

RESEARCH ARTICLE:

A Museum Theatre Approach to Museum Communication in Durban, South Africa

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Abstract

This article explores how museum communication can be enhanced in museums in Durban, South Africa, using the Old Court House Museum (OCHM) in Durban, South Africa, as a point of departure for analysis and discussion. The aim is to close the gap between the humanities disciplines through disciplinary hybridisation while focusing on exploring the intersection of theatre arts and museums through applied theatre (AT) strategies to enhance museum communication. Grounded in Richard Schechner's multidisciplinary approach to performance studies (PS), it incorporates the viewpoints of Dwight Conquergood on PS. The argument is that the humanities disciplines are historically and conceptually linked through cultural performance. The research employs qualitative methods, including historical-analytic analysis, key informant interviews (KIIs), and direct observation. The findings suggest the practice of the museum theatre (MT) concept in some parts of the South African cultural ecosystem, but with scant attention on Durban municipal museums.

Keywords: museum theatre; museum communication; Durban; South Africa

Introduction

This study examines how theatre art and museums intersect through PS to generate an AT hybrid. Nicholson (2014) sees AT as performances outside traditional theatre buildings, with participants being amateurs or professional theatre practitioners. Prentki (2015) submits that AT should be people-oriented. It involves collaborative and participatory approaches where issues about people and the community are brought into perspective theatrically in such a way that awareness is created. Prentki and Preston (2009) consider museum theatre MT a form of AT. Current museum communication methods often exclude people with disabilities, such as those who are hard of hearing, visually impaired, or differently-abled, which contradicts the growing emphasis on information access (Darch and Underwood, 2005) and equitable education for all (Kanter, 2014). Learning can happen through sight, sound, or both, but museums' static displays limit their educational potential. Theatre's use of movement, speech, and performance could enrich museum experiences by making the information presented more engaging. This study explores the idea of combining museum exhibits with theatrical elements. It is inspired by Israel Wekpe's *Idia*, a play performance on 26 December 2020, which was the first museum theatre experience encountered by the researchers.

Israel Wekpe employed a museum theatre approach in the staging of Pedro Obaseki's play, *Idia*, which showcases real-life artefacts retrieved from the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM), in Benin City,

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Nigeria (Omoera and Ode, 2023). The production sought an alternative platform to create awareness among a declining museum public (Omoera and Ode, 2023). The collaboration aimed to raise awareness of the museum as a repository of historical objects and a vibrant cultural institution that could connect with the city's thriving theatre scene. The approach was unique but not robust enough because it prioritised material artefacts over other museum assets (Hazan *et al.*, 2015: 1). The observations and viewing of this production led to some of the researchers' visiting the Kwa Muhle Museum (KMM), Natural Science Museum (NSM), History Museum (HM), Durban Cultural and Documentation Centre (DCDC), and Old Court House Museum (OCHM) in Durban in November 2023. One of the researchers also visited the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) in Benin City, Nigeria, in February 2024, where the tour guide acted as a solo theatre performer. Unlike the *Idia* production in Benin City, where artefacts served mainly as set dressing, this study proposes a deeper integration. Museum objects and information can be central resources for scripting and staging theatrical pieces (Papp, 2021). The museum theatre hybrid has been experimented at the KMM in Durban, and museums in other South African cities demonstrating how such a hybrid can enhance knowledge acquisition, or "cultural seeing." This approach is not unique – similar successful experiments have been conducted elsewhere (see Franklin, 2001: 13; Bhattacharyya and Dasgupta, 2013; Agaku, 2015: 86; Maneen, 2016: 1).

