

# Attractions

## MANAGEMENT

@attractionsmag

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2021  
ISSUE

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# New approaches

We need new tools to understand visitors in light of their COVID status, meaning traditional market segmentation may not give operators the insights needed to drive product development and marketing



**A**ttractions operators and suppliers are accustomed to surviving the turmoil of global economic cycles and impacts on the industry by everything from volcanic eruptions to floods, coups and terrorist attacks.

Every time a new threat has emerged, the industry has risen to the challenge with innovations, new concepts and energy.

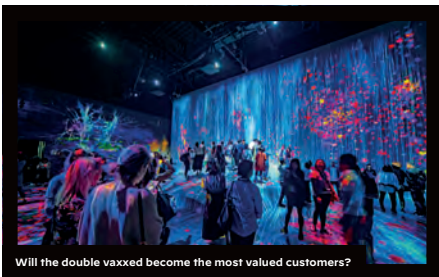
But throughout, one thing has remained constant – operators could take comfort from the fact that when customers returned, they behaved in fairly predictable ways.

As a result, the demographic profiling and market insights that drive tourism and attractions investments and operations have remained largely unchanged for many decades.

One of the biggest challenges facing the sector in the next five years, however, will be the reshaping of consumer groups by the pandemic. Demographics will still be a factor, but where once operators targeted certain groups by wealth or interest, now customers' COVID status and attitudes towards the virus are becoming a new and important variable.

Those who've been doubled vaxxed and want to travel and visit attractions without restraint will be prized premium customers for many. Others who haven't been (or can't be) vaccinated, or who are fearful, will require a different approach and then there are the COVID deniers, who won't be vaccinated, could be super spreaders and could shut businesses down. The situation with children is also complicated.

There may be little commonality between the people in these groups apart from their COVID status, so new thinking will be needed when it comes to market segmentation, experience design and the customer journey.



Will the double vaxxed become the most valued customers?

**“When it comes to segmentation, COVID status is becoming a new and important variable”**

Using tech has enabled the industry to navigate its way through the pandemic far more nimbly than would have been possible even a decade ago and it will offer up more solutions as things progress.

On page 46 co-author of *The Experience Economy*, Joe Pine, flags up hybrid digital and physical offerings as a direction he believes will see us through the pandemic and beyond, contributing to a reorientation around visitors' COVID status.

Pine says hybrid products can amplify the live experience, enable more people to attend and create important new revenue streams.

We hope to see sharing of best practice in relation to this challenge as the industry recovers.

Liz Terry, editor, @elizterry



**Incoming Louvre  
president**  
Laurence des Cars

PHOTO: FRANCK FÉNELLE

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**Nicolas de Villiers –  
taking Puy du Fou global**

PHOTO: STEPHANE AUBRAN/PUY DU FOU

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From mass customised itineraries to hybrid experiences, the pandemic is influencing attractions trends, says thought leader, Joe Pine

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Meow Wolf's Vince Kadlubek on weirdness and wonderment

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PHOTO: MEOW WOLF



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COURTESY OF DISNEY

Star Wars Galactic  
Starcruiser



PHOTO: DISNEY/ LUCASFILM

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PHOTO: HUFTON-CROW



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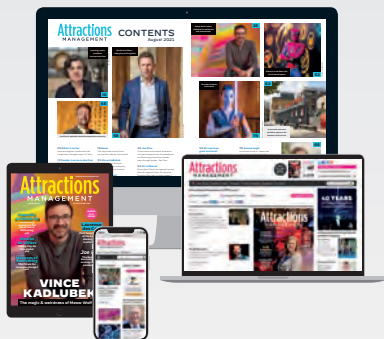
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Professor Yvonne Buckley

PHOTO: YVONNE BUCKLEY



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# Attractions People

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**My ambition is to place the Louvre at the core of topical debates**

**Laurence des Cars,**  
president, Musée d'Orsay

Laurence des Cars helped set up the Louvre Abu Dhabi (below right). She takes over as Louvre president in September





PHOTO: MUSÉE DU LOUVRE/OLIVIER OUAHAI

**Des Cars plans to widen the appeal of the Louvre and extend its opening hours**

**L**aura des Cars is to become the first female president of the Louvre, following her appointment by French president Emmanuel Macron.

Art historian des Cars is currently president of the Musée d'Orsay and L'Orangerie in Paris, and will take over from Jean-Luc Martinez at the Louvre in September 2021.

According to a statement by the French culture ministry, des Cars will focus on fostering a "dialogue between ancient art and the contemporary world" and widening the appeal of the Louvre, particularly for young people. She has pledged to extend the museum's opening hours in order to make it more accessible for working people – it currently closes at 5.30pm.

"I'm deeply honoured by the trust placed in me by the President of the French Republic and the Minister of Culture in appointing me as head of this tremendous museum," said des Cars.



"My ambition is to place the Louvre at the core of topical debates, and for it to foster reflection on all issues within society.

"Through its 'longue durée' approach', the Louvre gives relevance to the present, it is wholeheartedly contemporary and can therefore speak volumes to today's youth.

"The recent crisis has had a particularly destabilising impact, and has forced us to consider economic balances and to rethink – despite the constraints – the museum visit in terms of an exceptional experience," she said.

A general curator of heritage, specialising in 19th and early 20th-century art, Laurence des Cars began her career at the Musée d'Orsay, before overseeing the development of the Louvre Abu Dhabi between 2007 and 2014. Over the past four years, she has worked on broadening the appeal of the Musée d'Orsay and L'Orangerie, expanding the programme of exhibitions and live shows. In 2019, she oversaw the acclaimed exhibition *Black models: from Géricault to Matisse* at the Musée d'Orsay, which focused on the representation of black figures in visual arts, and in 2020 announced major transformation plans for the museum.

Des Cars plans to invite a range of contemporary artists and collaborators to the Louvre to enrich its work, while also emphasising the history of the museum.

"I want to see the great scholars who make the Louvre what it is share their knowledge with absolute openness," she said. "I also want to give modern-day creators the opportunity to express themselves." ●



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/NCOLA WESSMAN PHOTOS

“

**This is one of the most  
ambitious indoor waterpark  
developments in Scandinavia**

**Andreas Andersen, CEO, Liseberg**



Andreas Andersen  
joined Liseberg as  
chief executive in 2011



PHOTO: ANNE TEN LINGEN



PHOTO: LISEBERG, GÅRRETT & LUSTUDLO, 2020

The Oceana waterpark is set to open at Liseberg in 2024



PHOTO: LISEBERG, GÅRRETT & LUSTUDLO, 2020

## THE BACKGROUND



Construction work is currently taking place on a new indoor waterpark at Swedish theme park Liseberg in the city of Gothenburg.

Designed by Swedish

architects Wingårdh, the €110m park – called Oceana – will operate all year round and will cover an indoor area of 13,600sq m and a further 4,000sq m outdoors.

Due to open in Q1 2024, Oceana will complete the second phase of Liseberg's planned expansion, marking the park's centennial in 2023. Work began in 2019 on the first phase, the park-integrated Liseberg Grand Curiosa Hotel.

Oceana will feature 14 separate attractions designed and manufactured by WhiteWater, including "the first six-person raft rides in Europe, and the highest mega-drop Master Blaster in the World," according to Thomas Sjöstrand, CPO of Liseberg's Expansion Project.

Liseberg opened in June after 14 months of closure due to the pandemic.

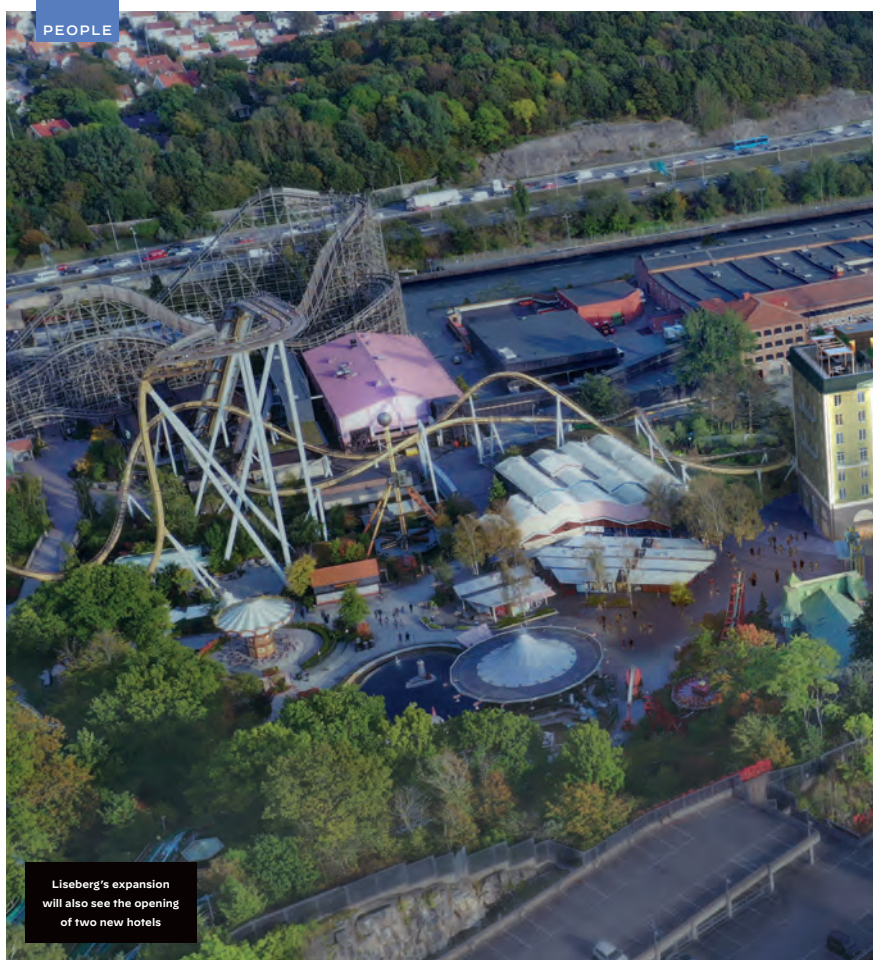
Here Andreas Andersen, CEO of Liseberg, tells *Attractions Management* more about the project.

### What will the opening of the Oceana waterpark and the Liseberg Grand Curiosa Hotel mean for Liseberg?

It will first and foremost turn Liseberg into a full-year destination. We operate hotels and campsites today, and we have also extended the park opening hours to include Halloween and Christmas, but with the expansion project Liseberg will be able to draw guests 365 days a year. This is positive for the business – and also for the city of Gothenburg.

### What will be special about the waterpark? How would you sum up what it will offer visitors? Can you highlight a couple of the most exciting features?

It is one of the most ambitious indoor waterpark developments build in Scandinavia. We have prioritised world class rides – of which some are a first in Europe – but we also aim at creating a relaxing atmosphere for the whole family. The park is not themed per se but will feature a green oasis in the middle of the hustle and bustle of the city.



Liseberg's expansion will also see the opening of two new hotels

**The design of the waterpark and hotel is inspired by the history of Gothenburg and the Swedish East India Company. How will that be seen in the design?**

Apart from greenery, rockwork and natural light, there will be a lot of visual elements and storytelling inspired by the trade-history of Gothenburg. From a design perspective, it will be the east meeting west, and history meeting the present.



**How has Liseberg been impacted by the pandemic? What do you expect the next couple of years to bring?**

Liseberg has been highly impacted by the pandemic. We have been closed down since January 2020, due to a legal glitch in the Swedish pandemic legislation. Fortunately we have a strong balance sheet, but the losses so far have been substantial.



PHOTO: LIFEBRIDGE, ©AMAP PHOTOGRAPHY, 2020

**What are you most excited about over the coming few years?**

We've been very excited about reopening; it's been devastating being closed for so long.

We're also very much looking forward to opening the new hotel and waterpark in a few years' time. We believe in the future of our industry – and these investments are a testament to that faith. ●



PHOTO: LIFEBRIDGE, ©AMAP PHOTOGRAPHY, 2020

The new waterpark will feature 14 attractions designed by WhiteWater



Theo Papadopoulos and Candy Holland worked on Lego Mythica

“

## In a child's mind it's totally normal for a mysterious bird to be half on fire, half frozen and shoot fire and ice balls all at once

**Theo Papadopoulos** Creative lead, LEGOLAND Parks

**Candy Holland** Senior creative director, LEGOLAND Resorts

**M**erlin Entertainments' Legoland Windsor theme park in the UK has reopened with a new multi-million-pound attraction, the Lego Mythica: World of Mythical Creatures zone.

The new zone is home to the UK's first ever flying theatre ride – called Flight of The Sky Lion – which stands at more than 25 metres tall. The 4D experience includes wind, mist and aroma effects, which have been synchronised with the animated film to fully immerse families in the Lego Mythica world.

Flight of The Sky Lion is accompanied by an array of other attractions and rides, such as the Fire and Ice Freefall, a drop ride and the Hydra's Challenge water ride.

Other attractions include Creature Creation, where guests can build their very own creatures; an adventure play area called Lava Dragon Play; a character meet and

greet experience called Creature Encounter and The Hungry Troll restaurant.

Creative lead Theo Papadopoulos and senior creative director for Legoland Parks Candy Holland worked closely with children to design the new Mythica zone. Here they tell us about the journey from concept to completion.

### What's special/unique/exciting about LEGO Mythica?

LEGO Mythica is a parallel dimension to our own. And whenever someone builds a fantasy creature using LEGO bricks in our world, it incredibly comes to life as a real creature in Mythica. Given that the types of creatures that live in Mythica are created mainly by kids, it's home to some incredible and very unusual creatures. There are dragons, sea monsters, and unicorns, but also flying lions, flying dogs and even flying elephants! How do elephants fly? Using their butterfly wing ears of course!



Watch the video

[www.attractionsmanagement.com/mythica](http://www.attractionsmanagement.com/mythica)

Mythica includes  
the UK's first flying  
theatre ride, Flight  
of the Sky Lion



Highlights include giant sized LEGO mythical creatures, super cute baby Alicorn 'Bitsandbobs' and Fire and Ice Bird on the family drop towers attraction. The most epic attraction is Flight of the Sky Lion – the UK's first flying theatre ride – where guests can take flight on an incredible adventure and go even deeper into this parallel world with the Sky Lion Maximus.

#### How did you come up with the concept and theme of this land?

After extensive research exploring various themed routes, we realised that the theme of mythical creatures was a much-loved evergreen theme for our target demographic. Importantly it's popular for both boys and girls which enables families to all enjoy the experience together.

#### You worked with children when designing LEGO Mythica. What input did they have?

The coolest thing about designing LEGO Mythica with children is that we realised very early on that the kids were the experts! As the theme is all about incredible creatures that kids can create using their imaginations and LEGO bricks, it allowed the children to lead the creative process and guide us (adults) on what type of creature creations they perceived as cool, engaging,

scary, friendly etc. They also had a desire to create creatures with special abilities and certain personalities. For instance, the creation of the fire and ice bird was born from the mash-up of totally opposing powers and in a child's mind it was totally normal for a mysterious bird to be half on fire, half frozen and have the ability to shoot fire and ice balls all at once.

#### How has the pandemic affected your work?

Hugely – this project was especially rewarding after spending the best part of the last year in lockdown mode. Working from home in a form of physical isolation isn't the most natural atmosphere for creative collaboration and development. We had to find other ways to communicate and work through the thousands of design details needed to develop the project together with all our partners.

We also had to find other ways of implementing and delivering the experience once on site.

For example, before the pandemic our overseas film production team, who created the sound mix for the flying theatre, would have come and installed it themselves, mixing all the levels on site. But instead we found UK-based local specialists to collaborate with and implement the mix. ●

### USA

# Warner Bros. Hollywood reveals new roster of attractions

A host of new experiences were added to the Warner Bros. Studio Tour Hollywood in Burbank, Los Angeles, ahead of its grand reopening on 26 June.

The attraction was closed for more than a year, due to pandemic restrictions.

At the heart of the new additions is the 'Storytelling Showcase', which will allow guests to discover the world of Warner Bros. by examining the breadth of the studio's film, TV and animation titles.

