

RESEARCH BULLETIN 2008

CONTENTS

- 02/03 FOREWORD**
CHRISTOPHER BREWARD
ACTING HEAD OF RESEARCH
- 04/05 RESEARCH FOR GALLERIES AND EXHIBITIONS**
DIAGHILEV AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE BALLETS RUSSES 1909–1929 (GEOFFREY MARSH, JANE PRITCHARD)
LEARNING AND INTERPRETATION (JULIETTE FRITSCH)
MAHARAJA: THE SPLENDOUR OF INDIA'S ROYAL COURTS (ANNA JACKSON)
REDISPLAY OF THE CERAMICS GALLERIES (HILARY YOUNG)
TELLING TALES, NARRATIVE IN DESIGN ART (GARETH WILLIAMS)
THE WILLIAM AND JUDITH BOLLINGER JEWELLERY GALLERY (RICHARD EDGCUMBE)
- 16/17 RESEARCH FOR PUBLICATION**
MEDIÆVAL AND RENAISSANCE GALLERIES (GLYN DAVIES, KIRSTIN KENNEDY)
TIMBERS USED IN BRITISH FURNITURE-MAKING, 1400–1900 (ADAM BOWETT)
THE CRAFT READER (GLENN ADAMSON)
TIPU'S TIGER (SUSAN STRONGE)
- 24/25 COLLECTIONS RESEARCH**
MAPPING THE PRACTICE OF SCULPTURE IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND 1851–1951 (ANN COMPTON, NANCY IRESON)
RESEARCH IN THE CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT (GRAHAM MARTIN)
RESEARCH IN THE THEATRE COLLECTIONS (KATE DORNEY)
- 30/31 GRADUATE RESEARCH**
AHRC COLLABORATIVE DOCTORAL PROJECTS
- 32/33 APPENDIX**
STAFF LIST
BENEFACTORS LIST

FOREWORD

Welcome to the third edition of the V&A Research Bulletin. The summaries of the research projects undertaken by the Museum's curators, conservators, educators, students and fellows during 2008 are representative of a much broader range of collections, exhibitions, gallery and web-related work, full listings of which can be found in the online V&A Research Report (http://www.vam.ac.uk/res/cons/research_reports)

The content and format of the research highlighted here supports the V&A's mission to be acknowledged and respected as the world's leading museum of art and design. It ranges from the sculpture and furniture woods of Britain to the splendours of India's royal courts and the glory of Russia's dance heritage, and aims to be truly global in its impact. The resulting publications, touring exhibitions and web-resources will reach national and international audiences, increasing knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the designed world.

We hope you enjoy this insight into the activities that underpin the public outputs of the V&A, and we thank our sponsors, partners, staff and students for playing a part in their successful execution.

PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER BREWARD
ACTING HEAD OF RESEARCH
DECEMBER 2008

RESEARCH FOR GALLERIES AND EXHIBITIONS

DIAGHILEV AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE BALLET RUSSES 1909–1929

The Ballets Russes was established by Serge Diaghilev (1872–1929) who had a remarkable ability to inspire original theatrical creations and promote dancers, composers and artists. He drew initially on the fin de siècle renaissance in Russian art – fine, applied and theatre arts – and subsequently involved the collaboration of many of the key figures in European music, dance, painting and sculpture. In two decades the company changed European sensibilities in music, colour and movement. It pushed forward the frontiers of theatre during the twenty-year period of its peripatetic existence, exerting an influence that continues to be felt.

The exhibition, scheduled for September 2010, celebrates the most exciting dance company of the twentieth century and its impact on all forms of theatre, music and fashion. It showcases original costumes from the V&A's unrivalled Theatre Collections alongside designs, prints and drawings, notation, musical scores, props, posters and film clips. These will be used to capture the spirit of experimentation and collaboration for which the Ballets Russes was famous. The work of key designers, from Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Chanel through to the Russians Léon Bakst, Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova features, but the craft of theatre becomes an important theme. Source material - librettos, the composition of musical scores, and the choreographed movements - will be presented to reveal the creative process. A special feature will be made of contrasting productions including the primitive *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913) and the chic *Les Biches* (1924).

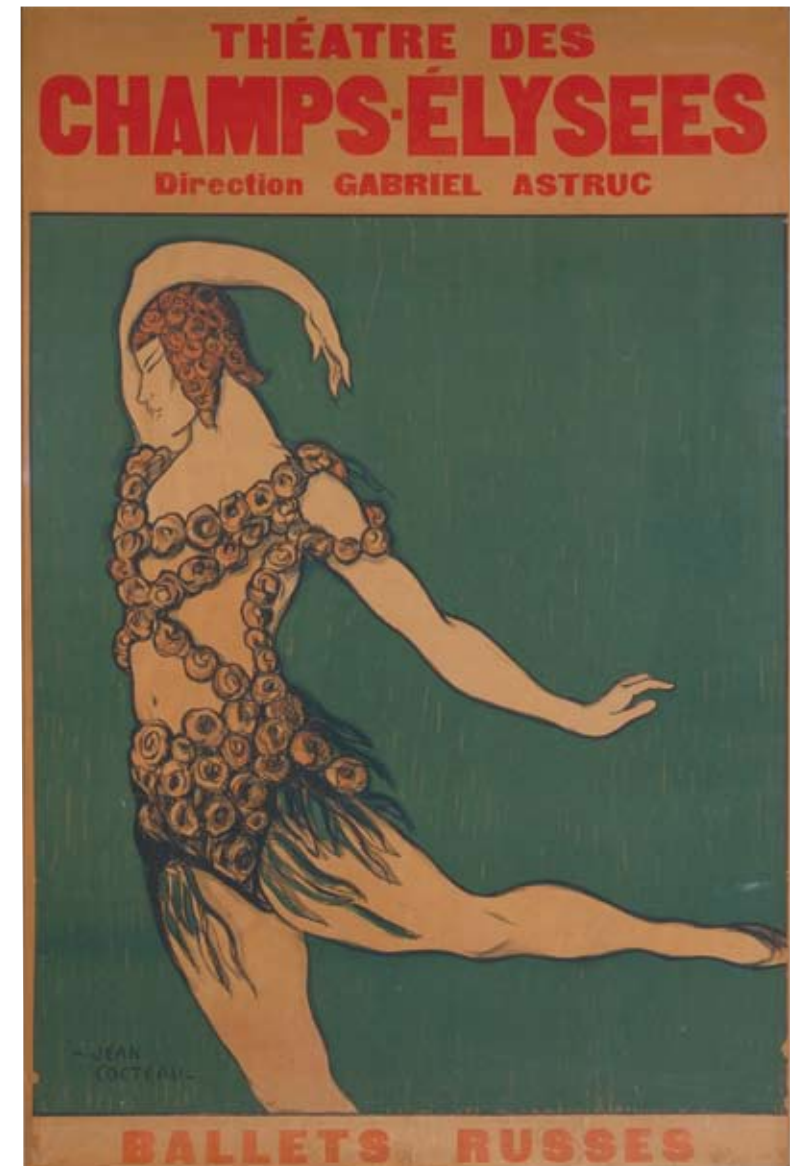
The exhibition coincides with the centenary of Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and his promotion of the Russian arts in the West. Although May 1909 is often regarded as the 'official birth' of the Ballets Russes, Diaghilev had begun presenting Russian arts in Paris in 1906, and it was not until 1911 that he established a year-round touring company. The 1909 season was the first dominated by ballet but the productions were adapted from works in the Imperial Russian Ballet's repertoire. Parisian audiences and later those elsewhere in Europe and America were nevertheless captivated by the bold colours, the extraordinary music and innovative movements. From 1910 Diaghilev presented original creations drawing on Western Europe's fascination with the 'Orient' and Russian exoticism. The first was *The*

