



One of David Bowie's final unrealised musical projects, *The Spectator*, an unseen Ziggy Stardust guitar, handwritten lyrics + Bowie's own costume designs displayed for the first time as V&A East Storehouse's David Bowie Centre opens to the public

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- **The David Bowie Centre at V&A East Storehouse opens 13 September 2025** - the **new home for David Bowie's archive**.
- Access to the David Bowie Centre is **FREE**. Tickets are released [here](#) every six weeks – sign up for updates.
- **David Bowie's archive will be available for the public to access for the first time** – appointments can be booked [here](#). **500+ items have been booked so far.**
- **Nine displays feature 200 items** spotlighting key moments across Bowie's career, his influences and collaborations, with **never seen items** including *The Spectator* – **an unrealised musical he was working on until his death in 2016**, iconic **musical instruments** including an unseen **Ziggy-era guitar**, as well as **photography, costumes, lyrics, hand-written notes, sketches**, and selections by guest-curators, **Nile Rodgers** and **The Last Dinner Party**
- The David Bowie Archive was acquired by the V&A through the generosity of the **David Bowie Estate, Blavatnik Family Foundation** and **Warner Music Group**

On Saturday 13 September, **V&A East Storehouse** opens its doors to the world-first **David Bowie Centre** on East Bank in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, designed by design company, **IDK**. A new permanent home for David Bowie's archive – made available to the public in entirety for the first time – the Centre is first and foremost a working archive and collections store with reading areas and a study room. Visitors can



book one-on-one time with their selections from the 90,000+ items in Bowie's archive through the pioneering new **Order an Object** service and via appointments with the V&A Archives team. Access to visit the David Bowie Centre is free but ticketed, with new ticket drops every six weeks (more info [here](#)). Within the first week of object appointments going live, **over 500 items have been requested by the public**. The **most popular object** is a **frockcoat designed by Alexander McQueen** and David Bowie for his 50th Birthday Concert in 1997.

The David Bowie Centre is brought to life with a series of **nine rotating mini displays featuring** approximately **200 highlights** exploring different themes and elements of the archive from Bowie's creative process and personas to his many collaborators and influences spanning Little Richard to Jungle and Drum & Bass. The central space includes a dedicated area for exploring the archive further, where visitors who have booked a ticket to see the displays, can explore topic boxes housing curated selections of reproductions of archival material.

Overhead hang **twenty of Bowie's most iconic fashion and costumes** in their special storage bags, from Freddie Burretti's Ziggy Stardust looks to Agnes b's *Heathen* ensembles, and Bowie's 1992 Thierry Mugler wedding suit. **A new film** created showcases performances and music videos spanning Bowie's career and an **interactive installation, 'The Library of Connections'**, traces the wide-spread impact of Bowie on popular culture from the sit-com *Friends* to Issey Miyake fashion and musicians from Lady Gaga, Charli XCX, Janelle Monae, and Kendrick Lamar.

New revelations and unseen items

The working archive and Order and Object service invites visitors on a personal journey to explore unseen aspects of Bowie's extraordinary creative process. Items include **Bowie's first ever instrument – a saxophone brought for him by his father in the early 1960s**, iconic and unfinished costumes, stage sets, and **Jim Henson-designed life size puppets of Bowie's many personas for a music video that was never released**. Bowie's extensive collection of writing, sketches, storyboards, handwritten and unreleased lyrics, digital artwork, music sheets and correspondence all offer personal insights into his creative process, and the ideas behind some of his era-defining projects. Also available to order is **one of Bowie's final Ziggy Stardust ensembles**, never seen in the UK, **the clapperboard used for the film *The Man Who Fell To Earth* (1976)**, artwork, materials and costume related to **Bowie's 50th birthday concert** in 1997, and **Bowie's original cover designs for albums *Hours* and *Lodger***, among others.

Items tracing the creation of Bowie's final albums, ***The Next Day* (released 2013)** and ***Blackstar* (released 2016)** – not seen until now – are also available to book, including costumes, posters and props for *The Next Day* such as the origami birds Bowie made for his October 2013 NME cover shoot. *Blackstar* items include Bowie's own sketches, a costume Bowie decorated by hand for the 2016 'Lazurus' music video referencing an iconic 1975 photoshoot shot by Steve Schapiro, alongside Bowie's own artwork and awards.