MT is a theatrical form that deploys theatre techniques to communicate artefacts, heritages, and information in museums and places such as conservatories, historical sites, and zoos. It is situated within the artistic communication (AT) framework (Prentki and Preston, 2009: 423). According to Lucia Todone (in Bridal, 2004: 2), MT involves all available theatrical techniques at the museum's disposal, projecting the museum's values and objectives. Marlowe (in Bridal, 2004: 2) affirms that MT involves plays specifically written to reflect museum exhibits for knowledge creation. Hughes (1998, ii: 423) provides a useful definition of museum theatre as 'the use of drama or theatrical techniques within a museum setting or part of a museum's offering with the goal of provoking an emotive and cognitive response in visitors concerning museum's discipline and/or exhibitions. MT encompasses and incorporates all the qualities of a regular theatre in terms of technique. It exists in the United States of America (USA), Latin America, and some parts of Europe. According to Bridal (2004: 15), "The first example of MT is widely noted to be a performance that took place at old Sturbridge in 1961 in [the] United States of America (USA)". While museums and theatres have distinct designs – museums with galleries and theatres with stages – they can be creatively combined into a compound form. These spaces offer a unique experience, using theatrical tools to bring museum exhibits to life. Performances can be scripted on a dedicated stage or improvised within the museum. Through plays, storytelling, and music, museum theatre fosters deeper engagement with exhibits and cultural trends for knowledge creation. Von Krogh *et al.* (2000) aver that speech, action, vision and enabling locale are vital for knowledge creation. This approach aligns with the Montessori Method (Montessori, 2015), which focuses on using practical tools and a convenient space to educate people. MT provides a captivating way for children to explore their communities' cultural heritage, moving beyond traditional classroom learning.

The Concept of Hybridisation and Museum

The idea of combining disciplines or concepts (hybridisation) is not new (Graff, 2015: 3). It is a powerful tool with a long history aimed at enhancing society (Jones *et al.*, 2019: 8). Early humans mixed materials like soil, mud, and wood to build shelters, laying the foundation for modern architecture (Arzani and Ashraf, 2017: 479; Shang *et al.*, 2017: 463). The ancient Egyptians built pyramids from granite, limestone, and coloured paintings (Sameh, 2014: 362). The pre-classical and classical periods witnessed the merger of Eastern and Western ideals (Ball, 2016). This culture peaked during the crises-ridden monarchies of the Greco-Roman classical period. As part of this memorable and inventive era, medicine was produced by fusing numerous plants, barks, roots, and leaves (Savych and Sinichenko, 2021: 1254). After the fall and division of the Empire, Emperor Flavius Justinian, who ruled the Eastern Empire, conquered the Western part controlled by the Barbarians and unified the flourishing civilisations in their cultures, arts, economies, education and engineering (Stephenson, 2004: 23). The Renaissance during the 13th to 15th centuries and Industrial Revolution (mid-18th to mid-19th centuries) saw the development of towns, economies and sharing of knowledge (Chant and Goodman, 1998). The dynamism of society and the interaction of ideas across the years led to the virtual form of 'museuming' in many places, including South Africa. As a hybridised form of knowledge creation, MT in South Africa is relatively new (Jenkins and Young-

Johangeer, 2022). Nonetheless, the Iziko South African Museum in Cape Town, the Robben Island Museum, and other museums have hosted many virtual exhibitions powered by technology and scientific innovations.

Museums such as the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town, Sterkfontein Caves, Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg and others in the territory, including the Bergtheil Museum in Durban that produced *Our Footprints*, a narration of issues exhibited in the museum highlighting German settlers in Westville and Pinetown areas in 1800, have used technology to promote museum information. Hybridisation comprises different aspects, including cultural, biological, agricultural and social aspects, among others, and these aspects are governed by theories such as the heteroglossia theory by Mikhail Bakhtin, which focuses on the compound nature of languages, and third-space enunciation theory by Homi Bhabha, which stipulates that cultures emerge from the contradictory space between two cultures. Influential scholars of the school of hybridisation include Chandra Talpade Mohanty, who theorised about the concept of hybridity and its relationship with feminism; Benita Parry, who wrote on the concept of hybridity and its relationship to colonialism; and Richard Schechner, whose performance studies approach combines theories and methods from multiple disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, cultural studies and theatre art. Hybridisation can be applied to museums to create a dynamic “museum theatre” experience. Theatre’s ability to connect with audiences is well-documented (Adams, 2021; Nisker *et al.*, 2006). Key theatrical elements such as dialogue, dance, and song can be used to express museums’ (including OCHM) rich histories, cultures, and artistic heritages through engaging performances.

