HEREPORT 2023

"It was the best day I ever had I was excited for my mum to come see the play."

A child participant on One Day Play





2023 saw our biggest year yet at The Herd. We became Charity and we reached over 17,000 children and families across the UK.

WHAT WE DO

The Herd Theatre make shows and arts experiences for families, with a focus on Early Years. Since 2016 we've involved 1,974 young people in our creative process and reached an audience of over 23,000 children in Hull.

We have been commissioned by the Southbank Centre, Hull Truck Theatre, Freedom Festival and Arc in Stockton, and toured to Royal Exchange, Northern Stage, Cambridge Junction. We've delivered bespoke projects for a wide range of partners including, Cambridge University, the National Theatre, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and Back to Ours.

Through shows and projects we tell new stories in memorable ways. We always invite our audiences and participants to play, because we believe that play is fundamental, and is the best way of engaging in the world.

The Herd are the Associate Theatre Company of <u>Hull Libraries</u>, <u>Back to Ours</u> and Freedom Festival



SHOWS



WORKSHOPS



PLAYWORK



OUR VALUES

We play alongside children to create ideas for all our work, play with artists to realise these ideas, and then unlock opportunities for our audiences to play.

FAMILY

PLAY

We create mutually beneficial experiences for the whole family, as enjoyable for adults as children. We understand families come in all shapes and sizes, and use the word to describe a child and their responsible grown up/s.

JOY

We exist to celebrate, interrogate and nurture the joy of childhood. We create exceptional moments for our audience that sit outside of the everyday.

RELEVANCE

We ensue our work is relevant, exciting and truthful to children by collaborating with them in all stages of the making. Our shows and experiences resonate with children living through the 2020s.

EQUITY

We work hard to remove barriers children and families have to accessing arts experiences, with a particular focus on barriers facing working class people and Disabled people.



2023 IN NUMBERS



REPLAY, SOUTHBANK CENTRE A LIMITLESS RECYCLED PLAYGROUND

"It was the BEST experience we as a family have had on a day out. Be gone limited toys. REPLAY has arrived."

Audience Member 'The House of Cute', Instagram.



REPLAY

REPLAY (Time Out Recommended) part installation, part adventure playground. A space built entirely out of waste materials repurposed for fun. With a crowd sourced play generator and an original score, REPLAY is a 60 minute uninterrupted celebration of free play.

Commissioned and Co-Produced by the Southbank Centre, we created an experience that puts creative play centre stage, that advocates for play between children and grown ups and that doesn't cost the earth.

REPLAY was extended by a month due to popular demand.

"TRULY, THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE ACTIVITIES YOUR CHILD CAN PARTAKE IN. WE ARE MAKING PLANS FOR A RETURN VISIT."

Audience Member, Instagram.

90% audience capacity across the run, sold out for 1 month.
15,300 audience members
45% new bookers to Southbank Centre





"NOT ONLY PROVIDES FUN, BUT ALSO PROBLEM SOLVING, SOCIALISING, LOOKING AT SHAPES, USING THEIR IMAGINATION. I'M ABSOLUTELY WOWED. THIS IS WHAT ALL NURSERIES SHOULD BE LIKE.'

Coin Street Nursery, London



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This year we created a new, environmental approach to designing work, alongside our Associate Designer Ruta Irbite with REPLAY. We made a 40 metre play space built entirely out of waste and reclaimed materials.

We reached out to theatres, factories, event companies and businesses and asked them if they had anything that was headed for the bin, earmarked for recycling or collecting dust on a shelf. The response was huge. We were given backdrops from fashion shows, sets from London theatres, props from TV adverts, fabric from bag manufacturers, hundreds of tubes from a bandage factory, and the actual red carpet from the BAFTA Television Awards. We could have kept going, we could have got so much more.

We have now network of waste streams in Hull and London, that we can utilise for projects. We then applied these learnings to our first theatre production with SNOWMEN.

100% materials waste or reclaimed in design of REPLAY

3AD

SNOWMEN TOUR

SNOWMEN TOUR

SNOWMEN is our latest play for 2-7yrs and their families. It tells the story of two snowmen on a mission not to melt when they discover their perfect home, an ice arena. It's cold, the music's great and the slushies taste delicious. They just need to remember one thing, they can't be discovered by the humans. With a caretaker lurking around every corner, the snowmen must do everything they can to hold onto their new home and not melt.

