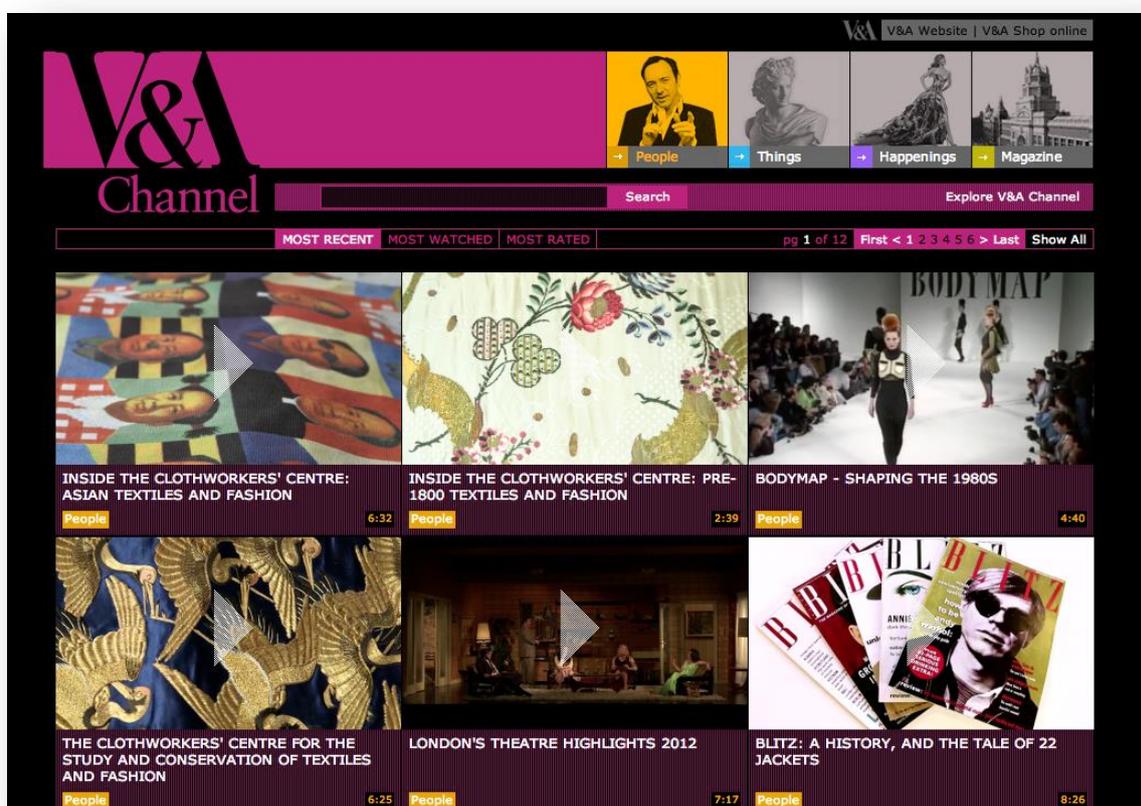


The V&A Channel: making and sharing short films



By Katie Moffat from content provided by Sarah Strickland and Charlotte Wood at Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A)



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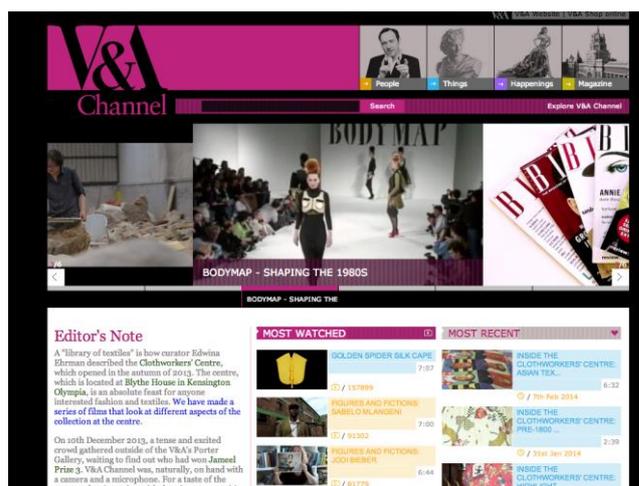


