

Attractions

MANAGEMENT

@attractionsmag

VOL 27 ISSUE 1

Esther Dugdale

On the challenges
of the Burrell
Collection
redesign
p40

Vince Kadlubek

Invest in the
artists
p68

Forrec's Cale Heit

"This is an
amazing
growth period
for attractions"
p82



New museums

A round-up of
what's to come
p52

IAAPA's Jakob Wahl

Leading the
industry
out of the
pandemic *p10*

JOE PINE

On the power of experience platforms *p78*



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Suspended Thrill Coaster 'Hals-über-Kopf'
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Supersensory

It's no longer enough to focus on the 'Big Five' senses if you want to fully connect with visitors. Why not engage the senses of danger, balance or justice to create experiences that truly resonate?



As we emerge from the pandemic, pent up demand is seeing people hungry for the adventures they've been missing out on. Memorable experiences are all about triggering sensations, and that's something the attractions industry has always excelled at, but could we be doing even more?

Museums and attractions have long described themselves as multi-sensory as a result of including exhibits and interactives that appeal to visitors' core senses of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste.

However, today, we have far more scientific insight into how we can engage a fuller range of senses and there's an opportunity to use this knowledge to engage visitors in more profound, unusual and creative ways.

In a fascinating interview on page 32, Roto founder, Joseph Wisne, argues it's time for us to move beyond the sensory to develop 'supersensory' experiences that stimulate the full range of senses in all their depth and diversity.

We know humans have far more than the five 'basic' senses we were taught about at school. We can now add a sense of danger or pain, and more complex 'senses', such as a sense of humour, justice or empathy to the list. All these can be used to tell powerful stories.

We can also use the science of 'peak experience' to play with the sense of time and make an experience feel longer than it really is, or get creative and use the senses of proprioception or balance to 'wake up' visitors.

This knowledge is being used by pioneers to create richer and more memorable experiences.

One of the most memorable experiences I've had was Punchdrunk's *Masque of the Red Death*, in which the audience dressed up, the



Tomas Saraceno's sensory installation at The Shed, NYC, page 32

PHOTO: PHOTO NICOLAS KNIGHT

“Spaces designed to disorientate or unbalance can force us to connect”

entire Victorian theatre was transformed and the live music, food and drinks were all part of the experience. We could touch the props, see and smell smoke – we were taken on a journey where we felt curious, excited and at times downright uneasy. The fact I shared the experience with friends only deepened its impact.

The success of attractions such as Superblue Miami, the Van Gogh Immersive Experiences and Meow Wolf and teamLab's art-based attractions show people's desire to feel fully engaged and stimulated. Static attractions and museums can learn from this to get supersensory and deepen visitors' connection with what they're experiencing.

Magali Robathan, editor



Joe Pine sees
power in experience
platforms

78

PHOTO: ROD EVANS



The next generation
takes on Drusillas

18

PHOTO: DRUSILLAS ZOO PARK



The Wave is rolling
out surf parks

72

PHOTO: MACECABIN

05 Editor's Letter

With our growing insight into how to engage visitors' more complex senses, it's time for a new approach, says Magali Robathan

10 People: Jakob Wahl

IAAPA's new executive VP and COO shares his plans

14 People: Philippe Chiwy

De Pinxi's founder on Choco-Story Bruges and the SpaceBakery project

18 People: Cassie Poland and Ollie Smith

On taking over the attraction they grew up in – Drusillas

22 News

The top news stories from the Attractions Management news feed

32 Joseph Wisne

Truly ambitious attractions providers need to push the boundaries of immersive design by engaging visitors' senses of pain, danger, balance, justice and more, argues Roto's CEO

40 Esther Dugdale

As the Burrell Collection relaunches and Eden Qingdao takes shape, Event's creative director shares her tips for creating experiences that spark joy and curiosity

48 Room to grow

Could the space age, ultra flexible design of the new Taipei Performing Arts Center provide a model for future attractions spaces?

52 Ones to watch

From an AI museum built by robots to the long-awaited Grand Egyptian Museum, we take a look at some exciting 2022 openings

62 Slavery links

As demand for growing honesty in relation to links to slavery and colonialism grows, should attractions be open about their history? Jon Young investigates



Jakob Wahl on
IAAPA's plans

PHOTO: IAAPA

Attractions
should harness
the power of art



68

PHOTO: KATE INTELLE, COURTESY OF HOWE WOLF



John Wick at
Motiongate Dubai

82

PHOTO: COURTESY OF FORREX/MOTIONGATE



Taipei Performing
Arts Center

48

PHOTO: SHENHONG CO. PHOTOGRAPHY, COURTESY OF OMA

68 Vince Kadlubek

Art engages and delights visitors. Kadlubek argues that attractions should embrace and support artists and look for shared initiatives

72 Waves of change

As The Wave inland surf lake announces plans to open six more sites, we go along for a surf and a sit down with CEO Craig Stoddard

78 Joe Pine

Experience platforms represent one of the biggest growth opportunities in today's experience economy, argues Joe Pine. Here's how to get them right

82 Cale Heit

With new themed coasters open at Motiongate Dubai and some intriguing projects underway, Forrec is making the most of the pent up demand for shared experiences. CEO Cale Heit tells us more

86 Product innovation

From Merlin's new deal with Attractions.io to the US waterparks teaming up with Accesso, we take a look at some of the exciting new product launches from across the attractions industry

90 AM Directory

Companies supporting the industry

32



Joseph Wisne, CEO, Roto

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ROTO



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Wahl leads the operation
of IAAPA's regional offices,
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Attractions People



**The global pandemic hit us
all hard, and we're not over
this rollercoaster ride yet**

Jakob Wahl Executive VP and COO, IAAPA

Jakob Wahl has taken over as executive VP and chief operating officer of global attractions industry body IAAPA.

In the new role, Wahl will oversee the regional operations of the global association.

He reports directly to CEO Hal McEvoy – who has announced he will be retiring on 1 April 2023 – and leads the operation of IAAPA's regional offices, global sales, three global Expos, and additional member events around the world. Wahl will also oversee the hiring and onboarding of a new vice president and executive director for IAAPA EMEA.

Wahl first worked at IAAPA as a programme manager, serving the association for four years in IAAPA's office in Brussels.

He left IAAPA to work at the Europa-Park theme park in Rust, Germany, before returning to the organisation in 2017 as VP and executive director of IAAPA Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA).

Here Wahl tells *Attractions Management* about his plans for IAAPA and the future for the industry.

What do you see as the biggest challenges facing IAAPA members right now?

The global pandemic hit us all very hard and we're still moving through it. This rollercoaster ride is not over. Despite all the resulting challenges, we've still seen the global industry come together and grow in new ways – more than ever before. I think our industry still has a solid foundation and our members have learned a great deal the last 24 months. We truly have a bright future.

What's the most exciting development you see in the market at the moment and why?

The degree of innovation our members have achieved has been astounding. Attractions have pushed for a boost in digitalisation, and I'm amazed by the ongoing trend of social gamification: if you look at the expansion of the Aquaventure Waterpark in Dubai, every attraction has some kind of racing or social component to it. Finally, the staycation effect has led to an increased demand for regional parks.



Veerit Cloude

IAAPA has been lobbying for more government support. How is this going?

When the pandemic hit, IAAPA gathered a group of global experts to develop a guidance document on how to operate attractions safely during Covid – that was very well received and helped to build trust in the expertise of our industry. Across the world, we also met with government officials and worked with many national associations to lobby for stronger support, which ultimately was successful in many countries. Government relations work is often underestimated but is of extreme importance for our industry.

What new initiatives are you planning?

Along with everyone in the industry, we've noticed the hurdles of international travel; this is why we try to increase our offer regionally with more gatherings for the local attractions industry. We also further invest into our digital offerings on mobile and web platforms and more digital content available from the Expos.

Do you expect the war in Ukraine to impact the industry?

This tragic conflict has been a huge hit for everyone. We're impressed by many of our members stepping up, helping to support the victims of this horrible conflict. We've helped one of our members who still produces in Ukraine to share their message and also helped another member from Ukraine to find a new position in this industry. Indirectly, all of us feel the impact of this war through higher energy prices. For our members that means that operational costs increase, but also for their customers, the cost to travel to an attraction increases and may keep the public closer to home.

PHOTO: WATERWORLDCEANPARKSK



How can attractions reduce their energy bills and become more sustainable?

Sustainability is a huge topic. We see this looking at the interest of all major players in this industry to play an active role within our IAAPA Sustainability Committee.

This group has also led the way in running monthly webinars and live chats on this important topic and we're looking forward to hosting the second edition of the IAAPA Expo Europe Sustainability Day at this year's Expo in London in September, where we will highlight some of the leaders in all different aspects of sustainability.

Our members are taking a leadership position towards being good stewards of the environment.



We're helping members educate their communities, governments and stakeholders about the importance of our industry

Founded in 1918, IAAPA represents industry attractions and suppliers

How do you balance the needs of all the different kinds of attractions that are members of IAAPA?

I actually think that there isn't anything to balance as it's in all our interest to promote the industry and develop all aspects of our business.

We are fortunate to have the true pleasure of sitting around a table and having everyone sharing their learnings with each other – even those who you might consider to be competitors. That's a big part of what makes the attractions industry so very special.

What's your personal favourite attraction?

That's a difficult question: a lot depends on the mood, the company and the season. I do love some of the all-time favourites: Indiana Jones in Disneyland Anaheim and Spiderman at Islands of Adventure as dark rides or Boulder Dash at Lake Compounce, Lisebergbanan in Liseberg. But a good show like La Perle in Dubai or a fun evening with colleagues at Puttshack is equally as fun. The Wild River at Rulantica or Aquaventure at Atlantis Dubai with my daughters. And the Adventure Course at Faarup Sommerland... I could go on forever! ●

“ Visitors ‘fly’ to Mars on-board a digital planetarium, choose an astronaut suit and explore the planet. They then devote themselves to the job of making bread on Mars

Philippe Chiwy general manager, de pinxi



The SpaceBakery project for Puratos allows visitors to learn about baking on Mars



The Choco-Story Bruges chocolate museum has reopened after a major renovation



PHOTO: CHOCO-STORY BRUGES

Launched in 1991, de pinxi creates interactive experiences across culture, tourism, education and leisure. As the Belgium-based company celebrates 30 years in the business, general manager Philippe Chiwy talks to *Attractions Management* about some intriguing projects.

How was your anniversary year?

2021 was our 30th anniversary and it was a good year filled with nice work. Last year saw de pinxi involved with three major projects: A chocolate museum renovation in Bruges, Belgium; the development of an experience to highlight research into the possibilities of baking on Mars; and the creation of a new wine museum in Colmar, France.

Choco-Story Bruges reopened last year after a complete renovation by de pinxi, with immersive décor, interconnected media, amazing displays and interactive games.

What can you tell us about the wine museum you're working on?

The Wine Museum Colmar will focus on the local wines of Alsace, and will offer a unique visitor experience, combining a rich collection with immersive media and décor, and will be aimed at families.

This will be an entertaining and educational experience – it's due to open this autumn, and we're excited about showing off our work.

For this project, we've carried out the research and development of the content and media experience, which includes information about local wines, their history and the process of producing them since Roman times. We're now developing



PHOTO: CHOCO-STORY BRUGES

Choco-Story Bruges reopened last year after a complete renovation by de pinxi, with immersive décor, interconnected media, amazing displays and interactive games

the media experience – the museum will feature various immersive video-mapping zones and interconnected games to support the theme of each room. The games are connected to the process of producing wine or to the tradition of the region.

We're also developing historical reconstitutions for the museum and for this de pinxi is creating the content (video, special effects, animation, computer graphics and programming) as well as customised interfaces and electronics to match the storytelling.

A sneak preview example is the game of 'organising the barrels' – visitors will have two minutes to store a barrel in a very crowded wine cellar.



You worked with Puratos on the SpaceBakery project. What did that involve?

This was a really interesting project we worked on with the baking industry food manufacturer Puratos.

In order to support ongoing innovation efforts, Puratos has launched the SpaceBakery research programme with the ultimate objective of being able to produce bread on Mars. To achieve this, the entire production chain is taken into consideration, from the cultivation of grain in a hostile environment to the baking of the bread by the future inhabitants of the red planet.

de pinxi was brought on board to try and explain the research programme to visitors (international customers and Puratos employees), and has devised an immersive experience that transports the visitor to the planet Mars, and gives them a taste of the adventure that may be in store for future pioneers.

The experience allows visitors to 'fly' to Mars on-board a digital planetarium, choose an astronaut suit and VR helmet to explore the planet. They can then devote themselves to the job of making bread on Mars, while learning about Martian resource subjects

The entire production chain is taken into consideration, from the cultivation of grain in a hostile environment to the baking of the bread by the future inhabitants of the red planet

– the jobs involved in the making of bread and the energy values of the food are presented in explanatory multimedia formats and interactive challenges.

de pinxi has designed and produced the media, the programmes, the engineering and the installation of the visitors' Martian experience by Puratos. We're very proud of having set up a digital dome infrastructure and show from scratch, after being part of the very first digital dome in the world back in 2000 (New York's Hayden Planetarium). ●



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Siblings Cassie Poland and Ollie Smith have taken over the running of Drusillas



PHOTO: DRUSILLAS ZOO PARK

Cassie and Ollie enjoyed a childhood at the park



We spent our childhood here

Cassie Poland and Ollie Smith
Joint managing directors,
Drusillas, Sussex, UK

Brother and sister team Cassie Poland and Ollie Smith have taken charge at Drusillas Park in Sussex, UK, after a childhood spent toddling around the theme park owned by their parents.

Smith and Poland have been appointed joint managing directors at Drusillas, which was acquired by their parents Laurence and Christine Smith in 1997. Cassie Poland started her career at Drusillas in the retail and warehouse team, then spent time in the education department, before heading up the marketing department for six years. When Christine Smith retired in December 2018, Poland assumed the role of joint deputy managing director.

“

I feel privileged to be doing a job I love and am thankful I get to work closely with my family



Laurence and Christine Smith have now stepped down as managing directors

PHOTO: DRUSILLAS ZOO PARK

"I feel privileged to be doing a job I love and am thankful I get to work closely with my family," said Poland. "I've worked across many departments within the park and feel that's given me a fantastic understanding of the business. I'm very excited about the future of Drusillas and will continue to work hard to ensure it remains a place where families can create magical fun-filled memories together."

Ollie Smith first joined the team in 2009, working in the zoo, before joining the Playland team in 2010, returning from university to run the marketing department as maternity cover, and taking up directorship in 2020.

"It's been fantastic to return to the park where I spent my childhood," said Smith. "We have some very exciting plans in the pipeline."

Resigning from his role as managing director, Laurence Smith said: "Since we reopened in May 2021, Cassie and Ollie have effectively been running Drusillas. My role has deliberately changed, and the next step is for me to give myself a new title of chair. They've done a great job in difficult circumstances over the last year. I'll still be working on a part time basis – I don't want the gold watch quite yet!"

Recent developments at Drusillas include the opening of sensory attraction Spark, renovation of the park's under fives' play area, migration to a new ticketing system, a new naturalistic animal enclosure, and the upcoming opening of The Rainforest Adventure attraction. ●



Drusillas' attractions are aimed at children aged between 2 and 10

PHOTO: DRUSILLAS ZOO PARK



Rides include the Rainforest Carousel, Flying Cheetahs and Hippopotobus (pictured)



Drusillas Park offers a range of 'Animal Close Encounter Experiences'

SOUTH KOREA

Legoland Korea opens on Children's Day

Merlin Entertainments has launched Legoland Korea Resort, the country's first global theme park, on Children's Day (5 May) in Chuncheon.

Construction work on the park was completed in March 2022 – to mark the occasion, Merlin hosted a commemorative ceremony during which a giant symbolic key made of Lego bricks was delivered to the park's operating team, marking the official handover of the attraction.

The 28,000sq m Legoland Korea Resort is the first Legoland to be built on an island and features 40 rides and attractions, as well as a 154-room Legoland Hotel.

In total, the new park features seven themed areas: Brick Street, Bricktopia, Lego Castle, Lego Ninjago World, Pirates Shore, Lego City, and Miniland.