Packed with visual comedy and told with a handful of spoken words and integrated with British Sign Language. We embarked on a winter UK tour, starting at Cast in Doncaster for a 14 day run, and Lawrence Batley Theatre in Huddersfield for 4 day run.

"JUST FANTASTIC. MESMERISED MY 2 YEAR OLD, 3 YEAR OLD AND 8 MONTH OLD."

Audience Member from Cast, Doncaster.

75% audience capacity in Doncaster and Huddersfield

2106 audience members Doncaster and Huddersfield





"We haven't been to the theatre for a few years... this was perfect" Audience member, Cast in Doncaster

ONE DAY PLAY





ONE DAY PLAY

Our second year of delivering One Day Play, a unique experience for KS2 Primary Classes in partnership with <u>Hull and East</u> <u>Yorkshire Children's Univeristy</u>, funded by <u>Hull City Arts</u> and <u>I Am</u> <u>Fund</u>.

280 Children across 7 schools in Hull, came to a professional theatre space at the University of Hull or Hull Truck Theatre and wrote, staged, designed and rehearsed their own original play.

One Day Play platforms children's imaginations and opens up the theatre making process at a formative age. The children got a hands on experience of performing, lighting, design, directing and stage management, culminating in a performance to their invited parents and carers.

"I LOVED MY ROLE. AND I WOULD TELL MY FAMILY TO COME TO THE THEATRE"

A child participant, One Day Play

280 child participants48 live hours of deliveryALL Teachers surveyed would recommend the project



"A big impact on the children who are EAL and SEND as everyone was able to participate equally. A fantastic experience"

Teacher, Buckingham Primary School, One Day Play

PLAYWORK IN HULL





PLAYWORK IN HULL

For the past 15 months we have been researching play experiences for children and families in Hull. One of our key partners for this work is Endike Primary School. We have delivered play sessions in school with 205 children aged 2 - 11 years. We've also delivered in-school family play activity, a drop in after school experience which got 63 children and their adults talking about play and being playful together.

We've also worked with partners at Hull Museums, Ferens Art Gallery and Stage at the Dock in Hull to provide free play activities for families. We danced, rolled, built, shaped, stuck, carried, tested, threw, styled and explored together. This series of creative exploration sessions for families in a space full of possibilities, has provided the grounding for the development of a new strand of play work in Hull.

"100s of creative ideas" "I'm going to come back tomorrow"

Family, Stage at The Dock

620 adult and child participants 32 hours of play

"Many thanks for such a welcoming session, much needed for SEN children and parents"

Parent, Pop-Up Play session at Ferens Art Gallery



CASE STUDY 'PLAYTIME'

One big take away we had after our play work at Endike Primary, was how much the oldest children got out of the free open-ended play sessions. We had wondered if the year 6 children would enjoy the sessions as much as the younger children. We were wrong. They were the most confident and enthusiastic players of all. The opportunity for free play decreases as children grow in and out of school, but they are still children, and play is essential to how they learn and express themselves.

Inspired by this discovery with the older children, in September 2023 playtime for Year 5 and 6 at Endike changed. They brought loose part play materials into the play ground. As a result they are seeing less behavioural incidents and surprisingly less injuries. Staff are enjoying playtime so much more as a result.



"It was magnificent to watch the older children play"

Helen Savage, Teacher at Endike

OTHER PROJECTS



PLAYWORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

We made an Early Years Play Space for Cambridge Festival at the University of Cambridge. This drop-in installation was facilitated by The Herd's playworkers alongside sessions from Academics at the University. We have been invited back in 2024.

FAST FOOD MEGAVERSE TOUR

Our audio show for 7+ written in collaboration with children at HEY Children's University's Letterbox Club, commissioned by Freedom Festival returned for its s e c o n d y e a r o f performances at Freedom Festival Hull, and toured to Solihull with Solihull City Council.





COUNTING SHEEPS R&D WITH BACK TO OURS

A 10 week baby and toddler club at Bransholme Chat, to develop a new show for 0-3 years. 45 babies and adults attended over 18 sessions. We then took our findings into a weeks R+D with creatives and performed an early version of the show to 69 babies and families, supported by academics at the University of Hull.

DEVELOPING WHALE SONG

Whale Song is an in-school workshop and picture book programme, with Hull Schools Library Service. It explores the story of Dolphin and Whale and bereavement for 7-9 year olds.

We worked with creatives, therapists and children to develop the project and the book which will go live in 2024.





