



PRESS RELEASE

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V&A reveals new creative vision for V&A East, alongside first acquisitions and youth-focused partnerships for east London

- **Director Gus Casely-Hayford unveils creative vision for V&A East’s two new sites in east London – a contemporary programme that platforms global creatives shaping today’s critical conversations, empowers young people and the next generation of creatives, and is rooted in its local community**
- **First acquisitions announced include a monumental portrait by artist Kehinde Wiley, a gown by fashion designer Molly Goddard, and a ceramic vessel by artist Ranti Bam**
- **New details revealed for V&A East Storehouse include acquisition of Sir Kenneth Grange’s Archive and display of Frankfurt Kitchen by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky**
- **V&A East Youth Collective Programme launched – a paid rolling advisory opportunity for east Londoners aged 16-25 to directly shape this new institution**
- **Two creative partnerships announced – interdisciplinary design collective RESOLVE appointed as first Youth Workers in Residence, and creative agency A Vibe Called Tech leading a creative residency, supported by Google Arts and Culture**
- **Construction is well underway on both V&A East sites, with the Storehouse and Museum set to launch in 2024 and 2025 respectively**

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30 June 2021 – Today, Director Gus Casely-Hayford revealed further details about V&A East, the V&A’s new national museum complex in east London. One of the world’s most significant new museum projects, V&A East will comprise two sister sites currently under construction in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Opening at Here East in 2024, **V&A East Storehouse** offers a new immersive visitor experience taking visitors behind the scenes and providing unprecedented public access to 5,000 years of creativity. A short walk across the park, opening in 2025, **V&A East Museum** celebrates global creativity and making. Both sites are part of East Bank, the Mayor of London’s £1.1 billion Olympic legacy project, which will create a new arts, innovation and education hub in Stratford’s Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

V&A East builds on the V&A’s long-standing heritage in east London and founding mission to make the arts accessible to all, and will spotlight global stories of creativity, addressing the biggest challenges and subjects of our time. More than just a museum or collections store, it

will be a creative campus and social space embedded within its local community. Making will be a central theme running across both sites, alongside a contemporary and engaged programme, and V&A East will celebrate the creative visionaries, pioneering radicals and extraordinary makers of the past and present. A non-linear approach to storytelling will place historic objects alongside contemporary works, linking different disciplines, geographies and time periods to prompt conversations on the latest issues shaping society today.

Underpinned by values of equity, empathy, openness and sustainability, V&A East is committed to creating opportunities for young people and fostering the next generation of creatives. It will focus on championing under-represented movements and voices to present a diverse range of perspectives, and highlight new forms of creative excellence to challenge the canon and showcase the dynamism and complexity of creativity and making from around the world. V&A East will collaborate with upcoming and established artists and designers, supporting new work, with the V&A's collections acting as a creative catalyst, and the Storehouse and Museum as working studio spaces to platform new ideas.

Reflecting V&A East's approach to collecting and storytelling, the first acquisitions will support stories about global creativity and motivations for making – whether as self-expression, creative experimentation or ways in which art, design and performance responds to broader social, cultural and environmental issues. Acquisitions announced today are:

- Thanks to generous support from Art Fund, **American artist Kehinde Wiley's 2020 portrait of east Londoner, Melissa Thompson**, who the artist met at Ridley Road Market in Dalston – a market first founded in the late 1880s and that remains a vibrant community hub today. Part of Wiley's *The Yellow Wallpaper* series, it represents the artist's ongoing practice subverting historic European portraiture traditions, with works that elevate sitters and challenge perceptions of blackness, to raise important questions about race, identity and the politics of representation.
- Hackney-based British fashion designer **Molly Goddard's hot pink *Daria* dress from her Autumn Winter 2019 collection** – a design worn by Beyoncé in her 2020 visual album *Black is King*. The full-length dress is made of 61 metres of tulle net fabric and was the largest dress that Goddard had ever made at the time of creation. The dress is inspired by baby doll dresses and is exaggerated in scale, celebrating the power of femininity.
- **Ten photographic prints by British fashion photographer Jamie Hawkesworth from his 2011 – 2018 series, *Preston Bus Station***, building on his work as part of the *Preston is my Paris* collective. The series consists of portraits of passengers passing through the Grade II listed 1960s Brutalist station in Lancashire – which was threatened for demolition but later saved, with Hawkesworth's photographic series forming part of the local campaign. The V&A is the first UK institution to acquire Hawkesworth's work.

- **A glazed ceramic frieze made up of 48 individual tiles, *Auntie, Mum and Me talking about my Fabric Collection (2016)* created by London-based artist Mawuena Kattah.** Kattah made the work during her Ceramics Residency at the V&A, in partnership with the studio Intoart, which supports people with learning disabilities. Kattah’s work draws upon her extensive personal archive of family photographs taken in Ghana, alongside more recent studio photographs of her family taken in London.
- **A visceral terracotta vessel, *Itari* by British-Nigerian artist Ranti Bam,** who works between Lagos, London and Paris. Bam’s organic and sculptural vessels push clay to its limits, with surfaces embellished with colours, patterns, and textures inspired by her exploration of the written word.

