

# News Release

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# Young V&A

## Young V&A – the UK’s new national museum designed with and for young people – opens Saturday 1 July 2023

**Embargoed to: 00:01 Wednesday 1 March 2023**

- Young V&A will open in London’s Bethnal Green on **Saturday 1 July 2023** following a three-year transformation into London’s major new cultural destination for children, families, and young people
- Designed with and for 0–14-year-olds, Young V&A’s mission is to inspire the next generation of artists, designers, performers and practitioners
- Young V&A is packed full of hands-on experiences including **sensory playscapes**, a **finger skateboard park**, an **‘Imagination Playground’ construction zone**, a **performance and story-telling stage**, **open design studio**, and **sandpit**
- **Inspiring global stories of children’s creativity** feature alongside **2,000 highlights** from the V&A’s art, design, and performance collections, from **Hokusai to Keith Haring**, **Micro Scooter to Minecraft** and **Superheroes to the Surrealists**
- **First exhibition announced: *Japan: Myths to Manga* opens 14 October 2023** featuring **Studio Ghibli, Pokémon, manga-inspired fashion** and more



**Young V&A** (the former V&A Museum of Childhood) will open on **Saturday 1 July 2023**, following a three-year transformation into London’s major new destination for children, families, and young people. Young V&A will showcase the transformative power of creativity, displaying remarkable and optimistic stories of children’s ingenuity alongside 2,000 works from the V&A’s collection of art, design, and performance.

Young V&A’s mission is to inspire the next generation. Designed collaboratively with children, the museum has been shaped around their interests to encourage playful learning, foster creative agency, and spark imaginations. Rooted in the latest research into early years’ development, three galleries, **Play**, **Imagine** and **Design**, will help children build the skills and creative confidence they need to thrive in our fast-changing world.

With curated spaces designed for babies to teens, family-friendly exhibitions and a programme of free events, Young V&A’s galleries are all packed full of interactives and hands on activities. Highlights include colourful and tactile sensory landscapes for infants and toddlers, performance and story-telling spaces for early readers and writers, an open design studio where children can learn from leading designers, as well as topical contemporary displays and a games design space for teens.

New details announced today include:

- An interactive **Minecraft** installation in the Play Gallery’s game design space ‘The Arcade’. The installation, built by Blockworks with support from Mojang and

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Microsoft, begins in a recreation of Young V&A's Town Square, before taking visitors across real and imaginary worlds created by Minecraft players across the globe.

- New murals by street artist **Mark Malarko** inspired by creative workshops with children at Weavers Adventure Playground, nearby Young V&A. A self-confessed 'doodle warrior', Malarko is known for his cartoon-like characters and vibrant street art in cities around the world from London to Athens, Barcelona, and Berlin.
- *This Is Me*, a co-curated display of new portraits by photographer **Rehan Jamil** capturing young people expressing what creativity means to them, set alongside self-portraits by leading creatives from **Chila Kumari Singh Burman** to **Quentin Blake**, **Kenneth Branagh**, **Dapo Adeola**, and **Linda McCartney**.
- To show how design can change the world by giving people and issues a voice, the Design gallery will include 1913 prints designed by **The Suffrage Atelier** demanding equality for women, artwork from the **XR Families Group** encouraging children to express their concerns for the environment through arts and crafts, and works by icon and youth climate activist, **Greta Thunberg**.
- Innovative creations by young people made for **Raspberry Pi's Coolest Projects** competition devising new tech solutions, including a gas leak detector designed by 11-year-old Sashrika Das and the EleVoc 2022 human-elephant conflict device by Chinmayi Ramasubramanian, aged 14.

Details of Young V&A's first exhibition are also revealed today: **Japan: Myths to Manga** opens on 14 October 2023. From sky to sea, and into the forest and city, the exhibition takes us on an exciting and atmospheric trip through Japanese history to explore how landscape and folklore have influenced popular culture, technology, and design.