It also charts technological innovations, from its cinema chain origins in 1923 through its nearly 100-year journey to become one of the biggest entertainment companies in the world.

The visitor journey will also offer the opportunity to

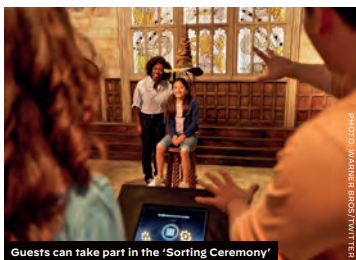
explore recreated sets from the Harry Potter franchise.

Fans can dabble in the art of potion-making, snap a photo inside Harry's cupboard under the stairs at 4 Privet Drive and take part in the 'Sorting Ceremony' – featuring the Sorting Hat.

Danny Kahn, vice president and general manager, Warner Bros. Studios, said: "Entertainment is about connecting with fans and we are thrilled to welcome guests back to the tour after a more than 15-month hiatus."

"Our new experiences will take guests on a journey through our history, how we bring stories to life and celebrate the DC Universe and Wizarding World."

More: [http://lei.sr/E2j9Z\\_T](http://lei.sr/E2j9Z_T)



Guests can take part in the 'Sorting Ceremony'

PHOTO: WARNER BROS./TWITTER



“

Our new experiences will take guests on a journey through our history

Danny Kahn

PHOTO: LINKEDIN/DANNY KAHN

### BELGIUM

## Merlin to take Legoland Discovery Centres to Belgium

PHOTO: BRUXELLES.BE



“

Our focus is now on delivering profitability on a full-year basis

Fabian Maingain

Merlin Entertainments has revealed plans to open a Legoland Discovery Centre in the Belgian capital city Brussels.

The company has signed a deal to launch a 3,000sq ft site at the Docks Bruxsel shopping centre, with an opening date set for mid-2022.

Described as a "next generation" Discovery Centre, Merlin said it would release more details of the attraction later this year.

Meike Lippert, senior divisional director of Merlin's Midway attractions in Europe,



The attraction will open at Docks Bruxsel shopping centre

PHOTO: MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS / LEGOLAND DISCOVERY CENTRE BERLIN

said: "We look forward to revealing more details over the coming months ahead of our first visitors in summer 2022."

According to Fabian Maingain, Alderman of Economic Affairs for the City of Brussels, the capital recognises "the added value" of the Legoland brand.

"It is positive for Brussels to welcome this kind of

offer, which will broaden the recreational offer along the canal, where you can already find, among others, the train museum, creating potentially interesting touristic synergies," Maingain said.

"This new LEGOLAND Discovery Centre promises to be a major draw for us."

More: [http://lei.sr/9u6A4\\_T](http://lei.sr/9u6A4_T)

### HUNGARY

# Full-scale franchised Madame Tussauds for Budapest

Merlin Entertainments has revealed plans to open a new Madame Tussauds in the heart of Hungarian capital city Budapest in early 2022.

Located near the city's Vörösmarty Square, the attraction will be the first full-scale franchised site for the brand, following an agreement signed between Merlin and franchisee Dorottya Experience Kft.

Showcasing the iconic waxworks – featuring international and domestic, current and late famous figures – the 2,000sq m attraction has been earmarked to play an important role in reviving tourism in the area, once pandemic restrictions are lifted.

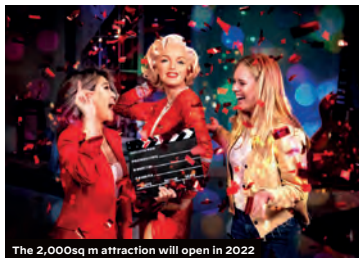
The celebrities and historical figures to feature in the attraction were chosen after “thorough market research and extensive negotiations”.

The plan is to include former politicians, Hungarian musicians, artists, athletes, actors and other public figures.

Chris Scurrah, franchise director of Merlin Entertainments, said: “We are launching our Madame Tussauds franchise in Budapest with a local partner experienced in the field of brand-building and tourism.

“This will be the first full-scale franchise attraction of the Madame Tussauds brand.”

More: [http://lei.ir/d8p8j\\_T](http://lei.ir/d8p8j_T)



The 2,000sq m attraction will open in 2022

PHOTO: MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS/MADAME TUSSAUDS



“  
Our local partner is experienced in the field of brand-building  
Chris Scurrah

PHOTO: LINKEDIN/CHRIS SCURRAH

### UK

# Secret Cinema and Netflix do Bridgerton tie-up



Visitors will be able to attend the most elegant ball of the season with only the most fashionable guests of the Ton  
*Secret Cinema*

Immersive entertainment specialist, Secret Cinema, has partnered with streaming giant Netflix to host a Bridgerton ball at a location later this year.

To be held at a secret location in London in November, the three-hour immersive experience will revolve around a ballroom – a setting that plays a pivotal role in the hugely popular series charting life in Regency England.

Visitors will be dressed as part of the cast and will be able to choose whether to blend in with the crowd or take centre stage, as



The immersive experience will revolve around the show

PHOTO: SECRET CINEMA

the experience looks to blur reality with that of the Bridgerton story. Guests can also take part in dance classes, life-drawing and period-specific games.

“Visitors will be able to attend the most elegant ball of the season with only the most fashionable guests of the Ton,” Secret Cinema said.

“They will also indulge in delicious food and enticing liqueurs throughout the evening, while listening to pop classics – as re-imagined by a classical string quartet.

“Guests can also explore the hidden parts of the grounds with duelling practice and games of chance.”

More: [http://lei.ir/B5t8P\\_T](http://lei.ir/B5t8P_T)

## CHINA

### Hong Kong's Ocean Park opens Water World

Ocean Park has launched a wide range of new water attractions – including Hong Kong's first ever indoor wave pool.

The new Water World Ocean Park – Asia's first and only year-round, all-weather seaside water park – features 27 outdoor and indoor rides and slides, which are a mixture of thrill rides and family-focused attractions.

The new Water World features five zones – Splendid Reef, Torrential River, Thrill Valley, Adventure Coast, and Hidden Village.

The experiences range from extreme "white-knuckle" water slides, such as Cyclone Spins and Daredevil Drop, to the Adventure Coast,

where visitors can relax in the seafloor cabanas.

Paulo Pong, deputy chair, Ocean Park, said: "The journey of exploration starts at Splendid Reef, an expansive open area right on the shores of the South China Sea.

"Our guides at the Water World Plaza will help adventurers prepare for their fun ahead across the different zones.

"Adrenaline junkies can seek the rush of the wild twists and turns of the thrilling slides at Torrential River.

"For those who dare to take on more challenging moments, Thrill Valley will offer mind-blowing extreme slides and freeroll experiences."

More: [http://lei.sr/B2H6k\\_T](http://lei.sr/B2H6k_T)



PHOTO: OCEAN PARK

Water World has both indoor and outdoor attractions



“

Thrill Valley will offer mind-blowing extreme slides

Paulo Pong

PHOTO: OCEAN PARK

## AUSTRALIA

### Village Roadshow plans Australia's tallest waterslide

PHOTO: LINKEDIN/CLARK KIRBY



“

We remain committed to providing world-class experiences to guests

Clark Kirby

Village Roadshow has unveiled plans to build the tallest waterslide in Australia, as part of plans to invest AU\$70m (US\$53m, €44m, £38m) in its theme park estate this year.

Set to be more than 23m tall, the Kaboom! – at the Wet'n'Wild water park in Queensland – will combine three separate adrenaline slides and a large tropical splash zone.

The three rides are the Kaboom!, a zero gravity water slide with a 10 metre drop and 360-degree spins; a side-by-side body racer with infinity edges called

Super Ripper; and the Double Barrel raft slide.

Kaboom! is the headline development of Village Roadshow's plans for its Gold Coast-based attractions.

Other additions this year include a special Hooray for Hollywood event at its Warner Bros. Movie World, the New Atlantis area at its Sea World

park and a new Meerkat exhibit at the Paradise Country farm experience.

Village Roadshow Theme Parks CEO, Clark Kirby, said: "We're committed to providing world-class experiences for guests and this investment will play a vital role in reviving Queensland's tourism."

More: [http://lei.sr/q3n5U\\_T](http://lei.sr/q3n5U_T)



PHOTO: VILLAGE ROADSHOW THEME PARKS

More than 23m tall, the Kaboom! combines three rides in one

UK

# Exclusive: 11Arches reveals Kynren theme park

11Arches, the charity behind outdoor theatrical spectacular Kynren – an Epic Tale of England, in Bishop Auckland, Durham, UK, has unveiled the first phase of its brand new theme park.

Called 11Arches Park, the attraction is set in the grounds of the Kynren show, next to the River Wear and overlooked by Auckland Castle.

The new park was initially scheduled to open in 2020, but plans were put back due to the pandemic.

Speaking exclusively to Attractions Management, Anne-Isabelle Daulon, CEO and co-founder of 11Arches, said: "We describe it as a 'ride-free

theme park' with plenty of immersive experiences.

"In short, it's an entirely new visitor experience to complement our award-winning evening show, Kynren, with both attractions presented with the theme of travelling through time and watching legends come to life.

"It includes the same elements that make Kynren so epic – the amazing cast, the brilliant stunt-riders, as well as all the immersive experiences and special effects."

Offering epic journeys, immersive live shows and attractions, the park will allow visitors to explore a Viking village and walk through The Maze of Fame.

More: [http://lei.sr/v7K7K\\_U](http://lei.sr/v7K7K_U)



PHOTO: 11ARCHES

The park will allow visitors to step back in time



PHOTO: 11ARCHES

“  
We describe it as a  
'ride-free theme park'  
Anne-Isabelle Daulon

US

## Extreme Engineering secures US patent for its Cloud Coaster

PHOTO: LINKEDIN/PHIL WILSON



“  
This really sets  
us far from the  
competition, always  
inventing forward  
Phil Wilson

Visitor attractions designer Extreme Engineering has secured a US patent for a coaster design which operates as a "cross between a roller coaster and a zip line".

The company received the patent for its Cloud Coaster from the United States Patent and Trademark Office and the patent includes many claims on the family coaster's design.

Designed as a family-friendly ride, the suspended roller coaster offers riders the opportunity to experience fast, controlled and safe speeds which give them the "sensation of flying and rocketing down a roller



PHOTO: EXTREME ENGINEERING

The suspended roller coaster will cater for families

coaster with smooth turns, uphill racing and launching around structures".

The abstract of the Cloud Coaster's patent states: "A rail coaster operates as a cross between a roller coaster and a zip line."

"A rail may be suspended under a frame by flexible cables or solid brackets.

Phil Wilson, Executive Vice President with Extreme Engineering, said: "I'm thrilled about our latest patent. This further enhances Extreme Engineering's IP portfolio. "This really sets us far from the competition, always inventing forward and protecting our ideas."

More: [http://lei.sr/9e8WB\\_U](http://lei.sr/9e8WB_U)

## USA

### CA\$25m redesign of Montreal's Biodome completed

Work has been completed on the redevelopment of Montreal's Biodome – a science museum which occupies the site of the former velodrome built for the 1976 Olympic Games.

The Biodome allows visitors to walk through replicas of five ecosystems found in the Americas – a tropical rainforest, a maple forest, the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, a sub-Antarctic island environment, and the Labrador Coast.

Biodome is one of four attractions located within the city's "museum district" – the other three being Planetarium, Insectarium, and Botanical Garden. Together, the facilities host more than 4,500 animal and 500 plant species.

Designed by Canadian architects KANVA, the CA\$25m (US\$20m, £14.5m) overhaul of the popular attraction has added a number of biophilic design features to the Biodome, including a white, undulating "living skin" being wrapped around the building.

According to Rami Bebawi, the project's lead architect and partner at KANVA, the brief was to bring the museum closer to its visitors.

"Our mandate was to enhance the immersive experience between visitors and the museum's distinct ecosystems, as well as to transform the building's public spaces," he said.

More: [http://lei.sr/B9v2q\\_T](http://lei.sr/B9v2q_T)



PHOTO: KANVA ARCHITECTS

Several biophilic design features have been added



Our mandate was to enhance the immersive experience  
*Rami Bebawi*

PHOTO: LINKEDIN/RAMI BEBAWI

## EUROPE

### Heritage Intervention award for Antwerp art museum



The KAAN-led project stood out as the complex and large scale project resolved the modernisation of the building in a unitary, respectful manner  
*AHI Award Jury*

The "respectful renovation" of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp, Belgium is among the four winners of this year's European Award for Architectural Heritage Intervention (AHI).

Now in its fifth edition, AHI is a biennial award organised by the Association of Architects for the Defence and Intervention in Architectural Heritage (AADIPA) and the Association of Architects of Catalonia (COAC).

The renovation of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts – designed by KAAN Architecten – won the AHI award in the



PHOTO: AHI/MEDIA MIKIER

The redevelopment was designed by KAAN Architecten

category for "Intervention in Built Heritage".

The award jury said the KAAN-led project stood out as the complex and large scale project resolved the modernisation of the building in a unitary, respectful manner.

Other winners included the Synagogue Square project

in Onda, Castellón, Spain (best exterior project) and architects Sara Bartumeus, Anna Renau and Rosa Escala, who won the AHI award for planning for their study of the urban landscape of the La Nova Esquerra de l'Eixample neighbourhood in Barcelona.

More: [http://lei.sr/J2h8h\\_T](http://lei.sr/J2h8h_T)

## DENMARK

### Kengo Kuma's Hans Christian Andersen House opens

The new Hans Christian Andersen House, designed by Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, has opened its doors to visitors in the Danish city of Odense.

Dedicated to the life of the celebrated author – famous for his fairytales such as the Little Mermaid, The Emperor's New Clothes and The Ugly Duckling – the US\$62m visitor attraction consists of both indoor and outdoor spaces.

The attraction is located on the site of Hans Christian Andersen's childhood home in Odense, which first opened as a museum in 1908.

The City of Odense embarked on a project to transform the museum into a flagship tourist attraction.

The attraction aims to break new ground in its combination of site and collection interpretation with immersive theatre, bringing visitors into a new appreciation of Andersen's creative output and celebrating his imagination.

Henrik Lübker, creative director of H.C. Andersen House, said: "We've identified artists that correspond with Andersen's universe and its core values.

"The ambition has been to create art, which exists on its own terms, while fitting into the overall project: melting together landscape, architecture, exhibitions, design and art."

More: [http://lei.sr/17F7S\\_U](http://lei.sr/17F7S_U)



The attraction has a floor space of 5,600sq m

PHOTO: H. C. ANDERSEN HOUSE



“  
Our focus is now on  
delivering profitability  
on a full-year basis  
Henrik Lübker

PHOTO: SOUTHERN DENMARK ACADEMY, EDU

## UK

### Eden Project signs deal for Dundee site in Scotland



PHOTO: EDEN PROJECT

“  
“The former Dundee Gasworks site is by far the best location for our Scottish home  
David Harland

The Eden Project in Cornwall, UK, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the owners of its preferred site for the planned Eden Project Dundee attraction.

The proposed site – the former Dundee Gasworks – is located close to the Dundee waterfront on the bank of the River Tay and is less than a mile away from V&A Dundee and the city's main train station.

The agreement between Eden Project and the site's owners, National Grid and SGN, follows the completion of a six-month “pollination”



The former Dundee Gasworks site on the River Tay

PHOTO: EDEN PROJECT

process to establish feasibility for the creation of a new international-scale site.

Eden envisages this as a “powerful symbol of regeneration”, echoing the project's home in Cornwall which is located in a former clay quarry.

David Harland, Eden Project International CEO, said: “The

former Dundee Gasworks site is by far the best location for our Scottish home and we're delighted to have a formal agreement in place to start working on a detailed plan.

“The feasibility study was like nothing we've ever worked on before, coming as it did during lockdown.”

More: [http://lei.sr/7m5m5\\_U](http://lei.sr/7m5m5_U)

### CANADA

# Herschend acquires Vancouver Aquarium

Herschend Enterprises has acquired Vancouver Aquarium from the Ocean Wise Conservation Association, adding the attraction to the group's growing portfolio of properties.

The aquarium has been hit particularly hard by the pandemic and the resulting lockdowns, losing millions of dollars since the start of the coronavirus outbreak in March 2020.

