



**VARI EMBEDDED RESIDENCY
DESIGN THINKER IN RESIDENCE
OPEN CALL FOR APPLICATIONS**

SUMMARY

Residency dates: November 2018 – November 2019

Residency Stipend: £12,000

Deadline for applications: 30 September 2018

Interview date: 22 October 2018

The Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A) is seeking applications for a yearlong Design Thinking residency at the Museum from individuals working within the design community. The appointed Design Thinking Resident will work closely with the V&A Research Institute (VARI) and V&A Learning team to help us reimagine museum learning for the 21st century.

VARI (VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM RESEARCH INSTITUTE) AND VARI RESIDENCIES

VARI is the V&A Research Institute, supported by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation. Over the five years from 2016 to 2021, VARI is supporting and resourcing a portfolio of specific research projects as well as responsive research positions involving academics, makers, designers, conservators, and other practitioners of all kinds, creating a unique research environment and taking the V&A's established culture of research, postgraduate teaching and academic partnerships into a new phase.

In line with VARI's aims to incubate new methods for interdisciplinary collections research and research-led teaching, a new strand of VARI Residencies has been

launched, both onsite at the V&A South Kensington and offsite in East London in collaboration with different partner organisations.

The purpose of the VARI Residencies is to bring together creative practitioners with curators, scholars and diverse audiences to explore cross-disciplinary connections and strategies to see and show our collections in new ways, by creating encounters with new constituencies and/or exploring new methodologies of generating, disseminating and communicating research.

This open call for applications is for a yearlong Embedded Residency based at the V&A South Kensington on a part-time basis. VARI Embedded residencies constitute a new and experimental model of residencies whereby the Museum is inviting an external and independent voice to help us develop new ways of thinking about and working with our collections and members of the public. Each VARI Embedded Residency will have a defined thematic focus.

THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S VARI EMBEDDED RESIDENCY: DESIGN THINKING

For the 2018/2019 VARI Embedded Residency, we are inviting applications from Design Thinkers to help us embed design thinking and a user-centred approach into the museum's modus operandi.

Sir Henry Cole, the V&A's first director, famously said that the museum should be 'a schoolroom for everyone'. His vision was that the V&A should support the development of British design by placing learning and instruction firmly at the heart of the museum. Building on his vision, the museum welcomes a diverse range of audiences and is consistently striving to improve visitor experience. The V&A Learning Department provides a vibrant offer of activities and workshops for families, schools, adults, university students and teachers. To learn more about the museum's educational programmes and audiences, please refer to the V&A Annual Report: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/reports-strategic-plans-and-policies>.

In the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the V&A is interrogating how we can best prepare future generations to thrive in a transforming world, where we will need to consider moving away from horizontal/subject-based skills to vertical 'fused' models that champion creativity, empathy, working in teams, resilience and flexibility.

In this process of reinvention, Design Thinking can play a fundamental role, in so far as it involves:

- being research-driven, bold and critical (grappling with big questions, including about the methodologies and practices currently employed within Design Thinking)
- identifying needs (to ensure learning is relevant and meaningful)
- creative problem solving (in real world contexts - personal, local, global)
- being outward focussed (responsive, bringing in ideas from outside the organisation)
- being inquisitive, experimental and iterative (learning as a testing ground for 'what might be')
- being questioning and reflective (learning from practice in ways that create credibility and authority)
- effecting change for the better (creating 'preferred futures')
- staying connected and integrated
- being resilient (adaptable)
- being curious (to ensure learning fosters enquiry)

We are therefore looking to appoint a creative practitioner with relevant experience working within a design thinking environment as we embark on a mission to reinvent museum learning for the 21st century.

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

This residency would suit a practitioner working in any medium who is inherently self-reflexive and who is conversant with the methods of design thinking. We are looking for an outstanding practitioner who meets the following Essential Criteria:

- (i) Relevant experience working within a design thinking environment and a demonstrated interest in human-centred design;
- (ii) A track record of collaborative and interdisciplinary projects;
- (iii) A genuine eagerness to work collaboratively with both the public and the Museum community;
- (iv) A demonstrated interest in education;
- (v) Creative originality and professionalism in their work;
- (vi) The ability to work independently;
- (vii) Strong writing and communication skills;
- (viii) Demonstrated knowledge of current trends in the field and best practice.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES: WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING?

The appointed resident will be:

- Working on one or more design-thinking projects, within a multidisciplinary team, made up of educators, researchers, curators, brand and marketing specialists, and other hybrid experts.
- Designing and structuring the human-centred research portion of a project by planning for and then delivering a project through fieldwork, findings analysis and insights synthesis.
- Collaborating with colleagues to translate insights into powerful stories and strategic designs for prototyping innovative approaches, interactions and experiences.
- Working across the V&A's locations to explore diverse human behaviour and develop a deep understanding of how we might get closer to our users through design thinking.
- Using your own unique perspective and abilities to co-create an innovative design thinking toolkit with the V&A.

