

CASE STUDY 2

FALMOUTH ART GALLERY

CORNWALL

Why take part?

The gallery had recently begun work on a project to create three new pieces of outdoor play equipment for the town, inspired by their collection of automata. Having taken part in Takeover Days in the past, the Director was keen to develop new ways of involving children and saw this as an opportunity to give the children ownership of the project they were working on.

Who took part?

216 children from a pre-school and local primary schools. The children visited the gallery in groups of approximately 30 over a period of two weeks to take part in the Takeover Day experience.

What did they do?

The children were invited to experiment with different designs of automata and make decisions about how the finished pieces of outdoor automata would look and function, working with the gallery staff and artists who would go on to build the finished items.

How did they spend their time on the day?

Each group spent half a day in the gallery following roughly the same format:

- Handling session exploring extensive collection of automata
- Studying the various mechanisms involved in each and making their own using cheaply sourced automata kits and other simple equipment e.g. mdf cams and chopsticks
- Feeding back to the artist what they wanted to see and be able to do with the outdoor automata

What happened next?

Using the feedback from the children, the artists are currently constructing the new outdoor automata which are due for installation in May 2013. All of the children will be invited to the launch event at the park which will be staged by the local residents association which is a partner in the wider project. In the meantime, the gallery has noticed many of the children returning with their families to show them the automata in the gallery and talk about what they did on Takeover Day.

The workshop format developed was so successful that the gallery plans to make them a regular activity and has found that this experience has helped them to develop their practice and offer for schools. By creating a learning opportunity linking to the Science and Design Technology curricula the gallery has found a strategy to reach new school audiences and give them access to their collection.