"This is the first time my child has seen someone play a guitar"

Parent Feedback, Counting Sheeps Sharing at Bransholme Chat

On **PLAY IN A DAY**

'It was the best day I ever had. I loved it so much"

"It was a interesting day and I loved it because it looked like a movie and I got to to do the lights, switching them to different colours and everyone had a good laugh."

"It was real fun we had to make some of the decisions by ourselves"

On **REPLAY**

"His eyes were wide open with excitement and I was doing my best to keep up with it all... Massive thumbs up"

"My son was utterly enthralled...and enthusiastically constructed a dent with a few newfound friends."

"Do we have to leave?"

On **SNOWMEN**

"Funny and clever and cold and lovely."

"Very funny, cool dancing, great costumes"

CHILDREN'S FEEDBACK





"Best thing I've seen all year."

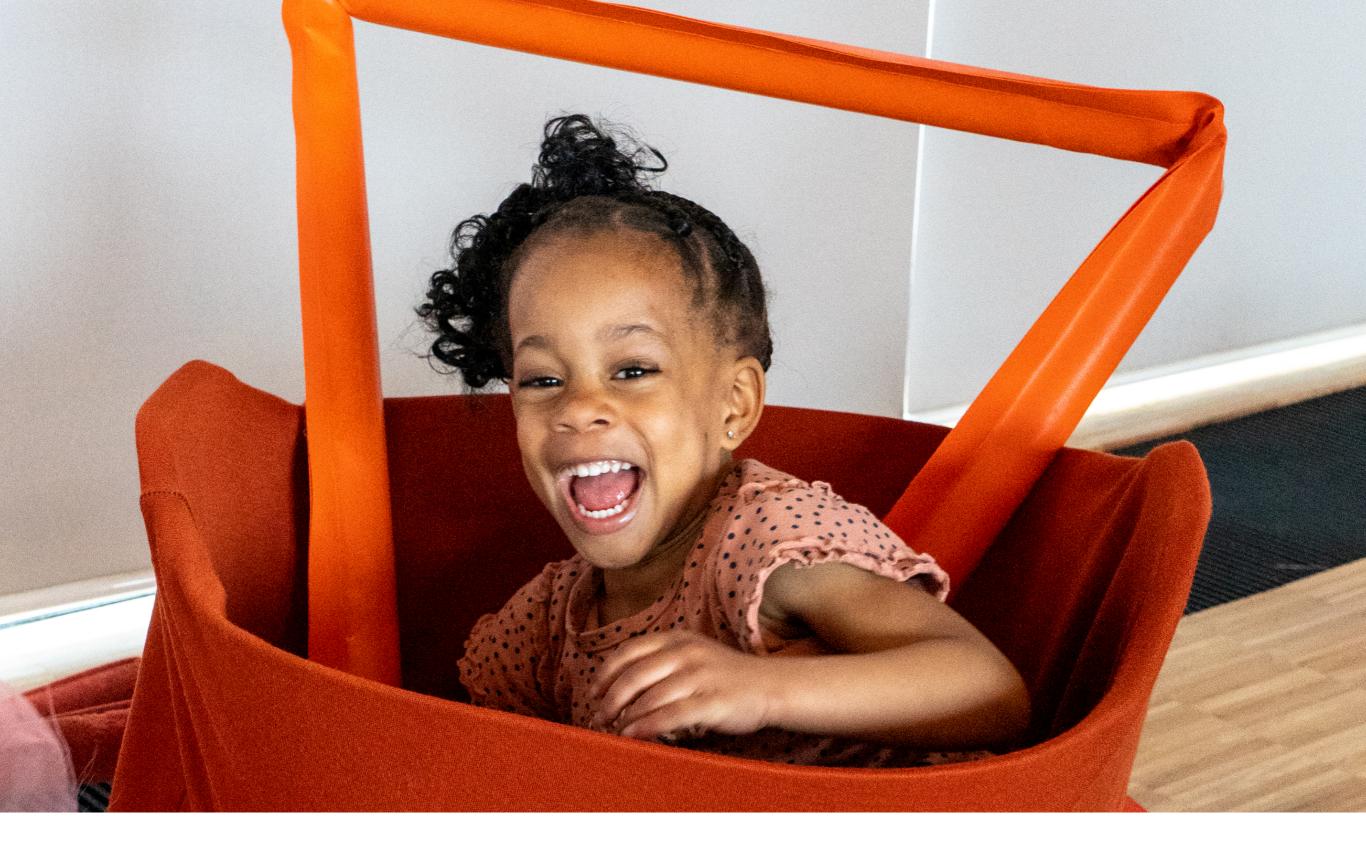
Audience Member on SNOWMEN, at Cast in Doncaster

