

## **“Settlers Under Sail” at the Immigration Museum**

Settlers Under Sail is an on-site drama workshop where students have the opportunity to explore immigration and cultural diversity through interactive role play.

The drama strategies are designed to engage students physically, emotionally and intellectually with the topic of migration. Through interactive role play the students are offered opportunities to gain insights into the dilemmas, decisions and dangers faced by migrants as they leave their homeland and make the journey to a new home, often an unknown destination.

Kelly Nash, a professional actor, led the Settlers Under Sail workshop for Raising Our Voices delegates as part of the 4<sup>th</sup> National Forum on Performance in Cultural Institutions. Settlers Under Sail is part of the Immigration Museum’s Drama and Cultural Diversity program; four education units for Years 2 – 12.

The purpose of the units is for teachers to have drama based activities about immigration and cultural diversity for use in the classroom and beyond. The units offer a wonderful framework by which students can explore the creative potential between exhibits that inspire and a dramatic interpretation. The materials were created by the Immigration Museum in partnership with Drama Victoria.

Performance is often used to present information or interpret exhibits in museums. However there is also opportunity for using drama strategies in everyday museum education programs, enabling students to emotionally connect with museum content.

The Immigration Museum successfully uses role play and storytelling in many of its education programs as an effective way of highlighting the personal experience of migration. Using the emotional engagement of drama to pursue educational goals is effective when dealing with the subject of immigration, which is inherently emotive. Role play enables students to put themselves in someone else's shoes. It enables them to develop empathy and gain insight into life faced by migrants.

This educational notion is supported by early findings in the “Performances, Learning and Heritage” project (2005-2008) which revealed when tracking the experience of primary school students in a British museum: “Both short and longer term recall and understanding have been enhanced by dramatic narrative. Students were able to relate personally and empathise with characters in the performances.”<sup>1</sup>

Follow the link below to get to the Settlers Under Sail education kit:  
<http://museumvictoria.com.au/pages/2495/Drama-Settlers-Under-Sail.pdf>

### **For further information please contact:**

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<sup>1</sup> p.689 Hughes, Jackson and Kidd The Role of Theater in Museums and Historic sites: visitors, audiences and learners. International Handbook of Research in Arts Education

Pictures of Settlers Unders Sail workshop with Primary School students



