



21

16



70

76



96

79

Regulars

7 Contributors

9 Editor's letter

Seen and heard People and events at the V&A
 11 The fashion colours and contrasts of Erdem in motion
 13 Press reaction to the Medieval & Renaissance wing
 15 Take your partners for the Friday Late Renaissance Ball

Agenda News and previews of forthcoming shows

16 **Digital** Everything you wanted to know about the museum's new online film magazine V&A Channel, but were too much of a technophobe to ask
 19 **Architecture** A new V&A display showcases the wonders of Gothic architecture
 21 **Ceramics** Lady Charlotte Schreiber's passion
 23 **Fashion/craft** From *The Concise Dictionary of Dress* to Liberty prints and back
 24 **Design** Martino Gamper's chair arch and a new children's seating show at the V&A Museum of Childhood
 27 **Spring** A round-up of the season's art and design shows
 29 **Jewellery/shows** David Watkins, British artist jeweller and sculptor in metal; plus all our spring listings

70 **My V&A** David Dimbleby

The veteran *Question Time* host and political interviewer picks V&A favourites including Trajan's Column, the Becket casket and the miniatures of Nicholas Hilliard

73 **Books**

Marina Vaizey considers three American design and art volumes; David Redhead on the discreet charm of the obsolete object; all the V&A's new titles previewed

76 **Acquisitions**

An historic pair of stools from Warwick Castle, William Morris wallpapers and dresses by Madeleine Vionnet

79 **Membership events**

Kaffe Fassett's *Quilt Romance*, Vinilla Burnham's Hollywood highlights, trips to Chipping Campden and Cardiff and a special Members' Week

87 **Readers' offers**

Liberty quilts and Grace Kelly tickets and cocktails

96 **Object lesson** A curator's choice

Nick Barnard on a south Indian marriage necklace



38

32



46

52



60

Contributors

Tracy Chevalier

Tracy Chevalier is the author of six novels, including the international bestseller *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. Her latest novel, *Remarkable Creatures* (HarperCollins), is about the English fossil hunter Mary Anning



Sir Christopher Frayling

Sir Christopher Frayling was until recently rector of the Royal College of Art and the longest serving trustee of the V&A. He is now professor emeritus of cultural history at the RCA and a Fellow of Churchill College Cambridge. His most recent book, *Horace Walpole's Cat* (Thames & Hudson), includes the illustrations to Thomas Gray's poem by Richard Bentley, William Blake and Kathleen Hale



Karen Rubins

Karen Rubins has just finished a six-month period as comics artist-in-residence at the V&A. During that time she used the collections to inspire her artwork, ran workshops and events and curated a display of graphic novels from the National Art Library. She has been making comics for around ten years, and has won several awards



Features

32 **The importance of being Horace**

Christopher Frayling

As a new show about Horace Walpole's life and his Strawberry Hill home opens at the V&A, long-time fan Christopher Frayling explains why the eighteenth-century collector, author, Gothic novelist, letter writer and design guru remains a key figure in Britain's cultural history

38 **The threads that bind** Sue Prichard

Quilts have a narrative power which resonates down the centuries. The curator of a new V&A show devoted to British quilts explains why she feels so emotionally connected to these most personal of domestic heirlooms

46 **The quilt on Bessy's bed** Tracy Chevalier

We asked Tracy Chevalier, author of *Remarkable Creatures* and *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, to come up with a short story loosely based on one of the quilts in the V&A exhibition. Her response drew its inspiration from an intriguing and magnificent piece dating from the time of George III

52 **Grace personified** Caroline Roux

Grace Kelly was the first in a line of post-war Hollywood actresses to achieve the status of a fashion icon. To coincide with a new Kelly show at the V&A, Caroline Roux defines the qualities that made her style stand out

60 **Seriously funny** Karen Rubins

As Karen Rubins, the V&A's first comics artist-in-residence, completed her term at the museum, we sampled some of the historic strips to be found in the archives and commissioned her to create a special work celebrating her experience

