

## Press Release

03 August 2022



### V&A announces programme for London Design Festival 2022

Live glass blowing, the creative renewal of broken household objects and a monumental sculpture created from upcycled marine plastic waste will all feature as part of the V&A's programming for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of the London Design Festival from 17-25 September 2022.

Now in its thirteenth year as the official Festival Hub, the V&A's iconic spaces will be transformed once again by an extraordinary collection of specially commissioned installations and displays by contemporary designers from across the globe. This year's projects are centred around the theme of transformation; from the transformation of molecules and material to the regeneration of the planet itself.

Highlights include: ***R for Repair: London x Singapore***, led by DesignSingapore Council and National Design Centre (Singapore), which sees broken household objects, often with deep sentimental attachment, handed over to designers to be not just repaired, but creatively renewed. Co-curated by Hans Tan Studio (SG) and Jane Withers Studio (UK), the display will feature Singaporean designers and UK designers repairing objects from both countries, in a cross-cultural exchange bound to provoke new interpretations of our everyday items. In ***Material Experiments***, Canadian artist Omer Arbel's transforms the John Madejski Garden into an immersive glass-blowing studio, with Arbel's iridescent fragile sculpture *113* taking centre stage. During the 9-day performance, common copper and glass antiquities procured from flea markets and vintage shops will be returned to their raw materials and used to create a series of new *113* artifacts. ***Plasticity*** will see a monumental sculpture, designed by Niccolo Casas, 3D-printed by Nagami, and made with Ocean Plastic®, marine plastic waste intercepted by the collaboration network Parley for the Oceans. The project explores the possibility of turning a harmful waste material into new uses, while highlighting the work of the organisation in cleaning up the world's beaches, islands and coastal communities.

***Whale in the Room*** imagines what would happen if Hope, the blue whale skeleton centrepiece at the Natural History Museum, came alive and swam in the Thames to demand climate action. Told through an animated film by DESIGN EARTH, a research practice founded by Rania Ghosn and El

Hadi Jazairy in 2010, the graphic story reanimates Hope to take action on the climate. **Not David!** is a project by Xcessive Aesthetics, an all-female interdisciplinary design collective exploring data and alternate realities, that aims to propose a new mode of reclaiming public space, reconsidering who or what is given space within the museum context and exploring the 'replica' across physical-digital space. Using the V&A's Cast Courts as a starting point they seek to give space to alternative, less replicated figures, starting with their own bodies, to explore the idea of 'taking up space' within the V&A's South Kensington site. In **Awakenings** visitors can experience an entirely digital fashion shoot in an immersive virtual creative session by renowned portrait photographer Simon Emmett and designer Gary James McQueen, in partnership with Epic Games.

The V&A will also host the **Global Design Forum**, the Festival's thought leadership programme which will bring together creative leaders to exchange ideas and solutions for some of the most pressing issues of our time.

Brendan Cormier, Senior Curator, Exhibitions & Contemporary Programme at the V&A said: "*We are delighted to once again be collaborating with the London Design Festival in its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year to showcase the very best in design and creativity from across the world. Our specially commissioned installations and displays exploring the theme of transformation, highlight how, from the micro-scale to the macro, the role of the designer is to ultimately be a choreographer, steering a process of change and transformation to produce new objects, new spaces, and a renewed way of living in the world.*"

Ben Evans CBE, London Design Festival Director, said: "*We are delighted to once again be partnering with the V&A – one of the world's foremost museums of design and art. Over the years our partnership has put a spotlight on the transformative power of creativity through a series of projects in response to the V&A's buildings and collections. As the Festival's hub for the last thirteen years, the museum sits at the heart of Festival activity and is the perfect place for visitors to immerse themselves in the very best of design from across the globe through specially commissioned installations, exhibits and a range of events from Digital Design Weekend to the annual Global Design Forum.*"

### **Further information on Installations, Displays and Events**

#### **Material Experiments**

*Medieval & Renaissance, Room 50b, The Paul and Jill Ruddock Gallery*

This live glass-blowing demonstration and display demonstrates how molten copper interacts with blown-glass to create a series of shapes and forms, largely determined by the material itself, as Canadian artist Omer Arbel transforms the long-forgotten narratives of Saint Clare of Assisi's rebellious courage and subversive power into vessels of consciousness. These iridescent, fragile sculptures, created on site in the museum's John Madejski Garden, will be carried into the Santa

Chiara Chapel in the V&A's Medieval and Renaissance gallery in a dignified, exalted procession, evoking the delicate beauty of archaeological artifacts that have been transported into our contemporary age.

