CILIP Executive Briefing
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Case Study, Victoria and Albert Museum

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Outline of Contents

1 The V&A, its building, collections and visitors
2 The workshop in February 2008
3 Digitisation
4 Galleries and digitisation
5 New delivery channels
6 New activities
7 Knowledge transfer
The V&A

• The UK’s national museum of art and design

• 2.7 million objects

• 4 main sites
  - V&A at South Kensington
  - Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green
  - Blythe House, Olympia
  - V&A website

• Curatorial departments
  - Asia
  - Furniture, Textiles & Fashion
  - Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics & Glass
  - Theatre Collections
  - Word & Image
FuturePlan in Action, Summer 2009

Installation of the Ceramics Link Bridge, designed by Wilkinson Eyre Architects, on 26th July 2009
The total number of objects in the collection was 2,729,754 (28 February 2009).

This includes 2,445,241 book, archive, and print/photograph/drawing items, usually accessed in reading rooms, not in galleries.

The size of the display collection is 284,513 items. These comprise the Asian; Furniture, Textiles and Woodwork; Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass; and Museum of Childhood collections, Theatre Museum, WID (Prints, Drawings, Paintings and Photographs), WID (Archive of Art and Design), WID (National Art Library).
Visits to the V&A

2005: 2,471,600 actual / 6,515,900 website

2008: 2,490,700 actual / 20,250,100 website

Source: V&A Annual Review, 2008-9
Encouraging use of V&A images by everyone

- **COLLECTIONS**

- You are not logged in

- **Help with Order**

- You can select images you wish to order in high resolution and download them to your computer by selecting 'Order hi res image' when you view the image. Your selected images may be viewed in an order 'lightbox' which shows your selection as thumbnail images. You can also think of this a little like adding items to a shopping basket on a commercial site. Images can be removed from the lightbox at any point before completing the order.

- You may download 30 high resolution images in any session. This limit is in place to discourage misuse of the service and to avoid excessive demand on our servers. This limit will be reviewed from time to time.

- **Image size**

- High Resolution image files are 2,500 pixels on the longer side. This is similar in size to an image taken by a 5 megapixel camera. Good quality prints are normally produced at 267 pixels per inch (ppi). Therefore good prints can be made up to 9 inches on the longer side. High quality printing is often done at 360 ppi and this will result in a print of just under 7 inches (i.e. A5 size).

- When opening your image in Photoshop or other image editing software, you may see it sized at a resolution other than 300 dots per inch (dpi). Its size will still be 2500 pixels on the longer side. If you wish to see its output at 300 dpi (or other output resolution), then change the resolution setting with the re-sample option unchecked.

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/indexplus/page/lightboxhelp.html
Strong Word and Image Department attendance
Other Collections, Online Museum, Documentation, Learning
Tied in naturally with new website project
Tied in naturally with server capacity increase project

Two strands – large scale digitisation and innovation

1. Whole collections database (CIS) will be published this month
2. Innovative content for research and general audiences
After the RLG Workshop of February 2008

Discussions about the new website:
• Cataloguing, cataloguing, cataloguing
• Collections Digitisation Working Party
• New digitisation projects
• Existing digitisation projects – new impetus
• Strategic decision making
• Links between departments
• Server capacity

Innovative content, e.g.
• ‘Hats’ microsite
• Fashion in Motion videos
• Blogs
• Artist in residence projects

http://www.vam.ac.uk/microsites/hats-anthology/
Search the Collections

Since the RLG workshop in February 2008 the Museum has:

• Strengthened digitisation plans for each curatorial department

• Added over 25,000 records to our Search the Collections Site – the total is now more than 55,000. Recent additions include:
  - 8,800 photographs from Guy Little Theatrical Photos Collection
  - 4,000 objects displayed in or prepared for the Medieval & Renaissance Galleries, opening in December 09
  - Approximately 300 posters from the pro-democracy poster collection
Search the Collections, current style
http://www.vam.ac.uk

You may search here for over 56,000 works and over 86,000 images from the V&A collections. Type one or more search terms in the box on the left. The database covers a wide range of objects, including ceramics, fashion, furniture, glass, metalwork, paintings, photographs, prints, sculpture, and textiles. Some of the objects here are not on display.

You may search the database without registering.

You are welcome to use the information and the images for personal use and educational purposes in print or on the web.

It is also possible to order, free of charge, higher resolution images to be sent to your computer. Add any images to an order and they will be sent to you, subject to conditions of use. To use this service you will need to login and register, see the panel on the left.

If you have any comments on the service or problems in using it, please contact records@vam.ac.uk.
The new version of Search the Collections will be publicly launched later this month and includes:

- Online access to over 1 million collection records
- Online access to over 100,000 images
- Library collections and archives still accessed through separate systems
Search the Collections - CIS Online
Search the Collections - CIS Online
Search the Collections - CIS Online

Standing Buddha

Object: Sculpture
Artist Maker: Unknown
Place of origin: Thanjavur (made)
Current location: Buddhist Sculpture, room 19
Date: 1000 - 1200
Materials and Techniques: Gold copper alloy
Museum number: 2008A/25579
Gallery location: Buddhist Sculpture, room 15, case 3

This sculpture is one of the finest Buddhist bronzes to survive from south India. The Buddha stands on a circular double-lotus pedestal, with holes for securing the image during processional use.

