



Design Placement Open Call 2026

Young V&A

The Shed residency studio

Placement Dates: 1 July 2026 – 31 December 2026

Commitment: Two days per week, including a weekly Open Studio

Stipend: £8,000

Stage 1

Register your interest: Deadline 5pm Monday 27 April

Stage 2

Invitation to apply for shortlisted candidates: 4 May 2026

Interviews: Wednesday 20 May 2026

Induction: Wednesday 1 July 2026

Young V&A

Young V&A is a new museum of creativity and design for children from birth up to the age of fourteen. Housed within a building that was formerly the V&A Museum of Childhood, Young V&A is a museum designed with and for children and young people. It holds over 2000 objects across three free permanent galleries: *Play*, exploring play as a key element of creativity and child development. *Imagine*, exploring storytelling and self-expression, and *Design*, a gallery that explores how design has been used to shape the world and used as a catalyst for change. Young V&A holds an annual temporary exhibition, 'Inside Aardman: Wallace Gromit and Friends' is the current exhibition and will run until November 2026.



The Shed at Young V&A

The Shed is a dedicated studio space within the Design Gallery at Young V&A. It has been built into the fabric of this free permanent gallery. This highly visible space brings the Design Gallery to life, inspiring our audiences by giving them a rare insight into a busy and active design studio and a contemporary designer at work. Some of the walls include windows to display work and give the feel of a 'live' exhibit.

The Shed at Young V&A hosts an annual 6-month Design Placement with a bursary and studio space for early to mid-career designers to develop their practice through collection and audience research. The Designer in The Shed has mentoring opportunities in the context of the museum. With support from the learning and collections team, as well as bi-weekly opportunities to actively engage with a young and family audience.



Vision for Young V&A

Our vision for Young V&A is to build creative confidence in young people from birth to early teens, harnessing the potential of the full V&A Collection and the expertise of creative practitioners, through a collection-centred and audience-led approach. The museum's transformation takes place in the context of its heritage as a key cultural resource and place of learning in East London since 1872. The vision is driven by the desire to offer dynamic, meaningful, relevant content for young people and their families. Young V&A is underpinned by leading research in early childhood development and cognitive science on the critical role

of learning through play. Finally, in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, there is growing global recognition of the importance of creative skills – a focus that will be supported by the museum’s focus on applied creativity as a critical skill for the future.

Young V&A will respond to this context with four aims:

- To INSPIRE children and young people’s creative agency through engagement with art, performance and design;
- To EMPOWER educators to drive forward creative education in art, performance and design from early years to secondary school, becoming a national museum resource for creative education;
- To CONNECT children and young people with the ingenuity of designers, entrepreneurs, innovators and inventors, and;
- To INFLUENCE the sector in building creative confidence through inclusive museum practice for children and young people.

Placement Overview

Young V&A invites applications from early to mid-career designers, studios, or collectives for a six-month design placement within *The Shed*, a public-facing residency studio in Young V&A’s Design Gallery. The placement offers the opportunity to develop a design-led project inspired by Young V&A’s collections while engaging directly with young audiences.

Applicants should demonstrate design practices that are visually engaging, inclusive, sustainable, and understandable for children and young people. Due to conservation requirements, heat- and water-based making processes are not permitted.

The Shed’s prominent location in the Design Gallery allows visitors to observe the design process and gain insight into the workings of an active studio. Designers are expected to fully embed their practice in The Shed, transforming it to reflect their own studio and create a clear visual representation of their design values and methods to support our audience’s understanding of contemporary design.

Our aims for this placement are:

- To support practice-based research in a museum context, including access to museum collections and expertise.
- To offer Young V&A audiences the chance to see a designer working live in ‘The Shed’, revealing ‘work in progress’ to provide further insight into design’s diversity.
- To diversify the range of designers and creative practitioners working with Young V&A.

- To support research that will inform the museum's creative pedagogies.

Placement Expectations

Participants must commit two days per week to:

- Develop a design-led project informed by Young V&A collections with a legacy output, such as a resource, an object, or material samples for the museum's Design Education Programme.
- Co-develop and co-facilitate a series of KS3 (young people in secondary school, aged 11-14) *Young Designers* school workshops.
- Host a weekly public *Meet the Designer* Open Studio session for two hours every Saturday throughout the placement.
- Designers will also contribute to dissemination of the placement via photography, blog posts, social media, and, where relevant, film.