The agreement will see Herschend take over 100 per cent ownership of the site and the deal is the result of a process initiated by Ocean Wise to save the Aquarium from permanent closure.

Vancouver Aquarium will continue to be led by

COO Clint Wright, who has been with the attraction for more than 30 years.

Herschend is a leading US-based attractions and tourism operator, and the owner of two aquariums – Adventure Aquarium in New Jersey and Newport Aquarium in Kentucky.

The group also owns – and partners with – a number of theme parks, including Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri, and Dollywood in Tennessee's Great Smoky Mountains.

Clint Wright said: "This secures the future of the Vancouver Aquarium and the Marine Mammal Rescue Centre."

More: [http://lei.sr/6w6r7\\_T](http://lei.sr/6w6r7_T)

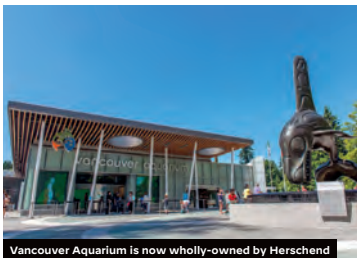


PHOTO: VANCOUVER AQUARIUM

Vancouver Aquarium is now wholly-owned by Herschend



“

Our focus is now on delivering profitability on a full-year basis

Clint Wright

### UK

# Safari Park opens overnight viewing lodge experience

PHOTO: LINKEDIN/NEIL JAMES



“

It's been thrilling to watch this amazing project grow into something so spectacular

Neil James

West Midlands Safari Park in Bewdley, Worcestershire, UK, has launched an "immersive overnight wildlife experience", offering guests the opportunity to view the zoo's animals from the comfort of their beds.

The long-awaited Safari Lodges overlook cheetahs and African elephants in their newly-updated animal habitats.

There are eight lodges in total, with six of them offering overnight stays.

The double-storey elephant lodges are themed with thatched roofs, accommodating up to five



PHOTO: WEST MIDLANDS SAFARI PARKS

The elephant lodges sleep up to five guests

people. They have large, open-plan living spaces with lounge, dining area and kitchenette. The spacious balcony with outdoor seating offers views to watch elephants approach the pool in front of the lodges.

Meanwhile, the two single-storey, detached cheetah lodges sleep up to six guests.

Project Manager Neil James said: "It's been thrilling to watch this amazing project grow into something so spectacular, and to have done it with conservation at the forefront of our minds when it came to the design and build throughout, has been hugely important."

More: [http://lei.sr/h7E7X\\_T](http://lei.sr/h7E7X_T)

## GERMANY

### MackNext creates VR experience for German park

MackNext, the innovation department of Mack Group, is working on a new VR experience at the family-owned Miniatur Wunderland visitor attraction in Hamburg, Germany.

The project is currently in the development phase and will be developed in a purpose-built space at the park.

Miniatur Wunderland will feature nine miniature worlds with small-scale models of cities and regions – including Hamburg, the Alps, Scandinavia and Switzerland.

The zones will be linked by a model railway and airport traffic system – the largest of its kind in the world, measuring around 16km in

length. Utilising VR, the new experience will look to merge the attraction's "small world" with the real, "big one".

The as-yet unnamed new attraction is set to open in early 2022.

MackNext is owned by the Mack family, owner and operator of the Europa-Park theme park, as well as a number of business divisions creating rides and experiences.

Commenting on the collaboration, Michael Mack, founder and CEO of MackNext, said: "Germany's two most popular tourist attractions – both family businesses – are joining forces for the first time."

More: [http://lei.si/v3b5A\\_T](http://lei.si/v3b5A_T)

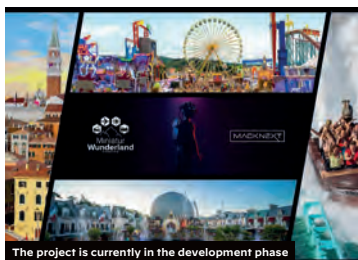


PHOTO: ANIMACRENT



PHOTO: MICHAEL MACK

“  
Germany's two most popular attractions are joining forces  
Michael Mack

## UK

### Tech-focused, live Monopoly experience planned for London



PHOTO: LINKEDIN/DAVID HUTCHINSON

“  
For us, Monopoly Lifiedized represents a major entry into a growing and exciting marketplace  
David Hutchinson

The launch of Hasbro's Monopoly attraction in London is back on the cards, with 14 August 2021 slated as the official opening date.

Hasbro has partnered with international theatre producer Selladoor Worldwide to open the live-action version of the iconic Monopoly board game.

Called Monopoly Lifiedized, the participatory gameplay attraction will combine elements of the board game with escape rooms and team challenges. Teams of up to six players will move around a 15 x 15m board – each board is capable of hosting between eight and



PHOTO: HASBRO/SELLADOOR WORLDWIDE/GAMEWORTH

24 people – participating in challenges as they 'acquire properties' and 'earn money'.

The attraction will be created by a team drawn from across the immersive theatre, tech and escape room worlds.

For the project, Hasbro partnered with Selladoor Worldwide's new gaming division, Gamepath.

David Hutchinson, CEO of Gamepath, said: "Monopoly Lifiedized represents a major entry into a growing and exciting marketplace.

"Our creative team has worked their magic to put our audiences centre place on the board and bring together their theatrical routes." ●

More: [http://lei.si/B7M9G\\_T](http://lei.si/B7M9G_T)

# VINCE KADLUBEK

Now a multi-million dollar attractions operator, Meow Wolf started out as a collective of skint artists. As the company's third permanent exhibition prepares to open in Denver, co-founder and director, Vince Kadlubek, talks to Kath Hudson about the highs and lows

## What is Meow Wolf and how did it begin?

We're an arts and experiential arts company which creates immersive multimedia experiences. We started out in 2008 as an art collective/ social group, trying to break into the Santa Fe art scene. Unable to get much traction in our own city, we felt like we were on the outside looking in. All the existing players were interested in a different aesthetic from us. It was prior to Facebook and Instagram, and before the term Millennial was broadly used, so there was a lack of understanding of the value of youthful, trendsetting fashion design and aesthetic.

As a result, we decided to open our own exhibition and found a 1,000sq ft space to deck out. No one had any money, so we looked in dumpsters for materials which we stapled to the walls. It was grungy experimentation with spray paint, chicken wire and Christmas lights. The end result was an artistic walk-through version of a dark ride.

## Was that the breakthrough moment for Meow Wolf?


No, but it led to a few years of creating immersive exhibits in different spaces and we managed to get onto the radar of a few

institutions and did some work within the education system. But what had been a hobby for some 20-somethings in 2008, had turned into an obligation for 30-somethings by 2014. We had momentum, but it wasn't sustainable and there was no career for those involved.

Everyone was ready to go their own way, but I was adamant our group had more to give and more art to create and suggested we create a permanent attraction which we could sell tickets to. Money was always the main issue. None of us came from money, we were struggling artists, who didn't have rich parents or good credit. To borrow money everyone wants to see a track record of success. To progress things further we needed someone with money to be prepared to take a leap of faith.

## How did you find a backer?

I had briefly worked as marketing director at a movie theatre owned by *Game of Thrones* author, George R R Martin. The job didn't last long, but we became friends. When we found the space which would work for an exhibition, I asked George if he was prepared to invest in the property and become our landlord. Luckily he went past the warning flags and took a risk on our passion. With him on board, we could

A portrait of a man with a beard and glasses, smiling, sitting against a background of colorful, diagonal stripes in shades of orange, yellow, and pink. He is wearing a dark grey long-sleeved shirt over a grey t-shirt and blue jeans. His hands are clasped in front of him.

***“ I challenge the industry to invest in art which is weird, inspiring, challenging, original, diverse & culturally meaningful ”***

Kadlubek is director  
and co-founder  
of arts production  
company Meow Wolf

## “We expected to attract alternative and progressive families, but were surprised to find soccer moms travelling from the mid-west”

leverage his name to raise money, which then opened doors and allowed us to create our first attraction House of Eternal Return in Santa Fe.

### What is the concept of House of Eternal Return?

Based on the idea of a house with secret passageways, it's a new genre of entertainment, putting storytelling into art for people to explore. As kids we always have that dream of magical spaces: it's an idea which has been explored a lot, for example in *Coraline* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, so we were playing with a proven trope. We empowered the artists to create, but because finances were tight we had a hard deadline. We first had the idea in August 2014 and it opened in March 2016.

I thought if children's museums could get 100,000 visits a year, then we could get 150,000. We actually received 400,000 and made \$6.8m in the first year.

### Who came and why was it so successful?

Our marketing was good: we leveraged George's name and used social media effectively. But also the consumer was ready: Burning Man had reached a cultural apex and people were open to experiencing new things which were weird and unexpected.

We expected to attract the more alternative and progressive families, but were surprised to find soccer moms from the Midwest travelling to visit. They probably didn't vote for the same president as me, but they seemed to enjoy the experience. Many walked in apprehensively, but by the time they'd got on their hands and knees and crawled through the fireplace and the fridge, they were full of smiles.

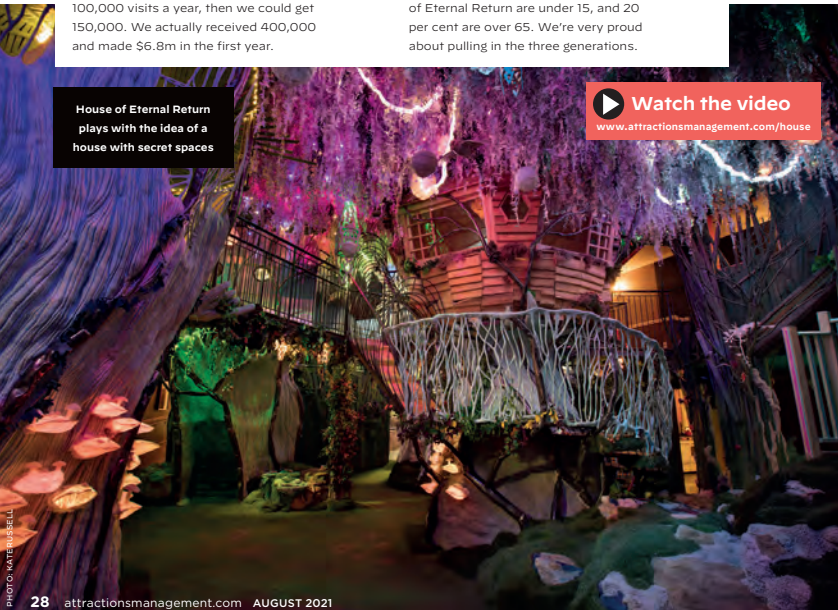
Twenty per cent of visitors to House of Eternal Return are under 15, and 20 per cent are over 65. We're very proud about pulling in the three generations.

House of Eternal Return plays with the idea of a house with secret spaces



Watch the video

[www.attractionsmanagement.com/house](http://www.attractionsmanagement.com/house)





Visitors choose their own path through the House of Eternal Return



PHOTO: KATIE RUSSELL



Meow Wolf's first attraction was built 'on passion'

PHOTO: MEOW WOLF

### With House of Eternal Return being so successful, did it make the next site easier?

We had some money behind us, and weren't living pay cheque to pay cheque, but we had more to lose. The House of Eternal Return had been built quickly and on passion, but we couldn't work like that again – we needed proper salaries, benefits and annual leave.

We started looking for other venues, and opportunities came up in Las Vegas and Denver at the same time. We hired 500 people in all kinds of creative disciplines to build the exhibitions. Once we started concept development we realised it would be insanely more expensive than we had initially imagined, so I spent 18 months fundraising, pulling in \$200m.

To do two projects at one time was ambitious and insane. We won't do it again.

### Omega Mart opened this year in Las Vegas. What is the concept?

We decided to play off the consumerism of Vegas, using the concept of a grocery store owned by an evil corporation. Omega Mart tells the story of the corporation and the addictive products they create. My favourite products include a butter-scented air freshener called 'Who Told You This is Butter?' and a breakfast cereal called 'Rumoured Associates'.

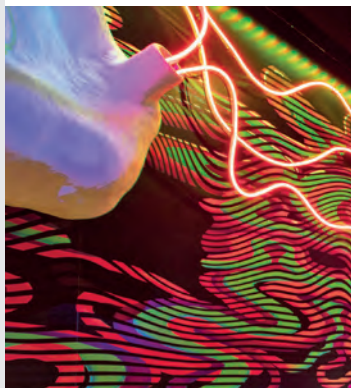
### What impact did COVID have?

It slightly delayed us, but because construction was deemed an essential business we were allowed to continue working. The main issue was that House of Eternal Return was closed, so our bottom line was hit significantly. There has also been a phased opening, but it's now going insanely well.



Products at Omega Mart include  
Omega Soda and Nut Free Peanuts

PHOTO: MEOW WOLF



### How will COVID impact attractions?

COVID-19 has accelerated existing trends, such as streaming content and shopping online. People were already questioning why they needed to leave the house and that question became even more pertinent once risk was involved. With most necessities now able to be done from home, the reason to leave the house is for experience.

Streaming services were fuelling the decline of movie theatres and that's accelerated. What used to be an anchor is now dying, so mall developers need to take a fresh look at how to fill these spaces. This offers an incredible opportunity for value creation combining art, following the Meow Wolf blueprint.

### What's next for Meow Wolf?

Denver is the next stop and will be a landmark site, opening fall of this year. It's our biggest and most complex project to date. Denver is a different community, so it will have its own energy and be a massive amalgamation of dimensions, making it unforgettable and transformational.

Immersive, psychedelic, mind-bending art and an underlying rich narrative will define journeys of discovery into a surreal, science-fictional epic. (More: [www.attractionsmanagement.com/denver](http://www.attractionsmanagement.com/denver))

Next we're interested in moving into any areas where creativity is involved: video gaming, film and TV, hospitality, collaborations with other attractions. We've already themed a dark ride for a Denver attraction – making it the first art-centric dark ride – and we'd love to do a rollercoaster.

### Would you like to see more art used more in the attractions industry?

Absolutely. I would like to challenge the industry to empower artists to create original work and act in a more abstracted and culturally

***We've themed a dark ride for a Denver attraction, making it the first art-centric dark ride, and we'd love to do a rollercoaster***

relevant way, investing in art which is weird, colourful, inspiring, share-worthy, challenging, original, diverse and culturally meaningful.

Parks have so much space for murals, sculpture, outdoor art, light art, immersive art, artful play spaces, immersive theatre and performance art.

Imagine if original expression was valued above IP replication and dark rides were seen as an artistic medium for original expression and abstraction.

If exploration and discovery, wonderment and inspiration, magic and weirdness, were valued higher than adrenaline and sugar, the amusement and theme park industries could become the largest supporters and employers of artistic expression ever.

The impact the visitor attractions industry could have on expanding the minds of communities through this kind of work would be astounding. ●

More: [www.attractionsmanagement.com/meow](http://www.attractionsmanagement.com/meow)



Watch the video

[www.attractionsmanagement.com/omega](http://www.attractionsmanagement.com/omega)

## OMEGA MART

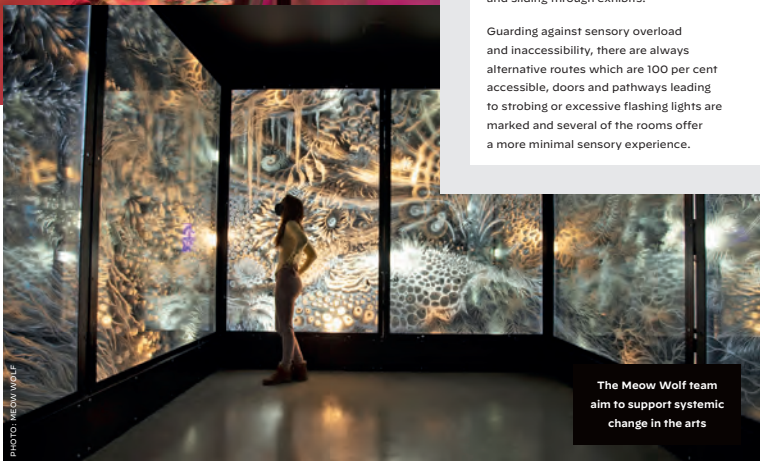
A trippy experience, which pushes the boundaries of space and reason, Omega Mart is an extraordinary supermarket which bursts into surreal worlds and unexpected landscapes. An experience in imagination and immersive storytelling.

