

# News Release

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## Monumental new work by Thomas J Price unveiled at V&A East Museum – ahead of opening on 18 April 2026

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- **Thomas J Price's** tallest work to date – *A Place Beyond* – unveiled outside **V&A East Museum** today, ahead of its public opening next month
- ***Making East London*** revealed as inaugural theme for **New Work** – a new creative commissions programme across V&A East Museum and Storehouse
- Features eight new works on display across V&A East's two sites, by creatives including Turner Prize-nominated artist **Rene Matić, Lawrence Lek, Laura Wilson** and **Carrie Mae Weems**, who turns her lens to the **UK for the first time**
- Open to the public on 18 April 2026, **V&A East Museum** celebrates **making and creativity for a changing world**
- Along with permanent ***Why We Make*** galleries and major exhibition ***The Music is Black: A British Story***, **V&A East Museum** includes new photography display ***Dispersal: Picturing Urban Change in East London***

Today, the V&A unveils London-based artist **Thomas J Price's** monumental new sculpture, ***A Place Beyond***, outside **V&A East Museum**, as part of East Bank in Stratford's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, ahead of the museum's public opening **on 18 April 2026**.

At 18ft, *A Place Beyond*, is Price's tallest sculpture to-date. Welcoming visitors into V&A East Museum, the sculpture depicts a fictionalised young person in casual dress, mobile phone in-hand, looking out to a horizon full of possibilities.

*A Place Beyond* is created from an amalgamation of images, 3D scans and observations. Constructed in bronze, using digital technology and ancient techniques, Price continues to critique narratives within classical sculpture.

The title, *A Place Beyond* encourages viewers to bring their own thoughts, feelings and lived experiences to the work. The sculpture acts as a quiet emblem for change and a

rejection of social or racial profiling to instead create connection through everyday moments. The V&A East Youth Collective were consulted during the process to help create an important new public artwork for east London, celebrating the diversity of the area.

**Gus Casely-Hayford, V&A East Director, said:** *“V&A East Museum is for everyone – I want you to feel that this space is for you. I’ve long admired Thomas J Price’s work as an east London based artist working on an international scale. His sculptures have such presence and are meticulously crafted, yet their power lies in their perceived ordinariness, and the relationships they build with their surroundings and the communities they share space with. At V&A East Museum, we celebrate creativity for a changing world. Thomas’s A Place Beyond symbolises those historically excluded from public monuments, challenging our preconceptions about representation, perception and identity. I can’t think of a more powerful work to greet our visitors on their way into V&A East Museum.”*

**Thomas J Price, said:** *“Being based in east London, it means so much to have my public work, A Place Beyond, on display at V&A East Museum. I want this sculpture to become an extension of the people who inhabit the museum, and the spaces around it. This commission is especially meaningful to me as I was taken to the V&A as a child with my mother and it has shaped much of my critique of museum collections. I’m excited to be part of the next chapter in the V&A’s evolution in east London.”*

Designed by architects O’Donnell + Tuomey, **V&A East Museum**, opens on 18 April as part of East Bank in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Co-created with young people, creatives, and those living, working and studying in east London, it celebrates **making and creativity for a changing world**. V&A East Museum includes two permanent **Why We Make galleries** offering a new, topical lens on the V&A’s global collections, alongside major **temporary exhibitions, New Work creative commissions** and **live events** spotlighting the **people, ideas and creativity shaping global culture right now**. It also includes a café by **Jikoni**, an exciting partnership with the restaurant group known for ‘cooking across borders’.

### **New Work commissions**

Also announced today is **New Work** – V&A East’s new six-monthly rotating creative commissions programme, championing a range of local and global artists, designers and community collaborators who are shaping contemporary culture today. Responding to a central and changing theme, the commissions will explore new ideas and pathways for creativity and address the urgent social, cultural, and political issues of our time. The creative commissions will be **displayed across V&A East’s two sites – V&A East Museum and Storehouse** from 18 April 2026.

New Work’s inaugural theme, **Making East London** invites artists **Tania Bruguera, Es Devlin, Lawrence Lek, Rene Matić, Shahed Saleem, Justinien Tribillon, Carrie Mae Weems**, and **Laura Wilson** to reflect on east London’s layered histories and creative futures. Their works explore east London as a site of global influence, recovery, cross



cultural exchange and creative production – drawing on its people, histories, materials, ecosystems, and beyond, to bring new perspectives on the areas surrounding V&A East Museum and Storehouse.

