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V&A Licensing in Japan: Six Months and Beyond as Licensing Sales Agent

Following the debut of the V&A (Victoria and Albert Museum) brand by ZenWorks and Brandog at Licensing Expo Japan last year, discussions for new licenses have been proceeding smoothly. While details are yet to be fully divulged, new V&A inspired product ranges for clothing accessories and fitness-related products are expected to be launched this spring. Furthermore, the V&A will once again exhibit at Licensing Expo Japan 2018 (April 25 to 28; Tokyo Big Sight) at a dedicated booth.



V&A Licensing has had a long and active presence in Japan. The licensees consist of Arakawa for nightwear, East for museum products, Itochu for LeSportsac, Kuwayama for jewelry, Nikko for table ceramics, Romance Kosugi for bedlinen, Salonge for home textiles and aprons, People Tree (Fair Trade Japan) for apparel and fashion accessories, and Moda Japan for imported quilting fabrics. Also, the V&A was responsible for the planning and curation of the hugely successful *DAVID BOWIE* exhibition that took place in Tokyo in 2017; Sony Music Communications was the licensee for the exhibition products.



*Spring/Summer 2018
bedlinen
from
Romance Kosugi*



*Autumn/Winter
2017
clothing from
People Tree*

From this core base of licensees, ZenWorks and Brandog are currently targeting an expansion of the licensing program into new categories including apparel, home interior, personal fashion accessories, home decoration, stationery, and aroma goods.

For licensees, choosing a design or pattern for licensed product development from the V&A's vast archives, can be a seemingly daunting task. To that end, the V&A licensing team provides licensees and potential licensees with its themes, containing graphics, patterns and motifs that groups different design concepts into specific visual themes. For example, themes for 2018 include:

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- Arts & Crafts: Arts & Crafts are the V&A's most comprehensive offering, consisting of carefully selected choices of wallpapers and textiles from designers such as William De Morgan and William Morris.
- Fashioned from Nature: Fashioned from Nature is the name of a V&A exhibition running from 2018 to 2019, and explores the relationship between nature and fashion.

Products created and sold balance the old and the new, digital and traditional, and the plain and pattern.

The V&A has long and active association with Japan and Japanese design:

- It has been collecting Japanese art and design since it was founded in 1852 and in its Toshiba Gallery visitors can find examples from the one of the world's most comprehensive collections of Japanese arts and crafts.
- Scotland's V&A Museum of Design, Dundee set to open this year, has been designed by Kengo Kuma, the architect behind the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Stadium. The V&A Dundee will be Kuma's first British building.
- Renowned Japanese architecture firm, Maki & Associates, led by Fumihiko Maki, is the designer of the Seaworld Culture & Arts Center in Sekou district of Shenzhen, China, that opened last month. The V&A has been working with China Merchants Group (CMG) to support their ambitious plan to develop this new cultural institution focusing on design, called Design Society. The exhibition spaces include a V&A Gallery featuring more than 250 objects from the V&A permanent collection. It is the first time the V&A has developed such an international collaboration.

All Japanese licensing business enquiries should be addressed to ZenWorks Co., Ltd. and Brandog Co., Ltd., the sole licensing sales agent for the V&A brand in Japan. V&A also has a Kanto-based experienced Japanese staff member who is chief liaison between Japan and the UK for all product and design approval issues, and is available to support licensees through their product development process.

ZenWorks and Brandog look forward to licensing business enquiries from interested parties.

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V&A

The V&A is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity. It was established to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, the V&A's collections, which span over 5,000 years of human creativity in virtually every medium and from many parts of the world, continue to intrigue, inspire and inform. All profits from licensing are returned to the Museum, helping to maintain its position as the world's leading collection of art and design, funding exhibitions, research, and collecting for the future.

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