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V&A East reveals *The Stories of Clothes*: a major new season exploring identity, power and belonging through fashion

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- ***The Stories of Clothes*** brings together new **displays**, **creative commissions**, **installations** and **film** across **V&A East Storehouse and V&A East Museum**.
- Six major new commissions by **leading contemporary artists** and **East London collectives** premiere across both V&A East sites. Artists include **Zadie Xa**, **Alia Ali**, **R.I.P. Germain**, **East London Textile Arts**, Design Trust Fellows **Sian Fan** and design studio **Jeon Huxley Khng**.
- At **V&A East Storehouse**, new displays reveal the surprising stories behind what we wear, from **football terrace style** and **Vietnamese embroidery** to **David Bowie's** fascination with **Japanese fashion**.

Today **V&A East** unveils its new ***The Stories of Clothes*** season exploring the storytelling power of clothes through a series of brand-new creative commissions, displays, film, events, installations and more.

Opening on Saturday 14 November, *The Stories of Clothes* is headlined by six major new commissions by contemporary artists and designers as part of **V&A East's *New Work*** programme – a rotating series of commissions, championing local and global artists and designers shaping contemporary culture today.

Set across both **V&A East Museum** and **V&A East Storehouse** in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, ***New Work*** invites artists **R.I.P. Germain**, **Zadie Xa**, **Alia Ali**, **East London Textile Arts (ELTA)**, and The Design Trust Fellows, **Sian Fan** and the industrial design duo **Jeon Huxley Khng**, to use clothing as a lens to reveal stories about the world today. Spanning installation, film, sculpture, garments, textiles, and photography, the commissions unpack themes of identity, craft, community, spirituality and more.

Alongside the commissions, *The Stories of Clothes* season presents **13 new curated mini displays at V&A East Storehouse**, bringing together objects from the V&A's collections to reveal the cultural, political and personal histories embedded within clothing and textiles. Displays range from **repair and resistance** to **cataloguing**

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changing clothes, **Vietnamese embroidery**, **football terrace style**, **east London's carnival and performance scene**, **David Bowie's fascination with Japan**, and beyond. Highlights include:

- **'Like some cat from Japan'** explores **David Bowie's** fascination with Japanese fashion and kabuki theatre, featuring the iconic silk cloak **Kansai Yamamoto** made for Bowie as Ziggy Stardust in 1973, **Masayoshi Sukita's** photograph of Bowie in Yamamoto's 'Tokyo Pop' vinyl jumpsuit, and an 1833 woodblock print of **kabuki actor Ichikawa Danzō V** by **Utagawa Kuniyoshi**.

- **'Terrace Style: A Casual Revolution'** charts how football fans in the late 1970s and 1980s became fashion pioneers, swapping club colours for sportswear and designer labels including **Burberry**, **Fred Perry** and **Stone Island** to create a style that still shapes menswear today.

- **'Vietnamese Embroidery'** traces stories of often-forgotten Vietnamese textile heritage, craft and creativity from an early 20th-century **embroidered bag designed to carry mosquito-repelling herbs** to a recent **silk jacket by Victoria Roe** inspired by royal embroidery traditions. These making practices are being celebrated and shared through workshops with Vietnamese communities in Hackney.

V&A East Museum's rotating display programme, ***X Selects***, also responds to *The Stories of Clothes* season, with two new displays curated by creative research **studio**, **Colèchi**, and *New Work* artist **R.I.P. Germain**. **Colèchi**'s selections range from a playful sequinned **Anya Hindmarch handbag** (2000) inspired by Walkers Crisps and a **handwoven Kuba cloth from Democratic Republic of the Congo**, to explore the relationship between hand and machine, raw material and final product. Their display asks how we can create a more ecologically and socially responsible future for fashion. **R.I.P. Germain**'s *X Selects* display explores clothing as a tool **for** self-expression, drawing together **stories from**1980s hip hop streetwear to collaborations like LL Cool J and TROOP, Supreme and Louis Vuitton.

Brendan Cormier, Chief Curator, V&A East, said: *"Clothing is one of the most universal forms of making and carries a range of important stories within its threads. In this second edition of New Work at V&A East Museum and V&A East Storehouse, visitors can experience the artists', designers', researchers' and local communities' unique views on the power of clothes and walk away re-examining how fashion shapes their own identity and culture today."*

The Stories of Clothes opens at V&A East Museum and V&A East Storehouse on Saturday 14 November and will run until June 2027.

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

- **R.I.P. Germain**, ***wheeloffortune*** – This digital film installation by LA-based multidisciplinary artist, R.I.P. Germain, examines the complex relationship between fashion, identity and perception, exploring how clothing can influence how people are seen and understood.

- **Zadie Xa**, ***Amulets*** – Inspired by a 19th-century Daoist priest's robe in V&A East Museum's *Why We Make* gallery, Xa explores how clothing can embody power and take on a presence of its own through seven suspended garments which gradually enlarge and shift in form.

- **Alia Ali, *Portable Sanctuaries: 3000 years ago/ Now/ 3000 years forward*** – Ali presents three garments made by materials and craft-skill from across the Indian Ocean, including an indigo-dyed gown inspired by a Yemeni judge's robe, a felted shepherd's kepenek (outer garment) and a shield adorned with talismanic objects, including Himalayan crystal and Ethiopian prayer beads.

- **East London Textile Arts (ELTA), *What We Love and What We Fear*** – Newham-based ELTA runs weekly classes exploring the diverse cultures of East London. Bringing together the stories of 90 East Londoners, this large textile installation uses embroidery, patchwork and clothing to explore love, fear, and belonging.

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

These commissions are by The Design Trust Fellows, supported by Design Trust Hong Kong.

- **Jeon Huxley Khng**, ***Motions and Notions of Fastening*** – From buttons to zips, this installation explores the materiality and design history of garment fasteners through film, sound and newly made sculptural work.

- **Sian Fan, *The Body is a Relic (how the light gets in)*** – Drawing on her Hakka Chinese and British heritage, Fan presents a family of life-sized, lantern-like sculptures draped in tapestries inspired by her research trips and the V&A's Hakka collections.

Supporters

New Work: The Stories of Clothes is supported by

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Supported by the Design Trust Hong Kong, the **Design Trust Fellowship at V&A East** is a one-year international research and commission programme created in partnership between Design Trust and V&A East.

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

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 (opened 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, opening up new possibilities and discoveries for everyone.
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About Design Trust

Design Trust was established in 2014 by Hong Kong Ambassadors of Design, a registered charity in Hong Kong since 2007, as a grant funding and community platform. Design Trust supports creative projects that develop expertise, build research initiatives and content related to Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area. Working across a multiplicity of design disciplines including, but not limited to, graphics, media, architecture to the built environment, Design Trust aims to actively accelerate creative research, design and development of meaningful projects that advocate for the positive role of design.
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