Located on Jungdo island, the resort is the world's 10th Legoland park.

At the commemorative ceremony in March, Nick Varney, Merlin Entertainments, said: "It brings me immense joy to host today's Key Handover Ceremony and to meet in person everyone who has helped us in this endeavour as well as share our hopes and expectations for the future."

More: http://lei.sr/4Q8K2_T



PHOTO: MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS



PHOTO: MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS

“
It brings me joy to
share our hopes and
expectations of the future
Nick Varney

GLOBAL

Tait to acquire Thinkwell – becomes end-to-end developer



PHOTO: THINKWELL GROUP

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

Engineering group TAIT has announced plans to acquire Thinkwell Group, the global experience design and production agency.

Thinkwell specialises in the masterplanning, design and production of guest experiences for theme parks, museums and brands and the company's portfolio of clients includes Warner Bros., Universal Studios, Google, Lionsgate, Smithsonian Institution and Cirque du Soleil.

The company will now become part of the TAIT Group, a live entertainment industry specialist which

operates in a number of markets – including theme parks, theatres, cruise ships, concerts, and corporate events. Acquiring Thinkwell is part of TAIT's strategy to position itself as the “most comprehensive end-to-end developer of entertainment and experiences.”

Joe Zenas, Thinkwell CEO, said: “For decades, our teams have created engaging and dynamic experiences around the world. The combination of project portfolio with TAIT's ambitious vision is a natural progression to expand our global footprint.”

More: http://lei.sr/y2a3D_T



PHOTO: TAIT

GERMANY

Europa-Park houses 70 Ukrainian refugees at hotel

German theme park Europa-Park is helping those fleeing Ukraine due to the war by housing a group of refugees at the park.

To help local relief agencies and to assist in the humanitarian aid efforts, the park – located in Rust, south-western Germany – has taken in 70 people who were forced to leave their homes at its luxurious Colosseo hotel.

Most of the refugees housed at the hotel are families – women, children and the elderly.

Speaking to the local press, Roland Mack, the head of the Mack family which owns Europa-Park, said: “These people had been on the run for eight days when they

arrived in Germany, without a bed or a hot meal.

“They are traumatised, uprooted and don’t know what will become of them.

“They were carrying everything they owned in plastic bags.”

As many of the refugees are children and families, Europa-Park also opened some of its rides for the guests to use.

At the time, Europa-Park was shut for the winter season. It has now reopened to the general public.

The 70 refugees will eventually be moved to more suitable long-term accommodation with support from Europa Park.

More: http://lei.sr/B9W6E_T



The refugees are housed in the Colosseo Hotel

PHOTO: EUROPA-PARK



PHOTO: EUROPA-PARK

“

These people had been on the run for eight days when they arrived

Roland Mack

COUNTRY

Motiongate launches first-ever John Wick rollercoaster

“

The ride will be the fastest spinning coaster using single cars. In addition, the coaster will have an absolutely special element - the Non-Inverting Loop, patented by Maurer

Maurer Rides

Motiongate Dubai in the UAE has launched two new rides.

The openings include the world's first rollercoaster using the IP of the Keanu Reeves-starred action-thriller franchise, *John Wick*, and another called *Now You See Me: High Roller*.

Both rides are located at the movie-themed park's Lionsgate Zone.

John Wick: Open Contract is a 4D Free Spin Coaster from ride specialist S&S. The 310m ride has a high point of 36m and reaches speeds of 70km/h.

The *Now You See Me: High Roller* is a 519m spinning coaster from Maurer Rides – created in partnership with



The ride will be located in the park's Lionsgate Zone

PHOTO: MOTIONGATE

design studios Forrec and DEC – it will have a top speed of 70km/h, a ride time of 103 seconds and six cars.

Maurer Rides said: “Now You See Me: High Roller will be the fastest spinning coaster using single cars. In addition, the coaster will have an absolutely special element – the Non-Inverting

Loop, patented by Maurer.”

First opened in 2016, Motiongate is a Hollywood-inspired theme park located in Dubai Parks and Resorts, showcasing themed areas and attractions.

For more see *Cale Heit*, Forrec interview on p82.

More: http://lei.sr/b5k5E_T

UK

Merlin acquires Cadbury World from Mondelez

Merlin Entertainments has acquired the operations and brand licenses for Cadbury World, the popular chocolate-themed visitor attraction in Birmingham, UK.

Opened in 1990, Cadbury World attracts more than 600,000 people each year and offers visitors the opportunity to learn about the Cadbury chocolate brand and its heritage and history.

As part of the agreement, Merlin will take over the day-to-day running of the Cadbury World site, its employees, and all operational decisions, as well as holding brand usage rights for Cadbury World in the UK.

Louise Stigant, UK managing director at

Mondelez International, said of the acquisition: "Cadbury World is a truly unique experience.

"We want to build on the strong foundations we've laid so that people can continue to enjoy Cadbury World for generations to come.

"As we approach Cadbury's 200th anniversary, I'm really excited by this partnership. By working with Merlin Entertainments, we will be able to bring the history and heritage of the Cadbury brand and the joy of chocolate to more and more people.

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

More: http://lei.sr/p6h5t_T



Merlin will take over the day-to-day running of the attraction



PHOTO: MONDELEZ INTERNATIONAL

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

US

Iron Gwazi, world's fastest hybrid coaster, opens to public

“
Iron Gwazi has been highly anticipated since we first announced this new legend
Neal Thurman

Busch Gardens theme park in Tampa, Florida, US has opened the world's fastest and steepest hybrid coaster.

Iron Gwazi, manufactured by Rocky Mountain Construction, is a wood and steel hybrid coaster that is also the tallest of its kind in North America.

Iron Gwazi plunges riders from a 206ft-tall peak into a 91-degree drop and reaches top speeds of 76mph.

Riders on the crocodile-inspired ride experience a dozen "airtime" moments, including three inversions.

The ride is the reincarnation of the former wooden

rollercoaster, Gwazi, which opened in 1999 and closed permanently in 2015.

Rollercoaster enthusiasts are already describing the new ride – which combines the nostalgia of a wooden coaster with technical innovations enabled by its steel coaster elements – as the “best

rollercoaster in the world”.

“Iron Gwazi has been highly anticipated by rollercoaster enthusiasts around the world since we first announced this new legend,” said Neal Thurman, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay Park President.

More: http://lei.sr/9f7j3_T



The ride was created by Rocky Mountain Construction

PHOTO: BUSCH GARDENS

US

Disney opens groundbreaking Galactic Starcruiser

Disney has opened its long-awaited *Star Wars*-themed Galactic Starcruiser resort.

The ambitious new attraction at the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, US, is a combination of a luxury hotel, interactive theatre, theme park ride and immersive role-playing game – with ‘food as entertainment’ also in the mix.

Galactic Starcruiser – an experience that can cost nearly US\$6,000 for a family of four – offers accommodation in hotel ‘pods’, which are part of a new generation of ultra-deep immersion experience into the *Star Wars* universe.

Each guest will become the hero of their own

adventure during a two-day, two-night stay.

Guests arrive and depart together at the Galactic Starcruiser Terminal, resembling a small, private cruise terminal.

They’re then directed into a ‘launchpad’ and blasted into space, where they arrive at the Halcyon for the two-day, immersive stay.

Guests sleep in ship-like cabins, experience onboard dining and interact with role-playing cast and crew members.

Windows in the cabins offer ever-changing views of the galaxy as the ship progresses through space.

The attraction will offer each guest a unique experience, as



Immersive roleplaying combines with a hotel stay

PHOTO: DISNEY/CLARK ARMS

the choices they make during the two-day stay will affect the exact nature of their journey.

“This is a *Star Wars* vacation experience unlike anything Disney has ever created,” said Jeremy Schoofield, from Walt Disney World Resort PR.

“*Star Wars*: Galactic Starcruiser offers a two-night itinerary where all guests become the heroes of their own *Star Wars* story in a new type of immersive experience.”

More: http://lei.sr/G2Z3J_T

US

First stand-alone Peppa Pig Theme Park opens in Florida

The world’s first stand-alone Peppa Pig Theme Park has opened at the Legoland Florida Resort in Florida, US.

The attraction is part of Merlin Entertainments’ growing portfolio in Orlando and features multiple rides, interactive attractions, themed play-scapes and water play areas and daily live shows.

The separately ticketed park’s theming is based on the instantly recognisable locations from the Peppa Pig universe.

Rides and attractions include Muddy Puddles Splash Pad, Peppa Pig’s Balloon Ride, Peppa’s Pedal

Bike Tour, George’s Fort and Rebecca Rabbit’s Playground.

There is also a large pirate-themed sand play area and Madame Gazelle’s Nature Trail, allowing guests to explore local wildlife.

At the heart of the park is the main ride – Daddy Pig’s Roller Coaster.

Designed by Zamperla, the steel ride has a single train with 11 cars and riders are arranged in pairs for a total of 22 riders.

In total, there will be six rides across the park, a number of playground areas, restaurants and food stalls and retail areas.



The park's main ride is Daddy Pig's Roller Coaster

PHOTO: MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS

There will also be a dedicated venue for shows and entertainment – called Mr. Potato’s Showtime Arena – and indoor cinema space.

The opening is part of Merlin’s partnership with US-based, global toy and entertainment giant Hasbro, which owns the IP for Peppa Pig. Hasbro acquired

the rights in 2019, when it acquired Entertainment One for around US\$4bn.

Merlin has an exclusive multi-territory licensing agreement with Hasbro to build and operate the Peppa Pig attractions, targeted at the pre-school market.

More: http://lei.sr/c6E6N_T

ITALY

Sony deal will see Jumanji attractions at Merlin sites

Merlin Entertainments has signed a deal with Sony Pictures to develop rides and experiences based on the popular Jumanji film franchise.

The multi-territory exclusivity agreement will see a number of Jumanji-themed attractions, rides, lands, retail outlets and hotel rooms being developed across Merlin's resort parks and waterparks in Europe (including the UK) and North America.

The first Jumanji experience to be launched as part of the agreement will be the world's first Jumanji ride at Merlin's Gardaland Resort in Italy.

A second Jumanji experience is also in

development at a different theme park for a 2023 launch – although no details have been announced.

For the Gardaland ride, Merlin is teaming up with ride technology specialist Oceaneering and Framestore, an immersive experience company.

Mark Fisher, chief development officer for Merlin Entertainments, said: "The team is already hard at work developing brilliant creative concepts, which will bring to life the blockbuster-famous Jumanji film across our theme parks and waterparks."

More: http://lei.sr/q9D2K_T



PHOTO: MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS

The first Jumanji experience will open at Gardaland

PHOTO: MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS



“

The team is already hard at work developing creative concepts

Mark Fisher

COUNTRY

UK's Eden Project North gets planning permission

“

The attraction will focus on reimagining health and wellbeing, wonder and entertainment within its core venues.

Eden Project

Plans to create a new Eden Project North attraction in Morecambe UK have been given the green light by planners.

Lancaster City Council approved the £125m proposals which include three shell-shaped pavilions designed by Grimshaw Architects.

The development of the project will be dependent on securing a slice of government funding and in October 2021, UK prime minister Boris Johnson indicated that he and his government were behind the project. Eden Project North will combine indoor



PHOTO: EDEN PROJECT

The attraction will combine indoor and outdoor experiences

and outdoor experiences, connecting people with the natural environment of Morecambe Bay while also enhancing wellbeing.

Eden Project said: "The attraction will focus on reimagining health and wellbeing, wonder and entertainment within its core venues.

"It brings together three elements. 'Above the Bay' is an environment filled with plants and art exhibits, showcasing natural abundance and the rhythms of life linked to the sun."

See interview with David Harland: <http://lei.sr/w6Q9J>

More: http://lei.sr/h8q9R_T

UK

£73m Guinness visitor attraction for London

Brewing giant Diageo has revealed plans to create a Guinness-themed cultural hub and microbrewery in London, UK, with design by London-based agency, Hot Pickle.

Called Guinness at Old Brewer's Yard, the visitor attraction is set to open in London's Covent Garden in autumn 2023.

Located on a historic brewing site – the Old Brewer's Yard was the site of beer brewing as far back as 1722 – the £73m development builds on the success of the Guinness Storehouse in Dublin, Ireland.

Covering 50,000sq ft, the venue will feature a microbrewery producing limited-edition beers and

offering guests tours with Guinness beer specialists to taste and learn about the iconic stout, its storied history and the company's ambitions for the brand.

A Guinness store will sell rare items via collaborations and partnerships that are bespoke to the London experience. There will also be a restaurant with an open-fire kitchen and 360-degrees glass rooftop space.

Dayalan Nayager, MD of Diageo Great Britain, said: "This project demonstrates our confidence in the UK as a go-to destination for tourists and our commitment to the hospitality sector."

More: http://lei.sr/k9E4X_T



The visitor attraction is set to open in 2023



PHOTO: PORTMAN GROUP

“
This project
demonstrates our
confidence in the UK
Dayalan Nayager

THE NETHERLANDS

Fabrique des Lumières opens in Amsterdam



PHOTO: CULTURESACES

“
We are pleased to create
this new experience for
the city of Amsterdam
Bruno Monnier

Paris' Atelier des Lumières creator Culturespaces has opened its new digital art centre, Fabrique des Lumières, in Amsterdam.

Located in the historic former gas plant of Westergasfabriek – built in 1885 by the Imperial Continental Gas Association – the cultural attraction uses “cutting-edge technology” to create immersive exhibitions devoted to some of the most celebrated figures in art history.

The venue has a total surface area of 2,800sq m and its exhibitions have been designed to complement the



Exhibitions complement the site's architecture

unique architecture of the site, with its 17m-high walls.

In addition to immersive exhibitions that focus on classical and modern artists, an area of the digital art centre is also devoted to the exhibition of contemporary art.

Bruno Monnier, president of Culturespaces, said:

“Following the creation of our digital art centres in France, we are pleased to create this new one for the City of Amsterdam. The Fabrique des Lumières offers visitors to the Netherlands an unforgettable immersive and sensorial artistic experience.”

More: http://lei.sr/U5w9r_T

PHOTO: CULTURESACES

SOUTH KOREA

Seoul's Incheon airport to host global museum

South Korea's largest airport could host an international museum as early as 2024.

According to local media, the Incheon International Airport Corp (IIAC) – which operates the Incheon Airport – is launching a feasibility study into how best to accommodate a satellite site for a recognised museum "brand" at the site, such as Louvre or Guggenheim.

Speaking to local newspaper *The Korea Herald*, an official from IIAC said the company was looking at two options for hosting the attraction.

The plan is for either a large, landmark complex at Incheon's Terminal 1, or a smaller site in Terminal 2.

It will be the second museum at Incheon Airport – it already hosts the Museum of Korean Culture.

The museum plans are part of the IIAC's vision to develop Incheon into the world's best airport and a "global mega-hub".

Its development strategy includes three core points – to "Connect Lives, Connect Cultures and Connect the Future".

Incheon is already one of the largest and busiest airports in the world. In 2019, it served more than 71 million passengers.

In addition to the terminals, the airport facilities include a golf course, spa, private sleeping rooms, an ice



The airport already hosts the Museum of Korean Culture

skating rink, a casino, indoor gardens and a video game centre.

Incheon International Airport is located west of Incheon's city centre, on an artificially created piece of land between Yeongjong

and Yongyu Islands. The airport was named the winner of World's Best Transit Airport in 2020 and Terminal 2 World's Best Airport Terminal in 2020.

More: http://lei.sr/55w5b_T

UAE

Dubai Expo attracts more than 24 million visitors



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The first ever expo to be held in an Arab country featured nearly 200 exhibitors

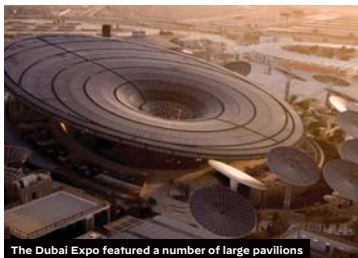
Reem Al Hashim

Expo 2020 director general

The number of visitors to Dubai's Expo 2020 passed 24 million visitors, with 30.3 per cent being international, thanks partly to a late surge in people visiting.

