



Category: Arts, Culture or Sport Campaign

Company: Hull City Council

Entry title: Ferens Art Gallery

Brief and objectives:

To develop an effective campaign to:

- build the national and international profile of the Ferens and Hull in the run up to and during 2017, positioning the Ferens as a pivotal part of the Hull cultural offer and doubling visitor numbers in the first six months of 2017
- maintain awareness of the Ferens during its refurbishment
- build audiences and increase public participation in the gallery's work.

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

At an early stage, we identified that three of the gallery's planned exhibitions for 2017 would drive our campaign:

- the acquisition of a 14th century masterpiece by Pietro Lorenzetti – a new addition to the gallery's collection of European Old Masters and the star of the gallery's re-opening in January 2017
- Spencer Tunick's Sea of Hull – encouraging participation and enabling this work – staged in 2016 for display in early 2017 - to become the largest and most successful nude installation ever staged by the artist in the UK (differentiating it from his previous works for other UK cities)
- maximising participation in the 50th Ferens Open Exhibition.

In developing the PR plan, we used insight from various customer research, including a June 2016 survey, which found that:

- respondents were significantly more likely to say that visiting exhibitions (91%) would attract them to visit the Ferens as opposed to the permanent collection (70%).
- when asked about visits to the gallery over three years prior to its refurbishment, respondents were most likely to have visited to see the European Old Masters in the permanent collection (54%) and to visit temporary exhibitions (63%).

The results of this research informed our rationale, strategy and tactics for communicating with:

- Local residents
- Visitors
- Local, regional, national and specialist media
- Budding artists and potential Sea of Hull participants.

Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:

Our strategy focus was to plan deliver a series of media events, stunts, public participation opportunities, digital engagement, branding and marketing, which saw the Ferens and Hull gain world-wide exposure in the run up to and early months of the city's year as UK City of Culture, achieving and exceeding all expectations and objectives.

- Throughout this period, our core media relations campaign focused on: building relationships with national and specialist arts media; offering strong picture and interview opportunities media tours, stunts and visits; celebrating construction milestones and celebrity/opinion former endorsements (e.g. Gareth Neame and Waldemar Januszczak); raising awareness of national and international partnerships and positioning the Ferens' Curator as a spokesperson for culture in the city by ensuring she had a high profile in any major UK City of Culture announcements.
- The process of creating Sea of Hull artworks gave us an unprecedented opportunity to engage with the media and participants through an impactful on-line presence in advance of and following the installation. Tactics included capturing the experience of participants via social media and working with a local film-maker to create a film which was then used as part of the exhibition and at a special preview for participants.
- The huge success of Sea of Hull provided a platform for the re-opening of the gallery, paving the way for high profile coverage of the Lorenzetti.
- Marketing material including gallery dressing supported the media relations and digital activity, raising awareness of the each milestone and exhibition, maximising its impact and experience. A strong digital presence was critical to raising the profile of the gallery and city as well as the exhibition and milestones taking place.

Implementation of tactics:

July 2016

Making of Sea of Hull installation offering media controlled access allowing them to get the 'shot' without taking away from the work of the artist.

July – September

Launch to call for submissions for the 50th Open Exhibition, artwork was submitted online for the first time.

September

Ferens curator takes centre stage as the UK City of Culture launch programme.

November

Handover of the gallery from the construction company and the re-installation of 2,500 pieces of art.

January/February 2017

Re-opening of the gallery followed by Royal Visit.

Opening of the 50th Open Exhibition and visiting Frances Bacon Exhibition.

Launch of SKIN featuring works by Lucian Freud, Ron Mueck and Spencer Tunick.

April

SKIN exhibition opens.

Measurement and evaluation:

The campaign met and exceeded its main objectives, as our evaluation shows:

Outcomes

- 300,000 visit gallery in the first six months of 2017 – more than double the full year figure for 2014. The gallery also saw a 319% increase in café sales and a 670% increase in retail sales.
- 1750 people took part in the 50th Open Exhibition – a 30 percent increase on 2015
- Over 3,200 people took part in the Sea of Hull event making it the UK's largest nude installation, beating Gateshead and Salford
- Sea of Hull media coverage reached a worldwide audience of 720 million people –
- More than 2,000 items/features in print, online & broadcast media reaching 54 countries
- Sea of Hull social media with #hashtag in a four-day period - 519,326 accounts reached with 627,409 impressions

Outputs

- 32 press releases and 10 media stunts
- The Ferens featured prominently within UK City of Culture season programme launch and the Made in Hull coverage starting from 1 January 2017
- Ferens and Sea of Hull web pages, marketing collateral & social media campaign
- Exhibition collateral for five exhibitions between January and June 2017.

Budget and cost effectiveness:

Our total PR budget for the core campaign was just £23,000 inclusive of exhibition collateral, interpretation for artwork and marketing material for each major exhibition. The eight-minute Sea of Hull film was produced free of charge by KCOM, local telecommunications company.