

BENJAMIN POLLOCK'S TOYSHOP

A destination toyshop unlike any other, with storytelling at its heart for over 100 years, we are passionate about celebrating creativity & play for adults and children alike.

A British heritage brand, Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop is uniquely positioned in the UK's retail landscape to exploit the rise in making, creativity and storytelling and 'real games in the real world' experiences.



"One of the shops I adore is Pollock's Toyshop...I have a particular affection for that" – Joanna Lumley

Voices At One, One Aldwych Hotel video on Covent Garden <http://www.onealdwych.com/voices/joanna-lumley/102-2/>

Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop
44 The Market, Covent Garden, Since 1980
www.pollocks-coventgarden.co.uk

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“Anchored by the Strand – London’s equivalent to Broadway – Covent Garden is very much about theater, with productions geared to children a common feature. A unique treat to bring home can be found at Benjamin Pollock’s Toyshop (44, The Market), where charming fairytale-themed miniature theaters start at about \$25.”

– New York Daily News

<http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/hang-johnny-depp-charles-dickens-london-article-1.2467037>

LOCATED IN THE HEART OF THEATRE LAND

- With our bricks and mortar location with an independent stand alone store, we are able to play a vibrant role in the life of the West End theatre land with the potential to develop the market on their doorstep of 14m+ theatregoers from the UK and abroad who have no linked retail experience.

HOXTON & COVENT GARDEN, LONDON SINCE 1880

- We sell traditional and contemporary toys and games through our shop, online and via 3rd parties, much of which involves cutting-out, construction and colouring, including toy theatres, shadow boxes and puppets - leading to storytelling and authentic ways of playing. Most of them beautifully illustrated from Victorian to the contemporary, some unique to us.



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SUPPLIER'S OF CHILDREN'S GIFTS TO LONDON'S 5 STAR HOTELS

• Relations with London hotels through their in-house marketing as well as VIP guest services for **Maybourne Group, The Savoy, The Lansborough, The Waldorf Hilton, Cafe Royal, Chiltern Firehouse** and **Quintessentially Gifts**

"I know I've said this before but honestly we love your products and we get feedback on how the kids enjoy it. I feel like we finally can provide our children with good quality gifts" – **Catherine Spencer, Guest Services, Claridge's**

30 YEARS BUYING EXPERIENCE IN TOYS, GIFTS, CHRISTMAS AND ANTIQUE TOYS

- Pop-Up Shop - **LIBERTY CHRISTMAS, 2012-2013**
- Pop-Up Shop - **FORTNUM & MASON, Christmas 2012 - 2016**
- Pop-Up Shop - **ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, Christmas 2014**
- Pop-Up Shop - **SIR JOHN SOANE MUSEUM, Christmas 2016**
- Pop-Up Cart - **CENTRAL AVENUE, Covent Garden, Christmas 2017**

LANDMARK SHOP FEATURED IN LONDON TOURISM GUIDES

• Recent Media includes film interview with owner Louise Heard for **Eat_Travel_Weekly**, Hong Kong's online media magazine for affluent professionals eager to explore attractive travel destinations. Manager Simon Seddon interviewed for Japanese morning television

• Products recently displayed at the **Hyundai Travel Library**, South Korea to represent British culture

• In 2016 media includes 3 minute slot on **Travel China** (600 million viewers) and **Travel Channel USA** on 'Rev Runs The World'

• Featured in many Travel publications ad blogs including only Covent Garden shop in **Taschen's 36 Hours in Europe**

ESTABLISHED MEMBER OF THE COVENT GARDEN COMMUNITY

• Historically, there has always been a link between the area of Covent Garden and the popular theatre of the Victorian times and the industries that grew up in Theatreland

• **Punch & Judy**, the first recorded show by Samuel Pepys is celebrated in a plaque mounted by the British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild at The Actor's Church

• In 2015 we celebrated the history of **Punch & Judy** with a commission from **Madness** to create a pop-up theatre for their record 'Lovestruck'

• We collaborated with collage artist **Peter Quinnell** to create the theatre for Record Store Day. The large display version was loaned to the **Punch & Judy Pub** and to **Covent Garden Underground Station** as part of their mission to brighten up the area with flowers and culturally specific work. The CG team won the TFL Community Engagement Award for this work. The display was then donated to a **Madness fan club auction** for teenage charity.

SUPPLIERS TO THE FILM, THEATRE & FASHION INDUSTRY

• Pollock's inspires many creative brands, we have been name checked by **Paul Smith, Diptyque, J W Andersen, Penhaligons & Tatty Devine** to name a few in fashion - as well as supplying many Hollywood films with props.

We are well known in the theatre design community as a place for reference by **Bafta** winning theatre designers **Es Devlin, Bob Crowley** and **Bob Ringwood**



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INNOVATORS AND EDUCATORS

- Creators of a design lauded iPad app used in Museums and Schools
- Partnered with app developers and theatre producers to offer the app for free with in-app purchases
- Showcased with a storytelling workshop at the Covent Garden Apple Store, 2011
- Established website featured alongside Harrods in 2016 <http://globalnews.ca/news/2998774/the-top-5-uk-websites-to-shop-as-the-british-pound-plunges/>



“... it's really, really gorgeous. Kids (or adults) can build their own theatre and make a play” – **Gwyneth Paltrow**



“A truly wonderfully magic concept and beautifully designed app - genius and authentic idea for a new generation of budding theatre lovers” – **Ralph Fiennes**

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Annual exhibitors at West End Live 2010-2017

West End Live 2017, Trafalgar Square
“Alice in Wonderland” concept, illustration, sets and costumes by Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop in-house team

“just wanted to say thanks again for taking part, your marquee was a hit as usual and my colleague's niece is even having an Alice in Wonderland themed birthday party in a couple of weeks she loved it so much”
– **Kim Goldsmith, Westminster City Council Account Executive, West End Live Post Review 2016**

BELIEVERS IN OLD STYLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

MYSTERY SHOPPER



BENJAMIN POLLOCK'S TOY SHOP 44 The Market, Covent Garden, London

Like the rafters of an old theatre, this store was adorned in theatrical memorabilia, puppets, marionettes, pop-out Victorian theatre craft sets and retro board games. Glass cases filled with antique toys and priceless puppet theatre gave the store a museum-like sense of nostalgia.