**Madeleine Haddon, Senior Curator, V&A East, said:** “*We’re delighted to introduce New Work – a new series of creative commissions across both V&A East Museum and Storehouse – that will change every six months. Our first theme, ‘Making East London’ sees artists from Tania Bruguera to Es Devlin, Lawrence Lek, Rene Matic and Carrie Mae Weems explore both the foundations and the future of making in east London. Installed throughout our galleries, circulation spaces and public areas, the commissions transform our V&A East sites into spaces of making, exchange, and experimentation, illuminating the V&A’s collections and activating the architecture of our buildings in new and unexpected ways.*”

### **New Work at V&A East Museum:**

- **Carrie Mae Weems’ *The Long Goodbye*** marks the **first time that the artist has turned her lens to the UK** in a brand-new video on display in the Museum’s *Why We Make* galleries’ Film Room. Weems’s work connects the histories of immigration in east London to wider currents of transatlantic exchange foregrounding the creative power of immigrant communities across the globe.
- Turner-prize nominated photographer and artist **Rene Matic** responds to the inaugural theme, and V&A East Museum’s first exhibition, *The Music is Black: A British Story*, with ***Heard***. Here, Matic transforms their photographic works into a sound system of lightboxes, celebrating events such as Notting Hill Carnival and the vibrant nightlife of East London and Britain today and reflecting on the powerful role Black British music plays in shaping communities, as people gather, remember, and move together.
- ***Towards A Civic Museum*** is a stained-glass piece by artist **Tania Bruguera** which has been collaboratively created between the artist and the V&A East Youth Collective, outlining V&A East’s steadfast commitment to the principles and aspirations of its young audiences.
- ***Heads! Look to the Workers*** is a series of moving sculpture by artist **Laura Wilson** honouring the makers and workers of east London past and present, drawing on her research into east London’s theatres, factories and women’s workwear to foreground histories of labour often left unseen.
- ***On the Sly*** is a film by artist **Justinien Tribillon** revealing the quiet ingenuity of east London workers using the materials and machinery of their workplace to create something ‘on the sly’ for themselves to take home – acts of making that blur the line between labour, creativity, and resistance.

### **New Work at V&A East Storehouse:**



- Artist **Es Devlin's** installation ***The Everythingists*** animates Natalia Goncharova's monumental 1924 stage cloth for Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird* (on display at V&A East Storehouse for the first time in over a decade), putting the movements of an east London dancer Joshua Shanny-Wynter and history of east London architecture in dialogue with the myth of *The Firebird* through drawing, sculpture and sound.
- ***Guanyin II: The Caretaker*** by artist **Lawrence Lek** is an immersive video game set in a speculative future of V&A East Storehouse. It invites players to enter staff-only areas of Storehouse such as the conservations studios as they confront questions about the relationship between historic objects, technology and the preservation of east London's past, present, and imagined futures.
- In ***I Was Born Here***, artist **Shahed Saleem** presents three mosaic tapestries exploring stories of east London's migration and labour industries. The work responds to the 15th-century Torrijos Ceiling on view at V&A East Storehouse and draws parallels between intertwined histories of Christians, Muslims, and Jews in 15th-century Spain and the contemporary anti-immigration rhetoric and politics in the UK.

### Announced today – ***Dispersal: Picturing Urban Change in East London***

East London has always been a place of making and creativity. Curated by V&A East Chief Curator, Brendan Cormier, this new display brings together 46 photographs by Marion Davies and Debra Rapp, who documented the people and workplaces of east London-based labour businesses at threat of closure or relocation due to the development of the London 2012 Olympic Games. From belt-making to zinc galvanising, salmon smoking, stained glass and stage design workshops, the images are a potent reminder of the industrial and working-class history of east London. The display reflects on the changing landscape surrounding V&A East Museum – and the museum's place in creativity and supporting the creative industries.