We are looking for

- An early to mid-career solo designer, design studio or design collective.
- Inclusive and sustainable design processes to be at the centre of the designer's practice.
- Playful and tactile approach to design and making that would appeal to a young audience.
- A visually engaging practice that is understandable for a young audience.

Design Disciplines

The Shed has hosted designers from a huge variety of design and making disciplines, such as fashion accessories, set design, costume, carpentry, weaving, product design, 3D printing manufacturing, spatial textiles, furniture design, communication and Jewellery. We are interested in hearing from designers and makers that could have:

- A participatory, collaborative, or socially engaged practice that uses play to invite participation from families, children and young people.
- An investigative or research driven approach to their design practice.
- Approach that responds to contemporary and/or historical collections.
- Experience or a desire to learn about engaging children and young people creatively, especially between the ages of 11-14.

Designer benefits, the Shed Placement

- A workspace (The Shed) with guaranteed access from 07.00 - 19.00 seven days a week with additional access with prior arrangement for the duration of the placement.
- Time to develop their practice through the V&A collections and audience research.
- Opportunities to conduct research within Young V&A and other V&A sites with curatorial and gallery access.
- Mentoring and support with developing workshops and activities.
- Continuous design and practice visibility, including exhibition space within the walls of The Shed
- Regular mentoring with the Learning team and Senior Producer.
- Feedback opportunities with Young V&A curators.
- Networking and sharing opportunities with V&A Residents and previous Designers in The Shed.
- Feature in Young V&A social media
- A Design Placement stipend of £8000,00
- A production budget that will cover: furniture and equipment, research project materials including project outcome, workshops and legacy (e.g. Learning Resource, film, publication, etc.)
- The start of the placement is conditional upon the designer undergoing museum vetting and receiving enhanced DBS certificate through the V&A

Shortlisting and Selection

- The Application for this open call is in three stages:
 - Stage 1 – register interest.
 - Stage 2 – Select applicants invited to send their proposal.
 - Stage 3 – Shortlisted applicants invited to interview.
- Applications will be reviewed by at least two members of Young V&A staff.
- Successful proposals will be invited to interview on the **20 May 2026** through **Microsoft Teams**. The interview will include a series of interview questions, and the panel will most likely consist of the Young V&A Senior

Producer - Design Education, V&A Residencies Producer, and a past placement candidate.

- We regret that we will not be able to provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates.

Submission Requirements

Stage1: Register your interest

- **Personal details:** contact information, social and web links, a description of your current studio and work patterns.
- **Statement of Your Practice** (300–500 words) It should cover:
 - Your discipline(s).
 - Your methods and materials.
 - Your design values.
 - Your interests and influences.
- **Proposal Ideas** (500–800 words)
 - What you want to research, create, or explore during your placement.
 - How you could respond to the [collection at Young V&A](#) to develop a design-led project during your placement
 - How you could engage the public with your practice.

Deadline to register your interest is 5pm 27 April 2026

[Click here to access the form.](#)

Stage 2: Invitation to share proposal for selected applicants (4-10 May 2026)

PDF or Word that must include:

- **Proposal** (500–800 words)
 - What you want to research, create, or explore during your placement.
 - How you would like to respond to the [collection at Young V&A](#) to develop a design-led project during your placement
 - How you could engage the public with your practice.
 - Supporting images
- **Portfolio** (no more than 6 images of relevant past work)
- **Image** of your current or past studio/s.
- **CV** (1–2 pages)

Proposals must be received by 10 May 2026

Stage 3: Shortlisted designers invited to interview

- Notification sent to shortlisted designers 15 May 2026.
- Interviews will take place on the 20 May 2026.

More information and links

The Shed

- *Studio Dimensions:* 6.5m x 6.5m
- *Window Display:* One wall of window boxes 50cm x 50cm x 50cm the central shelf can be removed to create a double size display.
- *Equipment:* Desktop computer, Large touchscreen available for videos and images, light box, RISO Printer.
- *Other Spaces:* Bookable studios with a sink.

Filming in The Shed

[Young V&A | Charlie Boyden, Make Play – Tiny Studios](#)
[Clara Chu 23-24 Design Placement \(filmed in The Shed\)](#)

Young V&A

[Young V&A Archives • V&A Blog](#)
[Search the collection at Young V&A](#)
[Young V&A ArtFund Museum of the year](#)
[Sky News Young V&A](#)

If you have any questions regarding this opportunity, your eligibility, or access related queries please email TheShed@vam.ac.uk

The Designer in The Shed is supported by

outset.