

Young V&A – the UK’s new free museum designed entirely for children – opens 1 July

- This weekend on Saturday 1 July, [Young V&A](#), London’s major new free destination for children, families, and young people, opens in Bethnal Green
- Young V&A is the UK’s first museum of art, design and performance created with and for young people, with national collections at the heart of the experience
- A free [Summer Festival](#) takes place on **Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 July** with fun-filled activities and performances
- Three new galleries – Play, Imagine and Design – feature 2,000 objects dating from 2,300 BC to today from all around the world
- Young V&A is packed full of hands-on experiences including optical illusions, sensory playscapes, a giant marble run, a story-telling stage, Open Studio for live workshops, self-portrait making station and den-building area
- Works by leading artists, designers and changemakers on display including **Virgil Abloh, Olafur Eliasson, Greta Thunberg, Bridget Riley, Miuccia Prada, Keith Haring, Issey Miyake, and David Hockney** alongside examples of children’s own creativity

10:30AM BST, 26 June 2023: On 1 July, Young V&A opens as London’s major new free destination for children, families, and young people after an extensive £13m three-year redevelopment. Previously the V&A Museum of Childhood, Young V&A showcases the transformative power of creativity, displaying inspiring stories of children’s ingenuity alongside approximately 2,000 works from the V&A’s collections. Dating from 2,300 BC to today and from all around the world, objects are displayed in unique and imaginative ways to ensure Young V&A is packed full of serious fun and playful learning at every turn.

The redevelopment is the most significant intervention in the Grade II* listed building’s 150-year history, and has completely transformed the museum. Encompassing three new galleries, a suite of new, larger and better equipped workshop and learning spaces, a purpose built 515m² gallery for showcasing major exhibitions, a new shop and café, the entire museum has been redesigned around children, young people, schools and families. Over 22,000 schoolchildren, teachers, Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and community groups, families and local people helped shape the project, and their impact and ideas can be seen throughout the museum.

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The new galleries **Play, Imagine and Design** are designed with different age groups in mind, from babies to teens, but open for all to explore. Each features new interactives and activities inspired by the collections, where children and their families can have fun together expressing their creativity, with immersive optical illusions, a performance area and stage, a marble run, self-portrait maker and open design studio- plus much more.

The project celebrates and restores the building's iconic Victorian architecture – original windows have been uncovered allowing natural light to flood into the space, and the 19th century marble mosaic floor has been restored and revealed. Spaces have been designed with a focus on accessibility and inclusivity, with significant improvements to circulation and noise, and galleries designed consciously around the needs of SEND visitors. Young V&A will be a cultural and educational resource for schools across the country, offering a self-guided visits and workshops year-round, from this October.

To celebrate the opening, Young V&A is hosting a free Summer Festival. Taking place on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 July visitors are invited to explore everything the museum has to offer, with a series of fun activities and performances from local talent such as Britain's Got Talent finalists IMD Dance, the east London based Grand Union Youth Orchestra, and hula-hoop group Marawa's Majorettes. Visitors can get creative, adding their contributions to a large-scale installation that will grow over the weekend.

Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A, said: *"The V&A believes in the transformative power of creativity, and that it's critical we work - across all our sites - to support and develop the next creative generation. Young V&A has been designed with and for our youngest audiences – inspired by the way we learn, play and experience the world. It is a place where they can have fun, be imaginative and take inspiration from the V&A's incredible collections. The museum is the first of its kind and by continuing to work in partnership with teachers and schools, locally and across the country, it will become a national resource for supporting the teaching of art and design."*

Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer said: *"Young V&A is going to encourage countless young people to dream big and unlock their creativity. We want to maximise the potential of our Creative Industries with a pipeline of talented young people and this space, dedicated to art, design and performance, will inspire young people to pursue creative careers in the future."*

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: *"Young V&A is an inspiring addition to our capital's world-leading museums. The redeveloped museum combines fun and innovation*

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in a hands-on experience that has been shaped by the brilliant minds of young Londoners. It will provide a fantastic free day out for families and offer creative spaces for local schools and communities that will ignite the creativity of our next generation as we work together to build a better London for everyone.”

