

News Release

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Young V&A unveils its first major creative installation, *Lost and Found Yōkai*, which invites contemporary artists and designers to breathe new life into forgotten umbrellas



Lost and Found Yōkai at Young V&A, London. Credit: David Parry, PA Media Assignments

24 May – 1 September 2024

Young V&A

Free

- Young V&A's first major creative installation, **Lost and Found Yōkai**, sees umbrellas lost on London's trains, Tubes and buses transformed by a host of contemporary artists and designers into a joyous 'parade' of yōkai
- As part of *Lost and Found Yōkai*, visitors will be invited to hear sounds of supernatural Japan come to life, in a new work from sound artist and designer **Yuri Suzuki**, in partnership with design and research studio **Very Very Far Away**
- The installation celebrates Young V&A's current exhibition, **Japan: Myths to Manga**, which runs until 8 September 2024
- *Lost and Found Yōkai* will kick start May half-term activity at Young V&A, with a host of on-site events and workshops available for families to get involved in during the school break

Inspired by Young V&A's current exhibition, *Japan: Myths to Manga*, which runs until 8 September, Young V&A has invited contemporary artists and designers from a host of disciplines to joyously transform umbrellas previously forgotten on London's transport networks, and donated via Transport for London's Lost Property office, into yōkai, as part of Young V&A's new major installation, *Lost and Found Yōkai*.

The free indoor installation takes visitors on a journey through *Kasa-obake Alley*, where umbrellas once lost around the bustling streets of London, now dance with life at Young V&A.

The installation draws from traditions of yōkai, a class of supernatural beings and entities that abound in Japanese folklore, literature, art and popular culture, in particular, the *kasa-obake* or umbrella monster. These playful spooks are a type of *tsukumogami*, everyday objects that receive a spirit and find new life as yōkai on their 100th birthday.

Participating artists and designers include **Andrew Kenny & John Booth, Anna Burns, Clara Chu, Nicole Chui, Damsel Frau, Jessica Dance, Lilah Fowler, IKUKO Iwamoto, Rio Kobayashi, Hannah Lim, Anzhela Hayrabyan & Luca Grosso, Kristi Minchin, Murugiah, Annie Frost Nicholson, Yuko Kondo, Dame Zandra Rhodes, Lydia Kasumi Shirreff, Sam Wilde & Naing Lin Oo** and **Bethan Laura Wood**.

William Newton, Curator, Young V&A says: *"At Young V&A, we're all about imagination, having fun and making things. It has been inspiring to see these artists give life to lost things – to bring out the umbrellas' inner yōkai – and transform them into a fabulous parade. Umbrellas are the most commonly misplaced item on London's transport networks, and it's great that we can give them a new use and bring a bit of Japan to the museum's Town Square for our visitors to enjoy."*

Developed in partnership with creative agency **AMV BDDO**, *Lost and Found Yōkai* creates a 'procession' that leads visitors to the entrance of *Japan: Myths to Manga*, located on Young V&A's mezzanine floor. Suspended at a height, the 'parade' of yōkai appear to float, inviting young visitors to walk beneath, look up, and immerse themselves in the enchanting forms.

Participating artists and designers draw upon their individual practices, and personal sources of inspiration, to bring to life their selected umbrellas. Set designer and paper artist **Lydia Kasumi Shirreff's** yōkai will embody a colourful bird in the style of a Japanese woodblock print, with patterned feathers floating in the air, created using paper with painted detail, inspired by her young son's idea of creating a 'rainbow bird'.

Artist **John Booth** collaborates with friend **Andrew Kenny** of London Embroidery Studio to create a yōkai inspired by Andrew's two-year old son Bobby, incorporating Bobby's love of monsters and a visit to *Japan: Myths to Manga*. A fun and playful monster, with a cheeky character, *Bobby* brings together components of lost umbrellas and offcuts from Andrew's studio.

