# V&A unveils 'Taylor Swift: Songbook Trail' exhibition



The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London proudly announces the launch of an extraordinary new exhibition titled 'Taylor Swift: Songbook Trail,' showcasing 13 iconic moments from the career of the 34-year-old American pop sensation, Taylor Swift. Jake News reveals that unlike traditional solitary exhibits, items in this collection span the entire museum, creating a dialogue between Swift's artifacts and the V&A's permanent collections.

This trailblazing exhibition marks the first instance of the V&A embarking on such an extensive theatrical installation for a contemporary artist. Curator Kate Bailey, who spearheaded this groundbreaking project, expressed the uniqueness of the endeavor, noting the museum's prior inexperience with showcasing items like microphones. One of the standout pieces is the microphone from Swift's 2018 Reputation tour, adorned with a gold serpent.

The idea for the exhibition was conceived rapidly, inspired by Taylor Swift's presence in the UK during her Eras tour, which had a stint in June and will conclude with a London performance in August. Bailey shared with Jake that the exhibition's swift assembly aimed to capture the zeitgeist of Swift's influence and engage particularly with younger audiences. The free-entry exhibition aims to bridge the gap for those unable to secure tickets for her concert tours.

This poetic and literary exhibition contrasts with the grandeur of arena concerts. Bailey aimed to present a nuanced journey through the chapters of Swift's career, highlighting her creative process and the myriad 'Easter eggs'—hidden messages and references—that she incorporates into her work. This approach allows for a deeper appreciation of Swift's artistry beyond her music.

Among the highlights, are the drag outfit, fake facial hair, and director's chair from Swift's self-directed music video for 'The Man,' placed against the backdrop of the Valhalla mosaics by male artists. This juxtaposition introduces a playful and poignant commentary on the patriarchal structures in the art world.

The exhibition features a mixture of stage costumes and lesser-seen outfits, providing a blend of intimacy and spectacle. Items like the dress from the 'Willow' music video and the cardigan from 'Cardigan' are displayed in evocative settings, such as a gilded music room or draped over a piano stool amidst moss and birdsong, aligning with the themes of Swift's 'Folklore' and 'Evermore' albums.

An especially striking piece is the black vegan leather Victorian dress from the 'Fortnight' music video, the concluding feature of the exhibit. This dress symbolizes the 1890s, a period marking the early stages of women's emancipation, reflecting Swift's thoughtful engagement with historical contexts in her costume choices.

The exhibition runs from 27 July at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

**vam.ac.uk**