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Cover photo: Restoring the exterior of the Cincinnati Museum Center, Ohio, as part of the two-year renovation. Reopened 2018. Photo by Maria Dehne – Cincinnati Museum Center.

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Glasgow Pantomime: Initial Planning for an Exhibition

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Keywords Glasgow Pantomime; Exhibition Development; Collection Management; Glasgow Social History

Abstract The planning of an exhibition is a long process that brings together different themes, considerations, and professionals. This article describes the early stages of Glasgow Pantomime, a collection-based project for a temporary exhibition within Glasgow Museums. It also sheds light on what it means to plan and develop an exhibition in a specific setting. The aim of the project was to exhibit and display, for the first time in Glasgow, the Pantomime phenomenon: a participatory form of theater, closely related to the popular culture of the city and an annual event in which entire families participate. The research and development of the exhibition were implemented by the Social History Curator for Glasgow Museums and the author of this article between May and August 2016 at the Glasgow Museum Resource Centre. This article follows the progress of the research and activities carried out during the early stages of the exhibition planning. From these activities, four important documents were developed: the Concept Proposal, the Object List, the Interpretation Plan, and the Project Proposal. Lastly, this article briefly presents the results achieved and provides some recommendations.

About the Author Alessandra Ceglie completed a Master of Science in Museum Studies at the University of Glasgow. She also holds a Master of Art in Post-Classical Archaeology and a Bachelor of Art in Cultural Heritage Studies, both from the Università degli Studi di Bari (Italy). Alessandra has international experience in the cultural heritage and museum sectors in Italy, Malta, United Kingdom, and Germany. Her areas of interest are museum interpretation, collection research, and ancient history.

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Introduction

Defined as Scotland's other National Theater, the phenomenon of Pantomime has a long history in Scottish communities and has become an important aspect of popular culture of the country over the last two centuries ("Pantomime in Scotland" 2016). Every year, it attracts a very diverse audience that includes people of all ages. Pantomime has been the focus of

only one exhibition, *Pantomime in Scotland*, that between 2008 and 2010 toured the major theaters in Scotland, attracting around 63,000 people.

Pantomime, or “panto” as it is informally known, is a type of musical comedy, usually aimed at family audiences. It can be considered a form of participatory theater, as the public is invited to participate in the action of the performance, singing during some parts and shouting sentences at the actors. The genre has developed in the United Kingdom, where it is still widely popular, particularly during Christmas time, and combines song, dance, buffoonery, as well as topical references. It also includes comedy with stories freely drawn from the vast world of fairytales and folklore. The stories do not make any direct reference to Christmas and they are often based on traditional children stories, for example the fairytales of Henry Christian Andersen and Grimm Brothers. The most popular pantomime subjects are Cinderella, Aladdin, and Jack and the Beanstalk (Figure 1). Despite the original children’s story, the plot always includes comic and satirical effect, and sometimes even sexual innuendo. The retelling of the original story is almost never exact.



Figure 1: A Glass slipper held at the King’s Theatre and used for the Cinderella Show.

The following article presents the research, development, and results of a proposed temporary exhibition called Glasgow Pantomime. This exhibition would have explored the theme of pantomime among a specific urban context, inspired by the fact that the city of Glasgow is regarded as the center of Scottish Pantomime. Although it has been a distinctive part of the city’s cultural life, highly valued both by the public and professionals, Glasgow Pantomime would have been the first exhibition about this subject, which is not explored in any of the current long-term displays. Unfortunately, the project never went beyond the initial planning phase, due to a lack of necessary resources to fully develop and deliver the exhibition as planned. This is an unfortunate but not uncommon outcome within museums. The hope is that the exhibition will be fully realized in the future. This article also explores some of the positive outcomes that result from the work and staff time during the proposal process.

As does each collection-based project within Glasgow Museums, Glasgow Pantomime had to follow the procedures outlined by the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) guidelines. These guidelines require the project to go through five stages: Concept, Planning, Initiation, Implementation, and Completion. Each of these phases has, as a result, the drafting of a document that is gradually enriched with more details throughout the process (Figure 2), such as a concept proposal, object list, interpretation plan, and project proposal.

