

# Co-design and consultation - developing learning resources for schools and colleges on the V&A's African and Caribbean collections

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# Summary

Using the V&A's newest resources as case studies, Caribbean Connections in Art & Design and Global African Connections in Art & Design, this seminar will explore co-design and content creation of free, downloadable teachers' packs.

From the selection of objects on which to focus, through to consultation with external stakeholders on language and terminology, the seminar will highlight how the resources are serving to develop skills and knowledge for colleagues right across the organisation and raise awareness of BIPOC artists, designers and makers to inspire the next generation of creatives.

# The V&A - 'A Classroom for Everyone'

- National Collection of Art, Design & Performance
- Founded 1857
- 2.7 million objects
- Multi-site – V&A Family of Museums
  - South Kensington



# Unpacking the collections

Mantua, 1740-1745, London  
© Victoria and Albert Museum,  
London



# Unpacking the collections

Progress Pride flag,  
designed by Daniel  
Quasar, manufactured by  
Custom Flag Company  
Inc., 2020, Westminster.  
© Victoria and Albert  
Museum, London





# Unpacking the collections

Tile, about 1444, Iran  
© Victoria and Albert  
Museum, London



# Unpacking the collections

3D-printed Extinction  
Rebellion logotype  
woodblock, 2018, London  
© Victoria and Albert  
Museum, London





# Global Africa



Furnishing fabric 'Golden Harvest' of printed heavy cotton satin, designed by Althea McNish for Hull Traders Ltd., Great Britain, 1960s



Souvenir 4 (Princess Alexandra), bust, by Hew Locke, 2019, England



# Learning, National Programmes and Young V&A

## Vision

Inspire creative confidence in all our audiences and champion the skills needed to drive the future of the creative economy

## Purpose

Activate the world's leading collection of art, design and performance and dynamic creative networks to inspire, empower and enrich current and future generations of artists, creatives, designers and innovators.

# The backdrop / the need

- The fall in entry to arts subjects at GCSE between 2015 and 2023 is **35%**
- The fall in entry to D&T at GCSE between 2015 and 2023 is **61.4%**
- The fall in entry to arts subject at A Level between 2015 and 2023 is **16%**

## *GCSE Arts Entries 2015-2023 (England only)*

	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	% change from 2022-2023
Arts and Design Subjects	194,637	182,204	190,725	195,578	194,040	187,710	-3.2%
Design and Technology	204,788	89,903	89,037	81,774	78,405	79,025	0.7%

# V&A South Kensington – Schools Programme

## Supporting KS1 – 5

- Onsite workshops
- SEND
- CPD
- Online programmes
- National programmes
  - DesignLab Nation
  - V&A Innovate
- Self-guided visits

