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PRESS RELEASE

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The Challenges of Design

Teachers visit Thurrock for Royal Opera House Design Challenge training

The Royal Opera House welcomed teachers and tutors from across the country on Thursday 7 September when they attended a special training day for the Royal Opera House Design Challenge.

The Royal Opera House's prestigious annual Design Challenge competition gives students the opportunity to test and develop design skills, based around an opera or ballet production. This year the production is Richard Strauss's opera *Salomé*. 40 teachers from as far afield as Huddersfield, Liverpool and Bournemouth, visited the High House Production Park to tour the Royal Opera House Production Workshop and Costume Centre and learn how to deliver the Design Challenge in their own schools and colleges. They also took part in a hands-on practical session with theatre designer, Ruth Paton and met South Essex College Costume Construction course leader Rachel Young.

The Design Challenge is open to all UK FE colleges and sixth form schools or colleges. Each participating student works through the six stages of design using a real director's brief, building a portfolio of their process and creating a final piece in one of the four categories: Costume Design, Set Design, Marketing Strategy and Design, and Hair, Wigs and Make Up. In 2017, students from South Essex College were amongst the successful entrants. Lee Lawrence was the winner of, and Velda Pond was highly commended in, the Marketing Strategy and Design category.

Abi Thompson, Head of Art & Design at South Essex College, said: “We love taking part in the Royal Opera House Design Challenge. Our Lecturers had a great day learning about this year’s brief and we can’t wait to share this exciting opportunity with our students.”

This year, winners of the Design Challenge will be invited to exhibit their work as part of the Opera: Passion, Power and Politics exhibition at the V&A Museum in February 2018. They will also be invited to see a matinee performance at the Royal Opera House, including a backstage tour and some time with the industry professionals in the relevant ROH departments.

To find out more about Design Challenge, please email Design.Challenge@roh.org.uk or call 01708 891 200.

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Notes for Editors

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock has been offering innovative and creative projects and programmes in schools, colleges and across communities in the Thames Gateway since 2006.

Since then, more than 60,000 people have participated in activities ranging from schools’ projects to teacher training, from work-based learning to fully-staged community operas. People in Thurrock have both been able to watch special performances at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden and gain a very special insight into the behind-the-scenes process.

The Learning and Participation team runs the Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus which currently has over 140 members of all ages and regularly performs across Thurrock and at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. For further information, please go to: www.roh.org.uk/learning/learning-in-thurrock/community-chorus. Details of future performances and taster session for the Community Chorus can be obtained by emailing getinvolved@roh.org.uk or calling 01708 891200.

Regular public tours of the state-of-the-art Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop where the sets and scenery for the Royal Opera House stage in Covent Garden are built, and the

Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre, which opened in October 2015, are now available. Please go to www.roh.org.uk/visit/tours/thurrock-tours for further details.

In April 2012, the Royal Opera House agreed to become a [Bridge](#) organisation, working to connect children and young people to great art and culture across Essex, North Kent, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

The Learning and Participation team is based at the High House Production Park in Purfleet which is supported by a unique partnership including Arts Council England, Creative & Cultural Skills, the Royal Opera House and Thurrock Council: www.hhpp.org.uk