



Filament  
PROJECTS

The Cherry Coloured Coat

## About Filament Projects

Filament Projects is a Cheshire-based theatre company producing creative adventures for children and families.

Since 2017 we have worked in partnership with schools, local authorities and cultural organisations such as the National Trust to dream up high quality performances and installations that invite children to discover and explore new stories and worlds and encourage them to use their own creativity to reflect on the world they are growing up in.

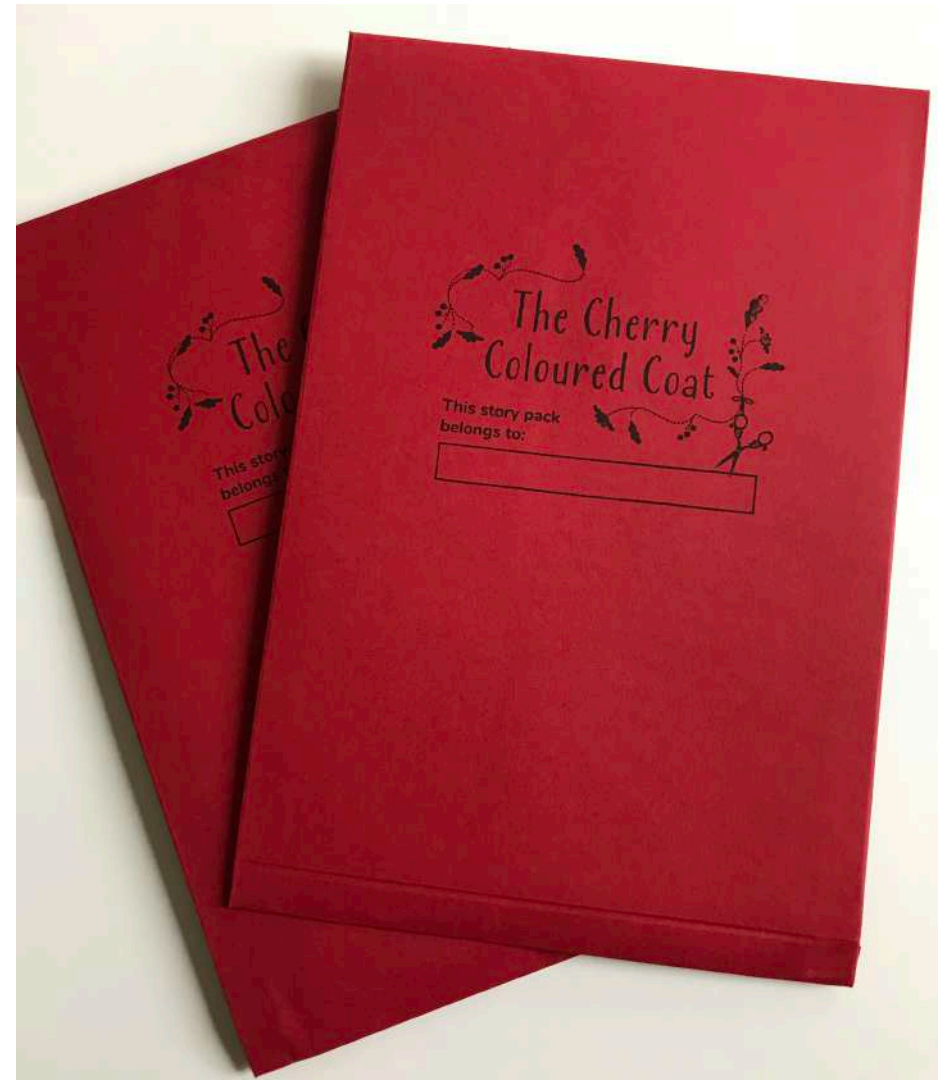
In 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we began exploring blended delivery methods, that featured high quality digital content presented alongside beautiful tangible resources.