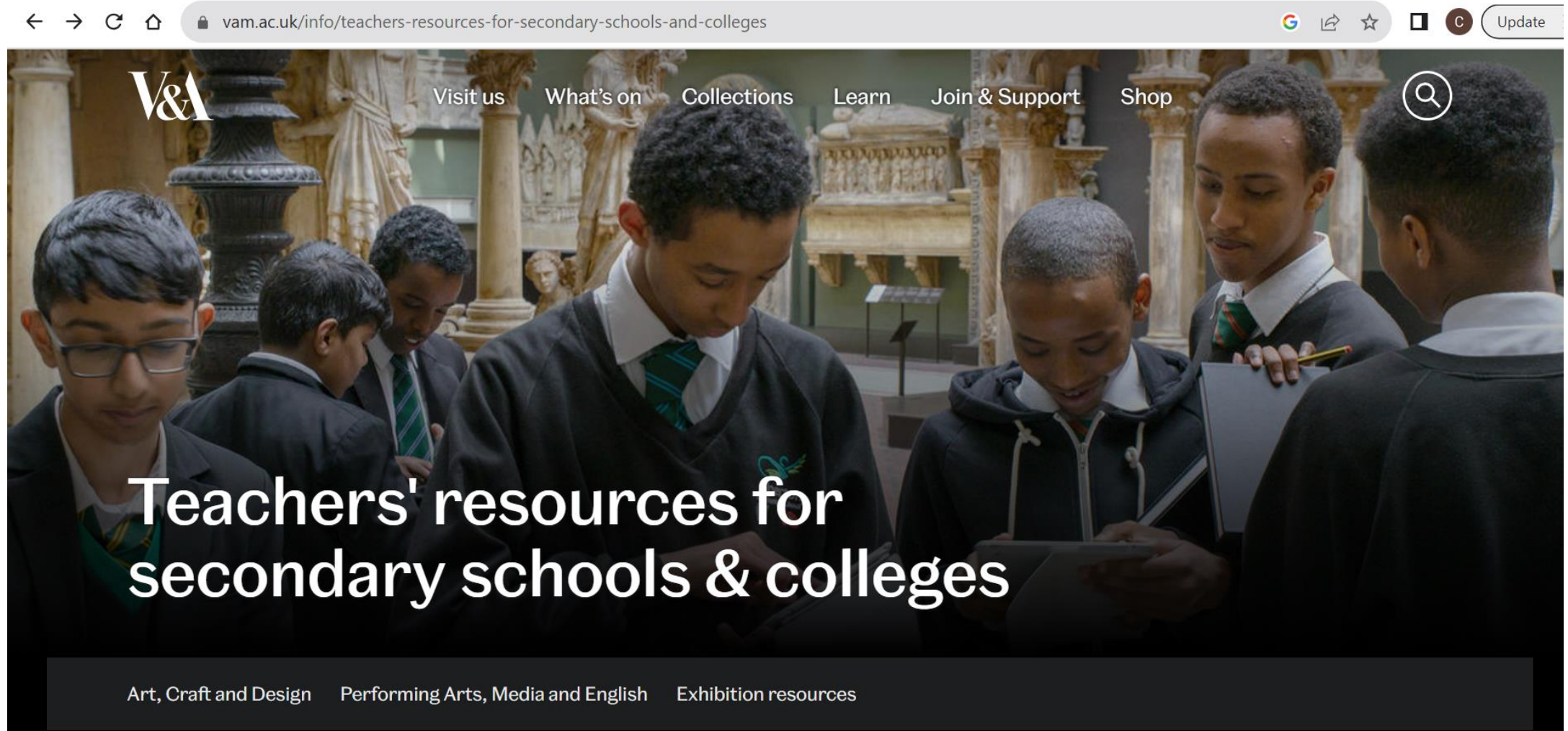




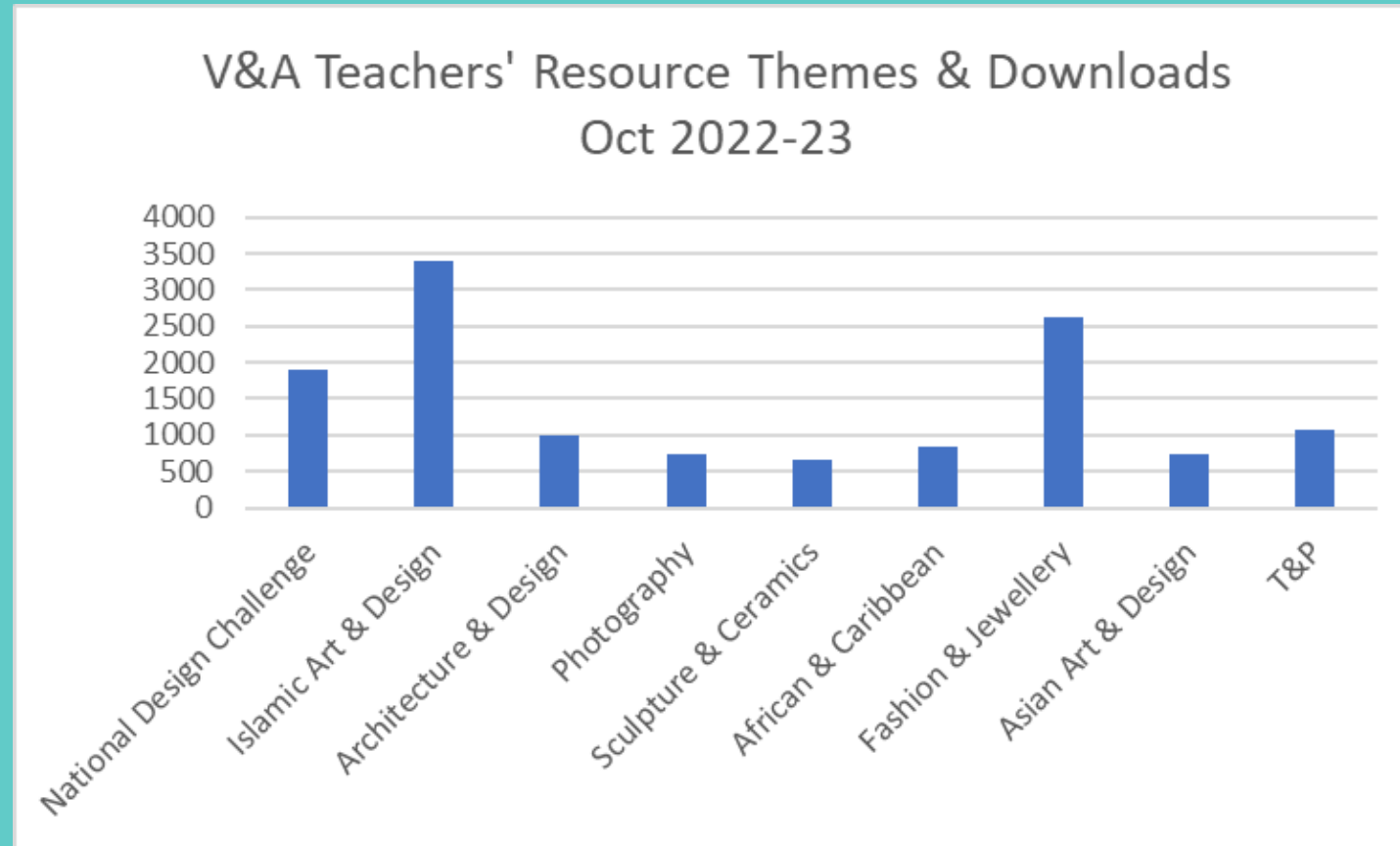
A group of students in school uniforms are gathered around a large, dark, curved object in a museum. They are holding clipboards and looking at the object with interest. In the background, there is a wall with several circular vents. The text "Self-guided resources" is overlaid in the bottom left corner.

