

The Carnival of Lost Emotions

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Aims

- To introduce audiences to research into the history of emotions
- To stimulate discussion around how feelings and emotions change over time

Audiences are encouraged to think about emotions in new ways using a 'Lost Emotions Machine'. This produces emotions very different from today's categories based on a date selected by participants.

Presenters then use these descriptions to engage participants in discussion around emotional states and their perceptions through time.

The Carnival has featured at the Barbican and Natural History Museum, at the launch of Being Human Festival and in general settings such as the Edinburgh Fringe and as part of Secret Cinema.

Key Lessons

Visible, memorable props give a 'hook' for discussions that might otherwise seem quite abstract and obscure. People are intrigued by the Machine, then drawn into discussion.

The activity is based around conversation, but given stimulus and direction by one or more 'lost emotions'. Presenters pitch activities at different audiences and levels of understanding.

The format draws people into coming to a sophisticated and nuanced position on emotion-biology-culture interdependence; something difficult to get from a less interactive arrangement.

