

V&A RESEARCH BULLETIN 2010

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FOREWORD

This is the fifth edition of the V&A Research Bulletin. The summaries of the research projects undertaken by the Museum's curators, conservators and fellows during 2010 included here are selected from a much broader range of collections, exhibitions, gallery and web-related work, full listings of which can be found in the on-line V&A Research Report www.vam.ac.uk/res/cons/research_reports.

High-level individual and collaborative research activity is an integral part of the V&A's mission to be acknowledged and respected as the world's leading museum of art and design. It ranges from the direct comparison of cartoon and tapestry that contributed to the unique display of the Vatican's Raphael tapestries in the early Autumn of 2010 to a cross-media investigation of design in contemporary India that will result in an exhibition and publication in 2012. A significant feature of research activity over the past year, and one that will also feed into our programme for 2012 has been the sourcing and interpretation of material for the major exhibition 'British Design 1948–2012', scheduled to coincide with the London Olympics. On a more personal note, I am grateful to Liz Miller, Deputy Head of Research, who has been over-seeing the Department during the latter part of 2010 and into 2011, so that I can focus on co-curating British Design and writing the associated book.

Preparations for the publication of the third issue of the V&A's Online Journal in Spring 2011 are well underway. The Journal, which offers a space for articles and reviews focussing on the Museum's history, collections and current public programme can be viewed at www.vam.ac.uk/vandajournal. Future submissions for issue 4 are welcome!

News of staff and student research across all three pathways of the V&A/RCA Postgraduate Programme in the History of Design can be found in the sister bulletin of this publication, and both are available to download at www.vam.ac.uk.

We hope you enjoy this insight into the scholarly activities that underpin the evolving knowledge and enjoyment of the V&A's collections and the quality of its public programme. We thank our sponsors, partners, staff and students for playing a part in their successful execution.

PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER BREWARD
HEAD OF RESEARCH
OCTOBER 2010



RESEARCH FOR EXHIBITIONS

RAPHAEL: CARTOONS AND TAPESTRIES FOR THE SISTINE CHAPEL

Early in 2010 the V&A received a proposal from the Vatican for a cultural exchange to mark the state visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the UK in September. The proposal, to reunite four of the Vatican's Acts of the Apostles tapestries with their original designs by Raphael, resulted in the exhibition Raphael: Cartoons and Tapestries for the Sistine Chapel, and the collaborative authorship of its catalogue.

The Raphael Cartoons, commissioned in 1515 by Pope Leo X, were full-scale designs for tapestries for the Sistine Chapel. The tapestries, woven in Brussels, were first hung in the Sistine Chapel in 1519. They remain treasures of the papal collection, and among the most celebrated tapestries ever created. The Cartoons themselves, which had never returned from Brussels to Rome, were purchased by Charles I, while Prince of Wales, for the creation of his own set of the tapestries in England, at Mortlake. Remaining in the Royal Collection they have been on loan to the V&A since 1865.

These works, both cartoons and tapestries, are masterpieces of the High Renaissance, and in recent years research and conservation work carried out in the V&A and the Vatican Museums, and in the wider museum and academic community, had already transformed understanding of them. But now for the first time in nearly 500 years Raphael's Cartoons for the tapestries and the tapestries themselves could be seen alongside each other, illuminating their process of creation. A group of preparatory drawings by Raphael and his studio was also included, lent by the Royal Collection and the Louvre. The accompanying publication, Raphael: Cartoons and Tapestries for the Sistine Chapel, edited by Mark Evans and Clare Browne, included summaries of recent scholarship with detailed catalogue entries for each of the Cartoons and tapestries, all published together in colour for the first time.

CLARE BROWNE

FURNITURE, TEXTILES AND FASHION DEPARTMENT

MARK EVANS

WORD AND IMAGE DEPARTMENT



SIT DOWN: SEATING FOR KIDS

The exhibition, Sit Down: Seating for Kids (Museum of Childhood, February – September 2010), started with the broad concept of children's furniture, but was quickly narrowed down to focus on seating. Seating has an enormous capacity for interpretation, providing interesting stories around social history, function and the importance of design.

