An IKEA soft toy, a 3D-printed gun, a wrist-worn computer and a piece of lift cable are just a few of the objects that are on display in a new gallery at the V&A this summer.

The objects have been recently acquired as part of the Museum’s new approach to collecting contemporary design and architecture, known as ‘Rapid Response Collecting’. This new strategy will help the V&A engage in a timely way with important events that shape, or are shaped by design, architecture and technology.

Regularly updated with new objects, it is the first gallery in the Museum that can be responsive to global events, technological advances, political changes or pop cultural phenomena that have an impact on art, design and architecture. The long-term result will be a permanent legacy of objects in the collection that will help future visitors and researchers to access material culture of the 21st century.

Kieran Long, Senior Curator of Contemporary Architecture, Design and Digital at the Museum, said: “The V&A has always strived to understand social history through objects of design, art and architecture, and with this new strategy we are bringing that social commitment to bear on the contemporary world.”

The opening display features a dozen objects including a sample of KONE UltraRope, a new lightweight lift cable. This new material will enable lifts to travel 1000 metres in a single run, potentially transforming city skylines as buildings get...
slimmer and higher. The world’s first 3D printed gun, ‘the Liberator’, designed by Texan Law student Cody Wilson will also be on show. The gun upended discussions about the benefits of new manufacturing technologies and the unregulated sharing of designs online, and continues to make the news.

A wrist-worn computer, the Motorola ‘WT41N0’, is a portable device used in large-scale warehouse operations to allocate, monitor and verify tasks as they are completed by individual employees. The ‘Nest’ thermostat, a device for the home that optimises the household environment based on data collected via sensors, acts as an example of a new kind of smart device which raises questions about privacy and personal data.

A pair of cargo trousers from Primark made in Bangladesh are also on display. Acquired in response to the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory complex in Bangladesh which killed more than 1100 workers, they bring into focus debates about fast fashion and the responsibilities of global consumer brands and shoppers.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- This FREE display is in the V&A’s Gallery 74
- The V&A is open daily from 10.00 to 17.45 and until 22.00 on Fridays
- The display is curated by Corinna Gardner, V&A Curator of Contemporary Product Design

For further PRESS information please contact the V&A Press Office on 020 7942 2502 or email press.office@vam.ac.uk

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