

GRIMM

WELT

KASSEL

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A hero's journey »Into the Dark Woods« – an exhibition entices visitors into a fairy-tale forest filled with light and shade From 10.04.2019 in the GRIMM WORLD Kassel

18 powerful projectors, numerous loudspeakers and some 1.5 km of cable transform 330 square metres of exhibition area into a walk-in fairy-tale forest: Wednesday 10.04.2019 sees the opening of the new exhibition experience »Into the Dark Woods« in the GRIMM WORLD Kassel. The multi-media installation takes visitors on a fairy-tale hero's journey in which they play a part. A special highlight: the exhibition requires neither language nor real exhibits, and can be understood across all languages and cultures.

On Wednesday 10.04.2019, GRIMM WORLD Kassel opens its new exhibition experience »Into the Dark Woods – Find your way through the fairy-tale forest to the magic clearing«. 18 powerful projectors, the same number of media players, numerous loudspeakers and around 1.5 km of cable transform 330 square metres of exhibition area into a walk-in fairy-tale forest of generative design. It took 300 hours to render the sequences, and the resulting production restarts every 20 minutes. As the exhibition narration is non-linear, visitors can join at any time. If you want to see every individual sequence all the way through, you will need more than three hours. The highlight of the immersive production is that the exhibition is accessible without mediation or interpretation, regardless of linguistic or cultural background. »For the first time ever, GRIMM WORLD is staging a purely digital exhibition - »Into the Dark Woods«. This opens up various possibilities: as the exhibition does without speech as an information medium, the experience is intuitive – and accessible to visitors of all ages, regardless of linguistic or cultural background«, says Peter Stohler, Director and Programme Head of GRIMM WORLD.

A hero's journey Into the Dark Woods

Once you have crossed the threshold and ventured »Into the Dark Woods«, you will soon be lost in the fairy-tale maze of light and shade between the trees – just like Little Red Riding Hood was, once upon a time. This forest is a living thing which grows and meanders this way and that, drawing the visitor in deeper and deeper to fall under its enchantment. The path to the magic clearing is inhabited by mysterious figures that show us what is slumbering in the depths of our soul: the multi-media installation takes us, the visitors, on our very own fairy-tale hero's journey.

»The exhibition is all about transformation, because characters or objects in fairy tales are very rarely what they seem«, says Mirko Zapp, the exhibition curator. Appropriately enough, a will o' the wisp lights the way through the pitch blackness. Trees, bushes, caves, and even a waterfall feeding a stream line the path, but the exhibition changes constantly: creatures and objects loom up and disappear again, sometimes it is stormy or rainy, and then the moon shines down from a clear sky. In the centre, the visitor reaches the magic clearing: five huge standing stones form a kind of mythical ritual temple. »In fairy tales, transformations often represent the inner transformation undergone by their protagonists«, Mirko Zapp goes on. »The clearing turns visitors into fairy-tale heroes or heroines who experience how it feels to undergo such an adventure – alone in the dark woods, exposed to the elements, surrounded by

darkness and unearthly figures. Needless to say, everything ends well – just like a typical fairy tale.«

The production studio URBANSCREEN from Bremen has designed a video sequence that works in exactly the same associative manner as the surrounding forest – although these are real video images. Narration takes a back seat in favour of a more immersive experience in which the visitor is exposed to a whirlwind of images that surround him on a projection area of more than 40 square metres. The sequence contains many allusions – some direct, some hidden – to fairy tales, but the most intriguing thing, according to Mirko Zapp, is: »It is just as effective if you don't know or recognise any of the tales. The exhibition works without any previous knowledge, and actually works best if you do not try to rationalise everything«. In fact, »Into the Dark Woods« does not present individual fairy tales, instead providing associations and fragments of archetypal narratives which enable visitors to experience their own stories.

