

THE LIFE RX

DIRECTOR'S BOOK





Location:
London

Best known for:
Old Vic Theatre/Tunnels,
The Department

- **Founded cult venue The Old Vic Tunnels which swiftly established itself as one of the Time Out Magazine's 'top 10 venues' in the UK**
- **Collaborated with Academy-Award winning actor Kevin Spacey on a wide range of projects at the renowned Old Vic Theatre, London**

Managing Director of cutting-edge immersive talent agency The Department, Hamish Jenkinson is at the forefront of cultural innovation. Having collaborated with Hollywood's elite as well as spearheading the experiential theatre movement in London, he was approached by Lexus as the perfect partner to help create an incredible adventure through which to introduce our guests to the boldly designed and unconventional new car. Bringing his firsthand experience of working with A-listers such as Madonna and Kevin Spacey, he has put together a launch that, in his words, 'Should feel like no other car launch that you've ever been to or will ever go to again.'

Hamish Jenkinson

Why was the Lexus RX/'The Life RX' proposition ideal for this kind of immersive theatrical experience?

"Firstly, it takes a brand that is forward-thinking, innovative and brave to try something as unique as what we're doing in this place. The second aspect would be that the TV commercial is so much about immersing yourself in the world of 'The Life RX', but it's also a state of mind that driving the car gives you."

"Having worked with Madonna and Kevin Spacey, many of the scenarios that the audience go through are actually snippets of real-life experiences of coming in through back routes and underground car parks of hotels and living the high life on the red carpet."

How does this event reflect the qualities of the Lexus RX and 'The Life RX'?

"The Life RX' is all about a luxury world of sophistication and edge and it brings to life the rewarding driving experience provided by the RX. This is an experience where the audience is in the driving seat, and is taken into an incredibly magical world. It should feel like they have become different people by going through this experience. It should change them, in some small, wonderful way."

What do you feel is unique about directing an immersive theatre production?

"The unique aspect of an immersive theatre production is that you can never fully know what the audience might do, and how they might react - because every single scene

that they are in, they are driving it. You don't get to sit down for two hours in a theatre. You have to explore, to investigate, to get the most out of that experience."

What made this event different to the projects you've worked on before?

"Nothing else that I've worked on has involved such a wide range of talent. While I'm the Creative Director, it's the team that we've assembled, this kind of dream team of immersive talent, that ensures this will be an immersive experience of the absolute highest calibre."

After working with Kevin Spacey and Madonna and taking on the role of Creative Director at London's renowned Old Vic theatre, what compelled you to become involved in the emerging medium of immersive theatre?

"Late one night, I was 'urban rambling' and I peeked through a door and discovered 40,000 sq ft of underground tunnels that had been abandoned for 30 years. And after a lot of blood, sweat and tears, I produced my first show - a collaboration between Punchdrunk and the Old Vic theatre, where 30,000 people came and saw the show in a little over two weeks."

CREATIVE DIRECTOR



Location:

London

Best known for:

The Dazzle,
Secret Cinema's
'The Shawshank Redemption'

Having worked in the pioneering world of Secret Cinema, director Simon Evans knows a thing or two about immersive experiences and what they need to achieve. He knew that he needed to build an illusion that was immaculate if he was to bring this alternate reality to life, so timing had to be perfect, characters spot on, the whole operation slick and smooth running. And it was a new challenge to give 'The Life RX' of glamour, excitement and thrills to each chosen pair; a bespoke, adrenaline-charged encounter complete with bulb-flashing paparazzi.

- **Simon is the precociously talented performance Director behind Secret Cinema classics, Shawshank Redemption and Ghostbusters, as well as a host of celebrated productions at the Old Vic and the Donmar Warehouse**
- **Director of the critically-acclaimed West End production, The Dazzle, which has received widespread praise by critics and audiences alike**

Simon Evans

What has been your role in developing the theatrical direction of this project and bringing the event to life?

"In the early stages it was very much meeting with the other producers, the Lexus team, and discussing the way that theatrically you could explore the themes personified in 'The Life RX'. We then had to produce something that an actor could take, make it fresh and engaging and most importantly, real."

What excited you and compelled you to get involved with the project?

"The whole concept of 'The Life RX', the concept that the right car can transform how you feel and this idea that you can live this life of glamour for a time, that this is your passport to excitement and thrills was hugely exciting. The beauty of a night like the RX show is that you can take everyone involved and give them that."

What would you say are the most exciting elements of 'The Life RX' event?

"I think that first moment when they get pulled into the rabbit hole - that's absolutely thrilling and is such a surprise for them. We really do throw them in at the deep end, and that's so exciting. And then just when you feel you've done all that and you've met all these people and you've been dressed up, suddenly Jude Law is there."

What inspires your creative thinking when developing concepts for new theatrical experiences?

"It's harder when I'm trying to tell a story that I don't have an emotional connection to. So that's become my rule now - that if there's not something in there that excites me or moves me, I'd be less inclined to get involved. I'd love to live this incredible life so when the opportunity to create this experience came along, I knew I could get on board with that, I could relate to it and tell that story."

What are you most proud of, to date, from your career in theatre?

