

## Museums at Night event ideas from previous years

A Museums at Night event can be as simple as keeping your doors open later than usual into the evening, or allowing free entry to exhibitions that usually charge an admission fee. However, take a look at the list of inventive events that venues have staged in the past: do any of these ideas resonate with you, and could you adapt them to suit your space, collections, exhibitions, and team?

### Performance

Site-specific performance art / twilight promenade  
Dance inspired by artworks in collection  
Live music from local bands and DJs / cabaret / choirs / juggling  
Poetry reading  
The Wake of Lost Souls: eulogies for fictional characters  
Storytelling, e.g. hear Conan Doyle's Egyptian stories in the Mummy Room  
Graffiti artists creating mural throughout evening  
Magic lantern show, Victorian entertainment, shadow puppet workshop  
Costumed re-enactment: meet characters from the past / ghosts / historical characters as tour guides or coming to life amongst artefacts from their lives  
Horror / historical / family film screening, short films, documentaries, local moving image artwork, artists films  
Meet the artist- or writer-in-residence  
Talk by or interview with designers / artists / experts / curators / authors  
Re-enacting night-time events that took place in the venue in the past  
Courtroom drama  
Recreated air battle

### Creative

Help record a sound collage  
Writing workshop  
Open mic jam session  
Craft activities: all-night printmaking, life drawing, sugar crafting, knitting, Stitch'n'Bitch, live pottery, make lanterns / masks / origami / balloon modelling / try live 3D sculpting / brass rubbing / felting / lacemaking / rag rug-making  
Build a beehive  
Make a clay or mosaic tile, or patchwork quilt square, for a community project  
Games programming night  
Try Roman skills e.g. writing on wax tablets  
Help create The Longing Archive: a participatory artwork made from old love letters, favourite songs and stories of rejection

## **Physical activities**

Go on military manoeuvres after dark with former soldiers, try night vision equipment  
Silent disco on light-up dancefloor  
Dance marathon  
Greek dance workshop  
FitBod fitness challenge

## **Interactive**

Torchlit tour  
Treasure hunt  
Murder mystery / live action Cluedo  
Sleepover  
Pyjama party followed by toy sleepover  
Speed dating / singles night  
Tudor / Regency / 1940s historical dance  
Play games from different historical periods / croquet  
Taste food and drink from the era  
Medieval feast  
Try playing the shawm and gittern (Tudor musical instruments)  
Karaoke  
Pub quiz  
Board games / word games / giant Jenga / Twister / vintage video games  
Twilight-themed night giving fans sparkly vampire makeovers  
Victorian school lessons, try writing with dip pens  
Sample gruel in a workhouse  
Above and below stairs social history tour  
Learn to lay a dinner table with a Georgian butler  
Historic house trail hearing the sounds of a 1910 dinner party  
World War I trench experience  
Learn first aid during a recreated World War II air raid  
Cook and eat food sculptures  
Wine, beer, tea or coffee tasting  
“Bushtucker trial” eating insects  
Dinner or tea party in venue / midnight feast

## **Collections- or exhibitions-based events**

Preview or launch of new exhibition / “Last chance to see” a closing exhibition  
Astronomy night / planetarium show / learn to use telescopes  
“Open cockpits” evening among historic aircraft  
Playing old 78 records from collection  
Model train running evening  
Object handling / object identification / conservators explaining their work  
CSI Friday: investigate the conservation challenges the housekeeping team face  
Hear a Victorian post horn played  
“Night flights” on flight simulators

Helicopter rides  
Fire up steam engines  
Ride on steam trains  
Canal trips on historic narrowboats  
Sunset hovercraft rides  
Historic tunnel tours by lantern-light  
Sunset naval ceremony  
Firing historic guns, cannon and mortars  
Bring objects from your collections, and volunteers happy to talk about them, in to somewhere central such as a marketplace or library

### **Collaboration with outside experts**

Craft market with stalls run by local artists  
Family tree research with genealogists / local history society experts  
Dissection night / learn surgical suturing / amputations  
Skull identification night with a facial anthropologist  
Paranormal investigation  
Young Chefs challenge  
Graveyard tour  
Blue Badge guided tour  
Fashion show

### **Making use of your building, grounds and surroundings**

Video art or live art displayed in windows  
Community-made short films projected on to building  
Illuminated grounds / animated projections on to building  
Atmospheric interior lighting  
Candlelit installations  
Nature walks discovering moths and bats, learning to use bat detectors, nocturnal animal talks, getting up close with creepy-crawlies / snakes / bearded dragons  
Atmospheric night walk  
Discover the rainforest biome  
Find the fairies in the gardens

### **Join these suggestions up!**

You can bring together a whole evening of themed activities by combining a selection of the ideas listed above: for example, one Thunderbirds-themed night featured an exhibition of rare models, music from the 1960s, screenings of the TV series, and an interview with voice artist Sylvia Anderson followed by a book signing session.

Best of luck! If you'd like to discuss your plans, you can always contact me by calling 01273 623336 or emailing [rosie@culture24.org.uk](mailto:rosie@culture24.org.uk).