



Applied Arts Pavilion Special Project at the Biennale Architettura 2025
A collaboration between
La Biennale di Venezia and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

La Biennale di Venezia and the V&A, London present:

On Storage
curated by Brendan Cormier

Sale d'Armi A, Arsenale
10 May – 23 November 2025

La Biennale di Venezia and the V&A present *On Storage* as the special project for the Applied Arts Pavilion at the Biennale Architettura 2025.

Curated by Brendan Cormier, Chief Curator of V&A East, in collaboration with Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R), the pavilion will explore the global architecture of storage.

On Storage explores the global architecture of storage used for the circulation of things. It features a newly commissioned six-channel film entitled *Boxed: The Mild Boredom of Order* directed by DS+R. This artistic commission was created in anticipation of the public opening of V&A East Storehouse in London on 31 May 2025. V&A East Storehouse is the V&A's new working store and free visitor attraction, designed by DS+R. A world-first in size, scale and ambition, and new source of inspiration for all, V&A East Storehouse will immerse visitors in over half a million works from the V&A collection spanning every creative discipline.

The exhibition in Venice will feature a newly commissioned, immersive 6-screen film installation directed by DS+R. The film follows an everyday consumer product, a toothbrush, on its journey through various forms of storage across the globe, from the massive scale of a fulfillment warehouse to the compact space within a suitcase.

The pavilion will also present large-scale photographs of V&A East Storehouse, DS+R's original architectural model and sketchbook, and behind the scenes photography of the new storage facility at work, taken by emerging East London-based photographers.

A meditation on the role storage plays in all our lives

Storage is everywhere, yet it rarely registers in our everyday consciousness. Most storage spaces are behind closed doors, inaccessible to the public, or not conventionally classified as

such. *On Storage* presents a view of the world as a massively interwoven and complex series of storage architectures, designed to accommodate an ever-increasing quantity of stuff produced.

The film at the centre of *On Storage* is a meditation on the role storage plays in all our lives: from the vast networks of global logistics that move goods and products around, to the way we acquire, collect and store objects within our homes, or carry them with us when we travel. Using documentary film shot on location within storage facilities, homes and in transit, we experience the storage and circulation of goods at a personal level; from work of distribution centre employees and baggage handlers to the process of packing possessions for a trip overseas – heightening our awareness of the spaces and places that goods and the people that move them inhabit.

A new focus for the V&A in the heart of east London

V&A East is a new focus for the V&A in the heart of east London, as part of East Bank, the new cultural quarter in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. V&A East is dedicated to creative opportunity and its power to bring change. Two new free cultural destinations – V&A East Storehouse and V&A East Museum, scheduled to open in spring 2026– will open up the V&A collection for all, celebrate making in all its forms and create new possibilities for everyone.

V&A East Storehouse offers unprecedented public access to the behind-the-scenes world of the institution's working stores. Spanning four levels, and at 16,000m² – bigger than 30+ basketball courts – V&A East Storehouse is home to over 250,000 objects, 350,000 library books and nearly 1,000 archives. Taking over a large section of the former London 2012 Olympics Media and Broadcast Centre (now Here East), it's designed to give unprecedented access and greater transparency, breaking down physical barriers and removing glass cases to get visitors closer than ever before to their national collections, and take them behind-the-scenes.

V&A East Storehouse's central Weston Collections Hall spans three levels. Anchoring the Collections Hall are six large-scale architectural objects – many have not been on display for decades due to their size. Following major conservation, these include the 1930s Kaufmann Office, the only complete Frank Lloyd Wright interior outside of the US; an exquisite 15th century carved and gilded wooden ceiling from the now lost Torrijos Palace near Toledo in Spain; and a full-scale Frankfurt Kitchen, which transformed kitchen design in the 20th century. Others include an architectural fragment from Robin Hood Gardens, a former residential estate in Poplar, east London; the 17th century Agra Colonnade; which is an extraordinary example of Mughal architecture from the bathhouse at the fort of Agra; and a monumental Ballets Russes theatre stage cloth standing over 10 metres high.

Dr Tristram Hunt, Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, said: *"The V&A is delighted to be collaborating with La Biennale di Venezia for the fifth time at the Biennale Architettura 2025 with On Storage. As the V&A opens its new collections centre – V&A East Storehouse – transforming public access to museum artefacts, we investigate the global challenge of managing and moving material culture today. In conjunction with Diller Scofidio + Renfro, the Applied Arts Pavilion explores the competing demands of storage and access in an era of mass commodification and global trade."*

Pietrangelo Buttafuoco, President of La Biennale di Venezia added:

"Storage spaces and warehouses are typically places of disuse and anticipation, hidden from public view and accessed only by professionals—whether in museums or department stores, in sacred or secular contexts. It is therefore remarkable to overturn this convention and finally shed light on the hidden side of a museum space. The intervention by Diller Scofidio + Renfro for the emerging V&A East Storehouse represents a powerful gesture of openness and transparency. Thanks to the materials and projects on display in the Applied Arts Pavilion, this vision can be shared with the visitors of the 19th International Architecture Exhibition."

Brendan Cormier, Chief Curator, V&A East and Lead Curator of On Storage, said:

"Storage is an essential and largely hidden element of all of our lives as consumers of material culture. Without storage, the systems of manufacturing, distribution and retail that form the basis of the global economy would collapse. This is critical infrastructure on a vast scale, but most of us are only vaguely aware of the spaces, labour and processes that keep this system functional. Storage is equally essential to the operations of museums, and I'm delighted to present On Storage as part of the build-up to the opening of V&A East Storehouse. The film offers insight into a subject that has been a career-long area of interest for DS+R and the V&A was delighted to offer this commission to the architect of our new public storage facility."

Elizabeth Diller, DS+R Founding Partner, Director of Boxed: The Mild Boredom of Order, and Designer of V&A East Storehouse said:

"Our lives are shaped by efficiency models that subdivide space into orthogonal bits. Everyday products leave factories packed and stacked in rectangular cartons, loaded as cubic volume onto trucks, then transferred to sea containers that cross oceans. Upon arrival, they are unloaded, repacked into boxes at distribution centres, and finally delivered to our homes—only to be sorted into closets, drawers, and cabinets. In storage, our stuff is disciplined to conform to spatial minimums. When we travel, objects are further confined—compressed into the rigid geometries of suitcases, tucked into overhead compartments or loaded onto airplane cargo holds, then once again slotted into hotel room drawers and shelves. Briefly, during transit, these edited fragments of home escape the normal taxonomies of storage and enter a momentary, anarchic order. In moving his home library, Walter Benjamin lamented unpacking his books—temporarily freed from the "mild boredom of order" imposed by organization according to title, author or genre—and allowed instead to exist in the delirious mix of their limbo state. The installation celebrates these nondescript spaces of the in-between."

About the V&A:

The V&A is a family of museums dedicated to the power of creativity. Our mission is to champion design and creativity in all its forms, advance cultural knowledge, and inspire makers, creators and innovators everywhere.

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