

Katherine Skellon

SKELLONSTUDIO

Profile

Katherine Skellon is an interpretative designer with over 20 years of experience creating museums, exhibitions and visitor attractions in the UK and internationally.

Completed projects include the Zayed National Museum, UAE; The Crown Jewels at the Tower of London; National Maritime Museum Cornwall; Oculus, St Pauls Cathedral; Royal Albert Memorial Museum (Arts Fund Prize winner 2012) and a number of temporary exhibitions including Great Escapes and Their Past Your Future, both for the Imperial War Museum. In addition to her museum heritage work, Katherine has developed a number of prospective projects for commercial clients that include The Macallan Visitor Centre, Ayrshire; a leisure destination for the District shopping mall, Saadiyat Island, UAE and the redevelopment of Battersea Power Station.

Alongside her practice, Katherine has been active in exploring the thinking behind museum design; teaching exhibition design at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, presenting at conferences and leading workshops aimed at investigating and progressing questions of how museum environments effectively design the experiences visitors gain.

Having worked for several of the leading design agencies in the UK including Event Communications and Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Katherine formed SKELLONSTUDIO in 2014, with the aim of bringing these two sides together, creating her own platform from which to enable museums to explore new approaches to design. Katherine collaborates with a full range of design professionals including fellow designers, contractors, fabricators and design consultants.

Curriculum Vitae

Career

2011 - 2014 Creative Director, Event Communications

Responsibilities:

- Overall creative leadership and direction across the office
- Creative director for one of the most eminent museum projects in the world
- Guiding project teams to produce innovative proposals
- Setting a vision for the improvement of studio skills and working practices
- Involvement in medium/long-term strategy and new business opportunities

As a Creative Director at Event I had an overview across a number of live projects working with designers, interpreters and project managers ensuring holistic and creative solutions were developed. More recently, I was the Creative Director for the Zayed National Museum, Abu Dhabi, a new 5000m2 Foster + Partners designed museum. This involved leading the project from Concept to Detail for the interpretation and design of six galleries and a Timeline Garden for the UAE's national museum. I also had involvement with marketing and new business development running pitches and undertook a 3-month master-planning study for the Moscow City Museum, Russia.

2008 - 2012 Director of 3D Design, Ralph Appelbaum Associates, London

Responsibilities:

- Design overview on all active projects giving design advice throughout all stages
- Creative lead on all pitches: initial brainstorming through to Concept Design stage, setting up and working with the design team, presentations at interview and key project meetings
- Management of resource across the office: Liaising with senior management and project leaders regarding project scheduling and resourcing
- Involvement in medium/long-term strategy and new business opportunities

Key projects:

2011 Crown Jewels, Tower of London, HRP, Lead designer throughout
2010 Oculus, St Paul's Cathedral, London, Lead designer throughout
2008 National Rail Museum, York, Lead designer for Great Hall HLF proposal

2006 - 2008 Senior Designer, Ralph Appelbaum Associates, London

Key projects:

2006 - 09 Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter.
£4 million refurbishment, lead designer from Concept stage through to HLF-submission and beyond.
2008 Nature Base, Horniman Museum, London
Lead designer on this interactive natural history gallery.
2007 Ailsa Craig Visitor Centre, Girvan, Scotland
2005 Black Cultural Archive, London
Archive and exhibition space dedicated to the history of black people in the UK

2003 – 05 Self-employment

Key projects:

- 2004 Discovery Centre, Snibston Science Centre
Consultant and design for a refurbished science gallery
- 2003 Black Gold, Black Cultural Archives, London
Design for a temporary exhibition commemorating black UK athletes past and present
- 2003 Great Escapes Imperial War Museum, London
Design for a temporary exhibition about WW2 Prisoners of War
- 2003 Their Past, Your Future, Imperial War Museum, London
Design for a travelling exhibition commemorating the lives of WW2 veterans

1992 –2003 Associate, Land Design Studio, London

Responsibilities

- Senior designer on award-winning projects generating and developing 3D design concepts and spatial planning from Concept stage through to on-site
- Creative input on pitches, from initial brain-storming through to interviews

Key projects:

- 1996-2002 National Maritime Museum, Cornwall
Lead designer for the HLF-funded, new-build museum from start to completion. Awarded D&AD silver.
- 1995 All Hands, National Maritime Museum, London
Design for an interactive childrens' gallery looking at the many aspects of seafaring,
- 1994 Water for Life, Kew Bridge Steam Museum, London
Lead designer for a gallery in a converted Grade 2 listed pumping-station. Originally a student competition, I took the project to Land as I joined.
- 1992 Plutonium Playground, Greenpeace
Design for an exhibition truck, highlighting dangers of nuclear waste.

Teaching

I started teaching in 1992 as a Visiting Lecturer on my own BA Interior Design course at Kingston University. I went on to be a Visiting Lecturer for undergraduates and post-graduates at Chelsea School of Art, the Royal College of Art, Central St Martins and Rhode Island School of Design RI, US. In 2005, I co-founded the MA Narrative Environments course at Central St Martins, aimed at filling the qualifications gap in the museum interpretation and design sector. I continue to teach there today.

Awards/Publications/Conferences

- 2014 Chaos at the Museum conference, University of the Arts
- 2014 Transforming Thresholds conference, University of Leicester
- 2012 Experiential Score, talk at the Museums & Heritage Show, London
- 2002 "Whose Line is it anyway", weekly column for Architects Journal
- 2002 D&AD Silver award for National Maritime Museum Cornwall

Education

- 1989-1992 Kingston University, Kingston, BA Hons Interior Design (1st Class Hons)
- 1987-1998 Willesden College of Technology, London, BTEC Diploma Interior Design
- 1986-1987 Winchester School of Art, Winchester, Foundation Course



National Maritime Museum Cornwall



Crown Jewels, Tower of London



Oculus, St Paul's Cathedral



Zayed National Museum, Abu Dhabi



Black Cultural Archive, London



Their Past, Your Future, IWM



All Hands, NMM



Royal Albert Memorial Museum