French poster advertising the Ballet Russes in Le Spectre de la Rose featuring Nijinsky. Colour lithograph designed by Jean Cocteau. Theatre des Champs-Elysees 1911, V&A: 5.562-1980

Firebird, which provides one of the focal points of the exhibition with a presentation on the versions designed by Alexandre Golovin in 1910 and Goncharova in 1926. This includes the backcloth for the Kremlin used for the final coronation scene in the second version which visually encapsulates the idea of Holy Russia (then apparently lost to the world by the rise of the Soviet state) and aptly reflects Stravinsky's hymn of thanksgiving at the end of the ballet.

The exhibition provides an opportunity to reassess the Theatre Collection's impressive holdings in the light of the recent acquisition of a substantial related archive, and investigate fresh means of bringing to life an intangible art to evoke the movement and creative energy of the company and its iconic performances.

GEOFFREY MARSH & JANE PRITCHARD
THEATRE COLLECTIONS & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT



LEARNING AND INTERPRETATION

This year, the Department was focussed on preparing for the opening of the Sackler Centre for arts education, the William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery, and continuing development work for the forthcoming Ceramics, Medieval and Renaissance, Gilbert and Buddhist Sculpture galleries, all of which are due to open next year.

For the Sackler Centre, a detailed research strategy has been prepared which will kick off in November 2008 with a three-day international conference, 'Fear of the Unknown', dealing with the relationship between interpretation design and learning in galleries. The conference has attracted wide attention and highly regarded academics and practitioners in the field will be travelling from all over the world to participate. It is hoped that the conference proceedings will be published. The Sackler Centre research strategy will commission research with two key avenues of enquiry: creative learning and cultural participation.

The CETLD team (Centre for Excellence for Teaching and Learning in Design) continued to attend conferences presenting the findings of their multiple research projects around the topic of Further Education design students and how they use art and design museums for their studies. CETLD funded projects running at the V&A in 2008 included the iGuides project, which is creating custom-made, managed, interactive online learning materials and guides. Conference outputs included a poster presentation at the 2008 Visitor Studies Association (VSA) conference, looking at language and culture issues in cross-sector partnerships; a presentation at the M-Learn conference in October 2008, looking at PDA technology as a medium for museum learning materials for design students; a presentation at the Sackler Conference for arts education in November 2008, looking at the potential for mobile learning devices to provide gallery interpretation.

Other projects included the Behind the Scenes research project and the Student Placement Programme. The Student Placement Project is due to end in the autumn of 2008 and Behind the Scenes in March 2009. In July 2008 the CETLD began a podcasting project, building on the iGuides project. The CETLD team have also had a book proposal approved by a publisher, for a book called 'Learning to Look: Museums as a resource for design education'. The final manuscript is due in March 2009.

This year, we also completed the AHRC-funded seminar series in conjunction with the Science Museum and Kings College, London, on 'The Socialisation of Interactives'. In July, the Head of Gallery Interpretation, Evaluation and Resources ran a research skills workshop in Houston, Texas during the VSA conference, on the topic of how non-science museums can draw on visitor research and evaluation from science museums in their work. This was attended by education and interpretation research staff from several American art institutions including the Dallas Museum of Art and the Detroit Institute of Fine Arts.

JULIETTE FRITSCH

LEARNING AND INTERPRETATION





MAHARAJA: THE SPLENDOUR OF INDIA'S ROYAL COURTS

In both Asia and Europe the word 'maharaja', literally 'great king', conjures up a vision of splendour and magnificence. This major exhibition, to be staged at the V&A in autumn 2009, will explore the real and perceived worlds of the maharaja, displaying spectacular and varied objects that reveal the many aspects of royal life. These significant works will be considered within a broader historical and social context, providing visitors with an understanding of the culture of kingship in India. One of the principal duties of a king was to be a patron of the arts; commissioning and acquiring objects that enhanced royal status and identity. Patronage will be a key theme of the exhibition, which will examine how its expansion from the local to the international not only altered the visual culture of kingship, but had a wide-ranging impact on the production of luxury goods in both India and the west.

The exhibition will open in the eighteenth century, as the power of the Mughal Empire began to wane and will close with the end of British rule in 1947, when the maharajas ceded their territories into the modern states of India and Pakistan. Sections on Kingship, Shifting Power, Imperial Spectacle, Expanding Tastes and the Jazz Age will showcase about 200 objects in a wide range of media: paintings, drawings and photographs, textiles and dress, jewellery, jewelled objects, arms and armour, ceramics, glass, metalwork, furniture, various modes of transport and rare archive film. The objects will be drawn from the V&A and from collections in Europe, America and India.