The OCHM’s collection offers a wealth of material for performance creation. Traditional costumes, artworks, and historical records can all be creatively reinterpreted. A playwright can use these elements to craft a script with characters, dialogue, movement, and settings that bring the museum’s stories to life. After the script is written, a director will interpret it, considering concepts like character portrayal and stage dynamics. Depending on the production’s needs, specialists like choreographers, costume designers, music directors, and stage designers can be brought in to enhance the performance. By skilfully integrating these elements, the director can create a novel theatre model that transforms the OCHM into a vibrant entertainment and knowledge creation space. This innovative approach can potentially redefine museums’ role in South Africa. Omoera and Ode (2023: 2) affirm that they (that is, the museum and the theatre) sometimes operate similarly in that they both entertain and educate while narrating history and preserving cultural heritage at the same time. Yet, they are separate institutions that would likely be more effective if creatively fused to complement each other in the quest for cultural communication. Perhaps, theatre is the most dynamic one of the two and in the hands of a skilful director, the museum can be brought to the theatre to facilitate an entertaining way of history and heritage preservation. MT is relevant in creating an inquiry-driven curriculum towards a hybridised approach to museum studies, theatre arts, history, folklore, sociology, and fine arts. Darbellay *et al.*’s (2014: 1) study of interdisciplinarity from the point of view of fate and the merger of disciplines is the subject matter of the *Handbook of Transdisciplinary Research* (2008). The *Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity* (2010) is also about combining disciplines. Within this context, this article examines how interdisciplinarity can be achieved through PS, using the OCHM as a point of departure to analyse and discuss the growing idea of museum theatre in South Africa.

Theatre Art (TA) as a Broad Discipline

Performance Studies (PS) is a dynamic field that analyses all sorts of performances. It goes far beyond the traditional theatre and delves into everyday transactions. PS explores these changes as society evolves, encouraging audiences to consider how social elements interact and influence each other. This exploration can even lead to new ideas and ways of doing things. Scholars like Stephenson (2020: 1) and Bial (2004: 5) see it through the lens of “liminality”, exploring how experiences can act as transitions or bridges to new ideas and understanding. In museums, for example, PS can inspire creative ways to educate visitors. PS emerged from theatre studies pioneered by Richard Schechner at New York University (NYU). Theatre integrates actors, materials, technology, and space to achieve specific goals, like informing or entertaining an audience (Bhattacharyya and Dasgupta, 2013: 1). PS takes this further, analysing how these elements work together in any performance. Schechner (2013: 24) suggests that performances can be conscious or unconscious and include everyday interactions and cultural practices. Performance is not limited to human actions. Certain animal actions

(trained or untrained) can be considered performances (Coleman and Moore, 2003: 17). PS also examines the efficiencies of inanimate objects, like cars and machinery (Muchiri and Pintelon, 2008). A poorly manufactured or inflated football can hinder the players' performance. On a football field, PS looks at all the variables in a situation that affect the outcome. PS analyses how well curriculum or training meets current needs in schools and workplaces and how effectively staff can deliver it. PS is relevant to every aspect of society, such as legal proceedings, political campaigns, medical procedures, and the use of language. PS studies what is being done, how it is done, and how this influences the outcome. PS examines museums' activities, from collecting artefacts to exhibiting them for the public's view, and how museums can improve community engagement.

According to Schechner (2013: 38), anything shaped by the social context, tradition, and established practices can be considered a performance. MT is a performance because it is governed by ritual, convention, context, tradition, and theatrical techniques. Conquergood (2002) avers that PS is apt for unifying divided ways of engaging knowledge. Franklin (2001) builds on Kirchenblatt-Gimblett's view of PS to highlight museums' effect on people's lives. Bial (2011) offers a different perspective on PS. He views it through the lens of "liminality," or a state of being "in-between." Liminality refers to a transitional phase, where something is shifting from one state to another. Bial suggests that PS examines how systems, practices, or activities undergo such transformations. In museums, "liminality" could involve shifting from traditional communication methods to more engaging approaches incorporating theatrical elements. Therefore, PS scholars analyse a museum exhibit for its content and how it interacts with visitors and creates a transformative experience (Dal Falco and Vassos, 2017: 3975). Museums are vital to society because they connect us to our history and culture. Traditionally, museums have communicated knowledge through physical objects or relics. However, new communication technologies offer museums new ways to engage audiences. PS scholars are interested in how these changes affect visitors, whether analogue or digital museums. PS sheds light on how museums can use theatrical techniques, like dialogue, dance, and songs, to improve communication and their impact on society (Bridal, 2004; Papp, 2021). By analysing a museum's current communication methods and exploring how theatrical techniques can be integrated, a more comprehensive approach to museum communication through the concepts of AT and PS can be developed.