Embroidery artist **Nicole Chui** presents *Bae-Bae: the spirit of the Bae will guide your way*, a creature inspired by a tiger, which channels the spirit of the people, and club mascot, of Baesianz FC, a football club for women, trans and non-binary people of Asian heritage, founded by Chui in 2022. The design, which also draws inspiration from a child's sketch in the museum's Open Studio, will encompass the colours of the team's football kit – Purple, green and black - and nods to the pitch, from astroturf to studs, incorporated into the final design.

To complement *Lost and Found Yōkai*, sound artist and designer **Yuri Suzuki**, in partnership with design and research studio **Very Very Far Away**, will present *Yōkai Onomatopoeic Machine*, a new sound and sculpture work, where sounds of supernatural Japan come to life through colourful horn-shaped sculptures. At the entrance to *Kasa-obake Alley*, individual soundscapes will transport visitors to a world where every creak and rustle tells a tale, from the echo of distant drums to the sound of the shamisen.

The opening of the installation coincides with the start of May half-term, during which a number of activities and workshops around the theme of textiles and weaving are available for families to take part in. Highlights include live weaving demonstrations from artist and tapestry weaver **Christabel Balfour**, a drop-in large-scale weaving activity with sculptor **Matt Shaw**, and an upcycling workshop with Young V&A's **Holly Zarnecki**.

The installation will also serve as inspiration for visitors in the museum's Open Studio space, where materials are available for children to sketch their very own yōkai.

As part of a new digital series of 'how to' videos on [mused](#), **Nanami Takeuchi**, an artist inspired by Japanese folklore and mythology will show viewers how to illustrate their own yōkai creatures.

Young V&A welcomes visitors to celebrate its first birthday in July, and its place in the running for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2024 this summer, with thanks to the continued support of its visitors.

Justine Simons OBE, Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries, says:

"This ambitious installation shows how creative inspiration can come from anywhere – even lost umbrellas! Young V&A continues to inspire young Londoners and visitors alike, and this will be a great first major installation, helping us build a better London for everyone."

AMV BBDO creatives Anzhela Hayrabedian and Luca Grosso say: *"We were looking for a playful idea that links two cultures - the tales from Japanese Folklore with the rainy streets of London. Abandoned umbrellas reimagined as yōkai seemed to be the perfect bridge, blending Japan's storytelling with the wonderfully eclectic art scene of the UK. We hope the installation can spark the imagination of children of all ages, though we do apologise for any mischief they might cause!"*

Japan: Myths to Manga is supported by Toshiba, with further support from Cockayne Grants for the Arts, a donor advised fund held at The London Community Foundation.

NOTES TO EDITORS

TfL's Lost Property office on the donation of umbrellas:

Diana Quaye, Performance Manager of TfL's Lost Property Office, says: *"It has been amazing to see the creative ingenuity from Young V&A and how the artists have utilised our donation of umbrellas to create such wonderful pieces of work. At the Lost Property Office, we do all we can to efficiently return lost items to customers; however, if we are unable to do so, we take great joy in participating in opportunities like these, where items can still be utilised and live on."*

ABOUT YOUNG V&A

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.

ABOUT AMV BBDO

AMV BBDO is a creative agency that believes in the power of radical empathy and creativity. In 2021, the agency won 5 Grand Prix, including a Titanium GP at Cannes Lions, a Black Pencil at the D&AD and six Grand Prix at The One Show, being named Agency of the Year in these three shows. It was the #1 Creative Agency in the UK in 2021, according to Drum World Creative Rankings. It was also Agency of the Year at Campaign Big Awards 2021. The team has the longest consecutive run of Golds in the history of the IPA Effectiveness Awards and is the winner of half of all the Marketing Society Grand Prix awards since 2012. They have also topped the sector across Europe in the inaugural Financial Times Diversity Leaders report 2019 and were named one of the top 10 best & bravest agencies on the planet in 2021, 2022 and 2023 by Contagious Pioneer Report. The agency is part of the BBDO network, with over 15,000 people in 289 offices across 81 countries & part of Omnicom often creating bespoke multi-disciplinary teams for clients.

