

<p>Institution: Falmouth University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 35 - Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts</p>
<p>Title of case study: The Enchanted Palace: developing audiences and bringing history to life with a site-specific co-created installation.</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p><i>The Enchanted Palace</i> was a collaborative project between theatre company WildWorks and Historic Royal Palaces (HRP). It transformed the State Apartments at Kensington Palace into an interactive exhibition (26 March 2010 – 1 June 2012) which brought the stories and the palace to life.</p> <p><i>The Enchanted Palace</i> enabled Kensington Palace to remain open during a two-year £12 million refurbishment. The project brought in income, safeguarded jobs and drew in new audiences. Thirteen community groups, schools and colleges were involved in its creation while 10 high-profile designers were invited to create work in response to the stories of the palace. The Enchanted Palace increased the numbers of Palace visitors (even during this refurbishment period) and was widely covered in the press featuring on the International Council of Museums website www.clothestellstories.com as an example of good practice.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>WildWorks [1] is an internationally renowned multi-disciplinary theatre and visual arts company founded in 2005. Mercedes Kemp (Senior Lecturer, Falmouth) is a core artistic member and Associate Director, Community and Research. Kemp has worked developed storylines and text for site-specific pieces across Europe. Her research is at the boundaries of participative and professional practice. Wildworks have produced several celebrated large-scale public projects, involving European communities. Two projects contemporary with the Enchanted Palace are ‘The Passion’ [1b] and ‘Babel’ [1c].</p> <p>The Passion, Port Talbot, Wales (2011, National Theatre Wales with Michael Sheen), involved 1200+ members of the Port Talbot community. People took part as writers, musicians, singers, actors, makers and stewards over a three-day non-stop celebration from afternoon of Good Friday to Sunday evening. During a six month preparation and devising period, the team worked in the streets, malls and social clubs of Port Talbot to engage members of the community in finding stories, memories, images and locations for the story of <i>The Passion</i>.</p> <p>Babel brought together the community engagement teams of 5 organisations: Wildworks, Battersea Arts Centre, The Lyric Hammersmith, Theatre Royal Stratford East and Young Vic. Babel was created as a celebration of the diversity of London in terms of language, culture, ethnicity, identity and the wider idea of communication beyond language. 600+ participants from across 23 Boroughs created 12 performances for audiences totalling 9000+. Participation was intergenerational with people from every age bracket in the census. 224 members took part in the final performance run.</p> <p>Other projects that have involved this methodology of community participation include: The Memory Projector, Merchant City Festival, Glasgow (2009) [1d], The Beautiful Journey (2009) [1e], Souterrain, Britain and France (2006-2007) [1f] and A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings/3 Island Project, Malta (2003), Cyprus (2004), Cornwall (2005) [1g].</p> <p>WildWorks aims to balance high production values with a commitment to community engagement. Kemp’s role within WildWorks involves working with host communities, exploring their relationships with place and memory and adapting text to fit each new location. Her method involves eclectic ethnographic research using a variety of sources: archives, artefacts, local historians, old photographs and conversations. Observing process of memory and its effect on the value that people place on their environments is key.</p>

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The initial research period explored ideas with staff at the palace, including curators, conservators and warders. Although they all approached the project from different perspectives, what united them was their passion for Kensington Palace and its stories, artefacts and significance.

HRP initially suggested using fairy stories as a framework for *The Enchanted Palace*, but WildWorks were keen for the project to be based around real stories of the palace: the real stories were as intriguing and compelling as any fairy tale. Because the noise of the building work would be heard, it made sense to weave this into the story. The idea was that the vibration and disturbance were shaking the stories out of the wall of the palace with the dust, and that they were somehow running free in the State Apartments [2].

The stories of seven princesses who lived in Kensington Palace were chosen as a focal point for the project, a way of presenting the historic site through an emotive narrative. They included those of Diana, Princess of Wales and Queen Victoria. While the stories spanned four centuries, the themes explored universal human experiences, such as the desire for love, rebellion, lonely childhoods and the pain of losing a child which would resonate with contemporary audiences.

