

## THE IMAGINATION MUSEUM

### Symposium 1 at The Collection Museum, Lincoln

10:00 – 16:00 Friday 24 May 2019

*facilitated by Emma McFarland, studio eMc*

### Notes from Lightning Talk by Anna Scott, Mayflower 400 Officer, West Lindsey District Council

#### Introduction

Anna's work as Mayflower 400 Officer includes supporting Pilgrims' heritage projects taking place in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, such as Made By Katie Green's *Imagination Museum: Mayflower 400* dance/heritage project. She works primarily in the 'Pilgrim Roots' area which includes 5 of the 11 UK destinations included in the International Mayflower Compact Partnership.

#### Background films:

- <https://youtu.be/9SHsRAZxLgM>
- <https://vimeo.com/302469585> (example arts engagement project by Electric Egg)

#### Anna's wider Mayflower work crosses over between:

**Heritage** – creating new interpretation at key sites; questioning what heritage means to us compared to other audiences (US/UK);

**Tourism** – thinking carefully about the visitor experience and what we need to do to make it high quality;

**Culture** – thinking creatively about engaging new audiences, creating spectacles and opportunities for participation in areas of low engagement.

#### What are the benefits of a dance project to a wider heritage programme like Mayflower 400?

- Many of the M400 partners are operating in areas of low engagement or challenging conditions in relation to low expectations, areas of deprivation, poorly defined local identity, and lack of pride in their places.
- A dance programme like the Imagination Museum is an opportunity to enhance engagement with heritage in a way that is surprising, provocative, memorable and enjoyable.
- It can support the exposure of hitherto hidden voices and new perspectives in relation to a history which, as in the case of Mayflower, has been heavily mythologised and distorted for well over a century - and this is something that audiences respond to and connect with,

because it tells a story which becomes something they can relate to.

- Telling the story through dance helps establish a history's contemporary relevance in a world which places so many demands on our time and attention.

### What are the challenges?

- Engaging with hard to reach audiences is a big challenge in many of the Mayflower 400 areas, and it's something that can be even harder to evaluate.
- Traditional measures of impact which quantify demographics and measure responses can become virtually impossible, so there needs to be creative responses to how this evidence is captured and evaluated.
- Mayflower is a multi-sited story that stretches across urban and rural contexts – and it presents challenges around ways of working and the idiosyncrasies of the different communities that you find there.

Having a dance project embedded within a wider portfolio of cultural activity is really helping us develop our audiences, raise the profile of our cultural and events programme and look to the future for how we continue these relationships beyond next year's anniversary. It's really important to recognise that history is not a static discipline, but a dynamic, story-making exercise which reinvents itself with every generation – and every time this is expressed through a dance performance, this process continues and highlights how dynamic that interpretive process is.



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