

Museums at Night Report: The Horniman Garden Party with rAndom International

By Ben Miller | 18 May 2013

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Review

Museums at Night Report: The Horniman Garden Party, Horniman Museum and Gardens, London, May 16 2013



Close up with rAndom International's light installation at the Horniman.

There were poetry readings, happily skewed tours of amazingly idiosyncratic galleries, film screenings and, in the central lower atrium, songs from a three-piece, South American-inspired band with a natty line in multi-coloured shirts.

But the star draw was in the Horniman Museum's Grade II-listed Victorian conservatory.

Having "won" a collaboration with rAndom International as part of this year's Connect10 competition (see our [Interview](#)), the installation illusionists – last seen creating a room within which the public could control the rain inside the Barbican – offered Future Self, a "living" sculpture comprising an upright bed of three-dimensional bright lights reacting to the gestures of those around them.

Better still, it served to divide two Adonis-like dancers from Wayne McGregor's acclaimed Random Dance company, writhing, limbering and stomping in front of one another, all taut limbs, pert buttocks and pinpoint poise during a series of five-minute performances.

The company are known for their performances filled with acrobatic high drama, so perhaps it wasn't a surprise that competition for space within this more modestly-sized historic setting proved as tight as those athletic bodies.

The crowd had the task of trying to decipher the beguiling formations of the central sculpture between them. At times it seemed easy to judge how the formations of the bulbs might shrink and illuminate in line with every arch, approach, retreat and coil. At others it seemed impossible to predict exactly how the mesmerising stack of lights might respond to each contortion.

Within seconds of their exit stage left, guests were crowding around the installation, palming its glimmering case in a fruitless bid to solve this shimmering riddle.

rAndom's work was there for one night only, and around 1,000 people made the most of it on an evening when the weather could hardly have been better suited to the occasion.

The magnificent gardens sprawled under the sunshine, punctuated by gin tents and the lawns seemed the place to hang out, and the queue at the café stretched from the cakes at the front to the patio at the back.

- rAndom International appeared as part of the Connect10 national competition linking artists with museums, galleries and heritage venues. The programme is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.
- Museums at Night runs until Saturday (May 18 2013). Visit museumsatnight.org.uk to find out what's on near you.



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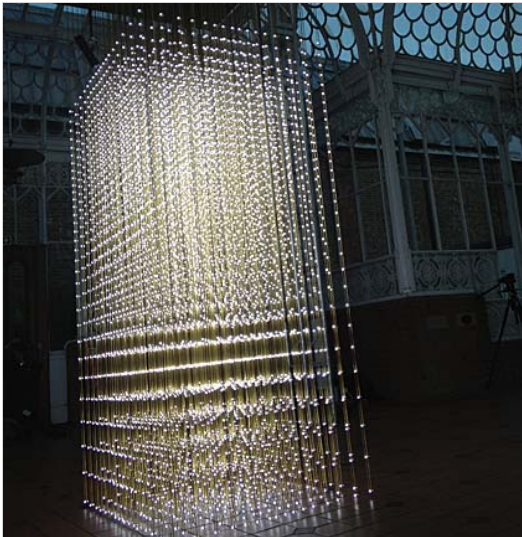


Ben Miller limbers up...



... for an interesting performance...

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