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## PRESS RELEASE

**Embargoed to 16:45 Thursday 16 December 2021**

### **V&A wins €50,000 Art Explora – Académie des beaux-arts European Award to expand its national schools challenge, V&A Innovate**

[vam.ac.uk/info/innovate](http://vam.ac.uk/info/innovate) | [@V\\_and\\_A](https://twitter.com/V_and_A) | [#innovateVAM](https://twitter.com/innovateVAM)



Today, it was announced that the V&A's flagship national schools challenge, V&A Innovate, has won an Art Explora – Académie des beaux-arts European Award. The Awards were established in 2020 to give vital funding to arts organisations that develop innovative ways to reach new and wider audiences – particularly those who might be less familiar with cultural institutions.

Inspired by the V&A's founding mission to be a 'schoolroom for everyone' and collection spanning 5,000 years of human creativity, the museum launched V&A Innovate in 2019 to champion Design and Technology as an essential curriculum subject and career pathway for young people. Free and available for 11-14 year olds at every state-funded school in England, it is a digital-first initiative, co-created by the V&A with teachers and professional designers. The annual schools' competition sets small groups of young people design challenges that address real world issues, encourage the changemakers of tomorrow and help them to envisage a better, more sustainable and inclusive future.

Previous V&A Innovate challenges have included *Go, Eat and Wear* (Year 1), *Home and Community* (Year 2), *Renew, Connect and Move* (Year 3 – currently ongoing), with Year 4 set to launch in September 2022. The €50,000 Art Explora – Académie des beaux-arts European Award will help the V&A expand the programme further in its fourth year to reach even more students and teachers across England.

**Tristram Hunt, V&A Director, said:** *"We are thrilled to win Art Explora's Académie des beaux-arts European Award for V&A Innovate – our national, digital-first challenge for young people inspired by our collection spanning 5,000 years and multiple creative disciplines. The Award comes at a time when creative education has never been more vital for young people, building life skills in problem solving, collaboration and critical thinking. The Award is a wonderful endorsement to the tireless work of educators and young people in the challenging context of the global pandemic, in which the role of museums as places of empowerment and inspiration for the next generation of creative thinkers cannot be underestimated. The funding will help us to expand V&A Innovate further and support young people to look to their futures with optimism*

*and agency through the lens of design. We are extremely grateful to Art Explora for recognising the value of our programme.”*

V&A Innovate is designed to help students develop interdisciplinary problem-solving skills, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication. It also gives students insight into the design process and a chance to explore careers in the design industry through discovering and working with future-facing designers and innovators. A set of inspiring guest judges also bring unique insight and expertise to inspire participants, with previous judges including fashion designer, **Phoebe English**, BRIT Award and Mercury Prize nominated rapper, **Loyle Carner**, Broadcaster and Paralympic Medallist, **Ade Adepitan MBE**, and chef, **Monica Galetti**, among others.

V&A Innovate can be delivered over one term, in an after-school club, over a few weeks, or intensively over one day, giving teachers and students flexibility to participate in a way that suits their needs. During the first two years of V&A Innovate (2019–2021), 1,188 students across England entered the competition, with many more students engaging with the programme through their teachers’ access to the free online resources, while 768 teachers attended the programme’s CPD sessions led by the V&A.

**-ENDS-**

#### **Notes to Editors**

- Sign up via [vam.ac.uk/info/innovate](http://vam.ac.uk/info/innovate)
- Further details about the shortlisted projects for the V&A Innovate National Schools Challenge 2021 can be found [here](#), with details of the winners [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.
- The transformation of Young V&A in east London’s Bethnal Green is now underway. Re-opening in 2023, Young V&A will be a world-leading museum of design and creativity for children and young people.

#### **About Art Explora**

The Art Explora Foundation, established by entrepreneur and philanthropist Frédéric Jousset in 2019, is committed to reducing the cultural divide by making the arts and culture accessible, through all its projects, to as many people as possible. Art Explora employs digital technologies and mobile systems, which are available to everyone, to initiate inspiring encounters between the arts and new, diverse audiences.

Art Explora has developed multiple initiatives to support artists, such as new commissions and artist residencies; as well as awards and grants to support cultural institutions; and investment in artistic creation, exhibitions and innovative educational and outreach projects. Art Explora aims to be a leading player on the world stage in the service of art for everyone.

[www.artexplora.org](http://www.artexplora.org)

**For further PRESS information about V&A Innovate or Young V&A, please contact Laura Mitchell on [l.mitchell@vam.ac.uk](mailto:l.mitchell@vam.ac.uk) / +44 (0)20 3949 4509 (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)**