



## News Release

# Heatherwick Studio: Designing the Extraordinary

Sponsored by Ernst & Young

31 May – 30 September 2012

The V&A presents the first major solo exhibition exploring the work of one of the most inventive and experimental design studios practising in Britain today. The exhibition showcases the wide variety of projects conceived by British designer Thomas Heatherwick and his studio. On display are over 150 objects, from an original seed-tipped rod from the UK Pavilion *Seed Cathedral* at Shanghai World Expo (2010) to a full scale mock-up of the rear end of the new London double-decker bus (2012).

The exhibition examines two decades of projects, from examples of Thomas Heatherwick's exploratory student work, through to the architectural commissions which have earned the studio their international reputation and their most current projects to date. The exhibition is part of the London 2012 Festival (21 June - 9 September 2012).

The collection of contextual photographs, maquettes, prototypes, material fragments and models on display offers an insight into the studio's design processes and their curiosity for materials, engineering and fabrication. The objects are structured in a series of conceptual clusters illustrating the interrelation of ideas throughout the studio's work, whilst giving a sense of walking through the Heatherwick workshop and archive. Each of the themed clusters are accompanied by film footage and audio clips of Thomas Heatherwick discussing the back-stories of the projects on show.

Martin Roth, Director of the V&A, said: "*We are delighted to be showing the first solo exhibition of the work of Thomas Heatherwick and his studio. He is an extremely exciting and forward thinking contemporary designer whose work spans a fascinating breadth of disciplines. He is constantly challenging us with his ideas and pushing boundaries in art and design.*"

The exhibition is designed by Heatherwick Studio and spans the disciplines of architecture, engineering, transport and urban planning to furniture, sculpture and product design. Preparatory drawings, full-scale material fragments and maquettes for larger-scale architectural achievements such as the East Beach Café, Littlehampton (2007), the design for Longchamp fashion store, New York (2006) and the Teesside biomass-fuelled power station, UK (as yet unbuilt) are on display. These are shown alongside test models, photographs and complete pieces for smaller projects like the glass *Bleigiessen* installation for the Wellcome Trust (2005), the pedestrian *Rolling Bridge* in Paddington Basin, London (2004) and the aluminium *Extrusions* (2009).

Thomas Heatherwick studied 3D design in Manchester followed by an MA at the Royal College of Art in London and in 1994 he established his own studio which is now based in King's Cross, London. Since the start of his career Heatherwick has worked with an extensive range of design disciplines and has shown a persistence of vision, with ideas and themes recurring in projects years on from their initial conception. His work reveals a fascination for texture, for what materials can do and how far boundaries can be pushed. His creativity and ingenuity have earned Heatherwick numerous design awards including the *Prince Philip Designers Prize* (2006), the *London Design Medal* (2010), the *RIBA Lubetkin Prize* (2010) for the UK Pavilion and in 2004 he became the youngest practitioner to be appointed a *Royal Designer for Industry*.

The V&A have also invited Heatherwick Studio to design a canopy over the front steps of the Museum as a way of signalling to the public the presence of the exhibition and welcoming visitors to the V&A during the British Design Season.

- ENDS -

#### Notes to Editors

- The exhibition takes place in the Porter Gallery, the V&A's gallery for contemporary exhibitions and installations from 31 May to 30 September 2012
- The Museum is open daily 10:00-17:45 and until 22:00 every Friday
- *Heatherwick Studio: Designing the Extraordinary* is curated by Abraham Thomas
- The exhibition is part of the V&A's British Design Season of exhibitions and displays across the Museum's collections and complements the major exhibition *British Design 1948-2012: Innovation in the Modern Age* (31 March – 12 August 2012)
- Ernst & Young is also the sponsor of the V&A's major exhibition *British Design 1948-2012: Innovation in the Modern Age*
- *Heatherwick Studio: Designing the Extraordinary* is part of the London 2012 Festival (21 June - 9 September 2012)

#### Ticket Information

Tickets: £6 (concessions available)

V&A Members go free

For advance bookings visit [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk) (booking fee applies)

#### Exhibition Sponsors

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**Corporate support for the V&A is more vital than ever. Please help us by acknowledging the exhibition sponsor Ernst & Young.**

### **Exhibition Designers**

Heatherwick Studio have created the 3D exhibition design and London based studio *Here Design* have created the 2D graphics.

### **About the Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 Festival**

The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad is the largest cultural celebration in the history of the modern Olympic and Paralympic Movements. Spread over four years, it is designed to give everyone in the UK a chance to be part of London 2012 and inspire creativity across all forms of culture, especially among young people.

The culmination of the Cultural Olympiad will be the London 2012 Festival, a spectacular 12-week nationwide celebration bringing together leading artists from across the world with the very best from the UK, from 21 June until the final day of the Paralympic Games on 9 September 2012  
[www.london2012.com/festival](http://www.london2012.com/festival)

### **Publication by Thames & Hudson**

*Thomas Heatherwick: Making* is published by Thames & Hudson, May 2012, 600 pages, £38 hardback. Prepared in close collaboration with the studio, the first publication on Thomas Heatherwick presents an exhaustive overview covering the studio's entire history – over 140 projects, each fully illustrated. Heatherwick has personally written on each project, offering an unprecedented, in-depth and behind-the-scenes perspective that reveals the creative, design and manufacturing processes behind his genius, often for the very first time. The book will be available at the V&A during the exhibition for £30. For PRESS information on the book contact Kate Burvill on 020 7226 7824 / 07947 754 717 or email [kateburvill@gmail.com](mailto:kateburvill@gmail.com)

**For further PRESS information about the V&A exhibition *Heatherwick Studio: Designing the Extraordinary* please contact Alice Evans or Amelia MacGregor in the V&A press office on 020 7942 2508 / 2502 or email [a.evans@vam.ac.uk](mailto:a.evans@vam.ac.uk) / [a.macgregor@vam.ac.uk](mailto:a.macgregor@vam.ac.uk)**

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