»Into the Dark Woods« was composed by URBANSCREEN, a production studio for interdisciplinary media art from Bremen. The studio is renowned for its immersive installations. »Creating a digital forest was a really exciting challenge for us, as designers and from a technical point of view«, says Majo Ussat, Managing Director at URBANSCREEN. »In order to make an aesthetically pleasing, living forest grow mainly from printed characters, we developed our own dynamic algorithm, consisting of design elements, typography and self-generating animations. «

URBANSCREEN has more than ten years of experience in the implementation of complex media productions, and has already illuminated a number of buildings, including the Sydney Opera House, the Rice University in Houston, Texas, or the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Hamburg.

VISION TOOLS from Hamburg is the exhibition's technical partner.

www.grimmwelt.de/finsterwald

www.urbanscreen.com

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Duration:

10.04.2019 – 06.10.2019

Opening times:

Tue – Sun from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Fri 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., closed Mon.

Admission

Special exhibition »Into the Dark Woods«: 5 €, reduced rate 3 €

Combiticket for permanent and special exhibition: 10 €, reduced rate 7 €

www.grimmwelt.de

Background: Idea and concept

The exhibition complex GRIMM WORLD Kassel brings the Brothers Grimm and their works to life in the modern world. The exhibition »Into the Dark Woods« is another step along the path we have already begun, and the first time we have offered a purely digital presentation: it uses light and shade to bring the world of the Grimm's fairy tales to life, without the need for speech or solid objects. The tale is told spatially: 18 projectors create an architectural forest of steles; nine different sound loops conjure up the right acoustic environment. Visitors enter »Into the Dark Woods« through a sound- and lightproof curtain. What follows is an individual hero's journey, during which they discover the thoughts, feelings and emotions they have brought with them. There is no fixed path to follow, for the exhibition is non-linear and non-chronological.

The theme of transformation

To a certain extent, images of the hero's journeys of antiquity reappear in fairy tales, and the rites of passage of earlier civilisations or indigenous peoples also contain analogies: the tales and rites begin with a separation: deliberately or accidentally, the protagonist is torn from his familiar environment. He leaves his home to seek his fortune, or he is banished, abandoned or given away. The story of »Hänsel und Gretel« is a classic example. In the woods, the protagonist is in a state of transition or suspense; he undergoes profound disorientation and many tests or trials. Having passed the tests, he is reborn as a hero, fully aware of his new-found strength, and assumes a different role and position – even when he returns to his former life. This phase of »integration« concludes the transformation, and the environment has mostly changed, too. The reward for having had the courage to change can be an entire kingdom, the hand of a princess in marriage, a castle, or untold wealth. The fairy tale »Iron John« is a good example: the king's son frees the wild man of the woods, who carries him off and compels him to be his servant. He fails and is forced to leave the forest, but receives a »gift of gold« at the same time. Following a series of further trials, in which he demonstrates great courage, he wins the heart of the princess and breaks the curse that had been put on Iron John.

The installation is made up of letters – the lowest common denominator of all stories. However, the letters in »Into the Dark Woods« do not appear as a text, but as constantly changing pictures, thereby becoming protagonists of a transformation themselves – an allusion to the linguistic research of the Brothers Grimm, as language is also in a perpetual state of flux and change.

The woods – a place of longing and a den of thieves

Dark woods always were – and still are – the ideal setting for these tales of transformation. The forest stood for all that is sub-conscious, uncivilised, untamed, and was also a tangible threat, because it was where thieves and robbers lived, and the scene of their dark deeds. In the age of Romanticism and for the Brothers Grimm, the forest became a place of longing for the first time. Phrases such as »sylvan solitude« were coined, and endowed the forest with a multitude of romantic associations. To this day, the forest is an emotionally charged, strongly symbolic entity in Germany: the perfect setting for stories about growth, because the forest itself grows and proliferates. The edge of a wood is the threshold between cultivation and untamed nature, light and darkness, the known and the unknown. We all know the sense of change we feel when we enter a forest on a summer's day. Everything suddenly becomes cool, dark, and uncannily quiet.