Through secret portals, visitors can explore more than 60 rooms of interactive, larger than life art, and follow the fictional storyline interwoven through the exhibit. Passing through a fridge into a different world, the experience is part video game, part escape room and part immersive theatre. Many of the products are art which is for sale, such as Plausible Deniability laundry liquid or Sweet Whispers toilet paper.

Using art to take people out of themselves, people are encouraged to experience it – explore the secret passage ways and narrow corridors; crawling, climbing and sliding through exhibits.

Guarding against sensory overload and inaccessibility, there are always alternative routes which are 100 per cent accessible, doors and pathways leading to strobing or excessive flashing lights are marked and several of the rooms offer a more minimal sensory experience.

Omega Mart features work from more than 325 music, art and digital creators



The Meow Wolf team aim to support systemic change in the arts

*What lessons can we take forward to a post COVID-future?*

# Capacity challenges

**Visitor attraction operators around the world are balancing the need to keep visitors safe and comply with social distancing measures while maximising revenue and offering a great experience. We find out how they're rising to the challenge**

**T**he need to optimise capacity in the age of social distancing is something many visitor attraction operators are grappling with right now, with this challenge not looking likely to go away any time soon.

Whether they're having to comply with social distancing regulations or just ensure anxious visitors feel safe when out and about, operators are having to think about maximising revenue while often having to limit numbers of people in their attractions.

This capacity may be different indoors and outdoors and by attraction type and location, adding another level of complexity when it comes to management.

Some operators are employing technology to help spread visitors out around their attractions, others are opening up new outdoor areas, and some have decided to offer a premium, higher-priced offer to control volumes.

What have been the most successful approaches, and what lessons can be taken forward to a post-COVID future? Magali Robathan speaks to the experts to find out.



The government's reliance on regulatory controls has been confusing and wrongly focused

“

## Governments should encourage individual responsibility, rather than setting industry-specific capacity limits

**Ken Robinson, CBE**  
Independent tourism adviser



Before COVID-19, few attractions actively managed capacity. The principal benefit to doing so is not just that they're complying with regulations, but also that matching the number of visitors to the attraction's ability to create the most enjoyable experience is good for business.

We take the simple efficiencies of the internet and the related online ticket prepayment options very much for granted, forgetting the administrative burden – pre-internet – of pre-booking and mailed or 'collect on arrival' paper tickets.

Within the last decade online pre-purchase became simple, which – taken together with time-slot access – made the control of booking rides and features very straightforward, with "tickets" being issued online and validated on-site via visitors' smartphones.

So when the UK government introduced its frequently changing

and stop-go COVID-19 regulations for the attractions sector, it was practical to adapt online systems to manage access by pre-booking.

However, I'm a committed cynic when it comes to the 'infection risk-management by government regulation' approach, except for in really high-risk places, such as public transport or potentially crowded, unventilated spaces.

At most attractions, it was ridiculous to believe or expect that the management and staff could safely regulate public behaviour.

For attractions, hospitality, sports and other leisure and cultural businesses, the more government has defined rules, regulations and guidance, the more loopholes have emerged, and the more clarifications have had to be issued.

The fact is that sensible people behave sensibly and cautiously to

minimise infection risks and those who do not maintain social distancing or follow government rules and guidance cannot be policed to do so.

We see the evidence in streets, outside pubs and in football crowd. Who polices that behaviour? No one.

Within an attraction, in capacity-controlled internal spaces, how is any member of staff to know whether people standing "too close" together are in a family group or bubble or not?

There is only one thing that can control infection – it is not government rules, or attractions' management of capacity, it is the responsibility of every individual to maintain social distancing.

Education around COVID-safe behaviour is where energy should have been directed by government, instead of the misplaced focus on regulations.

Their rules were ineffective in many respects, while seriously impacting attractions businesses.

“

**I'd caution people not to put too many eggs into the premium experience basket – go too high-end and you'll annoy your core market**

**Yael Coifman**

Leisure Development Partners



Yael Coifman is a founding partner of Leisure Development Partners

**What are the challenges and opportunities around the need to reduce capacity?**

In one sense the pandemic has been a good thing – because of capacity challenges and social distancing requirements, and the need for pre-booking, it has forced a lot of attractions and theme parks to start embracing new technologies. That should increase efficiency of operations in a lot of cases.

There's obviously a challenge in that attractions just aren't getting as many people in, yet they still have to operate

as normal. You can't say, here's access to our park, but half the rides are closed. They're having to support the same level of operating costs with lower levels of revenue, which puts them in a very difficult position.

**What are your thoughts on the VIP model – charging more for a premium experience?**

It's a way to get more revenue from a select group of people, but the danger is that it decreases the experience for the other people using your attraction. I would caution people not to put

Kidzania has worked with Leisure Development Partners



PHOTO: KIDZANIA



PHOTO: KIDZANIA

Leisure Development Partners works with a number of global brands, including Kidzania

too many eggs into the premium experience basket; there's only a certain portion of the population that can pay for that long-term. In the short-term, people might be willing to pay for anything just to have an experience, but at the end of the day, our industry functions off the middle class and working class.

You can offer low-capacity high-value experiences – and they do work – but it's a small percentage who can afford them. If you go too high-end, you're going to annoy your core market.

#### Are there upsides?

For operators happy to offer queueless rides and reservation systems, there's a real opportunity to make money from F&B and retail. While people are waiting to go on a ride, they need to find something to do, and that could be spending, eating and drinking. That's an opportunity people could be leveraging.

As people pay using apps, you can start looking at patterns of



PHOTO: KIDZANIA

behaviour and reorganising your internal operations to reflect that. One of the biggest benefits of the pre-booking system is that you can manage staff costs through the week and weekend and flatten the curve.

It will take at least a year for international tourism to get back to where it was, so the focus should be on the residential and domestic markets; on building loyalty and attracting those people.

The use of technology will definitely stick. The average consumer has got used to having to book.

There's been a real shift in thinking in terms of planning more. That will be useful, because it will flatten the attendance curve for most attractions. Hopefully, people who were forced to visit during off-peak times because they couldn't get in at the weekend will realise it's a quieter experience, and will continue to do this going forward.

“

## Having prices that are not static but dynamic offers more options to satisfy as many guests as possible

**Bernard Kochen**  
Convivous

How do Disney parks, crowds, and dynamic pricing relate?

Ever since the pandemic started, attractions and venue managers have had to squeeze their brains to figure out how to deal with the following scenario: high fixed costs, reduced visitor capacity, government regulations to comply with – and on top of all that, anxious visitors

with high expectations when it comes to the balance between their fun and their safety.

Giants such as Disney have put an end to some of their most popular programmes as a consequence. For example, Disneyland decided to end annual passes back in January. The underlying issue with the annual pass programme in the pandemic context

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/JOSEF SURIA



Disney has experimented with dynamic pricing

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/JOSEF SURIA



Annual pass holders spend less on food and drink than international visitors

was derived from the fact that these lower revenue-generating visitors were taking the spaces and capacity slots from higher-spending visitors, leaving considerable revenue opportunities for Disneyland on the table.

Most annual pass holders were people living near the park rather than inbound tourists. Since they live close by and are frequent visitors, they usually only stay for a couple of hours. As a result, they don't spend nearly as much on food and beverage, merchandising or accommodation as tourists and visitors from abroad.

#### How are attractions addressing this?

As a solution to face this challenge, more and more attractions (Disney parks included) are implementing



**Bernard Kochen, Convivous**

dynamic pricing strategies such as real-time pricing. This allows attractions to offer an incentive for frequent local visitors to come on slower days, by lowering the prices

at these times and then increasing them on the most popular days, so they generate higher revenue on days where demand is high and spread price-sensitive visitors to slower days – strategically managing their capacity.

#### How has this been working for operators who've adopted this way of structuring their pricing?

Having prices that are not static but dynamic offers more options to satisfy as many fans as possible – including those willing to pay a higher price in exchange for flexibility.

In addition, this allows attractions to spread their attendance effectively and level out crowds more evenly throughout their peak days, weeks, and overall, throughout the entire year.



## Parks can identify hotspots for overcrowding in real time and send personal incentives to shift customer flow away from busy areas

**Erin Morris**  
Data Duopoly

### How can operators optimise capacity and revenue in the age of social distancing?

Be innovative and flexible – it's important to deliver the best possible visitor experience.

From looking at negative reviews of the top UK attractions it's easy to see that the biggest frustrations come from long queues, overcrowded areas and poor customer service. When these things are addressed, the other factor – price – isn't as much of an issue.

Review your customer journey to ensure you're streamlining processes and improving every touchpoint.

Take this opportunity to make the most of goodwill by including opportunities for donations during this recovery stage. Memberships are also a great way to secure guaranteed revenue, so think about how you can add value to these and promote them.

### How can operators use technology to help with this challenge?

Communicate changes that visitors are likely to encounter during their visit via your website.

If you don't have one already, use an online booking platform that can assist with timed entries – vary the price of tickets to drive visitor numbers to less busy timeslots.

Apps such as XplorIT and Attractions.io enable visitors to operate interactive maps which allow them to spot busy areas to better navigate the venue and avoid crowds.

With XplorIT, information on exhibits or facts about the surrounding area can be made available based on visitors' location, maintaining their attention and enriching their experience.



PHOTO: DATA DUOPOLY

**Morris says attractions management apps can deliver better experiences for guests**

Gamification can be included to encourage children's engagement.

The app can identify potential hotspots for overcrowding in real-time and send nudge notifications or incentives to shift customer flow away from busy areas. These have been proven to increase dwell times and concessionary spending.

For example, it can also control how many guests are in different areas, by offering discounts at the shop if they leave a certain ride until the afternoon.

In addition, its COVID-19 tracker can notify visitors about capacity limits via a traffic light system and send a warning to the venue when this has been reached.

XplorIT's alert system notifies the venue if a visitor has tested positive for COVID-19, allowing the attraction to see where they were on-site for effective clean-up, as well as notifying other visitors.

### When social distancing is a thing of the past, will we still need this tech?

In a world where overtourism is an issue and on-demand consumption is shortening people's attention spans, digital solutions that engage visitors and control visitor distribution will be essential. ●



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ANNA JASTRZEBSKA

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# MUSEUM OF EVERYTHING

In a world first, Rotterdam's Boijmans museum is putting its entire collection on display in a mammoth new warehouse. As the V&A considers a similar experiment, is this 'open storage' model the future, asks Andrew Dickson?

F

rom a block away, it looks like a craft from a more advanced civilisation has landed in the centre of Rotterdam.

The structure is futuristic, with walls of mirrored glass curving up some 40 metres, reflecting the iron-grey clouds and the fractured city skyline. It wouldn't be surprising if it had a tractor beam instead of a door. As I draw close, a middle-aged Dutch couple are debating whether they like it. They decide not, but snap selfies in front of it anyway.

Rotterdammers are used to high-concept architecture, but what makes this building unusual is its function: it's a warehouse.

Designed by Dutch architecture firm MVRDV and known as the Depot, it has been created for one of the most well-regarded art museums in the Netherlands, the Boijmans Van Beuningen. When I visit, contractors are installing vitrines and polishing concrete floors. Now, several months later [July 2021] art handlers have begun moving in the museum's collection of Rembrandts, Boschs, Magrittes and Dalís – some 150,000 objects, ready for its opening in November.

In the atrium, Sjarel Ex, the Boijmans' director, is wearing the look of a man who can't quite believe it's finally happening. "A treasure chest, no?" he exclaims, gesturing towards a dizzying lattice of glass stairwells above our heads. "Every single thing we have will be on display."





Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen is billed as the world's first art storage facility with access to a museum's complete collection

## ***So much of what museums do happens in the dark. We want to bring it into the light***

To call the Depot a warehouse is, it turns out, to do it a considerable disservice: the building is an attempt to turn the Boijmans inside out. Instead of locking their crown jewels away behind closed doors, the institution has ploughed €55m (£50m) into an "open storage" facility in the heart of the city, right next to the main 1930s building.

Museums have dabbled with open or visible storage for decades. New York's Metropolitan made some of its research collections available in the late 1980s, while the V&A's 2009–10 ceramics galleries put some 26,000 objects on display in tall, tightly crammed glass cabinets. But Ex and his colleagues reckon this is the first time that anyone has built an open-storage facility to house an entire museum collection. "Radical transparency," Ex grins. "A little bit Dutch, I'm afraid."

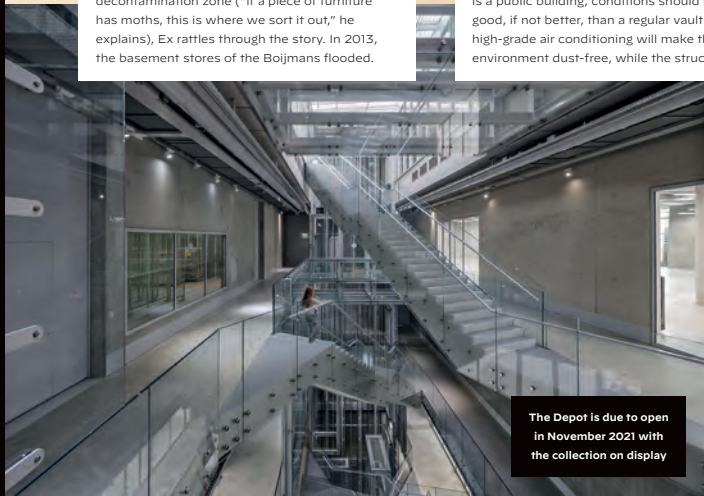
As we stride from the loading bay to the decontamination zone ("if a piece of furniture has moths, this is where we sort it out," he explains), Ex rattles through the story. In 2013, the basement stores of the Boijmans flooded.

Though the damage was mercifully minimal, it was obvious that the museum needed to upgrade, particularly given that 90 per cent of Rotterdam is below sea level – and with climate change, the percentage is increasing.

But instead of erecting something in an anonymous industrial zone somewhere, Ex had the idea of turning the stores into a visitor attraction. There were already plans to close the main building for seven years for renovation – it's due to reopen in 2026 – so this would also be a way of bridging the gap.


"So much of what museums do happens in the dark," says Ex. "We wanted to bring some of it into the light."

An appealing idea, but fiendishly difficult to pull off, architect Winy Maas tells me – light itself being a major problem. The museum was insistent that, even though the Depot is a public building, conditions should be as good, if not better, than a regular vault: super-high-grade air conditioning will make the environment dust-free, while the structure is



**The Depot is due to open in November 2021 with the collection on display**

PHOTO: OSSIP VAN DUINENBODE

A portrait of Winy Maas, co-founder of MVRDV, sitting on a wooden bench. He is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. He has his hand resting on his chin, looking thoughtfully at the camera. The background is a light-colored wooden wall.

MVRDV co-founder Winy  
Maas (pictured) helped  
to design the Depot  
Boijmans Van Beuningen



PHOTO: OSSIP VAN DUIVENBODE

divided into five “climate zones” for different kinds of artefacts (colour photographs need to be stored at a lower temperature than black-and-white prints, for example). While some pieces will hang on movable racks, or in 13 display cabinets placed through the building, light-sensitive objects will be kept in sealed cabinets and only inspected by appointment.

Ex doesn’t go into detail about security, but suggests that the building is more than a match for art thieves. “And which is safer, really?” he asks. “Putting your depot on the outskirts of a city, or having it right here in the centre, surrounded by people?”

## THE ISSUE OF SPACE

There’s more at stake than technical questions about how best to care for fragile artefacts. Although few museums advertise the fact, what we see in their galleries is a tiny fraction of what they possess: the usual estimate is that 95 per cent of most collections are locked away. Research done in 2016 by the magazine *Quartz* suggested that, in a sample of 20 museums, almost half the Picasso paintings were in storage, while far more Georgia O’Keeffes were in the vault (67) than on permanent display (36).