### **Plasticity**

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

*Plasticity*, a monumental 3.6-metre-high sculpture created by Italian architect Niccolo Casas, explores the possibility of turning a harmful waste material into something new. 3D printed by cutting-edge design brand Nagami and made from Parley Ocean Plastic®, a catalyst material created from upcycled marine plastic waste intercepted from remote islands, beaches and coastal communities, the installation speaks to a radical new eco-innovative architecture, and Casas, Nagami, and Parley's commitment to showing a vision of how design and architecture can become instigators of a circular economy that works in harmony with the ecosystem. Initially shown at the 17th International Architecture Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia, *Plasticity* is a symbol of change and a call for more industries to join in a global Material Revolution.

### **R for Repair: London x Singapore**

*Design 1900–Now, Room 76*

*R for Repair: London x Singapore* sets out to illuminate the art of repair and in particular the notion that creative repair can add character and value to cherished but damaged possessions. Originally starting with an exhibition in Singapore in January 2021, the project sits within a growing landscape of initiatives designed to encourage a repair culture and shines a timely spotlight on global waste by showing how, with a little ingenuity, broken or discarded items can be given a fresh lease on life. This LDF 2022 edition invited members of the public from London and Singapore to submit broken objects along with the story of why they are attached to them. These were then handed over to designers to be not just repaired, but creatively renewed. The project presents a cross-cultural exchange bound to provoke new interpretations of our everyday items. Co-curated by Hans Tan Studio (SG) and Jane Withers Studio (UK), and presented by DesignSingapore Council, National Design Centre (Singapore) and the V&A (London), the creatively mended objects will be displayed at the V&A throughout the festival alongside three repaired objects from the original 2021 exhibition, after which they will be returned to their owners.

### **Whale in the Room**

*Europe 1600-1815, Room 4, 'The Globe'*

A speculative eco-fable that addresses what it is to live and die in the midst of the climate emergency and the sixth mass extinction, *Whale in the Room* imagines what would happen if Hope, the blue whale skeleton centerpiece at the Natural History Museum, came alive and swam in the Thames to demand climate action. Told through an animated film by DESIGN EARTH, a research practice founded by Rania Ghosn and El Hadi Jazairy in 2010, the graphic story

reanimates Hope to take action on the climate. In her rebellion, the blue whale comes to life, charges out of the Main Hall and swallows the legacies of the 'Wonders of Industry', both the material legacies of whaling—the first oil of the Industrial Revolution—as well as the display inheritances of the 1851 Great Exhibition.

### **Not David!**

*Leighton, Room 108*

*Not David!* is a project by Xcessive Aesthetics, an all-female interdisciplinary design collective exploring data and alternate realities, that aims to propose a new mode of reclaiming public space, reconsidering who or what is given space within the museum context and exploring the 'replica' across physical-digital space. Using the V&A's Cast Courts as a starting point, this project examines how replication bestows value and prestige on certain bodies by creating cultural icons that are copied, repeated, and mass produced, and how digital tools can be used to reframe the value given to particular forms and bodies. In *Not David!* they seek to give space to alternative, less replicated figures, starting with their own bodies, to explore the idea of 'taking up space' within the V&A's South Kensington site. Using the transformative power of digital tools and software, they scan, distort, and inflate their bodies, and then re-insert these digitally manipulated forms into the museum space. In so doing they demonstrate how digital techniques allow for experimentation with different kinds of replicas that can be 'placed' anywhere and 'inflated' to explore the idea of 'taking up space' across different contexts.

### **Awakening**

*Fashion, Room 40*

In this immersive creative display, experience an entirely digital fashion shoot by designer Gary James McQueen and photographer Simon Emmett. Through augmented reality, this experience allows visitors to virtually try-on couture garments and take photos of themselves in McQueen's latest designs.

