Enhancing cultural heritage sites through immersive performances - ReInHerit Case Study in Performance Design and Practice

This practice explores how an immersive performance enhances cultural heritage site experiences and encourages audience participation in them. It integrates interactive sound, live music, Real-Time visuals, and projection mapping, to create a multisensory environment. By breaking down traditional spectatorship norms, it fosters active engagement, blurring the line between observer and participant. The analysis is based on the conceptual framework and observations of audience interaction. All performance instructional materials and documentation are openly accessible, promoting transparency and knowledge sharing.

Organisation in charge of best practice
CYENS CoE

Location
Ethnological Museum of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

Dates
January 2022 to October 2022

Description
The immersive performance titled "ReInHerit in Performance: The Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios Mansion", which took place on 29 October 2022 at the Ethnological Museum, in Nicosia, Cyprus, is a ground-breaking initiative in encouraging audience engagement within cultural heritage sites. This avant-garde experience seamlessly combines artistic mediums, integrating contemporary music and cutting-edge technologies. Examining the conceptual framework and the dynamic interaction between the audience and the immersive environment of this performance reveals a deliberate effort to enhance visitors' experiences in cultural heritage sites and attract a more diverse audience.

Links
https://reinherit.eu

Resources needed
ReInHerit in Performance: The Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios Mansion" utilized 14 wireless speakers to create its soundscape, 14 mobile phones for triggering sounds and sending audio signals to the speakers using bluetooth, 3 3D-printed replicas of a selection of the venues exhibits, a massive outdoors projector and a home projector, two powerful PCs for real-time visuals, and ambient lights.

Challenges encountered
"Despite its success, the immersive performance faced challenges that need addressing for future improvements. Problems in timely and effective communication between the institutions involved in the performance led to delays in acquiring necessary licenses and did not contribute to the smooth development of the performance project. To address this challenge, coordination between project officers of all institutions involved needs to be in full swing from early stages of the project. Another important limitation was the lack of comprehensive qualitative data, primarily due to the small number of audience members answering questionnaires. This hindered a thorough assessment of the performance outcomes and a nuanced understanding of the audience's perceptions, emotions, and overall experience. The absence of such data limits the depth of analysis and interrupts a holistic evaluation of the performance's impact. In addressing this challenge, future iterations of immersive performances should prioritize the implementation of robust qualitative data collection methods, using well-designed questionnaires to provide a deeper understanding of audience engagement, emotional responses, and specific aspects of the performance that may present opportunities for improvement. "

Evidence of success
"The evaluation of ""ReInHerit in Performance: The Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios Mansion" offers evidence of its success, with unexpected and promising outcomes. The event exceeded attendance expectations (divided in three performance slots), indicating heightened public engagement. The Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation (BoCCF), as the host organization, expressed overall satisfaction, emphasizing the achievement of project objectives, particularly in engaging a younger demographic and enhancing the visitor experience. The seamless integration of music and technology played a pivotal role in creating a captivating and immersive space, effectively delivering on the project's goals. Attendees actively followed musicians, showcasing their dynamic engagement with the live music element. The positive feedback and interest from visitors highlighted the value of incorporating interactive elements in the cultural heritage site experience, demonstrating a commitment to innovative technologies for engaging museum visitors. Exploring enhanced collaborations between artists, musicians, and technologists can lead to better results, enriching the field of immersive art practices. The interdisciplinary approach pushes the boundaries of immersive experiences, fostering innovation in the intersection of art and technology. The reported results of the event indicate its broad appeal, attracting diverse age groups, ethnicities, and people with disabilities. The positive feedback, active audience participation, and challenges encountered collectively contribute to valuable insights for advancing the field of immersive cultural experiences.

Potential for transfer

"The consortium's commitment to open access is evident, as all materials and documentation for the performance are made available via the ReInHerit Digital Hub. This transparent approach aligns with the project's mission to disrupt communication between museums and cultural heritage sites, fostering inclusivity and encouraging the broader adoption of their innovative concept. All necessary resources, including documentation and instructions for replicating the performance are now accessible to the public through the ReInHerit Digital Hub, which includes a dedicated GitHub repository. This repository offers an extensive manual and open access to the interactive sound application's source code, encouraging and streamlining the broader adoption of our innovative approach. By making these materials readily available, we aim to empower institutions, professionals, and communities to explore, adapt, and integrate our immersive performance concept into their own cultural initiatives, contributing to the evolution of engaging and inclusive experiences within diverse cultural settings. "

Further Information

"The evaluation of ""ReInHerit in Performance: The Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios Mansion" provides valuable insights for future research in the realm of immersive performances in cultural heritage sites. It emphasizes the crucial need to address technical challenges, enhance interactive elements, and delve into the emotional and cognitive impact of such experiences on visitors. The assessment identifies a key takeaway: the necessity to overcome technical hurdles to ensure seamless and effective interactive elements. This involves refining the technology used, potentially improving the performance of proximity sensor app for the sound installation, and resolving issues related to compatibility with changes in lighting and overcrowding. ""ReInHerit in Performance: The Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios Mansion "" acts as a catalyst for reshaping museum experiences. As a case study for immersive performance design advocates for continuous collaboration, innovation, and knowledge transfer within cultural institutions. This means encouraging ongoing partnerships between artists, technologists, and museums to drive positive transformations. The project's mission goes beyond its own success, aiming to inspire a broader cultural shift toward more engaging and meaningful museum experiences. "