The problem, of course, is space. Some museums have expanded to make more of their collections visible: Tate Modern’s 2016 extension doubled its gallery capacity, while the redeveloped MoMA in New York now contains a leg-punishing 15,000 square metres of gallery space over six floors – more than a city block. The V&A has open-storage ambitions for its new offshoot in east London, scheduled to open in 2023: the plan is to have 250,000 objects accessible, added to the 60,000-odd currently on display, which visitors will be able to access through guided tours.

But collections, like the universe, are ever-expanding – partly because many public museums are forbidden from “de-accessioning”, or getting rid of artefacts. “Show me a museum that doesn’t have a storage problem,” one director tells me. “I’d love to visit.”

“It’s a real challenge,” agrees Pii Rasmussen, who runs the conservation department at Denmark’s National Gallery. “These collections are owned by the public, but the public cannot see most of them.”

Open storage is one solution, but has its own challenges. For a start, most museums don’t have the resources to build new facilities,

## THE RIJKSMUSEUM RECONSTRUCTS THE NIGHT WATCH

Visitors to the Rijksmuseum can now enjoy Rembrandt's Night Watch in its original form for the first time in 300 years. As part of the Rijksmuseum's Operation Night Watch project, missing strips of the painting – which were removed when it was moved to Amsterdam's Town Hall in 1715 – have been recreated with the help of artificial intelligence. "Thanks to this reconstruction, we can now see that the composition as it was painted by Rembrandt was even more dynamic," said Taco Dibbits, director of the Rijksmuseum. "It is wonderful to be able to see with our own eyes The Night Watch as Rembrandt intended it to be seen."



PHOTO: RIJKSMUSEUM/REINER GERHARTSEN

The building's reflective façade has been designed to help it blend into the Museumpark

***These collections are owned by the public, but the public can't see most of them***

particularly in the UK, where institutions have battled with shrinking budgets for at least a decade, putting many on life support, even before the coronavirus crisis hit.

"In redevelopment plans, storage and backroom facilities are often the ones that get cut back," Rasmussen sighs. It's as much as some places can do to make sure that existing objects are kept safely, never mind the extra resources it takes to show them safely to the public.

Some professionals also have a suspicion that, eye-catching as visible-storage projects are, they are more of a symbolic than a real change to the way museums operate. Does anyone have the appetite to see the 2.3m-odd objects and books owned by the V&A? How about the Smithsonian, whose 19 institutions possess around 155m artefacts, most of which are stored offsite around Washington DC?

When I raise these points with Ex, he nods. "Sure. Projects like ours are an experiment. Will anyone come? Or will they come to the Depot, and not to the beautifully curated exhibitions we have in the museum?" He shrugs. "We'll see."

A train ride away from Rotterdam, another major institution is attempting its own version of radical transparency. Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum

has been conducting what it calls Operation Night Watch – a project to restore Rembrandt's most famous painting while the rest of us look on.

Rijksmuseum director Taco Dibbits concedes that locking The Night Watch in the conservation studio for years on end wasn't realistic – it is the reason many thousands of people visit the museum. Restoring it on display has benefits, too. "For museums, the way forward is how you share research," he suggests. "We sometimes underestimate how fascinated the public is."

For both Dibbits and Ex, opening up marks a powerful shift in how museums see their role, particularly as they emerge from lockdown and re-evaluate their place in the world. Pushing backstage processes and personnel into the limelight is part of it (perhaps the easy part); institutions also need to be open about uncomfortable issues such as funding and ethics, staff diversity, curation and collecting policies, the provenance of disputed or colonial-era objects.

It's a crunch point, Ex suggests: "We have to think much, much harder about transparency if we want to survive."

Dibbits concurs. "The objects stay the same," he says. "But how we talk about and show them – that really has to keep changing." ●


© The Guardian

# JOE PINE

He wrote the book that defined the Experience Economy and advises numerous Fortune 500 clients on boosting their businesses. Author and thought leader Joe Pine talks to Magali Robathan about the biggest trends for the attractions industry coming out the pandemic



Joe Pine co-founded  
Strategic Horizons LLP  
with Jim Gilmore in 1996



Swamp Motel's digital experiences have impressed Pine

“

**We are social beings  
and we insist on  
having experiences**

**B**ack in 1999, Joe Pine and his partner Jim Gilmore helped define a new economic phenomenon when they published *The Experience Economy – Work is Theatre and Every Business a Stage*.

Pine and Gilmore's philosophy was that "goods and services are no longer enough," and that all businesses must learn to "orchestrate memorable events for their customers that engage each one of them in an inherently personal way".

Since then, the book has been translated into more than 15 languages, and has become an essential read for business leaders. After an updated edition in 2011, a hardcover edition was re-released in 2020 with a new preface.

As the pair predicted in 1999, the 'Experience Economy' has grown steadily, becoming one of the predominant sources of GDP growth and job creation. For years, it seemed as though nothing could slow the shift from buying goods to buying experiences, and the experience sector went from strength to strength.

And then of course, COVID-19 hit, closing restaurants, pubs, theme parks, museums, cinemas, galleries, theatres and so many of the other places where we go for experiences around the world.

"The pandemic killed the physical part of the experience sector of the economy and that had a hugely detrimental effect on people," says Pine, speaking to me via Zoom. "The physical sector was decimated by the lockdowns. It's something none of us could have predicted or foreseen."

While people couldn't go to their usual places for experiences, they still craved entertainment and connection, and innovative companies quickly found ways to meet those needs.

"We are social beings, and we insist on having experiences," says Pine. "They moved from physical to digital, from social and communal to familial and individual. At times like this you always get innovation and there has been wonderful innovation in experiences that would not have existed without the pandemic."

One of Pine's favourite experiences during lockdown, he tells me, was by theatre and experience makers, Swamp Motel, who put on a hugely popular immersive online detective game called Plymouth Point. "You interact live with people to try and figure out what's going on; it was a great experience," he says. "That company has actually hired more people over the past year because what they're doing is so successful."

As the physical experience sector opens up, many of the lessons learned during the



Joe Pine (left)  
with Jim Gilmore

“

***Today's technology means there's little reason to wait in line***

lockdowns will enable them to provide a better offer than before, says Pine. Here he sets out some of the biggest trends he's seeing and what companies need to do to survive and thrive during the years ahead.

"One of the signs that the Experience Economy is very healthy is that whenever a place does open up to whatever capacity it can – guess what? It fills up to that limited capacity," he says. "People will never stop wanting exciting and meaningful experiences."

## PIVOTING TO HYBRID

One of the biggest trends going forwards will be hybrid digital and physical offers, says Pine.

"As companies responded to the lack of people coming to physical venues, more and more of them turned to digital events. But that alone is a poor business substitute, as it has yet to prove capable of generating the same level of revenue," he explains.

"The right approach is to stage hybrid experiences that amplify the live experience virtually."

Pine says Carnival's Ocean Medallion app helps the operator create customised itineraries and improve the customer experience

Pine sets out four stages to the hybrid experiences model. "Firstly, stage the live experience for however many people can attend – these people can be charged 100 per cent of the usual admission fee.

"Secondly, simultaneously offer the experience digitally to those who want the live experience but cannot or are unwilling to attend it physically. This same-time, different-place simulcast of the live experience can amplify it to many more people, who can be charged some portion of the physical admission fee.

"The third level involves taking all of your sessions of the experience and offering them for sale on an asynchronous basis, after the event. These 'different-time, different-place' viewers can absorb the bite-sized chunks you offer online whenever and wherever they desire – except in real-time, that is. That's reserved for those who pay the higher fees for the live performance, whether in reality or virtuality.

"Level four is the recap. Any hybrid experience stager can at least summarise the highlights of the hybrid experience: in short, free videos



PHOTO: CARNIVAL CORP

on YouTube and other social media sites – to get even more people to wish they had been there live, and through such amplification create demand for the next experience.

“Done well, for many experiences I fully believe this hybrid experience model has the potential to create more revenue than pre-COVID experiences that ignored virtual possibilities.”

## QUEUELESS ATTRACTIONS

Another big trend going forwards will be a huge increase in queueless attractions, says Pine. This will help with managing crowd flow – essential to accommodate social distancing – and increase the intensity of the experience offered.

“With today’s technology, there’s very little reason to wait in line for any length of time,” he says. “You should be able to experience something, somewhere, and then get to the next attraction just in time. Disney has got close to it with the Fast Pass, but everyone should be doing it. It’s going to be a big deal.”

This could also help with experience providers looking to address the need for social distancing ►

## JOE PINE: ENHANCING THE VALUE OF YOUR EXPERIENCES

Now is the time to refresh your places and redesign your offerings, as there will be much more competition going forwards, says Pine. When redesigning your offerings, make sure they are:

**ROBUST:** Expanding the experience to hit the ‘sweet spot’ of entertaining, educational, escapist, and esthetic realms of experience.

**COHESIVE:** Fitting all the elements into an organising principle (the theme, if you will) so that everything hangs together throughout the experience, from front to back.

**PERSONAL:** Reaching inside of each customer to create an experience with components customised to the individual.

**DRAMATIC:** Designing the time that customers spend with you to not be flat, but rather rise up to a remarkable climax and come back down again.

**TRANSFORMATIVE:** Bringing together the set of experiences required to help customers achieve their aspirations.

Pine namechecks Briq Bookings which works with Kartfabrique in the Netherlands

by allowing similar numbers of people into their offer but encouraging a faster turnaround.

"Queueless systems could get them to the point where they're just going from one ride or attraction to another," says Pine. "They might spend less time in your attraction, but they'll feel they have had a much more intense experience without that downtime in between."

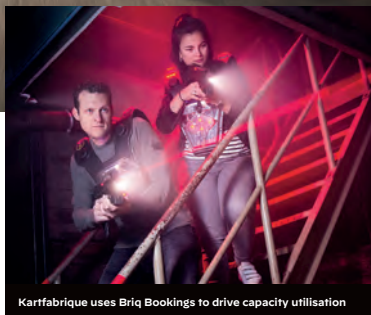
## MASS CUSTOMISATION

This links to the next big trend Pine advises operators to get on board with: the ability to offer mass customised itineraries.

"Creating a mass customised itinerary efficiently allows people to get an actual itinerary for the time they're spending with you," he explains. "The first company I know of to do it is the Carnival Corporation with its Ocean Medallion wearable device, which allows the company to know each individual guest and their preferences."

"As a guest, before you get on the cruise, you upload your passport and fill in a form saying what you like to do. You'll receive an itinerary so you have an idea of how the cruise will flow, and whenever you get within range of a crew member, your details pop up. This means you don't have to show your passport, your cabin automatically unlocks, crew can greet you by name and know your favourite cocktail or drink without asking. As the operator learns more about what experiences you like, it makes personal experience invitations to mass-customise that itinerary for you."

The potential for this technology is huge, explains Pine, particularly for multi-attraction facilities where mass customised itineraries can be created for each guest and family unit. "Briq Bookings in the Netherlands is doing this very successfully for family entertainment centres – it allows them to have tremendous capacity utilisation to smooth



Kartfabrique uses Briq Bookings to drive capacity utilisation

PHOTO DE KARTFABRIQUE UTRECHT

PHOTO DE KARTFABRIQUE UTRECHT

things out over their facilities. They're also seeing increases in food and beverage sales, as meal breaks can be scheduled in."

## A POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Looking ahead, Pine's prediction is optimistic for the sector. "I think that the experience sector will fully recover in the next couple of years," he says.

"The biggest change will be the infusion of digital technology into experiences."

"Hybrid experiences, and the use of digital technology within our experiences are here to stay. Attractions need to renew their capabilities around digital technology and recognise that is no longer optional, it's essential."

"The decades-long shift from goods and services to experiences is still taking place – there's no reason for that to abate long-term." ●

More: [www.attractionsmanagement.com/joepine](http://www.attractionsmanagement.com/joepine)



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# THE ART OF MARVEL

As Disney's Hotel New York – The Art of Marvel opens at Disneyland Paris, Magali Robathan speaks to Walt Disney Imagineer Caroline May about creating a unique place to stay



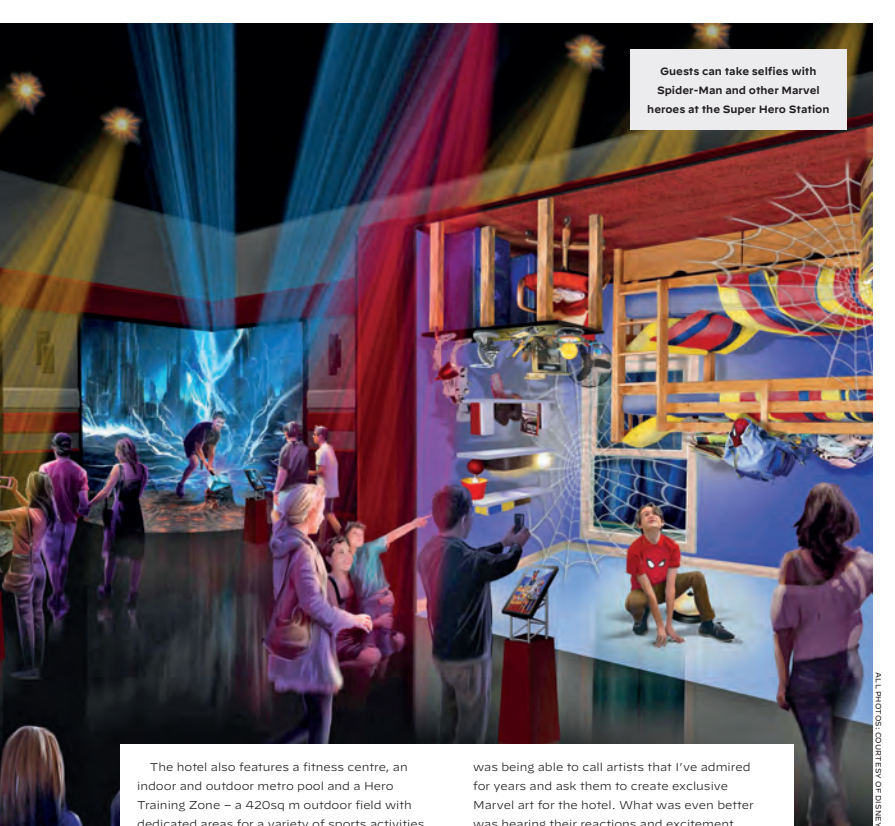
Caroline May, Walt Disney Imagineering



After months of closure, Disneyland Paris reopened on 17 June, and just four days later it celebrated the opening of Disney's Hotel New York – The Art of Marvel.

Originally due to open last June but postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the four star hotel features 471 Superior Rooms, 65 Empire State Club rooms and 25 Suites dedicated to Spider-Man, The Avengers and other Marvel superheroes. More than 350 pieces of artwork are on display throughout the hotel – including about 50 exclusive pieces – created by more than 110 artists.

The collection of contemporary art includes comic book covers, posters, illustrations from films, storyboards and original sketches showcasing a huge diversity of artistic styles, including classic black and white comics, street art, pop art, hyperrealism, engraved metal and collage art.



Guests can take selfies with Spider-Man and other Marvel heroes at the Super Hero Station

The hotel also features a fitness centre, an indoor and outdoor metro pool and a Hero Training Zone – a 420sq m outdoor field with dedicated areas for a variety of sports activities.

Disney cast members bring the hotel to life and children can learn about being a Marvel comic book artist in the Marvel Design Studio. Marvel Photo Stations allows guests to enter exclusive photo locations that immerse them in Marvel movies such as *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Captain Marvel*, *Iron Man*, *Ant-Man*, *The Avengers*, *Thor*, *Spider-Man* and *Doctor Strange*.

Here the hotel's art director tells *Attractions Management* what makes this hotel so special and why she's loved working on it.

### **What can visitors to Disney's Hotel New York – The Art of Marvel expect?**

This is a unique hotel experience where we celebrate the diversity of art and artists that have created such memorable Marvel stories. The personal highlight for me on this project

was being able to call artists that I've admired for years and ask them to create exclusive Marvel art for the hotel. What was even better was hearing their reactions and excitement that they would be a part of this project.

### **What makes it special?**

This hotel is special because guests can see how artists from different backgrounds have been inspired by Marvel storytelling through their unique approach to art.