While TA and PS explore various aspects of human activity, they approach social phenomena differently. TA is fundamentally about performance; it creates experiences that reflect societies, cultures, histories, climates, events, and other aspects of human engagement. It draws on elements like music, costumes, dance, and songs to bring these narratives to life (Spry, 2002: 181; Oyebode, 2012: 7). Theatre studies delve into various theatrical traditions, from ancient Greek plays to contemporary African theatre, examining how these forms connect with the societies that produce them. In contrast, PS takes a more critical and analytical approach. It uses the concept of "liminality" to explore how social phenomena shift and change. Despite their differences, TA and PS can intersect. Museums, rich with cultural resources, can serve as inspiration for theatrical performances. Dialogue can be created, songs composed based on museum exhibits, or historical figures brought to life on stage. Theatre refers to the venue where performances and an actual performance occur. The notion of theatre as a place refers to Peter Brook's declaration that "I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage" (Banu and Carre, 2005: 45). This statement denotes the relationship between theatre and museum as activities bound to space, whether temporal or permanent. According to Green (2013: 1), theatre is evolving and transcends space and time, portraying the wide possibilities that make it relative to PS. The notion of 'act' gives theatre a view of action or activity and is relevant in achieving theatrical performances. Theatre reflects society through a series of acts performed in an environment or on a screen. A theatrical form that combines several theatrical features is typical of African theatre performance (Zenenga, 2015: 236) and is known as "total theatre" (Easterling II 2009: 1; Nwadiigwe, 2012: 32). Therefore, its fundamental elements like dialogue, music, dance, drama, lighting, costumes, and make-up reflecting various contexts can be harnessed under the expert direction of playwrights, play directors, music directors, choreographers, librettists, stage managers, technical managers, house managers, among others, to engage the macro and micro aspects of society. Theatre involves well-articulated technical and human input to address social phenomena. It entails using theatrical elements to conjure real-life situations or similitudes before an audience with a specific message.

The use of the theatre to represent social phenomena is contingent on the fact that the theatre's primary responsibility is to society (Zazzali, 2013: 685). Society includes every natural or unnatural element that is present in a space occupied by humans or other living species that possess a set of socially shared values (Ricconi, 2022: 16). This means that every activity, object, animal, religion, education, invention, or intervention are issues that can come under the spotlight of theatre with movement and dialogue as a major medium of interacting with the audience. In March 2022, the KMM (The Place of the Good One) in Durban staged a captivating museum theatre production titled *Beer Halls, Pass Laws and Just Cause* (Jenkins and Young-Johangeer, 2022). This innovative performance harnessed the museum's rich resources, including exhibits, interviews, and publications, to create a pragmatic and dramatic exploration of apartheid's impact. The KMM delves into South Africa's apartheid history, focusing on themes like the Pass Laws, alcohol restrictions, violence, forced removals, and the story of Andrew Zondo, a prominent anti-apartheid figure who was condemned to death for anti-apartheid activities. As a pioneer in Durban's museum theatre scene, the KMM exemplifies the power of this approach. Museum theatre breathes life into historical collections. Objects often perceived as static within a museum come alive as catalysts for storytelling. By incorporating theatrical elements, these relics engage audiences with the past dynamically and thoughtfully. Jenkins and Young-Janangeer (2002: 423) suggest, "Many museums enforce a typical separation between displays and museum visitors, applying 'Please, do not touch!' Instruction which can disconnect the visitor from the artefacts and narratives, and the subsequent memories and understandings that can be generated from museum visits". Using the OCHM as a model for museum theatre projects in South Africa and beyond, this study explores how museums like the OCHM, with their rich collections of art, culture, and history, can use the AT model to educate visitors about various topics.

