

The Making of The Floating Cinema 2013 Transcript

0:00 Audio

[Music]

0:14 Emma Underhill

Building on the success of *The Floating Cinema 2011*, we were asked by the Legacy List if we would like to develop a new project, which would be a more kind of permanent fixture on the waterways. So we developed an open international competition, which we ran in partnership with the Architecture Foundation. And through that process, we shortlisted for architects, out of which we selected Duggan Morris Architects as the winner.

0:42 Sarah Weir

We commissioned *The Floating Cinema* in 2011. It was a great success. That was before the Olympics had even happened. And I was thinking out of that, that we really should celebrate the water, people who live and work on the water artists, creatives, people that own allotments around and about and bring all of those together. And *The Floating Cinema* seemed to be a perfect way to do it.

1:05 Sarah Ichioka

And we always like to situate architecture in its broadest, social, cultural and economic context, looking at cultivating innovation and social engagement. And I think innovation and social engagement are both two key parts of *The Floating Cinema* project. So we're really excited to be involved in helping to run the design competition that produces the winning selection that's now being built.

1:31 Adam Hiles

Having won the competition, we were faced with an exciting challenge of turning what was without quite an interesting scheme into reality. We started our design of the project thinking about the experience of cinema, that cinema is this experience ingrained within everyday culture. And that actually, it will be an amazing way of people engaging with the culture and history and legacy of London.

1:59 Joe Morris

The hook line for the project is a cargo of extraordinary objects. In our minds and I think the client and their team have sort of picked up on this. There's a real sense of sort of a magical, slow, calm process of this barge vessel arriving, I think it'd be very, very magical experience.

2:19 Emma Underhill

One of the things that really stood out when we were selecting Duggan Morris' proposal was their use of materials. And the fact that they created this really sort of stunning light box that would sit on top of the cinema barge, and that also integrated with kind of big signage system on the side of the boat that would sort of reference the old art deco cinemas, and the cinema signage. So then they collaborated with Modern Activity to develop a whole kind of graphic treatment for the boat.

2:48 Speaker

We looked at just the kind of the boxiness of the design and cinema signage. I think, this kind of thing here, which is just classic cinema lightbox, which is letters, which are kind of plugged into rods on a lightbox, would suit it well and would suit the sort of very kind of clean, simple forms of Duggan Morris' boat.

3:09 Emma Underhill

Well, it's been a quite a lengthy development process. And the original concept of Duggan Morris' was to use an old industrial hopper, and we spent a lot of time looking for the perfect barge that had to be exactly the right size to fit their design. And we found one and then it turned out that it had too many kind of rusty holes in it, and it would cost so much to repair, that we actually then realised that we're going to have to build this boat from scratch. And while we were going through that process, I think what was really important for us as the commissioners is to make sure that we were looking down lots of different avenues and following lots of different routes, but just to make sure that the architects design and the integrity of that always remained true. So we've decided that we'd have to go down the route of building a new boat and we were looking everywhere for the right boat builder to kind of work with us and then we found Turks Boat Yard in Chatham in the historic docks.

4:13 Richard Turk

Hugely unique project, we haven't actually been asked to do this kind of thing before, obviously, our mainstream business is building house boats and Dutch barges and recreational craft and obviously we do a lot of the commercial trade. This sort of fits in between the two - it's a bit unusual. We've got to somehow get the parameters of the design team into marine language and get a solution that makes everyone happy and I think we're going to get a really, really great project and something very unusual.

4:43 Ali Roger

And the first thing we do we got from the drawings that are coming out, the steel will get ordered. The fabricated steel will come in, the structure will get bolt, the wire structures getting bolt. All the finishing details will get basically precise. There'll be shooting fabrication get made. All the deliveries coming in - we've got a very tight programme of 12 weeks, so hence everything's got to run very smoothly. Rob the boat builder, he's manufacturing the steel. He's bringing it, building all the structure. Between the two of us we've got to make sure the structures exactly as to the drawings.

5:55 Emma Underhill

They were completely up for taking on the challenge of building this boat at a very, very fast pace, because we had a very specific deadline time with literally kind of drifting through our fingers. And they've been incredible. And actually, we've had a sort of time lapse film set to kind of documenting the process and just from day to day, how quickly they're kind of transformation from just a pile of steel to kind of making the boat is in quite phenomenal. We found this fantastic company down in the Isle of Wight called Hybrid Marine. And they've come up with this kind of unique system that combines this sort of engine, a diesel engine with a battery system. And it also will enable us to run the whole boat on biofuel. And I believe we're going to be one of the kind of pioneers of biofuel in terms of this approach, which is really exciting because we really want this project to be as environmentally sustainable as it can be.

7:04 Graeme Hawksley

In front of us here we have the freshly delivered a hybrid diesel electric system for the cinema project. The basic principle of operation is with the engine switched off, and the gearbox in neutral, we run an electric motor here. It's quite a powerful little motor - 12 horsepower. So enough to take the cinema three or four miles an hour and calm conditions. When the batteries run down, then we start the engine, we drive to the gearbox the propeller shaft in the normal way. At that time, this motor automatically becomes a generator for recharging your batteries. In addition to that, we're planning to run the system on 100% biofuel. So even when we are using fuel, we're using an environmentally friendly product then.

7:43 Dorian Fraser Moore

This year, we've created a much more bespoke system to provide a better sound system; a better high quality video experience to allow for the whole experience to be better connected. To people would bring a laptop to do their own presentation, as well as to be able to play active media sources to really work more like a cinema and less like a boat with a projector on it. As much as possible. I've really worked

with the architects to try and build everything into the boat, there'll be bits and bobs, you have to see the object or you build to see some of the cameras, but everything else will be closed away.

8:46 Emma Underhill

I think what's actually been a real learning curve for us at UP Projects is that rather than just with managing a refurb, which is what we would have been doing, if we'd gone down the original route, we've actually been building a boat. So it's been really interesting, but quite demanding as well.

9:25 Mary Duggan

The concept of the sort of hopper carrying extraordinary objects really came from sort of extensive research into the Lee Valley area. And we discovered that really it was a hub of invention. So there were things like aviation, petrol, lots of different, really interesting objects were actually invented in that area. And that's where we thought that we could embellish that somehow and come up with a vessel that in a way could support and continue that thread of invention.

10:46 Emma Underhill

The ambition of the project now that we were actually kind of building a boat from scratch has really only been able to be realised due to the support of Legacy List and Bloomberg. And we're really grateful for them to kind of follow us on this journey and support us all the way and we really hope that we'll be able to continue with *The Floating Cinema* for years to come.