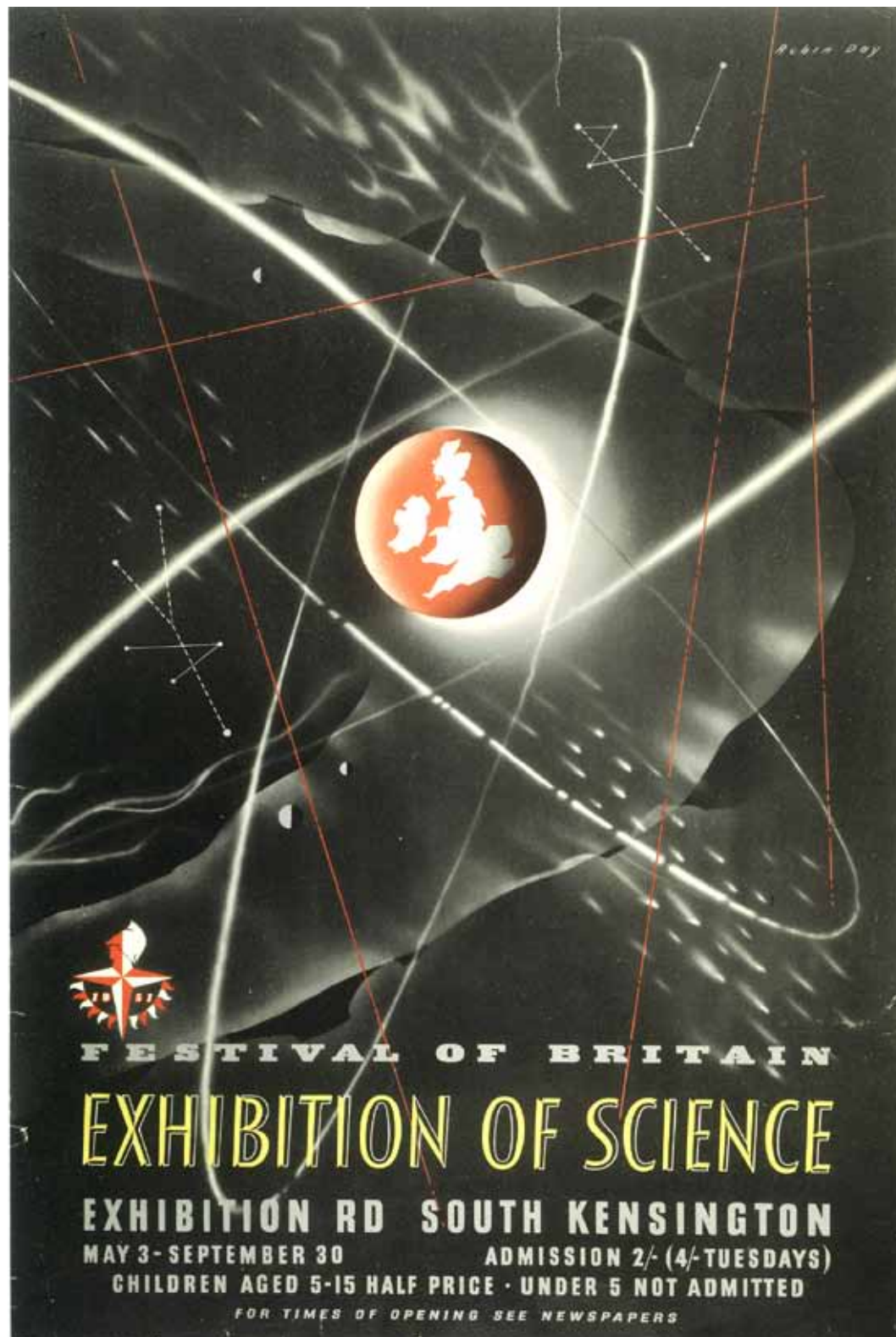
The exhibition research started with the Museum of Childhood's stores where a vast variety of children's chairs are held. Stronger in older styles dating back to the 17th century, it needed strengthening in more recent decades, particularly post-war, with loans from V&A Furniture collections and the Design Museum, London and Vitra Design Museum, Germany. It was left to me as the curator to fill in some of the gaps at the most contemporary end of design, and my research took me to children's fairs and designer shows to look out for striking designs that are taking shape today.

Most children's furniture design now takes place in Europe, but we made contact with Ercol, the last remaining furniture manufacturer in Britain. They have managed to retain close links with the locals around Wycombe and run very much as a family business. It was extremely interesting having a tour round their factory to see how chairs in their different parts are put together. Their link to children's furniture with a beautiful wooden stacking chair for schools was overtaken by the introduction in the 1960s of the plastic stacking chair.

The use of plastic chairs for schools has led to many debates about balancing the demands of practicality with health issues, as there are now a number of reports stating they can cause back pain in children. We added an extra dimension to the exhibition through collaboration with both Ercol and MA furniture design students at Bucks New University. They designed a stool for schools and we displayed the design process and the prototype for visitors to try, and give feedback on. The students will be collating this information with the possibility that the stool may go into production as an alternative seat for use in schools.

CATHERINE BORNET
MUSEUM OF CHILDHOOD





BRITISH DESIGN 1948–2012

This show, coinciding with the London Olympic Games, will document the transformation of British design between the post-war 'Austerity Games' of 1948 and the global competition taking place in 2012.

Three dominant themes will examine concepts of tradition and modernity, subversion, and innovation and creativity. Within these areas the exhibition will focus on the spaces and places of British life which have come to foster a distinctive design ethos.

A major research focus is the history of collecting and exhibiting post-war design at the V&A. A survey of the museum's holdings has brought to light key objects from the 1950s, '60s and '70s never previously displayed. These include a large group of Design Centre Award winners, which will be the subject of a small book. Other areas of research include the Coronation as a design event and the importance of British architects working in interior and furniture design in the post-war period.

A number of new acquisitions are being made for the exhibition, such as an early 1970s plastic chair by Brian Long and objects originating in the Creative Salvage movement of the 1980s. The curators have also sourced important loans from UK regional collections, including material relating to the Festival of Britain and to the development of the post-war New Towns.

