



CST

Will and George Come to Life

MMA CASE STUDY

Campaign Summary

With declining ticket sales and only a \$10,000 budget to promote the play *Sunday in the Park with George*, Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) had to get creative in order to remind Chicagoans about the transformative nature of art. To do this, CST partnered with the Art Institute of Chicago, home of the George Seurat painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* that inspired the play, to drive ticket sales, build buzz, and give art lovers an exclusive experience.

Strategy and Execution

After three months of discussions, Arc Worldwide/Leo Burnett (CST's agency) was able to convince the Art Institute of Chicago to replace the original Seurat painting for one day with a fake that omitted a number of the painting's main characters. As patrons of the museum became more and more confused, CST cast members appeared in full costume to perform a song from the play. The message was that the characters had left the painting to go be part of the play at CST.

CST's shoestring budget meant that social media would be the best and most efficient way to turn this one-of-a-kind event into a phenomenon. On the day of the event, viewers were invited to be part of a text-to-win sweepstakes to win their own Sunday on La Grande Jatte in Paris. Those who participated in the contest also received a video of the CST performance at the Art Institute. This allowed CST to reach anyone with a mobile device who was there that day, without the need to build an app. After the video ended, viewers were invited to share it on Facebook and/or Twitter and were able to call CST's box office directly for tickets to *Sunday in the Park with George*. Press kits were sent to local news outlets, and the national media quickly picked up on the story. The fake painting was also displayed on the Navy Pier in Chicago as part of an art festival, so that more Chicagoans could see the creation and share the experience with their social networks.

Results

This campaign was so successful that CST had to extend the run of *Sunday in the Park with George* by one week to accommodate the demand for tickets. The Art Institute stunt earned CST over eight million media impressions, and more than 17 percent of the art patrons who received the video via text opted in to receive future communications from CST.

Source

"Will and George Come to Life." 2013 Gold Winner, Best in Show Cross Media Integration. Brand: Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Lead Agency: Arc Worldwide/Leo Burnett.