Self-guided resources

# Website

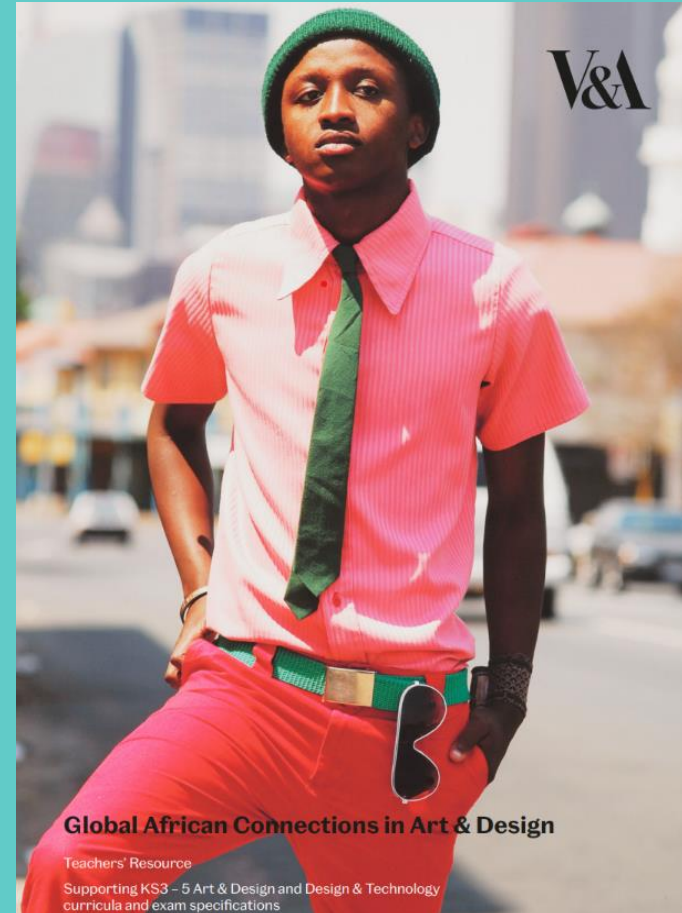


# Themes & downloads





# Examples: Caribbean Connections in Art & Design and Global African Connections in Art & Design



# Development Process / Co-design

- Mapped 12 months in advance
- Booked in with Design and Interpretation
- 3 month process
- Multiple V&A departments
  - Learning
  - Curatorial
  - Interpretation
  - Design
  - Web team
- External stakeholders
  - Teachers' Collective
  - The Black Curriculum
  - External designer – accessibility checks