Expo 2020, which was, originally scheduled for 2020 but had to be moved due to the pandemic, was the largest major global event to be held since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The first-ever expo to be held in an Arab country featured nearly 200 exhibitors in an exhibition ground covering more than 4sq km (1.5sq m). Located between the city-states of



The Dubai Expo featured a number of large pavilions

Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the masterplan for the Expo Dubai 2020 was designed by US architects HOK – in partnership with Populous and Arup – and was organised around a central plaza, entitled Al Wasl.

It was enclosed by three large thematic districts, each dedicated to one of

the sub-themes of Expo Dubai 2020 – Opportunity, Mobility and Sustainability.

In total, the Dubai event was one of the largest ever and featured 191 nations and each country participating – for the first time ever – had its own, dedicated pavilion.

More: http://lei.sr/5e3z8_T



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UK

Clifford's Tower transformed in £5m project

Clifford's Tower in York, UK – considered one of England's most important buildings – has opened to the public following a £5m redevelopment.

The structure is all that remains of York Castle, which was built on the orders of William I and once dominated the former Viking city of Jórvík.

While the landmark has played a crucial role in English history during its 800-year-old history, it had been pretty much an empty shell since it was gutted by a fire in 1684 when it was used as a store for armaments and gunpowder.

As a result, it had never become a popular visitor

attraction. Now, thanks to designs by Hugh Broughton Architects (HBA) – who worked with conservation specialists Martin Ashley Architects – the tower has received a new lease of life.

Visitors will now be able to explore the tower – owned and operated by English Heritage – thanks to a free-standing timber structure that has elegant aerial walkways.

An enlarged public area at the base of the motte now incorporates interpretation and accommodates an English Heritage-branded Piaggio, with an interior designed by HBA, for the sale of tickets and guidebooks.

It offers a ground-level place to engage with visitors,



The £5m project has created a new visitor experience

including those unable to ascend the tower.

Hugh Broughton Architects said: "The project includes vital conservation works as well as architectural improvements which

enhance the visitor experience. A timber structure has been installed to partially cover the ruin and provide fantastic viewing and activity space at roof level."

More: http://lei.sr/r6u4z_T

UAE

Natural history museum planned for Abu Dhabi

“
Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi will showcase thousands of unique natural wonders from Earth and beyond, taking visitors on a 13.8-billion-year inspirational journey and providing a thought-provoking glimpse into our planet's future
Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism

A new natural history museum in Abu Dhabi will take visitors on a 13.8-billion-year journey through time and space.

Called the Abu Dhabi Natural History Museum and set to open in 2025, the museum will be located on Saadiyat Island, in the Saadiyat Cultural District.

The project was officially unveiled by Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, member of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council and chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Office.

A spokesperson for the Department of Culture and Tourism said: "Natural



The museum is set to open to the public in 2025

History Museum Abu Dhabi will showcase thousands of unique natural wonders from Earth and beyond, taking visitors on a 13.8-billion-year inspirational journey and providing a thought-provoking glimpse into our planet's future.

"Featuring some of the rarest natural history

wonders from Earth and beyond, visitors will travel through time and space."

While exact details are yet to be confirmed, the museum will become the latest addition to the museums located in the Saadiyat Cultural District. ●


More: http://lei.sr/E4q4K_T



WATER. JUST ANOTHER WAY TO SAY FUN

ADVANCED WATER PLAY SOLUTIONS WITH CUSTOMIZED DESIGN: WHEREVER THERE IS WATER MYRTHA CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.

JOSEPH WISNE

A large portrait of Joseph Wisne, a middle-aged man with grey hair, a mustache, and glasses, wearing a dark blazer over a grey zip-up shirt. His hands are clasped in front of him.

Museums should go beyond the Big Five senses to create experiences that use visitors' sense of danger, pain, balance and injustice to bring them closer to issues that matter, the founder of immersive experience design firm Roto tells Magali Robathan

Joseph Wisne co-founded Roto in 2003, after seven years at COSI in Columbus, Ohio



You've argued that attractions wanting to achieve greater impact and commercial success should become supersensory. Tell us more

The concept of 'immersion' in public attractions has been around for more than 20 years, and we see the term applied to many conventional exhibits and attractions. Simple things such as 360-degree photos and open-world video games are often called 'immersive,' even when viewed on a 25-inch monitor. We wanted a new term that better reflects the order-of-magnitude increase in sensory experience introduced within immersive art attractions while simultaneously capturing why their demand has been so strong. Humans have evolved an enormous sensory capacity. A supersensory experience stimulates that full sensory range in all its depth and diversity, going far beyond sight and sound.

What's exciting right now?

New immersive art experiences are popping up across the landscape faster than I can check them out, and many have started to feel a bit reductive. Still, standouts for me include Tomas Saraceno's current show at The Shed in New York. This installation gives humans the supersensory perceptions of spiders, suspended in a 95-foot diameter sphere – way cooler than watching a Spiderman film.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ROTO

“

The five senses are something school teachers made up. Neuroscience identifies at least nine fundamental senses that are always in operation as we explore our world

“

Rather than designing for the popular common denominator, what happens when an attraction is customised for the specific curiosities and preferences of a particular group?

I think what Pace Gallery is doing with Superblue is very bold, and many of the installations fulfill the promise of the supersensory experience while also conveying a larger meaning or message. Grande Experiences have done well with their various Alive exhibitions, and we're curious to see how they move forward now that their model is being so heavily copied. I think here is where content may begin to supersede format, like what we have seen in the 'data sculptures' of Refik Anadol, which clearly demonstrate the potential of AI-enhanced animations.

Offering immersive experiences based on the main five senses is now quite commonplace. Can you talk about the role of other senses such as danger, temperature, pain, and balance?

We should remember that the five senses are something schoolteachers made up. Neuroscience identifies at least nine fundamental senses that are always in operation as we explore our world, including exhibits and attractions. I'm talking about specific receptors in the body that get interpreted by distinct regions of the brain – they're all automatic, and we can't turn them off.

We may not think of proprioception as significantly important, but maintaining a sense of where your limbs are in space matters in a

motion simulator or a massive net climber, or when Van Gogh-style projections are sufficiently synced. This is a huge problem for VR attractions to assimilate effectively. Then yes, there are the second-order 'senses' that most humans possess which are more emotional, like a sense of humour or a sense of justice. I'm not just playing with words here; we believe these fundamental capacities are critical elements of what makes us human and makes experiences supersensory.

Can you think of any attractions and experiences that are playing with these additional senses in successful and impactful ways?

Yes, hundreds! Despite all the attention paid to simulating fantastic new worlds in VR environments, the most compelling supersensory attractions that play with our sense of balance, space, orientation, and motion are still good old-fashioned rollercoasters, dark rides, and motion simulators. When friends and colleagues speak passionately about their favourite triple-A rides, I'm still hearing mostly about the authentic physical modalities of their adventures – soaring, flying, accelerating, cornering, dropping.

PHOTO: NICHOLAS KNIGHT





Wisne highlights Tomas Saraceno's Particular Matter(s) exhibition at The Shed as a 'standout'

PHOTO COURTESY THE SHED.



PHOTO: NICHOLAS WRIGHT COURTESY THE ARTIST; TANYA BONAOKARI GALLERY, NEW YORK; LOS ANGELES; AND NEUGERBACHSCHNEIDER, BERLIN



“

The best escape rooms tap into an ancient anxiety narrative around physical risk and entrapment, boosting adrenaline and becoming supersensory on a biochemical level

The narratives and images continue to deliver an increasingly sophisticated ambience, but the fundamentals of the experience are still rooted in real-world motion and acceleration. What is space tourism but the chance to escape our indelible sense of gravity?

How could the sense of danger and pain be used to create an intriguing experience or attraction?

If we broaden what we mean by sensing danger and sensing pain, they absolutely become prospective tools for authentic future experiences. The best haunted attractions have been doing danger pretty well for years, although jump-scares only go so far.

Tough Mudder succeeds by adding social bonding to physical risk and endurance. Outdoor paintball parks trade on the basic human emotion of hunter/prey far better than most indoor laser tag arenas, for reasons that probably relate to supersensory danger and proportional pain. The best escape rooms don't settle for merely offering complex timed puzzles – they tap into an ancient anxiety narrative around physical risk and entrapment, boosting adrenaline and becoming supersensory on a biochemical level.

Are there risks when designing immersive supersensory experiences?

We designed a supersensory section within the Vietnam War gallery of the National Museum of Military Vehicles in Dubois, US, including custom odours reminiscent of cordite and swamp gas. They were very realistic and very

immersive – and unfortunately also dangerously ‘on the nose’ for many veterans of that conflict and others suffering from PTSD. The odours were scrapped, and the sense of realism scaled down out of caution for those for whom violence and war were not a simulation.

How could the more complex senses be used to heighten visitors' experiences?

This is largely unmapped terrain, which is why we're excited to go exploring. The Laugh Battle interactive that Cortina and JRA created for the National Comedy Center in Jamestown, New York, exploits the user's inherent sense of humour at a fundamental level of behaviour. Trying not to laugh is the focus of the social encounter, which somehow makes the content even funnier. The fact that it uses AI to detect responses is both a part of the gag and somewhat independent from what makes it supersensory.

On the opposite end of the emotional spectrum, the new Legacy Museum in Alabama



-1980



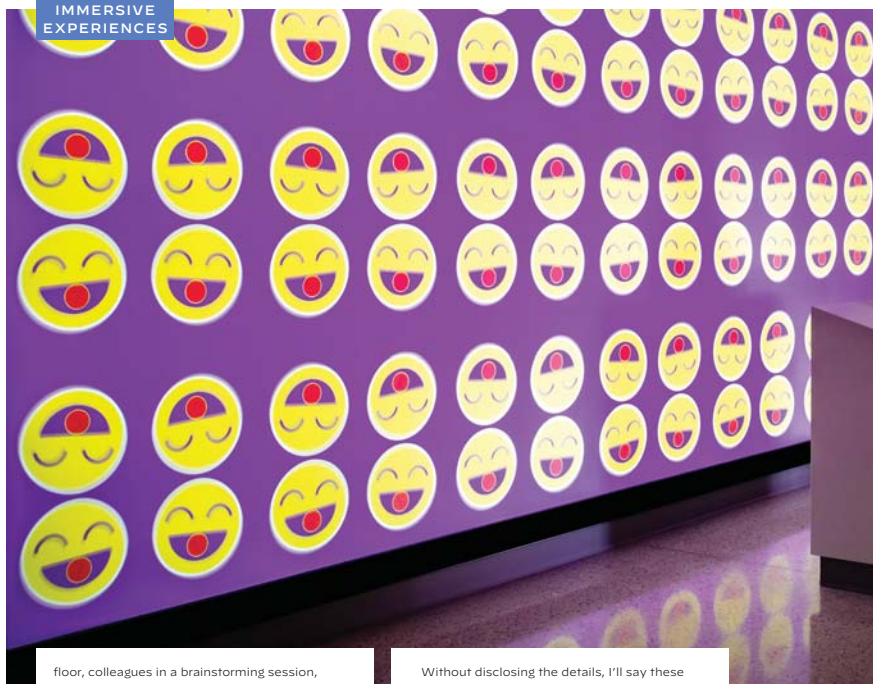
our company helped build with the Equal Justice Initiative leverages the fundamental human sense of justice to produce a lasting intellectual and emotional impact. The museum confronts participants with an overwhelming quantity and scale of incontestable facts, narratives, and artworks about the enslavement and mass incarceration of Black people in America. The effect is akin to that evoked by Dialog in the Dark experiences, which immerse participants in absolute darkness to engage a sense of empathy for the blind. The motivations and missions of these institutions may not resemble those of commercial entertainment attractions, but their supersensory techniques certainly do.

What insights do you have from your own work in this field?

The psychologist Adam Grant wrote last summer about the concept of collective effervescence, describing it as “the synchrony you feel when you slide into rhythm with strangers on a dance

Roto worked with the Cincinnati Museum Center on the Shaping the City Gallery

PHOTO: FERNANDEZ PHOTOGRAPHY



floor, colleagues in a brainstorming session, cousins at a religious service or teammates on a soccer field." I think we recognise something similar happening within the social dimension of many shared attraction experiences, whether thrill rides, scare events, or live shows – particularly when the audience numbers are modest – 12 to 25 people, for example.

We're studying what causes this and asking how we can exploit it further, and we're finding that it depends strongly on the audience's makeup. Thus, rather than designing for the popular common denominator, ie the same for everyone, what happens when the attraction is customised for the particular curiosities or preferences of a particular group? If Google and Facebook can sell us targeted ads, can we build more targeted attractions? And then change them on the fly from cycle to cycle?

What projects are you working on at the moment?

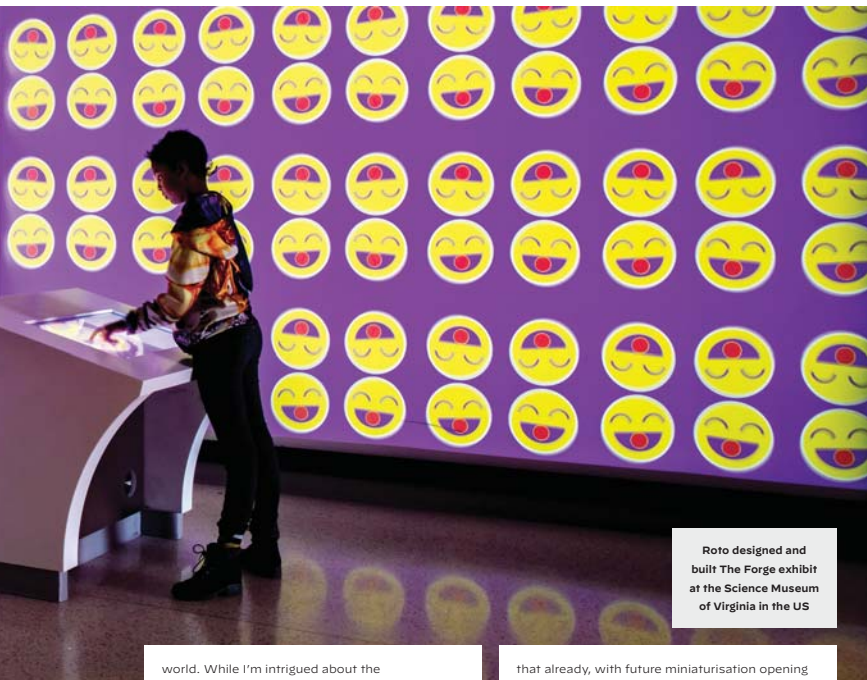
We have several projects in the major theme parks, both here in the US and Asia, following a far more integrated model than we've seen from Universal and WDI in the past.

Without disclosing the details, I'll say these design-build assignments greatly benefit from Roto's in-house design, engineering, and fabrication resources across theming, electromechanical, A/V, and digital media scopes.

Previously, these projects would have been split among multiple smaller firms, requiring heavy coordination overhead from the owners. This approach greatly benefits supersensory installations, where spatial design, animation, sound, sensing, control software, and sometimes the related interior architecture, must usually be coordinated by a single entity outside a set of drawings. The trend might have evolved as a result of so many younger show producers being raised around digital media and games – another discipline that relies heavily on integrated design-build methodologies.

What trends do you think we'll see in the area of supersensory experiences over the next few years?

You might notice a consistent theme in my comments about exploiting the fullness of our human sensory apparatus – they're strongly connected to the tangible, physical



Roto designed and built The Forge exhibit at the Science Museum of Virginia in the US

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROTO

world. While I'm intrigued about the future of the metaverse, I'm sceptical that it will eclipse what's most durable and effective in location-based experiences.

I look forward to new innovations in augmented or mixed-reality applications – more so than with true virtual reality. I see technology becoming fused with physical placemaking, literally 'augmenting' our sensory apparatus rather than replacing it wholesale. Conscious humans cannot get completely outside of their own brains and bodies (at least not while awake and sober), so advances in miniaturisation and fast wireless networks should allow more digital content to be overlaid on what people are already seeing and feeling.

Can you highlight any interesting technology that's being successfully deployed in this area?