The exhibition book will feature contributions from leading design historians, curators and cultural commentators, as well as case-studies of key topics such as Coventry Cathedral and the design of the Concorde.

CHRISTOPHER BREWARD
GHISLAINE WOOD
 RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

YOHJI YAMAMOTO

The Yohji Yamamoto exhibition at the V&A is the first to feature pieces of his menswear collections, and on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of his arrival in Paris, provides an opportunity to review the wider context of Yohji Yamamoto's work. The research for the exhibition has included field trips to Japan and Paris and an interview conducted with the designer.

Conceived as a series of installations throughout the galleries of the museum, the heart of the exhibition will be in Gallery 38. Looking back at a career spanning almost 40 years, over 60 silhouettes highlight some of the principal features of Yamamoto's œuvre while a multi-media timeline provides the wider context of his work and collaborations. Each of the smaller installations will offer an insight into different aspects of Yamamoto's creativity, while also opening up a new perspective on the galleries his pieces inhabit for the duration of the exhibition. Additionally, two external satellite installations at the Wapping projects and Wapping bankside galleries will extend this response to locations beyond the V&A, exploring the photographic output in relation to Yamamoto's work, and a singular installation of an oversized wedding dress.

In the spirit of exploring all aspects of Yohji Yamamoto's work, the exhibition also revisits some of the key relationships formed during his career: the designer's long time association with Masao Nihei on scenography and lighting; and with two of his long-time collaborators on the company's catalogues, photographer Nick Knight and art director Peter Saville, who were invited to create the exhibition's lead image and the show's graphic art direction respectively.

LIGAYA SALAZAR

CONTEMPORARY PROGRAMMES



INDIA DESIGN NOW

India Design Now is one of a series of exhibitions exploring design in Asia. It is planned for September 2012 and follows the V&A's 2008 exhibition China Design Now.

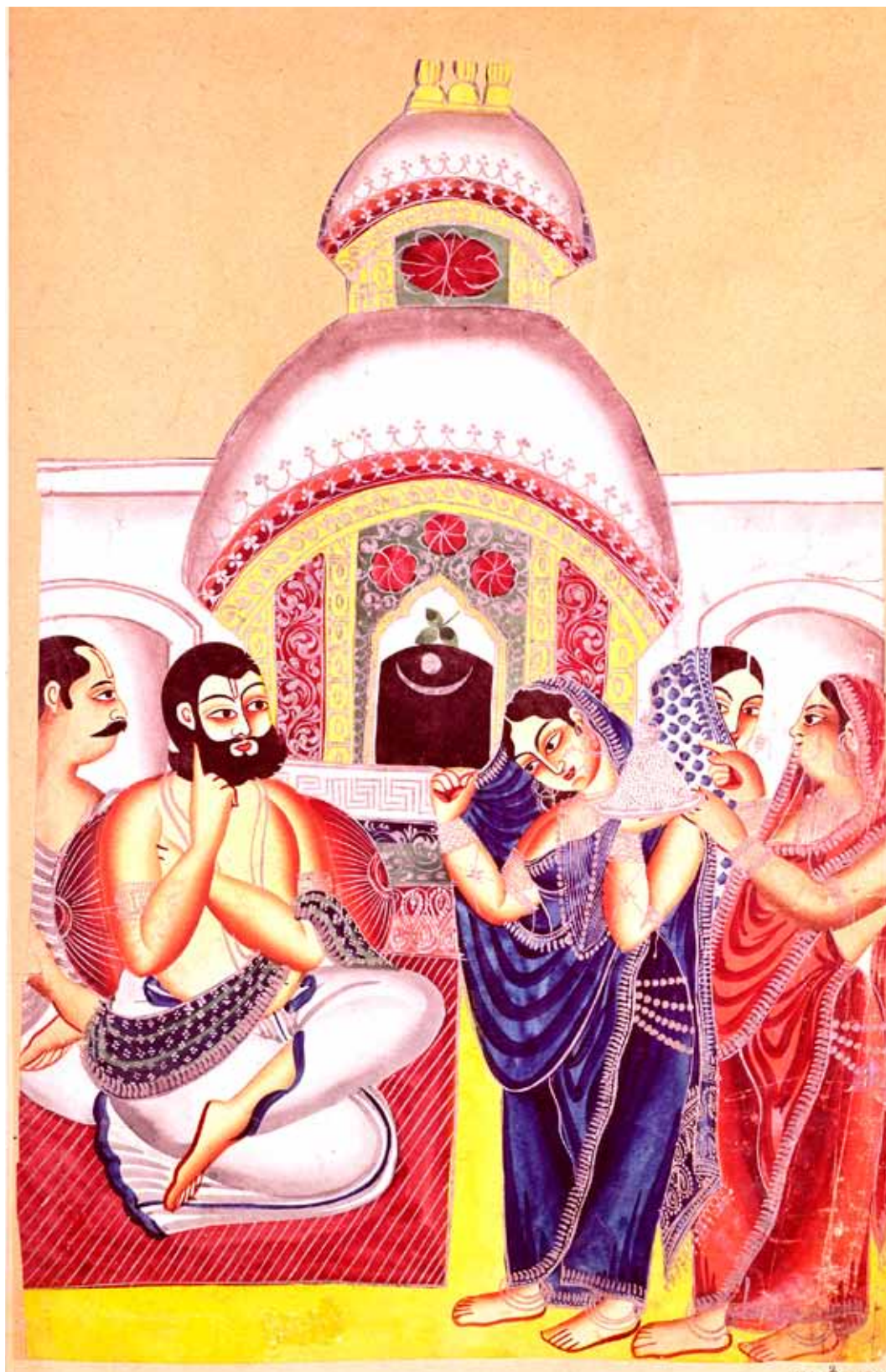
The rise of India as an economic and political power on the world stage has prompted a rapid change in its urban and rural landscape and the lifestyle of its people. This exhibition comes at a key point of transition, when design in all its forms, be it fashion, products, architecture or graphics is about to enter a dynamic phase of development.

