

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 Jenny Reeves, Director, About Time Dance Company

Introduction

Jenny introduced her company: [About Time Dance Company](#), working with dance and heritage/social history since 2016 in and around Lancashire, Cumbria, Cheshire, Manchester.

She spoke specifically about the creation and development of her first work for the company, [Cotton](#), which since 2016 has been performed in libraries, museums, galleries, outdoors, schools and mills.



Jenny described some 'top tips' for working in this context:

Creating work for the audience

- Talk to them! They tell Jenny about memories of seeing clogs and hearing the looms when/after they see the work *Cotton*
- If there is a 'hook' to help them to connect with the story of their local area, Jenny has observed that even though they may happen upon the piece by accident (the audience data suggests about 50% of them are incidental audiences), they are then captivated by the work and stay all the way to the end of the performance
- Create work in the round, so it looks good/can be appreciated from all perspectives, no matter where people stand/sit to see it
- Draw the audience in to the work, involve them, give them a role (e.g. ranging from asking them to look after a prop to asking them to join in as a member of a community cast)...
- therefore breaking down the fourth wall between audience and performer in these kinds of heritage spaces

Performers

- Work with the performers to develop a strong sense of their characters, so no matter where they are in the piece/place or who they're connecting with, they are always in the world of the work, and can therefore draw others in to this world.
- Work with performers who are warm, open, engaging and can communicate well with the audience.



Adapting choreography

- Jenny creates choreography that is adaptable to multiple sites, and can therefore make the most of the natural features of each new space, so the performance feels unique to each new place.

Selecting a heritage site

- Choose your heritage site carefully – find somewhere where you can draw on the embodied experience of the site through time (e.g. Jenny talked about the multi-sensory experience of some of the mills where they shared *Cotton*, the sounds there (e.g. of clogs on stone floors) and the heat), treading in the footsteps of people who have come before.

To find out more, visit <https://abouttimedancecompany.co.uk/> and/or contact Jenny at abouttimedancecompany@gmail.com.