Wearables are keys to unlocking more versatility in these augmented attractions. We need to keep track of where guests are within the space and seamlessly connect their data to their individual experiences when possible. Better RFID and beacon network infrastructure can do

that already, with future miniaturisation opening additional dimensions. Gesture and motion cameras have been adequate, if a bit clumsy to date, but we're excited to pursue more refined 3D tracking using multiple cameras for individual interactive elements. However, the biggest gains in the future attraction pipeline are in advanced digital tools. That may sound contradictory, but our next big project – one that fuses immersive media with supersensory participation and genuine human connection – relies most heavily on our incredibly talented software team. ●

ABOUT ROTO

Launched in 2003, Roto is an interdisciplinary creative design agency offering planning, experience design, immersive media, interactive engineering, and custom fabrication for museums, brands, attractions and architectural placemaking.

CEO and founder Joseph Wisne has helped create more than 200 projects, including the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, the Northern Virginia Science Center, The Legacy Museum, and the new National Museum of Military Vehicles.

More: www.Roto.com



We design for the visitor, not for the form

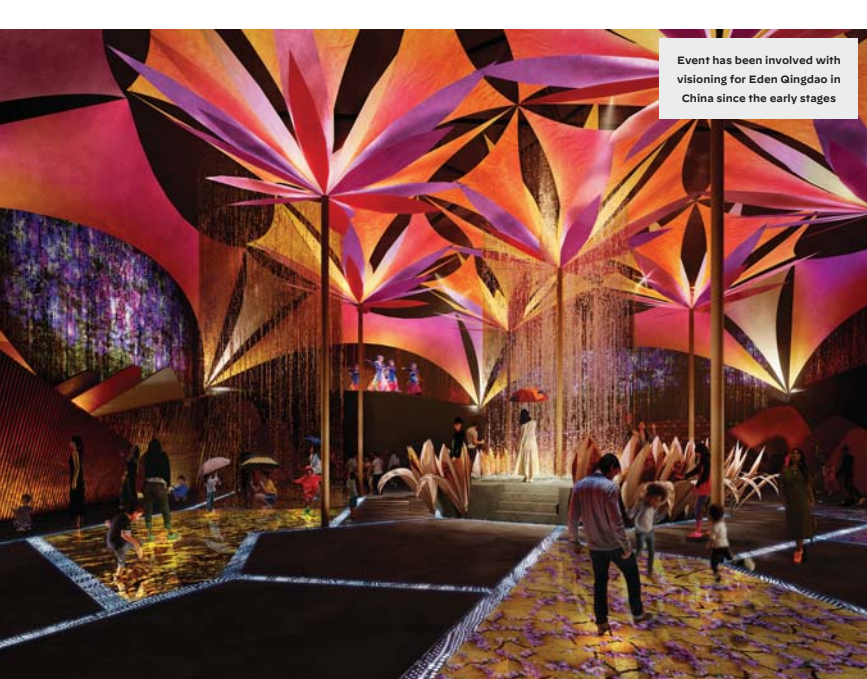


ESTHER DUGDALE



As the Burrell Collection opens in Glasgow following a £68m transformation led by Event, we speak to the experience design agency's creative director about creating spaces that spark joy, empathy and curiosity

Creative director Esther Dugdale led the Burrell Collection project



Event has been involved with visioning for Eden Qingdao in China since the early stages

PHOTO COURTESY OF EVENT

Since launching in 1986, experience design agency Event Communications has designed a wide range of experiences, spaces and exhibitions, ranging from the award-winning POLIN Museum

of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw to the hugely successful touring immersive Meet Vincent Van Gogh experience.

Projects completed over the past couple of years include the fairytale-inspired Hans Christian Andersen House in Odense, Denmark; The Box in Plymouth, UK; and The Raid, a Vikings exhibition at the National Museum of Denmark.

For creative director Esther Dugdale, the variety is what makes Event's work so exciting; she tells me that although the projects may be very different, they all share a certain philosophy.

"We design for a wide variety of clients, but what unites them all is a drive that we have to create great cultural spaces for people to come together and share extraordinary stories that

enrich their lives and expand their thinking," she explains. "We design for the visitor, not for the form or the design itself. It's about finding joy or empathy in a story or place and translating that into an experience."

Over the past few years, Dugdale has been working on two very different projects that highlight this approach: Eden Qingdao in China, and the Burrell Collection in Glasgow, UK. One is a massive, brand new attraction with an environmental message; the other a refurbishment of an iconic Category A listed building with a collection of fine and decorative arts spanning 6,000 years.

"I've been personally involved in both, and they've been both inspiring and challenging in different ways," says Dugdale. "Eden Qingdao is a complete contrast to the Burrell Collection; one was about transforming an iconic building and its displays for 21st century audiences, while the other is creating something new in order to bring a really important environmental message to Chinese audiences."



More of the collection is now on display



Event had the original quarry reopened to mine new materials for The Walk in the Woods gallery

THE BURRELL COLLECTION

When the Burrell Collection reopened at the end of March 2022 following a six year, £68m refurbishment, it marked a key moment for Glasgow.

Designed in the 1970s and opened in 1983 to house the collection of Sir William and Constance Burrell, the Burrell Collection was an iconic piece of architecture that was no longer fit for purpose.

"The building had so many wonderful things about it, but it was failing – the technology just wasn't there to achieve what the museum needed to achieve," says Dugdale. "The glass technology wasn't right, so it became notorious for leaking, they were having to take more and more works off display, the visitor numbers were dwindling – it needed a major piece of reinvigoration."

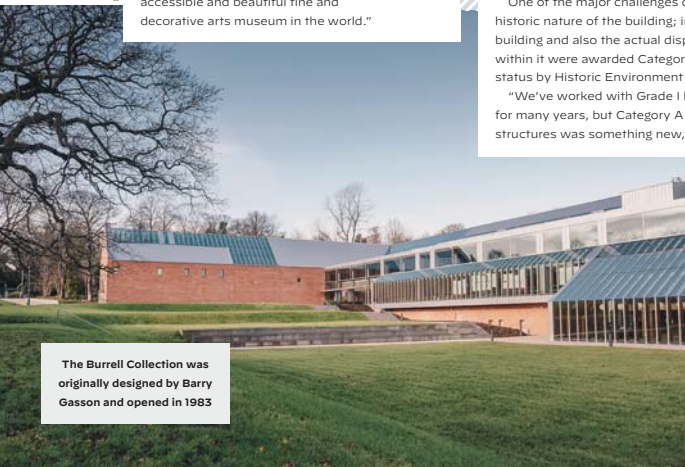
"The aim was to create the most accessible and beautiful fine and decorative arts museum in the world."

Event Communications were commissioned first to create a masterplan with the aim of increasing access to the collection – only 25 per cent of the Burrell's 9,000 objects was previously on display – "as well as rethinking the quality of the overall experience." Event were then subsequently appointed to deliver the exhibitions.

Working closely with charity Glasgow Life and architectural firm John McAslan and Partners, Event Communications has rearranged the interiors to create 35 per cent more gallery space. All three levels of the building are now open for the first time and a three-storey hub has been created at the centre of the building which allows for the display of a set of previously unseen medieval stained glass, known as the Boppard Windows. Displays have been redesigned to "enhance the relationship of the objects to the iconic modernist building and its natural surroundings."

One of the major challenges came from the historic nature of the building; in 2013, the building and also the actual display structures within it were awarded Category A-listed status by Historic Environment Scotland.

"We've worked with Grade I listed buildings for many years, but Category A listed display structures was something new," says Dugdale.



The Burrell Collection was originally designed by Barry Gasson and opened in 1983



HC Andersen's House was designed from the 'inside out' and inspired by fairytales

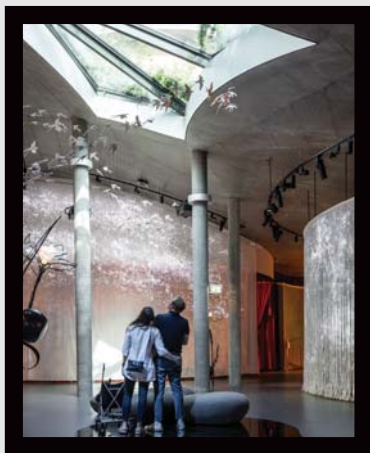
PHOTO: BLANKUS (MOTION)

"The display furniture, like the envelope of the building, wasn't performing at all – the showcases weren't sealed, there was no lighting on the objects, the glass on the cases was tinted green so all the objects looked slightly sickly.

"We had to find a way to respond to the original design and aesthetics and integrate all of the modern requirements for museum display, while also getting the proposals through listed building consent."

In the much loved Walk in the Woods gallery, which stretches along one side of the building, objects were showcased on stone plinths against the backdrop of woodland seen through a huge glass curtain wall.

"They were a million miles away from museum quality showcases, but the stone of the plinth matched the stone of the floor, so we couldn't change that," says Dugdale. "We ended up going back to the original quarry and getting it reopened so we could get stone from the same original seam. We engineered these plinths so that whole sections of it can slide out on super strong drawer mechanisms, so you can get inside and plug things in and add media screens."



HC Andersen's House opened in 2021

PHOTO: BLANKUS (MOTION)

“

We've really thought big with this one. The scale of a whole park as a storytelling vehicle is really wonderful

"They look beautiful and simple and we stuck with the concept of the stone being the earth and the glass being the sky, but the performance of those plinths is amazing."

Dugdale's favourite parts of the refurbished museum, she tells me, are the Walk in the Woods gallery, and the east galleries beyond.

"The east galleries previously felt like a bit of a dead end, but have now been opened out into double-sized spaces, and feature displays themed around imaginary gardens, with beautiful tapestries and artworks. I just find that space wonderful."

EDEN QINGDAO

The first Eden project to be built outside the UK, Eden Qingdao will aim to teach visitors about the importance of water on 227 acres of reclaimed land previously used for salt production and then prawn breeding.

Event Communications has been involved with the project from the early stages; Dugdale and her team took part in early visioning statements with Eden and Grimshaw Architects, and were commissioned to create a masterplan for the overall visitor experience. Construction is currently underway at the site.

"We've really thought big with this one," says Dugdale. "The scale of a whole park as a storytelling vehicle is really wonderful."

"The aim is to change visitors' thinking about water, so the whole attraction is themed around that, from the landscapes and features within them, to the architectural spaces – the big biome and pavilion.

"Working with the Eden team, we've been responsible for creating briefs for specialist commissions and designing about 25 specific installations/immersive experiences that sit within that bigger picture. We're now at the stage where all the briefing and design work has been done, and Eden is commissioning local design practices and local and international artists and specialists to create them all."

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

Over the past five years, Event has become increasingly associated with immersive and technology-driven experiences. So what, for Dugdale and her team, is the secret to creating a really amazing immersive exhibition?

"It's about keeping the message simple and amplifying the big idea," she says. "It's about surprising, delighting and informing – exceeding people's expectation. That's around what appeals to us as human beings. What's the psychology behind what resonates with people?"

The Eden Qingdao attraction will explore the importance of water to life on earth



*The gallery is very dynamic,
very atmospheric, beautifully lit.
Nobody who goes in there will forget it*

EVENT COMMUNICATIONS

KEY PROJECTS

- Burrell Collection, Glasgow, Scotland
- Hans Christian Andersen House, Odense, Denmark
- Eden Project, Qingdao, China
- POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw, Poland
- National Museum of Denmark
- Shipwreck Museum St. George, Denmark
- Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Scotland
- The Shard: Viewing Gallery, London, UK
- Guinness Storehouse, Dublin, Ireland
- St Fagans National Museum of History, Wales
- Titanic Belfast, Belfast, Northern Ireland
- EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, Ireland

I ask Dugdale if she can think of an example that Event has worked on; after a short pause, she cites the firm's work on one of the galleries in The Box Plymouth, which opened after lockdown in 2020.

"The client wanted to do a single gallery that encapsulated the natural and living environment in that region of the country," she says. "We worked with the museum to think about something really iconic in that space that would hold it all together, and the curator suggested they wanted a woolly mammoth – they had a mammoth tooth in the collection, [originally discovered nearby at Yealm Bridge Cavern]."

"As always, we asked ourselves, what would surprise the visitor? We decided to commission a full scale replica of a woolly mammoth. As visitors come in they're met with this huge creature appearing to step off the plinth towards them; it's surrounded by this wonderful, vivid mass display of all the creatures past and present on land and in the sea around Plymouth.



Event worked on The
Raid at the National
Museum of Denmark

The natural history gallery at The Box Plymouth features a huge woolly mammoth replica

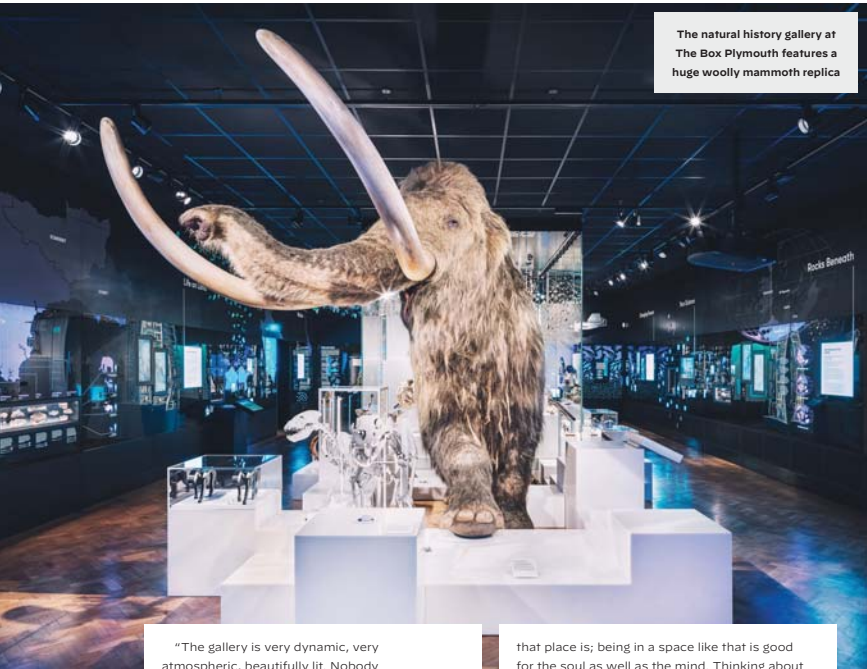


PHOTO: ANDREW WRIGHT/COURTESY OF EVENT

"The gallery is very dynamic, very atmospheric, beautifully lit. Nobody who goes in there will forget it."

Looking ahead, Dugdale and the team at Event look set to remain busy. Key projects for 2022 include ongoing work on the Eden Qingdao project, completion of The Across Ages Museum in Oman, a new national museum exploring the identity, culture and memory of the Omani people and their path to modern nationhood; the Carlsberg Experience in Denmark; and the International Rugby Experience in Limerick, Ireland. Set to open late 2022, this experience will feature immersive-media installations and interactive exhibits.

TRENDS IN MUSEUM DESIGN

There are several key trends to watch in museum design, Dugdale tells me. "Working sustainably is a big one," she says. "Not every museum is going to be about climate change, but an awareness of that impact needs to imbue every project."

"Designing for emotion, connection and wellbeing is another big trend. One of our missions is about bringing people together to experience extraordinary things that enrich them. One of the things I love about Burrell is how calm

that place is; being in a space like that is good for the soul as well as the mind. Thinking about those qualities is really important; it certainly creates a lot of dialogue and discussion internally."

"Finally, it's important to think about identity and sharing experiences. Things have a life beyond the physical – people want to share what they're seeing, whether that's by posting on Instagram or in other ways. Recognising that desire and using it to delight people is really important."

I finish by asking Dugdale which museums and experiences are on her wish-list to visit over the next year or so.

"I'd love to visit all of our recently completed projects," she says. "Obviously it's been much harder to travel, so the teams working on projects that have completed over the last couple of years have gone, but we haven't all had a chance to see them. I'd particularly love to visit the HC Andersen House and The Raid in Denmark."

