

Creative Southwark mid-term review

Cultural Investment Impact Case Studies

Case Study 1: Theatre Peckham

Using digital technology to reach new audiences



For the Christmas production of *Robin Hood: The Arrow of Destiny*, we hired a filmmaker to create a trailer, to give a flavour of the show and engage with young local audiences.

Matteo Zenini is a skilled filmmaker, who has worked on numerous projects including Sony, Virgin Media and London Film School. As our first in-house production under new leadership, we wanted to film around the local area and celebrate our community roots.

We filmed the two lead cast members, one of whom is a Theatre Peckham alumni. For both, *Robin Hood* marked their professional stage debuts.

Much of the ethos within the production was to connect locally and to ensure our new space felt accessible to many. We filmed around the local Sceaux Gardens estate, as we knew this would be instantly recognisable to our neighboring communities and provide a connection to young audiences. A large percentage of our participants are from the local estate.

Robin Hood was a festive, family show. In the run up to opening night, the trailer premiered on our YouTube channel and across all of our social platforms. Around the launch we engaged in paid social out-reach across Facebook and Instagram to promote engagement with targeted audiences. These audiences included families, those with an interest in family theatre and children's activities across London.

As a result the campaign reached 1,686 people and received 241 engagements on Facebook alone. In the months leading up to Robin Hood, we saw a significant increase in engaged following, including an 8.5% rise on Instagram. See the film here; [Robin Hood: Arrow of Destiny](#)

Case study 2 & 3: Blue Elephant Theatre

Residents supported into working in the creative industries

Brian Beaton is a local resident whose daughter goes to our Young People's Theatre. He approached us about developing work and we invited him to our initial meeting to form a Writers' Group. He has been a regular member of our Writers' Group ever since, developing his play Lunch Breaks as part of the sessions. The process has inspired him to make some quite big changes to the play, eg changing the gender of a



character, and enabled him to see how the play worked on its feet. It is now due to be performed in November at the London Theatre in New Cross with a cast which includes other members of the Writers' Group.

“Engaging in the monthly Theatre writing meetings at BET has been extremely enjoyable. It gives the opportunity to meet other people who have a strong interest in theatre and see how imaginative and various everyone's work can be. It also gives the chance to read other people's work and to practice you're own acting skills.

“To be able to use the lovely and individual theatre space at BET is very inspiring and the staff are friendly and knowledgeable. I have been lucky to have my developing play read during a few meetings, and the ideas and support coming from this has inspired me to complete the script, book it into a fringe festival and direct it. I am also working with actors who attend the writing meetings in the play. I feel BET is a shining star in the community and I only hope that it has a bright future and continues to show fantastic theatre and support people to engage in their passion.” Brian Beaton, Camberwell Resident

Supporting young people aged 12 to 19 years

X is autistic and attends Young People's Theatre. He is a dedicated member and often expresses the desire to do more such activities as he feels his family tries to baby him too much. He normally plays quite serious roles, eg parents, in showcases. We invited him to join our senior summer school even though it was intended for 10 – 16 year olds as we knew he might be bored during the holidays otherwise. It was the first time X had spent so much time with us and he enjoyed and took part in all the activities. He did, however, again express frustration over his home situation and the restrictions he feels his family place on him due to his vulnerabilities. He was able to have several conversations with our staff about this and we spoke to his family about how he was feeling when they came to the end of week showcase. We have also tried to signpost him to other opportunities.

During the week, he developed and displayed skills we were unaware he had, as we gave quite a lot of time to singing, spoken word and dance. At the showcase, he sang in a small group of five and performed a dance solo, showing the performance skills he'd developed as part of the week.

Case Study 4: London Bubble Theatre

Bubble Creative Volunteers

Amelia works full time for the National Youth Theatre, primarily with 11 to 25 year olds. She trained as one of Bubble's Creative Volunteers in September 2018 and supported our Tea Break Theatre every Friday for a term. Tea Break offers adults with time available in the day the opportunity to make theatre at a free, drop in group. The needs and interests of the group are very diverse, and the age demographic covers a span of 60 years, with participants in their 20s and 80s, and everything in-between. It is run by a lead and assistant facilitator but the presence of volunteers is highly valuable for this group particularly as the drop in nature means we don't know who will attend each week. Amelia is one of several Creative Volunteers who support participants to take part in Bubble groups.



“Working with Tea Break was such a rewarding, warm and wonderful experience. The ability to observe and facilitate a group like Tea Break with such a span of ages, experiences, abilities and personalities was so enriching for me personally and professionally and made me think about how we could all work to make theatre arts more intergenerational and inclusive. It was also lovely to be welcomed into another arts organisation and get a glimpse into the structure and approach of the company to help inform the way I and National Youth Theatre works”

Lead facilitator Helena, said that “Amelia’s presence has been hugely enabling for me and participants. One member of the group experiences anxiety in social situations, and was

able to discuss this with Amelia while I was leading the session. At other times, Amelia has adapted creative tasks for adults in the group with a physical or learning disability and provided creative ideas for workshop content. The presence of someone with a background in the creative industries and experience of working relationally in a participatory arts context is especially significant.

Paola is another Creative Volunteer & Arts Practitioner, who recently moved to Rotherhithe from Latin America. She has supported one of our Creative Elders groups taking place in Sheltered Housing Units. In particular she has supported a 93 year-old gentleman with English as an additional language. He tells us he is increasingly losing his hold on English words, and also has a hearing impairment. Paola works alongside him with a book and pen every week, writing and drawing to support his understanding of what the facilitator and other group members are saying. As an artist, she brings to the sessions a confidence in working more visually. Her capacity to give more focussed attention to one participant frees up the lead facilitator's ability to oversee the whole group.

As an artist, she tells us that through volunteering she has regained the space to participate in a creative group as well as learning more about social theatre and the crossover it has with her own work back in Uruguay. It's inspiring thoughts about a PhD, in which she'd be interested in looking at the methodology used on the Creative Elders Programme.