### About V&A East Museum

#### Permanent galleries – ***Why We Make***

Across two floors, and 10 key themes, **over 500 objects from the V&A's collections spanning art, architecture, design, performance, and fashion** go on display in new ***Why We Make*** galleries designed by **JA\_Projects** in collaboration with **A Practice for Everyday Life** and **Larry Achiampong**. With a design inspired by east London and in collaboration with the **V&A East Youth Collective**, the galleries offer a fresh look at contemporary culture through the V&A's collections, with guiding quotes from global makers throughout. Objects are brought together in constellations across different times, cultures and countries, and addressing topical issues important to our audiences – from representation, identity and wellbeing to social justice and environmental action.

#### First exhibition – ***The Music is Black: A British Story***

On 18 April 2026, V&A East Museum opens with its first landmark exhibition, ***The Music is Black: A British Story***, with a sound experience supported by Sennheiser. The



exhibition spanning 1900 to the present day reveals how Black British music has shaped British culture – and its global impact – to tell a long-overdue story of Black excellence, struggle, resilience, and joy. **Joan Armatrading's childhood guitar** goes on display for the first time, alongside fashion worn by **Little Simz** and newly acquired photographs by artists including **Jennie Baptiste, Beezer, Dennis Morris, Eddie Otchere, Sam White** and more. The exhibition includes a partnership with BBC Music and kicks off The Music is Black Festival, a series of programming, displays and performances in collaboration with East Bank partners in summer 2026.

### Supporters

V&A East Museum completes the V&A East project – one of the UK's biggest new museum projects of the decade – as the sister site to V&A East Storehouse, which opened in May 2025. Both sites are part of the Mayor of London's London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic legacy.

***The Music is Black: A British Story*** at V&A East Museum is supported by the Ford Foundation with further support from the Huo Family Foundation and GRoW @ Annenberg Foundation. Sound Experience supported by Sennheiser.

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For further PRESS information about V&A East, please contact **Laura Mitchell + Shannon Nash** in the V&A Press Office / [press.office@vam.ac.uk](mailto:press.office@vam.ac.uk) / 020 7942 2502 (not for publication).

A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from [pressimages.vam.ac.uk](http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk).

### Notes to Editors

- V&A East Museum is **FREE** to all and **opens on Saturday 18 April 2026**. Opening hours are 10:00-18:00, seven-days-a-week, with late night openings to 22:00 every Thursday and Saturday.
- Tickets are now on sale for V&A East Museum's first paid for exhibition, *The Music is Black: A British Story* [vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/the-music-is-black-a-british-story](http://vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/the-music-is-black-a-british-story)
- **O'Donnell + Tuomey** are the building architects for V&A East Museum. **JA\_Projects** in collaboration with **A Practice for Everyday Life** and **Larry Achiampong** are designers for the *Why We Make* Galleries. **Studio Mutt** are designers for the retail spaces. Wayfinding is designed by **Fieldwork Facility**. **Sadeysa Greenaway-Bailey** is the lead exhibition designer for *The Music is Black: A British Story*.

### About V&A East

V&A East is dedicated to creative opportunity and its power to bring change. V&A East Storehouse (opened 31 May 2025) and V&A East Museum (opening 18 April 2026) are two free cultural destinations that are part of East Bank, on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Both have been created in partnership with young people and inspired by east



London's creative heritage. Working directly with the voices that are shaping global contemporary culture, V&A East brings the V&A collection and archive to life in new ways, celebrating making in all its forms and opening up new possibilities and discoveries for everyone.

[vam.ac.uk/east](http://vam.ac.uk/east)

### 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 opens 18 April 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 Thomas J Price

Thomas J Price has rapidly become one of the most important British contemporary artists of his generation, subverting stereotypical representations of figures we value in society and traditional power structures. After studying at Chelsea College of Art, he completed his MA at the Royal College of Art, London and began further interrogating the language of monumentalism to question the status inherent in public sculptures.

*A Place Beyond* at V&A East Museum is Thomas J Price's latest public artwork in east London. Price's works *Reaching Out* and *Network* were included in The Line Public Art Trail in 2013 and 2020 respectively, and *Warm Shores*, was the first permanent public work celebrating the contribution of the Windrush generation and their descendants in the UK. Commissioned by Hackney Council, it was unveiled outside Hackney Town Hall in June 2022.