The »Into the Dark Woods« team of the GRIMM WORLD:

Producer: Peter Stohler

Peter Stohler has been Director of the GRIMM WORLD since the beginning of this year and is also responsible as programme manager for its programmatic orientation. He comes from Switzerland, studied art and film studies in Zurich, Amsterdam and London, followed by further training in cultural management. As representative for cultural affairs at the Department of Culture in the Canton Basel-Stadt from 2007 to 2013, he promoted projects of art, film, video art, photography and music. Before that, he was curator and director at several museums and art spaces in Zurich, Altdorf and Geneva. Before coming to the GRIMM WORLD, he had been director and senior curator at the Kunst(Zeug)Haus Rapperswil-Jona since 2013, directly on Lake Zurich. He is the author and publisher of numerous publications on contemporary art, photography and design.

Curator: Mirko Zapp

Mirko Zapp developed the idea and concept of the »Into the Dark Woods« exhibition and is responsible for it as curator. He has organised numerous exhibitions, especially in the field of photography, and exhibited his own works. He studied political science and history in Göttingen and worked subsequently for two of the largest German foundations, for example as programme, campaign or department manager in the areas of communication, culture, education and society. He also worked as a journalist, was the author of numerous articles and wrote and blogged for stern.de and other media. In 2017 he moved to Kassel and has since been responsible for communications at the GRIMM WORLD Kassel.

Coordination & Design: Manuela Greipel

Manuela Greipel has been responsible for the design at the GRIMM WORLD Kassel since 2015 and also designed the promotion material for »Into the Dark Woods«. She studied visual communication at the Kunsthochschule (School of Art and Design) in Kassel and takes the responsibility for international and interdisciplinary projects in Germany and abroad. She works in the areas of cultural and corporate communication as well as in the fields of design and spatial communication, typography and graphic/editorial design.

Mediation: Julia Ronge

Administration: Lucija Gudlin, Timo Vogt

Technology: Rolf Tonhäuser

Press, public relations and marketing: Mirko Zapp

The »Into the Dark Woods« team of URBANSCREEN:

Production: Majo Ussat

Majo Ussat worked as a freelance artist and as assistant director to Gustav Gisiger. As brand development manager for the media company Studio100, he produced television formats and radio plays. In 2000 he founded the event marketing agency JOKMOK. He has been with URBANSCREEN since 2011, where he initially worked as production manager and business development consultant; in 2017 he became one of the two managing directors. Here he has already directed several award-winning major productions, among others in the Gasometer Oberhausen or at the Luminale in Frankfurt. Most recently, he was with URBANSCREEN in the USA in connection with the opening ceremony of the Goethe Institut's "Deutschlandjahr" / Year of German-American Friendship.

Creative Director: Till Botterweck

Till Botterweck is a graduate architectural engineer and worked as a set designer and video artist for choreographers and directors such as Samir Akika, Michael Talke and Urs Dietrich. In 2006 he was one of the co-founders of URBANSCREEN. Since then, as Art Director he has staged projects at the Sydney Opera House, the Gasometer in Oberhausen and the Karlsruhe Palace.

Concept, direction, dramaturgy: Justin Koch

Justin Koch is a media artist, filmmaker and author. Since studying at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design (HfG), he produces artistic short films or music videos and writes screenplays for feature films and series. He designs commercials for various agencies, which he also produces as director. He has worked together with URBANSCREEN since 2018 on spatial installations and artistic works in the field of projection mapping.

Art direction: Julian Hölscher

Julian Hölscher has a design diploma from the University of the Arts in Bremen. He works as a graphic designer for various design offices and as a freelance graphic and motion designer. His work includes large-scale video mapping, stage sets, sculptures and medial façade designs. Julian joined URBANSCREEN in 2012 and has participated in numerous international projects, including the illumination of Rice University in Houston and the Luxembourg Light Festival. In addition, he continues to work freelance for other clients and holds lectures on design.

3D artist & 3D software engineering: Jonas Schell

Jonas Schell uses algorithms to create aesthetic worlds. This combination of computer science and artistic expression is also reflected in his career. After graduating from the University of Applied Sciences in Düsseldorf (B.Eng.), Jonas studied digital media at the Drexel University in Philadelphia with the help of a Fulbright Scholarship. He obtained his Master of Arts in Digital Media in 2018 at the University of the Arts in Bremen. After many years as a freelance co-operator, Jonas joined URBANSCREEN at the end of 2018.