The exhibition will open at the V&A on 10 October 2009 and run until 17 January 2010, after which it will tour internationally. It will be accompanied by a book which will explore the themes of the exhibition in detail and include contributions from a range of international scholars with expertise in the political, social and art historical context of Indian royal life and patronage.

ANNA JACKSON
ASIAN DEPARTMENT

*The Golden Throne of Ranjit Singh, Hafaz Muhammed of Multan
Wood and resin core covered with embossed gold, c.1818
V&A: IS.2518*

REDISPLAY OF THE CERAMIC GALLERIES

The V&A, which houses the largest and most comprehensive collection of ceramics in existence, is transforming its top floor pottery and porcelain galleries into a new international centre for the study and appreciation of ceramics. Comprising an unbroken run of eleven rooms, and accommodating approximately 29,000 objects from Europe, the Middle East, and East and Southeast Asia, this redisplay is being carried out in two phases, the first of which will open in September 2009. These rooms were originally laid out as ceramic galleries around 1909, and the taxonomic principles of display introduced at that time – with objects strictly placed according to their country, material, factory and date of production – remained fundamentally unchanged for almost a hundred years, though the displays became increasingly crowded as more and more acquisitions were squeezed in.

The first phase of the redisplay includes two major cross-cultural galleries that make a radical break with the massed ranks and taxonomic presentation of the old displays: a chronologically-arranged 'Introduction to World Ceramics', and a technologically-led 'Making Ceramics' gallery. Drawing on recent research on ceramic technology and on the connections between world potting traditions resulting from international trade and the transmission of technology and design, these make juxtapositions that explore connections between ceramics made in different parts of the world. Visitors will learn about ceramics as a medium of cultural exchange, through which style, design, materials, techniques and even language travelled the globe. Three further cross-cultural galleries in the first phase of the redisplay focus on twentieth-century and contemporary ceramics, previously poorly represented in the displays. A fourth is devoted to architectural ceramics from East and West.

The second phase of the display, by contrast, builds on the traditional taxonomic principles laid down when ceramic history was first established as an academic discipline. Opening in 2010, this will comprise dense study collections (some in visible storage units) supported by a Study Centre, where researchers will be able to examine objects requested in advance. While the first phase will be cross-cultural and introductory with a strong emphasis on interpretation, the second will be dense and taxonomically arranged, and aimed particularly at specialists. Once objects have been selected for the displays, the research effort for this second phase will focus on re-cataloguing collections and creating new, up-to-date electronic records

of the Museum's entire holdings of 34,000 ceramics, which will be accessible both in the galleries and via the Museum's website.

Throughout the planning process the gallery team held workshops to debate proposals, including one highly productive session sponsored by the Chipstone Foundation and held at the British Art Center, Yale University, New Haven in 2006. A further event, in which the planning for Phase II of the redisplay was discussed, was generously supported by a foundation in July 2008.

HILARY YOUNG

SCULPTURE, METALWORK, CERAMICS AND GLASS



*Chinese ewer with Iranian silver mounts, made for the Portuguese navigator and merchant Antonio Peixoto, c. 1545
V&A: C.222-1931*

TELLING TALES: NARRATIVE IN DESIGN ART

'Telling Tales, Narrative in Design Art' will be the first major exhibition to examine how contemporary designers of furniture and related objects are using narrative as the basis for their objects. It comes at a time of heightened interest in cutting edge design objects made as one-offs or in limited editions, which the market has defined as a new class of 'design art' object. The exhibition and accompanying book will explore connections between approximately fifty objects by about thirty international contemporary designers.

A problem faced by curators of any kind of contemporary practice is the difficulty maintaining critical distance from the subject, and in the case of contemporary furniture and product design, the general absence of clearly articulated theories underpinning it. This project examines how a group of very distinctive design objects can 'speak' by calling upon a common pool of shared memory. By focussing only on practice that uses story-telling, references to history, and to archetypes in the design process and eventual appearance of objects, 'Telling Tales' begins to construct a theory based on the notion of narrative, to explain how some design objects could be considered as 'design art'. Theoretical principles and comparisons have been found in literary theory, for example in narratology (the study of the development of narrative) and also in psychoanalysis, the history of fairytales, the development of the realist novel, surrealism and the history of design. The work of Walter Benjamin, Susan Sontag and other writers and theorists is also considered.

The exhibition will be staged in three immersive environments, in which the objects will create distinctive atmospheres that each relate to different themes. The first zone, the Forest Glade, recalls the pastoral idyll of ancient myths, the Garden of Eden, and of fairy tales, and features designs that are inspired by, or seek to instil, a sense of child-like wonder and innocence. These are all objects whose design reconnects us with elemental, universal truths and stories. Amongst the most impressive and significant objects will be the 'Fig Leaf' wardrobe, designed by Tord Boontje (2008). The natural imagery and realistic execution of the object relate it to the pastoral theme, while the quality of craftsmanship and exclusivity define it as part of the market-led 'design art' category.

The second zone is called the Enchanted Castle and continues the fairy-tale analogy. Here, an opulent interior is evoked by contemporary objects which all parody or re-present historic styles denoting status and wealth. A good example is the 'Cinderella' table, designed by Jeroen Verhoeven (2005), which updates the form and structure of eighteenth century furniture. The narrative context is the rise of the realistic novel in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and the prints of William Hogarth. The final zone collects together objects that consider mortality, eschatology, and art history, for example Luc Merx's 'Fall of the Damned' chandelier inspired by baroque paintings of the Last Judgement.

The accompanying book, written by the curator, will also examine the development and ramifications of the 'design art' term alongside detailed examination and contextualisation of the themes and objects in the exhibition. A one-day symposium is planned to coincide with the exhibition. 'Telling Tales' will be staged in the Contemporary Space as part of the V&A's engagement with the creative industries. It will also lead to significant acquisitions for the permanent collection and possibly to a tour.

