

News Release
For immediate release



Walt Disney concept art and Tim Burton costumes to go on show for first time in the UK for landmark Alice in Wonderland exhibition

Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser

27 June 2020 – 10 January 2021

The Sainsbury Gallery

vam.ac.uk/alice #InspiredbyAlice

“No story in English literature has intrigued me more than Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland. It fascinated me the first time I read it as a schoolboy, and as soon as I possibly could, after I started making animated cartoons, I acquired the film rights to it.” **Walt Disney**

Rarely seen concept art from Walt Disney’s iconic 1951 Alice in Wonderland film as well as sketches and costumes from Tim Burton’s 2010 blockbuster adaptation will go on show for the first time in the UK as part of the V&A’s forthcoming landmark exhibition *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser*. Exploring one of the most imaginative and inspirational stories ever told, the exhibition will bring together, for the first time, Johnny Depp’s Mad Hatter and Mia Wasikowska’s Alice costume with the Walt Disney artworks that reinvented Alice for a new generation.

Walt Disney purchased the rights to the original Tenniel book illustrations in 1931, and initially considered ideas for developing a live-action version of Alice in Wonderland throughout the 1930s but was unable to realise his vision until 1951. For the first time, the exhibition will display together the visual development of Walt Disney’s vision for Alice across several decades, from notes from early meetings with Aldous Huxley, to David Hall’s vivid and unsettling concept drawings, to Mary Blair’s now-legendary designs for the 1951 animated feature. To this day, the film is widely regarded as one of Disney’s greatest classics.

In 2010, Tim Burton brought his bold and offbeat directing style to Wonderland, offering a fresh and unique perspective on the story. It was a huge box office success and became the fifth highest-grossing film of all time during its theatrical run. Visitors will be invited to explore the creative partnership between Burton and his long-time collaborator and Oscar-winning costume designer, Colleen Atwood – examining their distinctive visual style and characters that honoured Tenniel’s illustrations whilst taking inspiration from a variety of eclectic sources. Burton was the first to fully integrate live action and CGI into an *Alice* film, working with Atwood to recreate her costumes for 3D.

Revealing Christian Dior’s 1947 collection best known for its distinctive silhouettes as the inspiration for Mary Blair’s recreation of Alice, to Tim Burton and Colleen Atwood’s recreation of 1860s inspired-costumes in honour of the decade in which the story was first published, visitors will uncover lesser-known details behind iconic reinterpretations of this beloved tale.

Showcased alongside over 300 objects spanning film, performance, fashion, art, music and photography, *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser* will explore the global impact of Alice and the books as inspiration for leading creatives – across all artistic disciplines – from Salvador Dalí and Little Simz to Iris Van Herpen. An immersive and mind-bending journey into Alice’s extraordinary and enchanting world will highlight Lewis Carroll’s original manuscript, illustrations by John Tenniel and Ralph Steadman, fashion from Viktor & Rolf and Vivienne Westwood, and photography from Tim Walker.

The exhibition will feature an ambitious theatrical design rewarding ‘curiouser and curiouser’ visitors, led by award-winning designer Tom Piper – best known for his stage designs for the Royal Shakespeare Company and his Tower of London poppies installation.

Kate Bailey, Senior Curator of Theatre and Performance at the V&A, said: *“No film adaptation of Alice has had a more enduring cultural impact than Disney’s 1951 Alice in Wonderland, so we are delighted to showcase original artworks and reveal the lesser known stories behind the creative development of this iconic film, for the first time in the UK. Alongside, visitors will be able to trace the visual development of the story across 158 years from John Tenniel’s illustrations for the first edition to Colleen Atwood’s magnificent costumes for Tim Burton’s films. The exhibition will celebrate the books as an endless source of inspiration and curiosity for some of the world’s most creative minds – we look forward to welcoming a new generation to imagine their own wonderland on the other side of the looking glass.”*

Colleen Atwood, costume designer, said: *“The idea of designing Alice in Wonderland was terrifying at first, because each character is so beloved and brought to life in so many traditions. Luckily, when Tim Burton and I spoke about the approach, I was set free to reimagine a new Alice for that particular time. I began by returning to Lewis Carroll’s original books and the decade in which they were published, because it was just so indicative of the story itself. So it is wonderful that the John Tenniel illustrations will go on show alongside the clothes created for the film, at the V&A, for future generations of Wonderland fans to draw connections and inspiration from.”*

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For further PRESS information about *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser* please contact Catherine Poust on c.poust@vam.ac.uk / +44 (0)207 9742 2683 (not for publication). A selection of press images are available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk

Notes to Editors:

- *Alice: Curiouser and Curiouser* will run from 27 June 2020 – 10 January 2021. Tickets £20. Children under 12 will go free. A range of other concessions will apply.
- The exhibition has been curated by Kate Bailey. It will be accompanied by a major new V&A publication, featuring specially commissioned illustrations by Kristjana S. Williams and contributors including Stephen Fry, Tim Walker, Little Simz and Chris Riddell.
- The quote from Walt Disney about the Alice in Wonderland books at the beginning of this release can be originally found in the 11 August 1946 issue of American Weekly.