



V&A celebrates 100 years of theatre and performance with new free display

***Enthoven Unboxed: 100 Years of Collecting Performance* will chart a century of theatre and performance collecting at V&A South Kensington**



Enthoven Unboxed: 100 Years of Collecting Performance 14 September 2024 – 4 January 2026 Theatre and Performance Galleries

This year, V&A South Kensington celebrates the centenary of its Theatre and Performance collections with a special display, *Enthoven Unboxed: 100 Years of Collecting Performance*, opening on 14th September 2024.

In 1924, the museum accepted a donation of over 80,000 playbills, programmes, and ephemera from collector, humanitarian, and campaigner Gabrielle Enthoven. The donation marked the beginning of the museum's proactive collecting of theatrical material which has since evolved into the UK's internationally renowned and recognised National Collection of Performing Arts. Inspired by Gabrielle Enthoven's nickname the "theatrical encyclopaedia", this display explores an A-Z of themes which show how performance continues to entertain, provoke and inspire. Through a selection of objects ranging from Enthoven's early theatrical material to the V&A's most recent performance acquisitions, the display presents a history of collecting performance at the V&A and celebrates the remarkable life and career of the collection's inspirational founder.

Highlights include: The original **Rolling Stones** tongue and lips artwork by graphic designer John Pasche; a costume worn by **Dua Lipa** in the Future Nostalgia tour; the semi-quaver spectacles worn by **Elton John** on his 1981-2 British and World tours; a costume worn by **Paul O'Grady's** Drag persona **Lily Savage**; A **Pink Floyd** azimuth coordinator; A long-lost portrait of Gabrielle Enthoven by suffragette artist Ethel Wright; a self-portrait bust by 18th century actress **Sarah Siddons**; a stage design by **Alexandra Exter** from 1924; a painting from around 1848 of **Ira Aldridge** as Othello; a set model designed by **Misty Buckley** for **Stormzy's** headline

set at Glastonbury Festival in 2019; a prompt script used by **Phoebe Waller-Bridge** for *Fleabag* in the West End.

Enthoven Unboxed: 100 Years of Collecting Performance forms part of the V&A's centenary celebrations for Theatre and Performance which kicked off earlier in the year with April's Performance Festival. As part of its commitment as the home of the National Collection of Performing Arts, the permanent Theatre and Performance Galleries, which opened at V&A South Kensington in 2009, have undergone a refresh complete with new lighting, flooring, colour scheme and interpretation. The galleries now comprise five areas: Curating Performance, Creating Performance, Selling Performance, Costuming Performance, Designing Performance and Experiencing Performance. A number of new acquisitions will join the permanent display from 14 September, including costumes and archival material from *Peaky Blinders*, costumes and puppets from the television series *His Dark Materials* and set models designed by David Rockwell for original Broadway and West End musicals *Hairspray* and *Kinky Boots*.

Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Theatre and Performance, Simon Sladen, said: "We look forward to celebrating Gabrielle Enthoven and her astounding legacy with *Enthoven Unboxed: 100 Years of Collecting Performance*. Over the past century, the V&A's collections have evolved as much as performance itself, which we unbox in this special display to honour our founder and consider the significant role performance continues to play in society."

-ENDS-

For further PRESS information about *Enthoven Unboxed: 100 Years of Collecting Performance* please contact the V&A Press Office at press.office@vam.ac.uk

Notes to editors

- *Enthoven Unboxed: 100 Years of Collecting Performance* will run from 14 September 2024 – 4 January 2026
- This free display is in the Theatre and Performance Galleries (103-106) at V&A South Kensington

About the V&A's Theatre and Performance collection

The Theatre and Performance collections are dedicated to the history, craft and practice of the performing arts both live and recorded. Their emphasis is on drama, dance, music, popular entertainment and film. Founded in 1924 by Gabrielle Enthoven, the collection constitutes one of the oldest and most significant in the world. They are widely acknowledged as the National Collection of Performing Arts and hold a diverse range of material types including playbills, posters, programmes, photographs, paintings, costume, designs, stage properties, stagecraft, letters, legal documents, published books, unpublished manuscripts, prompt books, scripts, scores, set models, puppets, backcloths, performance recordings, born digital material and files on practitioners, companies, theatres and productions.

About V&A South Kensington

The V&A is a family of museums dedicated to the power of creativity. 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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