



British Design 1948-2012: Innovation in the Modern Age

Sponsored by Ernst & Young

31 March – 12 August 2012

The V&A's major spring exhibition showcases the best of British design and creative talent from the 1948 'Austerity Olympics' to the summer of 2012. It is the first comprehensive exhibition to examine the ways in which artists and designers who were born, trained or working in the UK have produced innovative and internationally acclaimed works from post-war to the present day. Ranging from the *Morris Mini Minor* (1959) to a newly commissioned model of Zaha Hadid's London *Aquatics Centre* (2011), the objects on display aim to reinforce Britain's status as a global leader in design.

British Design 1948-2012 tells the story of British fashion, furniture, fine art, graphic design, photography, ceramics, architecture and industrial products over the past 60 years. Highlighting significant moments in the history of British design, the exhibition looks at how the country continues to nurture artistic talent, as well as investigate the role that Britain's manufacturing industry has played in the global market. It also examines the impact that Britain's ideas-driven, creative economy has had on goods and design industries world-wide.

Drawing on the V&A's unrivalled collections and complemented by works from across Britain, the exhibition brings together more than 350 objects. It charts the development of British design in all its forms featuring much-loved designs such as a 1961 E-type Jaguar car, a *Brownie Vecta* camera by Kenneth Grange (1964), an Alexander McQueen evening gown from the *Horn of Plenty* collection (2009), a six metre model of Concorde, fine art by Richard Hamilton and David Hockney, textiles by Lucienne Day (1951) and Laura Ashley (1983) and a *Moulton* bicycle (1964). Alongside these well-known pieces are works on museum display for the first time including Kit Williams' golden hare jewel from *Masquerade* (1979) and Brian Duffy's original photograph for the cover of David Bowie's *Aladdin Sane* album (1973), as well as recent discoveries such as a Brian Long *Torsion* chair (1971) and furniture by Max Clendinning (1960s).

Martin Roth, Director of the V&A, said: "As people around the world will be focussing on the UK in the summer of 2012 this is an ideal moment to showcase British innovation, taste and creativity. We are also delighted to be hosting a series of British themed displays across all the collections in the Museum to accompany the major spring exhibition."

The exhibition is structured around three themes; Tradition and Modernity, Subversion, and Innovation and Creativity and broadly follows a chronological framework.

The first gallery focuses on the tensions between tradition and modernity in the years following World War II. The opening section investigates how key events such as the Festival of Britain (1951) and the Queen's Coronation (1953) played an important role in promoting modernisation and preserving British traditions and heritage. The work of designers such as John Fowler, John Makepeace and Michael Casson demonstrate the revival of traditional craft techniques and show a renewed fascination in the British landscape as a source of inspiration. Along with this preoccupation with the past, however, came a drive to modernise British life. Urban regeneration projects such as *The New Towns Act* (1946) served to promote Britain as a progressive nation. On show are models and architectural drawings created for New Towns such as Harlow and Milton Keynes. The economic recovery of the late 1950s and 1960s also generated new kinds of consumer demand. Designers including David Hicks, Max Clendinning and David Mellor and high-street stores such as Terence Conran's *Habitat* were embraced by a growing, affluent middle class who developed a taste for modern, European-inspired design for their homes.

The second section of the exhibition is dedicated to the subversive nature of British design from the 1960s to the 1990s. The British Art School system has long acted as an engine for cultivating radical artistic talent. Richard Slee, Zandra Rhodes and Damien Hirst are just some of the internationally recognised artists to have graduated from British art schools and examples of their work are featured in the exhibition. The central gallery is divided into studios structured around a central 'street' space that explore the counter-cultural movements from 1960s 'Swinging London', through to the 1970s punk scene and the emergence of 'Cool Britannia' in the 1990s. British street culture has long fuelled the country's creative spirit, with the work of fashion designers such as Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren, photographers David Bailey and Terry O'Neill, performers David Bowie and Brian Eno, graphic designers Peter Saville and Barney Bubbles, and furniture designers Tom Dixon and Mark Brazier Jones, all illustrating the impulsive radicalism of British art and design.

