

Attractions

MANAGEMENT

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Volume 31 H1 2026

**The Eden
Project
turns 25**

GUY VASSEL

On taking
Parc Asterix
international

**DARK
TOURISM**

It's more social
than you think

"A TEMPLE TO THE PEOPLE'S ART"

**GEORGE LUCAS &
MELLODY HOBSON**

BRING THEIR MUSEUM DREAM TO LIFE



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Time to be bold

At 25, the Eden Project offers a powerful reminder that bold ideas, optimism and a little stubbornness can still change the world



Every now and again, a project comes along that reminds us what is possible. These projects usually begin with little more than a dream and a determination to make what once seemed impossible, possible.

The Eden Project is one such project. Rising from a barren, disused china clay pit in Cornwall, it has become one of the most recognisable visitor attractions in the world: a symbol of regeneration, environmental stewardship and the power of collective ambition. More than that, it is proof that bold thinking still matters.

Sir Tim Smit has been called a visionary many times, but he insists there is nothing unusual about him. "Every eight-year-old in every school in every country of the whole world dreams of building Eden projects and big dams and mad Ludwig castles up mountains," he has said. "But that gets knocked out of us."

His point is a simple but important one: somewhere along the way, many of us lose our confidence in doing extraordinary things.

I was reminded of this when I visited Eden recently, more than a decade after my last trip, to interview CEO Andy Jasper. The world can feel heavy right now. Economic pressures, political instability and a constant stream of bad news can make optimism feel naïve. Yet from the moment I walked into the site, I felt the opposite: possibility. Hope. A sense that good people, working together, really can create something remarkable.

That spirit has been there from the beginning. When Smit first approached Grimshaw, he had no funding and no site. The idea sounded bonkers, but it also felt like an adventure, and they agreed to begin work for nothing. When construction started, the team had just £3,000 in the bank. There was no money for a feasibility

CLIVE NICHOLLS



The Eden Project shows what can be achieved

“Attractions are, by their nature, acts of optimism”

study, so they pressed on regardless, making a pact never to use the word “if”, only “when”.

Attractions are, by their nature, acts of optimism. They are built on the belief that people will come, that experiences matter, and that places can enrich lives. In challenging times, it can be tempting to think smaller, safer and shorter term. But Eden’s story reminds us that progress often begins with the courage to be ambitious.

An impact report released earlier this year showed that Eden has delivered £6.8bn in total economic impact for Cornwall since opening. But perhaps its greatest legacy is less measurable: the confidence it gives others to think bigger.

Magali Robathan, editor
magalirobathan@leisuremedia.com



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The world we live in and the way we navigate it is completely dependent on science and engineering - it's how we survive, thrive and vibe

Dr Frederic Bertley
President & CEO, COSI



Dr Bertley became president of the COSI science centre in 2017



COSI

**COSI is widely recognised
as one of the US's top
science museums**



fter a decades-long career in immunology and science education, the president and CEO of the COSI science centre in Columbus, Ohio, US has been awarded the Themed Entertainment Association's Thea Catalyst Award.

Dr Bertley (known as Dr B) has been recognised for his innovative approach to democratising access to science, technology, engineering, arts and math.

Since becoming president of COSI in 2017, Dr B has grown the institution from a small regional science centre into a globally recognised leader in STEM education. His initiatives, including the COSI Science Festival, the STEM kit programme and COSI's Learning Lunchbox kits - filled with at-home experiments - have helped make science accessible for people of all ages.

COSI now reaches more than one million learners annually through immersive exhibits, hands-on outreach, and a range of media programmes including Bertley's video series, Dr B in 3, which breaks down complex topics in three-minute segments.

Bertley is also the CEO of the National Veterans Memorial and Museum (NVMM), where he is leading the museum through a transformational phase.



COSI

**Dr Bertley presents a
series of educational
television shows**



The COSI Planetarium features a 60ft diameter dome and is Ohio's largest

COSI



Dr B spoke to Attractions Management about winning the Thea award, his passion for science, and the challenges of running a science institution in the current climate

What does it mean to you to win the Thea Catalyst Award?

While we work in education because we believe deeply in its importance for humanity – not for awards or recognition – receiving the Thea Catalyst Award is an incredible honour for me.

As the president and CEO of COSI, I have always believed that science is not just information or a series of facts, but it is an experience that can spark wonder, ignite imagination, and change lives.

For me, the Thea Catalyst Award is not just a personal milestone – it is a tribute to the incredible teams, partners, educators, and community members whom I had the pleasure to work with to make this vocation possible. I'm honoured, humbled, and energised to continue this journey.

Do you have an achievement that you're proudest of?

Aside from the distinguished honour of being awarded the THEA Catalyst Award, there is a tie for two really cool things.

Being awarded the McGraw Hill Jr Prize in education in 2025 was a little overwhelming. Sharing this honour with past luminaries like Claiborne Pell, Barbara Bush, Sal Kahn, Reshma Saujani, and John Merrow, selected by an international selection committee of experts, was an unanticipated, humbling honour.

In 2024 I was awarded an honorary degree from McGill University and asked to deliver the Commencement Address to thousands of graduating students. My parents hailed from the Caribbean, and they met at McGill University. All three of my siblings and me graduated from McGill University with several degrees each. To be honoured by McGill more than two decades later was a uniquely defining moment in my professional career and personal life.

The Learning Lunchbox is a hands-on science kit featuring five activities



COSI's Space Kit helps students to build a rocket and design a moon base



The museum features a permanent Natural History Dinosaur Gallery

Why are science institutions so important right now?

The world we live in and how we navigate it is completely dependent on science and its cousin, engineering... This is how we survive, thrive and vibe. Science institutions strive to make sure this is not only understood but appreciated.

You launched the Color of Science initiative in 2024. What are its aims?

The US is approximately 50 per cent female and 38-43 per cent non-White. As such, it's important to recognize the rich legacy of past and present scientific genius from women and minority populations.

The Color of Science programme highlights the vast scientific and engineering contributions of these under-represented groups. It's a comprehensive science interest and literacy programme that invites the public to engage with the stories of remarkable individuals who have impacted our society through their scientific

It's important to recognise the rich legacy of past and present scientific genius from women & minority populations



COSI runs an annual science festival with a range of community events



COSI features more than
300 hands-on exhibits
across themed areas

work and achievements. These industrious and creative individuals include women, persons of African American, Latinx/Hispanic, Asian Pacific, and Native American heritages, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and persons with disabilities. The Color of Science programme showcases them to the wider community.

COSI recently announced it is laying off staff in response to economic pressures. How difficult has this time been? Do you have anything to say about this?

The non-profit sector across the United States faced significant financial headwinds in 2025 – particularly museums. All three major revenue streams – ticket sales, philanthropy, and public grants – declined at the same time.

Despite these pressures, we continued working to advance COSI's mission of ubiquitous engagement, international inspiration, and meaningful local and global impact. Still, in the face of these challenges, we were forced to make the incredibly difficult decision to reduce the size of our team.

My heart goes out to the talented individuals who contributed so much to the COSI brand and mission and were ultimately affected by these changes.



The Ocean exhibit features
a section themed around
Poseidon and the sea

What will the next year bring for COSI? And the next five years?

COSI has been named the nation's number one science museum six of the last seven years. We fully expect to extend this powerful STEM impact in the next year, and continue our positive impact in science education, engagement, excitement, and appreciation locally and globally. ●

Every animal has specific needs – temperature, humidity, acoustics, light. The narrative gives visitors a reason to move through the space, but the architecture has to quietly solve all of those conditions

Vichayuth Meenaphant, co-founder, VMA Design



Vichayuth Meenaphant
(left) with co-founder
Peerawin Sawattanawanit

The ice zone features a dual level space for viewing the penguins



Bangkok-based architectural studio VMA Design has won an architectural competition to design a new zoological building for the Orientarium Zoo in Łódź, Poland.

The multi-level, 6,000sq m building - entitled the House of Elements Pavilion - houses a range of animal habitats, and tells the story of how the elements have shaped life on earth. It features six zones: Earth, Ice, Water, Fire, Air and Future.

Visitors will start their journey by descending into a sunken Earth zone, before gradually ascending along a continuous spiral ramp which wraps several times around a central sea lion pool.

Along the route, visitors will encounter bear enclosures, Antarctic penguin habitats with underwater viewing windows, and large-scale manatee aquariums. The upper levels of the bamboo-clad building house volcanic giant tortoise enclosures set beneath an ETFE canopy, double-height habitats for spider monkeys and tree kangaroos, and a canopy-level aviary.

The journey will end in the Future Zone, which features moss walls, reflective surfaces, still water, and capybara habitats.

“The building has to work as a story and as infrastructure at the same time,” said VMA founder Vichayuth Meenaphant. “Every animal has specific environmental needs – temperature, humidity, acoustics, light. The narrative gives visitors a reason to move through the space, but the architecture has to quietly solve all of those conditions along the way.

“The story is what you experience. The system is what makes it possible.”

The pavilion was developed in response to an international architectural competition organised by Holding Łódź, which called for a building structured as a sequential journey through six thematic zones. The House of Elements follows the Orientarium – Łódź Zoo’s Southeast Asian wildlife complex completed in 2022 – as the zoo’s second major development.

VMA’s winning proposal, titled One Seed – A Thousand Growths, is based on a single generative architectural logic that adapts to varying spatial, environmental, and programmatic requirements across the site. ▶



VMA DESIGN

The building is clad in high density engineered bamboo

► Here VMA Design co-founder Vichayuth Meenaphant talks us through the plans

What excites you most about this project?

The idea that a zoo building can be a story you walk through, not just a container for animals. The whole pavilion is one continuous journey through five elemental zones. You descend into the earth and rise to the treetops. That kind of spatial narrative is rare in any building type.

Is this the first time you have designed a zoo building? How did you meet the needs of both animals and visitors?

Yes, it's our first zoo project. That was part of the excitement. Every animal has very specific environmental requirements: temperature, humidity, acoustics, light levels. So the architecture has to quietly solve all of those conditions while giving visitors a reason to keep moving through the space. The narrative is what you experience. The infrastructure is what makes it possible.

What was the biggest challenge with this project?

Making the building work as both a story and a piece of infrastructure at the same time. The sea lion courtyard, for example, is the emotional centre of the building. But sea lions are incredibly loud. So we needed four layers of acoustic mitigation at what is also the spatial heart of the whole pavilion. Every zone had that kind of tension between atmosphere and technical performance.

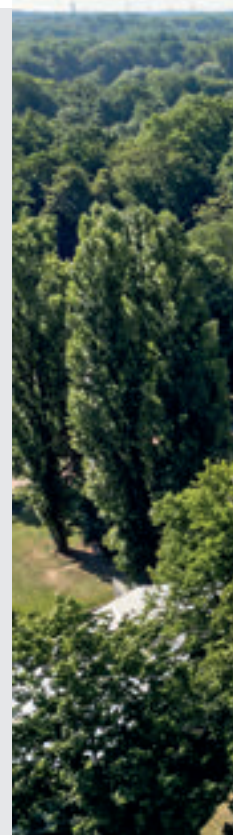


Why did you choose the materials that you did?

Our design sits between human craft and computational design. This project was a chance to bring what we learned working with craft in Thailand back to Europe. The facade uses high-density engineered bamboo cladding that reads as natural and warm but performs at a high technical level. Green roofs extend the landscape onto the building. The materials follow the same logic as the concept. One system, adapted to each condition.

Do you have favourite part of the design?

The moment you come up from the Earth zone and the spiral path reveals itself. You've been underground, in these dark soil passages, and then suddenly there's sky and water and noise, and you can see the full journey ahead with the sea lion show at the centre. That contrast is the heart of the building for me. ●





The space is designed so visitors feel like they're navigating a continuous story rather than separate exhibits



Dream big, invest and have confidence, and do it with a bit of style

Andy Jasper
CEO, Eden Project



As the Eden Project in Cornwall, UK, celebrates its 25 year anniversary, its CEO Andy Jasper urged operators to be bold, and said that the success of the charity proves the economic model for nature-based tourism regeneration projects.

An impact report released early in March showed that the charitable trust has delivered £6.8bn in total economic impact and £5.7bn additional economic impact for Cornwall since opening in 2001.

"The Eden Project is proof that a relatively modest investment can produce a very significant economic and social impact," said Jasper, speaking to *Attractions Management*.

"When you look back at the photos of the original site - a barren, disused china clay pit - you just think, how on earth was this created? At that point, it seemed impossible, but as Nelson Mandela said, it always seems impossible until it's done.

"With a relatively small £210m capital spend, this incredible global garden was created, with rich environments and beautiful biomes dripping with plants, and it has resulted in £6.8bn going into the local and regional economy." ▶



The Eden Project has welcomed more than 25 million visitors since 2001

THE EDEN PROJECT



The Eden Project transformed a disused clay pit into a global garden



The rainforest biome features more than 1,000 species of plants



THE EDEN PROJECT



► “And it’s not just about economic impact - it’s also about attitudinal change; about fostering a sense of hope and the motivation to do something positive.”

Asked what advice Jasper had for attractions operators and governments based on the lessons learned at Eden, the charity’s CEO said: “Dream big, invest and have confidence, and do it with a bit of style.”

The case for nature-based tourism

The success of the Eden Project shows the huge potential of nature-based tourism projects, added Jasper.

“We should be doing so much more,” he said. “It’s so important to invest in our natural resources and places that enrich our lives. It’s clear how much benefit people get, both physically and mentally, from spending time outside in beautiful places.

“The world needs more of that radical thinking that Sir Tim [Smit] pioneered 25 years ago.”

According to the report, Eden has attracted more than 25 million visitors to its rainforest and Mediterranean biomes, with 80 per cent travelling from outside Cornwall. The report also says that the charity has reached more than one million children and young people through specialised education programmes.

Looking ahead

“Taking a look back is a really healthy thing to do, as we open the doors to the next 25 years of the Eden Project,” said Jasper.

In February 2026, planning approval was granted for the new designs for Eden Project Morecambe, and construction is expected to start at the end of June 2026.

