Opening up collections: LGBT+ heritage at the V&A

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We visited the Victoria & Albert Museum to explore how heritage helps us tell stories, involve the community and imagine a better future.

Stuart Hobley, our Director of England, London & South, met with:

- Joseph Galliano, co-founder of charity Queer Britain, which is working to establish the UK's first national LGBT+ museum
- Dan Vo, LGBT+ tour co-ordinator at the V&A

In the film below, Joseph explains how understanding our past helps us "imagine the best of all possible futures", while Dan encourages other organisations to follow in his footsteps by sharing the three things he considers before adding objects to his guided tours.

Finding and sharing stories

For Queer Britain's Joseph Galliano, heritage is an important lens to engage people with LGBT+ stories. He says:

> "if you don't understand where you've come from, it's very hard to understand who you are now".

Museums and other heritage organisations can also help counter prejudice when they "open collections up to all different, diverse people, and make an effort to find the stories that show how threaded into history we all are".

Dan Vo says about the V&A Museum's LGBT+ tours: "You don't need a particular event or a particular exhibition on to be able to say 'here are the queer objects'. There will [always] be a story that can be found."

He considers three things before adding an object to his V&A tours:

- is the subject LGBT+?
- is the creator LGBT+?
- is it something that relates to the LGBT+ community? "Has the community looked at it and gone 'this is part of our story, it's a reflection of us'?"

Got an idea for a project?

As Stuart Hobley says: "For a funder like us, it's absolutely critical that all of the projects we fund include and reach a wider range of people."

Get in touch with your nearest office if you've got an idea for an LGBT+ or other local heritage project.