

My proposed site for my site-specific exhibition is the Palace Theatre, found nearby the Swansea train station. It's been under refurbishment since 2020 from its previously neglected state when it closed in 2007, set to reopen late 2024. The location of where this exhibition is displayed will entirely depend on the state of the building, either having the ability to display it inside with the council's permission or it will lead to being on the exterior of the building if it hasn't opened to the public in due time. The Palace Theatre has a long history, having been originally opened in 1888 as a music hall and its use changing along with what the times needed. It was the first place of a silent movie being screened in Swansea, bringing cinema into the city, as well as hosting performances from a young Charlie Chaplin (1895) and hosting Anthony Hopkins' debut performance (1960) when it'd been transformed to be used as a live theatre. Later in its years of use it served as a gay bar and nightclub, housing a safe space until its closure in 2007. Unfortunately, the Palace Theatre is no stranger to fires, one in 1949 stopping the building from being used until the 1950s, and a much more recent incident in 2019 with several small fires throughout the building. Shortly after the latter occurrence it has been taken over by the council, and currently undergoing a repurposing for offices and cafes. They do, thankfully, intend on preserving as many features of the Victorian architecture as possible, even keeping the area of the stage to be hired out. What fascinates me most is how much history, in varying types, the building has witnessed. Particularly it's uses within the start and the end of the 20th century: housing the revolution of cinema for the city and becoming a notable area for the queer community to visit. Those uses would be what I would like to explore within the exhibition for the site, and with the Palace Theatre soon to be reopening I feel it would be an expressive way to celebrate the history of such an iconic Swansea building that's finally found a new purpose in the modern day. Work for the site-specific exhibition could be presented in an imitation of the silent movies, using film as our primary method of photography and recreating scenes from early days of cinema. It could allow us to play around with text, and how that can change a story told when there's no other reference beyond those and our produced images.

