector, to share knowledge and skills.
- Engage audiences directly with issues of planetary limits and climate justice, through learning activities and public programmes including exhibitions, to help stimulate agency, action and debate.

Detailed work has taken place to calculate our Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions and to map decarbonisation pathways to reach net zero according to a science-based target.

Actions on energy, water and materials, as well as procurement, climate resilience, biodiversity and air quality form a central part of the plans. Examples include the creation of a new low carbon travel policy encompassing object transport, business travel and employee commuting, to reduce the V&A's travel carbon footprint by 30% by 2022, as well as operational building performance targets for all construction projects. Maintaining a zero operational waste to landfill policy is also included, alongside plans to significantly lower disposed waste for exhibitions and projects.

Throughout the year, the V&A's public programme will generate greater awareness of planetary limits and climate justice, highlighting design solutions for a sustainable future across its exhibitions, educational activities and major events and installations. Upcoming highlights include:

- The V&A programme for the **London Design Festival (LDF)** (18-26 September) celebrates design thinking in tackling climate change across a host of installations, projects, performances and events this year focusing on a low-carbon future, the circular economy and climate justice. The programme can be found [here](#).

- As part of **Global Design Forum**, the V&A has organised a ‘Museums Towards Net Zero’ online event, sharing best practice on actions museums are taking to reduce their carbon footprint and encourage climate action.
- **Beatrix Potter: Drawn to Nature** (opening 12 February 2022) will celebrate Potter’s passion for the natural world and her work as an early pioneer of conservation, the legacy of which can still be felt in the Lake District today. The exhibition will explore her relationship with the National Trust which she helped to acquire over 4000 acres of land and 14 farms, with a view to long-term preservation.
- **Plastic: Remaking Our World** at V&A Dundee (opening 29 October 2022) will chart the changing fortunes of a material with a more than 150-year history, from invention to ubiquity, from the history of what was once considered a magical material to the challenge of plastic pollution today as one of the world’s most urgent issues.

Phillipa Simpson, V&A Director of Design, Estate and Public Programme, said: *“From new acquisitions for Design 1900-Now, to the ambitious sustainability focus for this year’s London Design Festival and a major 2022 exhibition on plastics at V&A Dundee, how we use our imagination and ingenuity to drive sustainability and catalyse positive change will be a leading theme across new areas of programming. Today we outline our long-term ambition to enable people - through the creative power of art, design and performance - to contribute to a thriving planet and shape sustainable futures. I’m delighted to unveil the V&A’s most comprehensive plan to date in accelerating our own critically needed progress in carbon reduction and sustainable practice.”*

Sara Kassam, V&A Sustainability Lead, said: *“The V&A was founded in a time of optimistic belief in the power of industry, a seminal point in history which we now know has had devastating consequences for our planet. At this critical moment in the climate and biodiversity crisis, it is absolutely the responsibility of the V&A, in collaboration with others, to demonstrate the incredible potential of art and science to build a sustainable future for all. Our research and commitments have been led by the words of William Morris who once wisely said, ‘we are only the trustees for those who come after us.’”*

ENDS.

For further PRESS information about please contact Sophie Steel via s.steel@vam.ac.uk (not for publication). A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk

Notes to Editors:

- The V&A’s sustainability strategy has been led by V&A Sustainability Lead Sara Kassam, a newly created post appointed in Spring 2020.
- Further detail on the V&A’s new action plan for sustainability and key priorities can be found [here](#).
- From tending the V&A’s honey bees, to reusing exhibition materials, the V&A’s blog charts progress on embedding sustainability into daily museum life, [here](#).
- Keep in touch with us and offer feedback via the V&A blog or email us [here](#) with your questions.