The evolved designs for the new eco attraction in Lancashire, North West England, feature two rather than the original four biomes, in order to keep within budget. The design is by Grimshaw Architects. ►



Jasper previously worked for organisations including the National Trust

A contractor was recently appointed to build Eden Project Morecombe



The Realm of the Sun is this beautiful biome dripping with plants. The Realm of the Moon will offer a very different experience. It's a darker, theatrical space, which will mix incredible technology with traditional theatrical and puppetry experiences



The design for Eden Project Morecambe is by Grimshaw Architects



GRIMSHAW

► The shell-inspired biomes will be named the Realm of the Sun and the Realm of the Moon, and will be linked by a central arrival building known as the metronome. The attraction will also feature a concert arena, and extensive gardens, including an expanded, permanent version of the Bring Me Sunshine Garden, Eden's 25th-anniversary showpiece at this summer's RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2026. It is due to open in 2028.

"When we were approached about helping to create something incredible in Morecambe, it was an absolute no-brainer," said Jasper. "It's an area that's very deprived and ready for an injection of economic energy, and it has a fantastic seaside location.

"We used the tide as inspiration, because it dominates and transforms the landscape there, creating 100 square metres of land when it goes out, and coming in faster than a galloping horse. Morecambe is like one massive magnifying glass on the incredible connection we have to the rhythms of the natural world.

The Realm of the Sun in Morecambe will be similar to the rainforest biome

"The Realm of the Sun is this beautiful biome dripping with plants. The Realm of the Moon will offer a very different experience. It's a darker, theatrical space, which will mix incredible technology with traditional theatrical and puppetry experiences."

The Eden Project Scotland is expected to open in 2031. Housed in a disused gasworks in Dundee, it will feature a biome, a visitor centre and a 10,000 capacity area, which will be used as an ice rink in the winter.

"If you imagine taking a samurai sword and slicing through one of the big gasometers, putting a huge biome on top of it and filling it with subtropical plants - that gives you an idea of what to expect," said Jasper. ●

Attractions Management news roundup

EUROPE

World of Frozen launches at Disneyland Paris

World of Frozen has opened at Disney Adventure World in Disneyland Paris with new offerings across the entire park.

The expansion almost doubles the size of Disneyland Paris, immersing guests in a life-size recreation of the Kingdom of Arendel.

The World of Frozen features a *Tangled*-inspired attraction, 14 new dining locations and a large lake debuting a new night-time spectacular.

It also features a daytime celebration, themed shopping, and encounters with Anna, Elsa and other characters from Frozen, all set in meticulously themed surroundings.

The new area is anchored by Frozen Ever After, a family-friendly musical boat ride that tells the story of *Frozen* with a soundtrack of songs from the movie.

Adventure Way has been transformed into a promenade filled with lush gardens, a new gondola attraction, lively entertainment and restaurants. The gardens draw inspiration from Disney and Pixar films.

Guests will be able to meet a dynamic Olaf robotic character during their visit.

"We're thrilled to introduce a next generation robotic figure of Olaf," said Disneyland Paris president Natacha Rafalski.

"Developed by Walt Disney Imagineering, this is a true milestone in character technology. Unlike traditional animatronic figures, this Olaf is a free roaming, untethered robotic character. He can speak and engage with his surroundings in a way that creates a level of character fidelity previously only possible on screen."



Natacha Rafalski is president of Disneyland Paris

Future projects at Disney Adventure World include an *Up*-inspired attraction and a new *Lion King* zone.

"Our vision is one of continuous growth and layered storytelling," said Natacha Rafalski.

More: <http://lei.sr/w4g7t>

“

Our vision is one of continuous growth and layered storytelling

Natacha Rafalski



The World of Frozen features a next generation Olaf robot

UK

V&A East opens in London

The much-anticipated V&A East Museum has opened in Stratford, east London, UK.

Designed by architects O'Donnell + Tuomey, the new branch of the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A) will be a cornerstone of the East Bank cultural complex in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

Intended as a legacy for the 2012 London Olympics, the project was inspired by the cultural boom in South Kensington after the 1851 Great Exhibition and London's South Bank after the Festival of Britain in 1951.

The museum features two free permanent Why We Make galleries, exhibiting more

than 500 objects from the V&A's collections, alongside major temporary exhibitions.

The opening exhibition, *The Music is Black: A British Story*, focuses on Black music in Britain, with photography and exhibits including Joan Armatrading's guitar and fashion work by Little Simz.

Director of the V&A East Gus Casely-Hayford said of the aims of the museum:

"My early museum memories were of distance and barriers. We want to change that by exposing young people to truly exceptional things.

"Thinking back to being a teenager – I would have adored a place of refuge and escape and inspiration.

"This is a place where you can come and find yourself – and the world."

More: <http://lei.sr/019o2>



The V&A East building was designed by O'Donnell + Tuomey

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VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

US

David Geffen galleries open at LACMA

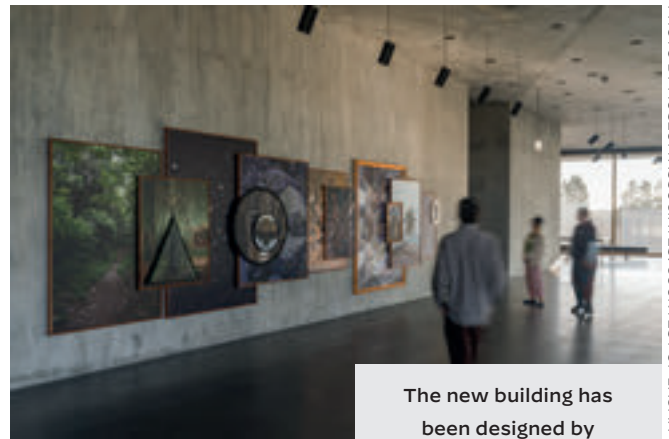
The Peter Zumthor-designed David Geffen Galleries have opened at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in Los Angeles, US.

Spanning LA's Wilshire Boulevard, the elevated exhibition space houses LACMA's permanent collection, allowing the museum to present art from all cultures and eras on a single level without hierarchies or prescribed visitor pathways.

"This building is not just about the flow of people. It's actually about the flow

of objects, ever-changing because history is ever-changing," said LACMA CEO Michael Govan.

The building is designed to hold approximately 2,500 to 3,000 objects from the museum's global collection at one time, filling 110,000 square feet of gallery space. Rather than displaying artworks according to medium or period, the inaugural installation will use the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic Oceans and the Mediterranean Sea as its organising framework.



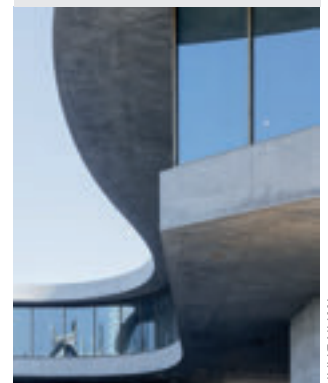
The new building has been designed by architect Peter Zumthor

PHOTO BY MUSEUM ASSOCIATES. COURTESY OF LACMA

The opening concludes a two-decade campus transformation to increase gallery space at LACMA and enhance the visitor experience.

The launch of the galleries is being celebrated with a range of events including a block party and a procession of portable artworks.

More: <http://lei.sr/v7T9W>



IWAN BAAH

ASIA

Therme Singapore announces new CEO



THERME GROUP

Tan Boon Khai will lead the development of Therme Singapore

Therme Group has appointed Tan Boon Khai as CEO of Therme Group Singapore, where he will lead the development of the group's urban wellbeing destination at the city's Marina South Coastal site.

Therme Singapore will be a S\$1bn (US\$768m, €664m, £507m) wellness attraction with a 4-hectare footprint on the waterfront, next to Marina Bay Sands resort and the famous botanical attraction, Gardens by the Bay.

The Singapore Tourism Board signed off on the tender in November last year, with Therme Singapore scheduled to open in 2030. Therme Group expects the destination to attract

around two million visitors a year at full capacity, with around half from overseas.

A lawyer by training, Boon Khai has more than 30 years' experience working in Singapore's public and private sectors across project development and operations.

Boon Khai said: "I'm honoured to join Therme Group at such a pivotal moment. Singapore is uniquely positioned to become a leading hub for urban wellbeing in Asia, and I look forward to bringing Therme Singapore's vision to life – creating a world-class destination that enhances quality of life for both locals and visitors."

More: <http://lei.sr/E3u1r>



Singapore is uniquely positioned to become a leading hub for urban wellbeing in Asia

Tan Boon Khai

WORLDWIDE

Royal Caribbean reveals record-breaking cruise ship

Royal Caribbean has revealed its Hero of the Seas cruise ship, home to the most pools at sea (nine), and a record-breaking 28 dining venues, as well as attractions including a waterpark with two new family raft slides.

Other attractions include the Crown's Edge skywalk/zip line experience, the FlowRider surf simulator, the Adrenaline Peak rock-climbing wall, and the Lost Dunes mini-golf course.

Arriving in Miami in August 2027, Hero of the Seas is Royal Caribbean's fourth Icon

Class ship, and will feature eight 'neighbourhoods'.

Dining venues include the newest supper club experience, Orleans Parish Supper Club, and Royal Railway – Hero Station, billed as the most immersive dining experience at sea. Signature Icon Class experiences on the

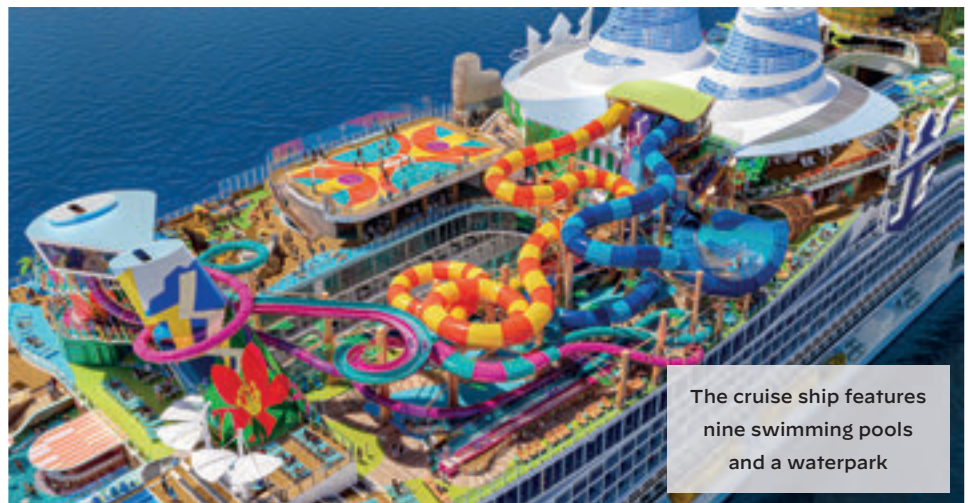
ship will include Pearl – the world's largest kinetic art sculpture, open-air Central Park featuring more than 30,500 real plants, and new theatre productions.

"Icon Class truly set a new standard for family vacations, and Hero of the Seas takes that vision even further," said

Michael Bayley, president and CEO of Royal Caribbean.

"With more water, more thrills and more choices, we're building on what our guests love about Royal Caribbean and delivering the experiences families are looking for when vacationing together."

More: <http://lei.sr/K3O1a>



ROYAL CARIBBEAN

The cruise ship features nine swimming pools and a waterpark

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MIDDLE EAST

New rides at Yas Waterworld

Yas Waterworld in Abu Dhabi has launched a major expansion, adding more than 20 new experiences under the Lost City theme, bringing the total number of experiences to more than 70.

The new development adds eight new waterslides, two jumping platforms and a large lounging pool.

Newly launched slides include the 233m-long Matamir's Drop, billed as the UAE's tallest waterslide.

The Lost City theme expands on the original Legend of the Lost Pearl story, adding Sahel Matamir (high-speed tube racers), Matamir Loop (fast body slide), and Matamir Twist.

State-owned destination creator Miral is the developer, owner, and operator of Yas Waterworld on Yas Island.

"I am excited to share the latest expansion of Yas

Waterworld Yas Island," said Miral Group CEO Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi.

"The one that I am really looking forward to is Matamir's Drop, which will be the UAE's tallest waterslide featuring a 40-metre plunge.

"With a total of 70+ rides, slides and attractions, Yas Waterworld is now even more thrilling for guests of all ages."

"The expansion of Yas Waterworld marks an

important milestone in our commitment to delivering world-class entertainment experiences on Yas Island," said Jonathan Brown, chief portfolio officer at Miral.

"With 11 new slides and attractions, we're enhancing the park's offering with fresh thrills and immersive adventures for guests of all ages.

"As Abu Dhabi continues to grow as a global tourism

hub, we remain focused on further positioning Yas Island as a top global destination for entertainment and leisure."

Yas Waterworld's new slides are by waterpark manufacturer WhiteWater.

The latest launch follows on from the last expansion of Yas Waterworld, which opened in July 2025 with 20 new rides, slides and experiences, and a new dining experience. ●

More: <http://lei.sr/cOc4e>



The expansion features eight new waterslides



The new slides are by waterpark manufacturer WhiteWater



**UNFORGETTABLE ENJOYMENT
IN THEME PARKS.**

GUY VASSEL

With an ambitious €250m three year transformation project in full swing and plans for the first Parc Asterix outside France, the much-loved French theme park is riding high. The park's deputy director tells us more

Parc Asterix is being transformed from a national to an international park



PARC ASTERIX



We try to stay very close to the comic books, and to incorporate humour, friendship & conviviality into everything we do



In April 6 2026, Parc Asterix near Paris in France unveiled its transformed and expanded Egypt Zone, part of a hugely ambitious three

year development plan aimed at elevating it into Europe's top five theme parks.

Parent company Compagnie des Alpes is investing €250m in a major transformation of Parc Asterix, which aims to expand the park's capacity by 20 per cent and increase hotel rooms, with a focus on extending seasonal operation and adding indoor offerings for year-round entertainment.

The project will include the creation of the new indoor British-themed Londinium Zone, set to open in 2028; and Odyssée Hotel, a 300-room themed property due to open in 2027; as well as the transformation of the existing Greek Zone. ▶

The fans voted us France's best theme park for the fourth year in a row

► This follows several years of major investment and new launches, including the three acre themed area Festival Toutatis in 2023, the Cétautomatix rollercoaster in 2025, and four star hotel Les Quais de Lutèce in 2020. These developments have resulted in increased attendance year on year.