The Old Court House Museum (OCMH) in Durban

Originally built in 1866 as a courthouse, the OCHM has served Durban for over 150 years (Personal communication, Rebecca Naidoo, 11 December, 2023). It was transformed into a public museum in 1965, showcasing Durban's rich history and culture. The OCHM houses a diverse collection of artefacts – artworks, photographs, documents, and urban design elements – that tell the story of Durban's people. These relics provide valuable insights into the community's past and serve as a resource for learning. Durban's history stretches back to the Lala and Luthuli clans, who called it "eThekweni", meaning the bay. Durban is the capital of KwaZulu Natal Province in South Africa. Strategically located on the Indian Ocean coast, Durban's sprawling port has been a key driver of its growth (Sutherland *et al.*, 2014: 21). Durban's story stretches back far beyond European arrival. The Lala and Luthuli clans called it "eThekwini" long before European explorers entered the scene. The Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama was the first European to set foot in Durban; he arrived on Christmas Day in 1497. He named the area "Rio de Natal" or "Christmas River." Centuries later, in 1824, British explorer Francis Farewell secured permission from Zulu King Shaka to establish a trading post. Farewell mapped the area and named it Port Natal. Port Natal's strategic location fuelled its growth, and in 1835, it was officially incorporated as a town and renamed Durban after Sir Benjamin D'Urban, the governor of the Cape Colony at the time. Durban's journey to becoming a major city continued, and in 1935, it was officially recognised as a city. The warmth and hospitality of Durban's people are legendary, as is their thirst for knowledge.

Durban boasts a rich tapestry of museums, including the KMM, the Phansi Museum (PM), the Port Natal Museum (PNM) of Natural Science (NSM), the Moth Museum (MM), the Local History Museum LHM), and the OCHM, each contributing to understanding the city's diverse history and culture. These institutions house invaluable relics that tell the story of Durban's people and their enduring spirit. Located on Samora Machel Street, the OCHM, built in 1866, is a testament to Durban's rich history. It served as the district courthouse for nearly a century before being transformed into a museum in 1965. Inside are an array of historical and cultural treasures. The museum boasts sections dedicated to various aspects of Durban's past, including the Daphne Strutt costume room, the Durban room, and a replica of Henry Francis Fynn's cottage, one of the first European settlements in Zululand. The Clairmont Sugar Mill is a reminder of Durban's agricultural heritage, while Miss Fany's repository reflects the lives of Durban's residents. Intriguing exhibits like the "dead man's tree" and the lantern room spark curiosity, while a computer display brings prominent figures like Albert Luthuli, Alan Paton, Indira Gandhi, and Shaka Zulu to life. The OCHM extends beyond mere exhibits. A workshop and a souvenir shop cater to visitors, while a treasure

trove of lockers, files, designs, and photographs offers researchers a wealth of information. These resources and the museum’s artefacts, crafted from wood, metal, ceramic, and textiles, serve as a captivating script for a museum theatre experience. As Agaku (2016) suggests, artists can find inspiration in objects and stories to create engaging and educational experiences.



Photo A: Henry Francis B.’s cottage



Photo B: The trunk of the dead man’s tree

Kim (2012: 386); Fletcher and Lee (2012: 505) and Hausmann (2012: 174) note that museums are becoming conscious of the need to be entertaining. Ghosh (1987: 139) claims that a museum is an artistic communication paradigm that can engage with other disciplines to generate a hybrid form. Liu (2011: 67); Maneen (2016: 56) and Gianni and Bowen (2019: 1) have consistently reiterated that point. For example, the use of kinetic sculpture to communicate is presented in the Museum of Modern Art in New York (Agaku, 2016: 89). Russo *et al.* (2006: 1) note how museums evolve through social media and virtual tours. The dynamic nature of the modern world demands innovation, and this approach merges the established power of museums with theatre’s engaging energy. Plays, performances, and interactive exhibits can breathe life into museum messages using visual, kinetic, and entertaining elements. This shift towards an entertaining museum experience is gaining traction. Authors like Kim (2012), Fletcher and Lee (2012), and Hausmann (2012) acknowledge this trend. Ghosh (1987) even views museums as platforms for artistic collaboration, creating a hybrid communication form. This concept is echoed by Liu (2011); Maneen (2016), and Gianni and Bowen (2019). In the present study, we argue that music, dance, costume, and make-up should be used to represent the scope of assets in the OCHM in Durban City contingent on the capacity and versatility of AT to reflect the diversity of the museum. The dynamic nature of the modern world necessitates the reshaping, merging, and creative transformation of old forms to new ones, using the theatre’s values to express messages deposited in the museum. By incorporating theatrical elements, the OCHM can create a vibrant space where history comes alive, fostering deeper connections with Durban’s rich past.

