



V&A Opens London Design Festival 2023 Programme

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/festival/2023/london-design-festival-2023>

A car at the end of its life, re-purposed into domestic objects, a major seating installation featuring 50,000 handmade flowers, and large-scale tapestries inspired by Sikh teachings are unveiled at the V&A South Kensington today as part of the London Design Festival 2023, running from 16– 24 September.

For this year's London Design Festival, the V&A have commissioned installations by international contemporary designers which celebrate the global power of design to bind communities, reveal untold stories and rethink our relationship with materials. In **Part Exchange**, London based designer **Andu Masebo** retells the life story of a scrapped car through a series of objects inspired by the people whose lives it touched over 25 years. Drawing on conversations with previous owners, the components of an Alfa Romeo Cloverleaf have been reconfigured into domestic furnishings. For **She Still Wears Kohl and Smells like Roses**, Palestinian architect, artist, and former V&A Jameel Fellow **Dima Srouji** creates 'replicas' of blown glass vessels from the V&A collection, in a project that seeks to reimagine and reframe the history of glass from Greater Syria and Palestine, and the often -violent history of excavation.

Ritual and intergenerational craft making is celebrated in **Hana Mikoshi**, a monumental seating installation created together with the Gifu Prefecture in Japan and London based **Hayatsu Architects**. Echoing the Mino Matsuri festival in Japan, the installation has been decorated with 50,000 sakura inspired washi paper flowers handmade by craftspeople in Japan and applied to the structure by visitors to the V&A throughout the summer. **Unstruck Melody** is a collaboration between British-born Canadian artist **Nirbhai (Nep) Singh Sidhu** and UK arts organisation **Without Shape Without Form** which brings together large-scale tapestry, sculpture, and film to create moments of self-discovery through contemporary Sikh teachings while exploring their impact on design now.

For **Maya: The Birth of a Superhero**, visual artist **Poulomi Basu** & film director and photographer **CJ Clarke** create an immersive installation and VR experience which follows an ordinary girl as she transforms into a superhero whose powers derive from menstruation, in an odyssey of womanhood. The work is inspired by Basu's law changing impact art project 'Blood Speaks' about menstrual exile and violence against women in South Asia.

Meneesha Kellay, Senior Curator, Contemporary Programme said: *"This year's projects in the museum place people at the heart of design, whether through the creation of new objects from a disassembled car inspired by its previous owners; or through applying traditional Japanese community-led craft practice to a new seating installation with contributions by thousands of visitors to the V&A over the summer. All the projects centre human stories and reveal the power*

of creative energy within our communities, everyone can participate in design and be enriched by the stories the projects tell.”

As part of the festival, the V&A will also host this year’s **Global Design Forum**, London Design Festival’s curated thought leadership programme, celebrating design and the minds shaping its future. Creative leaders from all corners of the global design community will share new perspectives on how design can be more accessible, inclusive, sustainable and at the forefront of change. Speakers include Simone Brewster, Caroline Till, Dominique Petit-Frère and Yinka Ilori.

The V&A’s London Design Festival themed **Friday Late** will also return on 22 September, which puts people at the heart of design, through exploring how community wisdom can bring new perspectives into design.

Further information on installations:

Hana Mikoshi

Medieval & Renaissance, Room 64b, The Simon Sainsbury Gallery

Together with the Gifu Prefecture in Japan and London based Hayatsu Architects, the V&A presents a Hana Mikoshi or ‘flower shrine’. Inspired by the Mino Matsuri festival, this sculptural seating installation is decorated with 50,000 sakura-inspired washi paper flowers handcrafted by craftspeople in Japan, which were applied to the structure by visitors to the V&A throughout the summer. This process echoes the annual Mino Matsuri festival in Japan which has taken place since the Edo period (1615-1868) where local families, craftspeople, and intergenerational groups come together to create the paper shrines for the festival.

