



PRESS RELEASE

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V&A East launch schools engagement programme, taking museum objects into schools for the first time in V&A's history

- *Your Collection: V&A East in Schools* is a major new school's engagement programme from V&A East.
- For the very first time in V&A history, objects from the national collection are heading into schools in east London.

Your Collection: V&A East in Schools is a new programme spearheaded by Director of V&A East, Gus Casely-Hayford which brings objects from the collection into schools, hosting talks and workshops designed to empower young people and open pathways into the creative industries.

Gus Casely-Hayford, V&A East Director, says: *"Objects are glorious. I have spent my life dedicated to promoting and protecting them, but they are always made richer when animated by peoples love and passion. That is the driver of our V&A East schools programme, to take small numbers of truly special objects out to the schools of east London. Students will have the unique experience to engage with museum objects up close and have their voices heard as we discuss the rich global stories behind the objects. We want to share our love for what we do, and for what is coming in our two new sites, so that local young people feel a part of V&A East and be among some of our first ever visitors when we open in 2024."*

The objects chosen to be taken into schools all have unique and complex stories from around the world and from different moments in history. These include: a West African cast gold badge dating from 370-1874, a 'Free Zulu' pendant designed by Kenny Zulu Whitmore and made by inmates in Louisiana State Penitentiary in 2014, and a 17th Century Silver Scent Pomander, historically worn during times a pandemic to protect wearers from disease.

This new schools project is part of the wider ongoing community engagement programme from V&A East, which is dedicated to connecting with, and creating opportunities for, young people in the community leading up to the opening of the two new sites. **V&A East Storehouse** will open at Here East in 2024, and offers a new museum experience, taking visitors behind the scenes and providing unprecedented public access to V&A collections. Also, in 2025 **V&A East Museum** is opening on Stratford Waterfront, celebrating global creativity and making.

Your Collection: V&A East in Schools has been closely informed and shaped with teachers through an advisory group and a series of pilot sessions to make each workshop relevant and inspiring for their students. Participating schools can choose from a programme of assembly talks, classroom handling sessions, careers and skills workshops and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers. The sessions will resonate with subjects across the curriculum from art, design and humanities, and align with The Gatsby benchmarks for Good Career Guidance.

Sarah Green, V&A East Community Engagement and Outreach Lead says: *“Empowering young people and opening pathways into the creative industries is fundamental to our vision for V&A East. East London is one of the most vibrant and creative areas of the UK, with around 45,000 of 1.2 million residents work in the areas’ thriving creative industries, however the boroughs’ diversity is not reflected in the workforce. We are working with our communities to address this inequity. We want to use the collection to spark change, innovation, and creativity for the future.”*

Your Collection: V&A East in Schools is set to reach as many schools as possible in the next few years, initially focusing on schools within the four Olympic boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. Upcoming visits include Leyton Sixth Form College and Little Ilford School.

Schools interested in participating or hearing more about the V&A East Schools Programme can get in touch here: va-east-engagement@vam.ac.uk

Testimonials:

Bow School: “Our year 9 students who have chosen to study a humanities and an arts subject for GCSE were given the opportunity to attend a pioneering 2-hour workshop with the V&A East museum team. Director Gus Casely-Hayford and his colleagues brought three highly valuable and fascinating objects in for students to see. Students were also given the opportunity to consider what careers are available in the museums sector, and to learn how to record, photograph and pack museum items. Our students were completely blown away by the West African gold. Thank you for bringing that, a real treasure!”

Mossbourne Riverside Academy: “It was very insightful and engaging. The students really responded to not only seeing the artifacts up close, but the stories behind them which were diverse and fascinating. The workshop was a nice extension of the talk. Students learnt what it meant to be a curator and drew objects that mean something to them that they would want to add to a museum.”

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

For further PRESS information about V&A East, please contact Jessica Strawson on j.strawson@vam.ac.uk / 07906 708 607 (not for publication).

A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk.

[Further comments from Gus Casely-Hayford available here.](#)

About V&A East

One of the UK’s most significant new museum projects V&A East celebrates global creativity and builds on the V&A’s long-standing heritage in east London and founding mission to make the arts accessible to all. Currently under construction in Stratford’s Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, V&A East encompasses two new sites – V&A East Storehouse opening at Here East in 2024, and V&A East Museum opening on Stratford Waterfront in 2025. V&A East is committed

to creating opportunities for young people and fostering the next generation of creatives. Across its two sites, V&A East will celebrate making, highlight under-represented movements and voices, advance cultural conversations, and support the creation of new work, with its collections and buildings acting as a catalyst and studio space to platform new ideas. V&A East is part of East Bank, the Mayor of London's £1.1 billion Olympic legacy project, which will create a new arts, innovation and education hub in Stratford's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. vam.ac.uk/east

About V&A East Museum

The V&A East Museum building is designed by award winning architects O'Donnell & Tuomey and will open in 2025 at the heart of the Mayor of London's East Bank development in Stratford, alongside UAL's London College of Fashion, Sadler's Wells, the BBC and UCL. V&A East Museum will champion global creativity and the big issues facing society today. It will feature free collection galleries alongside ticketed temporary exhibitions and contemporary programming that aims to inspire the next generation of creatives. Two retail spaces, a café, creative studio and top-floor gallery and project space will sit alongside object displays woven throughout the museum's public circulation spaces.

About V&A East Storehouse

Designed by New York architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro with support from UK based architects Austin-Smith:Lord, V&A East Storehouse is a 16,000 sqm purpose-built home for over 250,000 objects, 350,000 library books and 1,000 archives – heading to east London in what will be the UK's largest ever collections move. Offering an entirely new museum experience, the Storehouse invites visitors to immerse themselves within and explore the full breadth of the V&A's collections. Blurring the boundaries between public and private back of house spaces, V&A East Storehouse will bring together research and reading rooms with galleries, performance spaces and creative studios, all within one experiential warehouse building.