

# I am hamlet

This is a design proposal for a devised piece taking place at the Vaults under Waterloo. The piece is based on Shakespeare's Tragedy of Hamlet in which the audience experience themselves as Hamlet.

During this immersive installation/performance, the audience should see the world through Hamlet's eyes, and see themselves through the eyes of Hamlet.

During the piece the audience will explore the space on their own, as well as witness performances that are based on specific scenes from the play. The experience should be a continuous journey from beginning to end. The installations and performances take place in several different spaces at the Vaults and will be connected with corridors.

The idea behind the design is to create a mapped out journey through the Vaults that should make the audience feel like they are inside Hamlet's mind. They witness incidents, hear his thoughts and feel his confusion throughout the storyline of the play, from the death of his father to his own death. The atmosphere is most of the time dark and chaotic, and at times it should intimate the feeling of being on a ride through a house of terror. The experience should be individual, but at the same time people should feel safe so therefore the audience will never be alone, but sometimes be divided into smaller groups.

There are few corridors at the Vaults that can be used for the performance, but it would also be needed to build a few more to connect the spaces. The idea behind the corridors is that they should represent Hamlet's thoughts and confusion. In the corridors, the audience are not supposed to know exactly what is happening. The experience should be dark, chaotic, and become more uncomfortable and confusing as they go through more corridors. The scenes and installations in the spaces between the corridors should feel much brighter, clearer and more memorable. The corridors always close behind you, so that you can't go back.



## 1 Arrival

The audience enter the space through the **Vaults main entrance on Leake Street** and come into the **foyer** which should be dark and only lid with a few red lightbulbs.



## 2 Wake

The audience is lead into the **Vaults Kitchen** where they wait for the performance to start and can buy drinks at the bar. The space is empty apart from a plain bar made of weathered wood and a few high tables with candles around the room. Waiters, dressed in black, go around offering finger food and express their sympathy to the guests.



### 3 My mother weds my uncle days after my father's death

At a certain point of time a guide, dressed in black suit, enters and leads people, few at a time, out of the room, through an empty corridor that gradually becomes darker, and into a completely dark room, **the Gallery**. Slowly the lights come up on an open casket in the middle of the room. In a distance, a wedding is taking place. Gradually light comes up on the couple so the audience can see them. Then the light dims again.



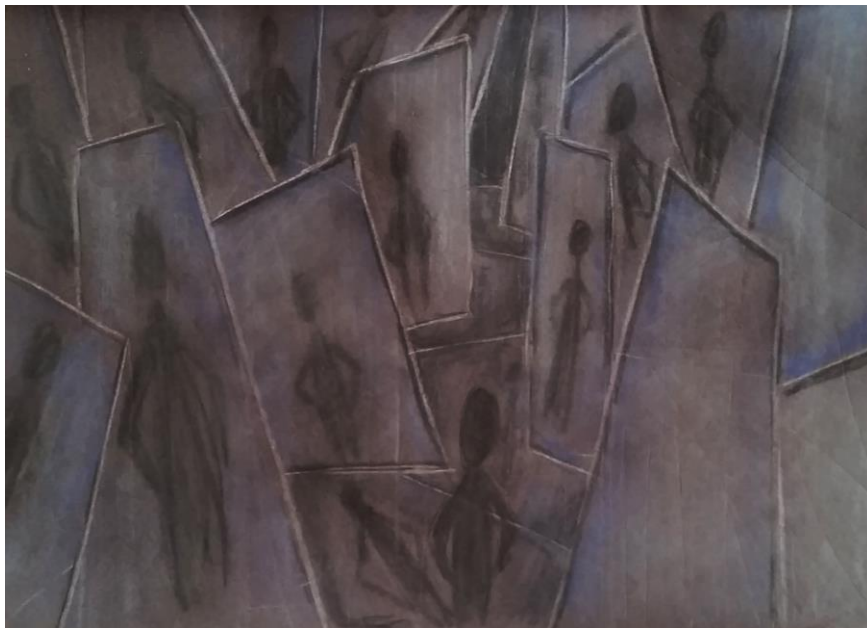
### 4 Corridor #1

The first corridor the audience walk through, is wide and covered with big square mirrors from floor to ceiling. They are all unbroken. As the audience walk through the space they barely hear a monologue by Hamlet through speakers, placed in different places in the corridor. Light is low.



## 5 The Ghost of my Father

The audience enter a dark room, **the Big Mezziane**. In the room are piles of timber and rusted corrugated iron is hanging from the ceiling and on the walls and floors. The room should give the impression of an old rusted rooftop. The room is dark and there is smoke. Old Hamlet's ghost appears and tells the audience that they need to revenge his death. This should be scary.