"I've never found myself in St Louis, but I'd love to go to Bob Cassilly's City Museum. And I'd very much like to see the Legacy Museum Memorial in Alabama for the victims of lynching. I think that would be a very powerful experience and it's important these things are memorialised." ●

ROOM to GROW



The Globe Playhouse was designed to resemble “a planet docking against the cube”

Could the futuristic, ultra-flexible architecture of the Taipei Performing Arts Center herald a shake up in the design of performance and exhibition spaces? Magali Robathan takes a look

The futuristic 800-seat theatre aims to be as inclusive and flexible as possible

The general public can enter the theatre without a ticket via a Public Loop



“We wanted to contribute to the history of the theatre and we're interested to see how this architecture will extend what we can do in theatres

Rem Koolhaas

“We're excited by how the building constantly generates new relationships between artists, spectators, and the public

David Gianotten

“This building sits at the centre of the plebian life of Taipei. Its informal, unpretentious, raw architecture echoes the spirits of how the citizens of Taipei approach art

Kris Yao



OMA's Rem Koolhaas (left) and David Gianotten

The long-awaited Taipei Performing Arts Center in Taiwan has been completed. Created by a team led by Rem Koolhaas and David Gianotten at OMA with local architect, Kris Yao, the 59,000sq m cultural centre has been designed as a highly flexible space suitable for the most experimental performances, and features “three theatres plugged into a central cube,” according to Gianotten. The theatres can be merged or modified, making them suitable for a whole host of different “unimagined and spontaneous forms.”

The general public can access a Public Loop, which runs through the theatre's infrastructure production spaces – portal windows allow them to peek at performances and the technical spaces in between the theatres.

The spherical 800-seat Globe Playhouse, with an inner and an outer shell, “resembles a planet docking against the cube,” according to the architects. The intersection between the inner shell and the cube forms a unique proscenium for experimentation with stage framing.

The Grand Theater is a 1,500-seat theatre space for different performing arts genres. Opposite to it, on the same level, is the 840-seat Blue Box for the most experimental performances. When coupled, the two theatres become a Super Theater – a huge, factory-style space that can accommodate productions and events “otherwise only possible in found spaces”.

A new landscaped plaza beneath the theatre offers a further gathering space.

The centre is due to open to the public in August 2022 following a series of test performances. ●

The Taipei Performing Arts Center is located at the heart of Taipei's Shilin Night Market

ONES TO WATCH

This year is set to be an exciting one for museums, with new institutions dedicated to robots, African art and film, ancient Egypt and the musicals of Broadway. Magali Robathan checks out a few

After delays and frustrations caused by the pandemic over the past couple of years, 2022 is shaping up to be a great year for museum openings. If all goes to plan (and we've certainly learned there's no guarantee of that) the world should see long-awaited facilities such as the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza finally open, as well as more recent but just as exciting projects.

Enjoy *Attractions Management's* snapshot of some of the fantastic museums set to open in 2022.



The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design opens in June



The new building has
been designed by
Kleihues + Schuwerk



National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design

Oslo, Norway

Norway's National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design is set to open in June 2022 in an enormous new building on Oslo's waterfront.

The state-owned National Museum holds Norway's largest collection of art, design and architecture and the new building designed by Kleihues + Schuwerk features 13,000sq m of exhibition space – almost twice as much space as the museum's former building.

The museum's collection holds around 400,000 objects, ranging from medieval tapestries to contemporary artworks, with notable pieces including Edvard Munch's *The Scream*, a collection of works by Norwegian architect Sverre Fehn and a rare Baldishol tapestry almost 1,000 years old. Other artists on display will include Harald Sohlberg, Harriet Backer, Theodor Kittelsen, Gustav Vigeland, Hannah

Ryggen, Lucas Cranach, Claude Monet, Vincent Van Gogh and Ida Ekblad.

The Light Hall is the museum's architectural showpiece – a spectacular 2,400sq m rooftop space with marble glass walls featuring 9,000 adjustable LED lights that will make the building 'glow'. This space will host special exhibitions and events, with the opening exhibition "a declaration of love to Norwegian contemporary art." The Light Hall will be filled with an extensive survey of new Norwegian contemporary art featuring almost 150 artists and artist groups of all ages and covering all the museum's fields.

A large open-air roof terrace will offer dramatic views of Oslo, and the museum will also feature cafés, a shop, and the 'largest art library in the Nordic region.'

Karin Hindsbo was appointed director of the National Museum in 2017.



Karin Hindsbo



PHOTO: STUDIO CONTRA



PHOTO: STUDIO CONTRA



PHOTO: STUDIO CONTRA

The museum is billed as Nigeria's "first major visual arts institution"



PHOTO: STUDIO CONTRA



PHOTO: STUDIO CONTRA

Studio Contra's
Olayinka Dosekun-
Adjei and Jeffrey Adjei

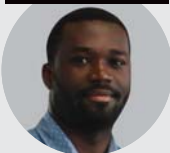


PHOTO: STUDIO CONTRA

The Institute of Contemporary African Art & Film

Ilorin, Nigeria

A gallery purpose-built with the aim of attracting the best in contemporary African art from around the continent, the Institute of Contemporary African Art & Film in Ilorin, Nigeria, will open towards the end of 2022.

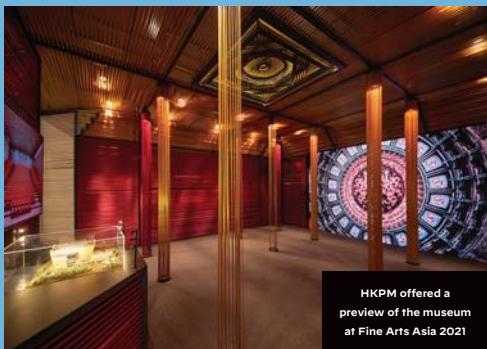
Billed as Nigeria's first major visual arts museum, it will feature galleries for a range of exhibitions, post-production studios for cinema and video art, a film screening room, a café, gift shop, co-working space and public landscaped gardens.

The museum has been designed by Lagos-based architectural practice Studio Contra. "Resisting the notion of art gallery as an elite cultural object, we have sought to integrate the building into the life of the city and invite people in, so as to create a locally-relevant and viable institution," said Olayinka Dosekun-Adjei, creative director at Studio Contra.

"The exhibition spaces of the Visual Arts Centre will offer visitors a seamlessly integrated experience of art, architecture and landscape, and the spaces will be designed to ensure that guests can have an unhurried, intimate engagement with both the artworks and the environment during their visit."



HKPM director Dr Louis Ng



HKPM offered a preview of the museum at Fine Arts Asia 2021

Hong Kong Palace Museum

Hong Kong

Five years in the making, the Hong Kong Palace Museum (HKPM) is due to open in July 2022. The museum is the result of a collaboration between the Palace Museum in Beijing and Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District Authority. More than 900 works of art will be displayed – on loan from the Palace Museum – signifying a strategic partnership between the two museums.

The HK\$3.5bn seven-storey museum was designed by architect Rocco Yim and sits on the Victoria Harbour waterfront. It will feature 7,800sq m of exhibition space spread across nine galleries, and has three stacked glass atriums at its core, offering views of the waterfront.

"The idea of a 'connected museum' captures the distinct identity and role of the HKPM in advocating for a new paradigm for the interpretation of Chinese art and culture," said Dr Louis Ng, director at the Hong Kong Palace Museum. "In this context, the concept of connection has multiple meanings – to connect the past to the present, increase hyperconnectivity, strengthen connections with museums and audiences in mainland China, and connect Chinese culture with a much wider global audience."

The museum team plans to build international partnerships and collaborations and as a result, one of the opening exhibitions – dedicated to the art of the horse – has been curated in collaboration with the Musée du Louvre in Paris.

The seven storey museum was designed by architect Rocco Yim



PHOTO: ENAARD

**Melike Altınışık**

Seoul Robot and AI Museum

Seoul, South Korea

Billed as the world's first robot science museum, Seoul's Robot and AI museum is being built by the robots it aims to showcase.

When it launches in 2023 the museum itself will act as its own opening exhibit, showing what robots can achieve.

"They're in charge, from design, manufacturing and construction to services and smart technologies," says architect Melike Altınışık.

"The new Robot & AI Museum (RAIM) which plays a catalytic role in advancing and promoting science, technology, and innovation throughout society, is going to be an experience space which can allow people to interact with robotic technologies," said Altınışık.

RAIM is at the heart of the Changbai New Economic Center – a new cultural district that's part of the city government's plans to revitalise the Chang-dong area of northern Seoul.

The museum aims to support public education in robotics and raise awareness of AI initiatives via a range of exhibitions.

PHOTO: MELIKE ALTINISIK ARCHITECTS



The museum building, which was built by robots, will act as its own opening exhibit



Museum visitors will experience the latest robotics technology

PHOTO RELEASE ALTERNATIVE ARCHITECTS



The new building will almost double the art gallery's space

PHOTO: KAZUYO SEIHA • RIVE NISHIZAWA / SANAA © ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, 2018

Sydney Modern

Sydney, Australia

The Art Gallery of New South Wales' Sydney Modern Project will see the opening of a brand new building designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architects SANAA.

Due for completion at the end of 2022, the project will see the flagship public cultural institution transformed into a two-building art museum that will almost double the Art Gallery of NSW's exhibition space. The original historic building is also being revitalised – by Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects, who are restoring the original architectural features and providing more space for art and scholarship. A new public art garden is being added, with Kathryn Gustafson of Seattle firm Gustafson Guthrie Nichol and Australian landscape architects McGregor Coxall working together on the landscaping.

The aim of the project, according to the Art Gallery of NSW, is to “bring together art, architecture

and landscape in spectacular new ways, with dynamic galleries, site-specific works by leading Australian and international artists, and extensive outdoor spaces for everyone to enjoy.”

Set in parkland overlooking Sydney Harbour, the glass-fronted Sydney Modern building will consist of interlocking rectangular pavilions and will connect to the existing sandstone gallery via the new public art garden.

The new gallery will feature a pair of reconfigured, decommissioned underground Second World War oil tanks for special exhibitions and performances. A full rehanging of the collection will give works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists pride of place in a dedicated space near the entrance and throughout the gallery displays.

Environmental sustainability is key to the design, which features green roofs, solar panels and rainwater harvesting.

Sydney Modern is backed by A\$244m from the New South Wales state government and more than A\$100m in philanthropic support.

PHOTO: KAZUYO SEIHA • RIVE NISHIZAWA / SANAA © ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, 2018

The oil tank gallery at the Sydney Modern

PHOTO:



The form is inspired by the pyramids

The Grand Egyptian Museum

Giza, Egypt

The long-awaited Grand Egyptian Museum is set to open in late 2022. Home to more than 100,000 artefacts representing 3,500 years of ancient Egyptian history, the 500,000sq m facility will be the world's largest archaeological museum.

Highlights will include King Tutankhamun's entire treasure collection, which will be displayed in its own dedicated exhibition space.

The idea for the museum was first mooted in 2002, when the Egyptian government announced a worldwide competition to design a new museum dedicated to Egypt's history. Irish architectural firm Heneghan Peng Architects secured the contract to design the museum, and construction began in 2005, but it was delayed by the 2011 revolution in Egypt and then by the pandemic.

In January 2022, it was announced that the project was 99 per cent complete; the museum is expected to open towards the end of the year.

The design of the museum was informed by the surroundings, according to the architects: "The site for the Grand Egyptian Museum is located at the edge of the first desert plateau between the pyramids and Cairo. It is defined by a 50m level difference, created as the Nile carves its way through the desert to the Mediterranean – a geological process that has shaped Egypt for over 3,000 years.

"The design of the museum utilises the level difference to construct a new 'edge' to the plateau, a surface defined by a veil of translucent stone that transforms from day to night."

PHOTO: EHAIF CONSULTING



Róisín Heneghan and Shih-Fu Peng

Waleed Abdel-Fattah, North African senior vice president of Hill International, spoke to *Attractions Management* about the project. Hill International is providing project and construction management services in a joint venture with EHAIF Consulting.

"The Grand Egyptian Museum is one of the greatest cultural projects happening in the world today," said Abdel-Fattah. "The designers have created the building on a north-south axis, matching the old temples. We started construction in 2012. Over time, technology developed and evolved. Our vision was to use only state-of-the-art technology, so we had to adjust to incorporate some of the latest technology as we developed the exhibition. This also meant sometimes we had to re-open the ceilings and walls to accommodate some of the technologies."

Ad Gefrin Visitor Centre

Wooler, Northumberland, UK

When it opens in autumn 2022, the Ad Gefrin Visitor Centre will tell the story of the 7th century Anglo-Saxon Royal Court of Northumbria, discovered four miles away in the mid 1950s in what was hailed as one of the most remarkable archaeological finds of the twentieth century.

Ad Gefrin aims to recreate the atmosphere of the Royal Summer Palace of the Northumbrian kings and queens at a time when the Great Hall of the Royal Court was a destination for international trade and cultural exchange with connections to people from across Europe and as far away as North Africa.

Standing in front of the hearth in the recreated Great Hall, visitors will be swept up in the rich stories of the time, through immersive AV technology that aims to bring this period of history alive through spoken word, art, music and dance.

A series of projected films will tell the stories of the people that lived and worked in the Royal Court; the museum will also display archaeologically-important artefacts found at the original site, and borrowed from international museums and collections.

The centre will house a whisky distillery – with guided tours and tastings planned – as well as a bistro bar and gift shop.



The museum will tell the story of an Anglo-Saxon Royal Court

The project is the brainchild of the Ferguson family, who own the Northumberland site.

"This project is very close to my heart and something that the whole Ferguson family feels passionate about," said Eileen Ferguson, co-founder of Ad Gefrin.

"Our collective ambition is to put something wonderful back into an area that has given us so much. In embracing all that the Golden Age stood for in terms of connectedness, cultural exchange and innovation, we hope that Ad Gefrin brings people together and instils a sense of belonging and hope."

PHOTO: SALLY ANN KOSBRIN



The centre aims to reawaken the Northumbrian whisky distilling tradition



PHOTO: PAUL BENNETT ARCHITECTS



The Museum of Broadway is set to open this summer

Museum of Broadway

New York, US

Slated to open in Times Square in the summer of 2022, the Museum of Broadway will celebrate the history, artistry, and legacy of Broadway musicals, plays, and theatres.

This interactive, multi-floor museum, founded by entrepreneur and producer Julie Boardman, and Diane Nicoletti, founder of experiential agency Rubik Marketing, will offer guests a mix of immersive installations and traditional displays representing a “unique look at the rich history of Broadway, a sneak peek behind-the-scenes, and a chance to personally engage with the ‘game changing’ shows that redefined Broadway.”

Guests will travel through a visual history of Broadway from its birth to the present day, highlighting theatre’s pioneers, landmark moments of social change, and many of the most beloved plays and musicals of all time. Along the timeline, pivotal Broadway shows such as *Rent* and *Hair* will be celebrated through a range of immersive installations. A special exhibit will also allow visitors to ‘go backstage’ to get a taste of what’s involved in the making of a Broadway show, from set design to lighting and script-writing. In the museum’s Map Room, guests will experience the history and migration of New York City’s theatres through immersive video projections.

“In the theatre we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. We’re thrilled to create a museum honouring Broadway’s extraordinary history, the trailblazers who pushed the art form forward and celebrate its bright future,” said Julie Boardman. “We’re delighted to be working closely with members of the theatre community to build an authentic experience that visitors of all ages will enjoy.”

“It’s thrilling to have a permanent museum dedicated exclusively to Broadway theatre open in the heart of the theatre district,” said Doug Reside, curator of the Billy Rose Theatre Division at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

“Theatre is an art form that regularly remembers its own past through revivals and reinterpretations, and this museum will help to contextualise the story of this repertory both for first time visitors to Broadway and for seasoned ticket buyers,” he added. ●



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Despite what some tabloids may say, opposition to including links to slavery is only found among a minority

ALL OF HISTORY


A growing honesty in relation to the subject of slavery has led to some attractions revising their policies and approach. Jon Young from BVA BDRC looks at visitor opinions on this shift



Jon Young



Chartwell, Winston Churchill's former home, was flagged for its links to colonialism



The controversial removal of the Colston statue in Bristol triggered a debate about slave links

In September 2020, the UK's National Trust published an interim report on historic slavery and colonialism links to the places it cares for. There were a number of complaints after the report came out, with claims the group had acted outside its charitable purposes by drawing attention to links between, for example, Winston Churchill's former home at Chartwell and colonialism.