### **OSPAAAL: Solidarity and Design**

*Design 1900–Now, Room 74A*

This display showcases revolutionary posters from OPSAAAL, the Organisation of Solidarity for the People of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Created after the 1966 Tricontinental Conference, which brought together the "currents of the world revolution", the Cuba-based solidarity organisation produced these striking and brightly coloured liberationist graphics and placed them within the pages of *Tricontinental Magazine*. *OSPAAAL: Solidarity and Design* brings together a selection of reproductions of the posters from the V&A's collection, focusing on the beginnings, reach, and unique process of the OSPAAAL group. The posters are a powerful and vibrant example of transformative design, and how graphic design in particular has been used to platform the struggles of oppressed peoples around the world.

## **Lebanese House: Saving a home, Saving the city**

*Architecture, Room 127*

At the heart of this display is a four-metre-high recreation of the façade of a nineteenth-century home in Beirut, Lebanon, which AKK has recently restored and conserved. In the 2020 Beirut port explosion, thousands of buildings were destroyed or severely damaged, including many of historical significance. In this installation, the recreation of a triple-arched window typical of a late Ottoman Empire house highlights the craft skills used in the original creation and current preservation of these vulnerable historic buildings. The installation also includes a divan evoking the traditional salon in the entrance hall of a Lebanese residence on which visitors can lounge and contemplate the façade, and a seat in the mini auditorium to watch a series of specially commissioned films that delve deeper into the physical and social effects of the 2020 explosion on Beirut's buildings and inhabitants, and the subsequent process of rebuilding. This project will be transformed for the Festival with new design elements developing the narrative of the effects the disaster had on the city's cultural identity.

## **What Is Seen and What Is Not – Osman Yousefzada**

*The Grande Entrance, Cromwell Road. Sculpture Gallery 25, Room 25, The Dorothy and Michael Hintze Sculpture Gallery & The John Madejski Garden*

Interdisciplinary artist Osman Yousefzada responds to the 75th anniversary of Pakistan with an exhibition that explores themes of displacement, movement, migration and climate change. Across three V&A sites, his handcrafted textiles, wrapped objects and seating interventions showcase the traditional and contemporary techniques of the Pakistani and European workshop. Together, the installations present Osman's unique and highly personal perspective on modernity and migration, offering a subtle and contemplative space to engage with the objects of his cultural heritage.

## **Digital Design Weekend**

24 and 25 September

The Digital Design Weekend is the V&A's flagship event on digital cultures exploring the impact and influence of technology in society and culture. Taking place during London Design Festival the event brings together artists, designers and technologists together to take over the Museum with immersive experiences, creative workshops, talks and interactive demonstrations. This year's festival will investigate how digital design can help make the reality of climate change visible to us all and enquire how emerging Digital Fashion practices can help reimagine our relationship with fashion and address urgent environmental challenges such as waste and disposability. Finally the festival will invite visitors to engage with playful installations to reflect on their digital choices and identities, learn about bias and trust online and how to protect their privacy in an algorithm-driven world. A preview of Digital Design Weekend will be showcased alongside Friday Late on 23rd September

## **Friday Late: Transformation Station**

23 September

This Friday Late, entitled 'Transformation Station' and held in conjunction with London Design Festival, highlights the different scales of change, from molecular to planetary, in which we can transform and be transformed to create a better world. Life is a transformative act. Not only do we constantly bear witness to a changing world, but we ourselves alter and grow over time. In this sense, design is a mode of intervening, of working with the forces and flows that shape our world and diverting their course just enough to produce a new effect.

**-ENDS-**

**For further PRESS information please contact the V&A press office on +44 (0) 20 7942 2502 or email [press.office@vam.ac.uk](mailto:press.office@vam.ac.uk) (not for publication). A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from [pressimages.vam.ac.uk](http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk)**

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

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London 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](http://vam.ac.uk)

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### **About London Design Festival**

Established in 2003 by Sir John Sorrell CBE and Ben Evans CBE, London Design Festival celebrates and promotes London as the design capital of the world.

London Design Festival has since earned the reputation as a key calendar moment of London's autumn creative season, alongside London Fashion Week, Frieze Art Fair and the London Film Festival, attracting the greatest thinkers, practitioners, retailers and educators to the capital, in a citywide celebration.

#LDF21

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