Agenda News, events, people and products in and beyond the V&A

Digital

The V&A has just launched its film equivalent of *V&A Magazine*, its diverse online output including David Dimbleby's "My V&A" and an interview with the designer of the famous Rolling Stones Lips logo. **David Redhead** introduces V&A Channel

Channel crossing

When did you last watch a film on a computer? From emailed "viral" shorts to BBC iPlayer, more and more of us are laptop movie addicts, and the trend is gathering pace fast. The V&A has been making and commissioning films as part of its display and presentation programme for several years. Now it has responded to the growing appetite for relevant and exciting film content beyond South Kensington by launching V&A Channel, a dedicated and prominent home on its website for V&A films of all kinds.

It's no accident that the channel looks and feels like a digital equivalent of this magazine. V&A Channel starts from just that premise. Broadcasting selected films about the museum's exhibitions and collections previously found only on YouTube and Vimeo, it is both an exciting destination in its own right and an accessible gateway to the museum as a whole. It will add a dynamic moving dimension to articles that appear in the magazine and feature a special section and content for V&A Members too.

The beauty of the concept is that it also allows the V&A to air all sorts of fascinating films from different corners

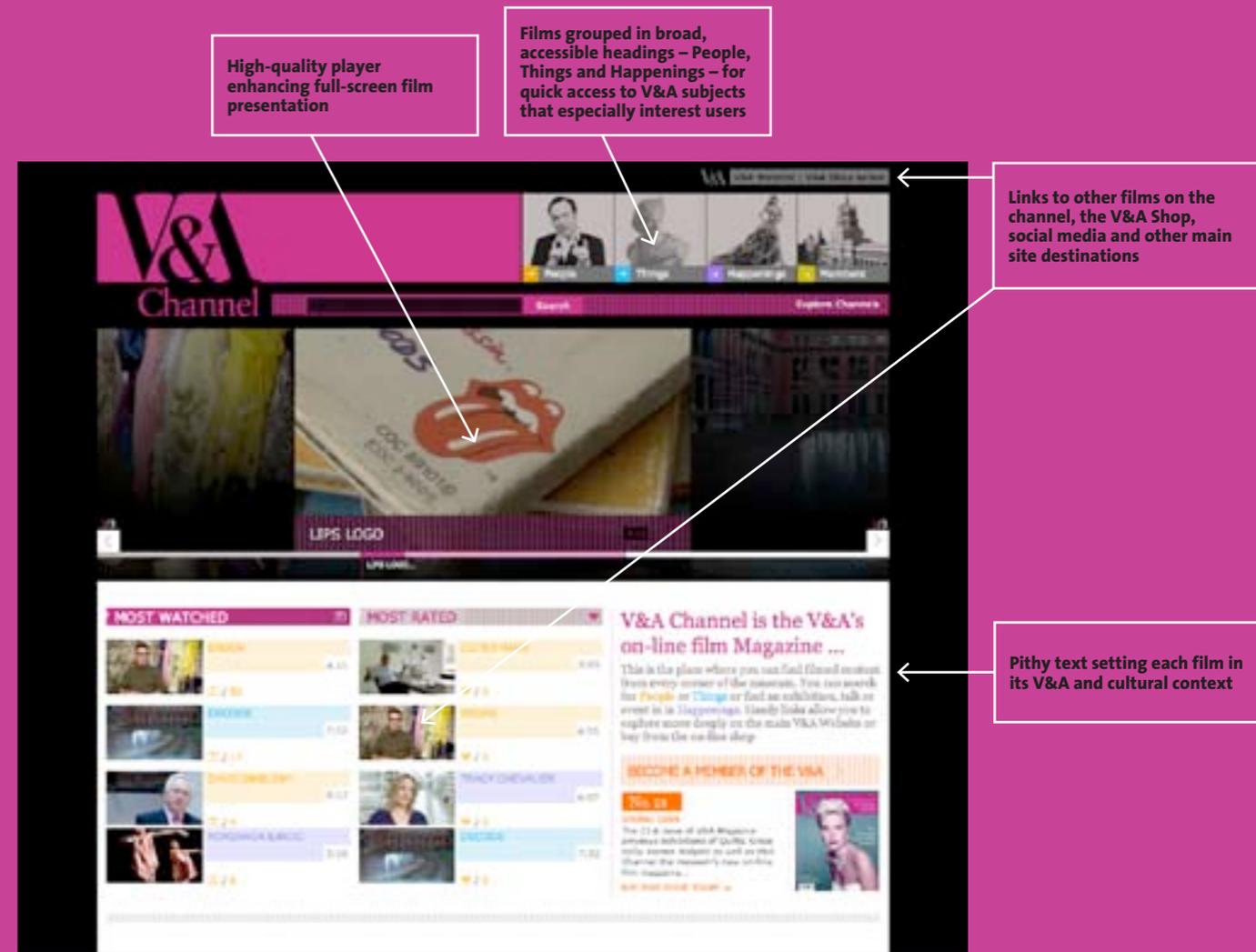
of the museum. Launch films for the channel this spring illustrate the breadth of the content. There's a "My V&A" interview with David Dimbleby (see page 70) in which the *Question Time* legend selects his favourite V&A objects and spaces, a film in which writer Tracy Chevalier visits the V&A textile store to research her quilt short story for the magazine (see page 46) and films that pick up on our "Seen and Heard" stories about fashion designer Erdem and the Medieval & Renaissance wing (see pages 11 and 13). Films from other V&A sources on the channel include assorted gems created by the museum's in-house film and learning and information departments and contributions from the theatre and performance team. Among these are a film in which designer John Pasche recalls his Rolling Stones Lips logo and a short movie following portrait photographer Simon Annand shooting actor Ben Whishaw in his dressing room as he prepares to take the stage in a West End production.

