



Step inside Shakespeare's first theatre

Cloak and Dagger Studios (CnD) and Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) have teamed up to create the first ever digital animation of Shakespeare's original London playhouse, The Theatre. The CGI animation is based entirely on archaeological evidence unearthed by MOLA and offers people today a chance to view the Theatre as Shakespeare would have himself in 1595.

Images from the animation feature in *Shakespeare and Us* presented by Simon Schama as part of the BBC's Shakespeare Season.

CnD employed 3D modelling software used in the film and visual effects industry to produce the virtual simulation of the Theatre. The animation is a highly detailed and versatile replica that takes users on a journey exploring every nook and cranny of the Theatre. The historical reconstruction is based entirely on real-world dimensions extrapolated from excavation work and has enabled archaeologists to explore how the playhouse would have been used by theatregoers and performers in the 16th century.

Initial reflections have highlighted the lack of light in the Theatre, which would have dictated when performances could be shown; the dimensions of the galleries have provided an insight into the views that the audience would have experienced; the constraints on space in the stalls reveals to us that conditions would have been extremely cramped for theatregoers.

The representation has also brought to light new questions about how the Theatre would have been used. Archaeological evidence for the stairwells only survived in part and therefore digital artists from CnD and archaeologists from MOLA did extensive research to build up a historically accurately and physically viable solution.

Digital Artist from Cloak and Dagger Studios, David Toon, said: "Whilst working on the 3D model of the Theatre we realised that we were the first people to have seen the inside since it was in use in Shakespearian times...quite an amazing thought. We hope that the simulation allows a wider audience to be inspired by this amazing archeological discovery and for specialist to be able to learn more about how the Theatre was used."

Archaeologist, Julian Bowsher, from Museum of London Archaeology, said: "Archaeologists are extremely lucky - we get to physically touch the past, in this case, with Shakespeare's Theatre of 1576. However, even for archaeologists it is sometimes hard to imagine what the remains we are excavating would have looked like in their original state. The digital animation MOLA and CnD have collaborated on is the final piece in the puzzle. It shows how important the work we archaeologists do and how the evidence we unearth can be used to reconstruct and understand our historic capital."

Explore the Theatre yourself www.explorethetheatre.co.uk.

Notes to editors:

1. For more information or images about Museum of London Archaeology please contact: Nicola Kalimeris nkalimeris@museumoflondon.org.uk 020 7814 5511 or via Twitter @MOLpressoffice
1. [Museum of London Archaeology](http://www.mola.org.uk) (MOLA) provides expert archaeological and built heritage services to help our property industry clients build for the future. Our team of 200 professional archaeologists and specialists has been excavating and researching sites across the UK for nearly 40 years, and we have offices in London, Birmingham and Manchester. The far-reaching, educational results of MOLA's work, funded by development through the planning process, literally make history. Visit www.mola.org.uk, contact newbusiness@mola.org.uk or follow us on Twitter [@MOLArchaeology](https://twitter.com/MOLArchaeology)

2. [Museum of London](#), [Museum of London Docklands](#) and [Museum of London Archaeology](#) seek to inspire a passion for London. The Museums are open daily 10am -6pm and are FREE to all
3. [Cloak and Dagger Studios](#) are professional developers specialising in 3D and 2D visual solutions for broadcast, print and the web. Find out more at www.cndstudios.co.uk
4. A new popular book by Museum of London Archaeology, exploring Shakespeare's London playhouses, is due to be released by in the 19th of July:
Shakespeare's London Theatreland: Archaeology, History and Drama
Julian Bowsher
Museum of London Archaeology
Price: £20
ISBN: 978-1-907586-12-5
Oxbow <http://www.oxbowbooks.com/bookinfo.cfm/ID/93336>
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