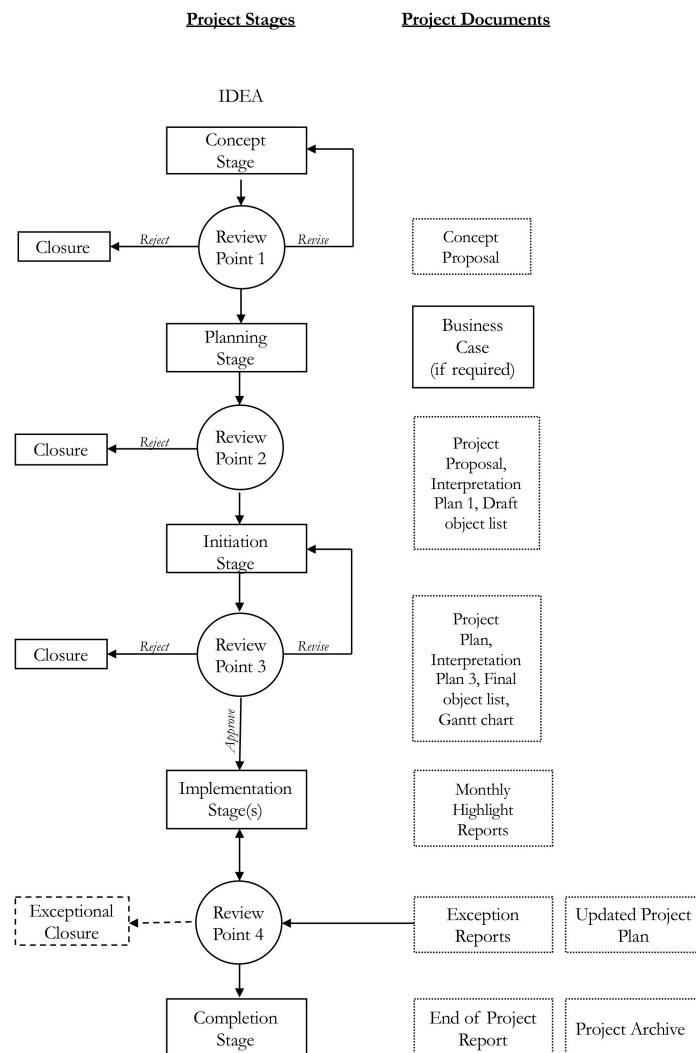


Figure 2: MoRPHE Project Stages. Source: Glasgow Museums.

Glasgow Museums and The People's Palace

All museums in Glasgow are managed by Glasgow Life, which is an organization that is responsible for managing and delivering cultural, leisure, and outdoor recreation services for the city. It is the largest museum service in the United Kingdom outside of London and operates 10 venues across the city. Glasgow Museums have been described as the finest civic collection in the UK and one of the finest in northern Europe. With strength and depth across the four major disciplines - art, human history, natural science, and transport and

technology - Glasgow Museums aspires to combine a commitment to social justice with excellence in research-based content.

The exhibition would have been hosted at the People's Palace Museum, in the east of the city. This museum traces the history of the city and its inhabitants from the second half of the eighteenth century to the present day. The history of this institution, the purpose and the philosophy that underlies its creation, and even the area in which it is located, are connected to one other. These features may help to better understand the Pantomime exhibition and the reasons why this space has been chosen for it.

The People's Palace and the adjacent Winter Gardens were opened to the public in January 1898. Its design was part of a much larger project that involved the redevelopment of the city, at a time when the majority of its inhabitants survived with very low living standards. Far from what it is today, Glasgow was one of the most overpopulated cities in Europe and afflicted with several problems. There were issues relating to public health, with very low hygiene-levels, and with almost all housing occupied by many more people than they should have been. This caused frequent epidemics and a very high mortality rate. In addition to this, poverty, crime, and alcoholism were also rife in the city (King 1985). These factors characterized Glasgow negatively, presenting it as an unhealthy city with poor living conditions.