"The Dazzle is something that I'm hugely proud of. It's a play I read four years ago and then I put the whole package together. I found the actors that I wanted, brought them on board, I went to producers. The other thing would be during my Secret Cinema tenure. With Miller's Crossing I got as close as I could get to how I think that work can be produced at its best, in a really exciting way that allows the audience to both follow a narrative and go off and free-roam."

THEATRICAL DIRECTOR



Location:
London

Best known for:
Sound design for the award-winning Faust,
It Felt Like A Kiss
The Crash of Elysium

- **Stephen has been a Sound and Graphic Designer for immersive theatre company, Punchdrunk, since 2002. With the company, he has worked in collaboration with Adam Curtis and Damon Albarn as part of the Manchester International, and on the Doctor Who adventure, The Crash of Elysium**

The sound maestro behind the mind-altering work of Punchdrunk has taken aural control of his audience through the many fantastical worlds of trailblazing immersive theatre. For 'The Life RX' his aim was to invite our guests to step outside their everyday life into an alternate reality, and the Lexus RX provided the perfect opportunity for that transformation. The craftsmanship of the car's sophisticated Mark Levinson sound system, and its rich heritage, provided a wealth of inspiration to create an experience with detail at its core. Reflecting the streamlined design of the Lexus itself, Stephen worked to construct a smooth and utterly flawless tone throughout.

Stephen Dobbie

What should the audience expect from your work as they journey through the experience?

"The word cinematic is the one that I draw on mostly, because we are putting people in their own film in many ways – they are the stars from scene to scene. I am hoping that it will be cinematic in as much as there will be moments of tension, of shock, of excitement, of total contemplation. But overall it should be an overwhelming sensory overload that they feel they don't have any control over; everything should feel real and completely immersed in 'The Life RX'. Through the way I create sound, I can help to maintain that magic."

How did the unique sound system of the Lexus RX inspire your design for the event?

"My design was inspired by the sound system in the car – it's a high-end system with such heritage behind it related to its creation and design. I drew inspiration from the major mechanics behind it. It's high fidelity and sophisticated so anything I did needed to match that and reach that level. High quality individuals and products inspire us to improve."

What are you most proud of, to date, from your career in sound design?

"It's anything that gives me tingles and gets me excited, or a particular sequence or passage of sound, or a noise that just hits you straight in the sternum and that gives you that visceral feeling."

What role does sound design play in 'The Life RX' immersive experience?

"There needs to be a holistic approach because along with set design, sound in film is often forgotten. If I've done my job correctly, no one should notice what I've done. It immediately sets the tone and the atmosphere for the space that they are about to walk into. People might not realize straight away what they are looking at, but hopefully the sound will partly guide them."

SOUND ARCHITECT



Location:
Mexico

Best known for:
Beyoncé Glastonbury 2011,
Nierka,
Alexander McQueen fashion shows

Tupac Martir, creator of light and magic in shows for everyone from Beyoncé to Alexander McQueen. Known for his risk-taking visuals, he was the ideal choice when Lexus was looking for someone who could push the audience's boundaries for this very special adventure. Tupac's challenge was to construct, through lighting, an atmosphere for the world of 'The Life RX'; and to show off to stunning effect the car itself for its moment center stage. And all the time the Lexus RX itself was a touchstone, as he took the high-tech spec of the car and incorporated elements of it into the journey, confident he could give the audience something brilliant, and unique.

- **Tupac Martir is a visual artist and Creative Director with an eclectic portfolio of projects in the arts and entertainment scene**
- **Tupac has provided production design, visuals and lighting direction for Elton John, Jon Bon Jovi, Sting and Beyoncé as well as at Coachella Music & Arts Festival, the Serpentine Gallery, V&A Museum and Old Vic Tunnels**
- **Wrote, composed, designed and directed own multi-disciplinary production, Nierka, which premiered in London in 2012**

Tupac Martir

What part does craftsmanship and daring design have to play in your passion for your work?

"It's everything! I take massive risks with the technologies that I use. I'm known for using technology that is not out there yet, in order to enhance the experience that I create. I do like taking that risk. It's pushing the limits."

How did the collaboration on 'The Life RX' provide an opportunity for you to step outside your comfort zone?

"Each room provides a different trigger to the audience. The challenge is giving them something new to feel and then they go to the next room and they feel something different. You are always changing their expectations, and you don't ever want them feel that they know what's coming next."

What were your first impressions of the Lexus RX, and how did its striking and angular design influence your light concepts for the event?

"Many of the defining aspects of the Lexus RX influenced my lighting concepts for the immersive experience, for example the movement of the lights was influenced by the smooth lines of the car. The elements which I have drawn from the car have been subtly placed along the journey the audience will be taken on, and likely not to be instantly recognizable, but I hope will act as a trigger in the days following when they remember the experience and think 'oh yeah, that's what that meant!'"

You've worked with some of the biggest names in music and fashion, including Elton John, Beyoncé and Alexander McQueen, but what do you feel has been the defining moment/project in your career?

