



The Charter School North Dulwich Wins V&A Innovate National Schools Challenge 2020-21

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Today the V&A announces the winners of the 2020-21 V&A Innovate National Schools Challenge. Following the submission of hundreds of entries from students across England, The Charter School North Dulwich have been awarded this year's V&A Innovate prize for their poignant 'Scenty Mems' proposal, a personalised jumper to help remember loved ones.

In a special pitching and awards day staged virtually yesterday afternoon, **Loyle Carner**, BRIT Award and Mercury Prize nominated rapper, **Ade Adepitan MBE**, Broadcaster and Paralympic Medallist and **Roma Agrawal MBE**, Structural Engineer, listened to 30 young people from seven shortlisted schools across England pitch their design ideas for making their lives, communities and world, a better place.

The museum's flagship learning programme for 11-14-year-olds; V&A Innovate sets young people design challenges to confront real world issues and helps them become the change-makers of tomorrow.

Speaking after the awards day, Loyle Carner, said: *"The experience of judging has been really inspiring. It's important for us to stay connected to younger generations and give them the freedom to express themselves"*

Ade Adepitan MBE, said: *"The ideas that these young people have created through V&A Innovate are so on point – it's been powerful and emotional hearing from them."*

Roma Agrawal MBE, added: *"This past year has been tough for so many, but the pitching day felt so hopeful and optimistic. To see the ideas and projects put forward, it is really reassuring for the future."*

This year's themes – Home and Community – prompted an extraordinary range of socially-conscious and sustainable projects from hundreds of students across England. The shortlisting panel included last year's V&A Innovate Teacher of the Year winner Stephanie Sweeney, with the following winners selected:

- **Overall winner: 'Scenty Mems' scented jumper
The Charter School**

A group of Year 8 students at Charter explored solutions to grief and coping with loss, in a year which has seen families around the world lose loved ones to Covid-19. Their

solution, praised for the originality and thoughtfulness of a sensitive and often painful issue, was to create a scent (through an item of clothing or perfume) to enable a continued connection with a loved one.

- **Winner of the 'Home' Category (Individual): QR-code waste scanner
King Egbert School, Sheffield**

This project developed by student Phoebe (Year 8) considered the alarming statistic that 91% of plastic is not recycled, and that easier access to education could help narrow the gap. Praised for its research, the idea is that a self-scanner, easily stored at home, could enable the public easier access to information to help them filter recyclable items, find out information on refuse collection and store data on recycling levels, to encourage the public to increase their eco-friendly practices at home.

- **Winner of the 'Home' Category (Team Entry): Garden scenic conveyor belt
The Charter School, London**

Exploring experiences of lockdown, outdoor space and bringing the community together, Year 8 students at Charter invented an idea for a garden scenic conveyor belt that moves plants between gardens in a neighbourhood.

- **Student Choice Winner: Waste reducing app for a fridge freezer
Trinity School, Berkshire**

Year 8 students at Trinity School identified the issue of food waste, highlighting that 17% of food wasted is forgotten about in the fridge and 1/6 of the food we buy is wasted. Their design for a smart fridge freezer includes compartments with adjustable temperatures, an app to notify the user when items are about to go off, and recipe suggestions using near sell-by-date products.

- **Winner of the Community Category (Team entry): Cinema cycle
Hoe Valley School, Woking**

Combining community engagement, fitness, leisure and eco-friendliness, this Year 8 project was praised for the detail of its research – from a pricing strategy, to mitigating against potential accessibility issues, and its sustainability vision.

Jennifer Vargas, teacher at The Charter School North Dulwich, said *“All here at The Charter North Dulwich are humbled to have won. We are so thrilled to have been awarded. Watching the work ethics of the other schools at the pitching day, driven by their teachers was inspirational to see. This will be an unforgettable day.”*

Today, the V&A also launches the themes and resources for V&A Innovate 2021-22: Renew, Connect and Move. Inspired by objects in the museum’s new Design 1900-Now galleries these themes ask students to consider:

- Renew: How might we give objects, materials and spaces a second life?
- Connect: How might we better connect with each other?
- Move: How might we keep active and make the most of the outdoors?

Helen Charman, V&A Director of Learning and National Programmes, said: *“As a world-leading museum of art, design and performance with collections cared for the nation, we have an essential responsibility to promote design and creativity in education - projects like V&A Innovate sit at the heart of our free programming for schools and teachers. The sheer imagination, resourcefulness and dedication shown by all the finalists was simply awe-inspiring, but we also want to thank all the teachers and students who took part in V&A Innovate this year, in such challenging circumstances.”*

Available to every state-funded school in England, V&A Innovate can be delivered over one term, in an after-school club, over a few weeks, or intensively over one day. It includes three stages. Collect focuses on equipping young people to think critically and collaborate through exploration and research of their chosen idea. Make nurtures problem solving skills and building confidence through testing and prototyping. Share guides young people through a series of activities and design processes with suggestions for how to refine and articulate their narrative to help make change happen.

Stephanie Sweeney V&A Innovate Teacher of the Year winner 2020, said: *“V&A Innovate is so important to get involved in, as a brilliant way to get students thinking and innovating. On a practical level it’s helps build confidence in how to approach projects at GCSE. It’s also a great eye-opener for the students to encourage them to think both locally and globally, and to get them working collaboratively together – offering a change to usual classroom practice, which is so often about individual tasks.”*

– ENDS –

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Notes to editors:

- Sign up via vam.ac.uk/info/innovate
- Further details about the shortlisted projects for the V&A’s National Schools Challenge 2021 can be found [here](#).
- The V&A was founded with a vision to be a ‘schoolroom for everyone’, and this mission to inspire the next generation and champion creativity continues today – from under-fives to those in schools, colleges and universities, community groups, adult learners and museum professionals, achieved through on-and-offsite events and outreach.
- Flagship activity includes DesignLab Nation – linking regional museums, local industry and secondary schools with loans from the V&A’s collections, now in its fourth year – and a transformation of the V&A Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green into a world-leading museum of design and creativity for children and young people.