"Apart from the COVID-19 years, every year since 2014 has been a record year for Parc Asterix in terms of attendance," says Guy Vassel, deputy director at the French theme park.

Last year was no exception for the Asterix and Obelix-themed park – it attracted 2.9 million visitors, cementing its place as France's second most visited theme park (after Disneyland Paris).

In December 2025, Compagnie des Alpes announced plans to transform the Belantis theme park in Leipzig, Germany into the first Parc Asterix outside France.

This transition will take place over several years, with the new name expected to be adopted around 2030 or 2031. The first themed area – dedicated to Asterix's loyal dog Idéfix – opened in April 2026.

Here Guy Vassel outlines what's new for the much loved French theme park

This spring marked the completion of the transformation of the Egyptian Zone. What has this involved?

In March 2024, we launched the 40m Tour de Numerobis tower attraction in the Egyptian Zone next to our existing suspended rollercoaster, Ozlris. We also launched the P'Oz Kebab restaurant in 2024, and in 2025 we added Les Fastes du Nil restaurant and a new themed souk marketplace area. ►



The park plans to open a new indoor zone in 2028, themed around Asterix in Britain



PARC ASTERIX



PARC ASTERIX

The park's Egyptian Zone has undergone a major transformation



PARC ASTERIX



PARC ASTERIX



The Germans love theme parks, and they love the Asterix comic books

► This season, we're launching two redesigned attractions, both themed around the River Nile. The former Oxygenarium raft ride is now La Descente du Nile – it has been completely redesigned with new scenery, giving guests the chance to descend a water ride on rubber rings at speed, under the watchful eye of Hapy, the God of the Nile. L'envol d'Ibis, meanwhile, is a flying chair attraction that allows guests to spin 10 metres above a new water garden dedicated to the sacred Ibis. This season we are also opening our new Les Comptoirs d'Épidemaïs buffet restaurant.

The Egyptian area is probably now the most beautiful area of Parc Asterix.

How was 2025 for Parc Asterix?

It was a great year for us. We had 90 per cent attendance all year, and we had a record Halloween period with more than 550,000 guests. Christmas was also very popular, with record attendance for that period. We began opening for Christmas five years ago, and it's become a really popular time to visit, because it has a very different atmosphere to the rest of the year.

We also won quite a few awards for our new Toutatis attraction, our new Cétautomatix family spinning coaster and our new Lefas Dunil restaurant. Plus the fans voted us France's best theme park for the fourth year in a row, which is a really important accolade for us.

What makes Parc Asterix special?

It's the DNA of the park. We try to stay very close to the comic books – we want to fully immerse visitors in the Gaulish, Viking and Egyptian atmosphere. One of the key values of the brand is humour, and so we try to be funny in what we do. Friendship and conviviality are also key to the brand and the park. ►

Parc Asterix is the second most visited theme park in France after Disneyland Paris



PARC ASTERIX

The park's investment strategy is having a clear effect on attendance



PARC ASTERIX

► **What can you tell us about the new Londinium zone**

Londinium is a brand new zone inspired by the Asterix in Britain comic books. It's a major addition to Parc Asterix because it will be indoors, so it will help us to welcome guests during the winter. This new area represents a very big investment for Parc Asterix.

The Londinium zone will feature two new indoor attractions. The first will be a dark ride – a family attraction inspired by a funfair in the Gaulish world, but with a British twist. The second is a big indoor rollercoaster, which will be a first for Parc Asterix.

It will also include Roman battles, a British pub, themed playgrounds and restaurants, and an attraction inspired by the British tradition of cheese rolling.

You're opening a new hotel in 2027. Why is this important?

It's important to have more hotel rooms, because it is part of our strategy to become a short destination. We want to develop our international guests, and this hotel – which is themed around Asterix's adventures in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Persia – will be important in welcoming more visitors from outside of France.

Londinium is a brand new zone inspired by the Asterix in Britain comic books

What can you tell me about Asterix in Germany?

That project is a big challenge, but I'm pretty sure it's going to be a success. The Germans love theme parks – Germany is the second biggest market for theme parks in Europe, and the good news is that it's also the second largest market for the Asterix comic books, accounting for almost a third of the volumes ever sold worldwide.

We chose a park in east Germany, because all of the country's theme parks are in the west, so there is less competition. Finally we chose the Balantis park, because there is lots of room to grow.

How many visitors do you expect the park to attract?

It's currently a small park, attracting around 250,000 visitors per year. We think we can triple that number within four or five years. ●



The Londinium zone will feature an indoor rollercoaster and a dark ride



Compagnie des Alpes is investing €250m into the development of Parc Asterix

PARC ASTERIX



PARC ASTERIX DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2026: The multi-year transformation of the Egyptian Zone is complete with the re-theming of the Oxygénarium attraction as The Descent of the Nile.

2026: Les Chaises Volantes becomes The Flight of Ibis and the Le Cirque restaurant becomes Le Comptoir d'Epidemais.

2027: A new area will be launched in the Greek zone with two new family attractions, a playground and a restaurant, La Table de Dyonisos, with a capacity of 450 seats.

The Greek zone will be transformed



2027: Launch of the Odysée Hotel, a new four star, 300-room hotel inspired by Asterix and Obelix's travels in the East, with four areas: Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Phoenicia.

2028: Creation of the new indoor Londinium Zone, a British-themed area inspired by Astérix in Britain, featuring an Intamin multi-dimension coaster and replacing the À Travers le Temps zone.



ANNA WARNECKE

As a new 'time travelling theme park' prepares to launch in the north of England its CEO speaks to Magali Robathan about passion and potential

“

The attraction is entering an ambitious new chapter with the launch of its large-scale theme park



Kynren's new historical theme park aims to bring UK history, myths and legends to life

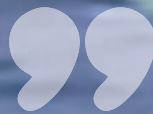
This summer, a major new attraction is set to launch in the north of England. Kynren – The Storied Lands will bring UK history, myth and legend to life through multiple large-scale live action shows and immersive experiences.

The 'time travelling theme park' will explore different periods in UK history, from Neolithic Britain to Victorian England, and will host a large-scale bird show in a newly built 2,500-seat arena designed to look like an eagle's nest.

The opening marks the evolution of the Kynren visitor attraction in Bishop Auckland, which hosts a spectacular night-time show featuring 1,000 volunteers set against the backdrop of Auckland Palace.

Kynren – An Epic Tale has been running during the summer months since 2016, and is part of a wider project using art and culture to regenerate the area. ▶

To be part of something that's been created from scratch is just amazing



A water show will depict a local 12th century folktale about a venomous serpent

▶ HOW IT ALL BEGAN

In 2001, the Church of England announced that it wanted to sell a series of 17th century paintings by Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán in order to raise money.

The paintings had hung in a room in Auckland Palace in Bishop Auckland, UK for more than 250 years, and there was a public outcry about removing them from their historic home. Investment banker and art lover Jonathan Ruffer stepped in and bought the paintings in 2011, before buying the Grade I-listed palace that housed them and the land surrounding it//;.

Seeing an opportunity to use art, history and culture as the catalyst to regenerate the area – which has suffered high unemployment and serious economic decline since the demise of the coal mining industry – Ruffer set up the Auckland Project in order to restore the palace and gardens and open them up as a visitor attraction.

The question of what to do with the surrounding land remained unanswered, until Ruffer and a friend took a trip to Puy du Fou in France, and were blown away by the park's spectacular, volunteer-led show.

Following that trip, Ruffer teamed up with the owners of Puy du Fou, and together they created Kynren – An Epic Tale of England: a dramatic 90 minute-long live action night show that takes place every Saturday from mid-July to mid-September. Former eventer Anna Warnecke,



who lives nearby, was approached to train the horses for the first season. Warnecke fell in love with Kynren and what it stood for, and stayed on, becoming head of cavalry and estates in 2015, and then being appointed CEO in 2022.

Now the attraction is entering an ambitious new chapter with the launch of its large-scale theme park.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Phase one of the park, which will be operated by charity organisation 11 Arches, will feature five live action shows and immersive experiences set against a series of landscaped historical backdrops.

These experiences include a dramatic Viking raid-themed show and 9th century Viking village; the Lost Feather bird show; a Victorian England experience; and a water show on a lake that retells the local Lambton Worm myth. The attraction will culminate with the park's biggest production – a Medieval live horse spectacle entitled The Trusty Steed.

The Kynren – An Epic Tale of England show will also continue on Saturday nights with its 1,000-strong cast and crew of volunteers.

Future phases of development will introduce further attractions, including The Lone Centurion, Tales of the Tudors, Conquest of the Seas and legendary stories such as Excalibur and Robin Hood. ▶



Kynren's night shows feature a huge cast of volunteers, fire, animals and locomotives





A newly built arena designed to resemble a bird's nest will host a large scale bird show

KYNREN



Anna Warnecke has been involved with Kynren since the very beginning

KYNREN

► Here CEO Anna Warnecke shares the plans with *Attractions Management*

How would you describe Kynren – The Storied Lands?

It's a historical theme park that consists of five spectacular daytime shows. Visitors can expect a unique experience that brings history, heritage and myth to life on a scale not seen anywhere else in the UK

How did the idea for the new park come about?

Right from the beginning, the long-term plan was to create a daytime attraction. In the north east of England, having a night show is quite a challenge, both from the point of view of the weather, and because it can be difficult for children to enjoy. We always knew we wanted this attraction, but it took us 10 years to have the right funding and plans in place.

For the past two years, we've been working hard on identifying what stories we want to tell and how we want to tell them. We knew we



wanted the shows to be local myths, history and legends, but with national – and even international – significance. The Viking show was an obvious one for us, as we already have a recreation of a Viking village here. We're extending the village with the show area and a proper auditorium, and we've created a narrative around that. It's a really fun show, with fire and fighting and amazing special effects.

I had always wanted to create a bird show, and I see this as a real opportunity to captivate and educate visitors about birds and the urgent challenges they're facing. We are running a huge conservation programme, linking up with zoos and other specialists. The Lost Feather is a stunning, emotional show about the connection between humans and birds. It will be beautiful, and very moving.

Our Victorian experience is a walkthrough maze, which will allow visitors to interact with Victorian characters in a Victorian town.

Legend of the Wear tells the story of a local 14th century myth – the Lambton Worm – about a young John Lambton who goes fishing and

The Lost Feather is a stunning, emotional show about the connection between humans and birds

catches a strange creature that grows into a venomous serpent and terrorises the area. Lambton returns from the Crusades and slays the serpent, bringing a curse onto his family. It's a water stunt show that takes place on a lake, and it's brilliant. It's a fast-moving, exciting show, with lots of parkour and fighting.

Finally, we'll have a medieval horse spectacular, Fina, which will take place on the Kynren stage. For visitors coming on a Saturday, they will also be able to stay and watch the night show as well. ▶



One thing I love about working with volunteers is the level of passion they bring

What to expect in 2026

LAND OF THE VIKINGS: Encounter an all-new Viking show, where warriors clash, sparks fly, and fires rage in a multi-sensory spectacle of Viking life.

VICTORIAN ADVENTURE: Step into an immersive Victorian adventure and meet some larger than life characters.

LEGEND OF THE WEAR: A giant lake becomes the stage for thrilling water stunts and a captivating retelling of the Lambton Worm myth. The audience will be left in awe as the monstrous, cursed creature emerges from the waters in an unforgettable show.

THE LOST FEATHER: An inspiring and visually stunning experience centered around the relationship between birds and humanity. Set on a breathtaking stage inspired by a bird's nest, this show will explore the beauty, power, and fragility of bird species from around the world, highlighting their struggles and triumphs in a rapidly changing environment.

FINA: The adventure builds to The Trusty Steed – an epic spectacle where medieval knights clash on horseback, and a fearless female warrior's courage and skill are put to the test in a breathtaking display of horsemanship and daring stunts.

KYNREN



► What is the plan for F&B and accommodation?

We're doing all the F&B in house – we've done it with Kynren for many years, so we'll just expand on what we have. It's all themed – we've got a 'time travellers' restaurant' where you can time travel with food, for example. It's really good fun.

As for accommodation, our sister charity The Auckland Project, already owns a hotel and is building another hotel in the next couple of years. We hope that launching The Storied Lands will make a huge difference for the area, with people able to make money running Airbnbs and maybe hotels in years come. We're aware that there is not enough accommodation in the area, and we hope to be the catalyst for the opening of a large hotel.

What are the challenges of the project?

One of the challenges is explaining to potential guests what we're doing and what the attraction will look like, because there's nothing quite like it out there.

While we're continuing with the night show with volunteers, we're hiring professionals for The Storied Lands day park, and it's quite different working with professionals. One thing I love about working with volunteers is the level of passion they bring – and they bring that freely. We've been thinking a lot about how to bring that passion and spirit to the day park as well.

How are you approaching that challenge?

It's mainly about training; about ensuring that our employees really understand what



The Lost Feather bird show will focus on conservation and aims to educate guests

we're all about and why we're here. This is a regeneration project, in a deprived area. We have a real chance to make a difference. Once people understand that, they can come with us fully on this amazing journey.

Kynren – An Epic Tale of England has been running since 2016. What makes it special?

It's a fast-moving, spectacular night show covering 2,000 years of British history, featuring a cast and crew of 1,000 volunteers and more than 150 animals. It features mass choreography, incredible stunts, huge battle scenes, special effects, epic music that's been written especially for the show, amazing costumes and much more.

It's an unforgettable event that you have to experience to fully understand.

You've been on board since the very beginning with Kynren. What were the early days like?

The first year was a complete whirlwind, with emotions going high and low, tears and laughter together. They broke ground in November 2015, and the first show launched in June 2016. We had a very short time frame to get ready for the opening.

The first horses arrived in my yard in February 2016, and they had never heard music or been in a show before. We were riding from five o'clock in the morning till late at night. Even in May, we didn't have the stage ready for the horses. It was a beautiful time, and also a complete nightmare!