"For me Alexander McQueen is a massive thing in my life - that gave me a major break in my career. Elton was my biggest job when I moved to the UK and, of course, there's Beyoncé's Glastonbury performance, and that's the video side of my designs. So it's quite a nice thing to do. But for me, in reality, my biggest pride and joy will always be Nierka - the show that I wrote, composed, designed and directed."

LIGHTING DESIGNER



LUXURY IS DETAIL
CHAPTER FOUR



Location:

London

Best known for:

Set design for Olivier Award-Winning
The Railway Children

A classical training within the Royal Shakespeare Company gave Joanna Scotcher, the set and costume designer for 'The Life RX' experience, an enviably refined pattern on which to base further, often more boundary-pushing designs; relishing this chance to mix traditional theatre with high-tech wizardry to create something entirely different. Her challenge was to sew together each element of the journey so that those travelling through it would be utterly enchanted and entirely unaware of their puppet masters behind the scenes.

- **Joanna is an award winning set and costume designer. Her projects have seen her work sets for fashion, underground tunnels, lake performances, live television broadcasts and the Royal Palace**
- **As well as the theatrical stage, Joanna's work specialises in the world of immersive performance and site responsive design**
- **Joanna's work was exhibited at the V&A Museum's 'From Gaga to Gormley' exhibition whilst her immersive series of installations 'House of Cards' were seen at Kensington Palace for part of the Jubilee re-opening in 2012**

Joanna Scotcher

What should the audience expect from your set designs in the immersive experience?

"In a sense, they shouldn't be able to spot the design, because it should work as an encompassing backdrop around them. The production design involves the people in it, the conversations they have, the surfaces they walk across and the rooms they have to pass through. I help to create the emotional journey. Really I think they should expect the unexpected."

What elements of the new Lexus RX did you try to reflect in the set designs?

"The immersive experience involved bringing to life the innovative technology within the Lexus RX, to show how revolutionary it is. That gave me the creative inspiration. The experience begins as quite informative, and then suddenly you're in this surreal world in a vault somewhere underground in London, as if the audience has accidentally stumbled inside this world - 'The Life RX'. We're luring people into a comfortable experience and then turning it on its head. It'll be really fantastic to watch people's reactions."

What aspects of your prior experience were you able to draw upon for this project?

"This is a high-spec production. It was an amazing experience. I bring the experience of being able to juggle the characters and the space with the meat of the narrative. It's how to set practical limits while keeping it magical and exciting for the audience. You've always got to imagine, with every bit of work you do, that you're seeing it for the very first time."

You're renowned for your work on the Olivier award-winning production of The Railway Children, but how do you feel that sets will become more immersive for the audience?

"I believe that individuals are as interested in the experience of going to see a piece of work as they are in being passively presented with a story or an image. We live in a day and age where so much is visual that we're longing to be more involved in the creation of the piece and to be inherently a character within it. That's what inspired me with this mechanism - to merge the audience within the magic of the piece, rather than them being outsiders looking in."

SET DESIGN
SPECIALIST



Location:
London

Best known for:
Founder of own London-based fashion brand,
Joshua Kane.
ex-Head of Design at Paul Smith

- **Prior to establishing his own label, Joshua was Head Designer at Paul Smith, Burberry Prorsum and Jaeger. He has been tipped to be the 'new Alexander McQueen'**
- **Joshua's fashion line has featured at London Collection: Men for the last 2 years, and has been worn by the likes of Jack Guinness, Alex Zane, Dougie Poynter, Jennifer Saunders, James Wan (director of Fast & Furious 7), Russell Brand and Alex Kapranos of Franz Ferdinand to name but a few**

The hint is in the name – Joshua Kane Bespoke set up shop in Old Spitalfields Market in June Of 2014, and Kane is a tailor tapping into something of an anomaly: the trend that is not a trend. "I think that what people are looking for right now is something more personal – it's about that luxury of individuality, and I believe that more of us than ever before are understanding the importance of quality." His skills, honed working for Paul Smith, Jaeger and Burberry Prorsum, are in high demand. "For me, being able to understand how things go together, how they are made, how the materials perform – those things are key." And the precision construction of the Lexus RX clearly struck a chord. "You are only ever going to be as good as your weakest link," he says, "So every element needs to be completely designed and on point – it's an ethos, and that really resonates with me."

Joshua Kane

What should the audience expect from your element of the immersive experience?

"A lot of energy and an intricate illustration of the connection between my design and the interior / exterior of the Lexus RX itself."

What elements of the Lexus RX interior and exterior appeal most to you as a designer?

"The designs resonate with my own style of design and my own personal collection but it's the design process which is important. I could design the most amazing suit in the world, but if the trims and buttons are not perfect, it lets the whole suit down. So to have a different product, but with the same mentality to constantly improve is what really resonates with me."

What do you draw on for inspiration for your designs?

"My collections always start from a story. Then each season I take a historical story and start looking at its importance and set about retelling it like theatre through my collections. But rather than telling it exactly as it was, I imagine it in terms of, if it was modern day, what would they be dressed in? How would they be acting? Who would the characters be and what would they want to wear from day to night?"

MASTER TAILOR



LUXURY IS ELEGANCE
CHAPTER SIX



