1)The brief

In order to challenge people’s perceptions of Hull and offer different ways to experience the city, Hull 2017 issued a brief for a major outdoor spectacle. The idea was an impactful and visually arresting, durational light art work to signal not only the end of a great year for Hull, but the beginning of a brighter, more confident future.

The brief asks artists work across the entire area of Hull’s old town and transform the streets with colour, light and wonder to expose and celebrate some of the hidden and less well-known areas of the historic heart of the city. The work, free and accessible to all, must invite the audience to promenade through a series of connected ‘lightscapes’ as a visual and social experience of time, space and place.

Invited artists must create an immersive, shifting and dynamic experience to enliven the streets through the action of light and people’s interaction with it. The light itself should be nuanced – presence and absence, spotlight and shadow, colour and texture, immersive and collective, to create a range of experiences from spectacular to contemplative, changing the urban environment each evening through the winter.

2) The creative idea

In response to the brief, Jason Bruges Studio, envisaged a specially choreographed interplay of light, shadow and sound inspired by the city's history as a centre for navigation. To encourage people to explore the city’s night-time streets, Jason Bruges Studio employed a cast of 21 robots across four areas around Hull's Old Town.

As night descends, the robots awaken and respond to the city's architecture, interacting with one another and with Hull's residents and visitors. The re-purposed industrial robots are a nod to the ways in which the old and the new can live in symbiosis, a juxtaposition of tradition and modernity, and the city's strengthened reputation for ideas and innovation. At each of four different sites, a different configuration of robots communicates through woven networks and act as light guides creating kinetic animations resulting in an inquisitive acquaintance with the city. Using a wide range of light effects, from beams to constellations, shadows and reflections, the robots animate and highlight unseen places and encourage people to see Hull in a new light. Specially curated soundscapes, using samples from the noises robots make as they move, add to the experience providing a layer of personality and atmosphere. This one of a kind intervention explores the relationship between people and technology through light, architecture and wonder. It responds to the city's unique geometries, built environment and embedded history while providing inspiration and hope for the future.

3) Evidence of how the idea was received by the target audience e.g. number of views, increase in visitors.