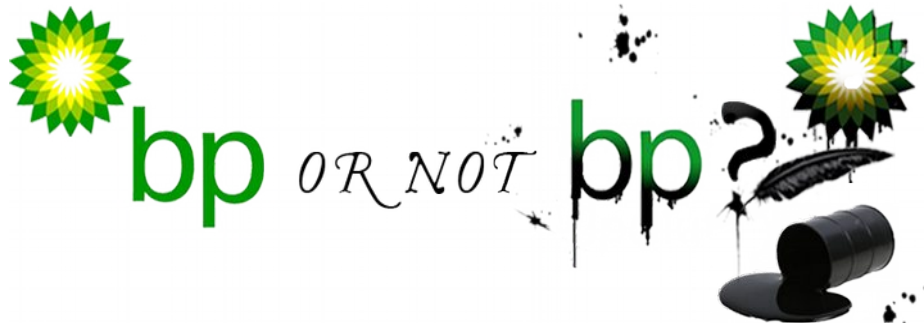


# Kicking Big Oil out of the arts

Danny Chivers  
*BP or not BP?*



# Prologue:



*In 2012, BP sponsors the Royal Shakespeare Company!*

*This gives it:*

- *Cheap PR*
- *False legitimacy*
  - *Social licence*
- *Self-censorship of artists*

*We decide to respond...*

# Act 1: The rise of *BP or not BP?* (2012)

*A season of on-stage  
interventions at the RSC:*

- *support from audiences*
- *membership and online support grew rapidly*
- *coverage in national and theatre media*
- *private and public support from actors and staff*



## Act 2: New spaces, styles, members (2013-14)

### ***1) Macbeth in Tate Britain***

- *Invisible theatre, site-specific*
- *playing with familiar text/stories*
- *advantages of using performance*





## ***2) Vikings in British Museum***

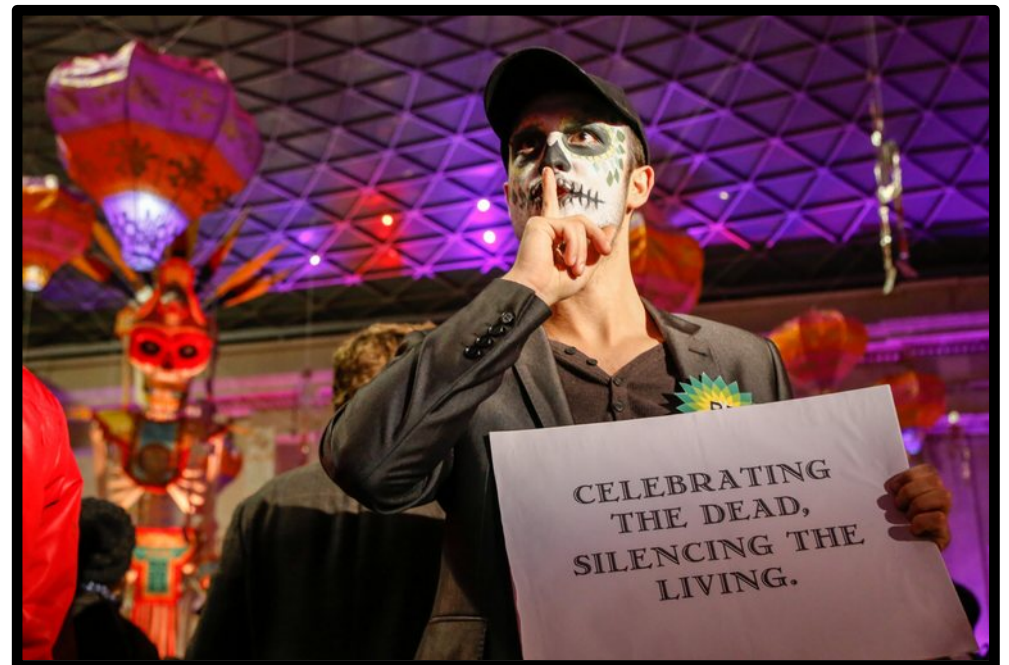
- *DIY approach*
- *Media breakthrough – C4*
  - *“Flash-horde” and the challenges of public announcement*