In the nineteenth century, the east of Glasgow was known as one of the most populated and poorest areas of the city. It was in stark contrast to other areas such as the west end or the city center, which had other types of museums and cultural facilities, not easily accessible for a large part of the population. At the opening ceremony, Lord Rosebery expressed that the People's Palace was to become:

A palace of pleasure and imagination around which people may place their affection and which may give them a home on which their memory may rest. (Carnegie et. al. 1998).

A member of the dedicating committee, Baisland Bailie, expressed:

The general idea is that the permanent collections to be formed should relate to the history and industries of the city, and that some spaces should be set apart for special exhibitions to be held from time to time [...] One element of originality in the way of municipal enterprise that can be claimed for this institution lies in the combination, practically under one roof, of a museum, picture gallery, winter garden and music hall.

Glasgow Herald, 24th January 1898 (Carnegie et. al. 1998).

Over the years, the People's Palace has seen its collection gradually enriched with more and more objects, thanks to both the many donations and to the active work of the museum's staff. The history of Glasgow is illustrated through historical objects as well as paintings, photographs, prints, and oral history recordings covering all the aspects of daily life, and the development and growth of the city.

Today, the People's Palace is still considered as an institution dear to the inhabitants of Glasgow and beyond, able to attract more and more visitors over the years. In 2008 the museum welcomed approximately 252,000 people; this figure has increased to approximately 363,000 visitors in 2015 (ALVA). In 2013, Glasgow Life commissioned ScotInform to conduct a survey about the visitors of the People's Palace. Approximately 70% of visitors surveyed came from Scotland and nearly half of them from Glasgow (Glasgow City and surrounding areas). This percentage confirms the deep affection inhabitants of the city possess towards the museum. This statement rings even truer when another fact is considered: more than half of the surveyed respondents (61%) visited the museum more than once. Further investigating these statistics, it was found that these visitors were: from the area of Glasgow (87%) and with children (80%). The remainder (39%) were first-time visitors and they came from abroad or from other parts of the UK. In addition, the sole purpose of visiting the People's Palace specifically was the most common motivation among visitors surveyed (39%), while for a quarter of respondents the visit was part of a broader tour of the major tourist attractions in Glasgow (Scotinform, 2013).

Exhibition Concept and Proposal

During the Concept stage, an initial object list is drafted, and a Concept Proposal is created that briefly defines the idea, explaining how this matches the quality criteria, timeline, and outcomes. The collections that will be used for the project are also briefly outlined.

The idea of the Glasgow Pantomime project stems from the fact that the city of Glasgow has been the center of Scottish Pantomime since the nineteenth century. In 2008, there was a previous touring exhibition, *The Pantomime in Scotland*, which attracted around 63,000 people throughout Scotland, confirming how this form of national culture is still vital. The project was supported and built on the research conducted by Adrienne Scullion and Paul Maloney regarding Scottish popular theater, touring theater, and theater in rural areas. Compared to the previous exhibition, the Glasgow Pantomime exhibition focused on the urban context of Glasgow, exploring how this form of national culture is deeply connected with the city's thriving and diverse population.

The development of pantomime has a fairly long history and has its roots in the world of Greek-Latin classical theater. It is from the sixteenth century however, that pantomime significantly evolved into the genre we know today. As part of this process, a decisive role was played by the "Commedia dell'Arte," a popular form of theater born in Italy in the sixteenth century, that remained in vogue until the Goldoni's Reform of the comedy in the eighteenth century. Another significant role was played by the "Harlequinade," an adaptation of the Commedia dell'Arte, in a sense more purely comic (Mayer, 2003). In its first phase, the genre Pantomime was essentially mute, with performances that consisted solely of gestures and dance (Mayer, 2003). In that time, in the UK, spoken drama was allowed only in specific theaters. The development of the genre continued gradually during the eighteenth century and began to include dialogues. The stories were mostly re-workings of themes taken from Greek and Roman literature; between the first and the second act, the Harlequinade was placed. At the beginning of nineteenth century, the genre can be considered finally developed. The Pantomime stories began to include other topics such as fairy-tale, legends, and stories from folklore; furthermore, the space for the Harlequinade had greatly elongated and often it was the most important part of the whole show.



Figure 3: Prop held at the Pavilion Theatre Store.

