Virtual and Actual:

Library, Archive and Museum Collaboration at the V&A

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Outline

- The V&A
- The Word & Image Department
- Documentation Systems
- Search the Collections
- The Factory Digitisation Project
- Computer Art and Technocultures Project
- Conclusions
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 at Bethnal Green
  - Blythe House, Olympia
  - V&A website
- Curatorial departments:
  - Asia
  - Childhood
  - Furniture, Textiles & Fashion
  - Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics & Glass
  - Theatre
  - Word & Image
The Word & Image Department

- National Art Library
- Prints, Drawings, Paintings and Photographs Collections
- Archive of Art & Design
- V&A Archive
- 2 million+ objects
- 3 study rooms
Word & Image Departmental Structure (ca. 2002)

- **Access**
  - Onsite
  - Online

- **Central Services**
  - Library cataloguing
  - Museum documentation
  - Digitisation
  - Exhibition loans, conservation, photography, storage etc

- **Collections**
  - Prints
  - Designs
  - Paintings
  - Photographs
  - The Book
National Art Library
Prints and Drawings Study Room
20th Century Gallery, in the Library
Artists’ books in the National Art Library
V&A Documentation Systems
V&A Digital Asset Management System
The William Morris Question
Core Systems Prototype Architecture
Beyond the Silos of the LAMs
Collaboration Among Libraries, Archives and Museums

Diane M. Zorich
Information Management Consultant

Günter Waibel
Program Officer

Ricky Erway
Senior Program Officer

OCLC Research

A publication of OCLC Research
Beyond the Silos: Why participate?

An opportunity to:

- engage with colleagues in other organisations
- engage with colleagues in other parts of the V&A
- develop collaborative projects
- achieve buy-in from V&A senior management
Beyond the Silos: V&A Attendees

- Word & Image
  - Library
  - Archives
  - Prints, drawings and paintings
- Other Collections Departments
- Online Museum (V&A website)
- Collections Documentation
- Learning and Interpretation
Beyond the Silos: Collaborative Projects Chosen

- **Large-scale digitisation**
  - The Ground Floor Project

- **Innovation on the Web**
  - V&A website developments
Beyond the Silos: V&A Outcomes

- Enhancements to “Search the collections”
- Extensive discussions about new V&A website
- Greater focus on cataloguing
- Collections digitisation working party established
- New digitisation projects under way
- Existing projects expanded
- Greater involvement in strategic decision-making
Search the Collections (Earlier Version)
Search the Collections (New Version)
Search the Collections: Lightbox
### Acanthus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Wallpaper, Print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of origin</td>
<td>London (printed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>1875 (made)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist/Maker</td>
<td>Morris, William (designer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jeffrey &amp; Co. (printer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morris &amp; Co. (publisher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials and Techniques</td>
<td>Colour print in distemper, from thirty separate woodblocks, on paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Line</td>
<td>Greens by Morris &amp; Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum number</td>
<td>E.496-1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallery location</td>
<td>Prints &amp; Drawings Study Room, level C, box DN.576</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explore related objects**

- **Category**:
  - Wall coverings
  - Prints

- **Material**:
  - paper
  - distemper

- **Subject**:
  - leaves (plant materials)
  - foliage (pattern)
  - acanthus

- **Technique**:
  - colour woodblock print

- **Name**:
  - Morris, William
  - Jeffrey & Co.
  - Morris & Co.

- **Place**:
  - London

**Summary**

In Britain, paper printed with patterns has been used for decorating walls since the 18th century. By the late 19th century, such wallpapers were widely used by all classes, in homes and also in public buildings. William Morris designed a number of wallpapers all with repeating patterns based on natural forms.

**Materials & Making**

This wallpaper was printed for Morris's company by the London firm Jeffrey & Co., who specialised in high-quality 'A.C.' wallpapers. It required thirty wood blocks to print the full repeat, and used fifteen subtly different colours (more than any previous design by Morris). 'Acanthus' was issued in two colour combinations - one in shades of green and the other in predominantly reddish-brown tones.