To be part of something that's been created from scratch is just amazing. ●



Museum founder Purat Osathanugrah brought his father's vision to life

We see art as the ripest
fruit of human imagination.
Something to be savoured,
questioned and shared

The **ART** *of* **STILLNESS**

BANGKOK'S NEWEST CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ASKS VISITORS
TO SLOW DOWN, WITH SPACES DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE
DEEP SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTERS WITH THE ARTWORKS

ART MUSEUM

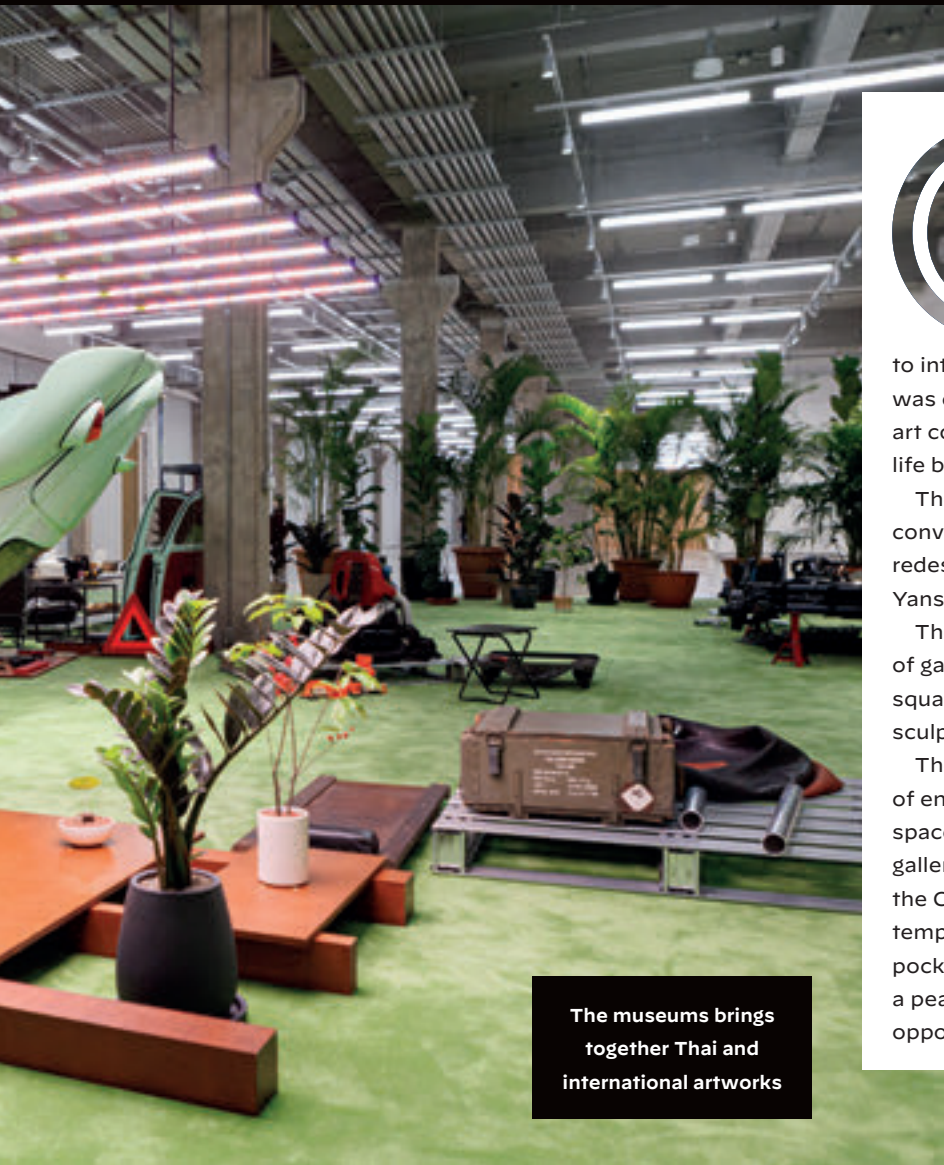


The conical-shaped Chapel (below) offers a pocket of calm





A former warehouse has been transformed in order to create Dib Bangkok



The museums brings together Thai and international artworks

One of the most significant art openings in Asia since M+, contemporary art institution Dib Bangkok has opened in the Thai capital. Billed as Thailand's first major museum dedicated to international contemporary art, Dib Bangkok was conceived by the late Thai businessman and art collector Petch Osathanugrah and brought to life by his son Purat 'Chang' Osathanugrah.

The museum is housed in a three-storey converted 1980s warehouse that has been redesigned by LA-based Thai architect Kulapat Yansantrast of WHY Architecture.

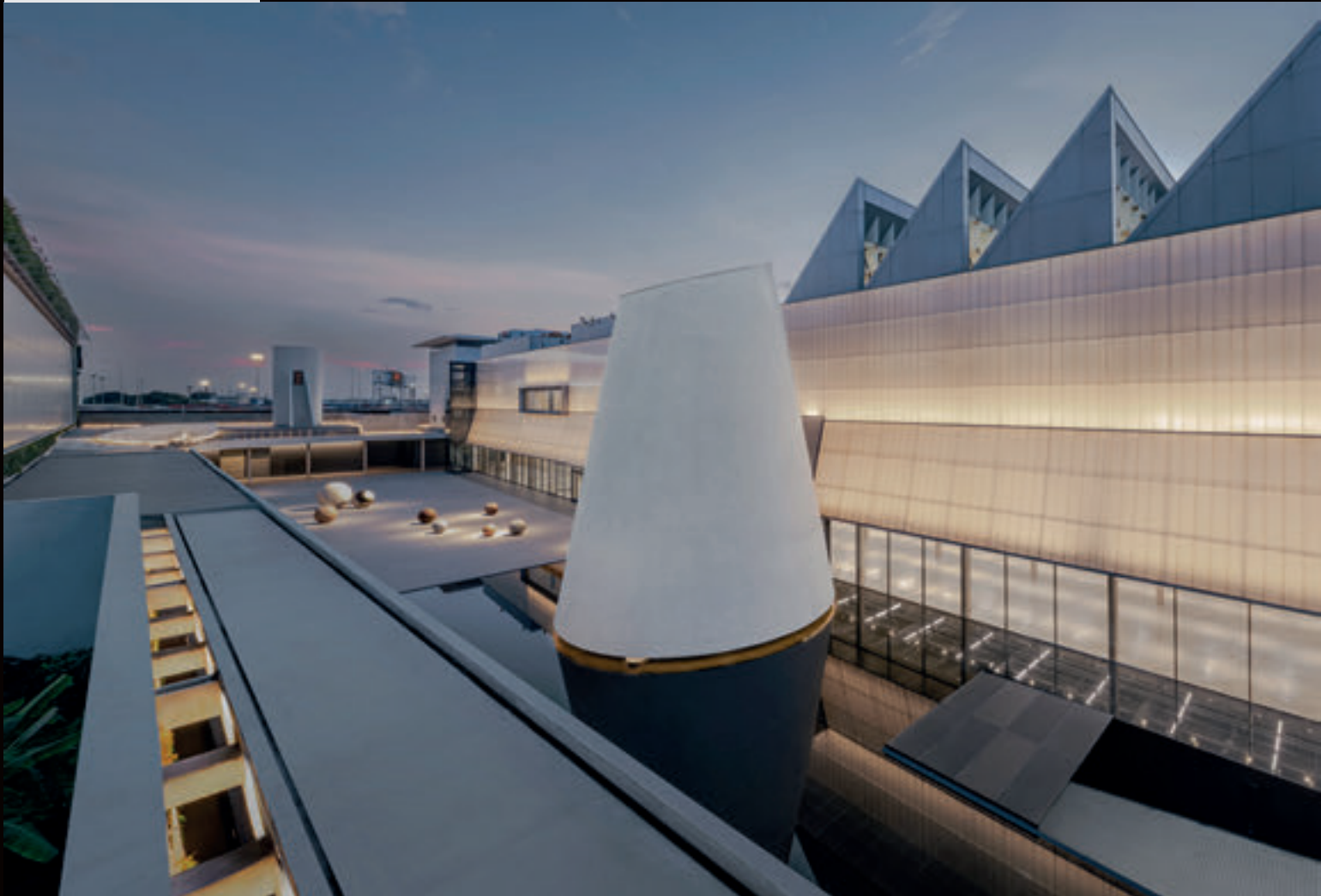
The museum houses 7,000 square metres of gallery space set across 11 galleries, a 1,400 square metre central courtyard, an outdoor sculpture garden, and a penthouse.

The design is framed as an architectural journey of enlightenment, moving from raw, grounded spaces on the lower levels to brighter, light-filled galleries above. A central conical gallery, named the Chapel, has been inspired by traditional Thai temple structures and has been designed as a pocket of calm. The aim of the museum is to create a peaceful, meditative space that offers visitors the opportunity for deep, spiritual encounters with art. ▶

ART MUSEUM



The central courtyard currently features stone globes by Alicja Kwade





COURTESY OF DIB BANGKOK. PHOTO BY W.WORKSPACE



Purat Osathanugrah is a prominent art collector and patron of the arts



COURTESY OF DIB BANGKOK. PHOTOGRAPHER AUNTIKA OUNJITTIKHAJ

Our curatorial approach is theme-oriented, and for the grand opening the theme is ‘invisible presence’– art that reaches beyond the sense of vision

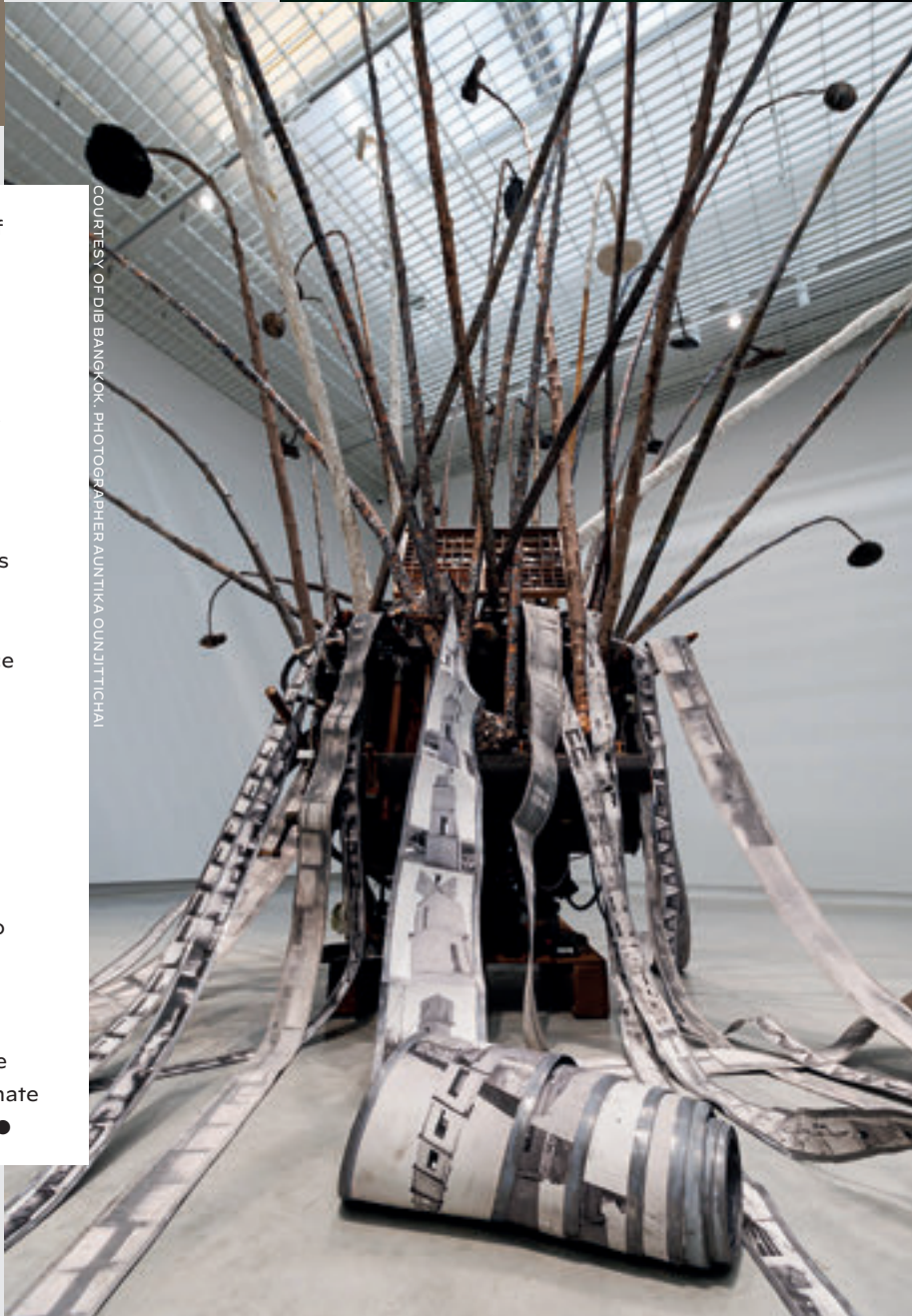
Director Miwako Tezuka has played a key role in shaping the vision