The UK Charity Commission found no grounds for regulatory action against the National Trust, commenting that it was "satisfied that the trustees recognised and carefully considered the potential negative reaction that could result from the publication of the report".

In a blog post, National Trust director-general Hilary McGrady said: "There is so much to be proud of in our history. The wonderful collection of places the Trust cares for, that have been cherished for generations before us, is a testament to that. However, history can also be challenging and contentious. It is surely a sign of confidence, integrity and pride that

while we can celebrate and enjoy history, we can also explore and acknowledge all aspects of it. The National Trust is at its best when we capture this complexity – when we present facts and material evidence in ways that inspire curiosity, inquiry, learning and sharing.

"We're developing a programme of rounded interpretation at properties," said McGrady, "Balance and integration will be at the heart of this programme. Our curatorial teams continue doing vital work with properties to make sure we have the highest standards of presentation and interpretation at these places. We are here for all of history – for everyone, for ever."

An example of the National Trust's slavery insights can be seen in its work on Penrhyn Castle at www.attractionsmanagement.com/Penrhyn

An industry-wide issue

Although the National Trust received much of the attention on this subject, a number of other operators have also sought to re-evaluate how they talk about this subject area. ▶

- A key concern is the impact any reinterpretation will have on attraction visitor numbers.

Some worry that by drawing attention to the negative side of history, the 'idealistic Downton Abbey traditionalist' may decide not to visit, but others argue that following the events of 2020, the public's understanding of how historic sites relate to slavery has shifted. There is an expectation that interpretation conveys the full history of a venue ('warts and all') and by doing nothing, they'll be providing a sanitised version of what happened, which will lead to a less fulfilling visitor experience. It could also mean people will decide not to visit.

As individuals, our team at BVA BDRC has well developed opinions on the subject – the *Story of our Times* podcast on Penrhyn Castle will give you a clue as to mine – but as consultants who work in the sector, we also seek to understand the objective truth, so we put the question to the general public, asking a nationally representative UK sample (1,750) the following question:

"In the last couple of years, organisations such as The National Trust have started to examine the links their properties have with colonialism and historic slavery.

In cases where slavery has played a large role in the site's history, how much do you

agree or disagree these organisations should include information about their links to slavery as part of their on-site interpretation?"

Key findings

The key finding was that the majority of the population (55 per cent) supported information about links to slavery being included in the interpretation. Perhaps more importantly, only a small minority of 15 per cent opposed it, while 30 per cent had no firm opinion either way.

Notably, although support for this sort of interpretation falls as people get older, it remains significantly higher than 'opposition' in every single age group, meaning that the argument that there is a huge cultural divide by age are largely unfounded.

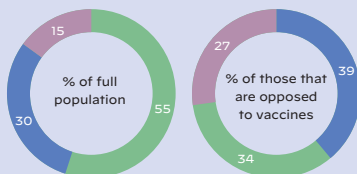
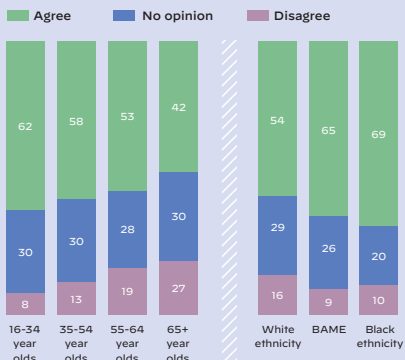
Perhaps unsurprisingly, there's majority support across all ethnic groups, with agreement increasing to 7 in 10 in UK residents of black ethnicity. For sites that champion an inclusive agenda, this figure may be enough motivation to update interpretation in itself.

We tried in vain to find an audience that is more likely to oppose, but such was the support for the suggestion, we were unsuccessful. The closest we came was among 'anti-vaxxers'. But even among this ►

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To avoid accusations of 'wokery', it's important attractions separate themselves from brands that appear to be jumping on a bandwagon

Organisations should include information about their links to slavery as part of their on-site interpretation



The owners of Stowe House benefitted from the slave trade. The richest family in England, they later became the 'greatest debtors in the world'


The National Trust's Lacock Abbey – owned by slave traders and the location for corridor scenes in the Harry Potter films



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/TWIDLET



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/MICHAEL WARWICK



The National Trust's Penrhyn Castle – built with proceeds from the slave trade and owned by anti-abolitionists

“

History can be challenging and contentious. It's surely a sign of confidence, integrity and pride that while we can celebrate and enjoy history, we can also explore and acknowledge all aspects of it

Hilary McGrady, director-general the National Trust

'counter- cultural' audience, support was higher than opposition – 39 per cent to 27 per cent.

A few words about the minority

This is a complex subject with many layers and nuances, and we don't expect this one question to provide meaningful recommendations. But we hope it demonstrates that – despite what some tabloids may say – opposition to including links to slavery is only held among a minority of the general public.

However, we mustn't forget this minority either and although 15 per cent is a relatively small number, no venue would want to lose or upset this amount of visitors. With any additional interpretation on slavery, this minority will want to be reassured that their 'traditional visit' is protected and that extra interpretation adds depth rather than taking anything away.

Our 'Brand Purpose' report suggests that one possible objection from these detractors is that places are responding to a 'woke' political agenda.

It found that although there was significant support for the inclusion of marketing on race, gender and sexuality, many felt that brands were jumping on a bandwagon.

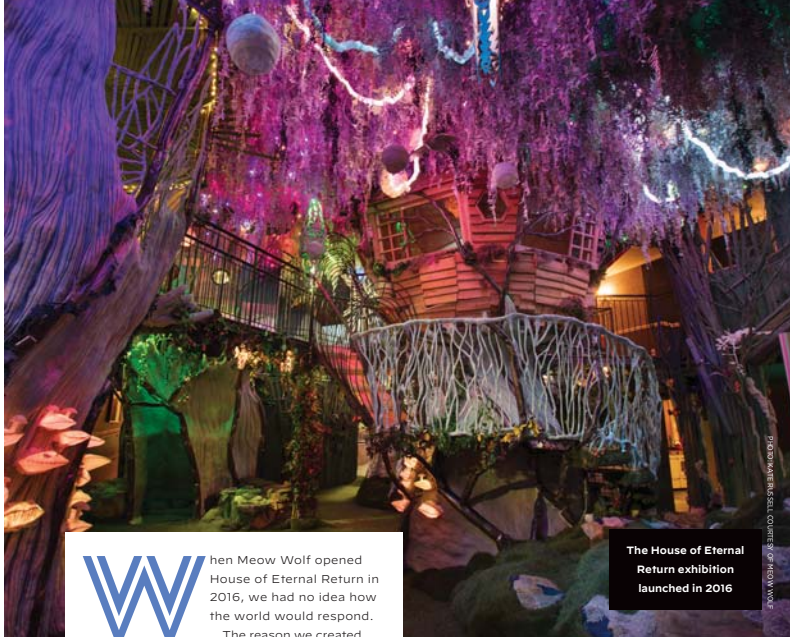
To avoid the accusation of 'wokery', it's really important that historic visitor attractions separate themselves from big brands that appear to be jumping on a bandwagon. This shouldn't be too difficult – a centuries old country house is likely to have more of an authentic story to tell than a brand of rice (for example!). One way of achieving this separation is by ensuring any references to slavery are supported by robust source material, and that the stories they tell are intrinsically linked to the site's history.

Venues should also be inclusive in their inclusivity – that is, rather than focusing on just one under-represented audience, drawing attention to all the groups that may be linked to the site. Attractions may also want to think about avoiding perceptions of tokenism and integrating this interpretation into the site's story, as opposed to box-ticking with a standalone exhibition. ●

Vince Kadlubek is co-founder and director of Meow Wolf

The evolution of the amusement park won't come from technology or by building bigger and better rides, it will come from recognising audience's craving to be immersed in worlds of imagination, says the founder of Meow Wolf, Vince Kadlubek

INVEST IN THE ARTIST



PHOTOGRAPH BY SELL, COURTESY OF MEOW WOLF



When Meow Wolf opened House of Eternal Return in 2016, we had no idea how the world would respond.

The reason we created the exhibition was less about reaching massive audiences, and more directly focused on elevating the value of art and imagination in our world. We saw our business model as a more robust format for showcasing work from emerging artists.

Pretty quickly after opening our first permanent exhibition in Santa Fe, New Mexico, these intentions came to fruition. The Meow Wolf mission of empowering and valuing the artistic voice was validated practically overnight.

But what really surprised us was not that the concept was a better model for artists, but that the general public desired the Meow Wolf experience to such a high-degree. Sure, we expected Burners and EDM'ers and weirdos and freaks to flock to our exhibit, but never did we expect that soccer moms from Texas and the Midwest would road trip to New Mexico just to experience our bizarre and psychedelic art project. But they did, and they came in droves.

Think about it – Meow Wolf had zero brand awareness, zero recognisable IP associated with our work. We were not Star Wars, or Bugs Bunny, or Marvel. Meow Wolf was simply art; creative spaces that showcased the magic and ingenuity of artists.

Our project was a collection of DIY sculptures made from recycled materials, hand-painted

The House of Eternal Return exhibition launched in 2016

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Meow Wolf proves that audiences want to experience the magic of the imagination when they visit attractions rather than the adrenaline and sugar rush that amusement parks have been so heavily focused on

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I'd love to see the day when going to an amusement park was actually a diversified cultural experience, home to some of the coolest pieces of art imaginable

murals by previously unknown artists, independent music created by producers in their living room, and lighting that was designed by folks who were just barely learning the field.

As the CEO at the time, I was floored by the results we were seeing. Somehow Meow Wolf had unexpectedly exposed a long-ignored truth about humanity: People inherently crave creativity. As the traditional art world segmented and isolated itself over many generations by focusing on wealth and status, society began to assume that art was not something that the masses were very interested in. Instead we just assumed that art was only for the elite. Meow Wolf shifted this understanding in a radical way.

Not only did the general population crave artistic experiences, they were willing to pay decent admission prices. As I watched the numbers starting to roll into the business, I couldn't help but to compare Meow Wolf to an industry that I am a huge fan of – amusement parks.

Audiences were flocking to our tiny, 30,000sq ft exhibit in Santa Fe to pay amusement park ticket prices for an experience that they only spent two hours at. And in order to get visitors to return for multiple visits, all we had to do was invest modestly in new art compared to building multi-million dollar rides every few years. Not only was our model disruptive to the

traditional world of art, we threw into question so many assumptions around attractions in general.

I'm a huge fan of amusement parks and theme parks. I've been a card-carrying coaster enthusiast since I was 15 years old. So I immediately started imagining how the attractions industry could learn from Meow Wolf's success. I landed on one simple question: What if the amusement park industry invested heavily in art?

This question solves so many issues simultaneously. For one, Meow Wolf proves that audiences really just want to experience the magic of the imagination when they visit attractions rather than the adrenaline and sugar rush that amusement parks have been so heavily focused on.

Meow Wolf shows art is not just for the elite, says Kadlubeck



PHOTO: KATE RUSSELL/COURTESY OF MEOW WOLF

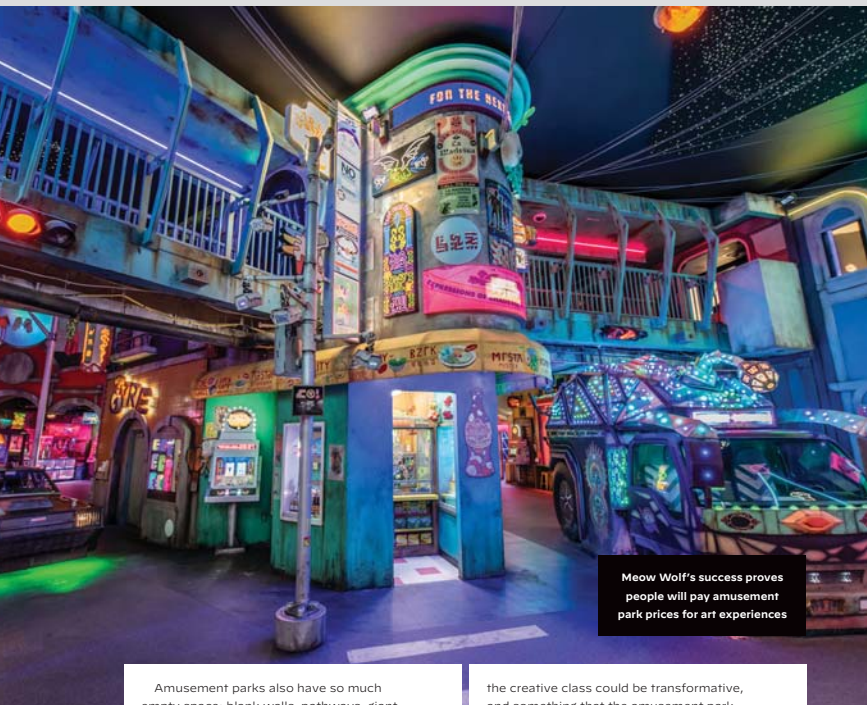


PHOTO: KATE RUSSELL, COURTESY OF MEOW WOLF

Meow Wolf's success proves people will pay amusement park prices for art experiences

Amusement parks also have so much empty space; blank walls, pathways, giant monochrome structures, and empty gathering spaces that are perfect blank canvases for amazing creative work. Imagine just how many social media posts would come out of a guest's visit if they had a bunch of cool art to look at. Plus, investing heavily in art could build a genuine relationship with local communities, activating a population of artists who would love to have their art showcased to park-goers.

This idea is not unlike the paradigm shift we've been seeing with food offerings at parks. Many parks across the US have begun successfully implementing local food vendors, food trucks, and stands that deliver higher quality options, bring their park into the 21st century, and connect with local communities.

The most intriguing upside to this possibility would be the amount of opportunity that could be provided to artists around the world. Consider how much a park invests in giant coasters and rides every year. Now imagine if even just a fraction of that budget went to emerging artists instead. The uplifting of

the creative class could be transformative, and something that the amusement park industry could proudly stand behind.

In 2019, Elitch Gardens in Denver collaborated with Meow Wolf to open the world's first 'art ride,' a dark ride refurbishment called Kaleidoscope that became their top attraction upon opening.

I'd love to see the day when going to an amusement park was actually a diversified cultural experience, home to some of the coolest pieces of art imaginable. When we think about how the industry could evolve to keep up with the interests of the consumer, art is a solution that's not only magical but also provides incredible social impact and community engagement.

The evolution of the amusement park won't be found through technology or continuing an arms race of building bigger machines, it will be through listening to the audience's desire to be immersed in worlds of imagination. Those worlds are made possible by artists. Value the artist, empower and invest in the artist. It will be the best investment you could possibly make. ●

As inland surfing destination The Wave announces plans to open six more sites, Magali Robathan goes for a surf and meets CEO Craig Stoddart to hear more about the plans



A clubhouse faces a central access spine and two large wave pools

WAVES OF CHANGE

The artificial surf park sector is fast-growing and set to boom over the coming years – predictions suggest that there will be around 100 surf parks operating around the world in the next decade. As Craig Stoddart, CEO of inland surf lake The Wave, tells me: “It’s a very blank canvas right now – there are only five operational surf parks in the world. We intend to be one of the leading multi-site operators internationally; there will always be a few significant players in the industry, and we want to be one of them.”

When I visit The Wave – just outside Bristol, UK – it’s been open for almost three years. The team has just announced an exclusivity agreement with Basque wavepool designer and manufacturer Wavegarden, and is pushing ahead with plans to open a second site in London in 2025, and a further five more sites across the UK and Ireland, while also looking at potential locations across Europe. It seems a good time to try the facility and to catch up with The Wave’s chief executive to find out more.

