

Press Release

Embargoed until 00.01am Wednesday 26 April 2023

## V&A to open new sculpture intervention in collaboration with artist Thomas J Price

*Eight works by the artist will be shown in dialogue with the V&A's historic collection*

**Thomas J Price at the V&A**

**22 July 2023 – 27 May 2024**

**V&A South Kensington**



Today the V&A announces the upcoming display 'Thomas J Price at the V&A', opening 22 July 2023. One of the leading sculptors of his generation, Thomas J Price is celebrated for his arresting yet contemplative sculptures depicting everyday individuals. He explores ideas of monument, representation, and value with a radical empathy that celebrates connection and shared humanity, using his figurative sculpture to prompt viewers to reflect on their preconceptions about status and appearance. This new free display will see these ideas in dialogue with objects from the V&A's historic collection, with eight works by the artist installed throughout the museum.

Describing his figures as 'psychological portraits', Price's large-scale sculptures depict amalgams of 'ordinary' people, fictional characters composed from different individuals he has encountered in the streets of London. Price carefully selects materials, scale and display methods to subvert sculptural traditions, addressing issues of visibility, identity, and the objectification of Black people in visual culture and the media. Deeply rooted in empathy, Price's figures do not honour singular individuals, but are a celebration of connection and shared humanity.

Highlights of the figures on display include Price's *Lay It Down (On the Edge of Beauty)*. This larger than life-size sculpted head of a woman carries the dignified majesty of a deity yet is recognisably contemporary. Made of a polished bronze that shines like gold, it will sit in the Dorothy and Michael Hintze Galleries amongst pre-Victorian busts.

Also on display will be *Signals*, placed in Room 25 of the sculpture galleries next to Vincenzo Foggini's *Samson and the Philistines*. Finished in a gleaming golden patina, Price's work shows a young man holding his phone up to the sky, searching for mobile connection.

Three large marble and aluminium heads from Price's *Numen (Shifting Votive)* Series will feature in the Dorothy and Michael Hintze Galleries. In Latin, *numen* means 'divinity' or 'divine presence' while a votive is a 'gift of worship'. Inspired by ancient sculptures, the *Numen* series prompts us to consider who we look up to and who has become the object of the public's worship today. Price combines the traditional process of lost-wax casting with aluminium, a material more commonly associated with modern engineering. The works set out to challenge traditional holders of power, to question provenance and instead bind one human experience to another in a manner that feels inclusive.

**Thomas J Price** said: 'Collaborating with the V&A has a profound significance for me, having grown up visiting the museum and being acutely aware of the absence of figurative works I could relate to, whilst recognising the importance engrained within the collection. I've remained deeply invested in exploring the philosophical and material conditions that have informed the making of art and its complex significance within society. The intervention of my work endeavours to shift preconceived notions around status and identity, igniting new and expansive connections between the objects on view and visitors within the space.'

**V&A Curator, Sculpture 1900 – now, Melanie Vandenbrouck**, said: 'Thomas J Price makes some of the most exciting and interesting work in sculpture today. In its sophisticated engagement with sculptural traditions, his work asks pertinent questions about the nature of monuments and what these mean to us. Ultimately, Price invites to think about, and celebrate, what connects us as a society.'

- ENDS -

**For further PRESS information about 'Thomas J Price at the V&A' please contact Thuli Maseko on [t.maseko@vam.ac.uk](mailto:t.maseko@vam.ac.uk) / 0207 942 2502 (not for publication).**

### **Notes to Editors**

- 'Thomas J Price at the V&A' will run from 22 July 2023 – 27 May 2024
- This free display will feature 8 works by Price installed throughout the museum, including in the Dorothy and Michael Hintze Sculpture Galleries and the Europe 1600 – 1800 Galleries

### **About Thomas J Price**

Thomas J Price lives and works in London. Conceptually driven, his multidisciplinary practice encompasses a wide range of mediums, including performance, animation, photography and painting. Price studied at Chelsea College of Art and the Royal College of Art, London and has held solo exhibitions at institutions including: The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada; The National Portrait Gallery, London, UK; Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK; MAC, Birmingham, UK; Royal College of Art, London, UK; Harewood House, Leeds, UK; and Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton, UK. Price's work is held in collections such as The Donum Estate, Sonoma, CA; Government Art Collection, London, UK; The Wedge Collection, Canada; Derwent London, UK; Murderme, UK; and the Rennie Collection (Canada). Price was the recipient of the Arts Council England Helen Chadwick Fellowship in 2009.

Price was commissioned by Hackney Council to create the first permanent public sculptures to celebrate the contribution of the Windrush generation and their descendants in the UK, unveiled in June 2022. His solo presentation, 'Witness', in collaboration with The Studio Museum in Harlem was on view in Marcus Garvey Park from 2021 – 2022. In 2023, Price will open his first comprehensive solo exhibition in the US at Hauser & Wirth Downtown Los Angeles, from 24 May 2023.

### **About the V&A**

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London (V&A) is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity, spanning 5000 years of human creativity. It was established in 1852 to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, its purpose is to champion creative industry, inspire the next generation, and spark everyone's imagination. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

Twitter: @V\_and\_A

Instagram: @vamuseum

Facebook: @VictoriaandAlbertMuseum

Tiktok: @vamuseum