COURTESY OF DIB BANGKOK. PHOTOGRAPHER WATCHARABONG SERWICHITTHAI



The museum features a collection of more than 1,000 artworks



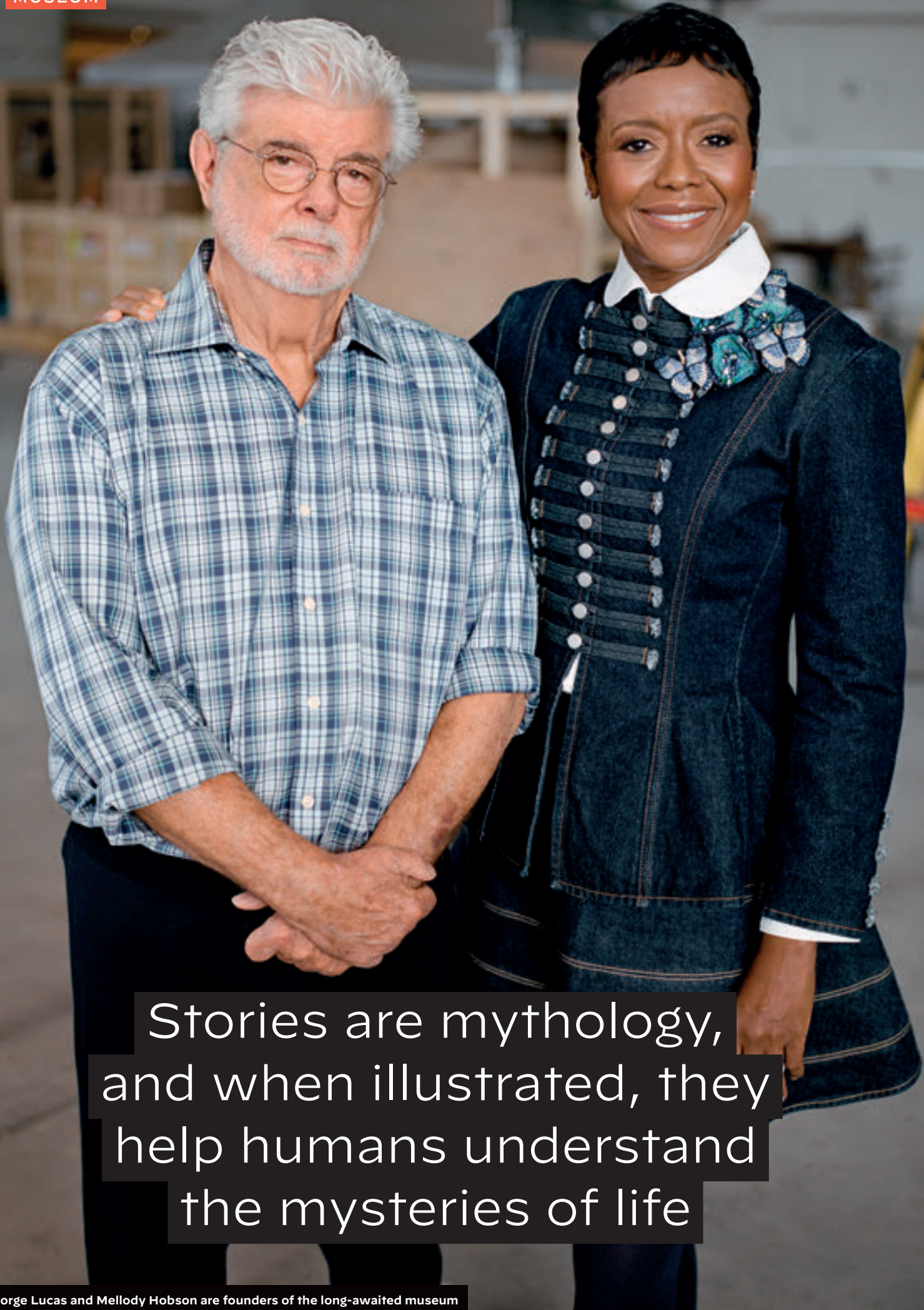
COURTESY OF DIB BANGKOK. PHOTOGRAPHER AUNTIK AUNNITTHAI

► 'At Dib Bangkok, we see art as the ripest fruit of human imagination—something to be savoured, questioned, and shared. But more than that, we're building Dib Bangkok to be a true creative oasis, a bridge between Thailand, Southeast Asia, and the global art scene— where deep art circles and the simply curious can come together,' says founder Purat (Chang) Osathanugrah.

'Bangkok, with all its energy, creativity, and unstoppable spirit, has long been overdue for an anchor to its contemporary art scene that matches its vibrancy—somewhere that celebrates art in a way as dynamic and bold as the city itself.

Its inaugural exhibition, titled (In)visiblePresence brings together significant Thai and international contemporary artworks for a 'multisensory exploration of memory and the unseen.'

"Our curatorial approach is theme-oriented, and for the grand opening the theme is 'invisible presence'— art that reaches beyond the sense of vision," says Dib Bangkok's director Miwako Tezuka "This theme is partly driven by our wish to honour our founding father, Petch Osathanugrah; we selected 81 works by 40 artists that ask how we sense and remember what is meaningful yet unseen. It is also a response to our time, when the world is in image overdrive and in need of an intimate attentiveness and stillness to counterbalance it." ●



Stories are mythology,
and when illustrated, they
help humans understand
the mysteries of life

George Lucas and Mellody Hobson are founders of the long-awaited museum



Story Time

Without the concept art that helped George Lucas persuade studio executives to fund *Star Wars*, his most famous films might never have been made. Now he's celebrating narrative art with his long-awaited \$1bn museum. Magali Robathan finds out more

'This is a temple to the people's art." So said filmmaker George Lucas, speaking at San Diego Comic-Con in California, US, about his aims for the long-anticipated Lucas Museum of Narrative Art.

Co-founded by Lucas and his wife Mellody Hobson, the \$1bn museum is due to open in Los Angeles, US, on 22 September 2026, and will celebrate narrative art across the ages, including cave art, comic book art, digital media and film, as well as paintings, illustrations and photography. It is rooted in Lucas and Hobson's deep belief in illustrated stories and their power to connect people across cultures and through time.

"This museum is dedicated to the idea that stories and mythology are extremely important to society in creating community," Lucas told the San Diego Comic-Con audience

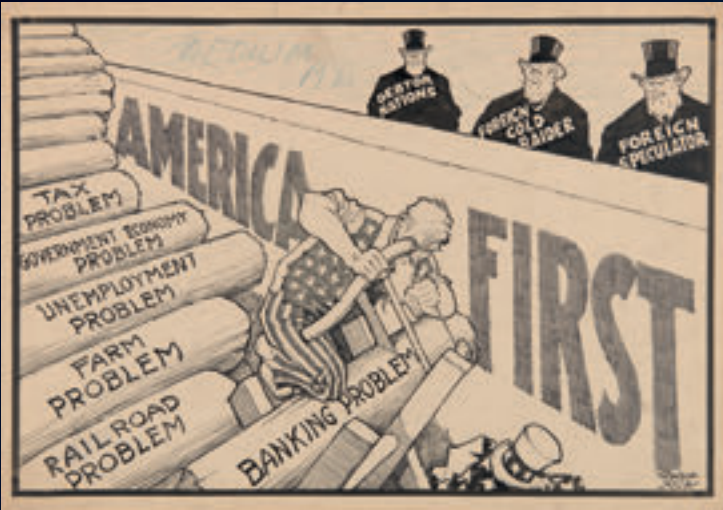
last summer. "Art illustrates that story – you need the art to make it seem real."

"The images are illustrations of beliefs we live with every day," said Mellody Hobson, who has been working on the museum with George Lucas for more than 10 years. "For that reason, this art belongs to everyone. Our hope is that as people move through the galleries, they will see themselves, and their humanity, reflected back."

A VAST COLLECTION

The museum, which was designed by architect Ma Yansong, will feature more than 40,000 artworks from Lucas and Hobson's vast collection, exhibited in 35 galleries spread across 100,000 square feet. As well as the galleries, the building will also contain two state-of-the-art cinema theatres, classrooms, shops, a cafe and a rooftop restaurant. ▶

COURTESY OF THE LUCAS MUSEUM OF NARRATIVE ART



COURTESY OF THE LUCAS MUSEUM OF NARRATIVE ART

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Artworks will be grouped by themes including love, family, adventure and play

The curved, futuristic-looking building has been designed by Ma Yansong



COURTESY OF THE LUCAS MUSEUM OF NARRATIVE ART



This art belongs to everyone

► Rather than grouping artworks by period as per the traditional art museum model, Lucas and Hobson have chosen to group them by human experience, with galleries covering universal themes including love, family, community, work, play, childhood and adventure.

The collection includes works by painter and illustrator Norman Rockwell, contemporary artists including Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, and comic artists like Frank Frazetta and Winsor McKay. As you might expect, it will also display a wide range of movie-related artefacts, including props, costumes, storyboards and posters, and it houses the complete Lucas Archives (1971 - 2012).

A LOVE AFFAIR WITH ART

Lucas' passion for collecting art began when he was a college student, and he started buying original comic book artwork.

"Back when I was in college, I couldn't afford real art, but I could afford comic art," he said. "I've been collecting narrative art since then."

Since his early days as a filmmaker, Lucas has always relied on visual artists to translate his ideas into reality. Back in the 1970s, when he began pitching his idea for a 'modern space opera,' studio executives struggled to understand his vision. Lucas hired illustrator Ralph McQuarrie to produce a series of concept artwork, which proved instrumental in getting Twentieth Century Fox to approve funding for the original Star Wars film. ►



► “People can’t understand what I’m talking about because they’ve never seen it before,” said Lucas, speaking to the *Wall Street Journal*. “That’s why I had so many illustrators working for me. I relied on them to help people get the picture.

“I’ve worked with hundreds of illustrators in my life. They’re all great, but they don’t get recognised.”

One of the key aims of the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art is to champion creators overlooked by the elite art world by affording illustration, comic book and populist art the same status as fine art. By focusing on the storytelling aspect of art, the museum bridges the gap between high art and popular art, with the hope that it will cater to a broader audience than elite institutions.

A LONG ROAD

The idea for a museum celebrating narrative art began in the early 2010s, following George Lucas’ 2012 sale of Lucasfilm to Disney. Lucas turned his attention to the creation of a

museum which would display his vast collection of art, with the aim of exploring how images shape culture and collective imagination.

“I have been [collecting art] for 50 years now, and it occurred to me, What am I going to do with it all?” he said. “I refuse to sell it.”

The museum – then called the Lucas Cultural Arts Museum – was initially planned for a site in San Francisco’s Presidio. Concept designs were created by the Urban Design Group, but the proposal was ultimately rejected by the Presidio Trust. After exploring a different site in San Francisco, Lucas and his wife turned their attention to Hobson’s home city of Chicago. A lakefront site was chosen and in 2014, Lucas hired architect Ma Yansong to design the museum, before deciding to pull out of Chicago in response to legal challenges by preservationist group Friends of the Park.

In 2017, the current site in Los Angeles’ Exposition Park was secured, and Ma Yansong designed the final version of the museum. ►



The Lucas Museum is surrounded by a series of new green spaces

George Lucas has been working on the creation of a museum since 2012

I've worked with hundreds of illustrators in my life. They're all great, but they don't get recognised

The Lucas Museum of Narrative Art

The architecture

Architect Ma Yansong, founder of MAD, conceived the museum as a sculptural, organic form shaped by light, clouds, and the surrounding tree canopy.

The building is the culmination of a 15-year collaboration between Ma and the museum's founders, with Michael Siegel of Stantec as executive architect.

The lobby

"When you step into the building, you're stepping into George Lucas's brain," said Mellody Hobson, co-founder of the museum.

Sunlight floods the museum's lobby, where sweeping arches soar and glass elevators carry visitors to the upper-level galleries and the restaurant.

The galleries

The galleries, which span more than 100,000sq ft (9,300sq m), present works organised around enduring themes, from the everyday to the fantastical.



The five storey, 300sq ft building is clad with white FRP panels

The library

The museum's library is both a research centre and a quiet space for reflection. It supports scholars, students, and curious visitors eager to explore the breadth of narrative art.

Retail, dining, and theaters

The Lucas Museum has been designed as a place for visitors to spend an entire day and evening. In addition to the galleries and cinema theatres, it also features a café and a rooftop restaurant with views over LA. Retail spaces offer signature merchandise inspired by works in the museum. Throughout the building, flexible spaces support public programmes, learning opportunities, and community engagement.



Ma Yansong

Exposition Park

The museum is located within South Los Angeles's Exposition Park, which dates to 1872, when the state of California set aside the land for agricultural fairs and exhibitions: a public gathering place devoted to education, industry, and exchange.

Over the next century and a half, it evolved into a civic and cultural hub and has served as a venue for two Olympic Games, in 1932 and 1984, and will do so again in 2028. Today, the 160-acre (65-hectare) park includes the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, the California African American Museum, the California Science Center, the LA Memorial Coliseum, BMO Stadium, and the Exposition Park Rose Garden. The University of Southern California (USC) is just across the street.

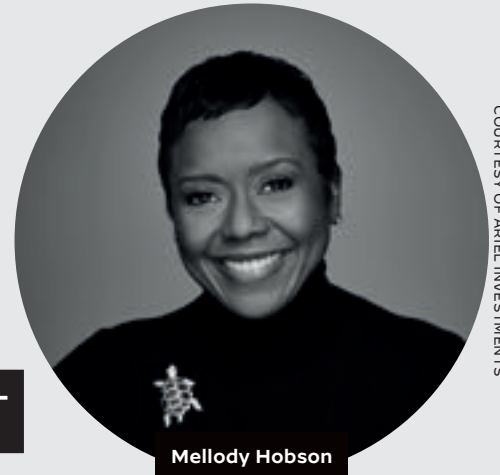
The entrance lobby features sweeping arches and glass elevators



Los Angeles' 160-acre
Exposition Park houses a
number of major museums



We've always said
we're holding society's
money, which we fully
intend to give back.
This is how we're doing it



Mellody Hobson

COURTESY OF ARIEL INVESTMENTS

▶ THE ARCHITECTURE

A museum launched by the creator of *Star Wars* about the power of narrative art was never going to be housed in a boring, conventional building. The building itself needed to inspire curiosity and tell a story – that everyone is welcome and that important and interesting things are contained within its walls.

As Lucas said: "This art is important. Lets put it in an important building."

Yansong's building is a futuristic, spaceship-like structure, designed to look as though it is floating above the gardens and paths at its base. It is wrapped in a pale, matte, fibreglass-reinforced polymer (FRP) skin.

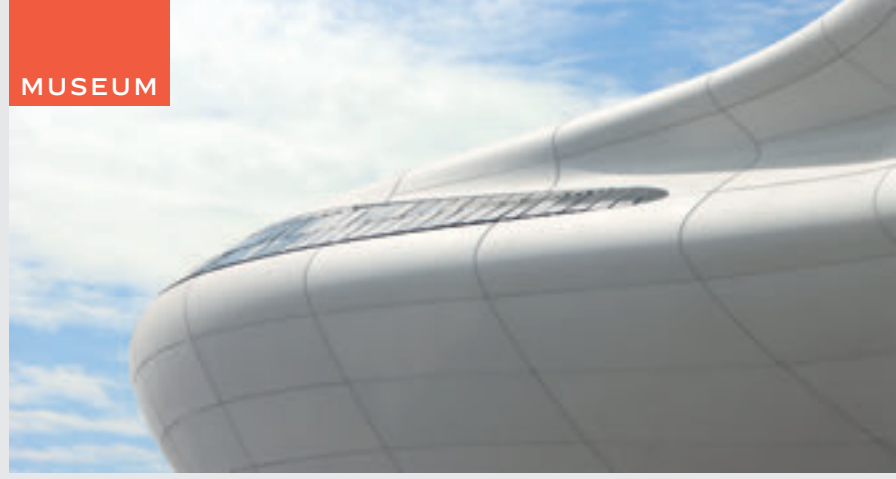
"I have been a fan of architect Ma Yansong from his earliest works. His designs never cease to amaze and inspire me," said Lucas. "It's why I was so excited to collaborate with him on the

Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. I believe visitors will come not just for the collection, but also the building – it's a work of art in and of itself."

