



## News Release

# V&A opens London Design Festival programme focused on design thinking in the challenge of climate change, and offering opportunities to young people

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/festival/2021/london-design-festival-2021> | #LDF21

A pavilion constructed from the world's lowest carbon footprint aluminium, a real-time growing couture gown worn by an artist robot, a holographic dance performance and the museum's first in-person Friday Late for over a year will feature as part of the V&A's programming for London Design Festival 2021, running from 18-26 September.

This year – in the lead up to the UK hosting the most important international climate summit, COP26, in November – installations, projects, performances and events explore design thinking in the challenge of climate change with projects focusing on a low-carbon future, the circular economy and climate justice. Projects curated by the V&A include *Between Forests and Skies* by Nebbia Works – an immersive, low-carbon aluminium pavilion that will appear to float in the pond of The John Madejski Garden at the V&A and allow visitors to enter and interact. *Placeholders* by Juliet Haysom and Aude-Line Duliere is an exercise in the circular economy, facilitating the reuse of the Aston Webb Screen stones as urban furniture on Exhibition Road. Paula Sello and Alissa Aulbekova's fashion house Auroboros will showcase a real-time growing couture gown worn by Ai-Da – the world's first artist robot – that will grow and fall apart during the festival whilst Ai-Da draws a self-portrait that can be experienced virtually.

In response to the impact that the pandemic has had on opportunities for young people, for the first time as part of LDF the V&A will host a youth-focused area of the programme. *Lund Point* will involve the transformation of currently empty dwellings in a 23-storey tower block on the edge of the Olympic Park into a multi-lens camera obscura, alongside the creation of ultra large format analogue photographic prints, created by young adults from east London with artist Brendan Barry. *Made on Location* is an installation by RESOLVE Collective – the V&A Research Institute / V&A East Creative Youth Workers in Residence – with Blackhorse Responders, V&A East Youth Collective and other youth groups, created from recycled museum materials in The Grand Entrance, Cromwell Road. Design Can, and V&A Youth Collective, will host a day of 'speed mentoring' and workshops for 18–24-year-olds during LDF. On 24 September, the museum will host its first in-person Friday Late in over a year, featuring DJ sets, live performances, talks and installations with the aim of providing a platform for young designers.

*Sonzai*, from Director Roland Lane, is a mixed-reality experience celebrating the power of dance. Viewed through Microsoft's HoloLens 2 spatial computing headset, stunning visuals inspired by heightened brain activity triggered by dancing surround a performing hologram. Created by Prodigious and using the Unreal Games Engine, the work features performer and

choreographer Maëva Berthelot, whose performance was filmed by leading volumetric capture studio, Dimension. This ambitious exhibit showcases the very latest in immersive technology and presents a new way to engage with performance art, elevating this piece of work to the truly spectacular. This is the world premiere of this work, programmed as part of London Design Festival and coinciding with the exhibition 'On Point: Royal Academy of Dance at 100' in the V&A Theatre and Performance Galleries.

Digital Design Weekend, curated by the V&A Learning and Digital Programmes team, will also return this year on 25 and 26 September, where artists, designers and technologists will explore the theme of climate change through immersive installations, creative workshops, talks and interactive demonstrations. A preview of Digital Design Weekend will be showcased during Friday Late on 24 September. The annual Global Design Forum will explore these themes as well as climate justice & resilience, decarbonisation, and meeting Net Zero targets, biodesign and digital futures.

Meneesha Kellay, lead on Festivals at the V&A, said: *"The V&A programme for LDF has been carefully curated to address some of the biggest challenges facing society today. We have commissioned installations and will be hosting performances and events exploring design thinking and responses to the ecological crisis by emerging designers. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on young people and the opportunities afforded to them. For the first time as part of LDF at the V&A, we have created a youth-focused area in the iconic Grand Entrance to showcase work by the V&A and V&A East Youth Collective, RESOLVE Collective and young people from across east London. We have also collaborated with inclusive platform, Design Can, to hold a Mentoring Takeover during LDF. We are excited to have young people and their priorities at the heart of our activities for LDF this year."*

The annual London Design Festival at the V&A is a unique collaboration between the world's leading museum of art, design and performance, and London's foremost contemporary design festival. Now entering the thirteenth year together as the official Festival hub, the programme will see iconic spaces within the V&A transformed by a collection of specially commissioned installations and displays by international contemporary designers, freely accessible for all to enjoy.

Ben Evans CBE, London Design Festival Director, said: *"We are delighted to partner with the V&A once again. Over the years, our unique partnership has seen an extraordinary range of projects by some of the world's most exciting designers created in response to the V&A's buildings and collections. As the Festival Hub, the museum sits at the heart of Festival activity across the city. It's the perfect place for visitors to begin their festival experience – to immerse themselves in the specially-created installations and displays, attend events, and experience the museum in new ways."*

This year features a number of installations produced in collaboration between the V&A Research Institute and V&A East, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Since 2016, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has supported the V&A Research Institute in an innovative programme of research projects, partnerships and residencies, aimed at opening up access to art and design histories and futures to new audiences as the V&A develops its new sites in east London.