Unlike western design, writing on this subject area is just emerging. Much of the initial exploratory process has involved visits to India, communicating with a wide body of people and making links with the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, to gain a greater knowledge of the key issues that are shaping design and design thinking in India.

This process has led to the emergence of four main themes, all of which highlight a desire for India to modernise whilst maintaining a distinct cultural identity. This is a time when designers are defining what it means to be Indian in an increasingly globalised world. Thus, the theme Handmade, explores those designers who are working with craft communities across India, helping to preserve and cultivate craft traditions and applying modern design standards to develop new products. Streetstyle, celebrates designers who take their inspiration from popular culture and the hustle and bustle of every-day street life. Design and the Environment explores issues of sustainability and design for rural communities. Cultural Nomads looks at designers of Indian origin who are based elsewhere in the world and who create for an international market.

DIVIA PATEL
ASIAN DEPARTMENT





KALIGHAT PAINTINGS

A collaborative exhibition opening in October 2011 at Victoria Memorial Hall (VMH) Kolkata, will be the first to show the V&A's collection of Kalighat paintings in India.

Kalighat ('home of Kali') painting is an urban popular painting style developed in the vicinity of the Kali temple in Kolkata in the mid 19th century. These watercolours were mainly the work of professional painters from rural Bengal who produced long narrative scrolls depicting religious and mythological stories. The artists would wander from village to village, singing the stories while unrolling the scroll, one picture at a time.

The mid-nineteenth century saw groups of these painters migrate to the rapidly expanding city of Kolkata drawn by devotees thronging the Kali temple on the banks of the Hooghly River. Urban audiences here were mobile, with transient interests, consisting of pilgrims and tourists looking for devotional images and souvenirs. The temple was also a focal point for many different artistic influences, including clay figural sculpture, wood and ivory carving, and clay figure painting. The painters recognised a ready source of income, if they could learn to adapt their style to suit the interests of Kolkata's visiting pilgrims.

The exhibition opens with examples of early Kalighat paintings. New analysis has been carried out to investigate the nature of the pigments used. A shift in subject matter took place during the latter part of the 19th century when European influence was being felt in Kolkata and artists began to satirise the lifestyles of the newly rising Bengali middle classes. A parallel Kolkata urban art form will be explored towards the end of the exhibition: 19th century woodcut prints. These borrowed heavily from the imagery of Kalighat painting. As the 19th century drew to a close, these prints became the most popular form of urban art, while Kalighat painting began to decline, marginalised by rapid advances in printing.

SUHASHINI SINHA
ASIAN DEPARTMENT

RESEARCH FOR PUBLICATION

MEDIEVAL IVORY CARVINGS: EARLY CHRISTIAN TO ROMANESQUE

The V&A's collection of ivory carvings from c.400–1200 is one of the most important in the world. Catalogues of much of the material were published in 1872 and 1927, but there has been a long-felt need for a new scholarly catalogue to take into account the numerous more recent interpretations of the objects and to include the many ivories acquired in the last 80 years.

The new catalogue, published in August 2010, contains 120 entries and an introductory essay on the collecting and study of medieval ivory carvings at South Kensington. Many of the pieces are amongst the most celebrated ivories of the Middle Ages, often with distinguished provenances and complicated physical histories; the entries, therefore, are necessarily discursive and have been extended to take into consideration wider groups of pieces with which the V&A ivories can be associated. Exhaustive research was carried out on the earlier histories of each of the ivories, their condition and changing appearance over time rigorously recorded with the assistance of colleagues in the Conservation Department, and every piece was carefully measured and photographed especially for the new volume. The back of every plaque is illustrated, a feature not normally included in catalogues but often of vital importance for the history of the object; and caskets and other more three-dimensional objects are also pictured from several different sides.

The full art-historical discussions of the objects were buttressed by scientific analysis, including radiocarbon dating of selected problematic pieces at the Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit at the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art at the University of Oxford; this analysis has helped to clarify some of the thornier and longer-lasting dating debates and settled issues of authenticity in several cases. Later copies and forgeries, often disregarded and excluded from scholarly study, are also included in the catalogue, with extended entries giving information not found elsewhere.

Work has now started on the second volume of the medieval ivories catalogue, covering the years 1200–1550 and including about 300 Gothic ivories.