GARETH WILLIAMS

FURNITURE, TEXTILES AND FASHION DEPARTMENT



*Cinderella Table, designed by Jeroen Verhoeven, 2005
CNC-cut plywood, V&A: W.1-2006*



THE WILLIAM AND JUDITH BOLLINGER JEWELLERY GALLERY

Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son in 1749 that there must be 'no days lost poring upon almost imperceptible Intaglios and Cameos'. The first rule in planning the William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery gallery, which opened in May 2008, was to ignore Chesterfield's advice. After twenty years on display, every object had to be re-assessed, a task undertaken by a dozen visiting scholars, the consultant curator, Dr Beatriz Chadour-Sampson, and by the V&A's own team of conservators, educators, and curators.

With Eva Jiricna Architects and the close involvement of the sponsors, our aim has been to create a visual delight, a gallery in which the lighting and the non-reflective glass make the jewels appear to float within reach, and the supporting information makes accessible the latest scholarship, published and unpublished. One of the excitements of a new gallery is the opportunity to bring together for a wide audience the fruits of ongoing research for public enquiries, taxation cases, export licences and acquisitions. Two interactives explore objects in depth and present 7000 images, including views of the back and the front of almost every object shown.

The displays in the new gallery extend back in date to Ancient Egypt, but the focus is on European jewellery since 1200 A.D. Of 4500 objects in the last gallery, 1500 have been excluded, on grounds ranging from doubts about authenticity to the demands of display. The Renaissance jewels are predictably fewer in number, but firmly juxtaposed with the nineteenth century copies and fakes which they inspired. Among 600 objects which have been added are 120 given by Patricia Goldstein, a New York collector and dealer, and many contemporary pieces, including nearly 50 from the Royal College of Art Visiting Artists Collection. The display of European regional jewellery is a completely fresh selection of 400 pieces from 2000 acquired in the 19th century. A new display on techniques is composed of three specially commissioned films and a range of designs, tools and casts which have been assembled with the new gallery in mind over many years.

In every period investigation revealed the complex lives which many jewels have led. While we no longer find it possible to read the initials of Marie Antoinette in a diamond monogram, we now know the story of a fine watch by Francis Perigal, previously undisplayed. It was stolen from the pocket of Henry Hare Townshend at Enfield racecourse on 1 September 1790 by George Barrington, a smooth-talking thief who was transported to Australia and became chief constable of Parramatta.

Puzzled by the fittings on the backs of a superb group of 46 diamond dress ornaments known to be from the Russian royal collections, we were indebted to research by our Russian colleagues which showed that the ornaments were made by Leopold Pfisterer for Catherine the Great in 1764. The way in which they were strung on ropes of garnets is explained in an interactive, Hidden Treasures, available both in the gallery and on the V&A website.

Central to the reassessment of the collection was the minute examination of objects by the conservation team led by Joanna Whalley, whose expertise as a gemmologist made possible a comprehensive review of gem identifications and nomenclature.

A new edition of *Jewels and Jewellery* (V&A Publishing) by Clare Phillips has been published to coincide with the re-opening of the gallery.

RICHARD EDGCUMBE
SCULPTURE, METALWORK, CERAMICS AND GLASS

RESEARCH FOR PUBLICATION

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE ART 300–1600

To accompany the opening of the Medieval and Renaissance galleries the museum is preparing a variety of publications, of which this will be the most extensive. Where the other books provide a carefully focused exploration of a topic through the collection, this title is an opportunity to address some of the themes that interweave with the new galleries, and link objects made distant by chronology or geography.

Our aim is to ‘re-people’ these objects, both commonplace and precious; to recover the attitudes of their makers and owners towards artistic practice by bringing their social contexts and religious beliefs to bear. While using items as a clue to social custom is not a new approach, much can be learned about the political, religious and social aspirations of people from the objects they owned. Extensive international trade, the movement of artists, pilgrims, soldiers and churchmen, and the shared inheritance of the Roman world all provided Europe with a common cultural inheritance – and the different interpretations and appropriations of this legacy is one of the primary threads running thorough the book.

Separating the Medieval and Renaissance periods is standard in many surveys and encourages their juxtaposition, which in turn focuses attention on innovations developed during the Renaissance to distance it from what had gone before. Treating the whole of this long period in European design and manufacture means that we can instead emphasise the continuities and slow developments that were often as significant as sudden upheaval. The sheer length of the Medieval period can encourage the impression that little happened, but our aim is to show that Medieval and Renaissance Europe was characterised by diversity and constant cultural change.

The book is aimed primarily at general readers, but will be of particular interest to students and scholars. Its eight chapters are complemented by thirty short, integrated pieces on specific objects and concepts, which allow discussion of featured subjects as diverse as gift-giving, Mosan metalworking and the silk trade. The many illustrations of V&A objects – most newly photographed for this book – will of course only provide a glimpse of the collection, but as part of a wider photographic project have been an important part of recording the preparation for the new galleries. The conservation, cataloguing and research for the project has led to a number of new discoveries, and these will be reflected within the book.

A substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund was awarded to the V&A to support the development of the new Medieval and Renaissance galleries. This is contributing to every aspect of the project, from the building of exciting new spaces to the conservation and research into the objects themselves.

GLYN DAVIES AND KIRSTIN KENNEDY
MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE PROJECT



TIMBERS USED IN BRITISH FURNITURE-MAKING, 1400–1900

This project, now in its second year, concerns the types, sources and uses of timbers employed by British furniture makers over five centuries. The aim is to create a work of reference for furniture scholars, curators, dealers and others working in the field of British furniture studies. The published work will include an introductory overview, looking broadly at the many factors which have influenced the range and choice of materials used by British furniture makers, and an alphabetical dictionary of some 200,000 words. There are currently some 300 entries on hardwoods and 100 on softwoods, covering nearly 500 species of timber from around the world. Each entry is effectively a ‘biography’ of the timber, giving its vernacular and botanical nomenclatures, its appearance, characteristics and uses, and a history of its use by British furniture makers. Where possible, securely documented examples of historic furniture are used to illustrate the text, including objects in the V&A collections.