## 6 Corridor #2

This corridor is narrow and covered with mirrors from floor to ceiling. The mirrors are unbroken but bent and crooked. The corridor is not perfectly straight, dim lighting, and you can hear a monologue by Hamlet through speakers placed in different places in the corridor.



### 7 Courting Ophelia

The audience enter **Lucy's Room** where they see Ophelia lying on her bed placed in the middle of the room. She is in love, holding her smartphone and is reading Hamlet's love letters out loud. Ophelia is dressed in white night gown. The floor is covered with flowers.



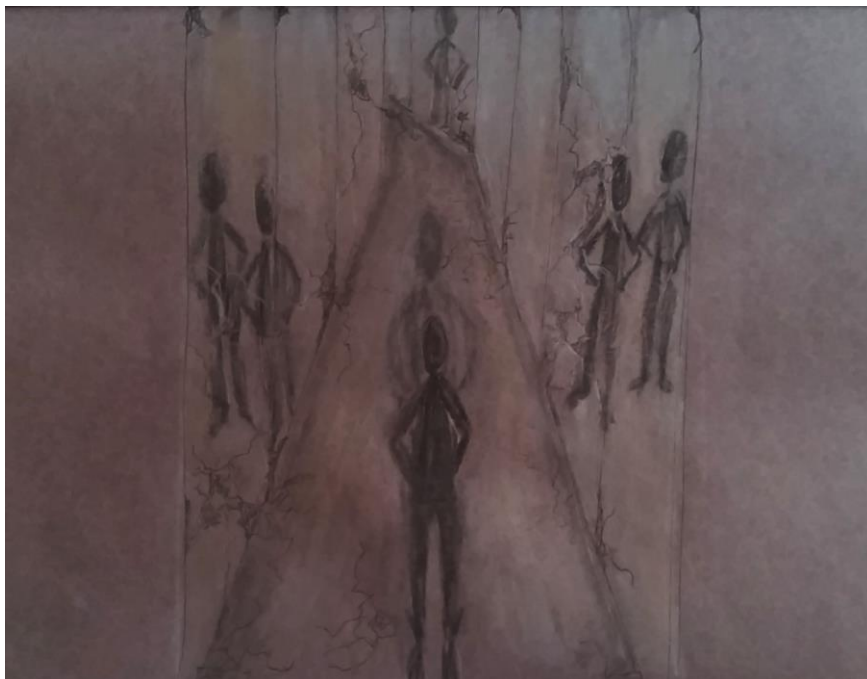
### 8 Corridor #3

This corridor is narrow and the walls are covered with corrugated iron. Strange sounds can be heard, smoke and flickering lights and shadows give the impression that somebody is at the end of the corridor. But when the audience come closer, no one is there.



## 9 In the Mind's Eye

The audience enter **the Gas Bottle Room**. In front of the audience is a very large sheet of glass, smoked, so that when it is lit from the audience side it becomes a mirror and the audience see themselves, but when it is lit from the stage side it is transparent and the audience see what is on the other side. Above, a light swings back and forth and when the glass becomes a mirror to the audience, black dressed actors enter, one at a time, sit down and face the audience. This process continues until all the chairs are filled. After what seems an unbearably long time, the actors speak simultaneously: To be or not to be that is the question.



## 10 Corridor #4

A narrow corridor covered with cracked and broken mirrors. Flickering light and you can hear a monologue by Hamlet very loud through speakers placed in different places in the corridor.



## 11 Bad Dreams

The audience come through the fourth corridor and enter **the Arch**, a space where there is a kind of an outdoor atmosphere. In the middle of the space there is a small stage, that reminds a bit of Shakespeare's Globe stage, made of scaffolding with wooden floor and balconies. Here a performance takes place. The curators of this section are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Scenes which will form the basis of the storyline: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's arrival - Ref: Act 2 sc 2, The actors' arrival - Ref: Act 2 Sc 2, The play within the play - Ref: Act 3 Sc 2, The closet scene/ murder of Polonius - Ref: Act 3 sc 4, Exile to England - Ref: Act 4 sc 2.