Revelations within the displays span Bowie's prophetic writings on the future of the internet, photographs from recording sessions, his artist's palette and self-portrait, and a series of unrealised projects. Discovered in Bowie's office after his untimely passing was ***The Spectator*** – a musical set in 18th century London. Bowie researched artists, writers, queer communities, criminals and public executions for the project to illustrate a London society on the cusp of modernity. On display are his notepad, index cards, and a series of sticky notes outlining historical events, potential characters, and possible scenes for the musical set around Covent Garden in the 1700s, including historical and invented characters. The musical would open with the dramatic real-life public execution of the notorious criminal, Jack Sheppard, on 16 November 1724.

Dr Madeleine Haddon, Curator, V&A East, said: *“Bowie was a pioneering multi-disciplinary creative – musician, actor, writer, performer, and cultural icon – working in a way many young creatives move fluidly across disciplines today. He was fascinated by the modern musical form and the 18th century as a threshold of modernity, shaped by the Enlightenment, advances in the arts, science, and philosophy. His plans for The Spectator, among other creative projects that can be seen across the displays, reveal his continual drive to experiment with boundary-pushing ideas and creative forms throughout his life and career, as well as his meticulous creative process, which visitors can delve into throughout his archive and across the David Bowie Centre's opening displays.”*

Dr Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, said: *“One of the greatest performers, musicians, artists and innovators of all time, David Bowie's impact continues to reverberate nearly a decade after his death – while his influence on design and visual culture and his inspiration on creatives today is unmatched. We are thrilled to care for Bowie's incredible archive, revealing new insights into his creativity and legacy, and open it up for everyone at V&A East Storehouse, in dialogue with the V&A's collection spanning 5,000 years of art, design, and performance. My deepest thanks go to the David Bowie Estate, Blavatnik Family Foundation and Warner Music Group – without their extreme generosity, this wouldn't have been possible.”*

Sir Leonard Blavatnik, founder of the Blavatnik Family Foundation, said: *“We're proud to support the David Bowie Centre at V&A East Storehouse, honouring a timeless cultural icon.”*

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: *“The David Bowie Centre at V&A East Storehouse is amazing. It's a must see for fans of David Bowie. It offers a fascinating insight into the life and work of one of London's most influential artists. For the very first time, this immense collection is available for the public – and it's free. I'm immensely proud of East Bank and City Hall will continue to support this new world-class cultural quarter as we build a better London for everyone.”*

Outside of the David Bowie Centre, and available to view without a free ticket, in V&A East Storehouse's main self-guided experience, a new mini display spotlights the work of the David Bowie archive cataloguing team and a series of new revelations as part of the process. For the first week after opening, V&A East Storehouse's [Object](#)



[Encounters](#) sessions will be Bowie themed, free sessions inviting visitors behind the scenes into storage areas with our collections team.

For more information on the David Bowie Centre and to sign-up for updates, please visit: vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/david-bowie-centre.

-ENDS-

For further PRESS information about V&A East Storehouse and the David Bowie Centre, please contact Laura Mitchell, l.mitchell@vam.ac.uk / 020 7942 2502 and Chris Goodman, chris@outsideorganisation.com, at Outside (not for publication).

A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk.

How it works: one-to-one bookings with items from Bowie's archive

Bookings to see 3D items from the David Bowie archive, including costumes, musical instruments, models, props and scenery, can be made through the V&A's new seven-day-a-week Order an Object service. Visitors can book up to five items per visit at a time that suits them. Bowie items are all live, ready to be booked, [here](#). Paper-based items including sketches, designs, writings, lyrics, press cuttings, and photographic prints can be consulted through scheduling advance appointments with the Archives team on Thursdays and Fridays. Visitors can search the David Bowie Archive [here](#), and make bookings via this online form [here](#). Both methods of booking items from the David Bowie archive require at least two weeks' notice.

Design approach

The David Bowie Centre is designed by London and Paris-based architecture company, IDK, and celebrates the unique environment of V&A East Storehouse and the extraordinary character of David Bowie himself. Balancing storage with stagecraft, the Centre is a dynamic space to explore Bowie's life, work and legacy offering a deeply personal insight into Bowie's world.