## **Further information on installations and events:**

### **V&A PROJECTS**

#### ***Between Forests and Skies***

#### **Nebbia Works**

#### **Supported by En+ Group**

#### **The John Madejski Garden**

Emerging practice Nebbia Works have designed an immersive, low-carbon aluminium pavilion in The John Madejski Garden at the V&A. The innovative design uses a minimal volume of material to create a seemingly delicate yet robust structure to demonstrate the unique qualities of aluminium. Working with sheet material and through minimal cuts and bends, the designers will transform a 2D object into a complex 3D space. The structure is self-supporting, utilising the innate strength of the aluminium despite its extremely thin profile. The resulting space is a manufactured forest of reflections suspended between the sky and the water. The space frames, obscures and reflects its environment. Natural light streams through openings in the canopy creating a dramatic contrast of shadow, light and reflection from the water below. The structure will appear to float in the iconic pond in The John Madejski Garden. It is intended to be both observed and explored, with visitors able to enter and interact with the installation, offering a new perspective to the garden and a moment of reflection between the forest of aluminium legs and upwards to the sky through the complex cut and fold form of the structure.

The Rt Hon The Lord Barker of Battle, Executive Chairman, En+ Group, said: *"The installation is made from the lowest carbon aluminium the world has ever produced. The combination of this breakthrough technology and the power of water means the number of uses and environmental potential of this planet friendly metal are simply enormous. This method of production places aluminium – infinitely recyclable – at the forefront of the materials with which we can sustainably build our future."*

Supported by



Cork seating provided by Amorim Cork Insulation SA

#### ***Placeholders***

#### **Aude-Line Duliere and Juliet Haysom, with a documentary by Ele Mun**

#### **Supported by Wallonie-Brussels International and Wallonia-Brussels Architectures**

#### **Exhibition Road**

When the V&A created the V&A Exhibition Road Quarter in 2017, the Aston Webb Screen – originally built in 1909 – was transformed from a solid facade into the porous entrance we see today. More than 400 large Portland Stones were removed from the original screen. To save them from being crushed into aggregate – which is the fate of most used stone, no matter how large, historic, and precious – they were donated to a quarry in Dorset, where they have been dormant for nearly a decade. In this strategic intervention some of these stones – marked by a century of London pollution and cratered by shrapnel from the Blitz – make a comeback

on Exhibition Road in the form of street furniture. This project illustrates the enduring possibilities for reusing stone, which is emerging as one of the lowest environmental impact building materials (if quarried and reused locally), holding great potential for the circular economy within the construction industry. By facilitating the reuse of the Aston Webb Screen stones on Exhibition Road as urban furniture, another design adaptation will overlay the traces of their production, assembly and deconstruction dating from 1909 to the present day, adding a new chapter to these stones' odyssey. Granite features, specifically designed for Exhibition Road, are making their way to complete Kensington & Chelsea Council's designs for this site. For the time being, these stones, originating in Dorset and bearing the traces of London's recent history, will hold this space.

### ***Made on Location***

#### **RESOLVE Collective**

##### **The Grand Entrance, Cromwell Road**

This installation brings together RESOLVE's year-long Creative Youth Worker residency at the V&A, displaying the collaborative work of Blackhorse Responders, V&A East Youth Collective, and other youth groups from the four east London Olympic boroughs of Hackney, Waltham Forest, Newham, and Tower Hamlets. The work celebrates and interrogates how design can be used as a vehicle to 'dissipate' institutional resource in local areas, rather than impose it upon them. The installation will provide a space to explore how, by using the premise of design to convene and collaborate, museums of the future can become essential spaces for the existing aims and aspirations of local youth groups. The installation will be designed using site-specific, upcycled materials and also platform a series of live events throughout LDF.

RESOLVE Collective are the V&A Research Institute and V&A East's first Creative Youth Workers In Residence, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

### **Emerging Designer Showcase**

#### **V&A Youth Collective**

##### **The Grand Entrance, Cromwell Road**

The V&A Youth Collective members will be showcasing three emerging designers through films documenting their career journeys and creative processes to inspire the next generation. The designers' work, in a variety of ways, responds to the climate crisis. Richard Ashton is co-founder of climate club, Adapt, who use design, art, humour and contemporary culture to communicate climate issues and reframe climate activism. Grace Emily Manning's interdisciplinary approach is driven by environmentalism, encompassing film, performance and experimental storytelling. Scarlett Yang challenges waste in the fashion industry through developing innovative approaches at the intersection of fashion, design and technology. The V&A Youth Collective is a cohort of young people ages 16-24, who help shape our events and content for young people, while gaining inspiring insights into creative careers, the museum sector and skills development opportunities.