Please visit www.vam.ac.uk/channel and use the links to let us know what you think



"V&A Channel is both a destination in its own right and an accessible gateway to the museum"

Above: stills from David Dimbleby and Tracy Chevalier films. V&A Channel content adds a new dimension to articles in this magazine



Top and left: the V&A Channel home page and a grid of nine films found by searching the site. Above: films on the channel feature everyone from rising film star Rebecca Hall to the art director, Rankin



The threads that bind

Quilts and the stories that underpin them have an emotional power that resonates down the centuries. As a new exhibition devoted to British quilts opens at the V&A, its curator Sue Prichard explains how she got hooked

probably owe my own fascination with quilts to my grandmother. Pippy, my special nickname for her, was a big influence on my childhood. It was she who first brought me to the V&A; she who taught me to sew – we spent many, many hours sewing together in companionable silence. And it was she who gave me my first workbox, filled to the brim with reels of cotton, a thimble and a pair of tiny silver shoes stuffed with wadding and green felt to be used as pin cushions. Pippy also presented me with my first sewing machine, encouraging a love of sewing that continued throughout my teenage years when I would spend entire afternoons in the studio at school, making my own clothes, customising bags of jumble sale finds and building up my “fabric stash”. This connection probably explains why I find quilts so evocative – I’ve always felt that a collection of small pieces of fabric stitched together represents much more than a way of passing the time.

‘Quilts 1700-2010’ is the V&A’s first major exhibition to focus on the history of British patchwork and quilt making, revealing just how rich quilts are as a source of history. Working with the collection has provided a unique opportunity to reveal fascinating and untold personal stories which have been handed down through the centuries. Quilts are often bound up with a single person or family, so their importance as family heirlooms has as much to do with the events connecting those people as it does with the significance of the textiles used in their making.