Kemp was the principle writer for *The Enchanted Palace*. She started writing poems for each princess [3], using the narrative of their lives and translating them into more mythic terms. These story-poems are at the core of *The Enchanted Palace* guide book [4] and became a focal point for the collaboration of artists, designers, curators, conservators, performers, community groups, educational partnerships and warders working on the project. The poems were translated into seven languages and included in storybooks accompanying the installations.

3. References to the research

[1] Wildworks <http://www.wildworks.biz>

[1a] Wildworks – The Enchanted Palace <http://www.wildworks.biz/1.5/projects/the-enchanted-palace>

[1b] Wildworks – Babel <http://www.wildworks.biz/1.5/projects/babel/>

[1c] Wildworks – The Passion <http://www.wildworks.biz/1.5/projects/the-passion/>

[1d] Wildworks – The Memory Projector <http://www.wildworks.biz/1.5/projects/the-memory-projector/>

[1e] Wildworks – The Beautiful Journey <http://www.wildworks.biz/1.5/projects/the-beautiful-journey/>

[1f] Wildworks – Souterrain <http://www.wildworks.biz/1.5/projects/souterrain/>

[1g] Wildworks – A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings/3 Island Project

<http://www.wildworks.biz/1.5/projects/a-very-old-man-with-enormous-wings-3-island-project/>

[2] John Barnes and Joanna Marschner, 'The Enchanted Palace. How Building Work Shook the Stories from the Fabric of Kensington Palace, London', in Werner van Hoof (ed) *Catching the Spirit. Theatrical Assets of Historic Houses and their Approaches in Reinventing the Past*. Proceedings of the ICOM/DEMIST international conference, Antwerp, 17-20 October, 2011. pp. 83-85

[3] <http://www.hrp.org.uk/KensingtonPalace/stories/Palacehighlights/EnchantedPalace/Fairytales>

[4] Joanna Marschner and Sue Hill. *The Enchanted Palace* (London. Historic Royal Palaces. 2011)

4. Details of the impact

Audience development

The palace building work offered a unique opportunity for Kensington Palace to experiment with different ways for visitors to explore and interact with the palace, its stories and treasures [1]. After the extensive refurbishment, the palace would re-open in 2012 as 'A palace for everyone', so the opportunity to develop Kensington Palace's visitor demographic prior to the re-opening was an important part of the project.

The core audience of Kensington Palace was previously made up of 'traditional' visitors who have a general interest in historic buildings. The majority of this group were mostly international, 'once in a lifetime' visitors. People whose interest in the palace due to its association with Princess Diana

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made up another key audience segment, while families and young, urban Londoners were underrepresented [3].

The Enchanted Palace had a considerable impact on the visitor demographic. It attracted a much wider audience than usual with a 20% rise in London-based visitors and 17% rise in visitors aged 25-34 [2]. More people were visiting Kensington Palace than ever before: in the first year of *The Enchanted Palace* visitor numbers were up 22% on the previous year at their peak [3].

The Enchanted Palace was an immersive experience, very different from a standard museum visit. This provoked some extreme reactions from visitors. As well as filling the palace's visitor book, many comments were posted online on TripAdvisor and Mumsnet [6].

While many people loved *The Enchanted Palace*, a minority hated it. This strength of feeling (both positive and negative) was something that Kensington Palace had never encountered before [3].

The exhibition was widely covered in the press [4], including national newspapers, prestigious fashion-focused magazines such as Vogue, trendy urban publications Time Out and Wallpaper as well as by influential bloggers. It was also well-received by the museum sector and featured on the International Council of Museums website: Clothes Tell Stories [5] as well as cited in several peer-reviewed journals [9]. *The Enchanted Palace* won the Editor's Award for Innovation and Tourism at the 2010 Group Travel Awards [8].

