



Bespoke workshops, events and products
for cultural venues
by Gallery Educator, Artist & Designer
Rebecca Chitty

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I have worked as a **Gallery Educator, Artist & Designer** in London for over 20 years. It has been my privilege to work with many prestigious cultural venues, community centres and schools.

As a Gallery Educator I have designed and delivered a wide range of creative gallery-based learning - sharing stories at the *British Library* in SEN and Harry Potter workshops; a Madonna-soundtracked body adornment youth project and the re-creation of an 17th Century roomset for the *Museum of The Home*; sand and water play with babies at the *National Maritime Museum* and engaging a variety of senses and activities that stimulate vestibular and proprioceptive senses in intergenerational family sessions. In partnership with the *University of The Arts London*, *Imperial College* and the *V&A*, I have run schools sessions, helping to build students' confidence and self-esteem through design projects. Employing a multi-sensory, inclusive and playful approach I use a wide range of materials and processes to encourage exploration, curiosity and discovery allowing deeper engagement with the collections. Working in nature is very important to me - outdoor learning, along with art and craft activities, have been proven to reduce stress and anxiety and help children develop holistically. Supporting children, young people and adults' health and emotional wellbeing is at the heart of all my sessions.

As an Artist & Designer, under my company name Product Of Your Environment, I have created retail products for *The British Library*, *The Royal Opera House* and *The Hayward Gallery*, to name a few, which have raised revenue, attracted new audiences and brought a smile to people's faces. **I have devised events** for *English Heritage* and in partnership with *Benjamin Franklin House* and *The Whitechapel Gallery*, re-imagining London's historical stories in fun and unexpected ways.

This document focuses on my Gallery Education work - where you can see in more detail selected workshops with Early Years, Families, Schools, SEN and Youth Groups and the design of Family Resource 'backpacks'. You can find all of my work at productofyourenvironment.co.uk



Early Years

Multi-sensory sessions for 0-5 year olds at the National Maritime Museum and the Livesey Museum.

For this age group I focused on sensory, fun and calming activities for babies and young children to develop cognition and fine motor skills, learn and understand new objects and concepts, and strengthen and coordinate the muscles of their hands. There was a focus on natural materials and textures and working in nature. Outdoor learning gives children the opportunity to develop holistically, supporting their physical, social, health and emotional wellbeing. For children with additional needs spending quality time outdoors can help improve concentration levels, develop social skills and encourage independent exploration. A four-year-old taking part in a herb activity realised that if she rubbed the herbs on the paper, they would leave a mark. Through further exploration, she found she could press and rub the leaves with stones to create her own sensory art.



Family workshops

“ Rebecca has made a significant contribution to the Family Learning programme during the fifteen years she has worked with us. She consistently contributes great ideas for workshops, re-interpreting the museum’s collection in a unique and fun way. She is able to encourage the children to use their imagination freely, and is particularly good at guiding sometimes unconfident and unsure intergenerational family members to work together. The final results are always fantastic, with the children going away with new knowledge, skills and a sense of pride in what they have produced. ”

Rebecca Jacobs, Creative Learning Manager, Museum Of The Home

Family workshops

I designed and delivered regular family sessions at the National Maritime Museum, Natural History Museum and the Museum of the Home. Many of these workshops focused on our connection with nature and the use of sustainable materials. The activities were fun and calming and intergenerational family members were encouraged to work together. For the NMM we lay on our backs in the gallery star gazing, explored shell maps, the sea and of course pirates! At the NHM we learnt how caterpillars turn into butterflies, making a caterpillar by threading beads onto a pipecleaner and transforming it into a butterfly by adding decorated wings. We were inspired by themes of family, what home means to us, migration, pets, gardens, growing and cooking at the MOH. (pictured below and overleaf)



Family workshops



Family self-led resource 'backpack'