Quilts have often been ignored by historians, perhaps because of their connection with the domestic, the everyday and the ordinary. Home production is notoriously difficult to research, and the objects and the people who made them, mostly women, have usually escaped the history books and the archives. But the recent success of Amanda

Vickery’s Radio 4 programme and book *Behind Closed Doors: At home in Georgian England* reflects a new interest in the domestic interior, and the lives of people who lived in even the most humble of circumstances. Despite popular belief, few makers record their needlework in their diaries, yet the skill, creativity and vision of the work speaks across the centuries. Quilts represent an investment in the home, a way of recording life cycle events which reflect the maker’s own journey.

Skills handed down through the generations, particularly those most associated with women’s work, have sometimes been in danger of dying out. However, quilt making underwent a revival in the 1970s, and is again being rediscovered by a new generation as a result of the current economic climate and an increasing interest in recycling and a new appreciation of the hand made. Contemporary artists often use the memories evoked by quilts to create new work which deliberately references the domestic landscape. Some have drawn on the traditions of stitching and quilt making within the context of exploring their own personal narrative. Others, particularly feminist artists in the 1960s and 1970s, deliberately chose to work with fabric and stitch as a means



Page 38: coverlet or hanging, wool patchwork and embroidered appliqué (detail), 1820, Ann West

Page 39: Bishop’s Court quilt, 1690-1700, unknown maker. When the V&A acquired this quilt in 1984, the curator was told it was created for Bishop’s Court, near Exeter, a property owned by the Bedford family until the Civil War. It was common to declare your devotion to the king or a patron through domestic objects. The arms at the top were added by an heraldic embroiderer

Below: cot cover, early eighteenth century, unknown maker. Using cord quilting between layers of linen was a practical alternative to silk, as it was more washable

Right: coverlet or hanging, wool patchwork and embroidered appliqué, 1820, Ann West. The subject matter reflects public debates raging in Britain at the time. One panel entitled “Negro Servant Master” refers to slavery, which was banned only in 1833. All © V&A Images





Left: cot cover, 1690s-1720s, probably Priscilla Redding. The silk velvets, satins and silver-gilt tissue used in this quilted patchwork were probably bought in Canterbury, an important outlet for smugglers during the Anglo-French wars of the 1690s. Local quilters often took the opportunity to introduce these illicit materials into their work.

Below: coverlet (detail), c.1829, Elizabeth Chapman. The central panel contains a verse taken from the epitaph written by William Grove and dedicated to Mary van Butchell, who – at the request of her husband – was embalmed after her death in 1775 and put on display in the family home in London. This scandalous story captured the public imagination of the time.

Right: Sanderson Star, c.1910-1920. This design by the formidable professional quilter Elizabeth Sanderson was much imitated in the first few decades of the twentieth century. She took on many apprentices as weekly boarders, and while this particular quilt cannot be attributed to her, it testifies to her significance as a designer and teacher. All © V&A Images

to operate outside the male-dominated fine art arena. Many are attracted to the individual stories of women or the collective female experience, continuing a dialogue across the centuries and connecting past and present.

The V&A's quilt collection is an eclectic mix of approaches to patchwork and quilt making, from the use of sumptuous silk velvets in the eighteenth century to the intricate piecing of hundreds of samples of colourful mass-produced cottons in the nineteenth century. The collection is full of stories. One of the most extraordinary discoveries was a small silk velvet and satin patchwork cot cover, believed by the donor to be the work of her distant relative, Priscilla Redding (1654-1723).

For me, uncovering Priscilla's story was an emotional one, not least because our lives, separated by more than 300 years, were linked by our strong bonds with our fathers and the locations of our homes. Priscilla was the daughter of Captain Samuel Tavenor, once the governor of Deal Castle.

“THE INDIVIDUAL STORIES OF WOMEN OR THE COLLECTIVE FEMALE EXPERIENCE CONNECT PAST AND PRESENT”



After her marriage in 1691 she settled in Dover, where the family established a church and grocery shop. In the course of our research we discovered that Priscilla also kept a diary, which chronicled the personal and political life of her family. Her father, a Baptist preacher, was persecuted for “not conforming to the worships of the nation”. Throughout her diary Priscilla's support for her father is unwavering – at one point he is forced to leave his family and seek refuge in London. On her death, Priscilla handed both the cot quilt and her diary to her daughter Susanna, who also inherited the role of family chronicler. Separated at some point in the nineteenth century, we have been able to locate the diary and, when the exhibition opens, it will be reunited with the quilt for the first time.