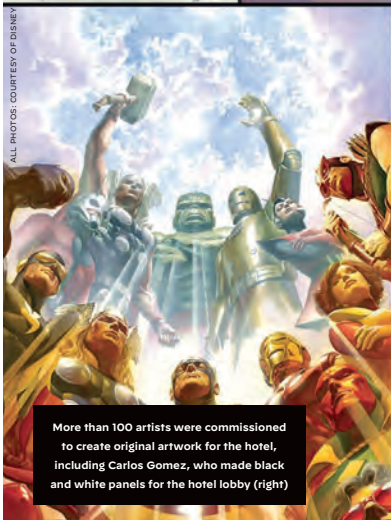
Each generation of artist defines the look of Marvel and influences the next generation. This hotel art collection is a celebration of this idea.

### **How did you approach this project?**

I graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design and concentrated on art history, so I approached the hotel as an art installation rather than art and objects as decoration. Each artist is inspired by Marvel characters and stories in different ways and I wanted to



ALL PHOTOS: COURTESY OF DISNEY



More than 100 artists were commissioned to create original artwork for the hotel, including Carlos Gomez, who made black and white panels for the hotel lobby (right)

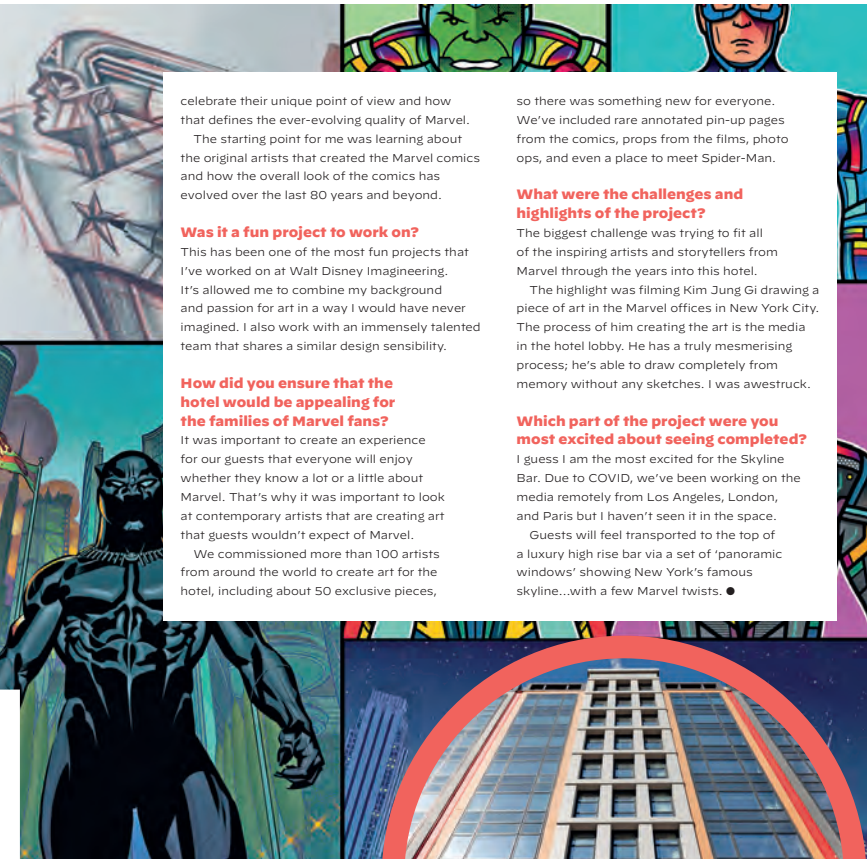


## ARTWORKS ON DISPLAY INCLUDE...

- French Marvel artist Olivier Coipel, famous for his work on *The Avengers*, *Thor* and *Spider-Man*, created a powerful representation of Thor: God of Thunder in a comic-book style.
- French Marvel artist Stéphanie Hans, featured in Marvel Comics including *Asgardians of the Galaxy* and *Black Bolt* created a realistic portrait of Captain Marvel depicted in full flight.
- UK comic book artist Tula Lotay, whose work on Marvel Comics includes *Black Widow*, *Gamora* and *Scarlet Witch*, created a vibrant and strong comic-book style portrait of *Black Widow*.
- Italian designers and twin brothers Van Orton have created pop art portraits of *Hulk*, *Captain America*, *Black Panther* and *Captain Marvel*.



- UK artist Liam Brazier, known for his geometric reinterpretations of iconic characters, created several pieces for the hotel, including contemporary portraits of *Captain America*, *Thor* and *Hulk* using saturated and bright colours.
- Spanish artist Carlos Gomez created huge backlit black and white comic panels that will greet guests as they enter the lobby (above).



celebrate their unique point of view and how that defines the ever-evolving quality of Marvel.

The starting point for me was learning about the original artists that created the Marvel comics and how the overall look of the comics has evolved over the last 80 years and beyond.

### **Was it a fun project to work on?**

This has been one of the most fun projects that I've worked on at Walt Disney Imagineering. It's allowed me to combine my background and passion for art in a way I would have never imagined. I also work with an immensely talented team that shares a similar design sensibility.

### **How did you ensure that the hotel would be appealing for the families of Marvel fans?**

It was important to create an experience for our guests that everyone will enjoy whether they know a lot or a little about Marvel. That's why it was important to look at contemporary artists that are creating art that guests wouldn't expect of Marvel.

We commissioned more than 100 artists from around the world to create art for the hotel, including about 50 exclusive pieces,

so there was something new for everyone. We've included rare annotated pin-up pages from the comics, props from the films, photo ops, and even a place to meet Spider-Man.

### **What were the challenges and highlights of the project?**

The biggest challenge was trying to fit all of the inspiring artists and storytellers from Marvel through the years into this hotel.

The highlight was filming Kim Jung Gi drawing a piece of art in the Marvel offices in New York City. The process of him creating the art is the media in the hotel lobby. He has a truly mesmerising process; he's able to draw completely from memory without any sketches. I was awestruck.

### **Which part of the project were you most excited about seeing completed?**

I guess I am the most excited for the Skyline Bar. Due to COVID, we've been working on the media remotely from Los Angeles, London, and Paris but I haven't seen it in the space.

Guests will feel transported to the top of a luxury high rise bar via a set of 'panoramic windows' showing New York's famous skyline...with a few Marvel twists. ●

**I approached the hotel  
as an art installation  
rather than art and  
objects as decoration**



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Nicolas de Villiers worked  
as a director for Puy du Fou  
before becoming president

# Nicolas de Villiers

As Puy du Fou España opens its doors,  
president of the historical theme park  
company tells Magali Robathan about his  
global ambitions and why he chose to  
see the pandemic as an opportunity

# ***If you want to conquer the world, you have to go to China***



**I**t's a theme park without a single ride, that eschews thrills and consumerism in the search for a deeper connection with its visitors. The second most visited attraction in France after Disneyland Paris, Puy du Fou

tells historical stories via spectacular shows with special effects and casts of thousands, and it's been wowing visitors since it opened in 1989.

It's also been going global, with the recent

launch of Puy du Fou España in March, big plans for China, and ambitious long-term goals.

"We want to become a global company,"

says Nicolas de Villiers, president of Puy du Fou

and the son of its founder Philippe de Villiers.

"What we offer is different. At a normal theme park, you're put on a ride which makes you move – it's fun, but it's just a sensation which connects with your body rather than your soul. We want to build on emotion by talking to your soul."

The Roman Coliseum  
at Puy du Fou, France

Puy du Fou started life in 1977, when Philippe de Villiers discovered the remains of a ruined castle in the village of Les Epesses in the Loire Valley. He wrote a script based on the history of the Vendée region of western France, and recruited several hundred volunteers – or Puyfolais – to perform it. The Cinéscénie night-time performance attracted thousands of people every year, and in 1989, the Puyfolais decided to launch Puy du Fou's Grand Parc all-day attraction in order to capitalise on its success.

Today, Puy du Fou features four historic French villages – including a medieval city with mud walls and ramparts and a Roman chapel – where

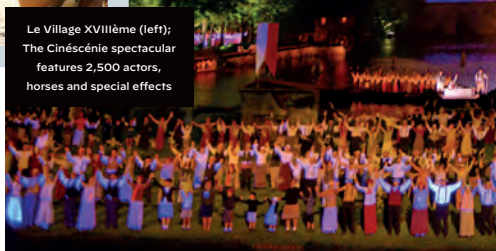


PHOTO: PUY DU FOU

Le Village XVIIIème (left);  
The Cinéscénie spectacular  
features 2,500 actors,  
horses and special effects



PHOTO: PUY DU FOU



visitors can wander the streets, visit shops featuring artisans at work and enjoy historically appropriate meals and snacks. The park still hosts the Cinéscénie at night during the season, now performed by 2,550 actors and featuring animals, horses, fireworks and dramatic special effects, as well as several other historical shows, all set in 50 hectares of woodlands and gardens.

## GOING GLOBAL

For a long time, the team focused on France, but around 10 years ago, they began to receive an increasing number of enquiries from people around the world asking them to help create a Puy du Fou in their own countries. Puy du Fou International was set up in 2010, and the team created the Raveleijn show for Dutch theme park Efteling, which launched in 2013.

In 2016, Puy du Fou collaborated with UK charity 11 Arches to create Kynren, an open air spectacular telling the story of 2,000 years of British history in County Durham.

Next came Spain, with the 2019 launch of the El Sueño de Toledo show in Toledo. It was a success, attracting more than 120,000 spectators in 2019 and 2020, with the first show of 2020 dedicated to the healthcare workers of Madrid and Castilla-La Mancha.

This year, at the end of March 2021, the 30 hectare Puy du Fou España park launched on the outskirts of Toledo (around an hour from Madrid). The park features four period villages,

including a Moorish camp and a medieval market with stallholders preparing traditional food, and four spectacular daytime shows that lead visitors through Spanish history. The park also features 10 themed restaurant and food outlets, where visitors can buy authentic Spanish food.

"We've had to limit attendance numbers [because of COVID-19 restrictions], but we've had a very good start," says de Villiers. "Attendance is growing week after week, booking is very good. The most important thing for us is that people are very happy with the shows and the experience. We carry out surveys every week so we know what people think, and they love what they see."

The four shows include an immersive experience which sees visitors set sail with Christopher Columbus; a swashbuckling adventure featuring Spain's Golden Age poet, Lope de Vega; and a dramatic telling of the story of Castilian medieval knight 'El Cid' (Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar). They feature

PHOTO: PUY DU FOU ESPAÑA





Puy du Fou España opened in Toledo in March 2021, featuring four period villages

***We're not  
historians,  
we're  
storytellers***

## PUY DU FOU ESPAÑA: THE SHOWS

### El Último Cantar (The Last Song)

A grand scale 360° show, set in the 11th century, that follows the incredible exploits and epic tale of 'El Cid', Don Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar. The deeds of the Castilian knight inspired future generations with his extraordinary feats, military prowess and commitment to honour.

### A Pluma y Espada (By Feather and Sword)

Enjoy a light-hearted swash-buckling adventure in which Spain's Golden Age poet, Lope de Vega, discovers that all is not as it seems.

### Cetrería de Reyes (Falconry of the Kings)

Step back in time to the year 939 and the Caliphate of Cordoba, and gaze skywards when a truce between the Count Fernán González of Castile and the Caliph takes the unusual form of a duel of falcons and an aerial dance performed by hundreds of birds of prey.

### Allende la Mar Océana (On the Other Side of the Ocean)

The year is 1492 and it is time to embark on an epic journey with Christopher Columbus. Puy du Fou España takes you on an immersive experience, starting in the port of Palos, before boarding the ship and setting sail through an undiscovered sea towards the west.

A swashbuckling adventure that evokes Spain's Golden Age

PHOTO: ALAIN VILLIERS

The Medieval Village in France (above); The El Sueño de Toledo spectacular at Puy du Fou España (main pic)

impressive sets, dramatic stunts, trained falcons, and a series of special effects.

How did the team decide which stories to tell in Puy du Fou España, I ask. "We consulted with historians, journalists and people from the world of culture in Spain – these people brought us knowledge, stories, themes and the spirit and soul of the Spanish," says de Villiers.

"We speak to these people, we read a lot – they help us to choose the right books – and then we slowly leave the historians and take the theme and write our own script. We're not historians, we're storytellers; the vision is to create a show not just based on local history but also on new concepts that will surprise the visitor – even those who have been to Puy du Fou and experienced our shows.

"Before we start to create a show, we ask ourselves two questions. Firstly, is there a story? Secondly, how do we want to tell the story? If we have a story, and we have some good ideas for how to tell it, then we have a show."

One of the highlights of Puy du Fou España is the immersive journey with Christopher Columbus. "It's an amazing show," says de Villiers. "We created the ship with Oscar-winning set designer Pilar Revuelta; we use machinery and special effects to make the boat move and create the atmosphere and sounds and feel of the ship on the water. We have actors playing the marines and Columbus, and they speak directly to the audience. It gives the visitor the opportunity to really feel what marines on board that ship would have felt."

PHOTO: PUY DU FOU ESPAÑA



Photo: Puy du Fou / Asia Pacific

## ***We had two options – either to be caught by the crisis and paralysed by fear, or to use it as an opportunity***

### **ASIAN AMBITIONS**

The next target market is China. In May 2021, Puy du Fou announced it would launch a new show in Shanghai, inspired by Chinese legends.

Called SAGA, the two hour live action show will feature actors, and will allow visitors to choose their own adventures in 1930s Shanghai.

The Everbright Convention & Exhibition Centre will be transformed to deliver the experience, with 40,000sq m of space being repurposed for the show and associated themed restaurant and bars.

Puy du Fou is partnering with CYTS, the tourism subsidiary of the Everbright Group and Shanghai Xuhui Urban Renewal Investment Development Group – the investment company of the Xuhui district in the city of Shanghai – to deliver the project and de Villiers says: “The signing of this agreement has made it possible to create SAGA Shanghai, with a total investment of €76m.

“If you want to conquer the world, you have to go to China, it’s such a huge market,” he says. “The first step is to prove that we can

# De Villiers aims to have four Puy du Fou parks by 2030

PHOTO: ALAIN MONTEAU



The original Puy du Fou park (above). Puy du Fou España takes visitors through the history of Spain (this pic)

PHOTO: PUY DU FOU



create shows that will touch the hearts of Chinese audiences. The next step will be to open a park, featuring several shows.

"We know we're looking for a location which is very green, immersed in nature; famous because of its heritage and the beauty of the place."

While the pandemic led to the closure of Puy du Fou España, it gave de Villiers breathing space to explore new opportunities.

"We had two options – either to be caught by the crisis and paralysed by fear, or use it as an opportunity," he says. "What I did was take my time. I worked for a year on new projects and new ideas I'd wanted to develop 'one day'."

"I sped up the Chinese opportunities. I'm also working on a Puy du Fou movie production – we

need a digital gateway. In the future, people need to be able to see Puy du Fou on their phones; that way, my vision will exist in their brains."

De Villiers' ambitions are to have four full parks by 2030 – in France, Spain, China, and one other country. "We're talking to several interested countries at the moment – it could be in Europe, it could be somewhere on the American continent. It's too early to say," he says.

I finish by asking de Villiers for the secret of Puy du Fou's success. What makes it unique?

"It's all about the way you take the hand of the visitor to bring them into the story you want to tell," he says. "Stories must always be a surprise and a journey." ●

**More:** [www.attractionsmanagement.com/Puy](http://www.attractionsmanagement.com/Puy)

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# ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

**Spectacular animals and a variety of species boost zoo visitor numbers, but there are other more unusual ways to drive footfall, finds this study by Trinity College Dublin's Yvonne Buckley**

**W**hat drives zoo attendance? How does variety in animal collections affect footfall? How do high zoo visitor

numbers boost conservation activity in the wild? Scientists from Trinity College Dublin teamed up last year with Species360 and NUI Galway to carry out a study to answer these questions and found that a range of strategies can be used to boost zoo attendances.

