



V&A acquires the Glastonbury Festival Archive

The V&A is delighted to announce a collaboration with Glastonbury Festival to create an archive reflecting more than 40 years of diverse and creative performance. Glastonbury Festival is the longest-running popular music and performing arts festival in the world.

Set up in 1970 by Michael Eavis on Worthy Farm in Pilton, Somerset – the Eavis’s family farm for four generations - the Festival is now attended by around 175,000 people annually. It has a long and unique history of hosting music, dance, comedy, theatre, circus, cabaret and other arts and collaborating with artists, set designers and craftspeople. Many distinguished names have performed at the summer festival over the last four decades including Beyoncé, Bjork, Blondie, Marc Bolan, Coldplay, The Cure, Jay-Z, Paul McCartney, Van Morrison, New Order, Oasis, Radiohead, The Rolling Stones, Toots and the Maytals, Velvet Underground and Amy Winehouse.

This eclectic archive includes a range of material, from programmes and posters from every festival since 1970, designs for the Festival identity, interviews, unseen film and photographs, correspondence, t-shirts, tickets and other memorabilia. Personal accounts and documents trace the origins of the Festival and festival maps reveal how it has grown and developed within the landscape. Press cuttings document the relationship of the Festival with the local community and stories that captured the nation. The working processes of the Festival will be captured in the archive with original backstage passes, photographs and performers’ set-lists. The archive also includes photographs that reveal the evolution of the legendary Pyramid stage since its creation in 1971 to a permanent stage – also briefly used as a cattle shed in 1981. Supporting political action is at the heart of the Festival and is documented through pamphlets and imagery.

The array of site-specific works by artists and designers are also represented such as the 15,000 hand painted recycled oil-drum bins hand-painted for each Festival; murals and permanent works by many different artists; and examples of the Mutoid Waste Company and other contributor’s mechanical sculptures, many of which made their first appearances in the 1980s. At the end of each Festival, Glastonbury will work with the V&A to continue to archive this cultural phenomenon. The intention is to document the evolution of the site, performances and the audiences that continue to make the Festival a rich celebration of creativity and contemporary culture.

Michael Eavis, Founder of Glastonbury Festival said: *“When I set out on this crazy hippy trip 44 years ago, little did I know how this roller coaster would run. But now I have to pinch myself every morning when I wake up to the excitement of another day heading up a team of the most creative artists anywhere in the world. The V&A is an inspirational space and feels like the natural ‘home’ for our ever-evolving archive so we can really show everyone, not just festival-goers, what we really do.”*

Martin Roth, Director of the V&A said: *“All areas of the live performing arts are represented in the V&A collections, documenting both current practice and the history of the performing arts in the UK. We are honoured to acquire the Glastonbury archive, a Festival which has attracted an extraordinary and unparalleled range of creativity across all areas of performance. The archive is interesting not only for its diversity but also for its fascinating witness to creative, social and political change in the UK.”*

Selected highlights from the archive will be on display in the V&A’s Theatre and Performance Galleries from March 2015 – January 2016. The V&A will make the archive available for research for the very first time once cataloguing has been complete and digital records will also be available on Search the Collections.

A film installation gathered from the 2014 Glastonbury Festival will be shown at the Jaroslav Fragner Gallery Prague as part of the Prague Quadrennial from 28 May – 28 June 2015.

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Notes to Editors

About the V&A

The V&A is the world’s greatest museum of art and design with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity. The V&A’s Theatre and Performance Galleries opened in March 2009 and explore all performance types from theatre and ballet to pantomime and rock music. More than 250 objects from the V&A’s collections are on display including set models, stage props, costumes, original posters, paintings and photographs, representing live performance in Britain over the last 350 years. The V&A houses the National Video Archive of Performance (NVAP), which has recorded nearly 300 theatre performances since 1992, from classic plays and musicals to new-writing and physical theatre. www.vam.ac.uk

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