Motion Graphic Design, Schnitt: José Buendía

Motion Graphic Design: Ana Cristino Romão, Eike Buff, Lukas Neumann

Technical construction: Armin Jakob

Sound design: Janis E. Müller

Press, Public relations: Lydia Liedtke

Accompanying Program

Sat. 13.04. | 7 p.m. | Reading

Liebes Kind

Lena and her two children live in a lonely cottage in the forest. However, this apparently idyllic setting is actually a prison from which there seems to be no escape. But one day, they succeed in fleeing – and then the real nightmare starts ... To coincide with the special exhibition “Into the Dark Woods”, novelist Romy Hausmann reads from her latest bestseller “Liebes Kind” (“Dear Child”).

Admission 10 €, reduced rate 8 €, incl. admission to the special exhibition “Into the Dark Woods” starts 6 p.m.

Wed. 24.04. | 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Easter holiday programme

Fairy-tale masks in the Dark Woods

Be the Wolf, Little Red Riding Hood, her Grandmother or a tree – choose your favourite design and make your own fairy-tale mask! When you have finished, it’s time to go to the Dark Woods, where you can bravely make your way between the trees like Hansel and Gretel ...

Admission: 5 €, advance reservation requested: by phone on +49 561 5986190 or e-mail at kasse@grimmwelt.de, age group: 6 – 10 years

Sat. 11.05. | 12 noon – 6 p.m.

Woodcarving workshop

To coincide with the horticultural show Kasseler Gartenkultur, sculptor Christoph Kalden will be conducting workshops for the creation of mystical wood sculptures. Under the heading “Forest Tales and Woodland Figures”, the GRIMM WORLD will be offering a two-day programme of fairy tales, music and workshops for all the family in the Weinbergpark: Sat. 11.05. starts 12 noon.

and Sun. 12.05. from 11.30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Admission free.

Wed. 22.05. | 3 p.m. | Walking tour followed by afternoon coffee

Grimm’s Grapevine – Wilhelm’s Woodland Poetry

In the midst of the special exhibition “Into the Dark Woods”, you will trace the origins of popular belief, sagas, legends and fairy tales back to their roots – for, according to Wilhelm Grimm, woods are where folk traditions have been handed down in their most original form.

Admission: 10 €, incl. walking tour followed by coffee & cakes in the FALADA café-restaurant.

Wed. 05.06 | 7 p.m. | Sound performance

Woodland Sounds

Cellist and composer Regine Brunke from Kassel joins actor Thomas Hof in their interpretation of the special exhibition “Into the Dark Woods”, a sound performance featuring fairy-tale sonatas and texts by the Brothers Grimm.

Admission: 15 €, reduced rate 10 €, incl. admission to the special exhibition “Into the Dark Woods” starts 6 p.m.

Thur. 18.07. | 7 p.m. | Lecture

Brock, Nightshade and Earthstars

German woods are home to countless fairy-tale characters and creatures. Flora, fauna and fungi – nature’s inventiveness and ingenuity knows no bounds. Hollyhocks and porcini mushrooms are just two of the highlights of an excursion to the local woods with Dr. Kai Földner, forestry scientist and director of the Municipal Museum of Kassel.

Admission: 5 €, reduced rate 3 €, incl. admission to the special exhibition “Into the Dark Woods” starts 6 p.m.

Thur. 08.08. | 7 p.m. | Reading theatre

Whispering Woods

German romantic poet Achim von Arnim spoke of “forest bathing”, and Odysseus is reputed to be the first man to have built a tree-house. Others – including Goethe, Eichendorff and, of course, the Brothers Grimm – have also taken woodland myths as their theme. Stefan Becker gives an instructive yet light-hearted insight into woods and trees from different literary points of view.

Admission: 15 €, reduced rate 10 €, incl. admission to the special exhibition “Into the Dark Woods” starts 6 p.m.

Events and readings will be in German.