“ Our self-led family resource was in need of updating so we were looking for someone who could help interpret our collection in a new and exciting way. Rebecca led through the whole process from consultation to the production of the backpacks showing a complete understanding of the brief and the needs of the users. She met the numerous considerations with creativity, offering multiple uses for each item, including hand-made bespoke items completely unique to the museum. The packs have proved very popular. ”

Rebecca Jacobs, Creative Learning Manager, Museum Of The Home

Family resource self-led 'backpacks'

I designed and developed this early years resource for the Museum of the Home. In facilitated sessions at a local childrens centre, we explored the engagement possibilities between proposed objects and the museums collection. The museum wanted the resource to provide activities, prompts and ideas which appeal across the family group to encourage discussion between family members. All the objects are durable, age appropriate and usable in multiple ways to encourage repeat visits; they connect to personal stories and historical objects; they are inclusive of different physical, learning and communication needs and engage with a variety of senses as well as stimulating vestibular and proprioceptive senses. The resource relates to themes including Style & Taste, Play & Entertainment, Food, Garden and Pets.



Objects: **The Wood Family** - The project was a great opportunity for me to design and make bespoke items unique to the museum, and The Wood Family was one such item. A wooden pastry brush, spoon, clothes peg, nail brush and candlestick form a family of characters that encourage playful interaction with objects and themes in the collection e.g. sparking a conversation between your child and the wooden spoon about cooking and what foods they like; **Lucky cat lavender bag** - A comforting cat to cuddle and sniff bringing a feeling of calm. This item relates to pets, the garden, favourite toys and references other cultures; **Interactive sounds phone** - a tactile, fun and contemporary item to communicate with family members and encourage role play while exploring different sounds like a clock and a doorbell.



Family self-led resource 'backpack'

Radish wooden toy - a fun item to explore and learn about food and the home - growing our own food, what we buy, cook and eat together as a family; **Feely bag** - a bag of different textures relating to various activities in the home. When you put your hand in the bag, there's a nice tactile surprise. This sparks curiosity about what the items are and might be used for, which in turn encourages role play.



Pattern cards - This bespoke item is a pack of printed acrylic 'cards' featuring different patterns found in the museums collection. Families can explore the museum to 'hunt' for the patterns, have a guessing game about what kind of object a pattern is on and talk about individual style, identity and taste. With 2 of each pattern, the cards can also be used as a game of snap or the memory game. This also encourages searching the collection for games and talking about games played at home.



Wooden TV/Picture frame - I designed and decorated this bespoke item with a TV on one side and a picture frame on the other. Families can spot other TV's in the collection and talk about what they enjoy to watch at home. They can look for other picture frames in the museum and talk about artwork and family photos they have framed. The item can also be used as a 'viewer' to focus in on objects and displays, it is a fun theatre stage for the **Wood Family** and the perfect accessory for a family selfie souvenir of the visit!



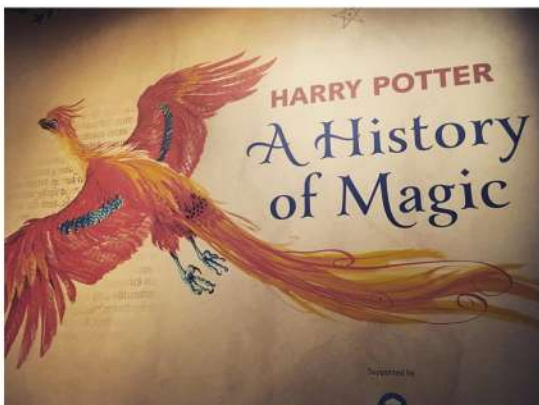
Schools & SEN workshops

“Rebecca was a longstanding and valued contributor to our Learning programmes. Delivering core weekly workshops to school groups, including regular sessions adapted for SEN, Rebecca’s warm approach and ready smile made everyone feel welcome. The creativity and playfulness that she brought to workshop content and development really stood out. I can highly recommend working with her. ”