The final section of the exhibition explores British creativity in relation to manufacturing industries, new technologies and architecture. During the post-war years, Britain was internationally renowned for its inventive product design and globally recognised for its feats of engineering from the Mini to Concorde. Since the oil crisis of the early 1970s traditional British manufacturing was in decline, while the nation's service industries started to expand. The strength of Britain's advances in new technologies are illustrated by objects such as the *Sinclair ZX80* home computer (1980) and Jonathan Ive's *iMac* for Apple (1998). There is also an immersive computer-gaming installation at the centre of the final gallery, featuring specially designed projections of five video games developed in Britain.

The last section also examines Britain's expertise in architecture and structural engineering and displays architectural renderings and models of the *Falkirk Wheel* created by RMJM (2002), Foster & Partner's *30 St Mary Axe* building (2004) and a newly commissioned model of Zaha Hadid's *London Aquatics Centre* (2011), opening in the summer of 2012.

For this major exhibition the V&A has worked with leading British designers. The 3D design has been created by Ben Kelly Design, exhibition graphics by London-based consultancy GTF (Graphic Thought Facility), visual identity and accompanying catalogue were produced by Barnbrook Design and audio visual installations by Soda. *British Design 1948-2012* is accompanied by a season of new displays across the Museum focusing on different aspects of British design.

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Notes to Editors

- *British Design 1948-2012: Innovation in the Modern Age* is curated by Christopher Breward and Ghislaine Wood
- The exhibition takes place at the V&A from 31 March to 12 August 2012
- The Museum is open daily 10:00 – 17:45 and until 22:00 every Friday

Related Exhibitions and Displays

- *On Eagle's Wings: British Adventure Comics 1950-1969*, 7 January - 27 May 2012
- *The New Medallists*, 11 February - 19 August 2012
- *Island Stories: Fifty Years of Photography in Britain*, 16 March - 19 September 2012
- *Transformation and Revelation: Gormley to Gaga*, 17 March - 30 September 2012
- *Fit for Purpose*, 30 March - 16 September 2012
- *George W. Adamson: A Twentieth Century Illustrator*, 3 April - 30 August 2012
- *Queensberry Hunt: Ceramic Design*, 14 April - 2 September 2012
- *Recording Britain*, 14 April - 21 October 2012
- *The Silent Traveller: Chiang Yee in Britain, 1933-1955*, 23 April - 9 November 2012
- *Kitty and the Bulldog: Lolita fashion and the influence of Britain*, 23 April 2012 - 27 January 2013
- *Ballgowns: British Glamour Since 1950*, 19 May 2012 - 6 January 2013
- *Heatherwick Studio: Designing the Extraordinary*, 31 May - 30 September 2012
- *Kings Cross: Regenerating a London Landmark*, 19 May - 21 October 2012

Ticket Information

Tickets: £12 (concessions available)

V&A Members go free

For advance bookings visit www.vam.ac.uk (booking fee applies)

Exhibition Designers

Leading UK Interior Design practice Ben Kelly Design (BKD), have created the 3D exhibition design. Barnbrook Design, one of Britain's leading graphic design studios, has designed the accompanying exhibition catalogue as well as the visual identity for the exhibition. GTF (Graphic Thought Facility), London-based design consultancy has been appointed for the exhibition graphics and London agency Soda have created the audio visual installations.

Exhibition Sponsors

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Exhibition Publication

An accompanying exhibition catalogue *British Design from 1948: Innovation in the Modern Age* (edited by Christopher Breward and Ghislaine Wood) is available from V&A Publishing (£40 hardback). For PRESS information on the book contact Julie Chan on 020 7942 2701 or email j.chan@vam.ac.uk

Exhibition Merchandise

There is a V&A Shop range inspired by British Design including an exclusive home textile range, posters and prints, and a fourth *Cherry on the Cake* range with leading fashion designers, many seen in the exhibition. For press information on merchandise accompanying the exhibition contact Lee Kendall on 020 7942 2681 or email l.kendall@vam.ac.uk

For further PRESS information about the V&A exhibition *British Design 1948-2012: Innovation in the Modern Age* please contact Alice Evans or Elinor Hughes in the V&A press office on 020 7942 2508 / 2500 or email a.evans@vam.ac.uk / e.hughes@vam.ac.uk

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