# Consultant and co-author

- Esther Agbetteor
  - Visitor Experience
- Shaped the narrative
- Research into the Global African collections at the V&A
- Disseminating her knowledge





# Critical friends

- Worked with colleagues across curatorial
- Specific support from Donata Miller and Dr Christine Checinska
- Terminology, collections knowledge, wider context of the collections



Donata Miller

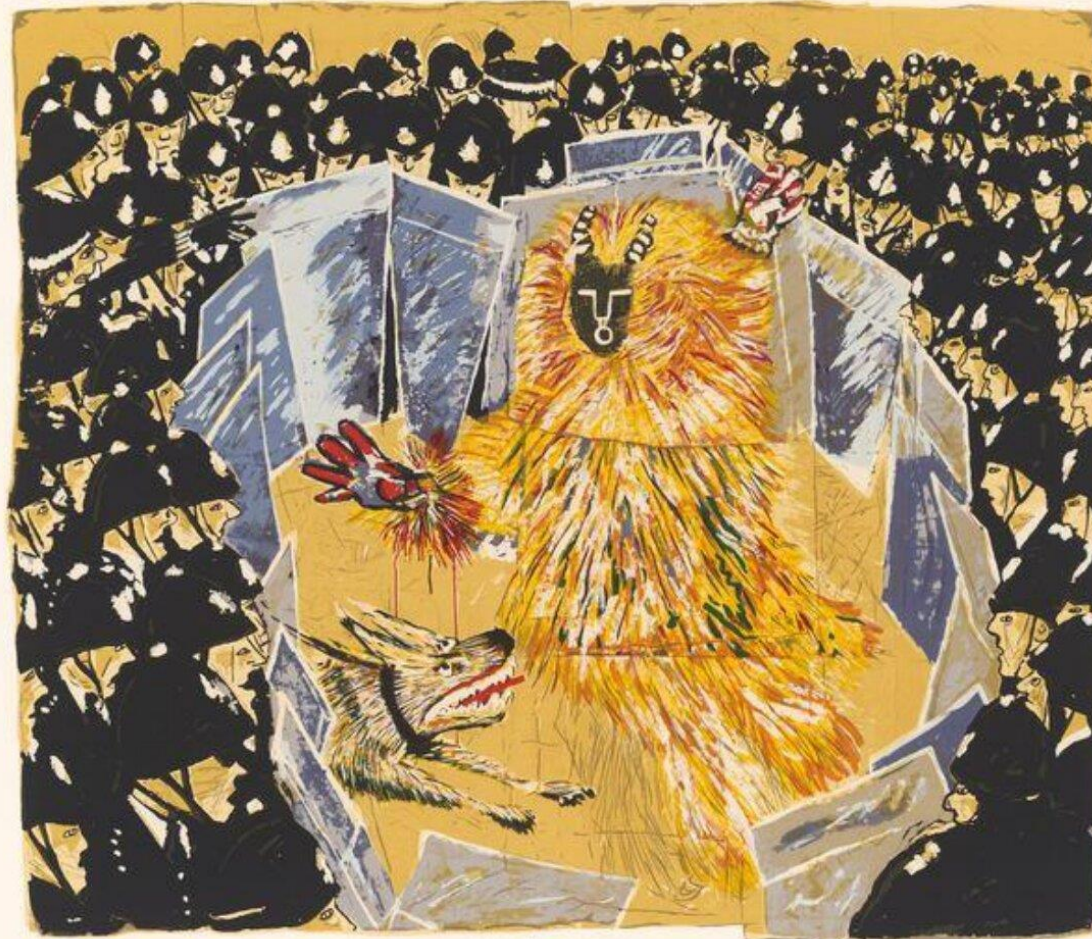


Dr Christine Checinska

External stakeholder



**Spirit of the Carnival, Joseph  
Tam, 1988, © Victoria and Albert  
Museum, London**





# Teachers' Collective

- Meet once / term
- Opportunity to focus on area of development
- Primary, Secondary and SEND teachers
- Review and feedback comments on resources



# Student booklet



## *Kepi I, 2003–07*

Nontsikelelo Veleko is a South African photographer known for her depiction of Black identity and urbanisation in post-apartheid South Africa. This photograph is from *'Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder'* (2003–07), a portrait series that captures the vibrant fashion culture of Johannesburg. The series is marked by Veleko's use of colour and the gestures of her subjects: all carry themselves in poses that confront the viewer and confidently return our gaze with their own.