I happily studied the store for ten minutes. To let us know if you need a hand, won't you? offered the mild mannered storeowner. I gave him my mission statement. Well, we have a number of options here if she enjoys crafts or putting on shows? Don't they all? I replied. He then proceeded to lay out

cut and craft Victorian theatres with a variety of playbooks and character sheets. Our most popular one sold out at Christmas, but we can find you something interesting here, does she like Fairy Tales? He went through a box brimming with scripts and playbooks. From Fairy Tales

and Shakespeare to classic Victorian plays, the choice seemed endless. We have plenty more to choose from of course, said the owner, indicating the rest of the store. He showed me a collection of 30 craft kits, depicting iconic literary characters. She may need help cutting these, he told me, or maybe you could put them together and frame them for her, as a nice gift for her room. A genius idea, but technically not a toy. He had to agree and continued to show me the collection of puppets and marionettes, silhouettes, Punch and Judy sets and circus themed toys and games. We also have these retro style board games from Hungary, these do really well. One look and I could see why. The store was filled with the weird, the wonderful and the utterly charming. Forgetting my mission momentarily, I admitted I wanted it all.

SUMMARY

London is the epicentre of trade and business, yet its population of independent toy shops is few and far between. However, among those it does have to offer, are some real gems. Special mention has to go to the month's star store, Benjamin Pollock's Toy Shop for its exciting collection of theatre-inspired toys and puppets, along with its accommodating and friendly customer service.

While Wood 11 Things scored lowest this month, a toy shop in this central location was a welcome sight, and a refreshing respite from the monotony of suits and ties in coffee shops.

5/5



“I am also grateful to Louise Heard of that most magical of places, Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop for permission to reproduce Simon Seddon's Pantomime Feast Shadow Box”
– **Nigel Slater**

Acknowledgments
‘The Christmas Chronicles’ published by 4th Estate 2017

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WHAT WE DID IN 2017

We **relaunched our website** in September 2017 with a range of new products, collaborating with British artists and illustrators. The new Limited Company of Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop meant a chance to refresh our identity, logo and retail shopping site. The operations were backed up by outsourcing our fulfilment to a British bespoke packing centre.

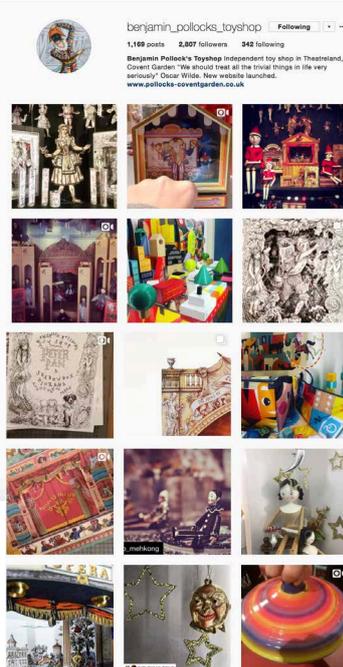
Our new Hansel & Gretel toy theatre and related merchandise by artist **Clive Hicks-Jenkins**, described by Simon Callow 'as one of the most individual and complete artists of our time' was well received and flew off the online and bricks and mortar shelves. It was featured centre stage in an article 'Toy Stories' in the December issue of **Town & Country magazine**.

We finished the year with an appearance in Central Avenue, **Covent Garden** with a temporary theatre themed Christmas 'barrow'. Designed to complement the Christmas scheme in the iconic Market Building, we commissioned Lucinda Oakes, a decorative painter to hand paint and gild the facade to our 'pop-up' built by furniture designer Alex Hellum. Selling wooden nutcrackers and vintage puppets, it was an Instagram hit for the area. Though short lived, it helped us achieve an 11% increase in Christmas sales in 2017



WE HAVE A SMALL BUT GROWING AND VERY ENGAGED SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITY

- **Instagram:**
2.8k Followers
- **Facebook:**
3.3k Followers
- 4.8 - 90 Reviews
- **Google:** 225k people found BPT on Google Dec 2017
- 800 asked for directions
- 700 visited website
- 25/36 x 5 star reviews



WHAT WE PLAN TO DO IN 2018

We continue to collaborate with artists to create new ranges including **Kate Baylay** (Fendi, Royal Palaces) who designed our **Snow Queen Theatre** and in-house illustrator **Simon Seddon**.

Other projects include a decorative theatre with **Lucinda Oakes** (Ballyfin Hotel, Colefax) and future collaborations planned with illustrators, toy designers and set designers.

Our own merchandise range will sit alongside a curated mix of traditional and collectable artists toys in a one of a kind Central London shop - THE destination for any toy collector and the only independent in the West End to sell design led toy brands for children such as **Maileg**, **Moulin Roty** and **Merrythought** bears.

An edited selection will be made available to our trade customers on a dedicated web shop to be launched in 2018.