Emma Bull, Education and Culture Professional

Schools workshops Years 3-8

Lead Artist and Gallery Educator for two core workshops at the British Library. I co-designed and delivered two workshops weekly (pictured below) inspired and informed by the British Library's collection which includes Shakespeare, sacred texts, letters from Henry VIII and Captain Scott's diary. In 'Make A Book' pupils were sent on a 'treasure hunt' in the Treasures Gallery, exploring the collection to search for particular kinds of books. In the art room they made their own stitched codex book to take home. In 'Play On Words' the pupils searched for nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, creating their own surreal sentence and then printing it using block letters, stencils and leterset. All the printed pages were bound together to form a collective artwork and 'poem'. It was great to see the children's confidence and interest growing throughout the workshop. The activities were curriculum linked and varied enough for all participants to find their strengths. I also worked on the major Harry Potter exhibition, working as part of a team to create activities, design a worksheet and deliver the very popular workshops



Schools workshops Year 10

Lead Artist on Lightshade Design workshops for University of the Arts London in partnership with Imperial College, the V&A and London schools. I introduced the students to inspiring images of lighting structures. They were then given A4 sheets of paper, hole punches, scissors and staplers and, in one minute bursts, invited to create 3D shapes and structures without thinking too much about it. This spontaneous exploration of the potential of a flat sheet of paper became the foundation for their final pieces. These looked spectacular, showed imagination and skill and demonstrated a new found confidence and way of thinking about design



SEN

I was one of 8 artists selected for the 'Get Art' project at the Chisenhale Gallery. We were paired with local schools for children with varying additional needs and re-interpreted and re-imagined the exhibition into creative workshops. I worked with a school for boys with emotional difficulties so I focused on calming and fun activities where the children could easily achieve something, helping to build their self-esteem and confidence

I co-designed and delivered the 'Between The Lines' workshop at the British Library for local community groups with additional needs (pictured below). We devised activities to explore the collection, themes and building in a fun, sensory and accessible way including printing and decorating postcards, using magnifying glasses to look at details, taking rubbings of building textures, collaging words together at random to make nonsense poems, listening to music and poetry - and usually dancing at some point! The aim of the sessions was to build confidence and encourage curiosity in unfamiliar surroundings. We also regularly ran a SEN version of the 'Make A Book' workshop for school groups.



I ran SEN sessions at the Museum Of The Home, mostly with the fantastic Laburnum Boat Club. These were multi-sensory, nature based and with an emphasis on messy play.

I consulted on the design and contents of the SEN self-led family resource 'backpack' for the Museum Of The Home, making sure the objects engaged with a variety of senses and connected to the personal and historical stories of the museum.

Youth projects

“ I thoroughly enjoyed working with Rebecca on several projects with Young People and intergenerational groups while Youth Project Coordinator at the Museum Of The Home. She was great to work with and always created the highest quality, well planned, exciting and engaging ideas - getting the very best from the groups. She was reliable, well organised and decisive; committing time & care to the projects and adapting calmly when needed during sessions. She was lovely with the participants and has become a hugely valued friend.”