Rushanara Ali, MP for Bethnal Green, said: *“Young V&A is an exceptional new cultural and educational resource. It is a museum that has held a special place in its local community for over 150 years. It will continue to bring significant benefits to local young people and their families, while welcoming visitors from all over the country to experience the diversity, dynamism, creativity and history of this extraordinary area of London.”*

Marie Maxwell, Executive Head Teacher, Bangabandhu and Globe Primary Schools, Bethnal Green, said: *“For years, this museum has been an important community space as well as a useful teaching resource, so we were thrilled that our school was asked to play a role in the development. Being part of co-design and co-production, working closely with curators, artists, designers and architects, has been a truly memorable experience for our pupils, giving them unique opportunities to express their creativity and have a say in shaping the museum experience they want. We know Young V&A will continue to play an important role in the lives of schoolchildren, locally and across the country, for years to come.”*

Young V&A was made possible by The McLain Foundation, Prue McLeod, Dunard Fund, Buffini Chao Foundation, The BAND Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Andrew Hochhauser KC, Oak Foundation, The Portal Trust, The Thompson Family Charitable Trust, Wolfson Foundation and many other supporters.

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Notes to Editors

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A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk.

About Young V&A

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Young V&A is a museum sparking creativity now and for the future. Created with 0-14-year-olds, it is a place for young people to imagine, play and design, and get inspired by a collection of 2000 toys, characters, objects and artworks from around the world and throughout history. Rooted in its local community with 150-year heritage as East London's first museum, Young V&A works to energise young creators everywhere, as well as empower everyone to promote creativity for the next generation and support the teaching of art and design education for all.

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/young>

In creating Young V&A, two leading architectural practices collaborated with the V&A's project team. De Matos Ryan led on the building's Victorian heritage and space planning, improving circulation and introducing new lower ground spaces. AOC architecture led the design of the visitor experience, the museum look and feel and the galleries, working with audiences and experts to develop new ways of displaying the V&A's collections.

AOC architecture

AOC is a practice of architects and designers led by Tom Coward, Gill Lambert and Geoff Shearcroft. Established in 2005 and based in East London, the practice is best known for its new public buildings, transformation of cultural institutions and learning spaces.

Completed projects include the Reading Room, Wellcome Collection; Somerset House Studios and Exchange; and Nunhead Green, a resident-run community centre and housing scheme in south London. Current projects include a new building for the National Railway Museum, Shildon; the masterplan and redevelopment of the National Science and Media Museum, Bradford; the transformation of The National Archives' brutalist icon in Kew; and the redevelopment of Lloyd's Register of Shipping in the City of London.

AOC have built a reputation for the quality of their designs, winning RIBA, Design Museum Designs of the Year and New London awards. The practice's work has been internationally published and exhibited, including the British School at Rome, Royal Academy, V&A and Venice Biennale.

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De Matos Ryan

De Matos Ryan is known for creating simple but imaginative contemporary environments and interventions often within historically or culturally sensitive settings, incorporating all disciplines from landscape to interiors and exhibition design. The practice's confident and well considered end-user approach draws attention through its quality and clarity, ensuring sustainability through not only carbon and energy reduction but also long-term community and business planning resilience.

The team believes in the social and public role that architecture plays in motivating a community and works hard to ensure that their projects are both accessible and engaging for all.

De Matos Ryan has received numerous awards, including RIBA and Civic Trust. Current cultural projects include Wonderlab: The Bramall Gallery, National Railway Museum (York), The British Film Institute (Southbank London), ArtsEd (Chiswick), Oriel Myrddin Gallery (Carmarthen), Borough Theatre (Abergavenny), Canolfan Ucheldre (Holyhead) and Tullie House Museum (Carlisle).

www.dematosryan.co.uk