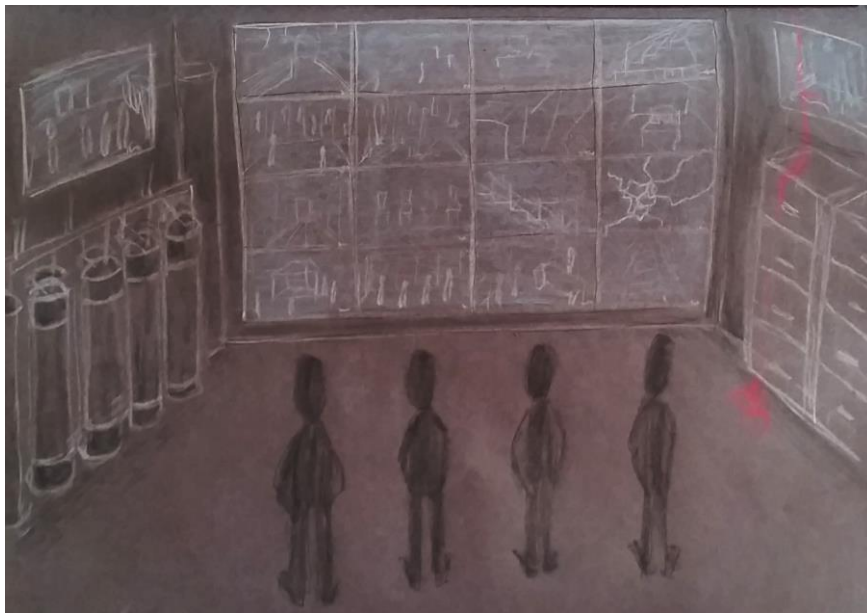
## 12 Interval

The interval should feel like a part of the whole experience. During the interval, the audience is lead further into the **Arch** and the **Oublette**, which now should give the feeling of entering a medieval market, but modern looking. There should be stalls where you can buy food, drinks and souvenirs, you should smell different spices, a music band would perform live music and dancers dance around the audience. On the upper floor should be rough wooden tables and benches to sit on. Fairy lights should hang from the ceiling.



### 13 Corridor #5

When the audience enter it looks like the corridor is endless long and they can see people walking down the corridor in front of them. But when they come closer they realize that they were watching themselves. The corridor is cold and dark and sounds of footsteps and other odd sounds can be heard. A camera is placed at one end of the corridor and live feed recording of the audience is projected on a screen at the other end.



### 14 Spy Room

After the interval the audience is lead through Corridor 5 and into the installation-based “spy room” in the **Gas Bottle room**. The room is filled with surveillance camera monitors, where the audience would see recordings of themselves from earlier parts of the performance.





### 15 Corridor #6

Strange sounds can be heard, smoke and flickering lights and shadows give the impression that somebody is at the end of the corridor. But when the audience come closer, no one is there. Red flowers on the floor in distance.



### 16 Inside the Grave

This section takes place inside a grave in the **Long Dry One** space. This is the main performance of Part Two. The curator of this section are the Gravedigger and Horatio. They talk to the audience; the gravedigger is a philosopher.

Scenes which will form the basis of this section: Gravedigger – Ref: Act 5 sc 1, Murder in Exile – Ref: ACT 5 SC 2, Hamlet: 'How all occasions do inform against me...' ACT 4 sc4, To be or not to be – speech.



### 17 Corridor #7

The audience is given an opportunity to kill Claudius. A man kneels in front of you praying. Several other figures, dressed in grey stand by whispering...“Now might you do it pat, now whilst he is praying. Do it now and so he goes to heaven; and so you are revenged.” Claudius: O, my offence is rank it smells to heaven; + Hamleg: ‘Now might I do it, pat...’ – Ref: ACT 3 SC 3.



### 18 Ophelia's Death

In the **Short Wet One** room, the audience see Ophelia drowned in a bathtub. The room is very damp, dim purple lighting and the floor is covered with flowers.



### 19 Corridor #8

The last corridor that the audience walk through will be created on the **upper floor above the Vaults kitchen**. The corridor is completely chaotic and maze-like and should give the impression that a combat happened in there. Broken mirrors, broken furniture, splashes of blood, dim red lighting and smoke. Very loud noise is mixed to Hamlet's monologues coming from speakers all over the space. Brief symbolic version of the mass murder in Act 5 Sc 2.



### 20 Funeral

At the end, the last corridor leads the audience into the same room as where the performance started. The final scene should be a mirrored image of the opening scene. A dark room, **the Gallery**. A single candle lit. In the middle of the floor stands an open casket. There is fog in the room and dim lighting so you have to come closer to see what is in the casket. When you look into the casket, you see your own face in a mirror.



21 End

In a distance, there is an open door leading to a corridor. Gradually the light from the corridor brightens, the audience walk into the light. The corridor leads out to the street where the performance started.