

WHEN CO-CREATION CREATES IDENTITY - ESCAPE AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

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The French artist Olivier Grossetête's 17 meter high cardboard installation was created during an event called 'Rebuilding the Abbey' next to a Danish monastic ruin in May 2017. Behind the event is the concept eEscape that seeks to combine art, archeology and tourism to create and tell stories through art in places where important historical finds have been made during archaeological excavations.

The purpose of the event was to create public engagement as part of attraction development of Øm Abbey.

The installation was to be created in one day, stand for 24 hours and to be demolished in a co-creative event. This required hundreds of volunteers who were advertised for by the press, in the radio and on social media. 4300 people visited the event and almost all helped create the sculpture in one way or another. All participants were part of a larger organism with a common goal. Everyone could join in, no one was too young or old. The process can be described as spontaneous interaction between people and was full of joy, helpfulness and creativity.

People clapped themselves, each other and the process when another element was lifted in place. People talked spontaneously with each other, new ways for cohesion were found and a strong community feeling created.

The co-creative event's most prestigious result was against expectation, not the impressive sculpture, but the sense of community that arose during the process and the special interest of the place and its particular identity, which was created that day.

The community and the process created a cardboard sculpture that resembled the monastery, that no longer existed - and it gave the contributing volunteers a sense of identity and the opportunity to take ownership of their local heritage.

Keywords

Public engagement

Co-creation

Volunteers

Identity

eEscape

Abstract book ISBN

978-80-907270-3-8 (European Association of Archaeologists); 978-84-9168-140-3 (Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, vol. 1); 978-84-9168-143-4 (Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, vol. 2)