PAUL WILLIAMSON

SCULPTURE, METALWORK, CERAMICS & GLASS





THE WEDDING DRESS: 300 YEARS OF BRIDAL FASHIONS

The V&A's superb collection of fashionable wedding dress forms the core of my forthcoming book describing the history of the white wedding dress in Britain from its antecedents in the eighteenth century to the present day. For most of the period, wedding dresses followed fashion so that wedding styles had to be researched in that context.

The impact of legal, social, cultural and economic change on bridal fashions and the growth of the wedding industry which was attracting social and satirical commentary as early as the mid-nineteenth century, also needed to be studied. For the period after 1810 it became essential to examine the introduction of new ways of communicating wedding fashions from fashion illustrations and photographs in the nineteenth century to film, television and the internet in the twentieth- and twenty-first century. Evidence drawn on included surviving garments, contemporary accounts of weddings in diaries, letters, memoirs and newspapers, and a wide range of printed material targeting readers across Britain from different social and economic backgrounds. Genealogical research has been important providing context for the garments in the museum's collection by offering information about the occupations, circumstances and faiths of many wearers. These details give some idea of the social level of the wearer and at a more subjective level bring the clothes alive.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the white wedding dress was the preserve of well-to-do European and American women but today it is worn by brides of many faiths across the world. The commercialisation of weddings, particularly in the Middle East and East Asia, and the globalisation of fashion has fuelled this trend. In Christian communities the religious associations of the white wedding dress remain important but for women of other faiths the fashionable white wedding dress is a symbol of wealth, status, modernity and romantic love.

EDWINA EHRMAN
FURNITURE, TEXTILES AND FASHION DEPARTMENT

BRITISH ASIAN STYLE

This is the first book to examine the influential role played by South Asia in British dress. Covering some 400 years from the foundation of the East India Company to the present day, thirteen authors discuss how this fruitful relationship has affected style in dress throughout British society. The authors took many different approaches to this subject, basing their essays on a mixture of collections-based research, field work, contemporary practice and documentation of related projects.

The book offers an eclectic mixture of contributions from curators, cultural geographers, ethnographers, fashion and textile historians, a photographer and an artist. Parts of the book draw on the V&A collections of South Asian and British textiles from the 18th to the 20th centuries to illustrate how both men's and women's fashions have historically been influenced by Indian design and fabrics. Chapters on the chintz and muslin crazes of the 18th and 19th centuries, bohemian and hippy fashions of the 20th century and present-day high-street ranges inspired by Gujarati rural dress, illustrate the interwoven relationship between the two cultures. The present-day synthesis of British and Asian style is explored in essays on contemporary Muslim fashion in Britain, a study of the community projects 'The British Sari Story' and 'Stitch' and in interviews with British South Asians, with snapshot studies of the contents of their wardrobes. Sections highlighting contemporary British Asian fashion designers show where this interaction has led in recent years, and a portfolio of new photographs on British Asian themes brings out themes of cultural and gender identity, religion, and colonialism. The spaces in which British Asian textiles are bought, sold and displayed are the focus of an essay on retail spaces and one on exhibiting South Asian textiles in the 19th century.

British Asian Style is one of the outcomes of a 5-year-long AHRC-funded project entitled 'Fashioning Diaspora Space', part of the 'Diasporas, Migration and Identity' Programme. A collaboration between the V&A and Royal Holloway, University of London, the project also gave rise to a successful conference and a number of new papers and contributions to journals.

ROSEMARY CRILL
ASIAN DEPARTMENT



THE ONLINE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF SCULPTORS IN BRITAIN 1660–1851

The Online Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660–1851 is due to launch at the beginning of 2011. It is a searchable database containing biographies of over 3000 sculptors, and lists of their works. With a bibliography of 3500 items, and details of over 30,000 works of art, it is the most significant reference resource for this period of British sculpture studies. The aim of the digital project is not only to disseminate the Dictionary to the widest possible audience, but to facilitate creative use of the information through complex searching.

The database contains all of the information included in *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain 1660-1851* by Ingrid Roscoe, Emma Hardy, and myself, published by Yale University Press in book form, in 2009. My contributions to that text were the result of a six year fellowship in the Research Department, and it was a great pleasure to return here with funding from the Paul Mellon Centre, and support from the Henry Moore Foundation, to prepare an updated edition for electronic publication. The database will be available via the Henry Moore Institute website.

This past year has been devoted to incorporating into the database all published material dealing with British sculpture and sculptors from the last ten years (the printed Dictionary relied chiefly on a bibliography that I compiled in 2001). Over 400 new citations have been consulted for additions to the data, around 100 new texts have been added to the 2009 bibliography, countless previously unrecorded works have come to light and around twenty new sculptors have been recovered from obscurity. The publication of the Dictionary has also prompted scholars and enthusiasts to send new information, and to point out occasional errors which can now be corrected.

If, as reviewers have suggested, the printed Dictionary has pushed forward the discipline, the electronic format will ensure that this process continues into the future.