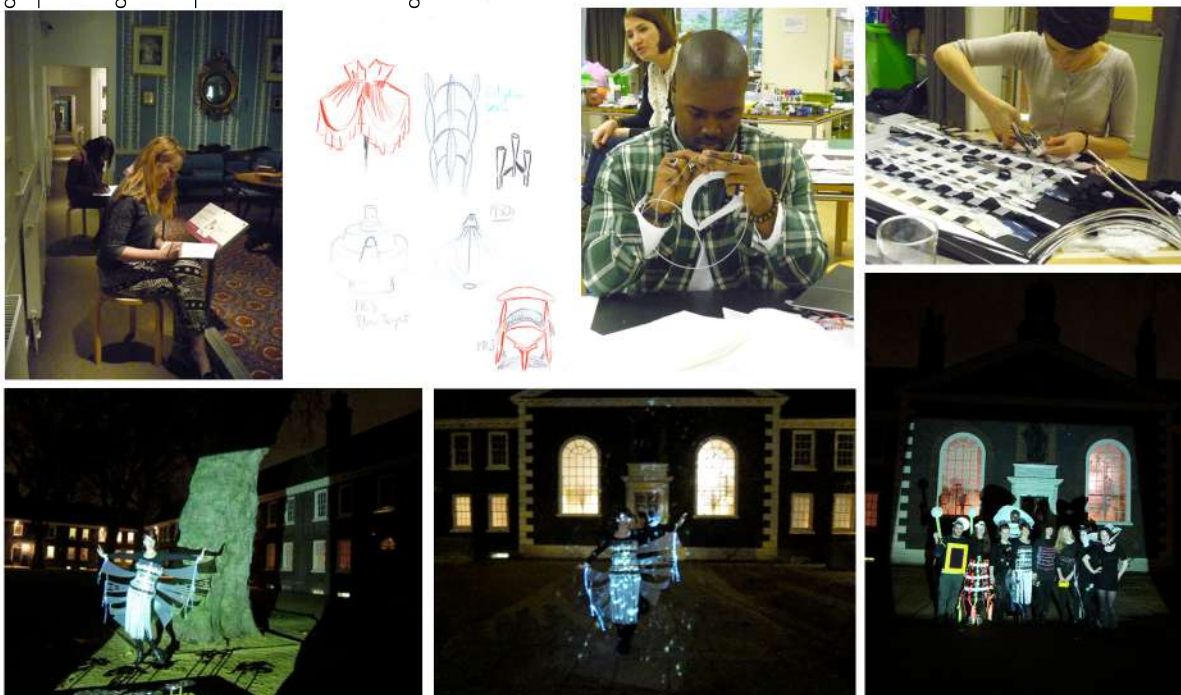
Gemma Gottelier, Youth Project Coordinator Museum Of The Home, 2006 - 2012

Youth projects

Connexions, Islington - An organisation for young people who had left school without any qualifications, giving them the opportunity to get back into education. I set up and delivered the Art Course, using art and creativity to break through challenging behaviour and embrace varying needs. Students were able to try out different media including painting, printing and plaster casting to build up a body of work. I'm proud to say that two students, one with Autism and the other a Serbian refugee, gained places at Art College.



I worked as Lead Artist on several Youth Projects at the Museum Of The Home. Pictured above is a retail project where the young people created a product inspired by the museum's collection, and designed a 'shop window' display presentation. For 'Light Fantastic' (below) the young people created weird and wonderful body adornments inspired by lampshades and candlesticks found in the collection. Showing great creativity and using a variety of materials, they illuminated their costumes in different ways and presented them in a self-choreographed nighttime performance to a Vogue soundtrack!



Youth projects

This Heritage Youth Community project with the Museum Of The Home was inspired by Newington Green's history as a home for dissenters and radical thinkers. Inspired by Daniel Defoe's civet cats, Mary Woolstonecraft's *The Vindication of the Rights of Women* and Edgar Allen Poe's poetry, the young people created lino-cut designs which they printed onto wallpaper. Papier-mache mirror frames and ceramic plates were also decorated. Over 10 weeks, the young people showed considerable development while working through the whole design process from concept to production. The project culminated in a life-size 17th Century style room-set which the young people felt very proud of and was decorated entirely with objects they had made. The room-set was installed on the Green for a weekend picnic event for the community - the creation of a unique social space for new stories to unfold



rebecca chitty

Gallery Educator, Artist & Designer

"In Chitty's studio mundane objects like Sellotape and pillowcases become Objects of Desire, she is doing a sterling job of challenging our conceptions of the ordinary"