The V&A Young People's Programme is supported by Fondation d'entreprise Hermès.

### ***Portal Tables***

#### **The Decorators and Stanley Picker Gallery**

##### **Below National Art Library Staircase**

Created amidst a pandemic and climate crisis, this project reflects on the paradoxical way in which the pandemic has both vilified microbes and prompted a renewed interest in

homemade practices of nurturing microbial life. On display is a video-essay and *Sofa-Bread* – part of a line of furniture that explores domestic interspecies intimacy in food-making. *Sofa-Bread* is designed to provide moments of conviviality across humans and bacteria during the fermentation process involved in making bread. Food fermentation gained a momentum in the past year of social isolation, with people sharing home-made recipes through social media. The hormonal joy produced by bacterial communities in the human gut serves as a substitute for the social joy of in-real-life human communities. Meanwhile, a growing area of research has been exploring bacteria as a potential resource for plastic recycling, opening up ethical questions regarding the *use* of microbial life as a solution for human pollution.

### ***Brickfield Newham***

**Georgia Haseldine, V&A Research Institute / V&A East Public Engagement Fellow  
Medieval & Renaissance, Room 64b, The Simon Sainsbury Gallery**

Film maker Amaka Ejizu has documented the community research project Brickfield Newham, which set up a brickworks on a construction site in the Royal Docks this year. Ejizu has captured how local communities came together to make bricks from local industrial waste materials and make performances from local histories of housing and brickmaking. Brickfield Newham is a V&A Research Institute and V&A East collaboration, devised in partnership with St. Austell's artist-led project Brickfield and University of East London's Performing Arts department, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Newham Heritage Month and Arts Council England.

### ***Lund Point***

**Brendan Barry with the Beyond the Box Young Cultural Producers  
Architecture Landing**

*Lund Point* involves the transformation of currently empty dwellings in a 23-storey tower block on the edge of the Olympic Park, into a multi-lens camera obscura, alongside the creation of ultra large format analogue photographic prints, created by young adults from east London with artist Brendan Barry. The work will offer a unique perspective of the site where the new V&A East Storehouse and V&A East Museum will open in 2024 and 2025 respectively. The work is proposed as an act of cultural democracy, reframing and inscribing a site through the lived experience of people living in east London.

*Lund Point* has been curated with V&A Research Institute and V&A East Public Engagement Fellow, Matilda Pye and is supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation with assistance from Populo Living.

### ***Shaping Space: modelling, making and activism***

**Save Ralph by Andy Gent Arch Film Studio**

**Theatre and Performance Galleries, room 102**

Renowned stop motion puppet-maker Andy Gent, creator behind Wes Anderson's *Isle of Dogs* (2018) and *The French Dispatch* (2021), and Tim Burton's *The Corpse Bride* (2005), will display sets and a puppet from *Save Ralph* (2021), a short film produced to campaign for the end of animal testing by the cosmetics industry. Gent is one model maker celebrated in *Shaping Space – Architectural Models Revealed*, a free exhibition opening on 24 September 2021 at the Building Centre in Bloomsbury. The exhibition is curated by the Building Centre in partnership with Simona Valeriani of the V&A Research Institute (VARI).

### ***Sonzai AR Experience***

**Roland Lane with Prodigious  
Paintings, Rooms 86 and 87**

**The Edward and Susan Davies Galleries**

*Sonzai*, from Director Roland Lane, is a mixed-reality experience celebrating the power of dance. Viewed through Microsoft's HoloLens 2 spatial computing headset, stunning visuals inspired by heightened brain activity triggered by dancing surround a performing hologram. Created by Prodigious and using the Unreal Games Engine, the work features performer and choreographer Maëva Berthelot, whose performance was filmed by leading volumetric capture studio, Dimension. This ambitious exhibit showcases the very latest in immersive technology and presents a new way to engage with performance art, elevating this piece of work to the truly spectacular. This is the world premiere of this work, programmed as part of London Design Festival and coinciding with the exhibition 'On Point: Royal Academy of Dance at 100' in the V&A Theatre and Performance Galleries.

### **DIGITAL DESIGN WEEKEND EXHIBITS DURING LDF**

#### ***Biomimicry Collection***

**Auroboros**

**Fashion, Room 40**

Founded by Paula Sello and Alissa Aulbekova, Auroboros is a fashion house that merges science and technology with physical haute couture and digital ready-to-wear. During London Design Festival and Digital Design Weekend at the V&A, Auroboros will showcase a real-time growing couture gown worn by Ai-Da, the world's first artist robot. Mimicking nature's life cycle, the gown will grow and fall apart during the festival, with Aida drawing a self-portrait as it constantly metamorphoses around her. While the physical piece follows its own life cycle in the exhibit, the digital designs will be available to be experienced virtually using augmented reality, inviting visitors onsite and online to imagine a new era of design encompassing innovation, sustainability and immersion.

