

All Party Parliamentary Group: British Council
Written evidence for the inquiry on education and culture's role in the UK's relationships
with Europe
Submitted by the Design Museum

Executive Summary

- I. This response seeks to examine the role that the Design Museum has played in strengthening and maintaining the UK's relationships across Europe based on the Museum's own experience of international collaboration and programmes.
- II. Britain is a nation built on design. From Isambard Kingdom Brunel to Zaha Hadid, we are a nation of creators and inventors, builders and makers - men and women who have projected British expertise, innovation, cultural achievement and economic strength around the world. We want to play our part to make sure that this continues in the decades ahead.
- III. The Government must strive to create the conditions that stimulate innovation and research so that we can continue to propel British genius around the world. This must begin with education, from early years right through to apprenticeships and universities.

About the Design Museum

- IV. The Design Museum is Britain's foremost museum of contemporary design and was named European Museum of the Year 2018. We have created a world class space for the promotion and celebration of design and architecture in the UK. After relocating to a spectacular modern landmark in Kensington in 2016, we have welcomed nearly one and a half million visitors. The Museum offers an introduction to the past, present and future of design through an ongoing programme of exhibitions, displays, talks, courses and workshops.
- V. Design is the principal method by which we make technology work and work for us. Design is about implementation, it is how world-leading products and services are created. Design gives technology the power to deliver change, it is the implementation of invention that leads to innovation. Design is not just about appearance - it is tangible, evidence driven, and transforms our lives every day. As we live through the fourth industrial revolution and see our lives changed in ways we never could have imagined, a new spirit of British design can power our economy, our society and our soft power around the world.

Bilateral relationships: our exhibitions

- VI. The Stanley Kubrick exhibition at the Design Museum has been described by the BBC, Time Out London, Evening Standard and others as one of the must-see cultural events of 2019. The exhibition is a loan from the German Film Institute, and tells the story of Stanley Kubrick, the obsessive genius, exploring his unique command of the creative design process of film-making, from storyteller to director to editor. The exhibition includes an exploration of Kubrick's special relationship with England and particularly London, as his primary filming location and source of inspiration.
- VII. 'Home Futures', an exhibition held at the Design Museum until this March, opened at the IKEA Museum in Almhult, Sweden on 25 April. The exhibition explores today's home through the prism of yesterday's imagination. Are we living in the way that pioneering architects and designers throughout the 20th century predicted, or has our idea of home proved resistant to real change? IKEA has always been curious about innovative technology and passionate about life at home, and collaborating with the Design Museum has formed a vital part of the learning process.
- VIII. The Design Museum recently collaborated with the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, on the delivery of 'Breathing Colour' by Hella Jongerius. It is an installation-based exhibition that takes a deeper look at the way colour behaves, exploring shapes, materials, shadows and reflections. The exhibition was open between 9 June 2018 and 12 August 2018, and we are now collaborating with the National Museum, Stockholm, which will be the exhibition's home in 2020.
- IX. Since being on display at the Design Museum in 2013 the exhibition 'Hello: My Name is Paul Smith' has toured to nine international touring venues and will open at its tenth this year. The first two venues of this tour were in Europe, at Mode Museum in Hasselt and The Lighthouse in Glasgow. The exhibition was particularly successful at the Mode Museum where it was the Museum's most popular exhibition to date. Securing the initial venues for an exhibition tour is always the most challenging as those venues bear initial costs related to transport, crating and so on. The European partners on the Paul Smith touring exhibition kickstarted this tour which has become the most successful in the Design Museum's history.
- X. The Design Museum is having ongoing conversations with the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, about collaborating on an exhibition to open in 2020.
- XI. Annually, the Design Museum participates at MUSCON, organised by Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany. The conference seeks to promote the exchange of travelling exhibitions and other projects between museums in Europe (as well as the United States and Asia-Pacific). This is an opportunity for the Museum to showcase the touring programme and build partnerships with potential host venues. Over and above being an important platform to secure host venues for touring exhibitions, the Museum aims to realise the potential of partnering with like-minded organisations at an earlier

stage to co-host exhibitions from their inception, offering the benefit of shared expertise, costs and profile.

Design Museum Campus

- XII. The Design Museum's vision is 'for everyone to understand the value of design' and at the heart of this is the notion that design's influence is not only expansive, but that an understanding of it as a discipline and societal force will have broad-reaching positive impact. Learning at the Museum is therefore concerned with being a catalyst for understanding across age groups and degrees of existing knowledge about design.
- XIII. The Museum acts as a campus for design education in the twenty first century, harnessing the potential of design to tackle the challenges of today's complex world from local to global. The Museum runs programmes, workshops, courses, events and more for a range of audiences including young people and families, school groups, teachers, further education and higher education students, lifelong learners, and professionals.
- XIV. We are concerned about the significant decrease in students taking design and technology subjects. In 2017, just under 166,000 GCSE students took Design and Technology subjects, a 60% decrease since 2000. 90% of schools have made cuts to creative subjects, involving reduction in lesson time, staff or facilities in the past decade (Ofsted, 2018). Between 2012 and 2016, the number of people leaving higher education with undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications in creative arts and design subjects fell by 7%. A full national effort must be undertaken to right this wrong. It is only by ensuring there is a joined-up effort and renewed focus on the creative industries that we don't lose a generation of talented and world-renowned designers, and our place as a leader on the world stage.

Conclusion

- XV. The Government must strive to create the conditions that stimulate innovation and research so we propel British genius around the world, and the British Council APPG must press it to do so. This must begin with education, from early years right through to apprenticeships and universities. In particular, the Department for Education, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport all support design and creativity, which will drive the UK's soft power going forwards. This must be done by supporting educational and training pathways to ensure that we continue to have a highly-skilled workforce.
- XVI. We know from our own experience of hosting and collaborating on exhibitions across Europe the reach and potential of soft power. The British Council APPG must press the Government to support cultural institutions and leaders to develop their international

footprint.

XVII. Supporting smaller innovative institutions will be key, and we must strive to create the conditions that stimulate achievement. We must ensure that support is available so that we can continue to create the brightest and the best from Europe and the rest of the world, and the cultural sector must be included in trade delegations to promote British culture on the European stage.

XVIII. There is a high demand for creative content around the world and particularly of British creativity. The Design Museum has been very successful in placing such content around the world and particularly so in Asia. The British Council APPG should press the Government to support the creative industries in the UK, emphasising education, training and entrepreneurship which will stimulate economic activity and create the content that remains in demand globally.