



V&A opens new gallery exploring design's pivotal role in shaping and challenging the biggest issues of our times

- Design 1900 – Now to feature new acquisitions as well as key objects from the museum's collection
- New acquisitions include iconic British road signage, a Kim Kardashian book of selfies and a redesigned flag for Europe
- Rapid Response Collecting is given a new identity for the first time since its foundation in 2014 and features new acquisitions from the last year
- Gallery to support the AQA Design & Technology curriculum creating connections between in-school learning and what's on display

Opening 19 June 2021, the V&A presents Design 1900 – Now, a new permanent gallery exploring how design shapes and is shaped by how we live, work, travel, communicate and consume.

Housed within the museum's former 20th Century Gallery, this newly curated space brings together leading design objects alongside the first redisplay of V&A's celebrated Rapid Response Collecting programme since its founding in 2014.

As part of the gallery, new acquisitions will go on display for the first time at the V&A, including Margaret Calvert and Jock Kinneir's iconic British road signage system, Kim Kardashian's *Selfish* book, Nike's Nigeria football shirt for the 2018 World Cup and a one-of-a-kind desk designed by Future Systems for Condé Nast Chairman Jonathan Newhouse.

A series of new Rapid Response Collecting objects will also go on display marking one of the most disruptive and impactful years in recent memory. From 3D-printed door openers to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus to the *I Believe in Our City* bus shelter posters that highlighted increased Anti-Asian bias, new acquisitions explore a year that has seen lives dramatically change but also moments where communities have come together in union and protest. British Vogue front covers portraying three key workers, a repurposed snorkel mask and the Nike running shoes that enabled the fastest marathon are also on display.

Aiming to spark the imagination of children and young people, the objects on display in the gallery directly support the AQA Design & Technology and Art & Design specification, creating connections between in-school learning and what's on display.

Design 1900 – Now will also provide the focus for V&A Innovate 2021-22, the museum's annual flagship National Schools Challenge. V&A Innovate is a teacher resource hub and invites students in years 7, 8 and 9 to work in teams to design a solution to a real-world problem. It is a core part of the museum's mission to champion creative education on the curriculum and nurture the change-makers of tomorrow. New films, animations, activity packs and educational resources will also be made available online to further support the educational ambitions of the Design 1900 – Now gallery and V&A Innovate.

The six thematic displays in the gallery address the challenges facing society today and draw on the museum's rich collections of fashion, digital and product design alongside photography, architecture and furniture from the last 120-plus years.

A section on *Automation and Labour* explores the changing nature of the workplace from office chairs to Amazon warehouse robots. An inexpensive IKEA lamp designed for shipping across the world and new technologies including 3D printing examine the potential futures of global mass-manufacturing.

Housing and Living charts the development of our connected societies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Seminal works such as the British road signage system by Margaret Calvert and Jock Kinneir, as well as Harry Beck's first sketch for the London Underground will sit next to new acquisitions including the the Copenhagen wheel, which can make any bike electric, to explore how we navigate our complex transport systems, both at a local and national levels. Smart devices from the Nest thermostat to the Amazon Alexa demonstrate the entry of new technologies into the home and the future of connected living.

Design's ongoing role in shaping and reacting to global issues is examined in *Crisis and Conflict*. From Better Shelter's flat-pack refugee shelter to the Progress Pride flag to Chris Ofili's print reflecting on the murder of Stephen Lawrence, creative practitioners are often at the forefront in responding to global events whilst also encouraging a new sense of belonging and community.

As a commercial industry, the work of designers and brands drives global consumerism. From Marc Newson's high-end bicycle for Biomega to Virgil Abloh's hyped "Sculpture" bag for IKEA and a Kim Kardashian book of selfies, first shared on Instagram, to body-sculpting underwear for men by Spanx, *Consumption and Identity* examines consumer trends and the role of objects in developing a personal sense of identity.

Tackling a defining issue of our time, *Sustainability and Subversion* looks at how design has sought to address the climate emergency. The Whole Earth Catalog, an influential example of do-it-yourself culture, is shown alongside new approaches to material innovation including the biodegradable Flax Chair by Christien Meinderstma and Totomoxtle by Fernando Laposse, which turns corn husks into a colourful marquetry material. Recent projects to demonstrate our individual roles in tackling climate change are also reflected through the Guppyfriend laundry bag aimed at reducing microplastic pollution and plastic bags decorated with shameful slogans to deter use.

Data and Communication looks at the roll of the digital in the everyday. Exhibits include a robotic lawnmower, a self-assemble 3D printer and the first-generation iPhone. The impact of technology on health and wellbeing is also examined through the Fitbit and the Aura Power Suit, whilst the USB condom addresses the new challenges to privacy that we face as part of a digital public realm.

With an estimated contribution of over £110 billion to the UK economy, the creative industries are essential to the future growth and sustainability of the world. *Design 1900 – Now* examines how we reached the here and now, with the aim of inspiring the designers and creatives of the future.

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For further PRESS information please, contact Callum Walker, Communications Officer, V&A, on c.walker@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).

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

Notes to Editors:

V&A Innovate

As a world-leading museum of art, design and performance, founded to champion creativity and human ingenuity in all its forms, V&A Innovate is a core part of our mission to champion the place of creative education on the curriculum and nurture the change-makers of tomorrow. V&A Innovate is a teacher resource hub and our annual flagship National Schools Challenge, inviting students in years 7, 8 and 9 to work in teams to design a solution to a real-world problem.

V&A Innovate builds an understanding of design and the value of creative education at a time of seismic shifts in the education landscape. The objects in Design 1900-Now provide a focus on the power of design in a time of fundamental change for young people.

Online resources to support the V&A Innovate challenge include, animations, activity packs, interviews with inspiring designers and Continuing Professional Development events.

New films to support V&A Innovate and link to Design 1900-Now are focusing on the stories behind the Tala Curry Measure by Jasleen Kaur and the Flax Chair by Christien Miendertsma.

Animations on the Mitticool refrigerator by Mansukhbhai Prajapati, the Liftware steadying handle by Anupam Pathak, and chairs made from recycled materials will bring objects in the galleries to life showcasing ingenuity and problem solving behind their creation.

V&A Innovate nurtures problem-solving, idea creation, collaboration and critical thinking – all identified by the Cultural Learning Alliance as crucial skills for the 21st century - helping students to work in teams to tackle a modern-day issue. Conceived to showcase the value, relevance and potential of Design and Technology as an exciting subject and career pathway, in a flexible and accessible way, V&A Innovate can be delivered by a D&T teacher over a term, by a Science or Arts teacher over a few weeks or a day, or as part of an after-school club.