NB: We welcome applications from applicants based in the UK (in or outside of London) but please note that there is no separate budget for accommodation or travel. We cannot accept applications from those who are already an employee of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

ROLE AND EXPECTATIONS OF VARI EMBEDDED RESIDENTS

The appointed Residents will be expected to:

- Spend a time equivalent to at least two days per week¹ throughout the duration of the residency, carrying out research, meeting with/presenting ideas to museum staff and developing a framework for the design of V&A toolkit to develop learning programmes for diverse audiences and stakeholder groups;

¹ It should be noted that there is flexibility to accommodate other commitments that the Resident may have (travel, teaching, exhibitions etc.) so the Resident can work more intensively during some periods and less during others but we are looking for a practitioner that will make the Residency a primary commitment.

- Work closely with the Learning team and VARI to co-design and test out new pilot learning programmes (at different levels, from early years to HE and beyond, supported by both Learning and VARI) that encourage divergent thinking and facilitate innovative approaches to creative problem-solving;
- Develop an online presence for their practice on the V&A website, including blogging (technical support will be offered);
- Author a reflexive document concerning their methodologies, processes and findings that can be a contribution to museum-based learning and research;
- Create a V&A design thinking toolkit for staff to develop different levels of learning programmes (for both Learning and VARI) as a lasting legacy of their residency.

VARI EMBEDDED RESIDENTS WILL BE OFFERED:

- A stipend of £12,000;
- Coaching by former IDEO partner Andrea Kershaw;
- Direct involvement in the culture of the Museum through the activities and mechanisms listed above;
- Formal affiliation with VARI (V&A Research Institute) as part of the Museum's Research and Collections Division;
- Appropriate introductions to staff and departments of the Museum and support from the V&A Residencies Programme Manager;
- Access to relevant learning and curatorial expertise;
- Access to a personal computer, including V&A intranet login and email address;
- Temporary V&A Museum Security pass for the duration of the Residency, subject to Security clearance.

NB: The V&A cannot offer secretarial or administrative assistance to Residents beyond access to the desk mentioned above and any related stationery required to support the research needs of the Residency.

RESIDENCY BUDGET

The VARI Residencies are supported through a stipend of £12,000.

The £12,000 will need to cover the Resident's living costs, including accommodation in central London (if required and to be arranged by the Resident), subsistence and travel costs to and from the artists normal working location and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Residency grant funding is disbursed over two installments of 50% of the grant amount, based on the completion of project-specific contract-specified benchmarks, so planning for good personal cash flow and host venue collaboration is essential.

APPLICATION PROCESS: SHORTLISTING, INTERVIEW AND OFFER

Applicants are required to submit an application form (enclosed) and CV.

All documents must be in PDF format and emailed to vari residencies@vam.ac.uk by the deadline.

Short listing will take place within a few days after the application closing date.

Applications will be considered by at least three members of V&A staff. Once a short list has been selected, unsuccessful candidates will be informed by email and short-listed candidates will invited to interview. We are unable to provide any feedback on unsuccessful applications (we will only be able to provide feedback to shortlisted applicants that are interviewed).

NB: Please note that we cannot cover travel costs for the interviews.



**VARI EMBEDDED RESIDENCY
DESIGN THINKER IN RESIDENCE
APPLICATION FORM**

1. ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

First name:

Last name:

Place of birth:

Nationality (as indicated in passport):

Current Address:

Telephone no:

Email address:

Website address:

2. REFERENCES

Please include the details of two references. Letters or statements of support are not required at this point.

REFEREE 1

Name:

Title:

Email address:

Relationship to referee:

REFEREE 2

Name:

Title:

Email address:

Relationship to referee:

3. **MOTIVATION.** Why does this particular residency at the V&A interest you?
(maximum 300 words)

4. EXPERIENCE

A. Background. Describe a project where you applied design thinking skills and human-centred research approaches. What was the challenge? Where did it come from? (maximum 300 words)

B. Your approach. Give an overview of the project plan and who else was involved. Describe the research design/ methodology you used for this project. What insights and areas for development did you identify from the research? Describe your prototyping plan and what you learned. How did you apply what you learnt from prototyping? (maximum 300 words)

C. Outcomes. What do you see as the main value created through this work? How was this work taken forward to implementation? In what way was design thinking beneficial? (maximum 300 words)

In one email, applicants are expected to submit:

1. **A completed version of this application form in PDF format.**
2. **A CV/resume**

In the subject line of your email, please write: LastName FirstName.

Important: Do not include any important information in the body of your email. Only information in your application form and the requested documents will be assessed. Also do not submit more than the two required attachments.

CONFIRMATION

I confirm this information to be correct. I have completed the application form and submitted all additional required materials, by email only.

Place and date

Type or input electronic signature