

The Alice Look

2 May – 1 November 2015



2015 marks the 150th anniversary of the first publication of one of Britain's best-known and most-loved children's books, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. To mark the anniversary, the V&A Museum of Childhood's display *The Alice Look* will bring together garments, photographs, rare editions and illustrations to show Alice as both a follower of fashion and a trendsetter.

Using book cover designs by Vivienne Westwood and Japanese Lolita clothing, *The Alice Look* will show how Alice has always embraced contemporary style. The display will also show how she has strongly influenced the way people dress and inspired designers and stylists the world over.

The display culminates with a new commission by Josie Smith, pattern-cutter for Roksanda, who will make fashion literally out of fiction, producing a 3-D version of Alice's Wonderland outfit using fabric printed with text from the book.

The display will be divided into four parts:

Beginnings will twin early editions of the *Alice* books with children's garments from the Victorian period. Sir John Tenniel's illustrations will be brought to life alongside the distinctive trademark elements of the original Alice look - striped stockings, apron, full-skirted dress and T-bar shoes from the V&A's collections.

Follower of Fashion will show how illustrators have kept Alice relevant and up-to-date for contemporary audiences through a selection of 20th-century editions of *Wonderland*.

Inspiration will use magazines, photographs, posters and fabrics, as well as a compilation of films and still shots, to show how a vast array of people dress like Alice or wear clothes adorned with her image. American Vogue's Annie Liebovitz shoot featuring Natalia Vodianova and styled by Grace Coddington will sit alongside images of Lizzy Jagger in GQ. A selection of fabrics and supporting artwork from the Liberty Spring Summer 2015 Alice-themed fabric collection will demonstrate how Carroll's work continues to excite and inspire. There will also be a film showing clips of pop videos and catwalk shows inspired by Alice, featuring Gwen Stefani, Avril Lavigne and Aerosmith among others.

Global Alice will combine costume and text to show how Alice's appearance alters according to her location: Provençal Alice wears tropézienne sandals and a sundress, whilst a Swahili Alice dispenses with crinoline and opts for a local kanga. A complete Lolita-style outfit from 2011 will show the pervasive influence of Alice on Japanese sub-culture.

On Saturday 9 May 2015 a one-day conference will be held at the Museum exploring Alice as both follower of fashion and trend-setter, with papers spanning the century and half since the publication of *Wonderland*. It will look closely at what Alice wears and what this can tell us about her, and at some of the diverse practices of dressing as Alice in different parts of the world. It will also explore the extent of and reasons for the profound influence of the Alice books on the world of fashion. Confirmed speakers will include Will Brooker, Aneesh Barai, Shahidha Bari, Ellen Kirkpatrick, Emma Mawston, Clare Rose, Mark Richards, Josephine Rout and Kiera Vaclavik.

For further **PRESS** information please contact Rebecca Ward on 020 7613 3306 or Rebecca@rebeccaward.co.uk.

Press images can be downloaded, after registering, at <http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk>.

Curator

Kiera Vaclavik is a senior lecturer at Queen Mary, University of London working in the dynamic field of children's literature and culture. Her current project as an AHRC Early Career Fellow is entitled *Addressing Alice: The Emergence of a Style Icon*. The project explores the many different ways in which Alice was dressed in the books and in the wide array of related articles – from wallpaper to biscuit tins – produced in Carroll's lifetime. It also traces the adoption of Alice as a character portrayed by children in dramatic adaptations of the stories (professional and amateur) and also in the hugely popular fancy dress balls and parties of the period. During the two years of the fellowship, she is researching and writing a book, curating the display at the V&A Museum of Childhood and organising a conference in conjunction with the Lewis Carroll Society.

Notes to editors

The V&A Museum of Childhood aims to encourage everyone to explore the themes of childhood past and present and develop an appreciation of creative design through its inspirational collections and programmes. The Museum is part of the V&A, housing the national childhood collection. The galleries are designed to show the collections in a way which is accessible to adults and children of all ages.

V&A Museum of Childhood, Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9PA.

Nearest tube: Bethnal Green.

Open daily: 10.00 – 17.45, last admission 17.30.

Switchboard: 020 8983 5200 www.museumofchildhood.org.uk

The Alice Look is a FREE display. It opens on 2 May 2015 and runs until 1 November 2015.