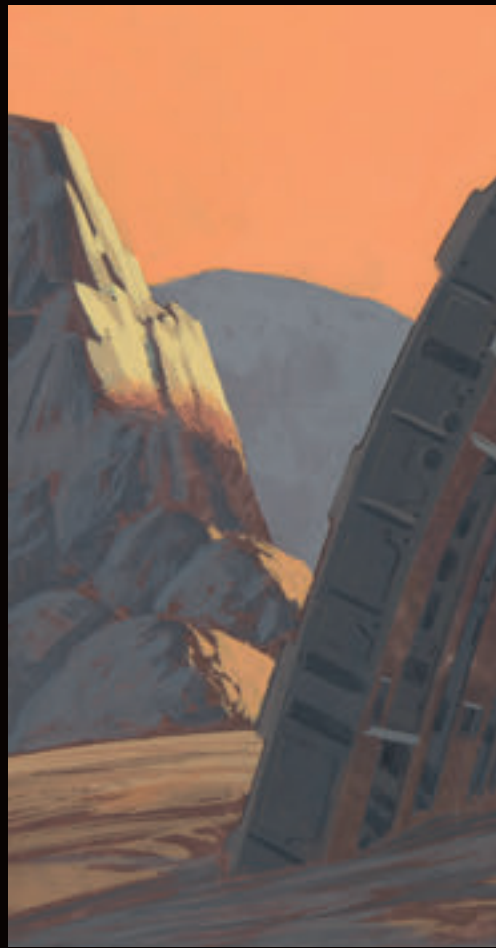
The former parking lots around the museum have been transformed by landscape architect Mia Lehrer and her team at Studio-MLA into a new green space featuring native and drought-tolerant plants, more than 200 new trees, paths, meadows and shaded areas for people to gather.

In 2010, George Lucas and Mellody Hobson signed the Giving Pledge – a promise by some of the world's wealthiest people to give the majority of their wealth to charitable causes. The couple have pledged to use their money to improve education, with a focus on storytelling and the arts.

"We've always said we're holding society's money, which we fully intend to give back," says Hobson. "This is how we're doing it." ▶



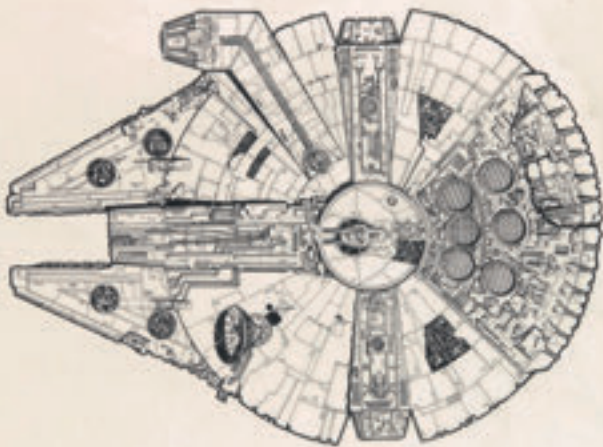
© 2025 JAKS PRODUCTIONS. PHOTO COURTESY OF USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS. ROBERTO GOMEZ



The Lucas Archives

The Lucas Museum is home to a comprehensive collection of props, artwork and artefacts from two of the most beloved movie franchises in history – *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones*. The archives were first established in 1983 at Skywalker Ranch in Marin County, California, as production wrapped on *Star Wars: Episode VI – Return of the Jedi*.

In 2013, this collection was donated to become the foundation of the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. Spanning more than four decades of filmmaking, the archives celebrate the creative vision of director and producer George Lucas, featuring materials from the first six *Star Wars* films, the first four *Indiana Jones* adventures, and other Lucasfilm productions, including *Radioland Murders*, *Howard the Duck*, *Red Tails*, and *Willow*. ●



COURTESY OF THE LUCAS MUSEUM OF NARRATIVE ART

The Lucas Archive is a massive collection of props, costumes, models, and production art, which forms the foundation of the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art



COURTESY OF THE LUCAS MUSEUM OF NARRATIVE ART



COURTESY OF THE LUCAS MUSEUM OF NARRATIVE ART



In the SPOTLIGHT

A small Cornish visitor attraction about a little known British pacifist is making waves internationally. Magali Robathan pays a visit and speaks to its founder Elsabe Brits

Emily Hobhouse's childhood home has been carefully restored



Emily Hobhouse
was dubbed the
Angel of Love



Opened in June 2024, the Story of Emily celebrates the life of Emily Hobhouse, a Victorian welfare campaigner who exposed the truth

about Britain's brutal treatment of civilians in concentration camps during the South African Anglo-Boer War at the turn of the 20th century. While Hobhouse is widely celebrated in South Africa – she was made an honorary citizen and several museums commemorate her life – she was labelled a traitor in the UK, and has been largely written out of history.

Now this museum is shining a spotlight on the courage and humanity of Hobhouse.

The attraction has been created by author, journalist and historian Elsabé Brits, together with South African investors Karen Roos and Koos Bekker, who bought the Grade II listed rectory and 40-acre estate that Hobhouse grew up in back in 2018. Roos and Bekker are known for five star winery, hotel and spa Babylonstoren in their native South Africa, and five star hotel the Newt in Somerset, UK.

Visitors can explore
the Rectory and try
on Victorian outfits

In 2025, Story of Emily attracted 20,000 visitors, and has won a slew of awards, including a Thea Outstanding Achievement award – the only UK recipient of the award at the 32nd annual event – and RIBA South West and Wessex Building of the Year Award 2025.

The attraction is divided into two main parts. The story of the first 34 years of Hobhouse's life is told in the home that she grew up in, which has been meticulously restored back to the way it would have been in 1875, when she was 15. The War Rooms are housed in a separate building, designed by architects Stonewood Design, and tell the story of the Anglo-Boer War and the concentration camps using AV, VR, film, artefacts and more.



STORY OF EMILY

SHE CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY



Here Elsabe Brits shares the story of how this attraction came about

How did you get involved with the Story of Emily?

I became involved right at the start in 2017 with the concept. I provided the research for the attraction, wrote the storyline for the War Rooms and Rectory, and sourced the décor and artefacts. I have been fascinated by Emily Hobhouse since I began researching her in 2013. It's been a wonderful journey.

This is a personal story for me – most of my ancestors were involved in the Boer war. They lost their possessions as a result of Kitchener's scorched-earth policy, and the women and children were sent to concentration camps. I have a diary of my great-grandfather, which he wrote while a prisoner of war in Ceylon, as well as artwork he created there. One of my great-grandmothers experienced the Krugersdorp concentration camp [which Emily Hobhouse visited and documented the appalling conditions of] with her mother and siblings.

One of the biggest impacts of the war is not only the loss of life and possessions, but also the psychological trauma that lasted for decades.

PHOTO BY DOOK CLUNIE-ROSS

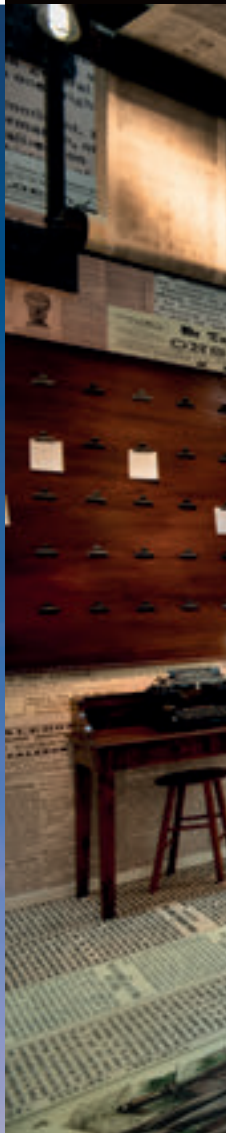


PHOTO BY DOOK CLUNIE-ROSS



Visitors are guided through a self-led tour of the War Rooms



The zinc-clad War Rooms were created by Stonewood Design

VISITOR ATTRACTION

A woman in a teal shirt stands in the center of a large, ornate wooden hall. The floor is a grid pattern, and the ceiling is a large, arched structure with a projection of people walking. The walls are made of dark wood with green accents and white window frames. The overall atmosphere is historical and immersive.

HISTORY BLENDS WITH CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY TO CREATE A FASCINATING IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

The attraction features
high tech headsets,
animation and VR



PHOTO BY DYDOK CLUNIE-ROSS

The War Rooms immerse visitors in the details of the Anglo-Boer War

Why is Emily Hobhouse a good subject for a museum?

She is perfect for a museum, because her story is so unique. Emily Hobhouse was a woman who grew up in the Victorian era and was seen as a failure because she was unmarried and childless, but who had the moral courage to challenge the mighty British Empire about its conduct during the Boer War.

As a pacifist, she felt an ethical and moral obligation to help the women and children during the war. And she did it practically alone, in an era when it was extraordinary - even frowned upon - for a woman to do so, and during a war when jingoism was very popular. Most of her own people called her a traitor, yet she never backed down, even though it had a heavy personal impact on her.

She changed the course of history.

How would you describe the Story of Emily and what it offers?

One has to experience its uniqueness in person. We have the fully restored mid-Victorian home where Emily Hobhouse was born and lived. A restaurant offering South African heritage cuisine. And then the War Rooms, which are fully immersive and tell the story

of Hobhouse, her journey to South Africa, and the way she saved thousands of women and children during the Anglo-Boer War. It blends the historical with the modern.

What sets it apart from other attractions?

In the War Rooms, history blends with cutting-edge technology to create a fascinating immersive experience. Visitors can discover installations, animation, film, and virtual reality, and see décor, historical pictures, and artefacts. This unique, sensory journey shares the resolve and courage of Hobhouse and the women and children before, during and after the Anglo-Boer War.

What was your starting point when designing and curating the content for the museum?

I worked with architects from Stonewood Design and a design team from Kossmanndejong. The starting point was to create a storyline with the messages we wanted to convey. This changed several times. Once this was determined, we decided where to use animations, light boxes, photographs, and films. In the meantime, I began collecting the décor and artefacts. It became difficult when we had several balls in the air, and the story had to be rewritten several times.

What were the biggest challenges of the project?

One challenge that we successfully overcame was installing a 20m glass wall in our restaurant. This is actually the longest single pane of glass that can be produced in Europe – it was transported to The Story of Emily site on an articulated lorry in September 2022. The 20m glass wall weighs 8434kg and required a 500-ton crane to lift it into place. Because of the necessary position of the crane, the lift was blind and instructions were given by radio. It was a nerve-racking day and involved a big team but the results of our beautiful light-filled restaurant speak for themselves.

Do you have a favourite part of the museum?

I am most proud of the concentration camp we recreated inside the War Rooms. I hand sourced every single article and artefact in that room – I did so for the other rooms as well, but that one was particularly important because I want visitors to really feel they're in a concentration camp. It was the most challenging space to create, but I'm proud of the result.

ONE CHALLENGE THAT WE SUCCESSFULLY OVERCAME WAS INSTALLING A 20M GLASS WALL IN OUR RESTAURANT



How has the attraction been received? Have you had any interesting reactions from visitors?

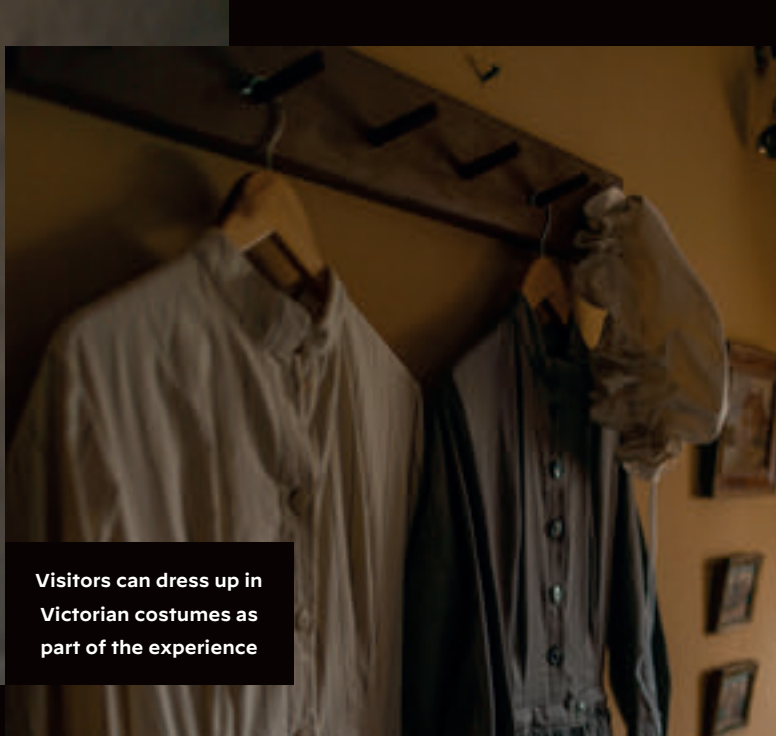
We have had wonderful feedback. An overwhelming majority of people comment that they have never heard of Emily Hobhouse, but are happy to learn that her story is now told. Many knew about the Anglo-Boer War, but were unaware of aspects such as the scorched earth policy and the concentration camps, and of Hobhouse's role in alleviating the suffering of women and children.

All of our recent award wins recognise the traction that we are proud to have achieved in a short space of time. We have been extremely pleased with the visitor numbers – 20,000 in the last year – who deeply connect and engage with the experience on every visit.

What are the plans going forward?