The Centre features a mix of permanent and rotating displays, a dedicated study room, and a space to further explore the archive. Open and inclusive, IDK's design approach is inspired by Bowie's own creative method of cutting up and rearranging ideas – bringing together different elements to form something new, surprising, and alive.

Fieldwork Facility are the wayfinding and interpretation designers. ZNA are the lighting designers. Structure Workshop are the structural engineers. P3R are the mechanical and electrical engineers.

Mike Lim, James Pockson & Roddy Bow, Directors at IDK, said: *"It has been a privilege to work with the V&A in exploring David Bowie's many and diverse worlds, making his archive accessible to the public. In designing the David Bowie Centre, we have sought to celebrate Bowie's remarkable legacy through a working archive that inspires vibrant creativity, discovery and learning."*



Supporters

V&A East Storehouse's free to access David Bowie Centre, and new home of David Bowie's Archive, was made possible thanks to the David Bowie Estate and a generous donation from the Blavatnik Family Foundation and Warner Music Group.

V&A East Storehouse opened on 31 May 2025. It is supported by Garfield Weston Foundation, The Foyle Foundation, Frédéric Jousset, David and Molly Lowell Borthwick, the Wolfson Foundation, The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation, Clore Duffield Foundation and many other generous supporters.

About V&A East Storehouse

- V&A East Storehouse immerses visitors in over half a million works spanning every creative discipline from fashion to theatre, streetwear to sculpture, design icons to pop pioneers. A busy and dynamic working museum store with an extensive self-guided experience, visitors can now go behind the scenes and get up-close to their national collections on a scale and in ways not possible before.
- V&A East Storehouse is open 10:00-18:00, seven-days-a-week, with late night openings every Thursday and Saturday to 22:00 (Storehouse will close at 18:00 on Thursday 11 September). Late nights include access to the V&A's revolutionary new Order an Object service, curated self-guided experience and displays, special events, and café, e5 Storehouse.
- Visitors can order objects stored at V&A East Storehouse at a time that suits them via the V&A's [Order an Object page](#).
- V&A East Storehouse is the first of V&A East's two new cultural destinations to open in east London. The second, V&A East Museum, is scheduled to open in spring 2026, and celebrates making and creativity's power to bring change.

About East Bank

- East Bank is the UK's newest cultural quarter at the heart of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The place where everything happens – entertainment, inspiration and discovery – and open to everyone who visits, lives and works in East London.
- East Bank represents the biggest ever cultural investment by the Mayor of London, with support from HM Government and the four Olympic boroughs.
- East Bank is made up of BBC Music Studios; London College of Fashion, UAL; Sadler's Wells East; UCL (University College London); V&A East Museum & Storehouse.
- London College of Fashion, UAL, and UCL East (University College London) opened the doors of their new campuses in Autumn 2023 and Sadler's Wells East opened in February 2025. V&A East Storehouse opened on 31 May 2025, V&A East Museum is scheduled to open in spring 2026, and BBC Music Studios in late 2026/early 2027.
- A powerhouse for innovation, creativity and learning in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, East Bank is rooted in the diverse communities of East London and is a reflection of the creative spirit and the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.



About the Blavatnik Family Foundation

Led by Sir Leonard Blavatnik, founder of Access Industries, the Blavatnik Family Foundation promotes innovation, discovery, and creativity to benefit the whole of society. Through the Foundation, the Blavatnik family has contributed over \$1.3 billion globally to advance science, education, arts and culture, and social justice.

www.blavatnikfoundation.org

About Warner Music Group

Warner Music Group (WMG) brings together artists, songwriters, entrepreneurs, and technology that are moving entertainment culture across the globe. Operating in more than 70 countries through a network of affiliates and licensees, WMG's Recorded Music division includes renowned labels such as Atlantic, Elektra, Nonesuch, Parlophone, Reprise, Rhino, Sire, Warner Records, Warner Classics. WMG's music publishing arm, Warner Chappell Music, has a catalog of over one million copyrights spanning every musical genre, from the standards of the Great American Songbook to the biggest hits of the 21st century. Warner Music Group is also home to ADA, which supports the independent community, as well as artist services division WMX. Follow WMG on [Instagram](#), [X](#), [TikTok](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Facebook](#).

