



Playing audience's guide

1884 playing audience's guide

This pack has been created to provide more information about 1884, the themes explored in the show and what the playing experience is going to be like.

If you have any other questions about taking part in 1884 or want to discuss any particular access requirements, please contact the Coney team on admin@coneyhq.org.

What is in this pack?

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Use this pack in the way that is most useful to you. Some people may want to use selective sections to avoid spoilers whilst others want the most detail possible, that is totally up to you.

The images in this pack are work-in-progress photos that are representative of the interactive format of the show, but do not reflect the final set design.

Themes of 1884 and content warnings

1884 is an immersive game-theatre show set in the fictional contemporary residential development of Wilhelm Street. The show is inspired by the history of the 1884 Berlin Conference.

In November 1884, representatives from all the European nations, the Ottoman Empire and the United States met at an international conference in Berlin. While little known in the UK today, the 1884 Berlin conference was a pivotal moment in the 19th-century European partition of the African continent.

In January 2023, a group of artists, historians and activists came together to learn about the conference and co-create an interactive experience in response to it. 1884 is the result. Taking place in a fictionalised modern scenario, this immersive game-theatre show takes audience members through the dynamics of the conference. The piece explores the consequences and memories of the people who were left outside of the room, and the ways in which anti-colonial resistance movements are excluded from public history.

Though taking place in a fictionalised setting, the piece contains references to colonialism, power, protest, resistance, displacement, government restrictions, forced migration, gentrification, heritage, and how these events are memorialised (or not) in contemporary society.

There are not many references to the 1884 Berlin Conference or the partition of the African continent in the show; due to its fictionalised set-up, audiences may also connect the show's theme to other historical or contemporary events.



COME BACK
HOW TO BEHAVE
IN A CROWD.
WE'VE JUST BEEN ON
THIS PLANET.
BEFORE.

PROPERTY 05

S2

Kitchen/Living

Bedroom

Wellbeing
Room

THE LATERAL FAMILY HAVEN

Format, interaction and playing audience experience

1884 is an immersive and interactive show where audiences are actively invited to participate and interact with other audience members:

- You'll be placed in small groups of up to 7 players. We will encourage audiences who came as a big group to split and sit with people they don't already know, but you will be able to stay with the people you came with if you want
- You will be playing a number of different games and creative challenges as a group. These are gently interactive activities, but you will always have an option to step back (or out) if you don't want to participate
- You will primarily be interacting with other participants, but there will be occasional verbal interactions with performers; you do not have to interact with performers if you don't want to, and you will never be singled out or forced to do anything you are not comfortable with
- You will be sitting for the majority of the show, but there will be moments where you will be invited to move around and explore the space or meet with other players
- You will have no physical contact with other players or performers
- **Please note:** You'll be playing with audience members who may have a different lived experience or connection to the theme as you do, so please be kind and respectful at all times
- No prior knowledge of the 1884 Berlin Conference is required to take part

1884 is a gently interactive show inspired by a dark part of African and European history. It can be both fun to play, emotional and thought-provoking, and create very different audience responses for different people. There will be a moment of reflection and debrief at the end of each show, to rest, reflect on the experience and explore a set of reflective questions individually or in groups.



POSTIE

Handwritten text on a card being handed over, possibly a name or address.

Large black mat with white text and diagrams. Visible text includes "HIDE ME" and "PERSON".

Practical and access details

General venue information: please refer to **Shoreditch Town Hall's [Access for All page](#)**, for more information about finding the venue, lift access, parking, guide dogs, as well as the venue's 3D tour, including the Council Chamber where 1884 will be taking place.

Running time: The full running time is approximately 2 hours 30 minutes, including a 15-minute interval.

Seating: The first part of the show involves sitting at tables with up to 7 players, on wooden folding chairs (additional padded folding chairs available upon request). There will be occasional and optional invitations to move around to explore the space. Audience seating is flexible and you will have the option to sit near an exit if this will make you feel more comfortable.

Step-free access: The Council Chamber has step-free access, and set design will be arranged to allow wheelchair users to move around the space.

Music and loud noises: The show involves recorded music and live performers amplified with microphones. Due to its interactive nature, there may be loud responses or noises coming from audience members; these may include players banging on tables, shouting, clapping or chanting.

Lighting: There will be no sudden changes in lighting, no use of strobe or flashing lights, and no blackout.

Text: The show includes written instructions delivered as part of the show, to read as a group. Large print versions of written communication are available upon request and key instructions will be repeated orally by one of the performers.

Relaxed performances: All performances are relaxed, which means audiences are allowed to stand up, move around, make noise and leave the room, and are welcome to re-enter at any time. If you have to leave/re-enter the room, the show will carry on as normal and you will not be picked on. Latecomers will be admitted at all times. This information will be included as part of the introduction briefing at the start of each performance.

Quiet space: A quiet space will be provided for all performances, in a separate room on the same floor as the Council Chamber.

Captioned performance: There will be a captioned performance on Friday 26th April.

- Performers' dialogue will be captioned live on two TV screens and available for the whole room
- The conversations happening at individual tables between players will not be captioned

Remember, if you're overwhelmed at any time, you can do whatever helps you. You can leave the auditorium temporarily and come back in when you are ready; you can wear noise-cancelling headphones; you can move to a different part of the room; you can play with a fidget toy or gadget. You can talk to a member of staff to provide support. Whatever helps you is ok.

We hope this guide has been helpful and we hope to welcome you as part of 1884 soon. If you have any further questions, please contact the Coney team on admin@coneyhq.org.

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