Led by Yvonne Buckley, professor of zoology at Trinity College Dublin, the research analysed data from zoos in 58 countries – headline findings include the fact that zoos with large animals such as elephants, tigers and pandas attract higher numbers of visitors and also that unusual species and zoos that are very different from others are also more attractive.

We spoke to Yvonne Buckley about what the findings mean for operators looking to drive up their visitor numbers, and how she hopes to see operators displaying smaller and more unusual species that can sometimes be overlooked.

**Buckley set out to identify ways for zoos to attract more visitors and enhance conservation**



PHOTO: ALEX KANTOROVICH

***With this study, you assessed how variations in animal collections affect zoo attendance. Can you briefly describe how this was measured?***

Crucial to our research was the availability of data on the species and number of animals kept in over 450 zoos worldwide. We worked with data from Species360 member organisations – Species360 facilitates international collaboration in the collection, sharing and analysis of data compiled by zoos on their collections.

We combined knowledge of zoo collections with attendance data from the *International Zoo Yearbook* to look at whether the number of species, number of animals or the size of the animals influenced how many people visit the zoo.

***What were the most significant findings?***

It was particularly interesting to see that across the 450 zoos there were several features of a zoo collection that consistently boosted

visitor attendance. Large animals, lots of different species (particularly mammals) and large numbers of animals were all positively correlated with attendance. Surprisingly, how different a zoo was from other zoos also had a positive effect on attendance. These different animal collection effects were just as strong, if not stronger than the socio-economic context of the zoo (GDP and population density).

***For smaller zoos, or for zoos that have made a decision not to keep larger animals, were there any alternative strategies to boosting attendance?***

It was interesting to see that there were many ways in which visitor attendance could be boosted, particularly because many zoos are limited in the amount of space they have available, which means they might not be able to keep large animals. An alternative strategy is to keep unusual animals or greater numbers of smaller animals.



PHOTO: ALEX KANTOROV/SH

Flamingos will only breed if they live in a large flock – something which draws more visitors



***I hope these findings will give some reassurance to zoo managers that there isn't a single formula for what a zoo collection should look like***

***Why is it important to attract higher numbers of visitors from a conservation perspective?***

Zoos contribute more than \$350m a year to wildlife conservation projects in the wild which makes them collectively the third largest conservation organisation contributor globally. We found that higher visitor attendance numbers are associated with greater numbers of conservation projects in the natural habitats of animals in the wild that zoos are involved with.


Zoos are increasingly playing an important conservation education role as well, so being able to reach wide audiences can increase public awareness of conservation issues and promote beneficial behaviours.

***Were there any other interesting findings?***

We were able to look at the complex ways in which different zoo collection features affect visitor attendance. For example, there are a limited number of large charismatic animals kept in zoos (such as lions, elephants and rhinos), so zoos with large animals tend to be similar to each other, but zoos which are different are associated with larger visitor numbers. So there's a decision to be made by zoos about whether they try to boost visitor numbers with a conventional collection or differentiate their collections and attract people that way.

Zoo collections need to fulfil several objectives and with our study we provide several different collection options for managers.





Buckley hopes the study will give zoo managers “wiggle room” to think about how best to utilise the space at their zoo

***There's a lot of discussion about the ethics of keeping large animals in zoos. How do the findings of this study contribute to that debate?***

Animal welfare is very important and always needs to be part of collection planning, regardless of studies like ours. We did find that large animals were associated with higher visitor numbers, but there are trade-offs a collection manager must make, as often there is not a lot of room for many large animals.

I think the most important finding we made was that there are several different kinds of collections that can be successful from a visitation point of view so if welfare issues limit the type or number of animals that can be kept there are other options for zoo managers.

***How could the findings from this research be used by the people running zoos and aquaria to boost attendances?***

I hope the findings will give reassurance to zoo managers that there isn't a single formula for what a collection should look like and that there's room for many different kinds of zoos. I hope this will give them some 'wiggle room' with their collections to fulfil other conservation activities such as including threatened species within management plans, or paying attention to smaller species that can sometimes be overlooked.

***You said that the study provides evidence to suggest that zoos don't need to compromise their economic viability in order to have a significant value to conservation. Could you expand on this?***

If you have limited space you can hold a few large species or many small ones.

Zoos play an important role in the breeding management of zoo populations of threatened species to maintain genetic diversity and perhaps for reintroduction back into the wild.

Breeding programmes often require several individuals of the same species to be kept together – flamingos will not breed successfully unless they live in a large flock, for example.

We show that by keeping larger numbers of animals for conservation breeding programmes you can still maintain visitor numbers while also driving your conservation work.

***Have you done any research into the effects of the pandemic on zoos?***

No we haven't. Zoos have undoubtedly suffered from a lack of revenue over the past year or so and it's important for conservation projects that they get up and running safely as soon as possible.

I was delighted to get tickets for my own local zoo and am looking forward to going back there to see how the animals are getting on. ●

# POWER OF YOUTH

Research shows teenage volunteers help 'tweens' get the most out of science centres, museums and other attractions. Magali Robathan speaks to the people behind the research to find out the implications for attractions wanting to make more meaningful connections with visitors

If you want to increase interest and engagement in museum exhibits in STEM subjects in children and tween visitors, enlist the help of teenage docents. This is the finding of recent research carried out by North Carolina State University in the US and the University of Exeter in the UK.

The study surveyed more than 2,100 visitors to 'informal learning sites', including a zoo, an aquarium, a children's museum, a technology-themed museum and a health-themed science centre. It found that teenage educators had a positive effect on the experiences of all age groups, but the effect was most marked in children aged 9 to 11.

NC State researchers Kelly Lynn Mulvey, associate professor of psychology and Adam Hartstone-Rose, associate professor of biological sciences, led the research, which measured interest levels at the end of the visit with questions that covered topic interest and informational recall of exhibit content.

They found that levels of information retention among 9-to 11-year-olds were markedly higher when they interacted with a youth rather than an adult educator.

"We know that learning is highly social, so we expected that visitors would benefit more when they interacted with an educator," Mulvey says. "But, we were very surprised at how helpful

talking with a teen educator was – perhaps this is because a teenage educator isn't too far removed from them, age-wise. Not only can the educator present the topic on the correct level, these kids can also look up to and see themselves in the teenagers, more than in an adult who they might view as just another teacher."

The researchers were also surprised to find higher engagement levels from adults when interacting with youth educators as compared to adult educators.

"What was fascinating was not only the strong impact on child visitors, but also the higher engagement level from adults," Hartstone-Rose says. "I refer to that effect as the 'charm factor' – the idea that the adults may want to invest time to help youth succeed." Another theory was that learning from a youth educator poses less of a threat to the self-esteem of adult visitors than learning from an adult peer might.

"These results also make a compelling argument for investing in youth programmes," Hartstone-Rose says. "The bottom line is, if you visit a zoo or museum, seek these people out – you will have a better experience."

Here we speak to the researchers about their findings, and the implications for museums and attractions looking to reopen safely following the covid-19 pandemic.

More: [www.attractionsmanagement.com/docents](http://www.attractionsmanagement.com/docents)



## INTERVIEW

**Kelly Lynn Mulvey, PhD**  
Associate professor of psychology  
North Carolina State University

**What were the most surprising results from this study?**

We were very excited to learn how much of a positive impact the youth educators had on both children and adults. We expected that children would do really well with youth educators, given prior research on how well children learn from their peers, but we were surprised that the adult visitors also really benefited from interacting with them.

**How did teen docents impact engagement levels among visitors?**

Adult visitors reported that they were significantly more interested and learned more when they interacted with a teen educator than with an adult educator. Children were highly interested and felt they learned a lot whether they interacted with a youth or adult educator. Interestingly, children in middle childhood (aged 9-11 years) were able to accurately recall more information when they interacted with a youth educator than with an adult educator or with just the exhibit.

**Why do you think the teen docents had such a noticeable impact on the engagement of tweens in particular?**

We think that youth educators were able to connect well with our visitors in middle childhood. The youth educators were probably able to accurately judge what children in

Researchers found teenagers connected powerfully with teens

middle childhood already knew and what might be especially interesting to them about the exhibit. We expect that they made relevant connections with the visitors. It's also possible that children in middle childhood looked up to the youth educators and were highly motivated to learn from teens.

**Were you surprised by how much the teen docents increased engagement levels among adult visitors?**

Yes! We think it's possible that the adult visitors were especially engaged with the youth educators because they were charmed by them or were invested in wanting to help encourage the youth educators and thus spent more energy engaging with the youth educators than with adult educators.



PHOTO: NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Kelly Lynn Mulvey started her career as a school teacher

## INTERVIEW

**Adam Hartstone-Rose, PhD****Associate professor  
of biological sciences**

North Carolina State University

**What are the biggest benefits teenage docents get from volunteering?**

The docents get an enormous amount out of the teen programme experience. That's one of the things that we're still studying, but preliminarily, we think that these programmes are fantastic for their STEM engagement, and we hope that they are especially good for encouraging under-represented groups to stay in these fields. Our study hasn't made any modifications to the existing programmes – we're just studying them as is.

**What relevance does this research have as museums are dealing with the challenges of reopening safely?**

As institutions struggle, they have to make difficult decisions about prioritisation and our data suggests that these teen programmes are great value; not only are they fantastic for the teen participants, but because the teens are

such effective educators, the institutions are essentially getting twice the benefit. In other words, they get value toward their educational mission both in terms of the impact on the teens and the teens' impact on the visitors.

Adult educators are also great, but our research would suggest that these teen programmes are actually more effective at supporting museums' educational mission.

**What would you like to see come of this research?**

Our work is among the first to show quantitative evidence of the wonderful benefits of these teen programmes. As we disseminate these results, we hope that institutions realise how impactful programmes like this are and choose to start, grow and emphasise them.

By the end of the project, we hope to have evidence-based systems of 'best practices' for how to build or modify these teen programmes for maximum effectiveness toward creating and enhancing STEM interest and engagement – especially for target populations like girls and people from marginalised ethnic groups that can feel excluded from STEM fields as they progress in their educations. ●

“

***These results  
make a compelling  
argument for  
investing in youth  
programmes***

Youth docent programmes  
are of benefit to visitors  
and also to the teens

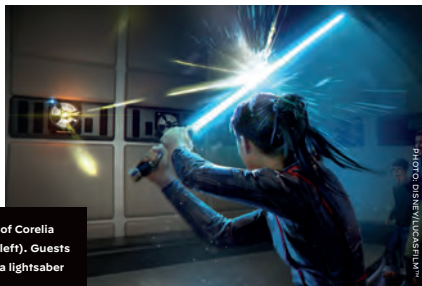


Hartstone-Rose  
worked with Mulvey  
on the research



Researchers found  
adults want to encourage  
youth educators

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ANOV FILMONOV



# REACH FOR THE STARS

**Dreamed up by fans and conceived by Disney imagineers, the *Star Wars: Galactic Starcruiser* will offer visitors the chance to live out their own *Star Wars* fantasies. Magali Robathan takes a look at what to expect**

**D**ue to open in 2022, the *Star Wars: Galactic Starcruiser* hotel will see guests become the heroes of their own *Star Wars* adventures during an immersive, two-night experience.

Their adventure will begin with a check-in at a dedicated terminal at Walt Disney World, where they'll enter a 'Launch Pod' which blasts them off into space. They'll watch the Earth getting smaller and smaller as they enter hyperspace and approach the *Halcyon* starcruiser. When the Launch Pod docks and the airlock opens, they'll enter the ship's main deck and begin their journey.

During their time on the *Starcruiser*, guests will take part in a multi-day, interactive story that will see them interacting with crew members, other passengers and *Star Wars* characters, including the starcruiser's charismatic captain, the ship's mechanic and heroes of the Resistance.

Activities will include visiting the *Starcruiser's* Bridge to learn about how to navigate its systems, learning the "ancient ways of the lightsaber" and "facing off against a training remote."

They'll be served meals in the *Crown of Corellia* Dining Room, which will offer "a lavish multi-course menu of otherworldly and familiar origins."



PHOTO: DISNEY/LUCASFILM™

A new, realistic lightsaber  
has been created by Walt  
Disney Imagineering

***“ Every window in the Halcyon  
starcruiser has an ever-changing  
view of the galaxy beyond ”***



Cabins feature  
bunks and a  
queen sized bed

PHOTO: DAVID ROARK, DISNEY

The experience will also feature a live performance “from a galactic superstar” and an excursion to the planet Batuu, “where guests can explore the winding pathways of Black Spire Outpost and seek out a hidden Resistance base.” They’ll also get the chance to visit Star Wars: Galaxy’s Edge at Disney’s Hollywood Studios.

As for the sleeping quarters, images released by Disney show a cabin with a queen-sized bed and two bunk beds, a spaceship airlock-style door and screen displays that show the Halycon spacecruiser’s journey through space (and possibly double up as televisions). ●

More: [www.attractionsmanagement.com/galactic](http://www.attractionsmanagement.com/galactic)



Crew and passengers will  
gather in the atrium, at  
the heart of the Halycon

PHOTO: DISNEY/LEICA/SPLASH

## STAR WARS Galactic Starcruiser facts

- Star Wars: Galactic Starcruiser guests will be the first to see characters such as Rey wield a brand-new, more realistic lightsaber designed by Walt Disney Imagineering Research and Development to create dramatic in-person moments previously only seen in films or shows.
- Every window in the Halycon starcruiser – including those in each cabin – has a view of the galaxy beyond, with ever-changing vistas as the ship progresses from destination to destination.
- Guests will be able to explore the starcruiser and perhaps discover hidden spaces deep in the mechanics of the ship – perfect for uncovering secrets or holding clandestine meetings.
- The Crown of Corellia Dining Room is named for Corellia, the planet known galaxy-wide for the shipyards that created not only the Halycon starcruiser, but also the famed Millennium Falcon.
- For a limited time, guests visiting Disney’s Hollywood Studios can now see a model of the Halycon starcruiser on display inside ‘Walt Disney Presents’.

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# ANIMAL MAGIC

A national study in Japan shows the potential for entertainment conservation partnerships to increase public interest in animals and boost donations to zoo conservation programmes.

Magali Robathan finds out more from ecologist Yuya Fukano

The broadcast of *Kemono Friends* (right) led to greater engagement with the animals represented at places such as Asahiyama Zoo

PHOTO © SHUTTERSTOCK/DAMIETSAI



PHOTO © KEMONO FRIENDS PICTURES COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF TOKYO

A

animated TV shows featuring animals can increase interest in real animals and lead to higher numbers of zoo visits and donations to conservation programmes, according to a study carried out in Japan by researchers at the University of Tokyo Institute for Sustainable Agro-ecosystem Services.

When an intense summer heatwave made fieldwork impossible, assistant professor Yuya Fukano from the University of Tokyo Institute teamed up with zookeeper Yosuke Tanaka and colleague Masashi Soga – an assistant professor at the University of Tokyo specialising in human-nature interactions – to carry out an office-based research project.

The team analysed data from Google Trends and Wikipedia page views to measure the impact of zoos on public interest in conservation and wildlife. They found an

increased number of internet searches for specific animal species within prefectures that have zoos caring for those animals, suggesting that visiting zoos motivates people to learn more about the species they see there.

They also spotted a dramatic increase in the number of online searches for certain animals and realised that they tallied with the first broadcast of the hugely popular animated series *Kemono Friends* which features a child who becomes lost in an enormous zoo and befriends various animals who help her navigate their habitats and try to find her way home.

In the year and a half during and following the original *Kemono Friends* broadcast, there was an increase of 4.66 million Google searches and 1 million Wikipedia page views for the species featured as characters in the programme, compared to the 18 months before it was broadcast. The researchers also found an increase in donations to three Tokyo zoos, and found that the animal species featured as characters in *Kemono Friends* attracted larger increases in donations.

We speak to Yuya Fukano to discover more about the findings overleaf.