Our main focus now is on building our brand and awareness nationally. ●

The restaurant serves authentic 19th century South African dishes



Visitors can dress up in Victorian costumes as part of the experience



Story of Emily: The lowdown

Opening times: 9am - 4pm, Wednesday to Sunday

Admission: £25 for adults, £5 for children aged 5-17

Annual pass: £35 for adults, £5 for children

Architecture: Designed by Stonewood Design

Conservation architect: Le Page Architects

Landscape architect: LT Studio

Exhibition designer: KoosmannDejong

Consultant historian & exhibition curator: Elsabe Brits

Headsets automatically trigger commentary based on location





NICK MORAN

As Wild West immersive open world adventure Phantom Peak expands, Magali Robathan speaks to its founder about world building and scaling up

PHANTOM PEAK



A

t the end of February 2026, the gates to the 30,000sq ft Wild West town Phantom Peak closed for the final time in Canada Water, east London.

Over the past three years, more than 160,000 visitors have explored this immersive world, embarking on quests and interacting with actors. With the storyline evolving every three to four months, and more mysteries than anyone could ever solve in one visit, the attraction has an impressive repeat rate of 25 per cent.

Now, backed by significant investment from European private equity firm Sensee, it is expanding into a massive new venue at Westfield Stratford City shopping centre,



I love escape rooms, but they aren't for everyone. I wanted to create something people could play at their own pace

After three years in London's Canada Water, Phantom Peak is set for a new home

London, with more actors, more space to explore and new technology. The new multi-level venue is due to open in July 2026, and will feature three separate areas to explore: Old Town, the Lakeside and the Town Square.

Old Town is described as an underground industrial mining town at the heart of Phantom Peak's industry. Town Square is a 'more modern area with impressive, multi-floored buildings, including the town hall and the Thirsty Frontier Saloon Bar'. Lakeside is set around an indoor lake, with the Watermill water wheel at its heart.

Alongside the upgrades to the physical set of Phantom Peak, the new venue will bring technological upgrades to enhance the storytelling, and create a more customised experience. Custom-made 'wingman' units,

designed by Tandem Set & Scenery, will allow actors to trigger lighting, sound, and physical effects within individual spaces, creating unique experiences for each group of guests.

A new three tier VIP experience is also being introduced, which will see guests take a seat on a train for a unique entry to the town. Everyone else will descend the stairs into the town, where they can explore freely.

Before creating Phantom Peak, Nick Moran worked in the world of escape rooms, co-writing and creating experiences including The Celestial Chain and Sherlock – the Game is Now.

In 2023, he launched Phantom Peak in Canada Water, London with co-founder Glen Hughes, who has a background in set design for escape rooms and immersive theatre.



PHOTO: ALISTAIR VERYARD

The expansion has been enabled by investment from private equity firm SenSee



PHOTO: ALISTAIR VERYARD



PHOTO: ALISTAIR VERYARD

Here Moran offers us a peek into his world of imagination

What is the history of Phantom Peak?

Phantom Peak began life as an extremely ambitious idea: what if you could walk into a real-life videogame and just live there for a few hours? We opened our first town in London three years ago with the ambition of building a completely original British IP – not an escape room, not theatre, not a bar, but a fully explorable world with stories, characters and puzzles everywhere you look.

Since then, it's grown into this sprawling, ever-evolving open world with a fiercely loyal community, which expands and improves season-by-season. I can safely say there is nothing like Phantom Peak in the world.

How did the vision and story begin life? Can you remember the original spark of inspiration?

I'm from an escape room background, and I love escape rooms: however, they aren't for everyone - they're high octane, thrilling and highly interactive. I wanted something that had all the



PHOTO: ALISTAIR VERYARD

The attraction is moving to a new home at Westfield, Stratford City in London



PHOTO: ALISTAIR VERNARD

Phantom Peak features a cast of actors, who interact with visitors on their quests

things I loved about escape rooms – the sense of immersion, the sense of exploration, the sense of discovery – but that allowed people to play at their own pace. I wanted visitors to be able to be a part of the world in a way that suited them.

From there came the idea of a town you could keep returning to, discovering new stories each time. Once we realised it could be a living world rather than a one-off experience, that was the moment it properly came alive.

How did you fund the company?

Ourselves – and we're not rich people. We've been fortunate to have a mix of private investment and an incredibly supportive fan community who believed in what we were building. It's always been about building something sustainable and expandable rather than a one-off pop-up – so every round has been about growing the world properly.

What were the early days like?

Chaotic, thrilling and occasionally terrifying. We were building a town from scratch while simultaneously inventing the format, the technology and the storytelling structure. Every day felt like we were

solving problems that didn't previously exist. But there was also a real sense of 'we might be onto something here.' Guests started returning again and again, and once that happened we knew the format worked.

Why do you think it's been so popular?

Because it gives people agency. You're not being talked at – you're exploring, discovering, choosing what to do. There are secrets hidden everywhere, storylines you can follow, characters to interact with and puzzles that genuinely reward curiosity. People like being part of something that feels alive and that changes over time. Also: there's a bar. Never underestimate the power of a bar.

Why did you decide to move to Westfield Stratford City?

Scale and permanence. We've proven the concept and built a huge audience, and now it's about taking Phantom Peak to the next level in a location that allows us to grow properly. Westfield Stratford City gives us the footfall, the visibility and the sheer physical space to create the most ambitious version of the town yet. It's a statement: Phantom Peak isn't a temporary curiosity - it's here to stay.

PHOTO: ALISTAIR VERYARD

Parent company The League of Adventure also owns a theatre set building company

Visit PHANTOM PEAK

All about Phantom Peak

Before creating Phantom Peak, Nick Moran worked in the world of escape rooms, co-writing and creating experiences including The Celestial Chain and Sherlock – the Game is Now.

In 2023, he launched Phantom Peak in Canada Water, London with co-founder Glen Hughes, who has a background in set design for escape rooms and immersive theatre.

Phantom Peak is owned by live entertainment company The League of Adventure, which was founded by Nick Moran and Glen Hughes in 2021.

In January 2026, The League of Adventure announced a partnership with European private equity investor SenSee to expand its projects, including moving Phantom Peak to Westfield Stratford City. This investment brings together League of Adventure's three companies under one group – Phantom Peak, escape room and immersive theatre set building company Tandem Set & Scenery – founded by Glen Hughes and Leah Morgan – and Spectre & Vox. Media and entrepreneurial veteran Wil Harris was appointed in January 2026 as group managing director to oversee its expansion.

The longer-term development plan is to develop further projects in the UK and internationally.

PHOTO: ALISTAIR VERYARD



PHOTO: ALISTAIR VERYARD

The food and beverage options are all part of the immersive world



PHOTO: ALSTAIR VERVARD

What can visitors expect from the new site? How will the town differ from the existing one? Who is responsible for the design for the new Phantom Peak?

Expect a bigger, more detailed, more interactive world. The new town will have more storylines, more technology, more secrets and more reasons to return repeatedly. We're designing it to feel like a fully functioning frontier town that just happens to be slightly odd.

It will differ in scale and ambition – more spaces to explore, more characters, and more systems that react to what guests do. The design is being led by our in-house creative team alongside our production company and long-time collaborators – the same slightly obsessive people who built the original world and can't stop adding to it.

What are the biggest lessons you've learned since launching Phantom Peak and how will they influence the new site?

Firstly: people are far more curious and engaged than you think. If you build depth, they will find it. Secondly: flexibility is everything. A living world needs to evolve constantly – new stories, new puzzles, new reasons to return.

For the new site we're building with that in mind from day one: more modular storytelling, more capacity for change, and more ways for the town to grow over time rather than stay static.

New quests and evolving storylines and characters encourage repeat visitors

What are your plans over the next five years? What is your ultimate vision?

To make Phantom Peak the most beloved immersive universe in the world, and then expand it. That means multiple towns, new formats, new cities and new ways of experiencing the world.

Ultimately the vision is a fully fledged entertainment IP that exists across physical spaces, digital storytelling and beyond. A place people feel part of, not just something they visit once.

What do you love most about your job?

Watching people step into something we've imagined and immediately start exploring it like it's real. There's a moment when someone realises, "Oh, I can actually go anywhere and interact with everything." That never gets old.

Which (other) attractions do you love?

I'm a huge admirer of anything that builds a proper world. Great theme parks, great immersive theatre, great game design – anything where you feel transported somewhere else. I love experiences that respect the audience's intelligence and curiosity, and that aren't afraid to be a bit strange. Those are always the most memorable ones. ●

COMMON GROUND

Visitors co-create dark tourism experiences through social interaction, according to new research that challenges operators to design their exhibitions accordingly. The paper's author Dr Rachael Ironside discusses the findings



RACHAEL IRONSIDE



Visitors rely heavily on other people to interpret what they're seeing



COURTESY PETERHEAD PRISON MUSEUM



Visits to dark heritage attractions are shaped less by exhibits, explanation panels and audio guides, and more by interactions with other visitors, according to recent

research led by Dr Rachael Ironside at Aberdeen Business School, Robert Gordon University and funded by the British Academy.

The research project, entitled *Talking about prisons: making sense of difficult heritage* at Peterhead Prison Museum explored how people make sense of difficult histories by studying the way visitors experience exhibits at Peterhead Prison Museum, part of the Cove Group, in Scotland, UK.

The meaning of difficult exhibits is not fixed, according to the research, but is instead created moment by moment through conversations, empathy, curiosity, humour and shared reactions.

The findings challenge the idea that some heritage sites are inherently darker than others, arguing that the perceived darkness of an attraction is constantly shifting according to the dynamics of a particular visit, who is experiencing it and their relationship to the other visitors, as well as their cultural understanding of the subject matter. ▶

Dark heritage attractions should be designed with social interactions in mind



Humour plays a complex role in dark tourism

Dark heritage is not something people simply consume. It's something they actively co-create with others

The findings pose interesting questions about how much the visitor experience can be engineered via design, layout and interpretation, and suggests that operators should consider how their attraction mediates and supports visitor interaction.

"Visitors constantly look to one another to make sense of what they see," says professor Dirk vom Lehn, professor of organisation and practice at King's Business School. "These everyday interactions shape how dark an exhibit feels and what people take away. Exhibitions should be designed with social interaction in mind, not just individual reflection."

"Dark heritage is not something people simply consume. It's something they actively perform, negotiate and co-create with others," says Dr Rachael Ironside, corresponding author and associate professor at Robert Gordon University. "Understanding this social dimension is essential for anyone seeking to present difficult histories responsibly."

Here Dr Ironside talks us through the report's main findings

What prompted this report?

This research was prompted by a gap in understanding in how people make sense of difficult heritage in real time. While prison museums and similar sites often aim to educate the public about justice, punishment and human rights, very little was known about how visitors interpret difficult histories as they move through dark sites, and the role of interaction in this.

Studying these interactions matters because dark heritage sites play a growing role in shaping public narratives about difficult pasts. Understanding how meaning is made helps site operators to understand how their exhibits are being engaged with and whether the intended interpretation is achieved in practice.

What were the headline findings?

Our main findings illustrate that visitors co-produce their experience at difficult heritage sites together. Meaning emerges through conversation, joint interaction with artefacts, shared emotional responses and even jokes.

We also observed that the 'darkness' of a site isn't fixed or necessarily determined by the exhibit's design; rather what feels meaningful or potentially disturbing is negotiated through interaction and shared cultural understanding. It is often the subtle emotional and embodied responses which matter – as people lean in, step back, mimic how a form of punishment was used, gasp, laugh – that shapes how people interpret difficult exhibits.

Dr Ironside's research explores dark tourism, heritage and culture

KAMI THOMPSON





Attractions operators have long struggled with how to present difficult histories

Did any of the findings surprise you?

One of the most surprising findings was how deeply social dark tourism is. We might assume that visitors process difficult heritage materials and artefacts individually, through personal reflection. Instead, people rely heavily on companions – and even strangers – to interpret what they're seeing.

Another unexpected insight was the role of humour. Humour is complex in dark tourism, we know entertainment is a key motivator for visitors exploring dark sites, but it presents challenges when presenting difficult pasts. Our findings revealed that humour is often used by visitors, and while sometimes this did appear to dismiss the severity of an exhibit, on other occasions it instigated some deeply human moments, helping people to connect and negotiate difficult topics.

How can museum and attractions operators use these findings to improve their offerings?