## The Cherry Coloured Coat

The Cherry Coloured Coat was created as a COVID-secure way for schools, children and their families to access a high quality artistic experience in the Winter of 2020.

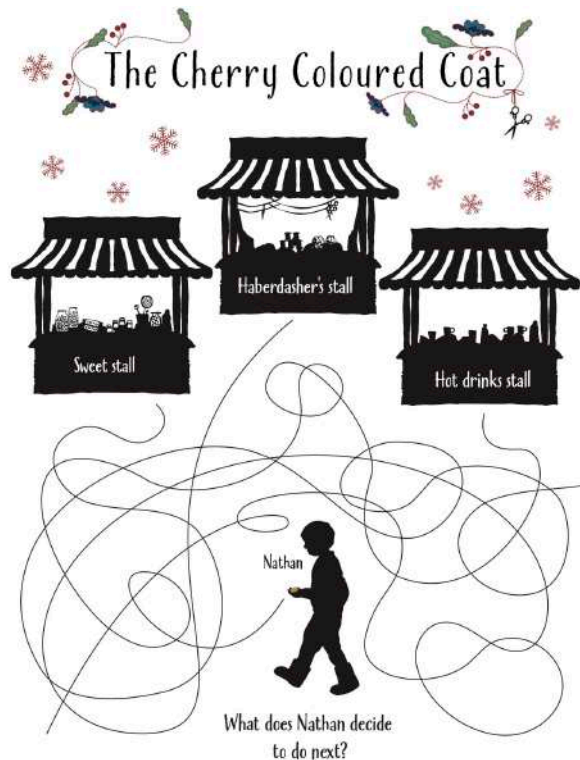
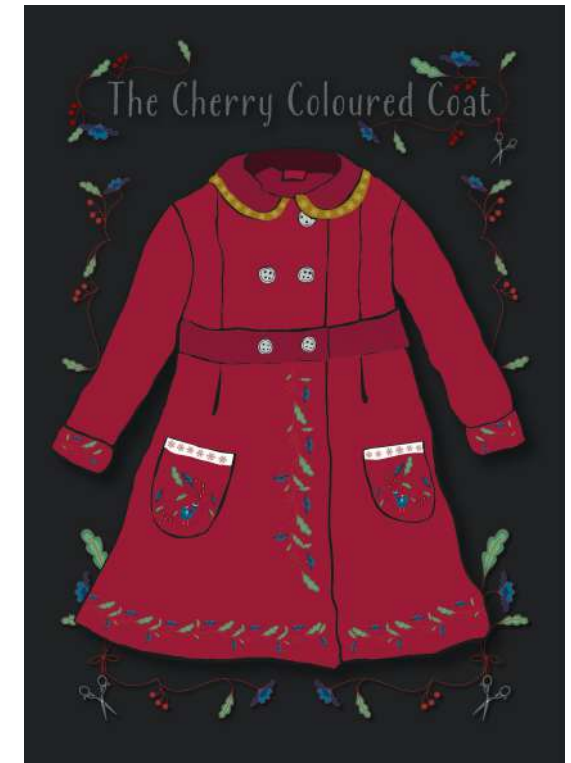
Inspired by Beatrix Potter's *The Tailor of Gloucester*, the story explores themes of kindness, community and our individual agency as consumers, introducing children to themes around fast fashion and fair pay, in a very light touch way.

The project features an online illustrated audio play, made up of five scenes, each approximately five minutes long. These scenes are supported by an interactive story pack, featuring a range of activities created in response to the scenes. The films feature a shadow puppet aesthetic, and the packs include materials to enable families to create their own shadow puppet theatre at home.