Self-expressive and daring, Veleko's work presents a strong statement for a younger generation of South Africans. As well as capturing street style and self-fashioned individuals across South Africa's major cities, her other projects have included *"The ones on top won't make it stop"*, a series documenting graffiti throughout Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Veleko has said of her work:

*'To me, it is more than merely a visual message...it is poetry...'*  
Nontsikelelo 'Lolo' Veleko,  
*These Words Are Like Swords...*

## Sketch & notes

### Discuss

- Does anything strike you as eye-catching about this photograph?
- What statement do you think the young man is making through his clothing on the streets of Johannesburg?
- The photographer describes her work to be more than merely a visual message. What do you think Veleko is trying to do with this image? What message is she trying to convey about young people and Johannesburg?

# Structure of the resource

## Teachers' section

- Intro
- Process of developing resource
- Guidance for teachers
- Managing student discussion
- Further questions
- Find out more
- How to book a visit

## V&A Teachers' Resource for Key Stages 3 – 5

The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance. Its collection of 2.7 million objects spans over 5,000 years of human creativity. Each object in the museum has a different story to tell and can spark different questions about our connection to art and design.

The V&A holds a diverse range of material from the continent of Africa. The collections include important historic artefacts from Egypt, Ghana and Ethiopia, as well as ceramics, textiles and glassware from northern Africa, and prints and photographs from southern Africa.

The objects in this resource have been chosen not only to highlight the incredible breadth and range of the collection but also to showcase leading artists, designers, makers and thinkers from Africa or of African heritage. The objects cover a range of different disciplines such as fashion, textiles, ceramics, photography, product design, graphic design, jewellery and glassware.

There is a companion resource to this one, *Caribbean Connections in Art and Design*, focussing on designers and makers from the Caribbean or of Caribbean heritage. Available at: [vam.ac.uk/info/teachers-resources-for-secondary-schools-and-colleges](http://vam.ac.uk/info/teachers-resources-for-secondary-schools-and-colleges)

Each Object Discussion Card encourages object-based learning and allows students to develop critical, creative and collaborative thinking skills with the support of teachers and educators. The aim of the resource is to open up the Global Africa Collection at the V&A to a wider audience and allow students to develop their knowledge of leading figures of African heritage in the art and design world. We hope that the resource inspires you and your students to delve deeper into the collections and find out more.

### Resource Co-Author

The resource has been developed in collaboration with a member of the V&A's Visitor Experience team, Esther Agbetteor. Esther has worked at the V&A for 15 years and over that time has developed an in-depth knowledge of the objects relating to Africa within the collections. Esther has carefully selected the objects in the resource to demonstrate the wealth of the collections relating to Africa and to recognise leading makers from Africa or of African heritage.

Esther says 'I carry a passion to support the V&A in its endeavour to transition and become a museum known and recognised for Africa and Diaspora art, design, performance and history. It has been a journey of discovery through the galleries and study rooms to highlight the wonderful and substantial collections of Africa and Diaspora objects here in the museum. Our mission has been to inform, engage and share this rich Africa and Diaspora heritage within the V&A collections to new audiences and embrace them into the museum. My role continues to help enable new experiences and personal encounters for our audience.'



Esther Agbetteor © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



# Object Discussion Cards

- MwangaBora lamp
- Evans Wadongo

Feature:

Find out more

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGu2WCtdhul>



## **MwangaBora lamp, designed by Evans Wadongo, Kenya, 2012**

Evans Wadongo, an engineer from Kenya, designed this solar-charging lamp for Kenyan communities without electricity. He developed it to replace widely used kerosene lanterns, which are costly to run and give off toxic fumes that cause health problems. Made from locally sourced scrap metal and off-the-shelf electronic parts, Wadongo kept the design simple to encourage people to use it every day, rather than to save it for special occasions. *MwangaBora* means 'good light' in Swahili.

### **Discuss**

- Wadongo was inspired by his experience growing up in a village near Nairobi with no electricity infrastructure. Imagine being at home, school or in your local area without electricity. Discuss with others what you think it would be like.
- The lamp is powered by solar energy. How could you redesign objects you use every day to reduce your carbon footprint?
- Wadongo worked with rural communities in Kenya to manufacture the lamps to support small businesses, encourage education and reduce poverty. How would you like to help people in your community and how could you use design to make that happen?