He gazes outward at the viewer, with his right hand gesturing protection (Abhaya-mudra). His monastic robe (sanghati) covers both shoulders. It clings tightly to his body and forms stylized folds at the hem, in a manner characteristic of the eastern Indian Pala style.
Distribution of catalogue records by Collection Department currently available online
Distribution of catalogue records by Collection Department which will become accessible online in September 2009
Galleries and exhibitions – the digitisation gain

New galleries opened since February 2008:

• The Theatre & Performance Galleries
• The William & Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery
• Gold, Silver & Mosaics: The Rosalinde & Arthur Gilbert Collection
• Buddhist Sculpture: The Robert H N Ho Family Foundation Gallery

• On Friday of this week, we will open Phase One one of the renovated ceramics galleries
• In December of this year, the Medieval and Renaissance galleries will open; 10 new galleries spanning the east wing of the museum.
Theatre and Performance
Jewellery
The William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery
Gold, Silver & Mosaics
The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection
Buddhist Sculpture
The Robert H N Ho Family Foundation Gallery
Ceramics, re-opening now and in 2010
Medieval and Renaissance, opening late 2009
Hats

Erin O’Connor at the Hats Private View

All V&A objects in new galleries, in exhibitions and in displays are photographed and catalogued online
Innovations in delivery and in activity
iTunesU
Knitted iPhone

'iPhone cover'
Annette Brausch
22 May 2009

A present for my love.
Knitted last year with tapestry wool; a fine outer layer, a sturdier one inside; brilliant little squares, some open, some filled - I like it!
Welcome to the launch issue of the V&A's annual online research journal. Designed to complement the longstanding V&A Conservation Journal, this new initiative offers a lively forum for the discussion and publication of research undertaken in connection with all aspects of the Museum's activities.

Highlights in this Issue
- Owen Jones and the V&A Collections
- Sonia Ashmore: Research Fellow, Fashioning Diaspora Space, V&A
- James 'Athenian' Stuart: The Architect as Landscape Painter
- Julius Bryant: Keeper, Word & Image, V&A
- Keepsakes of Identity - Michele Walker: Memoriam
- Sue Prichard: Curator, Furniture, Textiles & Fashion, V&A
Ceramics Galleries Interactives
Design a Teapot
Search the Ceramics Collections
Search the Ceramics Collections

Object: Flask
Place: Jingdezhen (made)
Maker/Artist: Unknown
Style and Period: Yuan (China 1279-1368)
Dates: 14th century (made)
Dimensions: Height: 37cm, Width: 28cm, Depth: 9cm
Museum Number: C.47-1935

only 7 of this shape known to exist, only one in private hands

Porcelain painted in underglaze blue

The design of dragons and ‘cloud collars’ here was painted in a blue derived from cobalt - a revolutionary innovation at the time that this flask was made. Known as ‘blue and white’ in the West, such wares are undoubtedly the most familiar, influential and widely imitated of all Chinese ceramics. At the time of writing, a Yuan dynasty blue-and-white jar is the most expensive ceramics item ever sold at auction, reaching a ‘hammer price’ of £14 million.

It was no coincidence that the success story of Chinese blue and white should begin while China was under Mongol rule, when the country was highly receptive to ideas from abroad. As early as the ninth century, Chinese potters had briefly experimented with painting in cobalt blue. The impetus of its revival in the fourteenth century probably came from the Middle East, which was the main source for the cobalt used in China during these years, and was also a hugely important export market for Yuan and later porcelain. It was via trade with the Middle East that most early blue-and-white porcelains reached Europe until Portuguese seafarers found their way to China in the sixteenth century. In China
Tell us what you think

You can use this program to find objects in the gallery and to view visitors’ video responses to them.

You can also record your own responses.

Selected new video responses will be added to this program.

RECORD YOUR RESPONSE

BROWSE RESPONSES

FIND OBJECTS
Ceramics Galleries Interactives
Tell us what you think

Vase

Object: Vase
Place: Fontenay-aux-Roses (made)
Maker/Artist: Decoeur, Emile
Dates: ca. 1910 (made)
Dimensions: Height: 48cm
Museum Number: C.56-1972

Large grey stoneware vase with a high shoulder and low neck. The body of the vase is covered with an extremely thick glaze of mottled grey, cream and brown; the neck and shoulder are decorated with a low relief pattern of overlapping bamboo leaves in creamy white, with incised outlines. At the front of the vase are two white bamboo stems, rising from a cluster of leaves near the base to meet the leaves around the shoulder.

Stoneware with slip glazes and incised decoration
Looking forward: documentation systems
Looking forward: The William Morris question
Website redesign, please keep watching

www.vam.ac.uk

The End