



News Release

V&A South Kensington to open first major UK display of Contemporary Chinese studio craft

Today V&A South Kensington opens a new display exploring contemporary studio crafts in China, the UK's first major display on the subject. *Dimensions: Contemporary Chinese Studio Crafts* will look at the way artists have reimagined traditional practices to find new avenues of artistic expression and showcase artistic innovations across ceramics, lacquerware, metalwork and more.

Over 80 objects – including nearly 50 new acquisitions – will be on display, spotlighting contemporary and modern makers who build upon longstanding tradition to reinvent ancient practices, pioneer alternative techniques, and develop new channels for self-expression. Many of these objects will sit in dialogue alongside permanent displays of historic Chinese craftsmanship, to reflect how artistic ideas are formed and how these ideas relate to China's craft tradition.

Xiaoxin Li, Curator of Chinese Collections, said: *“From the rugged mountains of Yunnan to the coastal plains of Shandong, artisans across China have long transformed its natural resources into ceramics, lacquerware, metalwork and more, creating works that blend functionality with beauty. In the 1980s, Chinese artists began to reimagine craft not just as utilitarian but as a medium for self-expression. Until now, there has been limited scholarship on and public collecting of studio crafts outside of China – I am delighted to highlight the vitality of innovation and creativity in the country through this display that celebrates contemporary making.”*

In the China Gallery, *Dimensions* introduces the rise of studio craft in the country and spotlights contemporary makers challenging traditional aesthetics and materials under a series of focused themes. In addition, modern works are placed across the gallery in dialogue with pre-existing displays of historic pieces, exploring how artisans are reinventing established forms, materials or iconographies in Chinese art today. On display are large scale works such as LOEWE FOUNDATION Craft Prize winner Lin Fanglu's *She's Bestowed Love* (2025), that transforms intricate tie-dye practices into a monumental textile sculpture, as well as more delicate pieces such as Zhang Huimin's *Golden Mammary 4* (2025), a brooch produced by pushing the boundary of filigree in a reinvention of traditional practice.

Dimensions continues in the Ceramics Gallery, to explore how Chinese artists have been innovating across three key areas of ceramics – clay, glaze, and painting. This section will showcase how this wave of innovation can be traced back to the revitalisation of major ceramics production hubs and institutions in the 1950s, which

went on to nurture a pioneering generation of studio potters. Highlights include a wall hanging by pioneering artist of studio pottery Tan Chang, as well as works by the three potters who were the first to be exhibited in China under the mantle of 'modern ceramics': Mei Wending, Zeng Li and Zeng Peng.

The V&A houses one of the most comprehensive collections of Chinese art and design outside East Asia, comprising over 18,000 objects across ceramics, jade, painting, metalwork, lacquer, textiles, furniture and more. Objects date from 3000 BC to the present day, and highlights range from rare historical pieces made in the Ming and Qing dynasties to contemporary design works acquired during the museum's ground-breaking exhibition project *China Design Now* (2008).

Dimensions: Contemporary Chinese Studio Crafts is supported by KennedyTing and Tiān Foundation.

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For further PRESS information please contact 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

Notes to Editors

- *Dimensions: Contemporary Chinese Studio Crafts* runs at V&A South Kensington from 28 October 2025 to 27 September 2026
- Located in the China (gallery 44) and Ceramic Galleries (gallery 148), the display is free to visit

About V&A South Kensington

V&A South Kensington is a world of extraordinary global creativity, with unmissable exhibitions, experiences and educational programmes for all. One of London's most iconic buildings, it is home to national collections of art, design, fashion, photography and furniture to theatre, performance, architecture, and ceramics, as well as the UK's National Art Library. It is a place where everyone can experience a story of creativity that spans 5,000 years and every creative discipline, which brings that story to life through programmes and activities for all ages and specialisms, and world-leading research and conservation.

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