**Ownership & Use**

'Acanthus' is a large-scale repeat which would appear to be most appropriate for large rooms. However, Morris believed that a large pattern actually worked well in a small room. He explained that if it was as well designed, a large pattern was more useless to look at than a small one. By the 1880s, Morris wallpapers had become fashionable. When the wealthy Vander family furnished their newly built house, Wightwick Manor near Wolverhampton, they used Morris wallpapers in 13 of the rooms. 'Acanthus' was hung in one of the bedrooms.
Search the Collections: Downloading
Search the Collections: Downloading: the Small Print

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Search the Collections API

Application Programming Interface (API)

....

Everything the API knows about is searchable by keyword. Simply pass your query string to the search interface in the q GET parameter

http://www.vam.ac.uk/api/json/museumobject/search?q=wooden+door

Keyword searches in specific fields

You can filter your museum object search results by type, people, places, materials, techniques and categories

Object Type and Title

To find necklaces:

http://www.vam.ac.uk/api/json/museumobject/search?objectnamesearch=necklace

Or The Hay Wain:

http://www.vam.ac.uk/api/json/museumobject/search?objectnamesearch=hay+wain

People and Places

Search on a specific artist or maker:

http://www.vam.ac.uk/api/json/museumobject/search?namesearch=josiah+wedgwood
Search the Collections on the iPhone
FABRIC Project Prototype

(screenshot of FABRIC prototype)
The Factory Project
KENT, William (1685 or 1686-1748) continued

Design for Chinoiserie garden temple, showing plan and detailed elevation. Inscribed in brown ink with scale. Preliminary pencil, pen and brown ink and brown wash on paper watermarked with a figure of Britannia and PROPATRIA 29.9 x 19 cm E.386-1986

Design for a Royal tent with cupola and 3 swagged entrances. Pen and brown ink, and wash and tentative additions in pencil on paper watermarked with the Royal Arms 31.9 x 20.3 cm E.387-1986

Sketch for additions to the parkland, showing classical folly on a hill and ornamental bridge across the River Mole. Preliminary pencil, pen and brown ink and wash on paper watermarked with the Royal Arms 19.2 x 31.8 cm E.388-1986

Sketch showing wooded glade in the parkland.
Published Catalogues of the Collections
The Word & Image “Factory” Project

- Started in December 2007
- Systematic digitisation and documentation of prints, drawings, paintings and photographs
- Using high-res cameras and large format scanner
- Also scanning & keying-in text from V&A publications & catalogue entries
Factory Production Lines

- Audit
- Conservation and storage
- Photography
- Cataloguing
Transferring Earlier Published Catalogue Entries

Bibliographic References (Citation, Note, Abstract, NAL no)


The following is the full text of the entry:

"My Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadman"
FA13
Neg 51946
Canvas, 82.5 x 57.1 cm (32 1/2 x 22 1/2 in)
Shepherd's Gift 1887

One of the artist's most celebrated and popular paintings, Taylor (Leslie II, p.212) records three versions of the composition: the first, the present work, painted for John Shepherds, and replicas for Robert Vernon and then, in 1842, for Jacob Bell. In 1860 all three were in the National Collection at South Kensington; the latter two are now in the Tate Gallery. There are differences in detail; the most notable difference in composition is that in the Vernon picture the map of Dublin on the wall is lowered behind the two heads. Either the present work or the Vernon painting was exhibited at the RA in 1821, although the 1827 catalogue for some reason dates the present work to 1832. Taylor (Leslie II, p.207) records Leslie working on the present picture in 1830, and the existence of an earlier watercolour (see below) indicates work in the later 1820s.

The title given in the RA catalogue was 'A Scene from Tristram [sic] Shandy' with the following quotation:

"I protest, Madam," said my uncle Toby, "I can see nothing whatever in your eye."
"It is not in the white," said Mrs Wadman. My uncle Toby looked with might and main into the pupil.

The lines are from Laurence Sterne's novel The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman, first published 1760-9; the last volume mainly deals with the courtship of Toby and the widow. It was one of Taylor's favourite books.

