



The Design Fund to Benefit the V&A Announces New Contemporary Acquisitions

September 2013

The Design Fund to Benefit the V&A has this year enabled the Museum to acquire five contemporary design projects ranging from a series of vessels made of natural polymers to a 3D printed gun. They will all go on display at the V&A for the first time during London Design Festival (14-22 September).

Martin Roth, Director of the V&A, said: *“The generosity of supporters of the Design Fund ensures that the V&A is able to acquire for our permanent collections some of the best and most exciting design projects of our time. This year’s acquisitions reflect an interesting combination of new technologies working with traditional crafts.”*

Yana Peel, Founder of the Design Fund to Benefit the V&A, said: *“We are thrilled that in its third year, the Design Fund to Benefit the V&A has continued to enable the acquisition of such meaningful works for the Museum. With 17 exceptional contemporary design projects now acquired through the collective generosity of the Fund’s donors, a legacy is being built to represent the leading trends in design and society of today.”*

The Design Fund was set up in March 2011 by arts patron Yana Peel, to bring together design enthusiasts with a shared passion for contemporary design and an interest in supporting the V&A’s aim to enrich people’s lives by promoting knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the designed world. Over the last two years supporters of the Fund have enabled the V&A to buy a number of pieces by such international designers as Fredrikson Stallard, Joris Laarman and nendo. Some of the pieces are now on permanent display in the V&A’s new Dr. Susan Weber Gallery for Furniture, while others will go into future exhibitions.

These new acquisitions significantly enhance the V&A’s holding of contemporary design, a collection which reflects what is new, influential, innovative or experimental, and what is representative of current trends in design and society. The collection spans all aspects of design and art including fashion, furniture, craft objects, product and graphic design, digital media, architecture, photography, prints and drawings.

DETAILS OF THE NEW ACQUISITIONS

Defense Distributed (Cody Wilson)

Gun: *Liberator*, 2013



Texan law student Cody Wilson developed and fired the world's first 3D-printed gun, the 'Liberator', in May this year. His company, Defense Distributed, created designs for guns and gun components that can be downloaded by anyone anywhere in the world and printed out on a 3D printer. The invention of this so

called 'wiki weapon' sparked intense debate and upended discussions about the benefits of new manufacturing technologies and the unregulated sharing of designs online. The V&A has acquired two *Liberator* prototypes, one disassembled gun and a number of archive items to enhance its collection of 3D printed objects and represent a turning point in debates around digital manufacturing. www.defdist.org

Gareth Neal

Chest of Draws: *George*, 2008/2013

Artist's proof from an edition of five



Neal is passionately interested in the history of furniture, and believes that designers must 'look to the past to understand the future'. This 2013 chest of drawers made from ash is a development from an oak model made in 2008 and exhibited at the V&A. In certain positions the viewer can see the outline of a 1780s George III commode emerging from the rectilinear,

contemporary chest of drawers. The idea for the surface of this piece came about when Neal made an error while learning computer drawing. To make *George*, Neal combines computer controlled routing machines, hand carving techniques, traditional craft and contemporary design. www.garethneal.co.uk

Studio Formafantasma (Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin)

Botanica, 2012

Four prototypes and material samples



The vessels of the *Botanica* series are created as if in an era before oil was commonly used. The designers experimented with natural polymers extracted from plants and animals, aiming to develop a new aesthetic for a post-industrial world. Based on meticulous historic research, the objects challenge our current understanding of plastic materials and suggest new approaches towards sustainable alternatives. This project was commissioned by Plart, an Italian foundation dedicated to scientific research

and technological innovation in the recovery, restoration and conservation of works of art and design produced in plastic. www.formafantasma.com

Studio Makkink & Bey (Rianne Makkink and Jurgen Bey)

Ear Chairs, 2003

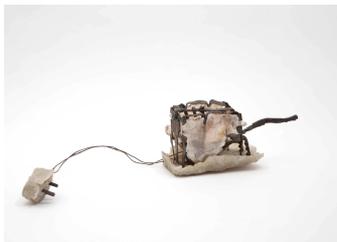
Prototypes



These chairs were designed for an office reception space. Paired together, they form a mini-environment – the ‘ears’ can create privacy or define space and the arm-rest functions as a small table. The designers combined the chairs with carpet and wall panelling that referenced the Sunday-room of a Dutch farmhouse. Despite this nod to history, the chairs aim to introduce a radical new way of working and living. They have been widely imitated in a range of seating designs in recent years. www.studiomakkinkbey.nl

Thomas Thwaites

The Toaster Project, 2009



British designer Thomas Thwaites decided to build from scratch a simple household appliance that cost £3.49 at Argos. He extracted and processed the raw materials himself using homemade tools and built a crude, but functioning, toaster that he admits “*will bear a very imperfect likeness to the ones that we buy – a kind of half-baked, hand made pastiche of a consumer appliance*”. If it were to go on sale it would cost £1187.54 – showing the vast economies of scale of large manufacturers. www.thomasthwaites.com

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The Design Fund to Benefit the V&A

The Design Fund to Benefit the V&A was established by Yana Peel in 2011. Supporters of the Fund contribute £5000 or more annually to enable the V&A to acquire the best examples of contemporary design. The inaugural campaign resulted in the largest gift to date for contemporary acquisitions at the V&A. The annual selection of acquisitions is displayed for the first time during London Design Festival. This year's pieces will be on display in the V&A's New Acquisitions Gallery, Room 19a.

www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/d/the-design-fund

London Design Festival

14 – 22 September 2013

London Design Festival is a key constituent of London's autumn creative season, alongside London Fashion Week, Frieze Art Fair and London Film Festival. Established in 2003, its role is to celebrate and promote London as the world's creative capital and gateway to the UK's

world-class creative community. London Design Festival works closely with, and receives financial support directly from, The Mayor of London. London Design Festival also receives support from Arts Council England, London, as a Regularly Funded Organisation for 2011/12. For the fifth year running, London Design Festival will reside at the V&A. Throughout the Festival the V&A will provide the central hub for the capital's major celebration of design with a rich and varied programme of installations, events and talks.

www.londondesignfestival.com

For further PRESS information and images, contact the V&A press office on 020 7942 2502 or email press.office@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).