Much of the work is document based, looking at trade statistics in the National Archives and contemporary published literature on timber and its uses. The British Library has proved particularly fruitful, as have the libraries at Kew Gardens. Other sources include early travel literature, furniture makers’ inventories, domestic inventories, trade directories, newspaper advertisements, timber merchants’ price lists, and many miscellaneous documents.

At Kew the Economic Botany Collection has formed a key part of the work, housing recorded samples of timbers sent from around the world by explorers, traders, colonial officials, merchants, botanists and private individuals. These samples provide secure identification for most of the timbers concerned, as well as providing valuable information in historic nomenclature, both botanical and vernacular. Chosen samples will be refinished and scanned at high resolution to illustrate each entry. Another

important aspect of the project is the microscopic identification of unidentified timbers found on furniture of all periods. Much of this is being done by me, but more difficult cases are sent to Kew for identification.

Finally, furniture collections throughout Britain and abroad are being studied, both to locate and illustrate furniture with securely identified timbers of all kinds, and to discover and identify previously unknown timbers. One example of a significant new discovery revealed by a combination documentary research and microscopic analysis is the previously unsuspected presence of substantial quantities of Australian timber, mainly *Cedrela toona*, used for carcass work in Victorian furniture. On the other hand, many puzzles remain. The identity of the mysterious allegorical, used by Gerrit Jensen and Thomas Chippendale, among others, currently remains elusive.

ADAM BOWETT
BRITISH ACADEMY FELLOW



THE CRAFT READER

This anthology of readings for Berg publishers will bring together a series of historic texts on the subject of modern craft—a topic that is currently undergoing a rapid expansion in interest in both the academic sector and among the general public. Taking its examples from the period of the industrial revolution through to the present day, the book covers a wide geography, with particular emphasis on Africa, India, Japan, Europe and North America. Many areas of endeavour are included—from pottery and weaving, to couture and chocolate-making, to contemporary art and architecture. Each selection, in its own way, addresses craft under the conditions of modernity.

Perspectives represented in The Craft Reader are equally diverse. The reformist, idealized visions often associated with the Arts and Crafts Movement is traced from the formative writings of William Morris through the ideas of twentieth century authors such as Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, M. C. Richards and Octavio Paz. There are examples of pure theory, by figures ranging from David Pye and Theodor Adorno; feminist approaches by historians such as Rozsika Parker; and also texts which consider the relation of craft and design, by figures such as Lazslo Moholy-Nagy and Andrea Branzi.

The anthology also reviews arguments about the position of craft during the period of the industrial revolution, exploring the question of whether artisans were deskilled in the nineteenth century or merely displaced into new activities. There are writings which concern the implication of craft in post-industrial production, too: Soviet factories where mechanics must cope with derelict equipment; auto mechanic shops in Africa; and the Chinese village of Dafen, which produces custom-ordered oil paintings by the thousand. Finally, there are a selection of “how to” texts, and a series of statements about the contemporary “DIY” movement.

Together, these texts map a whole arena of study that will be of interest not only to art and design historians, but also anthropologists, economic historians, students of philosophy, and practitioners.

GLENN ADAMSON

V&A/RCA COURSE IN THE HISTORY OF DESIGN



*W. A. S. Benson 1854–1924, Electric Table Lamp, 1900.
Brass, cast and sheet. V&A: M.957-1983*



TIPU'S TIGER

The V&A's semi-automaton wooden tiger devouring a helpless European soldier has inspired artists and writers, frightened children, and entertained the public since it first reached London from India in 1800. Its body conceals an organ which can be played by turning a handle to operate bellows that provide wind – museum visitors were allowed to do that for much of the 19th century.

Many museum objects are perceived in different ways at different times, but few have carried their colonial legacy as markedly as this one, still often designated in its late 18th century English spelling "Tippoo's Tiger", after the South Indian ruler of Mysore who commissioned it. And few objects and owners have entered so effectively the popular culture of a foreign environment.

Tipu Sultan (r.1782–1799), was a major figure in India at a time when regional boundaries and alliances were constantly changing as the great Mughal empire disintegrated. He inherited lands taken over from their former Hindu ruler by his father, the military adventurer Haidar Ali, and their combined talents made Mysore a leading power. His success, and his employment of French soldiers and experts who brought the latest Western military technology to his court, clashed with the expansionist intentions of the English East India Company whose home government was at war with France. Within months of the arrival of their new Governor-General, the Company's army moved towards Tipu's capital. It fell on May 4th, 1799, Tipu Sultan was killed, and the Siege of Seringapatam was celebrated in England as the great victory it undoubtedly was. The dead ruler was presented in newspapers, public spectacles, popular songs and in the many accounts of the war, as a caricature enemy. When his wooden tiger was found in the music room of his palace, it seemed to support every British prejudice concerning their Muslim adversary.

The siege had been followed by looting that was stopped only by hanging and flogging some of the perpetrators. When calm was restored, Tipu Sultan's treasury was divided between the victorious army according to rank, in line with contemporary convention. Much was immediately resold to local jewellers and goldsmiths for cash, though some reached England. But most of the pieces in Tipu Sultan's treasury lost evidence of their provenance for ever – unless decorated with the ubiquitous tiger-stripe motifs that indicate their origin.

The wooden tiger probably survived only because of its lack of monetary value. It was discovered in the days after the siege and shipped to London where it became a star attraction in the recently opened Indian Museum.

A new V&A book, *Tipu's Tigers*, studies the wooden tiger in its original context, examining the court arts of Mysore, and the significance of the tiger stripe motif on the personal possessions of Tipu Sultan, some of which have not previously been identified as such. The narrative will follow the journey of the tiger from India to England, and from museum to museum in London, and show the lively place that it, and its patron, occupied in British popular culture.

SUSAN STRONGE
ASIAN DEPARTMENT

COLLECTIONS RESEARCH

RESEARCH IN THE CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

There continues to be an active research programme in the Collection Services Division. In the recent past we have highlighted the Mazarin Chest project (see Research Bulletin 2007 pages 26 and 27) and the SurveNIR paper condition project. As with all good research - these major programmes have come to an end and find various routes for publication of the outcomes in the literature. Both are praise worthy in keeping to their agreed deliverables.