Our findings point to the need for dark attractions to design exhibits that foster interaction between visitors. We found in our case study site that the use of headsets for the whole experience, while of excellent quality, often hampered conversation and interaction between visitors. We also noticed that the presence and behaviour of strangers can be just as influential on visitor engagement as companions, especially in the way they approach and exit an exhibit space. Our findings may help museum professionals to design attractions that account for how people respond to each other, and support both personal contemplation and group interaction. ▶



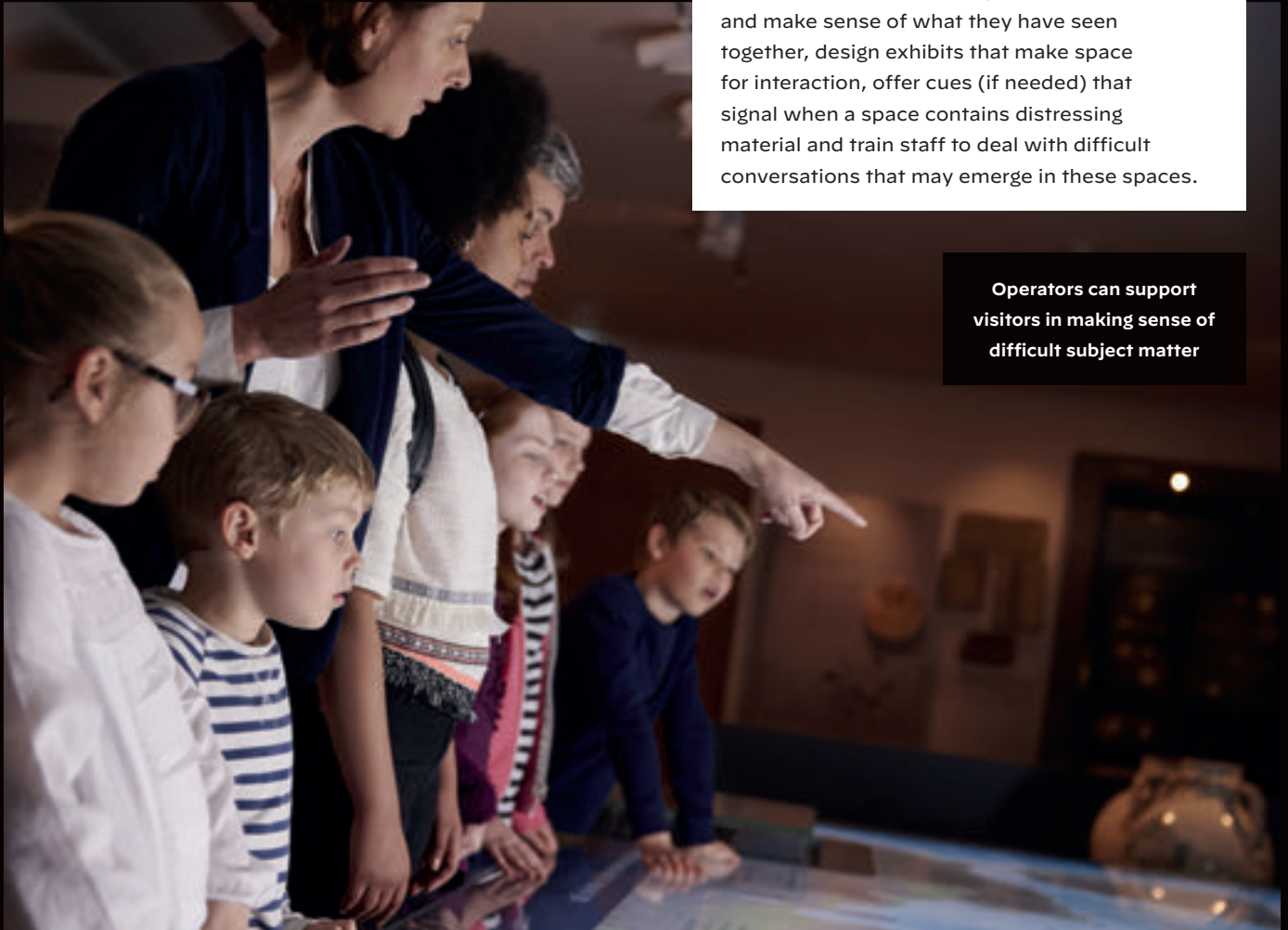
One of the most surprising findings was how deeply social dark tourism is

► **How can operators support visitors in making sense of the content and dealing with their emotional reactions to it?**

Visitors often turn to each other to manage and share their own emotional response to an exhibit whether that is shock, sadness, discomfort or empathy. We also noticed that attractions staff can play an important role in helping visitors to understand and make sense of what they have seen, often resulting in quite difficult topics of conversation (such as talking about family members who were impacted by the issues on display).

Operators can support this by offering reflective prompts to help groups process and make sense of what they have seen together, design exhibits that make space for interaction, offer cues (if needed) that signal when a space contains distressing material and train staff to deal with difficult conversations that may emerge in these spaces.

Operators can support visitors in making sense of difficult subject matter





The research found that the use of headsets can hamper interaction

SHUTTERSTOCK/ANTONIE DE ROOIJ

Do you have any suggestions about how they might respond to the fact that meaning is co-created at dark sites?

These findings highlight an opportunity, rather than a challenge, for dark heritage sites. They suggest that rather than being in complete control of interpretation, operators are facilitators of this process. Visitors bring their own histories, experiences, questions and emotions to dark sites and turn to each other to make sense of what they see. Operators may benefit from reviewing their current offering and observing visitor interactions to consider whether their exhibits account for this. Do they encourage conversation? Prompt reflection? Does the space at and between exhibits encourage this or hinder it?

Can you think of any museums that engage with the social dimension of meaning-making in an interesting way?

I recently visited the National Prison Museum (Gevangenisemuseum) in Veenhuizen, Netherlands with my research colleague, Alona

Roitershtein. We really enjoyed the exhibits that brought modern issues of crime and punishment forward with interactive exhibitions.

The prompt to interact wasn't obvious, but the varied storytelling components, opportunity to pass judgement on the cases, and layout of the exhibition meant that we had some really interesting discussions, and we continued those conversations after our visit – we still speak about it now. I think the important lesson here is that prompts for interaction don't need to be obvious; they can emerge through creative, novel layouts and designs that evoke curiosity.

What's next for the research?

We're very keen to continue our research into other dark tourism attractions and beyond. We are currently working on a proposal to extend this initial case study into a UK-wide study of penal heritage attractions, however, we would also welcome collaboration or conversations with those working in attractions and would like to explore visitor interaction further. ●

Product Innovation

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The Grand Hall Experience features projection mapping, lights and music

LHMC HOTELS

DreamLab uses Christie projectors to update St Louis Grand Hall Experience

The Grand Hall Experience at St Louis Union Station in St Louis, US, has recently undergone a major upgrade, involving new projection technology, media servers and new and refreshed content.

The former train station's Grand Hall now serves as a hotel lobby, event space, and attraction – and features the Grand Hall Experience, combining projection mapping onto the massive and ornate 65-foot-tall ceiling with lights, music, and narration.

DreamLab Immersive designed and installed the system, selecting Christie Griffyn® 4K50-RGB pure laser projectors and Jazz Series 1DLP laser projectors

to create a next-generation immersive show environment.

“Lodging Hospitality Management (LHM) and DreamLab saw an opportunity to raise the visual and emotional impact of the show”, said John Miceli, founder and executive creative director of DreamLab Immersive. “The primary goal was to bring the experience up to current technological standards, upgrading to higher resolution, smoother frame rates, richer colour, and more dynamic shows, while preserving the architectural integrity and magic of the space.”

[attractions-kit](#) keyword

Christie



LHMC HOTELS



SEAWORLD ORLANDO/VEKOMA

The dark ride will take visitors on a virtual undersea expedition

SeaWorld Orlando provides details of new dark ride ahead of launch

SeaWorld Orlando has given a preview of the ride vehicles for SEAQuest: Legends of the Deep, a unique suspended dark ride set to open this year.

SEAQuest: Legends of the Deep provides a deep sea expedition on state-of-the-art submersible-style ride vehicles.

For the first time, SeaWorld Orlando is blending multi-sensory storytelling, imaginative ride technology and the awe-inspiring experiences of the deep sea into one voyage.

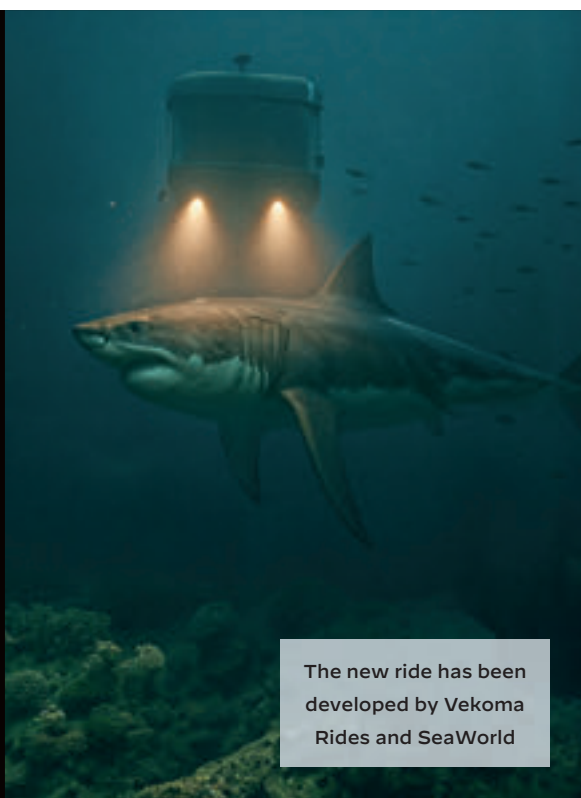
The ride will see guests board state-of-the-art submersibles, before embarking on a virtual undersea expedition — discovering glowing worlds, exploring sunken shipwrecks and encountering astonishing creatures.

“SEAQuest: Legends of the Deep redefines what a family attraction can be,” said Conner Carr, vice president of rides and engineering for the park.

“By blending cutting-edge ride technology with the mystery of the deep sea, we’re creating an experience that inspires curiosity and brings explorers of all ages along for the adventure.”

This all-new indoor suspended dark ride, in partnership with Vekoma Rides, will feature a smooth, gliding motion system that allows ride vehicles to swing and rotate through different themed environments — creating a cinematic experience. Featuring immersive audio in every vehicle, dynamic lighting, and a fully indoor setting, SEAQuest: Legends of the Deep offers an experience that lets families embark on a deep-sea expedition no matter the weather outside. SeaWorld Orlando has not given an exact opening date for SEAQuest: Legends of the Deep.

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SEAWORLD ORLANDO/VEKOMA

The new ride has been developed by Vekoma Rides and SeaWorld

The new show features 100 aquatic drones that move across the water



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Disney partners with Dronisos on new drone show

Disneyland Paris has launched a new drone show, Disney Cascade of Lights.

The 16-minute night-time spectacular takes place at Adventure Bay at Disney Adventure World. It features 379 total drones, combining 279 aerial drones with 100 ground-breaking ‘aquatic drones’ that move on the water’s surface, paired with fireworks and fountains.

Disneyland Paris teamed up with drone light show specialist Dronisos to create the show, which highlights heroic journeys from Moana to Marvel, and features music and narration. In addition to the drones, the show also features fireworks, water-screen projection and cutting edge visual effects.

Cascade of Lights features luminous floating drones

perfectly synchronised with the aerial drones.

The show is the result of two years of co-development with Disneyland Paris’s creative and technical teams, and Dronisos’ engineering team. The result of this partnership, according to Dronisos, is that “a completely new generation of autonomous aquatic drones has been created, opening up fresh creative possibilities for night-time spectacles.”

Dronisos is a pioneering company in drone shows and robotic solutions for entertainment. Headquartered in Bordeaux, the company designs and develops all its systems in-house, from drones to swarm-piloting software.

The company has been the official technology provider for Disneyland Paris since 2022, delivering unique nightly drone shows. ●



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Disney worked closely with Dronisos on the development

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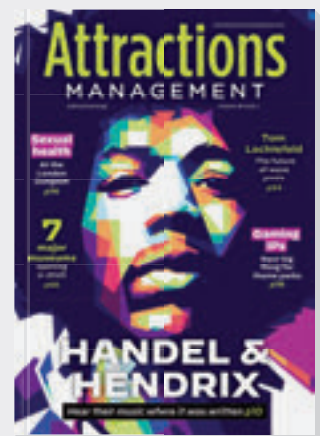


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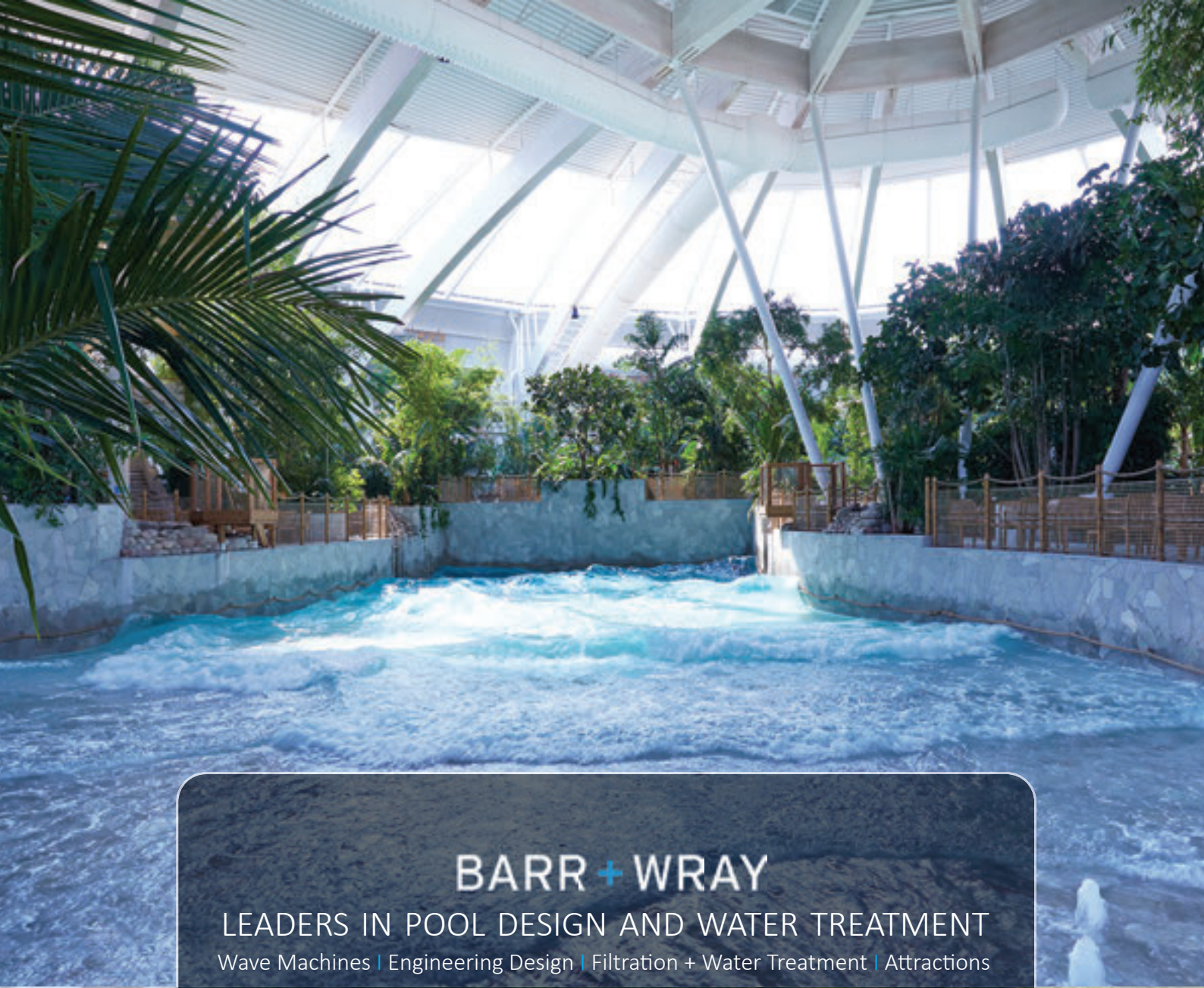
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