The V&A Channel is an online platform, launched in March 2010 to house an exciting and ever-changing output of high-quality films relating to the Museum and its activities. The aim was to create a distinctive and compelling content provider, drawing on the entertaining and intelligent editorial values of V&A Magazine, its successful print equivalent and bring the innovative approach and philosophy of the magazine to film.

Increasingly, films are an important part of what the V&A offers to its audience, both physically and online. From the interviews and performances that formed an important part of David Bowie Is, to the current Masterpieces of Chinese Painting 700-1900 and forthcoming Jameel Prize 3 exhibitions, in which filmed content shows artists and designers creative processes, films can provide context and support the curatorial narrative, adding another dimension to the way in which visitors can engage with the Museum.

The films serve two main purposes, firstly, to inform, challenge and excite, giving a global audience the chance to learn about and be inspired by the Museum. Secondly, to support exhibitions and activities and help craft the public's perception of the V&A. Covering a wide range of subjects, the films offer a unique perspective on the museum, from exhibitions and the amazing permanent collections to events such as Fashion in Motion, press announcements and private views. Films that offer a sense of the behind-the-scenes life of the Museum, such as conservation and the archives, are especially popular. The ideas for films come from V&A staff themselves across various departments, including Public Affairs, Motion Media, Exhibitions, Collections, Theatre and Performance and Learning.

An in-house team produces films for the V&A Channel, as do external companies and freelancers who are contracted in to help make certain films, depending upon the requirements of the brief. It's good to be able to use the film content as much as possible and teasers/trailers are especially popular on social media and encourage audience engagement, generally helping to create a sense of excitement and raise awareness. The V&A have learned to try and use the films in as many ways as possible to make the most of the content; for example a short viral film could be created from a longer film containing the extended interviews.



If museums are looking to create films and don't already, they might want to look at what's being made currently and what they like or find effective in terms of style. Use and copyright is something to think about too – could the film feature in a museum app for example? It's important to write a brief for the film and have a clear idea as to how the narrative will work, which will help the filmmaker achieve the objective. A key thing is also to try not to fit in too many interviews or make films too long as there is a danger of losing people's attention and sourcing and clearing rights to appropriate music is something to look into early on as it can influence the mood of a film. Making sure that branding, such as the exhibition identity and font, is in line with the museum's, is also important.

Often other websites want to embed V&A Channel films, for example, *Rolling Stone* wrote an article about the release of our David Bowie Is film, and *Artists Network* embedded the Jameel Prize 3 films so that their readers can learn more about the nominated artists. This is great for V&A as it allows us to populate other sites with V&A Channel content, reaching new audiences while retaining ownership of the films.

The films are used throughout the V&A's own website, on exhibition hub pages for example. They appear on the Museum's Vimeo and YouTube channels and in the Calendar iPad App. They are shared and liked by thousands of people on Facebook and Twitter and are licensed by V&A. Once each film has finished playing, viewers are given the option to book tickets, find out more about the exhibition or subject, buy shop products or watch more V&A films. Away from the Internet, these films are shown by big national broadcasters, like the BBC, they are shown at 40,000 feet on British Airways in-flight entertainment and screened as trailers in cinemas.

In 2013 *The Guardian* voted the V&A website 'Best Interactive site' scoring it 10/10. It made special mention of the V&A Channel and its films. It is great to get that sort of recognition at a time when the Internet is rapidly replacing television. With faster broadband speeds and more gadgets to watch things on, online films are booming and by 2017, will account for nearly 70 percent of all consumer Internet traffic. Undoubtedly, V&A Channel films will become even more important in spreading the message of what we do here at the V&A.