One particular area that has secured resources is the study of the conservation issues of plastics in collections. This project is a collaborative EC funded project of 42 months and led by Professor Bertrand Lavédrine of the Centre de recherche sur la conservation des collections (CRCC) Paris and is called POPART. This project started on 1st October 2008 and more details can be found on the website at <http://popart.mnhn.fr/> The truly collaborative nature of this project (12 partners from the EU and the USA) promises to bring together the leading researchers in this field.

Sustainability continues to be a high priority on the research agenda. Proposals for investigating alternative, more environmentally-friendly object transportation around the globe will make progress in the next year.

As always, there is far more activity than can be referenced in this short piece. All of the work, whether in process or planned, is worthy of mention and I would suggest that the reader scans the V&A website and other published media for more information. (www.vam.ac.uk/res-cons/conservation/journal/index.html)

GRAHAM MARTIN
CONSERVATION



RESEARCH IN THE THEATRE COLLECTIONS

Giving a Voice to the Nation: the Arts Council of Great Britain and the development of theatre and performance in Britain 1945–1995.

Giving a Voice to the Nation is a five year collaborative project between the V&A's Theatre Collections and the Department of Film, Theatre and Television at the University of Reading, funded by an (Arts and Humanities Research Council) research grant. The project will interrogate the relationship between subsidy, policy and practice in the fields of new writing, regional and touring theatre through an examination of the archive of the Arts Council of Great Britain (held at Blythe House, the V&A collections centre in Kensington Olympia) and interviews with panel members and practitioners. In the course of the project, post-doctoral research associates and PhD students will join the project investigators (Kate Dorney, Graham Saunders and John Bull) and contribute to the project outputs: an enhanced catalogue of the archive complete with web essays and resource discovery guides; two symposia, an international conference and a series of articles and interviews.

The project also aims to develop a framework for research and dissemination applicable to investigating the relationship between subsidy, collaboration and practice in the theatre arts.

STAGE COSTUME WEB FEATURE

A new website feature on designing, making and wearing stage costume is due to go live on the V&A site this autumn. Drawing on the Theatre Collections' 2,500 stage costumes, curators have selected the best 40 to be re-photographed as 360° animations. These will be presented within sections focussing on specific topics such as designing for historical periods, the use of decoration and effects, and the challenge of designing costumes for movement. The content also includes interviews with leading designers, and video content showing the handling collection of costumes being worn by models.

KATE DORNEY
THEATRE COLLECTIONS

Costume for the Fairy in The Wooden Prince, Ballet by Béla Bartók 1914-16, London Festival Ballet. Lamé, Lurex, cotton, satin, plastic, sequins and goldbraid. Designed by Phillip Prowse, made by Carl Bonn and Colin Mackenzie V&A: S.731 A to C-1985

MAPPING THE PRACTICE AND PROFESSION OF SCULPTURE IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND 1851–1951

In September 2007 the Victoria and Albert Museum joined Glasgow University and the Henry Moore Institute to launch a major three-year research programme: Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851–1951 (Mapping Sculpture 1851–1951). The project is the first comprehensive study of sculpture in the century between the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Festival of Britain in 1951. Mapping Sculpture 1851–1951 is supported by a substantial Research Grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, with additional funding from the British Academy and Henry Moore Foundation. Research outputs will be made public in 2010 through an open access online database at Glasgow University, published articles and an exhibition in the V&A's Gilbert Bayes Gallery.

The methodology of Mapping Sculpture 1851–1951 centres on an investigation of the uniquely collaborative nature of the sculptural medium and the role of informal networks and institutional infrastructures in supporting art practice. Aiming to enlarge on the conventional image of the sculptor modelling or carving alone in the studio, the research is exploring artistic partnerships (particularly those with architects) and the role of related businesses, such as studio assistants, plaster casters, stone-cutters and art metalworkers. Evidence of networking, professional activity and exhibiting patterns is being drawn from the records of art colleges, exhibitions, art societies, clubs and other art institutions. The project reconsiders the full range of sculptural practice, including works that fall outside the accepted critical hierarchies of monumental, ideal or abstract work, to throw new light on patterns of production and consumption. Mapping Sculpture 1851–1951 reflects changes in cultural geographies, arising from economic development and urban growth, by bringing forward data from fifteen key urban centres to make an integrated study of sculpture in Britain and Ireland. These methods, supported by a state of the art relational database, will reveal the complex web of relationships between sculptors, associated businesses, professional colleagues, objects, organizations and places. This is a new way of looking at the practice and profession of sculpture that will create the foundation for numerous studies in art history and visual culture.

The research is being managed from the History of Art Department at Glasgow University by Professor Alison Yarrington, Principal Investigator, and Ann Compton, Project Originator and Director. They are working in partnership with Marjorie Trusted FSA, Co-Investigator and Senior Curator of Sculpture at the V&A, and Dr. Jon Wood, Project Partner and Research Curator at the Henry Moore Institute. A team of six research assistants is investigating sculptural practice in: London, Scotland, the north of England, central England, Ireland and Wales.

Research in London is being conducted from the V&A's Research Department and draws heavily on the rich resources in the museum's collections, the National Art Library and Archive of Art and Design. The V&A's participation affirms its long-term commitment, demonstrated in the major new displays unveiled in the Dorothy and Michael Hintze (2007) and Gilbert Bayes Galleries (2004) as part of FuturePlan, to unveil and promote the complex histories that lie behind the production of British sculpture.

ANN COMPTON

PROJECT DIRECTOR, MAPPING SCULPTURE
1851–1951

NANCY IRESON

V&A RESEARCH FELLOW, MAPPING SCULPTURE
1851–1951



GRADUATE RESEARCH

The V&A continues to be successful in a number of joint applications to the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Collaborative Doctoral Award Scheme. The Awards were introduced to develop collaboration between higher education institutions and non-academic bodies (including museums) and to enhance the employment related skills and training research students gain during the course of their studies. Here students appointed during 2008 describe their projects and we list the projects of students continuing from 2007:



STEPHEN KNOTT

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

Spot the difference: concealing the 'ever – same' in modern adornment using historically constructed illusions

This research project considers the role of historical narratives in the process of attributing symbolic meaning to modern adornments. The twin development of the museum and the department store in Britain and France constitutes the major focus, examining their mutual role in constructing historically conscientious consumers.