Wavegarden Cove technology is used to create up to 1,000 waves per hour



A range of initiatives aims to attract a broad spectrum of people to The Wave



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We wanted to remove the barriers to a sport that brings real joy and huge mental and physical benefits

PHOTO: GLOBAL SHOTS

The Wave worked with the adaptive surfing community on the design of the site

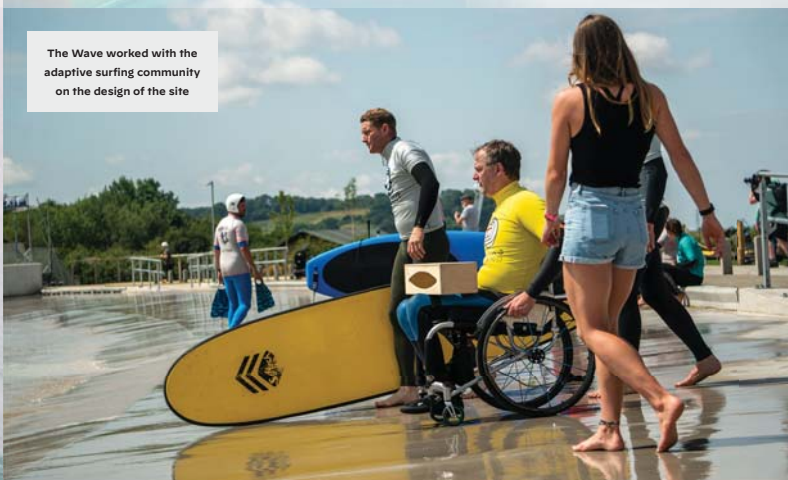


PHOTO: SUPREMACY AND



The Wave worked with Finisterre to develop kit for Muslim women

MAKING SURFING ACCESSIBLE

When The Wave founder Nick Hounsfield first had the idea of opening an artificial surf lake, wave generating technology was still in its infancy. An osteopath and lifelong surfer, Hounsfield was determined to harness the physical and mental benefits of surfing, and to open a safe, accessible place for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to try the sport.

When Hounsfield came across Basque wavemaking company Wavegarden (www.wavegarden.com) via a Youtube video, he was impressed, and went to meet the brothers behind the company. That meeting led to the creation of The Wave, which features a 180m-long cove-shaped lake, with a pier in the centre, and uses Wavegarden Cove technology to create up to 1,000 waves per hour. The waves are generated using 40 paddles which move backwards and forwards.

Importantly, the system is customisable and can be used to generate waves of different height, length, frequency, power and speed, so that a facility can be made suitable for everyone from complete beginners through to champion surfers.



The Wave founder Nick Hounsfield (left) and CEO Craig Stoddart (right)



The Wave opened in 2019; right from the start it was designed to be as inclusive as possible. The site has been designed with people with disabilities in mind – the whole place is fully accessible for wheelchairs, it has smooth ramps into the water, beach wheelchairs and specially trained surf coaches. There are also a number of initiatives in place to remove some of the barriers to surfing and encourage more diversity in the sport, including women-only surfing sessions, a partnership with outdoor clothing brand Finisterre (www.finisterre.com) to develop a wetsuit for Muslim women, and funded surfs for children from deprived inner city areas of Bristol.

Highlights from 2021 included the opening of 25 glamping-style accommodation units on the site, meaning visitors can stay for several nights, and the hosting of the English Adaptive Surf Championships for the second time.

MY EXPERIENCE

The day I arrived at The Wave for my beginners lesson was a truly miserable one – cold, low mist, heavy rain. “Makes no difference once you’re in the water. Rip it and grip it,” advised my surf-mad brother, when I messaged him to say I was having second thoughts about the wisdom of taking my first lesson on a freezing winter day.

Things didn’t improve much when I pulled up at the waterlogged, pot-holed carpark, and realised it was a 1km walk to the Clubhouse and lake [this is due to planning laws, although surfers with mobility issues can drive right up to the venue]. There are signs along the

way to encourage you to keep going, but it wasn’t a fun walk, with the rain really hammering down by this point.

As soon as I walked into the warm, bright, welcoming Clubhouse, my spirits lifted. I checked in, was kitted out in a wetsuit, boots and gloves, and directed to my group lesson – the whole process was very smooth and well organised. Beginners lessons cost £60 and include wetsuit and board hire, as well as half an hour of coaching on land and an hour in the water.

Our instructor, Teigh, was excellent, explaining the safety aspects of surfing and how to paddle and pop up on our boards in a clear and easy to understand way.

In the water, we took it in turns to catch (or try to catch) the waves. Teigh gave us a helpful push-off onto the wave to start with, until we learned to paddle and catch the waves ourselves. He watched us and was extremely encouraging, giving each of us tips and things to try on our next go.

The experience has been designed really well, so the water didn’t feel at all crowded, and there was plenty of space to catch the waves without fear of colliding with anyone else. The waves come in sets, with a break in between to get back out and catch your breath. There were several ‘Wavemakers’ in the water watching us all, and we felt extremely safe. I’d wanted to try The Wave for a while, but was worried about feeling intimidated or self-conscious – once in the water, this wasn’t a worry at all. All in all, I was very impressed, and would definitely like to go back with my children.

PHOTOGRAPHIC

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We'll develop further activities in addition to surfing that will create a health and wellbeing destination around active leisure – we might look at skate parks, bike trails, yoga, nature trails and bouldering

Once I'd dried, off, I spoke to The Wave CEO Craig Stoddart, to find out more about the company's ambitious growth plans.

You've announced a partnership with Wavegarden to open several more sites across the UK and Ireland. What does this mean for the business?

We've just announced an exclusivity agreement with Wavegarden, who are our technology partners and providers of The Wave technology kit. It's a geographical exclusivity for most of the UK and the whole of Ireland.

We always intended to have a multi-site approach – what we needed to do was prove the model and show what it was capable of. Without COVID we would have probably done this a lot earlier – we secured a site in the Lee Valley in London about four years ago. We're now really pushing that forward.

We're looking to get the planning applications submitted for the Lee Valley site later this year. I'm hoping to be close to starting construction this time next year. Realistically it will be a late 2024/early 2025 opening date. By this time next year I'd hope to be close to starting construction on the London site, having successfully got a planning permission in place with at least one other site – probably one in the north of England.

By then, I would also like to have identified at least three or four other sites across the UK and Ireland. We're also looking at a number of sites in Europe at the moment.

Where are you looking for sites?

I can't be too specific at this stage, but we're negotiating on a site in the north of England, in and around the Peak District, and we're also looking for further sites, particularly in the South East of England.

The Wave has a development agreement with Wavegarden

One of the things we're looking at is failed golf courses – there's an oversupply of golf courses in the UK and quite a number have shut. They have planning for leisure in the green belt, they have good facilities, generally good access, and good access to water.

What do you look for in a potential site?

Typically we look for quite large sites – at least 50 acres and ideally about 100 acres. We're looking at green spaces rather than pre-developed sites and the sites should ideally be relatively flat. They need to have good connectivity, ideally with sustainable transport options.

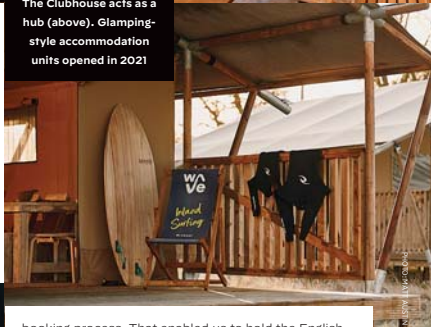
The other key thing for us is to be able to provide other facilities alongside the surf lake. While the surf lake is the hook and the anchor, we view ourselves more as a health and wellbeing destination. In time we'll develop further activities in addition to surfing that will create a health and wellbeing destination around active leisure – we might look at skate parks, bike trails, yoga, nature trails and bouldering.

It's also important to us to be able to provide accommodation. We have 25 glamping units in Bristol, and we'd ideally like to be able to put in around 75 – 100 accommodation units in our new sites – these are likely to be a mix of units, including some insulated accommodation that will help us extend the season.

The final element we're looking for is space to put solar arrays, so we can power the site off-grid.



The Clubhouse acts as a hub (above). Glamping-style accommodation units opened in 2021



In Bristol we recently got planning permission and have got a funding agreement in place to put in 10 acres of solar and battery array. We already buy 100 per cent renewable energy, but this should enable us to produce about 110 per cent of our energy requirement ourselves.

How would you sum up the philosophy behind The Wave?

We want to make surfing available for people of all ages, all backgrounds and all abilities. The sport has historically been quite inaccessible for various reasons – geography, the challenges of getting to the beach, the health and safety risks when you throw yourself into the sea and the male-dominated nature of surfing. All of those things are barriers to a sport that brings real joy and huge mental and physical benefits. We felt there had to be another way, and that it could be a sport for everyone.

We sponsor Surf England to help adaptive surfing with the goal of sending some of the elite athletes off to the World Adaptive Games. A lot of that community are big champions of ours, and we got a number of them involved in the design of The Wave site.

We work really hard to provide an accessible surf experience for as many people as possible; the site has been designed to be accessible for wheelchairs and all of our systems are set up so that if you have adaptive needs we can work with those to get you surfing – that's part of our normal

booking process. That enabled us to hold the English Adaptive Surf Open championships here last year.


Another focus is on cultural access to surfing. A lot of minority communities feel surfing is not something they've been exposed to – we're trying to break some of those barriers down. We've worked with Finisterre who have developed a suit for Muslim women so they can feel comfortable surfing – we hope that is opening up the sport to that community. We're also trying to open up surfing to more women.

We're trying to harness the blue health benefits of surfing. We work closely with a charity called The Wave Project which brings in children and young adults with anxiety and mental health challenges. They're receiving funding from the NHS because they now have enough data to show that the outcomes they're getting through surf therapy are significantly better than normal medical interventions. It's reducing the reliance on antidepressants and drugs and delivering better outcomes for the kids.

And finally we offer significantly discounted surfs and try to raise funding to enable more people to try – that ranges from philanthropic donors to corporate groups to public grants. We have some philanthropic donors who are focused on bringing in children from schools in deprived inner city areas, for example. This year the target is to do more than 5,000 social impact-funded sessions. ●

More: www.thewave.com

POWER PLATFORMS

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a dark suit and a patterned tie, sits in the foreground of a large, empty theater. He is looking directly at the camera with his hands clasped. The theater seats are a deep red color, and the background is dark, creating a sense of solitude and focus on the subject.

Experience platforms are one of the biggest growth opportunities in today's experience economy, says author and thought leader Joe Pine. He explains how to approach them

Pine co-authored *The Experience Economy* with James Gilmore



Disney's MagicBand+ debuts this year at Walt Disney World

Platforms – places where buyers and sellers come together to exchange money for offerings – are not a new phenomenon, at least not in the physical world. Commodities have been sold in farmers markets forever.

High streets and shopping centres have long provided platforms for tangible goods, while malls were more a place for services, such as shoe repair and dry cleaners.

Disneyland is itself a platform, bringing together numerous experiences in one place for guests to enjoy and remember (even if an operational platform, rather than one with offerings from many different suppliers.)

Digital technology has amped up the power and network effects of such transactional platforms, enabling millions and potentially billions of buyers to connect with a boundless number of sellers. Amazon and eBay were early pioneers of goods platforms on the Internet, while Royal FloraHolland switched its commodity flower auctions to digital decades ago. Digital service platforms proliferate across most industries, from Uber to Fiverr to Grubhub, Bumble, Venmo and on and on the list grows.



PHOTO: DISNEY

And, increasingly, digital platforms offer experiences. Think of Airbnb, which originally sold access to a sofa, a room, a house, but in 2016 created Airbnb Experiences to enable those staying in Airbnb host properties to connect with local experience stagers, particularly those that made guests feel like a local in their visited locale.

Think of the value unleashed – consumers gained easier access to a better overarching

Theme parks, FECs and attractions should be embracing experience platforms

experience; local experience stagers gained easier access to a set of consumers eager to experience the locale; and Airbnb got a piece of every transaction.

When the pandemic hit and the platform pivoted to digital experiences, this enabled Airbnb to continue garnering income, while saving many companies that would have gone under without visitors, and saving the sanity of many consumers.

Operational Experience Platforms

Earlier I described Disneyland as a physical operational platform because it wasn't multisided like all of the rest above: The Walt Disney Company is not the only experience stager with offerings in the space. It also was one of the first to offer a digital operational platform with its MyMagic+ system in 2013, enabling visitors to connect to, buy, and operate experiences (as well as many services on which the experiences were built, such as park admission and hotel room entry). Guests particularly interacted with it through the IoT device the company created, MagicBand.

John Padgett, one of the original five members on the project, eventually left for Carnival Corp. where at the Consumer Electronics Show in 2017 he and CEO Arnold Donald announced the Ocean Medallion. This operational experience platform set a new bar for its incredible degree of customisation, enabling every crew member to greet and interact with every guest by name and act on their preferences.

The platform creates a mass customised itinerary for each guest and party and as it learns more – creating what Carnival calls a “guest genome” – it can send out personal experience invitations to enhance itineraries. The Ocean Medallion can even learn things such as when a guest is on the pool deck with his kids his favorite drink is iced tea with no lemon; in the bar with his buddies it's a mojito; and in the restaurant with his spouse it's a glass of Shiraz.



Carnival's Ocean Medallion experience platform “set a new bar for its incredible degree of customisation,” says Pine

PHOTO: CARNIVAL CORPORATION

PHOTO: CARNIVAL CORPORATION



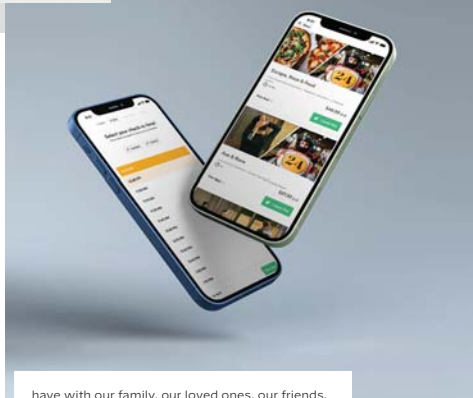
De Kartfabriek in the Netherlands uses Briq Bookings to customise its offer

Find your role to play in experience platforms

Many companies, such as Briq Bookings, access, and Holovis are now providing experience platforms that attractions can customise and deploy to their own operations. Every theme park, amusement, family entertainment centre, or attraction of any significant size should be looking at how it can embrace such platforms to enhance and customise operations to each individual guest.

Don't neglect your presence on the multisided transactional platforms such as Airbnb, Amazon Explore, Red Balloon and Virgin Experience Days – on and on that list goes. (I think there is at least one operating in nearly every country in the world.) They can be great ways to be discovered and booked by consumers, both local and global.

And despite the tremendous growth in all these kinds of platforms, there's room for many more. The Experience Economy is set to grow tremendously, for the one thing we learned for sure from the pandemic is that, at least in the developed world, we don't need more stuff. What gives life meaning is the shared experiences we



have with our family, our loved ones, our friends, our colleagues, and even with complete strangers.

Experience platforms can connect us to these meaningful experiences, and power, enhance, and customise them to our individual wants, needs, and desires. ●

More: www.attractionsmanagement.com/joepine



CALE HEIT

With two newly opened rides at Motiongate Dubai and a raft of exciting projects in development, FORREC is riding the wave of a pent up demand for shared experiences, says its CEO



When Cale Heit took over as CEO of global entertainment design firm FORREC in 2017, he'd already been working for the company for 25 years. Heit joined as a landscape architect in 1993 and worked his way up through the ranks to lead the theme parks business, before taking the helm from former president and CEO Gordon Dorrett five years ago.

2022 has seen the opening of two new FORREC-designed attractions at Motiongate Dubai's expanded Lionsgate Zone: the John Wick Open Contract 4D free-spin rollercoaster and Now You See Me: High Roller spinning rollercoaster. Last year's projects included the opening of the Niagara Parks Power Station as an immersive tourist attraction – FORREC worked closely with the client team to repurpose the hydroelectric power plant as an attraction. As part of this ongoing project, Thinkwell Group created an immersive light show and Science North the exhibit design – both opened in January 2022. Further experiences will launch this summer.

Here, Cale Heit shares his insights with *Attractions Management*.

What trends do you see emerging in the attractions industry?

We see a pent-up demand for transformational experiences connecting us all. Socialisation and shared experiences with family and friends among larger crowds are paramount to who we are as human beings. Experiences that allow for these interactions are critical as a shared community. We feel whole when we have opportunities to share joy, be in awe, learn, laugh, and cry.

