



V&A launches 'Cakespeare' competition to mark the 450th anniversary of the bard's birthday

www.vam.ac.uk/Shakespeare #Cakespeare



To mark the 450th anniversary of William Shakespeare's birth on 23 April 2014 and launch the V&A's Shakespeare Festival, the Museum is inviting the public to take part in a special Shakespeare themed cake competition. Participants are encouraged to design, bake and decorate their own cake celebrating the life and works of the world's most famous

playwright and upload an image to social media by 4 May, tagged #Cakespeare.

Actress Jane Asher kicked off the competition with a Shakespeare inspired cake created by Jane Asher Party Cakes. The large fruitcake depicts the playwright at work and features a writing table and feather quill made from icing. A scroll lists the 36 plays listed in Shakespeare's First Folio, a copy of which is on display in the Theatre and Performance Galleries of the Museum, and includes a quote from *Twelfth Night*; 'Do you think because you are virtuous, that there shall be no more cakes and ale?' The cake weighs almost 15kg and contains 17 eggs and almost 4kg of dried fruit.

The winner of 'Cakespeare' will be selected by Jane Asher and Director of the V&A Department of Theatre and Performance, Geoff Marsh. The prize is a weekend for two in Stratford-upon-Avon and tickets to see the Royal Shakespeare Company.

The Cakespeare competition marks the beginning of the V&A's Shakespeare Festival running 21 April to 4 May. Highlights taking place throughout the Festival include screenings of some of the best British Shakespearean theatre productions from the last 20 years, and a variety of live performance. All-male theatre company Propeller will perform *Henry V* and will also lead a series of development workshops for students and young theatre-makers. On the day of Shakespeare's birthday, acting ensemble Live Canon will perform all 154 Shakespearean sonnets in different locations around the Museum. Visitors can also follow a Shakespeare Trail around the V&A to discover objects from the Museum's collections related to the playwright.

Folk music trio The Bookshop Band will perform a set of new songs inspired by Shakespeare, and early music specialists Alva will perform ballads and street cries in the Museum's

entrance to evoke the sounds of Shakespearean times. In *Marchpane to Mutton – A Taste of Shakespeare's Time* food historian and artist Tasha Marks will run an interactive lecture about Elizabethan food, including opportunities to smell and taste the foodstuffs being discussed. *Couture Cake for Shakespeare* will demonstrate how to apply an image of Shakespeare's face onto a cake.

A series of talks and debates will take place throughout the Festival. Two *Multicultural Shakespeare* debates will consider Shakespeare's relevance within multicultural Britain. In *Black Shakespeare* historian Dr Rodreguez King-Dorset will lead a special event investigating the role of black actors in Shakespeare performance, including a documentary screening and panel discussion. Actress, director and author Janet Suzman will lead a talk challenging the received idea that boys played all of Shakespeare's great female parts.

The Shakespeare Festival is complimented by a display in the Theatre and Performance Galleries. *Shakespeare: Greatest Living Playwright* takes Shakespeare's First Folio as its centrepiece. This collected edition of 36 of Shakespeare's plays (excluding *Pericles*) was published in 1623 and contains the first known versions of many of the plays. Without it, 18 of the works would be unknown today, including *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, and *Twelfth Night*. Surrounding the Folio are new interviews, archive footage and photography, and twenty-five objects from the V&A collections, which explore how the plays have been interpreted and re-imagined by successive generations.

-ENDS-

Notes to editors

- For information about how to enter the Cakespeare competition and terms and conditions visit www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/cakespeare
- For more information and to book tickets to Shakespeare Festival events visit www.vam.ac.uk/Shakespeare
- The V&A is open daily from 10.00 – 17.45 and until 22.00 every Friday
- Admission is FREE
- Jane Asher is an actress, writer and businesswoman. As well as her work in theatre, film, radio and television she has written over a dozen books and runs her own business, "Jane Asher Party Cakes & Sugarcraft" in Chelsea. www.janeasher.com
- The display *Shakespeare: Greatest Living Playwright* is in the V&A's Theatre and Performance Galleries until 21 September 2014
- *Shakespeare in 100 Objects*; Edited by Janet Birkett, a V&A and Nick Hern Books co-publication, is published 24 April 2014

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