ELEANOR PAREMAIN

BIRKBECK, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

A History of the Tricycle Theatre: Audience, Identity and Agency

Using the Tricycle Theatre's archive ranging from prompt books and management records to photographs and publicity materials, I aim to examine the Tricycle's long held commitment to producing theatre for its ethnically diverse local community, and its pronounced political preoccupations. Central to the study is an interrogation of the representation of national identity and the agency of the spectator.

JUDITH THEI

IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Conservation of degraded East Asian lacquer surfaces

The thesis will investigate the conditions that initiate and propagate cracking in Asian lacquer (urushi) as well as the effects current conservation treatments have on the micro cracking and how these treatments behave when aged. The thesis also has a humanities component which will research the sources of tension in conservation.

EMILIA TERRACCIANO

COURTAULD INSTITUTE/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

'Beyond the gaze: collecting and displaying modern and contemporary South Asian art in the V&A and other UK public and private institutions: positioning current contemporary Indian art in the global arena'.

The project explores the equivocal position of Indian 'modern and contemporary' art in the western world and the rapid changes it is currently undergoing. The project will look at the ways in which modern and contemporary Indian art has been collected and displayed, traded and received in the UK, both in the public and private arena, focussing on the period from 1945 to the present. The final dissertation will focus on the art of the past ten years with particular artists and their reception as case studies.

SARAH BERCUSSON

QUEEN MARY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Gifts, consumption and ritual exchange in Italy in the second half of the 16th century

STEVE BROWN

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Dialogues between Decoration and Form: New Potential for Ceramics Offered by Image Based Technologies

VERITY CLARKSON

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
The Cold War 'emigré' exhibit in Britain: Cultural Exchange, Diplomacy and Trade c.1945–75

HELENA DAVIES

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
John Forster as biographer

LESLEY DELANEY

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
The development and marketing of books to teach reading in Victorian Britain: primers and first readers, their authors, publishers and consumers

JANE EADE

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Vision and Ecstasy in the Baroque

BONNIE HEWSON

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Collecting the Intangible Heritage: The Case of Theatrical Processes

CAROLYN MCSHARRY

IMPERIAL COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Conserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage: investigating the removal of degraded Western varnish from Japanese lacquer

EMMA RICHARDSON

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Non-invasive Characterisation of Synthetic Textiles within Museum and Heritage Collections

CATHERINE ROSSI

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
The Transition of Modernity: The Practice, Dissemination and Consumption of Modern Craft in Italy

NICOLA STYLIANOU

TrAIN (CENTRE FOR TRANSNATIONAL ART, IDENTITY AND NATION), UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, LONDON/VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Producing and Collecting for Empire: African textiles within the Victoria and Albert Museum 1850–1950

ELAINE TIERNEY

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
The Unofficial Material Culture of Official Public Festival in Paris and London, 1660–1715

*Detail of a Man's Robe, Mali, 1880's
Cotton embroidered with silk V&A: 1110-1898*

APPENDIX

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT STAFF
AND PROJECTS 2008

CORE STAFF

RESEARCH DEPT
SARGENTSON, CAROLYN
HEAD OF RESEARCH (AHRC LEAVE 2008)
BREWARD, CHRIS
ACTING HEAD OF RESEARCH
MILLER, LIZ
ACTING DEPUTY HEAD OF RESEARCH
AJMAR-WOLLHEIM, MARTA
ACTING DEPUTY HEAD OF RESEARCH AND V&A/
RCA COURSE TUTOR
FLOOD, LINDSAY
RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR

V&A/RCA COURSE:
ADAMSON, GLENN
HEAD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES AND DEPUTY
HEAD OF RESEARCH
CURRIE, ELIZABETH
COURSE TUTOR
GUTH, CHRISTINE
COURSE TUTOR
MCSHANE, ANGELA
COURSE TUTOR
ROYALL, KATRINA
COURSE ADMINISTRATOR
LONG, LORAINÉ
COURSE ADMINISTRATOR

JOINT FELLOWSHIPS

EDWARDS, EILUNED
LONDON COLLEGE OF FASHION/V&A FELLOW IN
FASHION AND TEXTILES
FIELDING, AMANDA
CAMBERWELL COLLEGE OF ARTS/V&A FELLOW IN
CRAFT
PARTINGTON, MATHEW
UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND/V&A
FELLOW IN 20C AND CONTEMPORARY CRAFT
PAVITT, JANE
UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON/ V&A FELLOW IN
PRODUCT DESIGN AND MUSEOLOGY
SANDINO, LINDA
CAMBERWELL COLLEGE OF ARTS / V&A FELLOW
IN ORAL HISTORY
TULLOCH, CAROL
CHELSEA COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN/V&A
FELLOW IN BLACK VISUAL CULTURE

FUNDED FELLOWSHIPS

ASHMORE, SONIA
AHRC FASHIONING DIASPORA SPACE FELLOW
BOWETT, ADAM
BRITISH ACADEMY FELLOW
BROWN, OWEN
AHRC FELLOW IN SCULPTURE HISTORY
IRESON, NANCY
AHRC FELLOW IN SCULPTURE HISTORY
MEARS, HELEN
HLF FELLOW IN HISTORIES AND OBJECTS OF THE
AFRICAN DIASPORA (CAPACITY BUILDING
AND CULTURAL OWNERSHIP)

EXCHANGES

WHARTON, STEVE
(SUSSEX) SUSSEX UNIVERSITY EXCHANGE
FELLOW 07/08
IRVINE, GREG
(V&A – ASIA) SUSSEX UNIVERSITY EXCHANGE
FELLOW 07/08
DENNIS, FLORA
(SUSSEX) SUSSEX UNIVERSITY EXCHANGE
FELLOW 08/09
WHITLEY, ZOÉ
(V&A – CONTEMPORARY) SUSSEX UNIVERSITY
EXCHANGE FELLOW 08/09
COOMBS, KATHERINE
(V&A – WORD AND IMAGE) YCBA/V&A
EXCHANGE FELLOW 2008
FORRESTER, GILLIAN
(YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART) YCBA/V&A
EXCHANGE FELLOW 2008