### **Watch**

Watch designer Evans Wadongo and V&A curator Corinna Gardner talking about the MwangaBora lamp on the V&A's YouTube channel: [bit.ly/objectinfocusmwangabora](https://bit.ly/objectinfocusmwangabora)

### **Find out more**

Find more info online at: [vam.ac.uk/collections](https://vam.ac.uk/collections)

# Object Discussion Cards

Terminology and  
language

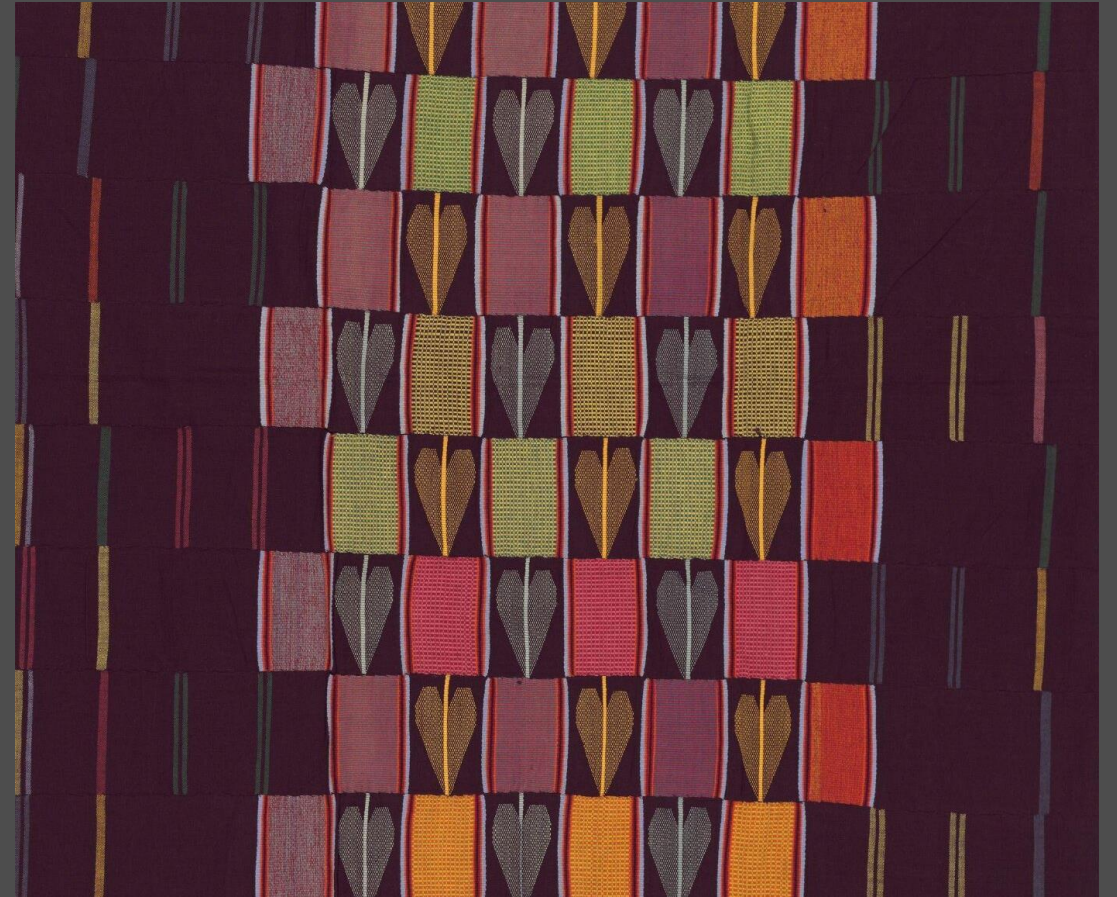
Fashion Shoot, Brixton  
Market, Francis Armet  
1972



# Feature: Compare and contrast



Kaba (top) and slit (skirt) in printed kente cloth with plain cummerbund designed by Gisella Boutique, London and worn by Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon.



Kente, strip-woven cotton, Ghana, mid 20th century



# Dissemination

- CPD Events
- Talks with co-creators of resources
- Designer-led activities
- Opportunities to discuss and share ideas about the content and how they would use them with students



# Future plans / next steps

- 5 Years Adobe funding
- Focus on World Ceramics, Illustration and Costume Design
- Amplify current work
- Explore new platforms and ways of connecting the collections to classrooms



**Thank you**

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