The Public: an inevitable end for the misguidedly ambitious Bromwich arts centre

I was thinking of the Millennium Dome and then you mentioned it. The problem wasn’t the task, it was the skills, the brains and the determination to achieve the ends, to do the job of making a speech, to make a speech. It was a jumble sale of bits and pieces, a graveyard of interactive technologies with no apparent purpose. It made the Millennium Dome look like a museum, a place to look at, but not to take seriously.

The interior is one cavernous open space, through which a snaking ramp weaves its way up to the first floor. The ceiling is a forest of metal trees, hung with monitors and panels of glowing light, to stepping-stone “flypads” that allow you to control computer characters with your feet. It is a jumble sale of bits and pieces, a graveyard of interactive technologies with no apparent purpose. It makes the Millennium Dome look like a museum, a place to look at, but not to take seriously.

Whatever its future – whether it continues to struggle along as a dysfunctional attraction with a well-used social hub, or as a sixth form college with arts trappings of dynamic fluidity, it was in fact an intransigent container that foretold the end of its life. The project’s supporters feel it is only just beginning to come into its own, now that it has the benefit of some time to work out how to make the most of its innovative and ambitious ideas. The Public is a jumble sale of bits and pieces, a graveyard of interactive technologies with no apparent purpose. It makes the Millennium Dome look like a museum, a place to look at, but not to take seriously.

The Millennium Dome was a project of huge ambition, with a budget of £250m and a brief to create a “box of delights”, a cathedral-sized cabinet of curiosities to bring under one roof the latest in interactive technologies. With a riotous interior, dressed up by visual effects and lighting, it was a place to see things in a new way. The Public is a jumble sale of bits and pieces, a graveyard of interactive technologies with no apparent purpose. It makes the Millennium Dome look like a museum, a place to look at, but not to take seriously.

The institution’s demise in every detail of its fluorescent fabric. It was billed as a “box of delights”, a cathedral-sized cabinet of curiosities to bring under one roof the latest in interactive technologies. With a riotous interior, dressed up by visual effects and lighting, it was a place to see things in a new way. The Public is a jumble sale of bits and pieces, a graveyard of interactive technologies with no apparent purpose. It makes the Millennium Dome look like a museum, a place to look at, but not to take seriously.

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