VISITING FELLOWS

ARNOLD, REBECCA
(ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART)
TWENTIETH CENTURY FASHION
ORR, LYNN
(FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO)
AESTHETICISM
SMART MARTIN, ANN
(UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN)
ILLUMINATION AND REFLECTION IN EARLY
MODERN BRITAIN AND AMERICA

INTERNAL SECONDMENTS

BRODIE, ANTONIA
BAROQUE CATALOGUE
CAMPBELL, MARIAN
MEDIÉVAL JEWELLERY PUBLICATION
CULLEN, ORIOLE
STEPHEN JONES EXHIBITION AND PUBLICATION
GRANT, SARAH
FRENCH PRINTED TEXTILES 1760–1840
PUBLICATION
LEIGHTON, SOPHIE
THE ONLINE JOURNAL
MELCHAR, DANA
FRENCH FURNITURE CATALOGUE CHAPTER
MILLER, LIZ
ACTING DEPUTY HEAD
PATTERSON, ANGUS
ARMED IN STYLE PUBLICATION
PRICHARD, SUE
QUILTS EXHIBITION AND PUBLICATION
PRITCHARD, JANE
BALLETS RUSSES EXHIBITION AND PUBLICATION
THOMAS, ABRAHAM
ILLUSTRATING FASHION PUBLICATION
THUNDER, MOR
EMBROIDERY DESIGNS ARTICLE
TOWNSEND, ELEANOR
THE ART OF DYING PUBLICATION
SHANNON, LOUISE
DIGITAL RESPONSES EXHIBITION AND
PUBLICATION
SARGENTSON, CAROLYN
FRENCH FURNITURE CATALOGUE
WATSON, ROWAN
ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS CATALOGUE
WILLIAMS, GARETH
TELLING TALES EXHIBITION AND PUBLICATION

EXHIBITION TEAMS

SURREAL THINGS

GHISLAINE WOOD

CHINA DESIGN NOW

HONGXING ZHANG, GIGI CHANG

COLD WAR MODERN

JANE PAVITT, JANA SCHOLZE, MARIA MILEEVA,
RUTH CRIBB, OLIVER WINCHESTER

BAROQUE

MICHAEL SNODIN, JOANNA NORMAN,
ANTONIA BRODIE

QUILTS

SUE PRICHARD, CLAIRE SMITH

BALLETS RUSSES

JANE PRITCHARD, LAURA SHAW, SARAH SONNER

POSTMODERNISM

JANE PAVITT, OLIVER WINCHESTER

HONORARY FELLOWS

THE LATE DR PATRICIA BAKER

PROFESSOR MALCOLM BAKER

(UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA)

ANTHONY BURTON

(INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR)

DR DONAL COOPER

(WARWICK UNIVERSITY)

DR FLORA DENNIS

(UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX)

DR SUZANNE FAGENCE COOPER

(BUCKS NEW UNIVERSITY)

EDGAR HARDEN

(INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR)

PROFESSOR MAURICE HOWARD

(UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX)

PROFESSOR SANDRA KEMP

(ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART)

PROFESSOR ULRICH LEHMANN

(UNIVERSITY OF THE CREATIVE ARTS)

PROFESSOR NIGEL LLEWELLYN

(TATE GALLERY)

JENNIFER WEARDEN

(INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR)



**THE V&A IS GRATEFUL TO THE FOLLOWING
BENEFACTORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT OF
RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN THE MUSEUM:**

THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL
THE BRITISH ACADEMY
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CHILTERN,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
CAMBERWELL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN,
UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON
CHELSEA COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN,
UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON
THE CHIPSTONE FOUNDATION
THE CLIVE WAINWRIGHT MEMORIAL FUND
THE DESIGN HISTORY SOCIETY
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
SAM FOGG ESQ
THE FRIENDS OF THE V&A
THE GETTY FOUNDATION
THE GILBERT BAYES CHARITABLE TRUST
THE GOLDEN WEB FOUNDATION
THE HENRY MOORE FOUNDATION
HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND
JOINT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (JISC) CAPITAL
PROGRAMME
THE LEVERHULME TRUST
THE LONDON COLLEGE OF FASHION,
UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON
MOHAMMED ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL
MONSOON ACCESSORIZE
THE MUSEUMS, LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES COUNCIL
NEHRU TRUST FOUNDATION
THE OLIVER FORD TRUST
THE PASOLD INSTITUTE
THE PAUL MELLON CENTRE FOR STUDIES
IN BRITISH ART
PAUL AND ELISSA CAHN FOUNDATION
AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE V&A THROUGH
THE GENEROSITY OF TIMOTHY AND
MADELEINE PLAUT
THE REYNER BANHAM FUND
THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART
ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE V&A THROUGH
THE GENEROSITY OF THE SAMUEL H. KRESS
FOUNDATION
SOCIETY OF LONDON THEATRE
SOTHEBY’S
SUSSEX UNIVERSITY
THE SYLVIA LENNIE ENGLAND FUND
THE TOSHIBA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON
UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND
W INVESTMENTS
THE WARNE CURATORSHIP FOR CHILDREN’S
LITERATURE: FREDERICK WARNE & CO.
WARWICK UNIVERSITY

THE YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART
WINKCREATIVE
WINKLER FOUNDATION
THE CENTER FOR CRAFT, CREATIVITY AND DESIGN

AND OTHERS WHO WISH TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS

V&A

SOUTH KENSINGTON
LONDON SW7 2RL
+44 (0)20 7942 2000
WWW.VAM.AC.UK

V&A MUSEUM OF CHILDHOOD

CAMBRIDGE HEATH ROAD
LONDON E2 9PA
+44 (0)20 8983 5200

V&A

DESIGN BY V&A DESIGN