Viewership at Old Court House Museum

The OCHM was established to promote the visual interaction of visitors to the museum with peoples’ tangible historical and cultural assets (Personal communication, Rebecca Naidoo, 11 December, 2023). Entry into the museum is free, and it is open between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. from Monday to Friday and 8 a.m. to 12 noon on alternate Saturdays. Its open-door policy encourages undeterred access of visitors to the museum for the acquisition of historical knowledge and to foster a sense of cultural pride among the people of eThekweni. Table 1 presents the attendance at the OCHM recorded between January and September 2023 (Personal communication, Rebecca Naidoo, 11 December, 2023) and is derived from the visitors’ book at the museum.

Table 1: 2023 public attendance at OCHM

Month of attendance	Adults	Children
January	126	41
February	78	2
March	61	5

April	58	10
May	179	10
June	156	29
July	101	29
August	112	22
September	63	20

Notes: Total attendance (January – September) = 2,293; margin of error +/-5.

The table shows a relatively low attendance at the museum compared to the population of the eThekweni region, which is about 3,228,000 (Macrotrends South Africa, 2023). Visitors to the museum are mostly adults and schoolchildren. In May 2023, there was a rehearsal in the museum with 27 artists in attendance, while in June 2023, 11 artists led by Thabane Ngolere attended another rehearsal. These figures are not included in the table. There was no family attendance, as is the case for some European countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and Italy, where it is common for families to visit the museums together (Kirchberg, 1996: 239). Museums offer more than just education; they can be entertaining and therapeutic. However, the OCHM faces challenges with low attendance, possibly due to a perception of museums as static and uninviting.

On 24 September 2023, South Africa’s Heritage Day, a national opportunity to celebrate history and culture and visit museums occurred. The following day, 25 September, was a public holiday, further encouraging museum visits. Observing visitors’ attendance on Heritage Day and other public holidays could be a valuable metric for assessing a museum’s impact. By analysing visitor behaviour and exploring how the museum “performs,” PS can offer valuable insights into improving the OCHM’s appeal and effectiveness in engaging the community. For example, the KMM reportedly has high attendance, with a regular stream of students from Grades 5 to 9 visiting the museum. While no quantitative data supports this, a museum theatre project held there in 2022 suggests strong visitor interest. According to a respondent, the high attendance rate at the KMM is attributed to the museum theatre staged there in 2022.

Compared to the NSM, the OCHM has the lowest recorded attendance between September 2023 and April 2024 based on the data collected and information obtained from respondents (see Table 2)

Table 2: Attendance at OCHM and NSM in 2024

Month	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024
OCHM	205 adults with fewer children	141 adults with fewer children	170 adults with fewer children	122 adults with fewer children
Natural Science Museum (NSM)	3,367 adults and children	2,046 adults and children	2,125 adults and children	4,694 adults and children

Notes: Margin of error for OCHM = +/- 2 and NSM = +/- 5

The large attendance recorded at the NSM may be because the exhibits focus on animals and nature and a series of programs on electronic media featuring animals and nature in real-life situations. While the reasons for attendance at the NSM are speculative, the KMM’s attendance can be linked to the engaging museum theatre program, which suggests that incorporating interactive and engaging elements into museum exhibits can significantly boost attendance.

Conclusion

The OCHM is a treasure trove waiting to be unlocked. Its artefacts and exhibits have the potential for captivating stories, and theatre can bring them to life. A play set in David S.B. Anderson’s apothecary, filled with sights and sounds, may prove nostalgic. Miss Fann’s Fancy Repository becomes the backdrop for a tale of everyday life, while the Henry Francis Cottage and the Clairmont Sugar Mill transport audiences back in time. The “dead man’s tree,” a powerful symbol of community life, offers even more insight to people who once traversed this space. Museum attendance can be affected by factors like education and income levels; however, theatre presents a unique opportunity to bridge that gap. Engaging performances can spark curiosity and ignite a passion for history, even among those who might not traditionally be drawn to museums. By embracing the vibrancy of theatre, the

OCHM can move away from a purely “visual” to an interactive experience. Interactive plays and performances will enhance communication and solidify the museum’s role as an educator. Ultimately, the OCHM has the potential to be far more than just a repository for objects. By incorporating theatre, it can become a vibrant space where history comes alive, fostering a deeper understanding of the community’s past and enriching the lives of its visitors.

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