



PRESS RELEASE

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The V&A celebrates 150 years in east London – and one-year to Young V&A's opening – with launch of year-long *Reinvent Festival*

- 24 June 2022 marks 150 years since the V&A opened the Bethnal Green Museum (now Young V&A) in 1872 as east London's first ever museum
- Young V&A launches a year-long *Reinvent Festival*, celebrating 150 years with 150 ways to be creative
- Young V&A's *Reinvent Festival* offers a taste of what's to come at the new museum – and a chance for children to feature in its inaugural displays with *This is Me* pop-up event



On 24 June 2022, the V&A celebrates 150 years of its museum in Bethnal Green (now Young V&A), which opened in 1872 as east London's first ever museum. It also kicks off the countdown to Young V&A's opening (formerly V&A Museum of Childhood) in summer 2023 following its major redevelopment into a new national museum and creative powerhouse dedicated to 0 to 14-year-olds. To mark the moment while construction continues, Young V&A is taking its creative programme into the community throughout its birthday year with the launch of the *Reinvent Festival* – its most ambitious festival to-date.

Celebrating 150 years with 150 ways to be creative, Young V&A's *Reinvent Festival* offers a series of family friendly events, activities and pop-ups in partnership with venues across east London from the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Great Get Together to Victoria Park's All Points East *In The Neighbourhood* and Idea Stores across Tower Hamlets. Giving a taste of what visitors can expect when Young V&A opens, the festival's programme includes activities for children and families to play, imagine and design, and features a range of creative ambassadors from children's author [Ed Vere](#) (*How to be a Lion*), whose stories encourage diversity and inclusion, to portrait and documentary photographer, [Rehan Jamil](#), and artists [Albert Potrony](#), [Emilie Queney](#) and [Zoom Rockman](#), *Beano*'s youngest ever illustrator and *Private Eye* cartoonist.

Dr Helen Charman, Director of Young V&A, said: "For 150 years, the V&A has been embedded in its local community, and we can't wait to open Young V&A in Summer 2023 as a new museum that puts children and their creative futures front and centre. The World Economic Forum has made an urgent call to prioritise playful learning and help equip future generations with the creative, social and emotional skills they need to thrive in today's complex world. Through harnessing the potential of the V&A collection to create moments of joy, inspiration and wonder, empowering young people to unleash their own creativity, Young V&A will do just that."

Catherine Ritman-Smith, Head of Learning and Engagement, said: “We’re so excited to celebrate our 150th birthday and reconnect with our visitors as part of our Reinvent Festival. It’s fantastic to work with so many incredible creatives, organisations and venues across east London and beyond to make it happen. We’re experimenting with new ideas and activities and looking forward to giving you a glimpse of what we have in store for you when Young V&A opens next Summer – we hope you’ll come and celebrate with us and join in the fun.”

Young V&A’s Reinvent Festival programme

Young V&A’s [Reinvent Festival](#) includes a series of family-friendly activities and events for children to tap into their creativity, and a chance to test new creative programming ideas, paving the way to Young V&A’s opening in summer 2023.

The Festival launches on 24 June 2022 with the online summit, *Sparkling Creative Futures*, headlined by children’s author, Ed Vere, and live-illustrated by *Beano*’s youngest ever artist, Zoom Rockman. The event will bring together those from the creative, education and cultural sectors to discuss the need for creative education now, and the ways in which creative practitioners, museums and schools can work together to support children born since 2010.

On Sunday 26 June, Young V&A will celebrate its birthday weekend with families at Rich Mix’s ‘Everyone a Maker’ event with free, fun activities and opportunities to play and make together. In July, Young V&A will be running collaborative story-making assemblies throughout Tower Hamlets primary schools. The sessions that support literacy, storytelling, and performance, will encourage children to help ‘collect’ objects that have ‘escaped’ from the museum, to create a unique story through collaboration.

Other events will include pop ups at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park’s Great Get Together on 23 July with large-scale, creative construction and making sessions for children and families using playful building materials by Hackney-based architect Emilie Queney. Later in the summer, Young V&A will run a two-day pop-up photography studio at Oxford House, capturing snapshots of children being creative in 2022 with photographer, Rehan Jamil. A selection of the photographs will go on display in the *This is Me* section in Young V&A’s new Imagine Gallery.

During the school holidays, throughout late July and into August, Young V&A will be running Story-makers at Idea Stores across Tower Hamlets – a series of artist-led, interactive story-making sessions that’s part of the national Summer Reading Challenge. Young V&A will also be at All Points East’s *All in the Neighbourhood* family weekend on 21 and 22 August with creative design challenges and ‘Imagination Playground’ play equipment for little ones to build and explore. The full list of events can be found [here](#), with additional events and activities to be added in due course over the next year.

V&A’s 150 years of reinvention in east London

Young V&A, until recently known as the V&A Museum of Childhood, was first called the East London Museum of Science and Art when it was opened by the Prince of Wales in 1872 but was better known as the Bethnal Green Museum. Right from the outset, the museum aimed to be a cultural and educational resource for local people and has continued to be a place of reinvention throughout its history, housing a wide variety of collections and activities, with early visitors including artist Vincent van Gough and Henry James. In Summer 2023, the

museum will open as Young V&A, a new museum dedicated to 0 to 14-year-olds, their families and carers.

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Notes to Editors

For further PRESS information about Young V&A, please contact Laura Mitchell on l.mitchell@vam.ac.uk / 020 3949 4509 (not for publication). A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk.

About Young V&A

Currently under redevelopment and reopening in Summer 2023, Young V&A is being reimagined as a powerhouse of creativity for the young from infants to early teens. It will be a place to imagine, play, create, debate and design for tomorrow, as a new national museum entirely dedicated to children. Designed with and for 0 to 14-year-olds, Young V&A's central mission is to inspire young people with the creative ingenuity of art, performance and design, to empower educators to promote creativity, and to influence child-centred museum practice. vam.ac.uk/info/young

Follow Young V&A's social media channels for more details about Reinvent Festival events:

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