In Scotland, Pantomime soon assumed different connotations from the rest of the UK, including an increasing number of local references in the performances. In Glasgow, The Princess Royal Theatre, located in the south of the city from 1880 until the Second World War, was marked by a distinctly Scottish tradition and hosted pantomimes written by Fred Locke, with lyrics characterized by numerous local cues. Another factor that contributed to making pantomime markedly Scottish was related to the music, in particular the involvement of musicians from the country's musical-halls. After World War II, the variety and entertainment sector faced two decades of crisis that led to the closure of several theaters and budget reduction of these shows (Bruce, 2000). However, pantomime managed to survive those years, due to its ability to change and adapt.

Within the concept proposal, the project team had to clarify how the exhibition would meet specific criteria, outlined in the "Management of Collections-Based Projects," by Glasgow Museums. An important emphasis was given to the section on Collection Development Strategy. Since 2011, the collections of Glasgow Museums have become the center of a new strategy, that outlined five areas that need to be improved: research, documentation, communication, partnerships, and capital projects.

The proposal also contains a section related to the Outcomes, which are based on Glasgow Life Strategic Objectives:

- To enhance the health and wellbeing of people who live, work and visit the city;
- To create a culture of learning and creativity that lets people flourish in their personal, family, community, and working lives;
- To enhance and promote the city's local, national, and international image, identity and infrastructure;
- To demonstrate the ongoing improvement in the quality, performance and impact of the services and opportunities we provide.

Finally, the Audience Development Plan identified two key audiences that the exhibition would have targeted: families and less frequent visitors to the People's Palace.

Object List

This list was drawn up using Mimsy, the collection database used by Glasgow Museums. It included basic information such as:

- Object name
- Catalog number
- Title
- Maker
- Materials
- Date and place made
- Measurements
- Short description
- A photograph of the object, in some cases.

This preliminary list was created by searching for all related objects with the theme of "pantomime" within the database. It was necessary to view each of them in order to assess any relevance to the theme and enrich the information contained in the list. In fact, not all of the information was completed and for the majority of the objects, information such as measurements and date of creation was missing. This process revealed that the collection of the Glasgow Museum Resource Centre was broader and richer than originally expected.

During this phase, many objects were found that related to pantomime in Glasgow, which had not contained any indication of "pantomime" in the database. Others, however, proved to be irrelevant to the topic and unrelated to the city of Glasgow. Consequently, they were excluded from the object list. At the end of this process, it was possible to define several categories of objects such as: posters, leaflets, programs, photographs, flyers, and paintings.

Another type of information needed, that became clear through this stage, was the general condition of the objects. All the details were recorded that could help provide a clear picture of each object's condition. This identified which objects could be exhibited and how, and which objects needed conservation. All of this data was added to the Object List, an excel spreadsheet (Figure 4), and shared with the rest of the Glasgow Museums staff.

Pantomime in Glasgow OBJECT LIST											
OBJECT LIST											
Thumbnail image	Accession Number	Object Name	Title	Date	How does this relate to the key message? - Theatre/Performer	Display Requirements (Curatorial) e.g. orientation, case needed	Height mm	Width mm	Depth mm	Diameter	Other notes/issues

Figure 4: Detail of the Object List document.

Possible Loans

Research was also conducted with the aim to enrich the object list with other categories of objects not present at the Glasgow Museum Resource Centre. Several meetings had been organized in order to view costumes and props held within theaters in Glasgow, with a long Pantomime tradition, like The King's Theatre and the Pavilion. Objects were also found in other institutions such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Through its online database, it was possible to find 13 posters that covered a time span ranging from the late nineteenth century to the whole of the twentieth century; they all appeared in good condition and were added to the Object List, because the poster category was quite poor. Really interesting objects were also found at the Scottish Theatre Archive, in Glasgow, including sketches of costumes and two sets of make-up, belonging to the famous actor Harry Lauder and dated early twentieth century (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Harry Lauder's set make-up. Held at the Scottish Theatre Archive.

Developing and Writing the Interpretive Plan

The Interpretation Plan Stage 1 is a document that is geared towards visitors and explains how to make the exhibition accessible to the receiving audience through six sections. Since it is closely object-based, this is a task that could be carried out only after the creation of a first object list.