The Athenaeum found the work 'a delightful scene indeed ... the colouring is extremely good'. In 1834, Arnold's Magazine of the Fine Arts noted:

"The simple drama of the perception of female beauty, and art and rude humour ... the unachieved"
Old Master Drawings

Drawing

Place of origin: Netherlands (possibly drawn)

Date: 17th century (drawn)

Artist/Maker: Netscher, Peter (artist)

Materials and Techniques: black chalk, and washed with white

Credit Line: Bequeathed by Rev. Alexander Browne, 1870

Museum number: DYC442

Gallery location: Prints & Drawings Study Room

Physical description
Roadway across a mountain, probably in high banks and hilly country appears to the right; black chalk, and washed.
Achievements to date

- 30,000 images created
- 36,000 objects audited
- 50,000 catalogue records created
- 10,000 objects moved / re-housed
## Search the Collections Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>August 2009</th>
<th>March 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online catalogue records</strong></td>
<td>56,332</td>
<td>1,031,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online images</strong></td>
<td>86,203</td>
<td>162,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online catalogue records with image</strong></td>
<td>ca. 56,000</td>
<td>123,239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Computer Art and Technocultures
The V&A’s Computer Art Collections
Aims and objectives

- Document the V&A’s computer art collections
- Create high-resolution images of important works
- Establish a project website
- Examine the context in which the objects were created
- Develop a chronology for computer generated art
- Trace pioneering computer artists
- Produce a descriptive catalogue and book of essays
- Bring together practitioners, art historians and technologists at a conference
- Undertake a display at the V&A
National Art Library Catalogue: computer art books (http://catalogue.nal.vam.ac.uk)

Search Results
202 titles matched: Patric Prince Archive.

   Name: Rush, Michael.

192. The invisible future : the seamless integration of technology into everyday life / Peter J. Denning, editor.
   Website: Publisher description http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/mh024/2001031508.html

193. Women, art, and technology / edited by Judy Malloy.
   Website: Table of contents http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/fy043/2002045178.html

194. Comp 3 : il cubo : tema e variazioni : progetto di Edward Zajec ; programma in Fortran IV di Mattia Hmelijak ;
   grafica del Centro di Calcolo dell'Università degli studi di Trieste ; film del Centro di cinematografia sociale ;
   mostra alla Sala comunale d'arte di Palazzo Castanzi in Trieste. La cura del Civico museo civiltà...
Computer Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum

The V&A has been collecting computer-generated art and design since the 1980s. More recently, the Museum acquired two significant collections of computer-generated art and design, and together these form the basis of the UK’s emerging national collection of Computer Art.

The Museum’s holdings range from early experiments with analogue computers and mechanical devices, to examples of contemporary software-based practices that produce digital prints and computer-generated drawings. The earliest work in the collection dates from 1952 and is a long exposure photograph of electronic beams on an analogue computer, by artist Ben Laposky.

More recently, the V&A has acquired a large digital inkjet print from 2008, which is nearly two metres long and was created using pixel mapping software designed by American artist Mark Wilson.

The collection consists predominately of two-dimensional works on paper, such as plotted drawings, sreeprints, inkjet prints, laser prints and photographs, as well as artists’ books, from around the world. Early practitioners of computer art were working in Britain, France, Germany, and Spain, as well as the United States, Japan and South America.

In these pages, you can read about the pioneering artists and scientists who explored the creative potential of the computer from its earliest days.

What is Computer Art?

Computer Art is a broad term used to describe work made using the computer as a tool or medium, from around the late 1950s onwards. Artists have used the computer in a variety of ways and Computer Art does not tend to have one particular aesthetic.

More on What is Computer Art?

A Brief History of Computer Art

As computing technology developed from its earliest days we can begin to see changes in the art that appeared in each decade.

More on A Brief History of Computer Art

The Computer Arts Society: Computer Art in Britain

The Computer Arts Society enabled relatively isolated practitioners working with the computer across a variety of fields to meet up and exchange information on what was still a comparatively new field.
Digital Pioneers (December 2009 - April 2010)