Empowering young people and opening pathways into the creative industries is fundamental to V&A East, with an extensive outreach programme well underway and consulting with over 20,000 people to-date. The **V&A East Youth Collective Programme**, a rolling 6-month paid opportunity for locals aged between 16 and 25, will play a key role in shaping strategic decisions in the making of V&A East from programming, to opening hours, ticket prices and more. **Interdisciplinary design collective RESOLVE** has been appointed as **V&A East’s first Youth Workers in Residence** to help shape V&A East’s future youth programming. RESOLVE has been working with organisations across the four Olympic boroughs, including Hackney Quest and Blackhorse Road Responders, to run a series of creative workshops exploring young people’s connection to their local area as an opportunity for creative practice. Their work will culminate in a series of installations, designed and delivered in locations across the Olympic boroughs in collaboration with the young people.

Creative agency **A Vibe Called Tech**, whose work explores the intersection of black creativity, culture and innovation, has recently joined the V&A East project as part of a new creative residency supported by Google Arts and Culture. They will collaborate with young people on a series of digital content experiments that will inform V&A East’s evolving creative programme.

Gus Casely-Hayford, V&A East Director, said: *“V&A East will build on the V&A’s long-standing heritage in east London and founding mission to make the arts accessible to all. We are shaping a new creative campus and social space, and by working closely in partnership with our local communities, will highlight the cultural dynamism, youth and creativity of east London. We want to amplify the role museums play as a platform for discovery, hope and conversation in our rapidly changing world, to help foster the next generation of Alexander McQueens.”*

Tim Reeve, V&A Deputy Director and COO, said: *“We believe that V&A East – a cornerstone of the Mayor of London’s vision for a cultural and education legacy in the Olympic Park – is one of the most significant new museum projects in the world today. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, construction is well underway on both V&A East sites, with the assembly of the steel frame at V&A East Museum, and the formation of the unique public spaces at V&A East Storehouse.*

Together, they will open up the national collections in ways never possible before, enabling us to reach new audiences in one of the most creative and culturally diverse parts of the UK. The catastrophic impact of COVID-19 has only made this project more urgent, as a driver for cultural tourism, economic recovery, creative opportunity and as a major new creative resource for east London and the UK.”

Justine Simons OBE, Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries said: *“I’m delighted that V&A East is placing young people and the local community at the heart of its exciting new plans. It will inspire our next generation of creatives, showcase diverse voices from around the world and will bring a fresh, innovative approach to displaying its extraordinary collections. This is another big step towards establishing East Bank – London’s new powerhouse of culture and education that will boost our recovery and cement London’s reputation as a global creative capital.”*

ENDS

Notes to Editors

**For further PRESS information about V&A East please contact
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**A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from
pressimages.vam.ac.uk**

V&A East

One of the UK’s most significant new museum projects, V&A East celebrates global creativity and builds on the V&A’s long-standing heritage in east London and founding mission to make the arts accessible to all. Currently under construction in Stratford’s Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, V&A East encompasses two new sites – V&A East Storehouse opening at Here East in 2024, and V&A East Museum opening on Stratford Waterfront in 2025. Underpinned by values of equity, empathy, openness and sustainability, V&A East is committed to creating opportunities for young people and fostering the next generation of creatives. Across its two sites, V&A East will celebrate making, highlight under-represented movements and voices, advance cultural conversations, and support the creation of new work, with its collections and buildings acting as a catalyst and studio space to platform new ideas. V&A East is part of East Bank, the Mayor of London’s £1.1 billion Olympic legacy project, which will create a new arts, innovation and education hub in Stratford’s Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

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East Bank

East Bank is a new £1.1 billion powerhouse of culture, education, innovation and growth being built on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford, east London. East Bank will be spread

across three sites – UCL East (UCL’s new campus), Stratford Waterfront (Sadler’s Wells, BBC, the V&A and UAL’s London College of Fashion) and Here East (V&A East Storehouse, and an existing space for UCL).

The scheme, driven with significant backing and funding from the Mayor of London and support from HM Government, will provide skills and jobs for local people, bring over 10,000 students to the site, and attract thousands of visitors from London and beyond. East Bank will help to cement the capital’s reputation as a world leader in culture, education and innovation creating 2,500 jobs, £1.5 billion of economic benefit and 600 new homes.

East Bank will build on the area’s existing creative credentials, and East Bank partners have been building relationships and delivering projects with the thriving arts, fashion and community organisations based in the area, including the artistic community in Hackney Wick, East London Dance, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Studio Wayne McGregor and many more.

RESOLVE Collective

RESOLVE is an interdisciplinary design collective that combines architecture, engineering, technology and art to address social challenges. RESOLVE have delivered numerous projects, workshops, publications, and talks in the UK and across Europe, all of which look toward realising just and equitable visions of change in our built environment.

Much of their work aims to provide platforms for the production of new knowledge and ideas, whilst collaborating and organising to help build resilience in our communities. An integral part of this way of working means designing with and for young people and under-represented groups in society. Here, ‘design’ encompasses both physical and systemic intervention, exploring ways of using a project’s site as a resource and working with different communities as stakeholders in the short and long-term management of projects. For us, design carries more than aesthetic value; it is also a mechanism for political and socio-economic change.

A Vibe Called Tech

A Vibe Called Tech is a new creative agency, consultancy and public engagement service founded by Charlene Prempeh to explore the intersection of Black creativity, culture and innovation. Prempeh’s previous career involved marketing and consulting with some of the UK’s most prominent media platforms and art institutions including the BBC, The Guardian and Frieze.

In addition to this, Prempeh writes about Black innovators, design, travel and culture for the Financial Times where she is a contributing editor and has a column titled ‘The Kudos Project’ centering Black Business. She is on the editorial board for Tate etc. is the Marketing lead for Society Centred Design at Projects by IF and is a member of the steering group for Chatham House and the London Design Biennale’s programme, ‘Design Resonance In An Age Of Crisis’.