Hajime Furuta, Governor, Gifu Prefecture, Japan said: *“We are delighted to be celebrating the traditions of Gifu with the ‘Hana Mikoshi’ installation at the V&A. The ‘Hana Mikoshi’ festival has been running for over 170 years: each year flower shrines made by the community and are paraded through the town, with bright pink cherry blossoms dancing wildly. The Mino Washi (Japanese paper) used to make the flowers is a traditional craftwork from Gifu Prefecture and its history can be traced back 1,300 years.”*

Part Exchange

Design 1900–Now, Room 74, 74a & 76

For the annual V&A Emerging Designer Commission during LDF, Andu Masebo retells the life story of a scrapped car through a series of objects inspired by the people whose lives it touched over 25 years on the road. Drawing on conversations with previous owners, the disassembled components of an Alfa Romeo Cloverleaf have been reconfigured into a variety of domestic furnishings. The installation comprises a family of furnishings, including a daybed, freestanding shelves and a coffee table, that tell the full 25-year history of a single car, an Alfa Romeo Cloverleaf.

Andu Masebo, Designer said: *“No object has changed the modern world like the car. Over the past century, the car has become inextricably linked with the rise of mass production, urban life and modernism, and is closely connected with ideas of individuality, social status, and increasingly, environmental consciousness. The car is not just a mode of transportation; it’s a political item in the fabric of our society.”*

But She Still Wears Kohl and Smells like Roses

Contemporary glass landing, Room 131

Palestinian architect, artist and V&A Jameel Fellow Dima Srouji presents objects and film that reframe the history of glass in Greater Syria and Palestine. The new works include replicas of glassware from the V&A collection excavated from the region, including personal domestic objects including 'kohl' make-up and perfumed oil vessels. As part of the display, these original objects will be temporarily removed from display, and will be replaced with excavation or 'tomb' cards which narrate imagined histories of these objects, which speak to the often-violent histories linked to excavation.

Dima Srouji, architect and artist said: *"I'm delighted to be displaying 'She Stills Wears Kohl and Smells Like Roses' at the V&A as part of this year's London Design Festival. Through creating replicas of V&A objects with the help of amazing craftspeople working in Palestine today including the Twam family, I wanted to retell the story of glass from the region, and imagine alternative histories of the objects, and how they may have come to the museum."*

Unstruck Melody

Prince Consort Gallery

Unstruck Melody is a collaboration between British-born Canadian artist Nirbhai (Nep) Singh Sidhu and UK arts organisation Without Shape Without Form. They bring together their practices of spirituality and transferring knowledge into a newly conceived installation. Artworks including tapestry, sculpture and film create moments of self-discovery through contemporary Sikh teachings while exploring their impact on design now. The display delves into the metaphysics of form and spatial rhythm and is a poetic and symbolically-rich exploration of formlessness as a metaphor for the divine and endless possibilities.

In a specially commissioned film, which forms part of the display, the artist and curator, Deep K Kailey, discuss ideas around contemporary Sikh teachings, such as *Simran* (a focused practice for the mind) *Seva* (selfless service), and *Sangat* (community practice and mutual commitment).

Deep K Kailey, Artistic Director of Without Shape Without Form and curator of *Unstruck Melody*, said: *"In a world in which we create our identity around what we do as opposed to who we are, this installation explores a practice that promises to completely redefine what it means to be oneself. It will be about you, and not what you do."*

Maya: The Birth of a Superhero

John Lyon's Community Gallery, Learning Centre for Arts Education

Maya: The Birth of a Superhero is an immersive installation and VR experience by Poulomi Basu & CJ Clarke. It follows Maya, an ordinary 21st Century girl, as she transforms into a superhero whose powers derive from menstruation, in an odyssey of womanhood. The work is inspired by Basu's law changing impact art project 'Blood Speaks' about menstrual exile and violence against women in South Asia. This event is free, and places are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Note: virtual reality (VR) headsets are designed for ages 13+

Poulomi Basu and CJ Clarke said: *"We're thrilled that Maya is part of London Design Festival and Digital Design Weekend - and everybody will be able to experience what it means to face down your shame and monsters, and have your inner strength awakened."*

Further information on events:

London Design Festival: Friday Late

18:30-22:00, Friday, 22 September 2023

This Friday Late, in celebration of the V&A's projects for London Design Festival (LDF) and Digital Design Weekend, reveals the power of creative energy within our communities. Design is not just a solo or exclusive act, but rather a form of collaborative practice in action. Through installations, performances, workshops, multi-media and VR, experience the global power of design to bind communities, reveal untold stories and rethink our relationship with materials.