Auroboros is housed at The Sarabande Foundation: founded by Lee Alexander McQueen.

#### ***Digital Atmosphere***

**Studio Above&Below**

**Sackler Centre for arts education**

*Digital Atmosphere* is a Mixed Reality sculpture from digital artist duo Daria Jelonek and Perry-James Sugden, known as Studio Above&Below. The piece looks at how technology and art can illuminate the quality of our air, usually invisible to the naked eye. The sculpture's sensor will pick up the invisible change of air quality of the immediate environment, translated into an evocative augmented reality simulation to encourage the visitor to visualise a sustainable, zero-carbon emissions future for our cities and shared environments. At a time when the safety of our air is at the front and centre of our public consciousness, this digital installation is a timely technological and artistic endeavour.

### **EVENTS**

**Design Can x V&A Youth Collective Mentoring – Sunday 19 September**

**The Grand Entrance, Cromwell Road**

## **14.00-16.00**

Design Can and V&A Youth Collective host an afternoon of ‘speed mentoring’ and workshops for 18–24-year-olds during LDF. This event will provide an opportunity for design curious 18–24-year-olds to build professional networks and gain inspiration as they recalibrate themselves in the world and design industry, beyond the challenges of the pandemic. Designers across disciplines, such as architecture, fashion, digital design and more, will participate in the mentoring sessions. The workshops will offer practical advice and creative exercises, covering topics such as CV tips, portfolio presentation and how to build a network. Design Can is a campaign and online tool calling for the design industry to be representative of the world it serves.

## **Legrand Jäger with Isaac Clarke Performance – Friday 24 September**

### **The Raphael Court**

#### **On the hour from 13.00-17.00, and during the Friday Late**

Legrand Jäger continue their investigation of technology as an interface to analyse the production of futures based on forecasting models. In this performance, *ribbon.Py: fate spinning, curve fitting*, they use a machine vision software they have developed with Isaac Clarke, which analyses the curves produced by a rhythmic gymnast and her ribbon. Here performance is a way of generating data, modelling data and diagramming predictive algorithms often used to project COVID-19 cases or climate change.

*ribbon.Py: fate spinning, curve fitting* is generously supported by the Creative Industries Fund NL.

## **Friday Late: Design For Our Times – Friday 24 September**

### **Museum-wide**

#### **18.30-22.00**

For our first onsite Friday Late in over a year we will explore what design can do today, from design thinking in a time of climate crisis to challenging inequalities in our city landscapes. Walk on water in an immersive aluminium installation and see a couture gown grow in real time on the world's first artist robot. Watch a ribbon dancer spin the graph curves of our forecasted futures and reflect on the paradoxical ways in which the pandemic has made us reconsider microbes. Join designers to discover what connects model making and activism and explore spatial inequality in architecture while you dance.

## **Digital Design Weekend – Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 September**

### **Museum-wide**

#### **10.30-17.00**

This year's festival is exploring the role and responsibility of digital design in addressing climate crisis challenges and inequalities. The event brings together artists, designers, engineers, technologists who take over the museum with pop-up and immersive installations, robotics, creative electronics, talks, workshops, family-friendly events and more. Come experience over the weekend a full programme of over 20 displays, lectures and activities showcasing cutting-edge projects and artists.

**-ENDS-**

**For further PRESS information please contact the V&A press office on +44 (0) 20 7942 2502 or email [press.office@vam.ac.uk](mailto:press.office@vam.ac.uk) (not for publication).**

### **About London Design Festival**

Established in 2003 by Sir John Sorrell CBE and Ben Evans CBE, London Design Festival celebrates and promotes London as the design capital of the world.

London Design Festival has since earned the reputation as a key calendar moment of London's autumn creative season, alongside London Fashion Week, Frieze Art Fair and the London Film Festival, attracting the greatest thinkers, practitioners, retailers and educators to the capital, in a citywide celebration.

#LDF21

[www.londondesignfestival.com](http://www.londondesignfestival.com)

Instagram: @L\_D\_F\_official

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

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London (V&A) is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity, spanning 5000 years of human creativity. It was established in 1852 to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, its purpose is to champion creative industry, inspire the next generation, and spark everyone's imagination.

vam.ac.uk

Twitter: @V\_and\_A

Instagram: @vamuseum

Facebook: @VictoriaandAlbertMuseum

### **About En+ Group**

EN+ is the world's leading producer of low-carbon aluminium and independent hydropower with 90,000 employees operating across five continents. The Group has committed to industry-leading emissions targets of net zero by 2050 with at least a 35% reduction by 2030.

<https://enplusgroup.com/en/>