GREG SULLIVAN
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT



THE QUEEN BY CECIL BEATON

The year 2012 marks the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. The publication *The Queen by Cecil Beaton* will explore Cecil Beaton's long relationship with the British monarchy in his role as royal photographer. The book will examine his working methods and unique style, explaining his rise to fame as a master of the art of photography. It accompanies a V&A touring exhibition, opening in Dundee, in September 2011 and showing at the V&A in early 2012.

From teenage Princess, to mother and sovereign, Elizabeth II posed for Cecil Beaton's camera on many occasions from the 1940s to the 1960s. He worked in both colour and black and white, frequently employing several cameras during a single sitting to achieve the desired effects. Beaton's photographs had dual functions: copies were ordered by the Queen and presented as gifts to individuals such as Commonwealth representatives, and the images were seen by millions through their frequent reproduction in the world's press. Beaton's personal diaries, which fill 145 notebooks, are rich with details of many sittings, and his volumes of meticulously preserved press cuttings reveal the far-reaching impact of the portraits. New research for the publication included examination of the letters Beaton received from royalty and staff of the royal household, and interviews with Geoffrey Sawyer, Beaton's assistant of thirty years.

The romantic aesthetic of Beaton's royal portraits of the 1940s consciously evoked the long tradition of painted portraiture, in particular the work of Sir Thomas Gainsborough and Franz Xaver Winterhalter. The official photographs of the Coronation Day on 2nd June 1953, and the sketches he made during the ceremony at Westminster Abbey convey the pomp and splendour of the event Beaton described as a scene of almost Byzantine magnificence, and contrast with the tender and less formal portraits of the Queen with her young children. Devoid of the floral props and lavish backdrops of earlier sittings, Beaton's 1968 portraits of the Queen depict a solitary figure in a dark admiral's cloak and convey the magnitude of the role of Britain's monarch.

SUSANNA BROWN

WORD AND IMAGE DEPARTMENT



COLLECTIONS RESEARCH

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT WITH THE ALHAMBRA

The “European Network of Museums of Islamic Art” (REMAI in Spanish) is a new EU-funded collaboration project consisting of the creation of a network of European museums and collections specialised in conserving cultural heritage of Islamic origin, particularly from Islamic Spain, using the collections possessed by the institutions which participate in the project, as well as the architectural structures conserved in situ in the Alhambra Monument Complex.

Three institutions participate in this European project. They are the Patronato of the Alhambra and Generalife, Alhambra Museum (coordinator); Victoria and Albert Museum. Sculpture Conservation and Middle Eastern Section (co-organiser); and the Musée du Louvre: Département des arts de l'Islam (co-organiser).

The specific objectives are to gain deeper material, technical, artistic, historical and socio-cultural knowledge of the Islamic Spanish Heritage which these centres possess; exchange information and scientific experiences developed by the institutions involved; strengthen research on Islamic art in the European Union as a strategy for intercultural knowledge and integration; transfer knowledge as a strategy for intercultural understanding of different civilisations; design dissemination tools and channels for the results – incorporating and producing content through the use of new technologies.

This exchange of knowledge and expertise from a conservation and a curatorial point of view will optimise the understanding of the collections from Islamic Spain which belong to the three museums. The work will focus particularly on Spanish Islamic plasterwork, ceramics, and 19th-century photographs of the Alhambra, as well as the influence of this style on the Orientalism movement.

VICTOR BORGES
CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT
MARIAM ROSSER-OWEN
ASIAN DEPARTMENT



*Plaster panel from the Hall of the Ambassadors, Alhambra Palace, Granada. 14th century with later polychromy. A.9-1913
Gift of Sir Henry H. Howorth K.C.I.E through the Art Fund*

PICO-SECOND LASERS FOR THE CLEANING OF ART OBJECTS

Conservation has always been faced with cases where commonly used cleaning methods as well as highly sophisticated cleaning systems have only been partially successful. In the last two decades lasers have become an alternative or complementary option for the conservator. Most recently the development of an academic and industrial research interest in pico-second (trillionth of a second) laser applications seems to offer a promising means to overcome problems associated with commonly used lasers.

The secondment to the Research Department facilitated the opportunity for me to evaluate together with Professor Ken Watkins from the Laser Group, University of Liverpool, and Dr David McPhail, Department of Materials, Imperial College London, the feasibility of a clearly defined test procedure for application of short-pulsed lasers for testing one or two very specific cleaning problems on a material or set of materials that will feature strongly in the V&A FuturePlan Galleries: Europe 1600-1800, Furniture Materials and Techniques or the Cast Courts.

Grant income provided, collaborative interdisciplinary research will in the first instance be aimed at further understanding the mechanisms involved in the ablation process (removal of material from the surface by laser irradiation) using pico-second lasers. Short-pulsed laser systems achieve very subtle effects on the surface of an object if used with a pulse length of 20 pico-seconds or less. Simply speaking, less heat is generated, which might change the impact of photo-thermal and photo-chemical reactions to the surface. Parallel to the analytical side of research the pico-second laser prototype needs to be adapted to become a suitable and versatile tool in the cleaning of art objects.

LISA WAGNER
CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT





Portrait medallion of a lady of the French court, painted in enamel on copper. Probably by Léonard Limosin (circa 1505–1575/77), French (Limoges), circa 1530–40, 7912-1862.