Theme - In choosing the theme, the focus was on what the visitor could remember at the end of the visit. The theme, bound to the key objects, would be pantomime as part of the popular culture of Glasgow, an annual event in which entire families could participate.

Key Messages - The key messages provide the content to the exhibition's broader theme. Because the exhibition is of medium size, three key messages had been chosen. The first one was related to the origins of Pantomime, as a popular phenomenon in Glasgow beginning in the nineteenth century. The second was focused on pantomime as a ritual that is repeated every year, usually in the same theaters with similar stories, and always brings together different generations. Finally, the last one was focused on the characteristic of pantomime as a participatory form of theater, founded on interactions with the audience, and on the familiarity that the audience has with the stories, the characters, and the actors on stage.

Target Audiences - The primary identified audience was families. Pantomime is a subject in which different generations are able to reflect themselves: the family group, therefore, had proved to be the most immediate and natural target audience. Given the size and theme of this exhibition, a secondary audience was also identified. It consisted of a smaller group of visitors, composed of people interested in the local history of Glasgow, who might find remarkable insights within the exhibition.

Key Objects - The choice of the key objects related to the key messages. The objects or categories chosen were: a painting of Stanley Baxter; costume(s); poster or program(s) of the nineteenth century.



Figure 6 and 7: Picture portraying the actor Stanley Baxter and Stanley Baxter's costume. Held at King's Theatre.

Story Description - The project aimed to cover the development of the genre up to the present day. In this way, the project also intended to dwell on one of the peculiarities of Pantomime as a ritual to which Glaswegian families participate each year. Through the exhibition of costumes worn by the most famous pantomime stars, the second point was to revive the memories that visitors might have about their experience with earlier pantomimes.

Visitor Outcomes - The outcomes identified were twofold. Through the display of different objects, the exhibition intended to trace the history of this theatrical genre and offer insights about the close relationship between the city, its inhabitants, and Pantomime. The second outcome correlated to the emotional sphere, as it is likely that nearly all the visitors could have some memories of Pantomime. The goal was to convey a feeling of happiness within the visitor and make sure that he or she could relive and share emotions and memories associated with Pantomime.

Developing and Writing the Project Proposal

Budget

In order to be assessed properly, a project must clearly present the costs involved based on the object list and interpretation plan. The development of the object list prompted considerations related to conservation issues, that certainly could have presented an expense. The construction of new cases, especially for some programs that could have exhibited opened, was included in the provisional costs. Framing costs, as well as replacement frames for those that were damaged, were also part of the budget.

The possible loans also represented a cost. Institutions dictate obligations and specific costs that the borrower must agree. Borrowers are generally responsible for costs such as loan fees, fine art agent fees, courier travel fares including accommodation, insurance, and bespoke packing crates.

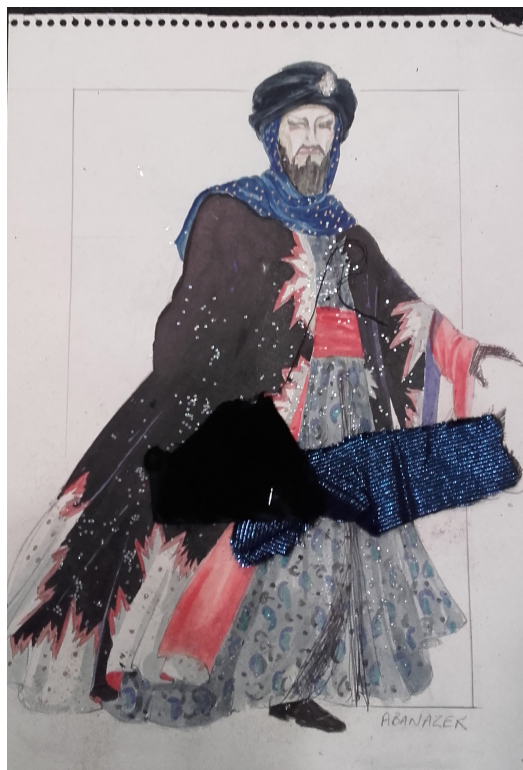


Figure 8: Sketch of a costume realized for the Citizen Theatre. Held at the Scottish Theatre Archive.