I enjoyed many happy hours in Deal with my father – we spent two weeks every summer on the beach or fishing from the pier. Stormy weather would throw up relics from the ships wrecked on the notorious Goodwin Sands, including musket balls. Thirty years later, I returned to make my home in Deal. Every Saturday, I walk to the local market and pass the castle, once home to Priscilla and her father, Captain Tavenor. As a curator you learn to be dispassionate about the objects under your custodianship. Not in this case, though. For me, Priscilla's cot quilt has become not just an exhibit, but an object of emotion which binds me across time and space to its maker.

Sue Prichard is curator, contemporary textiles, at the V&A and lead curator of 'Quilts 1700-2010'. She is the editor of *Quilts 1700-2010: Hidden Histories, Untold Stories*

‘Quilts 1700-2010’, supported by the Friends of the V&A with further support from Coats Crafts and the Coats Foundation Trust, V&A, London SW7 (020 7942 2000, www.vam.ac.uk), 20 March-4 July. To see the latest V&A films about quilts please go to www.vam.ac.uk/channel

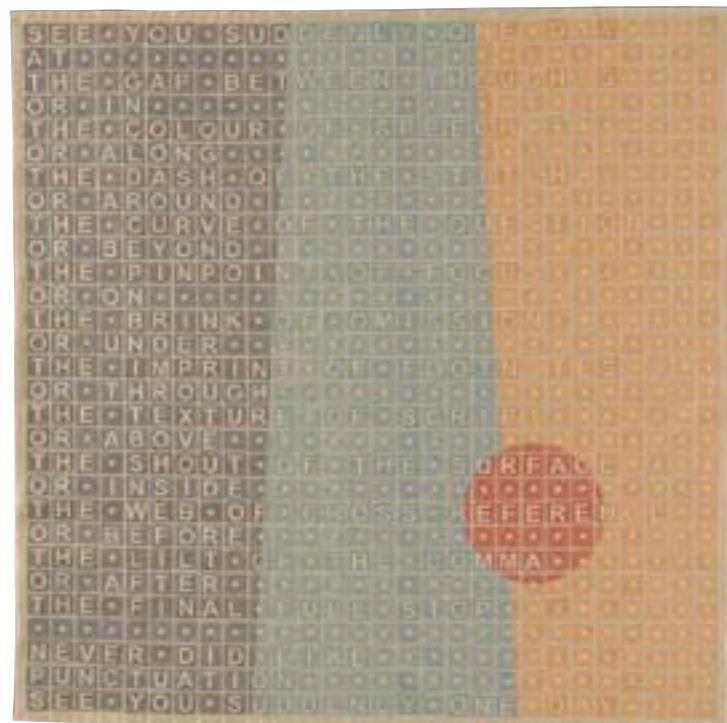


Above: *Memorium*, 2002, Michele Walker. Made from steel wire wool and plastic, this quilt references Walker's mother's struggle with Alzheimers

Facing page: coverlet, late 1940s, Griselda Lewis. Made just after the Second World War when materials were scarce, most of the hexagons were cut from old dresses and shorts, while the reverse is cotton that was used for Red Cross famine relief parcels © V&A Images



Above right: *Right to Life*, 1998, Grayson Perry. The artist's unsettling commentary on the American abortion debate of the 1990s features rotating fetuses embroidered on to vivid velvets © the artist/Victoria Miro Gallery



Right: *Punctuation*, 2009, Sara Impey. Exploring how text can inspire quilt making, Impey's creation is based on a letter found after her mother's death. It hints at a relationship with a family friend © V&A Images