Annie Deakin, The Independent

Lead Artist /Gallery Educator – selected projects

- 2004 – to date** **Developing creative gallery-based learning workshops using a multi-sensory and playful approach. Working with early years, local communities and family, SEND and school groups. National Maritime Museum, Natural History Museum, British Library, V&A and the Museum Of The Home.**
- 2020** **Designer & Family Facilitator - 'Backpacks' for under 5's and SEND, Museum of the Home**
Developed and designed the contents of this multi-sensory self-led family resource, enabling young families to engage with the collection, learn and make new connections through fun object-based activities.
- Devised workshops exploring engagement possibilities between proposed objects and the museum's collection
 - Developed ideas in consultation with children's centre
 - Researched and sourced objects that met an extensive criteria
 - Factored in flexibility of applications making each return visit a new experience
 - Designing and making bespoke objects for the backpack
- 2009** **Lead Artist - Arts and Heritage Youth community Project, Museum Of The Home**
A project inspired by Newington Green's history as a home for radical thinkers that culminated in a life-size 17th century style room-set installed on the green for a weekend picnic event, with art workshops for the local community.
- Designed and delivered weekly youth group workshops creating designs to print on wallpaper and ceramics
 - Facilitated the creation of a unique social space that became a stage for new stories to unfold
 - Injected a significant cultural dimension into the regeneration of the area
 - Attracted new audiences and engaged existing ones
- 2004** **Lead Artist - University of The Arts and Victoria & Albert Museum summer school**
- Encouraged students to explore the 20th Century Design galleries at the V&A with a fresh perspective
 - Devised activities including observational drawing and 5 minute paper sculptures as a starting point for the students work
 - Facilitated a 'catwalk' presentation of final work
 - Fostered an enterprising spirit with a focus on research, planning and time management skills
 - Worked as part of a team and managed a group of assistants and volunteers

Product design

- 2006 - to date** **Founder & Designer, Product of Your Environment**
- Designed, produced and brought over 100 own-brand products to market.
 - Products stocked in retail, museum & gallery shops worldwide including Liberty, Design Museum, Tate Modern and Hayward Gallery

- Regularly featured in The Sunday Telegraph, The Guardian, Living Etc., Time Out
- Licensed 20+ product ideas to major manufacturers which are sold globally

Commissioned Bespoke Product – selected projects

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 2019-2020 | Royal Opera House – Soprano & Tenor throat sweet tins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed concept in response to themes the ROH promotes • Researched and sourced manufacturer • Product development in collaboration with Merchandise Consultant • Produced a premium product popular with customers • Developing new lines to extend the range |
| 2015 - 2017 | English Heritage – Blue Plaque plates project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed and produced a set of six Blue Plaque plates to celebrate the 150th year of the scheme. • Raised awareness of the connection between English Heritage and Blue Plaques • Engaged existing English Heritage members and attracted new audiences through extensive Press coverage • Secured a new and significant revenue stream for English Heritage's newly established charitable status • Project management and budget management |
| 2014 | British Library – Gothic Imagination Exhibition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed concepts drawing on the dark humour inherent in the exhibition • Designed, developed and produced 24 products, a mix of ceramics, jewellery, textiles and stationery • Commissioned a wide range of manufacturers • Brought new life to the collection in fresh and inventive ways • Managed a £19,000 budget • Met a broad range of price points to attract a diverse customer base. |
| 2010 | Woodhorn Mining Museum Arts Council project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responded to the paintings of the Ashington Group (Pitman Painters) with concepts that revealed the extraordinary achievement of these men • Designed limited edition products that captured the essence of the Ashington Group • The products were a significant milestone in helping Woodhorn achieve long-term change in the way the historical is brought to life by the contemporary • Transformed their retail offer with unexpected and thoughtful high-end items • The products are still best sellers in the shop today |
| 2008 | Hayward Gallery – ‘Choose Your Ism’ range <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked in partnership with the Head of Retail to develop concepts reflecting the gallery’s unique promotion of contemporary art • Designed a range of core products for the shop based on the artistic movements Cubism, Surrealism, Minimalism |

Education

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| 2000-2003 | • MA Communication Design, Central St. Martins, London. |
| 1990-1993 | • BA HONs Graphic Design & Illustration, Kingston University, London. |

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