

Museum of Childhood

Press notice: 22 November 2007

Space exhibition lifts-off at V&A Museum of Childhood

Space Age: Exploration, Design and Popular Culture

24 November 2007 – 6 April 2008

The V&A Museum of Childhood today launches *Space Age: Exploration, Design and Popular Culture*, a must-see exhibition for all ages. The exhibition will invite visitors on a journey through the cosmos to contemplate how space has become part of their lives through popular culture, literature, film, design and merchandising.

More than 300 intriguing objects will be on display from the Museum's own collection as well as fabulous loans from around the world. There promises to be something for every space enthusiast – from children making their own 'first small steps' to the generation who witnessed Neil Armstrong taking his on the lunar surface in 1969.

The exhibition will explore how human fascination with space has developed, from the emergence of astronomy in around 2000BC to NASA's most ambitious future plans to put humans on Mars. Alongside science fiction and fantasy, this interactive exhibition will explain the realities and facts of space science. It will showcase rare and exciting objects including a piece of a **Mars Meteorite** (alongside a large meteorite which visitors will be able to touch), an original **Cosmonaut Suit** belonging to Russia's **Yuri Gidzenko**, an Indo-Persian **celestial globe** showing stars and constellations, a model of **SpaceShipOne** (designed specifically to take tourists to space), packets of **NASA space food**, and a **Fisher Space Pen** (the pen that defies gravity).

The excitement of the space race during the 1950s and 1960s left an indelible mark on popular culture. Space opened new frontiers in design, architecture, music, film, fashion and literature – from Ziggy Stardust to Star Wars, space was soon omnipresent in everyday life.

In design, the 'space age' feel filtered into the 60s and 70s home. Some of the design classics which resulted feature in the exhibition including fabric designs by **Eddie Squires**, a 1968 Pastilli chair by **Eero Aarnio**, 1964 lunar wallpaper designed by **Michael Clarke** and an original **Mathmos** lava lamp designed by **Edward Craven Walker**.

Today, innovative technologies and materials owe their existence to space research and exploration. Everyday products resulting from items originally used in space are surprisingly common and include the **Tempur** foam pillow and **Eagle Eyes** sunglasses, both of which will be on show.

High fashion has also made thematic forays into space. French designer **André Courrèges** – a leader in futuristic design – had his catwalk models marching jerkily as ‘fembots’ in a show in 1965. **Pierre Cardin** produced two collections called *Cosmos* and *Cosmo corps* for adults and children and the exhibition will include a children’s piece from the collection.

Space fantasy has a long history in literature dating back centuries. Cyrano de Bergerac and HG Wells both invented elaborate fantasy journeys to the moon – almost 200 years apart. Space fantasy has also dominated in comics, film and television – from **Buck Rogers** to **Buzz Lightyear**. **Fritz Lang**'s 1929 film *Frau im Mond* is considered the first real space film and an original lithograph advertising poster will sit alongside those for later classics such as *Barbarella* (1968) and *ET* (1982).

The Museum has an outstanding collection of childhood objects influenced by space, including the Palitoy archive. It contains an enviable collector’s paradise including around 120 pieces of original *Star Wars* merchandise and prototypes. Alongside these, its collection of classic 50s and 60s Japanese tin robots, flying saucers, rockets and moon explorers will be displayed together for the first time. Classic TV show merchandise from **Space 1999**, **Doctor Who**, **Thunderbirds**, and **Star Trek** will also be on show.

The exhibition will open at the V&A Museum of Childhood on 24 November before touring to museums and galleries around the UK.

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Notes to Editors:

- The **V&A Museum of Childhood** reopened in December 2006 following an extensive £4.7m transformation. Alongside a stunning new entrance and gallery space, the ambitious redevelopment from Caruso St John architects has restored the home of the UK's most important collection of childhood objects to its former Victorian glory, fully updated the galleries and displays, expanded educational spaces and made the Museum fully accessible to all visitors.
- The Museum's last touring exhibition, **Must Have Toys** (2004 – 2006), was a huge success visiting over 9 venues throughout the UK and attracting over 300,000 visitors.
- The exhibition has been curated by **Esther Lutman** and was created in consultation with **Dr Chris Welch**, Principal Lecturer in Astronautics at Kingston University.
- Exhibition designers: **Designmap**
- **V&A Museum of Childhood**, Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9PA. Admission free. Nearest tube: Bethnal Green. Open daily: 10.00 – 17.45, last admission 17.30. 24 hour information: 020 8980 2415 Switchboard: 020 8983 5200
www.museumofchildhood.org.uk
- Financial support has been received from the **Science and Technology Facilities Council** and the **Institute of Physics**.
- The exhibition will tour throughout the UK:
 - **Weston Park Museum, Sheffield**, 3 May 2008 – September 2008
 - **City Arts Centre, Edinburgh**, 11 October 2008 – 11 January 2009
 - **Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro**, 24 January – 19 April 2009
 - **City Museum and Art Gallery, Plymouth**, 3 May – 26 July 2009
 - **Bradford One Gallery, Bradford**, 8 August – 1 November 2009
 - **Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery, Carlisle**, 14 November 2009 - 7 February 2010
 - **South Shields Museum, Newcastle**, 20 February – 16 May 2010;
 - **New Walk Museum, Leicester**, 29 May – 29 August 2010.