## Project aims

- To create a high quality theatrical experience that can be enjoyed by children, families and primary schools
- To explore a blended form of delivery, featuring both digital elements and beautiful tangible items, leading to a more in depth experience and engagement
- To work with schools across Cheshire to deliver a universal offer to children in the region, opening up access to the arts for those who might otherwise not engage with it
- To extend our artistic network, working with, and employing, a diverse range of artists on project delivery
- To introduce children to some of the themes and debates surrounding fast fashion, and fair pay, including our agency as consumers
- To encourage use of creative learning practices in the wider curriculum through provision of CPD sessions and an accompanying education pack



## Artists Involved

Following a successful research and development period, in Autumn 2020 we commenced work on full delivery of the project. The R&D had allowed us to explore different aesthetic languages for the piece, techniques for creating the audio virtually, and also supported work on the script and story development.

For the delivery of the full project we worked with Cheshire-based design house, Muddy Publishing, to design the branding, visuals and website for the piece, including the creation of the story pack activities. Manchester-based theatre-maker, Sophia Hatfield, worked with us to produce the script, and was also one of the performers. Other performers who joined us for the project were Mitesh Soni, Ruby Barnhill, Paul Barnhill, Denise Pitter, Gareth Cassidy and Victoria Brazier. Sound design and composition was by Cheshire-based artist, Adam P McCready.

## Delivery

In total 780 packs were delivered to four schools across the Cheshire and Staffordshire area. The project was developed to offer schools flexibility in terms of delivery.

All schools were encouraged to allow pupils to take packs home, enabling parents and families to engage with the materials. Parents reported that they had enjoyed engaging with the films and exploring the shadow puppet activities at home

Schools were also provided with an education pack, which linked the project to other curriculum areas and offered additional wrap-round activity ideas.

## Manchester Libraries

We also partnered with Manchester Libraries to deliver three days of live, actor-led, digital storytelling sessions via Zoom Webinar, featuring the illustrated films. For these sessions we worked with Sophia Hatfield and designer, Rachel Shore, to develop the character of Frida, inspired by Beatrix Potter's original dedication in the book.



## Key Figures

- Physical story packs supplied to four schools, totalling 780 pupils. Working with Peover Endowed Superior Primary, Parkroyal Community Primary School, Goostrey Community Primary and Portland School and Specialist College.
- 160 packs were posted out to families
- 9 actor-led storytelling sessions were delivered on Zoom Webinar in partnership with Manchester Libraries, to nine different schools, reaching 1,890 pupils in total.
- CPD sessions delivered via Zoom to offer teachers further insight into project and resources
- 879 users visited the Cherry Coloured Coat website
- +100 followers across social media platforms

## Marketing and Profile

The Cherry Coloured Coat was the first project where we have been able to link directly with audience, this time through story pack sales on the Cherry Coloured Coat website. This presented us with an opportunity to increase our marketing activity, and build relationships with our audience. In order to do this, we worked with marketing specialist, Jess Rooney.

We were aware that this new, blended approach was new to audiences as well. So, in an attempt to address any uncertainties, we produced a 'How To...' video that introduced both the story pack and the website to audiences.

Marketing activity was also supported by other project partners, such as Wild Rumpus, who featured the project on one of their newsletters. The project also featured in Arts Council England's National Storytelling Week 2021 Creative Lowdown mail out.



## Feedback

### From Teachers

'Beautifully constructed and ideal length. Our class are visual learners and this method of engagement worked very well'

'The teachers resource pack was very useful - having the activities broken down and labelled with different curriculum areas was really helpful... the difficulty was trying to only choose a few to do!'

'The children loved the packs and couldn't wait to open the envelopes - there was a lot of excitement and a real buzz in the classroom.'

### From Parents

'I watched this today with my two children and was in bits. Such a beautiful story and so well produced. We all loved it and had a little chat after each scene to say what they would do next.'

'We made the stick puppets tonight, and made mini play which my son thought was hilarious'

'My son was totally engrossed in the story from start to finish and he loved the thrill of opening the envelopes and doing the activities. It's a beautiful adaptation with such a strong, lovely message.'

### From Children

'I REALLY liked it, it was so good because it was all about being kind!'