Another expense was presented by the venue and its preparation for the exhibition. The budget included the possibility of having to paint the gallery, as well as construction work related to the preparation of theatrical sets. Graphics, like panels and labels, had also been taken into account, together with reproduction fees.

Marketing and Communications

At this stage, the exhibition is still a proposal. Nevertheless, it is necessary to start thinking about a plan regarding the communication strategy. Since the project should have been managed by Glasgow Life/Glasgow Museums, the marketing activities should have been carried out by the Marketing Officer for Glasgow Museums.

This strategy would have been implemented principally through printed marketing, with the creation of leaflets and posters to be affixed in strategic locations such as the subway. It would have been advertised in guides about events in the city available both online and in printed version. Alongside this, social media would have been used as well, through Glasgow Museums and the People's Palace accounts. Targeted marketing would have also been used, directly addressing the target audience, such as the Local History Group. Finally, it was considered a collaboration with some theaters and the possibility to implement some cross-marketing and public programs.

Professionals Involved

Analyzing the documents already drafted, it was possible to better understand which kind of professionals are needed for the implementation of the project. The first professional figures included were the Manager and the Assistant Manager of the host museum. Professionals that managed duties related to construction, such as the Senior Technician, were also involved. The object list, as well as the draft of potential loans, demanded that two other important roles were considered, in order to accomplish all the conservation and loan responsibilities: the Senior Conservator and the Loans Manager. Finally, through the interpretation plan it was possible to identify other professionals such as the Learning and Access Curator, already consulted during the drafting of the Interpretation Plan and necessary for the development of public programs; the Managing Editor, for the evaluation and proofreading of all the exhibition texts; the Digital Manager and the AV technician for the digital resources and audio-visual elements.

Results and Recommendations

The first result of this project was the improvement of the objects' documentation and collection records. As aforementioned, the preliminary list of objects was not complete or contained inaccurate information. Often, objects were found with incomplete descriptions and without measurements or dates of creation. There were about 48 objects with no reference to "Pantomime" and "Glasgow" in their description. This lack of information affected the work, preventing staff from finding related objects and causing delays to the development of the object list. Incorrect information was revised, and data was added related to the date of creation, measurements, description, and location of the objects.

The development of the Object List achieved another significant outcome: the improvement of the collection's accessibility. During several visits to the Pods of the Glasgow Museum Resource Centre, about four objects were found without any catalogue number. This is an

important part of the collection record; without it, in fact, an object is not traceable. These four objects were all related to Pantomime in Glasgow and were very interesting pieces for the exhibition. During this stage, they were provided with all the information, including the catalogue number. Consequently, it is now possible to track them through the collection's database system 'Mimsy' and they could become the subject of other research which would further the documentation. While compiling the object list, the condition of objects were also evaluated and information highlighted which items would need special attention. These observations are useful for a future conservation team.

This project has represented a unique opportunity to view and research a considerable number of objects and, therefore, to assess a significant part of the Glasgow Museums Collection. This is an important result, considering that the area investigated, related to the Theater, has not received a lot of attention over the years. The main recommendation for Glasgow Museums and other museums is to continue supporting and encouraging projects that are able to document areas that have been underestimated for years. The research and planning process removes possible barriers to use of the collection.

Another noteworthy achievement of the project was that it started a network between institutions and nearby theaters. An additional recommendation, therefore, is that effort continues to be put into maintaining this network and the connections established. A functioning and supportive network may be beneficial in creating and disseminating knowledge about this and other aspects of Glasgow's culture. Reaching out and introducing other institutions to this network would also offer the citizens of Glasgow, interested in theater and social history, an insight into this significant but under-researched field.

Unfortunately, the Glasgow Pantomime exhibition has yet to be realized. The project was stopped after the planning stage, because Glasgow Museums was not able to allocate all of the resources necessary to implement the exhibition as was originally planned. Considering the deep affection that Glasgow has towards the theme, the hope is that in the future Glasgow Museums will be able to realize this exhibition.

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