Alongside a series of sensory interactives and activities, the exhibition features films such as *My Neighbour Totoro* (1988) and *Ponyo* (2008) from the iconic animation studio, **Studio Ghibli**, a manga-inspired coat by **Comme des Garçons**, and dizzying heel-less shoes by **Noritaka Tatehana**, plus plenty of **Pokémon**. Also on show is *Doodle Champion Island Games* (2021), a role-playing browser game created by **Google with Studio 4°C**, epic sculptures by **Keita Miyazaki** and a moving installation of 1,000 cranes – a symbol of remembrance from the **Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park** in Japan.

*Japan: Myths to Manga* is supported by Toshiba, with additional support from Cockayne – Grants for the Arts, a donor advised fund of the London Community Foundation.

**Dr Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, said:** “Children and young people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and its aftermath, alongside the dramatic fall in creative education in schools. Young V&A is our response: a flagship project investing in creativity with and for young people and their futures. We are using our stunning collection of art, design and performance to open the nation's favourite design club for all children and young people. In new galleries and exhibitions, from early years spaces to teenage games design rooms, our plan is to foster Britain's next generation of artists, thinkers, makers, innovators, and entrepreneurs.”

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**Actor and writer, Dame Emma Thompson, said:** *“I’m delighted to know that Young V&A – our first national museum created with and for children – will be opening soon. It will make its thrilling and essential contribution to our young people, whose access to arts, culture, and design opportunities, both in school and out, has been so impoverished by decades of underfunding. For kids, this will be a space of collective fun, cultural enrichment, and wonder, and it’s designed specifically for them, which makes it incredibly special.”*

**Rushanara Ali, MP for Bethnal Green and Bow, said:** *“Young V&A is an incredibly special museum. As a major new destination for children and young people and their grown-ups, it exists to inspire young people to find their creative superpowers, and as a space for people to come together in Bethnal Green. Based in the East End of London, our area is known for its diversity, dynamism, creativity, and extraordinary history. Young V&A will help provide opportunities for children and young people both in my constituency and around the country by creating a fantastic new museum and cultural space for London and the UK.”*

Alongside creative education spaces for hands-on making and performance in Young V&A’s galleries, three workshop spaces dedicated to learning and a reading room in the lower ground floor will support a year-round programme of learning and education. Programming will range from early years sessions to curriculum-based provision for school learners in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and after school and holiday activity for families and young people.

Young V&A will open on the site of the former V&A Museum of Childhood – east London’s first museum – in Bethnal Green on Saturday 1 July 2023 following a £13m capital project designed by base-build architects De Matos Ryan and fit-out architects Agents of Change (AOC Architecture).

Young V&A is incredibly grateful to its supporters for their commitment to the redevelopment project so far, including Prudence Trust, Dunard Fund, Buffini Chao Foundation, The BAND Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Andrew Hochhauser KC, Oak Foundation, Wolfson Foundation, The Thompson Family Charitable Trust, and many other donors.

**- ENDS -**

**For further PRESS information about Young V&A, please contact Laura Mitchell on [l.mitchell@vam.ac.uk](mailto:l.mitchell@vam.ac.uk) / 020 3949 4509 and Jessica Strawson on [j.strawson@vam.ac.uk](mailto:j.strawson@vam.ac.uk) / 020 7942 2759 (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).**

## **About Young V&A**

Currently under development and opening on Saturday 1 July 2023, Young V&A is a powerhouse of creativity for the young from infants to early teens. A place to imagine, play, create, debate and design for tomorrow, it is a national museum dedicated to children and young people.

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## **QUOTE SHEET**

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**Dr Helen Charman, Director of Young V&A, said:** *“Young V&A is a clarion call for the vital importance of creativity in children and young people’s lives. We want Young V&A to inspire young people and families with the creative ingenuity of art, performance, and design, to empower educators from early years workers to teachers, parents, and carers to promote creativity, and to influence child-centred museum practice across the sector. We can’t wait to welcome everyone to Young V&A this July.”*

**Dr Philippa Simpson, Director of Design, Estate and Public Programme, V&A, said:** *“In creating Young V&A we were set a challenge by our young audiences – to create the world’s most joyful museum. From the start, we involved children in every aspect of the process. They have worked directly with architects to co-design the building, curated displays, and made artworks and exhibits for the galleries, setting out their manifesto for a more sustainable, just, and inclusive world. The whole site is a testament to the power of young creativity and optimism.”*