CREDITS

ARTISTS AND COLLABORATORS CORE TEAM RUBY THOMPSON, SAM CASELEY, CHRISTIE PARKIN, HANNAH EVERARD **ASSOCIATE ARTISTS** RUTA IRBITE, FINLAY MCGUIGAN, LUA BAIRSTOW, YSABELLE WOMBWELL **REPLAY** RUTA IRBITE, SAM CASELEY, RUBY THOMPSON, JAMES DAWSON, JOHN PHILIP SAGE, CARLOS ROMO-MELGAR, HELOISE D'ALMEDIA, ANNA VAN DER POORTEN, ECE TAN, ELIZA COLIN, GEORGIE WHITE, KEMI MAGMA, PIRAN CASELEY, JAY WILLIAMSON, JOSHUA LINDON, LOUIS CASELEYM MAISIE JACKAMAN, MEGAN CASELEY, QIANER JIN, REBECCA DRURY, SAM MACKAY, SEBASTIAN ROMEO, ZOE BURT, YSABELLE WOMBWELL **FAST FOOD MEGAVERSE** GRACE LILLEY, SARAH PENNEY, JESSIE ADDINALL **ONE DAY PLAY** RUTA IRBITE, ALIX TOLE, JACK CHAMBERLAIN, TAMAR DRAPER, JESSICA GIBSON AND REBECCA KINGSTON AT HEYCU, PISHDAAD MODARESSI **COUNTING SHEEPS** SOPHIE MERCELL, EMMA BRIGHT, HANNAH SIBAI, SOPHIE THOMPSON **WHALESONG** LUA BAIRSTOW, AMY BAIRSTOW, YSABELLE WOMBWELL, STACEY HART, AND AMY JEFFREY AT HULL SCHOOLS LIBRARY SERVICE **SNOWMEN** PARKEY ABEYRATNE, SARAH CRIBDON, LEVI PAYNE, RUTA IRBITE, JESSIE ADDINALL, IVOR MACASKILL, XOLANI CRABTREE, ADAM BASSETT, ANDY BAKER, ISABEL POTTER.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES NAQIYA EBRAHIM, ANN-MARIE MERRICK, ANDREW SHIMMIN, JAMIE JACKSON, HELEN SAVAGE, KATHERINE IGOE-EWER, LOUISE HOLMES.

WITH THANKS TO REPLAY HELEN SAVAGE AND ENDIKE PRIMARY, FAMILY TESTERS EBOSEKUGBE, ELIZA, ELBIETA, EMMA, HENRENTTA, ITOHAOSE, JOEL, JOESIAH, LIYIA, MAJA, MIHA, MILA, MIMI, MUTEESA, NICKY, OSELUNAMEN, SHERMARIE AND VANESSA. TEAM AT SOUTHBANK TONY BIRCH, JOSHUA BORELY, SHARON CHOU, MADDIE FORD, RUTH HARDIE, LUKE JORDAN, MEGAN LANGER, BETH LOVELL, PETER MALLON, COLLEEN MARTIN, DAVE MORTLOCK AND ALEX WILLIAMS. COUNTING SHEEPS DR JO TRAUNTER, KERRIE LEE, JASON SHIPLEY, JENNIFER HALLIWELL, EMMA SARGO, AMY SKINNER AND ALEX BROOK-MCCLEAN AT HULL UNIVERSITY ONE DAY PLAY ANNIE KIRKMAN, RACHEL HOGG, ADAM POWNELL AND FOH AT HULL TRUCK, AMY SKINNER AND ALEX BROOK-MCCLEAN AT HULL UNIVERSITY SNOWMEN ALL AT AVENUES LIBRARY AND TECH TEAM AT CAST OTHER THANKS HELEN TAN, HELEN CAVE AT BACKSTAGE TRUST, LEE CORNER, MICHELLE ALFORD, EMILY ANDERTON, SARAH PENNEY AND ALL AT MIDDLE CHILD, MATTHEW SOARE AND THE MAKERSPACE TEAM, THE JANITORS AND ALL AT HULL LIBRARIES.



"Replay at the Southbank Centre is one of the best things we've done in ages... Creative and inspiring" Parent Feedback, REPLAY at the Southbank Centre

PARTNERS AND FUNDERS IN 2023



@theherduk

www.theherdtheatre.co.uk

The Herd Theatre is a registered charity Registered Charity Number 1204739