# Act 3: Culture Wars (2015)

## *15 performances in 2015:*

- *Creativity, experimentation, and ambition*
- *Solidarity and linking issues, wider institutional critique*
- *Collaboration and coalition*
- *Research and media work*
- *BM becomes stage where wider battle is playing out*





# Act 4: Starting to win (2016)

*Turning up the heat on the BM*

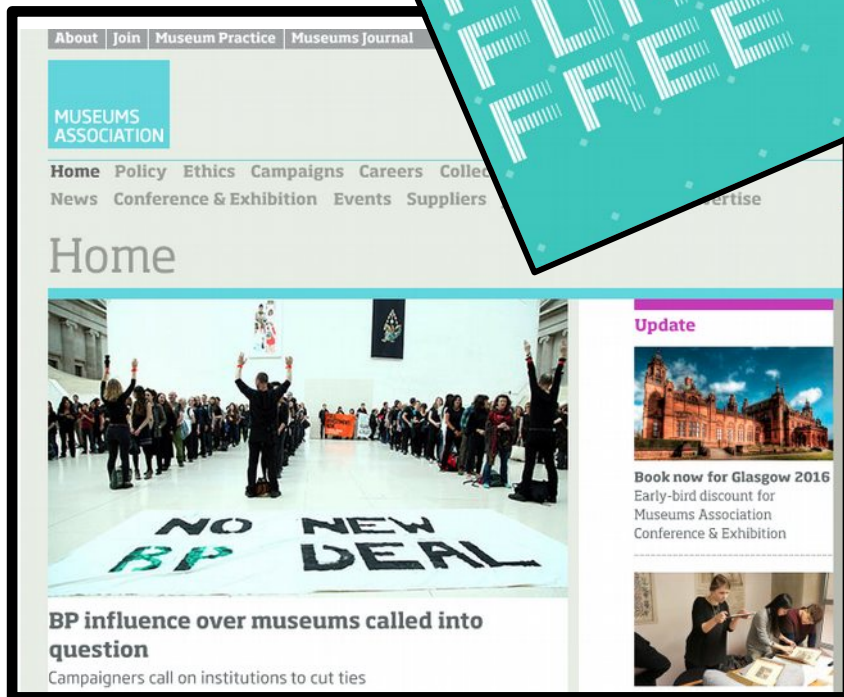
- *challenges of representation*

*Two huge wins*

- *Tate and EIF*
- *role of artists speaking out*

*But British Museum, RSC and others renew their BP deals*

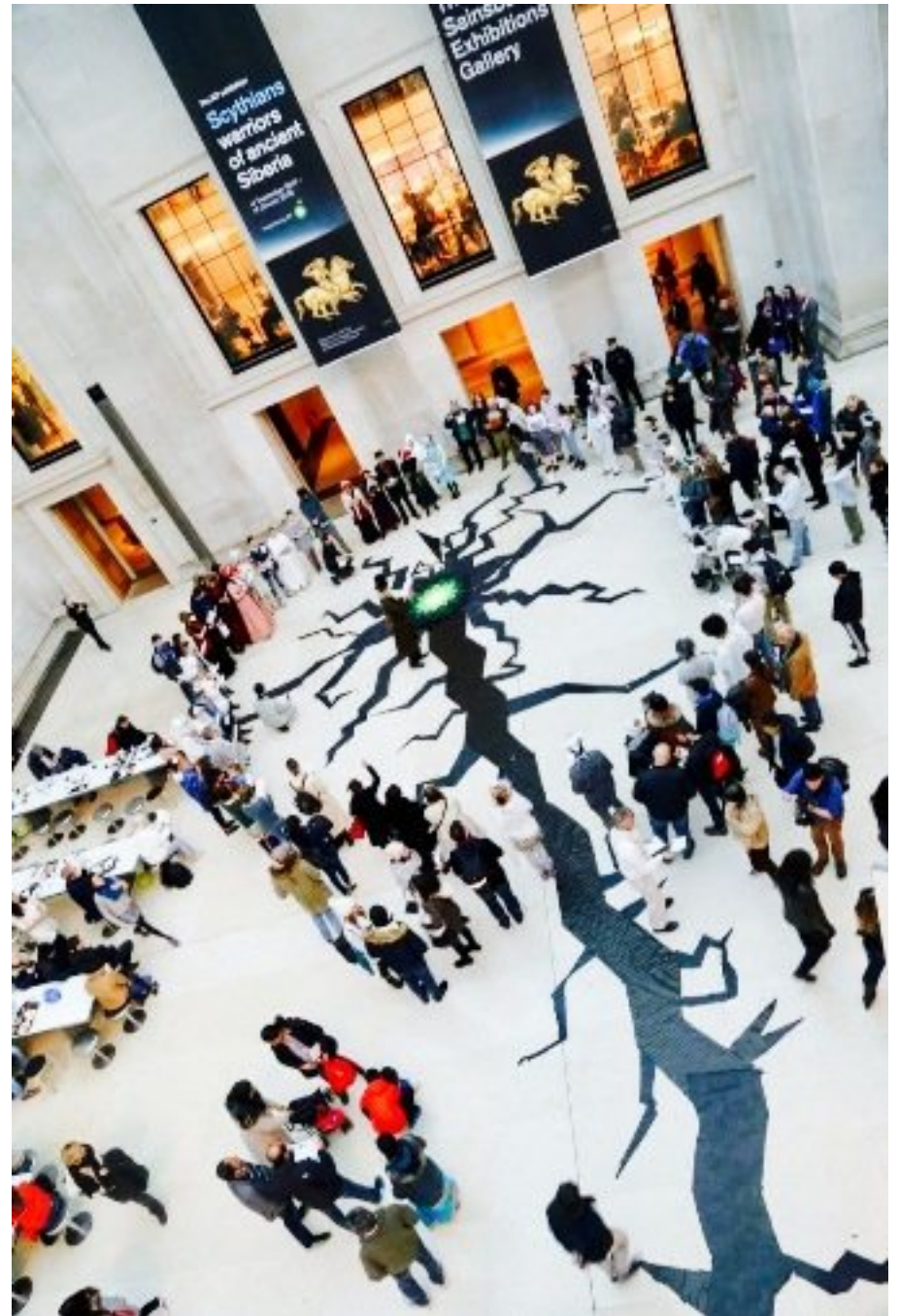
- *We respond with more ambitious performances...*



# Act 5: Cracks appear (2017/8)

*Fewer but more targeted:*

- *Focus on RSC and BM*
- *Rebel Mischief Festival*
- *Bigger and bolder British Museum interventions*
- *Building support behind the scenes*







## Act 6: Out, damned logo! (2019)

### *Important new allies*

- *collaboration with Iraqi activists at BM*
- *big theatre and arts names speak out*
- *school strikers threaten RSC boycott*

### *The theatre world acts!*

- *RSC drops BP, NT drops Shell*
- *BP deal broken partway through*
  - *Dominoes starting to fall?*

## ***Key learning points:***

- *The right form of action for the right time and place*
- *Balance between disrupting status quo and engaging key players*
  - *Persistence – and the role creativity plays in that*



# Creative challenge

*Talk to the person next to you.*

- 1) Each come up with one example of how you've seen art and creativity used well in a project for positive change.*
- 2) Each come up with a new suggestion for how art and creativity could be used in something you are working on.*





# A culture beyond oil is possible!



***[bp-or-not-bp.org/troy](http://bp-or-not-bp.org/troy)   [artnotoil.org.uk](http://artnotoil.org.uk)  
[fossilfundsfree.org](http://fossilfundsfree.org)***