

NEWS RELEASE

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With only one month to go to opening, Young V&A announces Summer Festival line up and collaboration with Children's Laureate, Joseph Coelho

- Young V&A opens in London's Bethnal Green on **Saturday 1 July**
- 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
- The 'Sound It Out' display includes original poems inspired by the V&A's collections by leading authors including Children's Laureate **Joseph Coelho, Valerie Bloom, Liz Brownlee, Bob Raczka** and **Michael Rosen**
- Newly released images show a life-size Joey the *War Horse* puppet enter the building, a Microlino car suspended from the ceiling, and Star Wars' Jabba the Hutt take up residence in the galleries – complete with conservation-approved slime
- From optical illusions to den-building and a stage to perform on, Young V&A is packed full of hands-on activities alongside daring new collection displays
- Young V&A's free Summer Festival takes place on **Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 July** with fun-filled activities and performances by young talent including **Britain's Got Talent finalists IMD Dance**



In just 30 days, **Young V&A** will open its doors as London's major new destination for children, families, and young people. To celebrate, Young V&A today announces details of '**Sound it Out**', a display that takes visitors on an evocative journey through an A-Z of the V&A's eclectic art, design, and performance collections. Children's Laureate **Joseph Coelho**, and authors **Valerie Bloom, Liz Brownlee, Bob Raczka** and **Michael Rosen** have lent their literary magic to create a series of original works inspired by objects on display in Young V&A's Play Gallery. Their one-of-a-kind poems and playful illustrations by **Nayanika Chatterjee** will spark learning and enjoyment for visitors of all ages.

Each author chose their favourite objects to respond to in their own unique way. Joseph Coelho kick-starts the A-Z with a brand-new poem inspired by ornate glass apples. Liz Brownlee creates visual poems in the shapes of objects that inspired them, including **Beatrix Potter's** beetle sketches, a 16th century bronze octopus sculpture and **Mary Poppins'** iconic umbrella from the Disney/Cameron Mackintosh stage show. Bob Raczka plays with phonics and uses wordplay in his poems about Kings and Queens riffing on a 19th century bronze bust of Queen Victoria, while a 1960s dolls' house inspires one of Valerie Bloom's poems exploring different homes for animals. Michael Rosen takes on arguably



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the most challenging letter of all – ‘X’. In one of his poems, he writes an ode to an X-Ray of a puppet from the much-loved TV show *The Clangers*.

New pictures also released today show a life-size Joey the *War Horse* puppet enter the building, a Microlino car suspended from the ceiling, *Place (Village)* a large-scale installation of doll’s houses by **Rachel Whiteread**, and Star Wars’ Jabba the Hutt installed in the galleries, complete with conservation-approved slime, as Young V&A edges ever closer to opening.

Also announced today is Young V&A’s free **Summer Festival**. Taking place on **Saturday 8** and **Sunday 9 July** visitors are invited to explore everything the museum has to offer alongside a series of free fun and creative activities and experience performances from local young talent such as **Britain’s Got Talent finalists IMD Legion**, the east London based **Grand Union Orchestra**, and hula-hoop performance group **Marawa’s Majorettes**. There will also be the chance help create a large-scale art installation with **Leap then Look** that will grow as visitors add their own unique contributions over the weekend.



Dr Helen Charman, Director of Young V&A, said: “At Young V&A we have reimagined the way national collections can be used to connect with younger audiences - displaying objects in new ways to support early learning and inspire creativity. We’re so grateful for the incredible authors who have created these wonderfully imaginative poems for our *Sound it Out* display. Playing creatively with letters, words and numbers is a great way to support language development, social connections and meaning making. We are excited to open our doors in just 4 weeks’ time as a new home for fun and creativity and to inspire the next generation and their families with the creative ingenuity of art, design, and performance.”

Joseph Coelho, Children’s Laureate, said: “It was such a joy to write new poems for the *Sound it Out* display at Young V&A, I’m so glad that my work and the work of other talented authors and illustrators will be displayed alongside fascinating objects from the museum’s collection. Poetry and wordplay are wonderful ways of helping young people learn language skills and develop their own creative curiosity. There is a magic in poetry, it has the power to show children that their words and the worlds they create are worth a seat at the table. I had such fun using the fascinating objects in this display to inspire my writing and hope together they will inspire future budding poets. Young V&A is the perfect place to flex those creative muscles and I look forward to its opening and becoming a place of inspiration for the next generations of writers, performers, artists, and designers.”

Young V&A is packed full of serious fun and playful learning at every turn. Across three galleries – Play, Imagine and Design – over 2,000 objects dating from 2,300 BC to today and from around the world are displayed in creative and ingenious new ways. In Play, the youngest audiences can discover ornate marble sculptures while crawling along a smooth marble



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landscape, while in Imagine, visitors will have their perceptions tested in an optical illusion room and hear objects come to life in a Living Room filled with works by the Surrealists and artists and designers such as **Méret Oppenheim, Eduardo Paolozzi, Bridget Riley** and **The Memphis Group**.

The Design Gallery tells the stories behind some of the most inventive contemporary creations including Hero Arm, the world's most affordable multi-grip prosthetic arm, and will host Young V&A's first onsite studio designer **Clara Chu**. Clara is a London-based multidisciplinary designer, her six-month placement based in *The Shed*, will give visitors insight into her work and the world of a practicing designer to inspire the next generation of designers and makers.



Alongside the incredible collections are activities for young visitors to encounter from den-building in the *Imagination Playground*, to exploring Minecraft worlds in *The Arcade* and creating stories inspired by objects on show in *Adventure* including an **18th Century Samurai Suit of Armour, Peppa Pig, Katsushika Hokusai's Great Wave (1831)**, and **Harry Potter's** Nimbus 2000 broomstick.

Young V&A was made possible by Prue MacLeod, The McLain Foundation, 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 supporters.

- ENDS -

For further PRESS information about Young V&A, please contact Laura Mitchell on l.mitchell@vam.ac.uk / 020 3949 4509 and Jessica Strawson on 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.

About Young V&A

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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Young V&A's first Design Placement has been announced as Clara Chu. This six-month placement will be based in 'The Shed', a dedicated space integrated into Young V&A's Design



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Gallery, and is a unique opportunity for our visitors to gain insight into the world of a practicing designer. This visible presence will bring the Design Gallery to life, highlighting the role of a designer with a busy and active design studio.

Clara is a London based multidisciplinary artist and designer. She creates work that re-imagines everyday, mundane objects in our domestic world, mixing mass production with the hand crafted. Visionary and colourful pop accessories challenge what we wear on our bodies, not only textiles but everyday household objects we take for granted such as a mop, a kettle and a toothbrush. Clara's exploration around up-cycling questions the prominence of fast-moving consumer goods, blurring boundaries between 'high' and 'low' forms of culture through humorous transformations. Her practice helps change the perception around waste in forms of fashion accessories, workshops and installations.