

BENJAMIN POLLOCK'S TOYSHOP

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Creative Gift

Since its founding in the first half of the nineteenth century, Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop has been a magnet for children and adults alike. Captivated by the notion of building a beautifully illustrated table-top theatre to stage their own productions, tell their unique stories and let their imagined dramas unfold, our customers come from all walks of life. We are a destination for Londoners, for those who have journeyed from other parts of the UK and countless visitors from around the world for whom Pollock's represents a mix of the UK's past with a very contemporary present.

Based as we are in the heart of London's theatre-land, we are also lucky enough to count many actors, directors, designers, playwrights as well as many others who work within the creative and theatre industries amongst our customers.

Some of them, perhaps you included, have asked how they can help Pollock's - is there a way they can be involved

with this little jewel-like shop, that is so extraordinarily unique in today's world of ever greater ubiquity?

In 2017, when we were asked the same question once again, we decided to come up with a very Pollock's way of saying 'yes, please, if you would like to be involved in some way - we'd love your contribution, whatever that might be'.

We are calling it a 'creative gift'.

What could your Creative Gift to Pollock's be?

If you would like to participate in the continuing life and success of Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop, there are many ways we'd love to work with you...

- If you are a playwright - would you like to write a mini play for one of our theatres?
- If you are a director - perhaps you've got a burning story to tell?
- A designer? We'd welcome your vision for staging a show from your imagination.
- Actor - bring us the part you've had in your heart since you knew you wanted to perform.
- Chef, poet, scene illustrator, copywriter, art director, impresario, angel - what would your contribution be?

After all - you would be walking in the footsteps of greatness... Sir Laurence Olivier contributed his film likeness to the toy theatre version of Hamlet just after WWII.

Robert Louis Stevenson immortalised Benjamin Pollock in his essay Penny Plain Twopence Coloured "If you love art, folly and the bright eyes of children...speed to Pollocks" and it is said that Winston Churchill, a regular visitor to the original Pollock's shop invoked his favourite toy theatre production A Miller and his Men for his 1940 speech ending "We will never surrender"

Academy Nominee costume designer Bob Ringwood looked to his childhood Pollock's Toy Theatre when designing the ballet production 'Le Corsaire' and Theatre Designers Es Devlin, Bob Crowley and Christopher Oram have all used them as inspiration for their internationally acclaimed set designs. The famous ballet impresario of the Ballet Russes, Diaghlev was enchanted by Pollock's toy theatre sets and recreated them for his 1926 production of The Triumph of Neptune.

Whatever you want to offer us - your 'creative gift' - is up to you. All we ask is that it is appropriate for our audience, your own original work and is in the on-going spirit of Pollock's.

If you would like to have a chat with us and check out your idea, Pollock's owner, Louise or Simon Seddon, the shop manager (and one of our illustrators) would be happy to talk.

We'd be really delighted to hear what you'd like to do.