Yuya Fukano

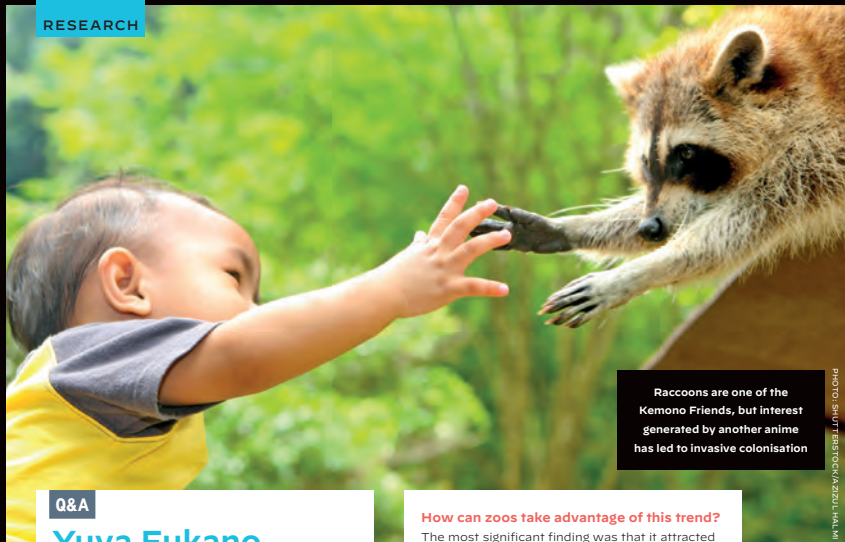


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/ARZUL HAJMI

Raccoons are one of the Kemono Friends, but interest generated by another anime has led to invasive colonisation

## Q&amp;A

## Yuya Fukano

### What prompted this research?

Anime and manga are very popular forms of entertainment in Japan and are widely enjoyed by children and adults. However, since they're often perceived as subcultures, there have been few studies that have seriously attempted to investigate their influence on the real world. We thought that because there are so many animals in anime and manga, the interest in real animals might spill over.

### You measured the impact of zoos on public interest in wildlife. What did you find?

It is not easy to measure people's interest. We estimated the dynamics of interest using a variety of indicators, including online search behaviour, donation behaviour, online questionnaires and social media activity.

We found zoo animal exhibits, collaboration with TV anime series and special events significantly increase people's interest.

### Online searches for certain animals increased dramatically when Kemono Friends was broadcast. Were you surprised?

Very surprised. The biggest reason for such significant impact, I think, is that this anime became a huge topic of conversation, not only among anime geeks but also 'ordinary' people. Another reason is the fact that the anime was produced with respect for zoos and wildlife.

### How can zoos take advantage of this trend?

The most significant finding was that it attracted people who had not previously been interested in zoos, particularly young adult males.

My co-researcher at the zoo told me, "After the anime broadcast, I saw that the number of adult male visitors increased; not only those with children. Young adult males are a demographic that's difficult for zoo PR to reach".

I believe that by working with entertainment companies in the future, zoos and conservation centres will be able to deliver important information to and get support from people who have historically been difficult to reach.

## ABOUT KEMONO FRIENDS

The manga, TV show and video game, with characters conceived by manga artist Mine Yoshizaki, is based on the idea of Japari Park, a large zoo which is home to extinct and endangered species and some legendary creatures.

In the manga (graphic novel), a 'mysterious substance' known as 'sandstar', enables many of the animals to be anthropomorphised into girls who are known as Friends. The tale follows a park keeper named Nana who looks after the Friends in Japari Park.

Animals in the park include a serval cat, a northern white faced owl, a raccoon, penguins, a red fox and a Fennec Fox as well as a giant pangolin and a giant armadillo.

**I hope the entertainment industry will try to turn people's attention to the sustainability of animals in the wild, rather than their desire to keep them as pets**

**Fukano found that clownfish poaching increased after the film *Finding Nemo***

### **Does this interest translate into behaviour that supports endangered species?**

It translates to an increase in donations. It would be nice if there were more opportunities to directly engage in conservation, such as participating in habitat conservation programmes for endangered species.

### **Would you like to see zookeepers, conservationists and entertainers working together to help support endangered animals?**

Yes, that would be wonderful. As an interesting example, Kemono Friends Projects has done a lot of collaboration with WWF. I also heard that they are allowing the use of their anime characters for free for use on information boards at zoos.

### **You carried out the study in Japan. Do you think the findings are relevant elsewhere?**

Japan may be a unique country in relation to Europe. Most adults in Japan enjoy manga, and there are many anime targeted at adults. So, it may be unique to Japan or other Asian countries that anime has such a strong influence. However, each country has its own popular subcultures and high cultures including music, sports and movies. I think that by linking with such cultural activities, zoos and conservation centres could become more effective.

### **Are there any risks? Could boosting interest in this way lead to negative outcomes for wildlife?**

There is a risk. As mentioned in our paper (Fukano et al. 2019), the film *Finding Nemo* increased poaching of the clownfish, and a Japanese anime called *Rascal the Raccoon* is thought to be responsible for the colonisation of invasive raccoons that's happening in

Japan, because the anime increased the number of people keeping raccoons as pets.

In order to prevent this happening, those involved in the entertainment industry must take advice from appropriate expert supervisors.

I hope they will try to turn people's attention to the sustainability of animals in the wild, rather than to their desire to keep them as pets and I'd like to see programmes and films featuring wild animals and plants contributing to the sustainability of wildlife and ecosystems through their entertainment.

### **You recently carried out a study assessing the impact of the debut of an endangered Japanese rock ptarmigan at a zoo on public interest in the species. What did you find?**

We showed that the debut of an endangered bird in a zoo triggered a large increase in public interest, awareness, conservation knowledge and motivation for conservation of the species, using various metrics.

This kind of quantitative data will make it easier for zoos to gain support from the general public and government.

### **What role do zoos play in protecting endangered species?**

Zoos contribute to the conservation of endangered species in a variety of ways; I still think that the role of public awareness is the most unique and important. Zoos are almost the only place where we can see endangered species.

At least in Japan, many people who come to zoos don't have a great interest in conservation – zoos are often run by the government and admission fees are very low. I believe this is a strong point, and zoos have a great potential to reach out to such people. ●

# THE WAY

After a year in which our homes have become the centre of our lives, London's 100-year-old Museum of the Home has reopened with a new look and a new purpose. Magali Robathan takes a look



A new entrance opposite Hoxton Station has been added to increase footfall

# WE LIVE





A

fter being locked down for much of the past year, the public are now being invited to learn more about the places we've been confined to, as the Museum of the Home in Hoxton, London reopens following an £18.1m redevelopment by Wright & Wright.

The 100-year-old Museum of the Home (formerly the Geffrye Museum) is housed in a group of 18th-century almshouses and gardens, and is designed to be a 'creative space to explore and debate the meaning of home' through displays of its permanent collections, exhibitions, performances, discussions, and events.

In 2011, the museum brought in David Chipperfield Architects to create more space via a proposal that involved demolishing the site's listed pub to create a new extension – locals campaigned to save the pub, the council refused planning permission and David Chipperfield's scheme did not proceed.

Ten years on, Wright & Wright's redevelopment sees the pub turned into the museum's café, and consolidates the historic buildings with new contemporary spaces, creating 80 per cent

more exhibition space and 50 per cent more public space. It also introduces a new entrance, adds two new garden pavilions and a street-facing café, and improves public access.

In the main almshouse, the architects have excavated and re-established the lower ground floor to form the new Home Galleries, which explore the concept of home over the past 400 years. The first floors have been reinstated to create a new Collections Library and Study Room, and the reception area has also been redesigned. A reconfigured circulation route gives visitors more flexibility to navigate the museum in their own way.

Two new pavilions – one with a green roof planted to increase biodiversity – provide community space for educational activities.

## UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTHS

The museum has faced controversy over the contentious statue of 17th century merchant and slave trader Robert Geffrye, the former namesake of the museum who partly funded the almshouses in which it stands. While consultation last year found that the majority of ►



PHOTO: EM FITZGERALD

An 1830s drawing room, part of Rooms Through Time (left).  
The new Home Galleries (top right)



PHOTO: EM FITZGERALD



**Sonia Solicari – DIRECTOR, MUSEUM OF THE HOME**

We hope visitors will be intrigued and inspired by the personal stories of home life which run through our new and reimagined galleries and programmes – from diverse contemporary and historical stories in the Home Galleries, to Stay Home, our rapid-response collecting project documenting home life during lockdown, and Behind the Door, our pioneering partnership with the London Homeless Collective.

In a year when many of our homes have morphed into places to work, learn and keep fit, debating, sharing and delving into ideas, feelings and personal experiences of home seems more important and relevant than ever.



PHOTO: EM FITZGERALD



PHOTO: EM FITZGERALD

The Home Galleries  
explore the idea of home



locals supported the removal of the statue from the museum's grounds, UK culture secretary Oliver Dowden demanded that it should remain.

In the end, the board of trustees decided to keep and explain the statue in its current position, with a new panel that details the history of Geffrye, including his connections to the slave trade. A statement on the museum website says that the board and museum team are continuing to review and discuss options for the statue, and that: "We will confront, challenge and learn from the uncomfortable truths of the origins of the Museum buildings, and fulfil our commitment to diversity and inclusion."

## NEW CURATORIAL APPROACH

While the previous focus was mainly on the changing design of homes, the aim now is to widen the appeal of the museum by focusing on contemporary issues, including changing family structures, homelessness and our emotional and psychological experiences of home.

The museum still features its 11 period rooms, or Rooms Through Time. A mix of contemporary and historical stories are told in the new Home Galleries via films, exhibits and interactive displays. Events currently running include a photo exhibition celebrating the resilience of single parent families and monthly online panel talks on themes including migration, foster care, social housing, family and gender.

In 2020, the museum invited the public to submit stories of their home lives during lockdown as part of the national collecting project Stay Home. The results join its Documenting Homes archive, which contains around 8,000 items. ●



## Clare Wright – ARCHITECT AND PARTNER AT WRIGHT & WRIGHT

As the poet T.S. Eliot wrote, "Home is where one starts from". The revitalised Museum of the Home will appeal to those used to exploring museums and to new and younger visitors alike.

Working with the magical, domestically scaled 18th-century buildings, we have dug down into cellars and opened up roof spaces to reveal hidden spaces, while stitching in modest extensions, linking it all into the Museum's beautifully cared for gardens, for everyone to enjoy.



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## ProSlide Innovation launches Mammoth Blast Water Coaster

ProSlide Technology Inc. has broken new ground at the expansion of Atlantis Aquaventure in Dubai with its latest innovation, the Mammoth Blast Water Coaster.

This revolutionary design combines ProSlide's water coaster BLAST technology with the world of rafting for an experience that ProSlide promises will, "Change the landscape of family water rides and entertainment completely." The new Water Coaster will also be unveiled at Aquashow in Quarteira, Portugal later in 2021.

"Innovation is in our DNA and the new Mammoth Blast Water Coaster represents the pinnacle of our innovative technology," said ProSlide chief commercial officer Ray Smegal.

"This combination of vision and design makes the Mammoth Blast a true family water coaster.

It raises the bar by bringing together speed and power into one thrilling shared experience.

"We're excited to work with our clients around the world to bring this game-changing water ride to their parks for the ultimate family water coaster experience."

ProSlide's Mammoth Blast Water Coaster combines the face-to-face rafting experience of the company's original Mammoth water ride with the water coaster's speed, powered by patented water propulsion from their high-performance Blast water jets. For a truly high-performance experience, this necessitated the creation of

a brand-new piece of technology built specifically for the Mammoth Blast – the 5-person low centre of-gravity raft. According to ProSlide, the new design delivers, "25 per cent more throughput than was previously possible and allows for a wider range of rider configurations – meaning the vehicle can seat anywhere from 2-5 riders – and includes cushioned seats and a lower centre of gravity for a more comfortable experience.

"This increased versatility of capacity, along with all its other features and innovations, contributes to making Mammoth Blast a flexible anchor attraction that sets a new bar for family water rides," said Smegal.

Ray Smegal

[attractions-kit.net](http://attractions-kit.net) keyword  
ProSlide

## New Glorious Orient theme park showcases Vekoma's fighter jet coaster

Vekoma Rides' next generation Fighter Jet rollercoaster is showcased at Fantawild Group's newly opened Glorious Orient theme park in Ganzhou, China.

Themed around an aircraft carrier take-off, the coaster features four fighter jet trains with a maximum of eight passengers per train, and can reach a top speed of 97 kilometres per hour.

The ride starts when a beautiful day on the majestic aircraft carrier is disrupted by an emergency radio call: "code red, harbour breached! Scramble fighters".

Following a 'power launch' that reaches speeds of 97 kilometres per hour in just three seconds, riders experience several 'duelling train effects,' five 'breath-taking airtime moments' and four inversions.

The concept for the Fighter Jet coaster was created by the Fantawild design team, who presented the idea of an aircraft carrier launch type experience and asked Vekoma

if they could design something that would simulate the flight of a fighter jet being launched from a carrier. Vekoma designers tried to include as many direction changes and force changes as possible to simulate a 'dog fight' – two fighter jets battling in the sky.

[attractions-kit keyword](#)

**Vekoma**

PHOTO: VEKOMA RIDES

Vekoma Rides' new coaster has now launched

## Kraftwerk Living Technologies launches immersive concept with climate message

AV systems integrator Kraftwerk Living Technologies (KLT) has launched a new media-based educational attraction, Sun Dark, a story that explores the effects of climate change on the future life of the planet.

Based on a story by Fractal Picture, the attraction is presented by KLT as a patented turnkey concept.

The story is set in the year 2100, where the climate crisis has affected all our lives on planet Earth. A queue line and pre-show sets the scene, before the audience enters what appears to be a unique themed theatre space.

"From the first moment to the last, the audience is immersed in the story through complex motion, massive visuals and explosive sound," said



**Kevin Murphy**

Kraftwerk's director of sales and marketing Kevin Murphy. "As the attraction has been developed from the ground up, the team has had the advantage of tailoring each technical element to suit the stunning storyline, taking guests on a journey like no other they have experienced before.

"Sun Dark comprises a complete package. Building on more than 28 years of technical excellence in the global attractions market, KLT

is able to deliver a truly innovative experience that is simple to operate and with a high throughput. Thrilling for all audience age groups and using fun, educational and inspiring storytelling, Sun Dark delivers a strong and clear message about our need to work together globally, using the power of innovation to ensure a sustainable future for all." ●

[attractions-kit keyword](#)

**Kraftwerk**

PHOTO: KRAFTWERK LIVING TECHNOLOGIES / FRACTAL PICTURE

The attraction explores the issue of climate change

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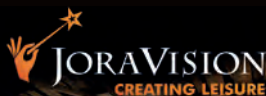
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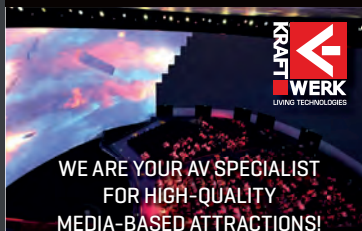
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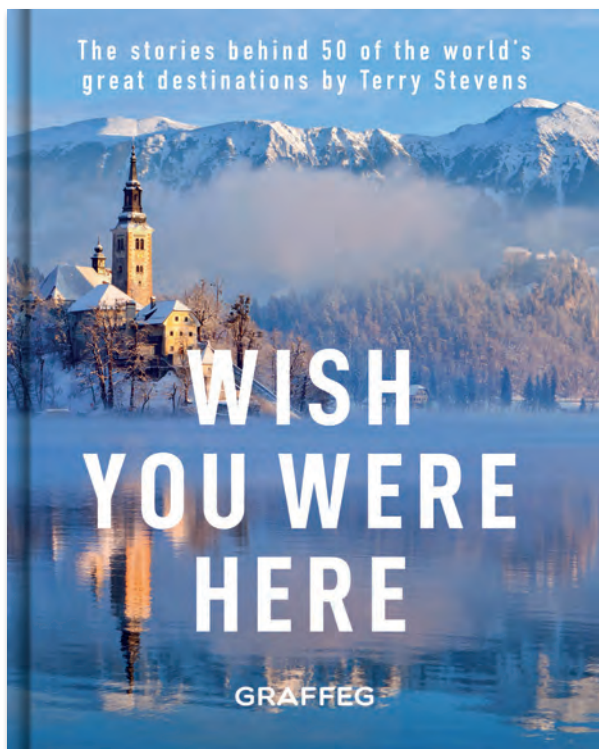
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