This Friday Late puts people at the heart of design, through exploring how community wisdom can bring new perspectives into design; how bodies in motion can power design objects and offer a space to look within ourselves and explore the connection between music and spirituality.

Digital Design Weekend 2023

Saturday 23 September - Sunday 24 September 2023

Learning Centre for Arts Education

Digital Design Weekend returns on 23 and 24 September to take over the V&A, with free interactive installations, showcases, workshops, talks and family-friendly activities taking place around the museum.

Global Design Forum

16, 17, 20, 21 September

Lydia and Manfred Gorvy Lecture Theatre

Global Design Forum is London Design Festival's curated thought leadership programme, celebrating design and the minds shaping its future. Creative leaders from all corners of the global design community will share new perspectives on how design can be more accessible, inclusive, sustainable and at the forefront of change.

The programme for 2023 includes some of the most challenging and exciting topics that designers currently face from speculative re-imaginings; transdisciplinary design; designing for community; diversifying design; new material showcase; material sustainability; system redesign; design intelligence; harnessing the possibilities of AI; using design to adapt to extreme change.

Speakers include **Caroline Till, Franklin Till; Dominique Petit-Frère, Limbo Acra; Joycelyn Longdon, Climate in Colour; Shawn Anderson, POoR Collective; Simone Brewster; Yinka Ilori; Yuri Suzuki, Pentagonam and Yves Behar, Fuse Project.**

Global Design Forum is supported by Headline Partner SAP and programme partners Pearlfisher, Istituto Europeo di Design and UAL.

For the full programme and to book your tickets visit: globaldesignforum.com

Other displays on during LDF:

The Zizi Show

The Photography Centre, Room 99, The Meta Media Gallery

Saturday 25 May 2023 - Friday 1 March 2024

Commissioned for the newly re-opened Photography Centre, Jake Elwes' The Zizi Show explores the ethical issues of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create a deepfake drag cabaret. Although viewed by some as flawlessly neutral, AI applications often show discriminatory behavior because the datasets they rely on reflect the bias of their human programmers. Elwes observed that computer systems 'have difficulty recognising trans, queer and other marginalised identities', which can cause them to visibly break down. For The Zizi Show, Elwes looks to drag to expose and subvert this bias.

Supported by the Manitou Fund

Field Notes

Furniture, Room 133, The Dr Susan Weber Gallery

Tuesday 1 August – Tuesday 31 October 2023

For the second iteration of Make Good: Rethinking Material Futures, the V&A has collaborated with environmental charity Sylva Foundation to create the Field Notes summer school. Twelve practitioners within art, design and architecture were selected to participate through an open call-out. Through seminars, forest walks, and hands-on making the participants explored ways of caring for woodlands and utilising locally sourced wood. Field Notes considered the importance of diverse thinking when envisioning sustainable futures, it also discussed issues of land use and ownership; and questions of access and inclusion.

This display is part of Make Good: Rethinking Material Futures, a ten-year project supported by John Makepeace OBE.

Surfacing Stories

128, Architecture

Tuesday 1 August – Saturday 2 September 2023

In this gallery-based intervention, activists, architects, historians and writers offer fresh interpretations of objects in the V&A'S riba Architecture Gallery, exploring stories about provenance, eurocentrism, women, disability, LGBTQ+, colonialism and climate change. This project was supported by the RIBA and funded thanks to the generosity of Donald and Nancy Notley. The project was also supported by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Fund, Oxford Brookes University.

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For further PRESS information about *London Design Festival 2023*, please contact Shannon Nash on s.nash@vam.ac.uk. A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk.

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. Vam.ac.uk