ONLINE CATALOGUING

If research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights effectively shared, one way the V&A carries out research is by cataloguing its collections online, available through the V&A website at <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/>.

While articles, books, exhibition catalogues and conference papers written by individual V&A staff are listed in the Museum's annual Research Report (also available on the V&A website www.vam.ac.uk/res/cons/research_reports), online cataloguing is carried out by so many staff as a fundamental curatorial activity that it has proved impracticable to include it there. It seems appropriate therefore to acknowledge it here in the Research Bulletin as a crucial building block on which so much subsequent research inside and outside the Museum rests.

Cataloguing investigations can take the form of identification of materials and techniques; transcription of lettering, inscriptions, monograms, and signatures; measuring and sometimes weighing. It can involve the marrying up of objects with entries in documents such as wills and inventories and the study and questioning of the existing scholarly literature on a particular object. The history of an object's ownership and exhibition is crucial to an understanding of the role it has played within cultures of collecting and display. Recently opened V&A galleries such as Medieval and Renaissance Galleries, are underpinned by massive recataloguing projects.

These involve the study of some of the V&A's most famous treasures as well as items which might never have been previously photographed and for which there is no bibliography. New information on place of manufacture, dating, authorship (including the recognition of fakes), even an object's true function, have all been brought to light by bringing the latest findings from disciplines such as archaeology to bear on a fresh examination of the collections. Examination by V&A scientists and conservators have provided many new insights while colleagues in other museums, in the universities, and independent researchers have all contributed their expertise to the understanding of V&A collections. This is an ongoing process not only because with collections of such extent there is always more to do, but because scholarship does not stand still. The online cataloguing seeks to open up new avenues and debates in the study of material culture as much as to record the present state of knowledge about objects in the collection.

LIZ MILLER
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS

NEW RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE V&A AND YORK

The V&A and the History of Art department at the University of York have agreed to institute a research partnership beginning in the academic year 2010–11 designed to further art-historical scholarship in areas of mutual interest and expertise.

Selected curators and scholars from both institutions will focus every two years on a designated research field, tied to particular areas of specialism within the Museum and to the art-historical areas covered by one of the Research Schools in the York History of Art department.

Between 2010 and 2012 the designated strand will be 'Medievalisms'. Future years will see the two institutions working together in the other areas covered by the History of Art department's Research Schools – Architectural History and Theory; British Art; Sculpture; and Stained Glass.

Collaborative research and scholarship will be developed in several ways. An annual V&A/York lecture will be held alternating between the venues from year to year, in which a scholar from one institution will give a public lecture in the other. An annual V&A/York symposium will be jointly organised by a V&A curator and a York colleague, again taking place in each venue in alternate years. Annual V&A/York Research Fellowships will see a V&A curator travelling to York for a short period each year to present their research, to give classes to MA and PhD students, and to work with a York collaborator, and a member of the History of Art department spending a similar period in the V&A's Research Department.



UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, LONDON ORAL HISTORY

In September 2009, the V&A oral history project was launched with my appointment as the joint V&A/University of the Arts, London Senior Research Fellow. The project's aim is to record the history of curatorial practice at the Museum over the last thirty years as represented in curators' narratives. The period covers several major shifts in the Museum's identity: the closure of the Circulation department (1976), the Museum's transition from the Department of Education and Science to Trustee status (1983), major restructurings that have led to the transformation of the V&A from its post-war days, when "it was a bit like the army", to its current incarnation. The recordings and related documents will come under the responsibility of the V&A Archive at Blythe House. The research has and will be disseminated through publications, exhibitions, and will have an online presence.

Beginning with family background and education, the detailed interviews, which range between four and twelve hours in length, cover all aspects of curatorial responsibilities and experience in order to provide a substantial resource for scholars studying the history of museums, their collections, exhibitions, the impact of government strategies, as well as museum personnel. Curators' narratives also reflect on issues of gender, class and other subject identity formations. Life histories are narrative constructions of identities-over-time ("learning to be a curator from scratch"), that also demonstrate how stories function to create, foster and sustain communities, enabling researchers and users of the recordings to grasp the Museum, as conceived by Pierre Nora, as both '*milieu* [and] *lieu de mémoire*'.

LINDA SANDINO
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

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 other bodies such as museums and to enhance the employment related skills and training research students gain during the course of their studies. Here recent graduate Sarah Bercusson now lecturing at York St John University describes her experience and we list the projects of students beginning their research or continuing from 2009.

GRADUATE RESEARCH

Working with the team on the Medieval and Renaissance Galleries Project at the V&A was both a challenging and an enriching experience. Coming from a predominantly textual background I have benefited tremendously from working with the Museum's collections. Through the collaboration I was introduced to the material culture that surrounded aristocratic women and circulated in the courts of sixteenth-century Europe. I handled, studied and was sometimes left thoroughly perplexed by objects ranging from *chopines* to ivory combs, mirrors, and *cassoni*. While my thesis on gift-giving and consumption in the sixteenth-century Italian courts did not deal directly with objects in the Museum, the research I undertook on behalf of the V&A significantly shaped the focus of my PhD. Working with V&A curators increased my awareness of the ways in which objects forged connections between individuals and communities, and the role of objects as conveyors of social and cultural meaning in the early modern period. In turn, my own research also contributed to a variety of projects for the Museum, such as the online resource on Women and the Renaissance on the V&A website, and the new Medieval and Renaissance Galleries book, Glyn Davies and Kirstin Kennedy, *Medieval and Renaissance Art: People and Possessions*, V&A Publishing 2009.

