

Virtual Vauxhall Gardens

About the VR experience

MBD Ltd (Paul Long), Andrew Hugill

MBD's WORK

MBD led the artistic and technical creation of the Virtual Reality Environment. Using a combination of expert input, sketches, descriptions and a little bit of educated guesswork the Rotunda was envisaged first as a concept drawing.

From this, MBD's VR team made a fully optimised 3D model of the structure to run within a games engine environment. The model was then textured to create the appearance of the stone, plaster, gold gilt and painted surfaces, before adding the details such as the busts, urns, carvings and even the spectacular 72 candle chandelier.

Finally, the model was lit to create the realistic shadows and textured surfaces that really bring the building to life. Everything, right down to the flickering of the candles on the wall is painstakingly recreated to make sure that, when wearing a virtual reality headset, it feels as if you are there.

THE STORY

Once the model was completed, MBD generated the narrative structure to create vignettes that covered key themes from the research. Sections covered the construction of the building itself, the music that was presented in the rotunda, and the ideology behind Jonathan Tyers ambitious vision. Written text was compiled, edited and recorded before being set to an atmospheric musical backdrop.

The voiceovers are by Lars Tharp and Paige Emerick

Original sound design is by MBD

The music used is Handel's "The Advice: Mortals wisely learn to measure". Sophie Bevan (soprano), London Early Opera, Bridget Cunningham (conductor).

Available on the album 'Handel at Vauxhall 1' SIGCD428. Used with permission.

USER EXPERIENCE

Through this combination of sound and light, the space is brought stunningly to life as you experience a taste of what it was like inside the Rotunda at Vauxhall Gardens in 1752. As the sun sets, the stunning chandelier illuminates the whole building to bring a beautiful and atmospheric conclusion to the experience.

MULTI-SENSORY

While multi-sensory installations are not in themselves new, we are aiming to achieve a new level of user control and experience with this project.

The Olfactory component that is added to one of the displays. Is a first attempt to combine sensory inputs within a single experience.

The Psychology experiments which will be conducted in the coming months will test the extent to which such a multi-sensory experience enhances user experience and understanding of the historical aspects.

We are also interested in exploring how people with sensory processing issues might be able to experience and enjoy VR. We will be inviting selected individuals to test out the experience in the coming months.