As part of project, Kensington Palace tried out late-night opening for the first time, with four *Enchanted Evening* attracting on average 400 visitors. Nearly 700 people attended 'Peter the Wild Boy's Ball', the last in the series of evening events. Following the success of these events, Kensington Palace has run further evening events, including 'Eerie evening tours'.

Community

Community involvement was a key part of the project. Drawing on WildWorks' and specifically, Mercedes Kemp's previous work with communities in unusual settings, the project brought a diverse group of people together, both from within the palace and the local area. Thirteen educational and community partners were involved in creating artwork and exhibits for *The Enchanted Palace*: Acton and West London College, Central St Martin's College of Art, Chelsea Methodists, Fox Primary School, Harpley Pupil Referral Unit, Into University, Locksley and St Dunstan's Sewing Group, North Kensington Jigsaw Club Positive Age, Pimento Supplementary School, the Prince's Drawing School, Queens Park Children's Sewing Centre, Stitches in Time and Wimbledon College of Art.

Many of the people involved had never visited Kensington Palace before, or would have even thought of visiting, yet made a strong emotional connection with the stories connected to the palace:

"Visiting Kensington Palace taught me that even princesses had sad lives too. I didn't realise they had to be married off, or leave their country, family and precious possessions behind, just like us. I felt important and proud seeing my embroidery displayed in the palace."

Fathima Begum from Dora Hall Sewing Group. [2]

The Enchanted Palace has also had lasting impact on HRP, in particular how it trains its staff and manages projects [7].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[1] Historic Royal Palaces website www.hrp.org.uk
<http://www.hrp.org.uk/KensingtonPalace/stories/Palacehighlights/EnchantedPalace/Fairytales>

[2] Joanna Marschner and Sue Hill. *The Enchanted Palace* (London. Historic Royal Palaces. 2011)

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[3] Humphreys, L. K. "Does the Queen know about this? Audience Development and Reaction to the Enchantment of Kensington Palace."
http://www.rosetta.bham.ac.uk/Issue_11/humphreys.pdf

[4] Media Highlights/Press

Time Out <http://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/enchanted-palace>

Wallpaper <http://www.wallpaper.com/art/enchanted-palace-london/4375>

The Independent <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/enchanted-palace-a-tale-of-seven-princesses-1928374.html>

Vogue <http://www.vogue.co.uk/news/2010/03/26/kensington-palace-enchanted-palace-exhibition>

The Guardian

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/mar/25/princess-diana-home-enchanted-palace>

<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/apr/02/enchanted-palace-art-kensington>

<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2010/apr/13/enchanted-palace-review>

[5] International Council of Museums website: Clothes Tell Stories – working with costumes in museums <http://www.clothestellstories.com/index.php/stories-2/telling-stories-with-clothes/imagination-3>

[6] Example online reviews from members of the public

http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186338-d187550-r63585819-Kensington_Palace-London_England.html#REVIEWS

<http://www.mumsnet.com/reviews/family-days-out/historic-buildings/8185-kensington-palace>

[7] Awards

Editor's Award for Innovation and Tourism at the 2010 Group Travel Awards

http://www.wildworks.biz/images/stories/Enchanted_Palace_Innovation_Award_Media_Release_18.6.10.pdf

[9] Citations in journals

Sara Selwood, 'The Enchanted Palace, Kensington Palace, London', in Museums Journal, issue 110/07, July 2010, pp.44-47

Kim, Alexandra. "The Enchanted Palace at Kensington." Curator: The Museum Journal 54.4 (2011): 403-412.

Chittenden, Tara. "The Cook, the Marquis, his Wife, and her Maids: The Use of Dramatic Characters in Peter Greenaway's Peopling the Palaces as a Way of Interpreting Historic Buildings." Curator: The Museum Journal 54.3 (2011): 261-278.