We continue to hear the question regarding online versus in-person experiences. Why debate when I ask, "why can't there be both?" Better integration of these two will lead to more immersive and repeatable experiences.

The online experience has jumped years ahead since the pandemic started. This includes how we live, work and play. There's no going back, but rather moving forward with how we combine the new way of meeting our needs. The possibilities of increasing connections through in-person and online engagements can't be overlooked.

However, opportunities to be in the moment is something we continue to be challenged to deliver and this has been exacerbated by the lines of life and work being blurred as we move towards a more flexible work environment.



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***We're in an amazing growth period
for attractions in our industry***”

What's on your wishlist to visit in 2022?

The list is long as we're in an amazing growth period for attractions in our industry.

I'm excited to experience our work at Dubai Parks and Resort, especially the John Wick: Open Contract experience and ride (www.attractionsmanagement.com/JohnWick and www.attractionsmanagement.com/JohnWickfans) and the Now You See Me: High Rollers attractions at Motiongate. The entire team from DXBE, Lionsgate, consultants and the team at FORREC did an amazing job. The innovations at Area 15 are also high on my list to explore.

Universal Beijing is another one of our projects that I'm excited to experience once travel into China is easier.

Super Nintendo World is a must experience in Japan, and being a big Marvel fan, the Avengers Campus at Disneyland will be another go-to during the 2022 season.

What's FORREC working on right now?

We're leading the visioning of various cultural attractions from greenfield in one case to an existing attraction in another. For the latter project, we're working with the operations team to research, assess and make recommendations for upgrading the experience with added capacity and attracting a broader demographic.

In both of these attractions and in most of our work, the need for authentic experiences that truly represent the people, natural

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I'm excited to experience our work at Dubai Parks and Resorts

environment and social connections of that region are a key driver. Being sensitive to not impose biases on our work allows for more inclusive designs that reflect the culture, further bringing meaning and connections that allow the purpose of the attraction to be the star.

We've found that receiving input from stakeholders has never been more crucial whether through open forums or cultural representatives and speciality consultants. This research has come to be critical for the creation of experiences. As an example, we're currently working together with an indigenous consultant to fully capture a non-colonial mindset for a cultural attraction.

Despite the limitations on travel, we're active in Asia, including China, as well as North America, and have several projects in the MENA region, including KSA.

We're also very excited to participate in the grand opening of LEGOLAND Korea Resort. Our long-standing partnership with Merlin has led to many successful projects and we're immensely excited to share in the celebration with the LEGOLAND team.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FORREC

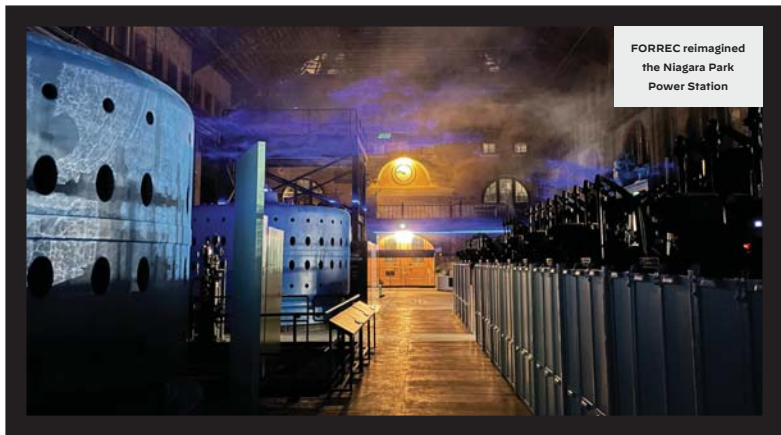
Heit started working for FORREC as a landscape architect in 1985

What are your plans?

To remain successful and grow as a company you must have a strong purpose, a visionary strategy, and propensity to set achievable goals.

I'm excited about providing creative, quality design and design management offerings to our clients through a broadening of our studio's expertise and experience, and focusing on important, strategic partnerships.

Another great opportunity I see is aligning with the rapid changes in our industry. We're experiencing a shift in the blurring and combining of project types, whether it be retail, attractions,



FORREC reimagined the Niagara Park Power Station

PHOTO COURTESY OF NIAGARA PARKS COMMISSION



The John Wick: Open Contract ride starts with a journey through the 'Continental Hotel'

or accommodation. We've seen that standalone commercial centres, waterparks and theme parks which have been designed for one purpose are no longer as viable as they once were. Having a multi-sector approach with a lens on people-centric design is something we're focused on.

How are you taking the FORREC legacy forward?

Our legacy is based on five key pillars: hiring and retaining exceptional people, creating long-lasting relationships with our partners, staying creative and innovative, offering a breadth of design and design management services, and using our experience and know-how as subject matter experts to deliver the vision.

For each of these offerings, FORREC sets goals to build upon this great foundation. That said we will remain nimble to help us grow our business to reflect the hyper environment of constant change we continually face.

Our industry is one of the most dynamic and innovative in terms of creating experiences that connect and engage people. However, we cannot continue to achieve success in our attractions without considering three key factors that impact us greatly: inclusivity, sustainability, and talent.

These three factors are critical to the long-term success of the attractions industry and individual businesses; it will take a concerted and measured effort by all to create meaningful changes in these areas. ●

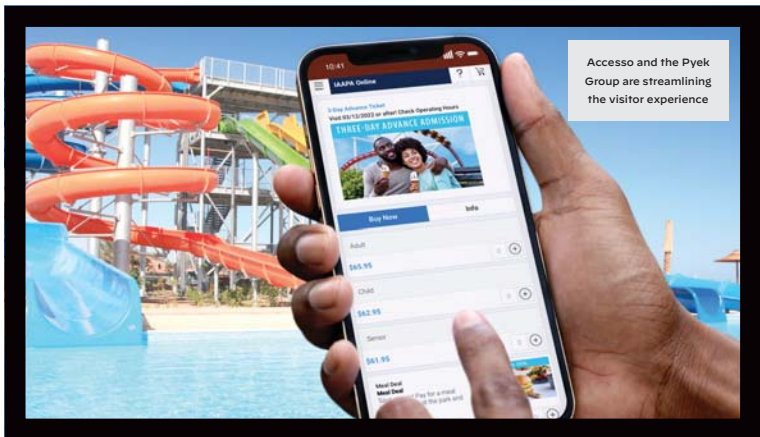


The Now You See Me: High Roller has launched at Motiongate Dubai

Product Innovation

Suppliers tell *Attractions Management* about their latest product, design and technology news

For the latest supplier news and company information, visit attractions-kit.net



Accesso and the Pyek Group are streamlining the visitor experience

IMAGE COURTESY OF ACCESSO

Accesso partners with US waterparks

Attractions technology provider Accesso Technology Group plc has signed a three-year deal with Pyek Group to provide eCommerce, on-site ticketing and mobile F&B technologies for the group's four North American waterparks.

Through this partnership, Accesso Solutions are actively supporting 160 sales points across the four Pyek Group properties: Typhoon Texas Austin in Pflugerville; Typhoon Texas Houston in Katy; Cowabunga Canyon in Spring Valley, Nevada; and, Cowabunga Bay Las Vegas in Henderson, Nevada.

Typhoon Texas Austin and Typhoon Texas Houston feature family-friendly attractions including the Shootout seven storey open-air slide; the 480,000-gallon

Lazy-T River and large-scale water bucket and play structure.

Pyek Group has also implemented Accesso solutions at two Nevada waterparks – Cowabunga Canyon and Cowabunga Bay Las Vegas – which the management group owns and manages through a merger completed in November 2021. The newly named Cowabunga Canyon features more than 25 slides and attractions across a 20-acre property, including the Tornado – a slide that catapults riders to a zero-gravity experience.

"We're excited to partner with Pyek Group and support their operations in such a forward-thinking way," said Steve Brown, Accesso CEO. "Through this

partnership, Pyek Group is delivering a digital experience the modern consumer craves – one that is intuitive, engaging and designed to maximise the value of their visit."

Together, Pyek Group and Accesso are streamlining the guest experience at all four waterpark venues with the introduction of three distinct solutions: The fully hosted Accesso Passport® eCommerce ticketing suite, the Accesso SiriuswareSM point-of-sale ticketing solution, and Accesso's guest experience management platform, which enables mobile F&B functionality across the waterparks



Steve Brown

attractions-kit keyword
Accesso



Smeetz offers smart ticketing software designed for attractions and cultural venues

Smeetz brings new ticketing offers to France

Smeetz, a provider of smart ticketing software for attractions and cultural venues, has announced that it will continue its expansion across Europe with the launch of operations in France.

With the COVID-19 pandemic accelerating the digitisation process across leisure and attractions, Smeetz CEO Alexandre Martin has said it is time to shake up



Jean-Marc Tille

the French ticketing market.

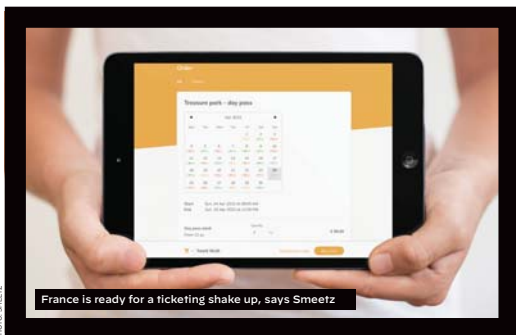
"After successfully entering the UK market and positioning Smeetz as a powerful player there last year, starting operations in France seemed

to be the logical continuation of our expansion plans. The diversity of the attractions and cultural venues' landscape and the lack of data-driven solutions to successfully run their business was the hint for us to jump in," he said.

Jean-Marc Tille has been appointed country manager for France and Belgium, with a responsibility for developing business initiatives, growing the team in France, positioning Smeetz as a leader of dynamic pricing in the French attraction industry and establishing the company regional office.

The pandemic has sped up digitisation in ticketing globally, but particularly in France where players were less advanced than elsewhere, according to Tille.

"Digitalisation increased the need for marketing. By making experiences available online, attractions had to start thinking of strategies to market, price and promote their products. Pricing strategies are allowing venues to adapt to new post-COVID consumer behaviours. Seen as unfair and unethical for a long time, dynamic pricing is beginning to be seen for its true value to both venues and end customers and will surely become a norm in France."



France is ready for a ticketing shake up, says Smeetz

attractions-kit keyword

Smeetz



Mark Locker

PHOTO: ATTRACTIONS.IO - ANASTASIA JOHNSON

Merlin has worked
with Attractions.io
since 2018

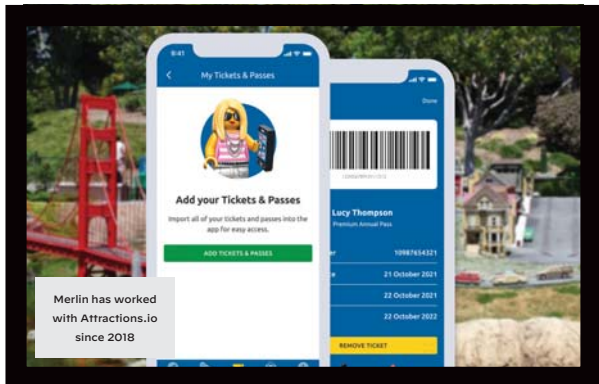


PHOTO: ATTRACTIONS.IO

Attractions.io expands partnership with Merlin Entertainments

Merlin Entertainments has announced that it is expanding its partnership with Attractions.io, adding a new mobile wallet to its theme park apps.

Attraction.io's mobile wallet allows guests at Merlin attractions to store tickets and season passes in a mobile wallet within each attraction's individual, branded app.

The new functionality marks an expansion of Merlin's partnership with guest experience platform Attractions.io, which has provided the group's theme park apps since 2018.

Digital project manager at Merlin, Kayleigh Fields said: "It was a

pleasure to work with Attractions.io on this project. Their time and dedication meant that we delivered a product that met our needs and most importantly will improve guest satisfaction and create operational efficiencies for our attraction teams."

Unlike alternatives such as PDF or email-based tickets, the app automatically optimises passes for scanning and is accessible offline, meaning guests can head straight through the turnstiles.

Merlin's mobile apps have already been adopted by up to 90 per cent of Alton Towers visitors, said the attractions company. By expanding the app's functionality to include

a mobile wallet, Merlin hopes to respond to the needs of its "digitally native visitors, for whom self-service tools are quickly becoming the preferred form of customer service".

The new mobile wallet feature is currently available at Chessington World of Adventures, LEGOLAND Billund, Alton Towers, Thorpe Park and LEGOLAND Windsor. Justin Skinner, global digital director at Merlin, said: "The introduction of mobile wallets across the Merlin portfolio adds another piece to our digital jigsaw. We see the app as the linchpin of the guest experience and look forward to continuing to expand its services to make it the one-stop destination for guests visiting our attractions."

Mark Locker, CEO & founder of Attractions.io, said: "We're delighted to extend our partnership with Merlin Entertainments to incorporate a digital wallet into their parks' mobile apps. The admissions process is a common source of frustration for guests itching to start their day out, so it's fantastic to see Merlin embracing technology that will streamline the guest experience and make it even easier to start their adventure." ●

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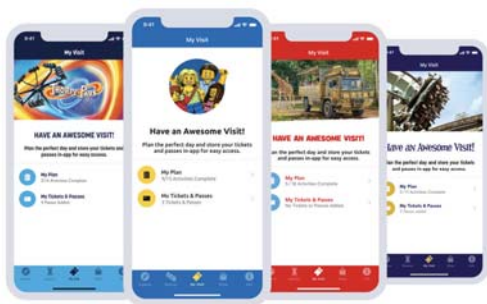


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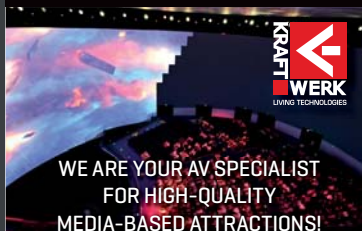
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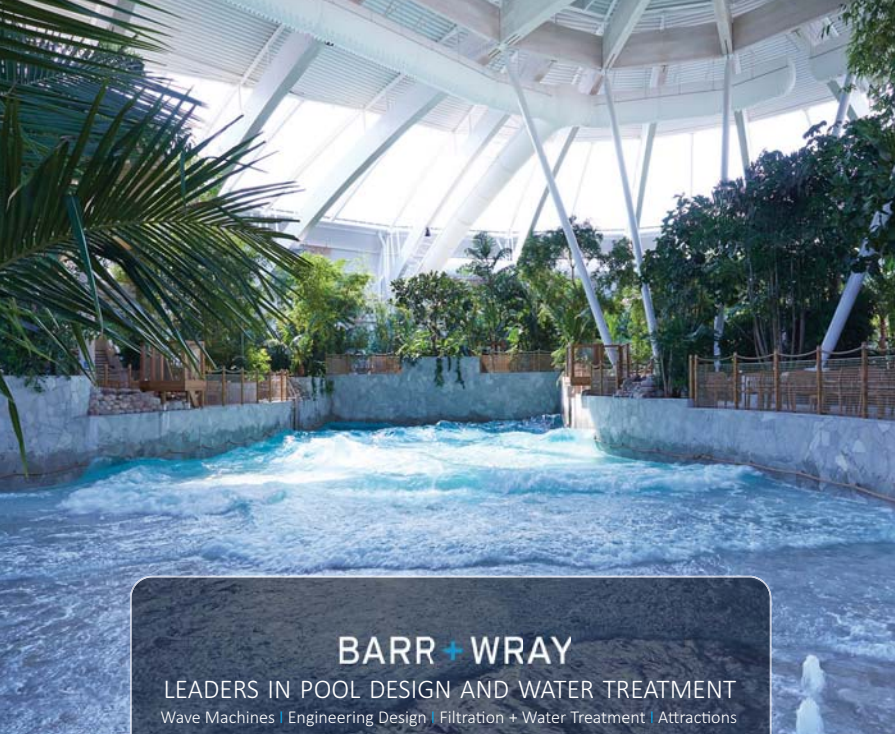
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