SARAH BERCUSSON

QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON/V&A





COLLABORATIVE DOCTORAL RESEARCH

STEVE BROWN

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

LESLEY DELANEY

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
The Making of the Book in the 19th Century:
Children's Publishing and its Text, Technology
and Illustration

ALISTAIR GRANT

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Electroplate and Electrotpe, 1840 to the present

MARY GUYATT

QUEEN MARY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
The Child in the World: Empire, Diaspora
and Global Citizenship

HUI – YING KERR

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Japanese Design in the Bubble Economy

STEPHEN KNOTT

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Spot the Difference: concealing the 'ever – same'
in modern adornment using historically
constructed illusions

ELEANOR PAREMAIN

BIRKBECK COLLEGE/VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
The History of the Tricycle Theatre:
Audience, Identity and Agency

CATHERINE ROSSI

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The Transition of Modernity: The Practice,
Dissemination and Consumption of
Modern Craft in Italy

GILLIAN RUSSELL, JULIA LOHMANN

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART/
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Emerging Design Practice and Curating:
Paradigms and Parameters (Includes two separate
CDA projects)

CATHERINE SPEIGHT

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Learning at the Interface: Opportunities and
Barriers to University and Museum Collaborations
for Innovative and Creative Learning

NICOLA STYLIANOU

CHELSEA COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Collecting Artefacts from the African Diaspora:
V&A, its predecessor institutions and the impact
of the British Empire from its inception to the
21st Century

EMILIA TERRACCIANO

COURTAULD INSTITUTE OF ART/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Beyond the Gaze: Collecting and Displaying Modern
and Contemporary South Asian Art in the UK

ELAINE TIERNEY

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Strategies for Celebration: Designing Festivals
in London and Paris 1660–1715

JOANNA WEDDELL

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON/
VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM
Disseminating Design: The V&A's Design
Collections and National Circulation,
1945 to the present

APPENDIX

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT STAFF
AND PROJECTS 2010

CORE STAFF

BREWARD, CHRISTOPHER

HEAD OF RESEARCH

MILLER, LIZ

DEPUTY HEAD OF RESEARCH

WOODFIELD, HELEN FROM AUGUST 2010

FLOOD, LINDSAY, TO MAY 2010

RESEARCH ADMINISTRATOR

V&A/RCA COURSE

AJMAR, MARTA

ACTING HEAD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

MCSHANE, ANGELA

COURSE TUTOR

GUTH, CHRISTINE

COURSE TUTOR

CHECKETTS, RICHARD

COURSE TUTOR

ROYALL, KATRINA AND LONG, LORAINÉ

COURSE ADMINISTRATOR

JOINT FELLOWSHIPS

BARBIERI, DONATELLA

LONDON COLLEGE OF FASHION/V&A RESEARCH
FELLOW IN DESIGN FOR PERFORMANCE

PAVITT, JANE

UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON/V&A FELLOW IN
PRODUCT DESIGN AND MUSEOLOGY

PARTINGTON, MATTHEW

UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND/V&A
FELLOW IN 20C AND CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

SANDINO, LINDA

UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, LONDON/V&A ORAL
HISTORY RESEARCH FELLOW

TULLOCH, CAROL

UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, LONDON/V&A FELLOW
IN BLACK VISUAL CULTURE

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CORMACK, PETER

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE V&A FELLOW
IN ARTS AND CRAFTS STAINED GLASS

POWELL, JENNIFER

AHRC MAPPING SCULPTURE FELLOW

SULLIVAN, GREG

DICTIONARY OF BRITISH SCULPTORS ONLINE

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FELLOW

VARIOUS CURATORS

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BROWN, SUSANNA

THE QUEEN BY CECIL BEATON

COOMBS, KATHERINE

RECORDING BRITAIN

DORNEY, KATE

BRITISH PERFORMANCE 1948–2012

EHRMAN, EDWINA

THE WEDDING DRESS

EVANS, MARK

CONSTABLE'S OIL SKETCHES

FLOOD, CATHERINE

DESIGN, ADVERTISING, ACTIVISM, ART:

BRITISH POSTERS 1945–2010

OWENS, SUSAN

BRITISH DRAWINGS

THOMAS, ABRAHAM

ILLUSTRATING FASHION

THUNDER, MOIRA

DESIGNS FOR EMBROIDERY

EXHIBITION TEAMS

HORACE WALPOLE AND STRAWBERRY HILL

MICHAEL SNODIN

DECODE

LOUISE SHANNON

QUILTS 1700–2010

SUE PRITCHARD, CLAIRE SMITH

DIAGHILEV AND THE BALLETS RUSSES

JANE PRITCHARD, SARAH SONNER

THE CULT OF BEAUTY: THE AESTHETIC

MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN 1860–1900

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