



PRESS RELEASE

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Shortlist announced for V&A East Museum's *Why We Make* galleries design brief

Today, V&A East announces the shortlist for its V&A East Museum galleries design competition, first launched in April 2022. The following design teams are progressing to tender stage, with the winner to be announced in late summer 2022:

- **Citizens Design Bureau with Hayatsu Architects, Neba Sere and Rose Nordin**
- **Freehaus x IDK + Bergini**
- **JA Projects with A Practice for Everyday Life and Larry Achiampong**
- **OMMX with HATO**
- **Studio C102 + Mobile Studio Architects + Manijeh Verghese with Sthuthi Ramesh**



V&A East is seeking a team of designers, architects, and creatives to design and deliver two ***Why We Make*** collection galleries at V&A East Museum, which opens in Stratford's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in 2025. Spanning two floors, the *Why We Make* galleries are a call to action exploring making for the future. Bringing together approximately 700 objects from the V&A's collections spanning 5,000 years of art, design and performance, and including a series of new acquisitions, the galleries celebrate the joy and transformative potential of art, design and making through a contemporary lens.

Avoiding traditional art historical chronologies and stylistic groupings, the *Why We Make* galleries tell stories across time and geography and expand the traditional canons by championing global, diverse and previously marginalised narratives. Tuned to the major issues of our time, the galleries also explore how creative practitioners past and present give purpose to their work to change the world for the better and include inspirational and innovative objects, from born-digital works to those tackling the climate crisis, artworks about health and wellbeing and design projects addressing inequality and social injustice.

V&A East is looking for a gallery design scheme that is dynamic, active and captivating. It must be grounded in sustainable practice, as well as audience-led, responsive, coherent, and welcoming. It is keen to embrace new approaches to museum display, and be challenged with exciting, inclusive and immersive ideas that will target audiences – particularly young people – including those from the four Olympic Boroughs (Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest), and welcoming those that have previously felt that museums are not for them.

Active and continued consultation is key to the development of V&A East, as is creating opportunities for young people within the creative industries, and this forms a key part of the *Why We Make* galleries design brief. The V&A East Youth Collective – a rolling annual paid opportunity for young east Londoners to help shape V&A East – will be involved in the selection of the gallery design team and part of the design process that follows. The V&A East Youth Collective will work with the appointed design team to review ideas and provide continued consultation and collaboration at key stages throughout the project, whilst gaining valuable insight into the design sector and creative process. Through the design brief, V&A East is keen to support emerging practices, designers and collectives, especially those who are unrepresented in the built environment community.

Claire McKeown, V&A East Project Director, says: *“We are passionate about responding to our audience and we need a gallery design which is truly inclusive and surpasses their expectations. We want to create galleries that evoke wonder, surprise and intrigue through experiential design, using colour, pattern, texture, light and sound to engage with our audiences. We need the design team to understand and seek to dismantle barriers to entry creating a visitor journey that’s clear and that can be easily navigated. We’ve had an incredible response to the first stage of our design competition – and I can’t wait to see what comes through in the tender stage.”*

Catherine Ince, V&A East Chief Curator, says: *“V&A East’s *Why We Make* galleries are about celebrating the transformative power of making in the face of the major issues of our time. The gallery design itself is central to the ‘*Why We Make*’ concept – it will effectively be the largest ‘object’ on display in the galleries – and an example of something that V&A East is actively making. We’re seeking a team to express their creativity and expertise in a design that brings together a diverse range of objects spanning time, geography and different mediums to create a welcoming, contemporary space that offers our visitors immersive, energising and empowering experiences alongside quieter opportunities to switch off, contemplate and lose themselves in thought.”*

V&A East Museum’s *Why We Make* gallery experience is sub-divided into 10 complementary thematic sections, each presented as a series of constellation-like displays that juxtapose diverse practitioners and objects around shared themes and agendas. Sections will include **‘Our Place in the World’**, **‘Building Creative Communities’** and **‘Rethinking Systems’**. **‘Our Place in the World’**, explores powerful stories of shaping and communicating personal identity. Focusing on topical agendas around representation, identity politics, and planetary consciousness, this section explores different forms of visual representation and how these empower creators and communities. Objects on display range from **Kehinde Wiley’s** oil on canvas, *Portrait of Melissa Thompson*, 2020, to Sofonisba Anguissola’s *Self-portrait miniature*, around 1550 to 1620, **Maud Sulter’s** ‘Urania (Portrait of Lubaina Himid)’ from the series *Zabat*, 1989, **Molly Goddard’s** *Daria* dress, 2019, and a **Daoist robe** dating from the 1800s, among others.

V&A East Museum’s galleries will also have a Film Room, a dedicated, immersive space for a changing programme of screenings of film works resonating with the *Why We Make* gallery themes, as well as a series of co-curated displays, and an annual, changing programme that invites contemporary practitioners to select V&A collection objects for display and to showcase their own creative practice. Alongside object displays, the *Why We Make* galleries will be dynamic, animated and welcoming social spaces, and host a constantly changing in-gallery

programme including pop-up events, performances and resident practitioners, aiming to spark conversation, respond to topical events and encourage repeat visits.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

For further PRESS information about V&A East, please contact Laura Mitchell on l.mitchell@vam.ac.uk / 020 3949 4509 (not for publication). A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk.

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 as a hub of creativity 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 gallery displays 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

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. Underpinned by values of equity, empathy, openness and sustainability, 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

Image credit: *V&A East Museum under construction, June 2022 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London*