

THE PEARLFISHER GARDEN

AT THE RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW

Submission Title

The Pearlfisher Garden: Turning the tide on plastic

Client Company

Pearlfisher

Submission date

November 2018

For publication - confidential data redacted

DBA DESIGN EFFECTIVENESS AWARDS 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of its 25th anniversary celebrations, Pearlfisher wanted to commit to advancing the impact and positive change design can make on the world.

The first initiative – **The Pearlfisher Garden** – is the brainchild of Founding Creative Partner & Chief Creative Officer, Karen Welman, and was inspired by a personal, and professional, sense of urgency to use design thinking and expertise to reduce the negative impact of plastic on the planet.

With a staggering 32% of the 78 million tons of plastic packaging produced annually left to flow into our oceans*, The Pearlfisher Garden, visualises the plight of a planet drowning in plastic waste with an innovative garden design celebrating the largest garden in the world – our oceans - and showcasing the dichotomy of the beauty and destruction in our seas and what we're set to lose.

The Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show was maybe an unexpected and ambitious route for, not just a first-time entrant, but for a brand design agency to submit against global and award-winning garden designers. But, as one of the most prestigious and publicised annual design shows in the world, being accepted for Chelsea gave a synergistic and global platform from which to make a bold and expansive commitment and showcase a ground-breaking, sustainable design solution on a truly grand scale.

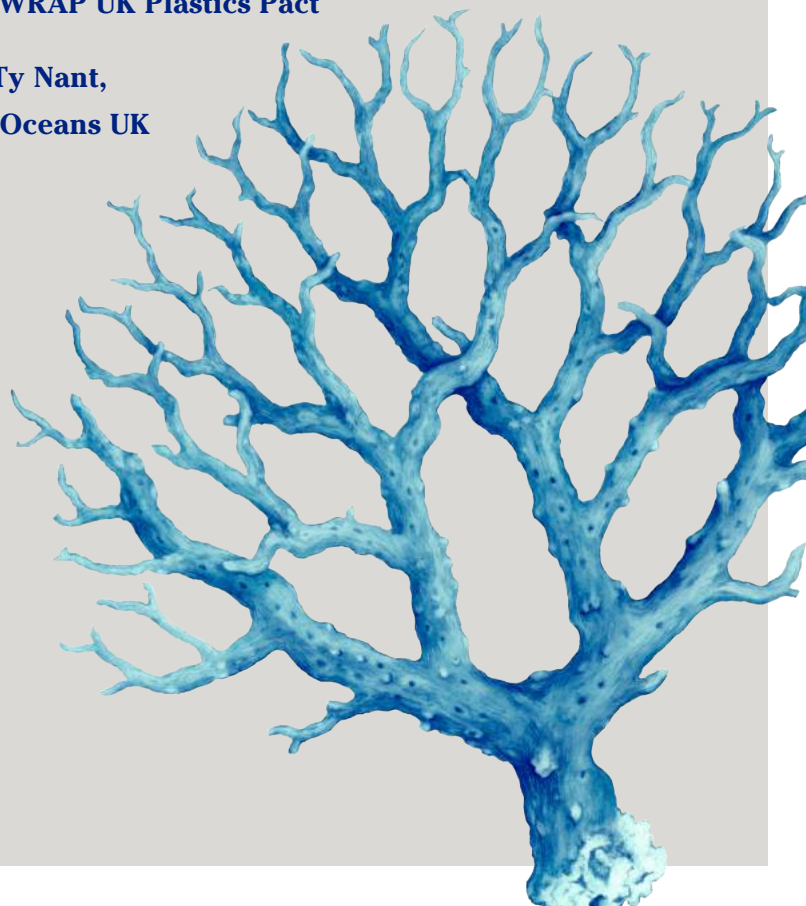
The Pearlfisher Garden ultimately took root in the heart of SW1 when it was unveiled on the **21st May** to mark the start of the 2018 event **(running from 22nd – 26th May)** it became a groundbreaking and tangible call to action for designers and brands to create sustainable life cycles for all packaging and products of the future and for people to rethink the impact of their own consumption as we collectively turn the tide on plastic .



THE IMPACT OF THE PEARLFISHER GARDEN SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

- **First time a brand design agency has been selected for the prestigious RHS Chelsea Flower Show**
- **Awarded a coveted RHS Gold Award medal**
- **Profiled 7 times in 5 days on the BBC's daily Chelsea Flower Show, reaching 11.5 million viewers on this broadcast platform alone**
- **Garnered international print coverage reaching approximately 18 million people**
- **Online media storm with the Garden viewed approximately 450 million times across international digital press**
- **Redacted confidential data**
- **Generated (redacted confidential data) new project wins for Pearlfisher contributing to a revenue rise of 13%**
- **200% increase in traffic to Pearlfisher's website during the show, 93% of which was from new users**
- **Social media followers grew by an average of 30% across each channel**
- **First design agency invited to join WRAP UK Plastics Pact**
- **Secured brand partnerships with Ty Nant, Beam Suntory and Plastics for the Oceans UK**

The Pearlfisher Garden has left a small footprint, but made a big impact by challenging and delighting people, with its creative elements, overall message and call to action which has already seen consumer pledges to change behaviour, new projects won for Pearlfisher and the Garden established as an inspiring, impactful and educational living legacy for future generations.



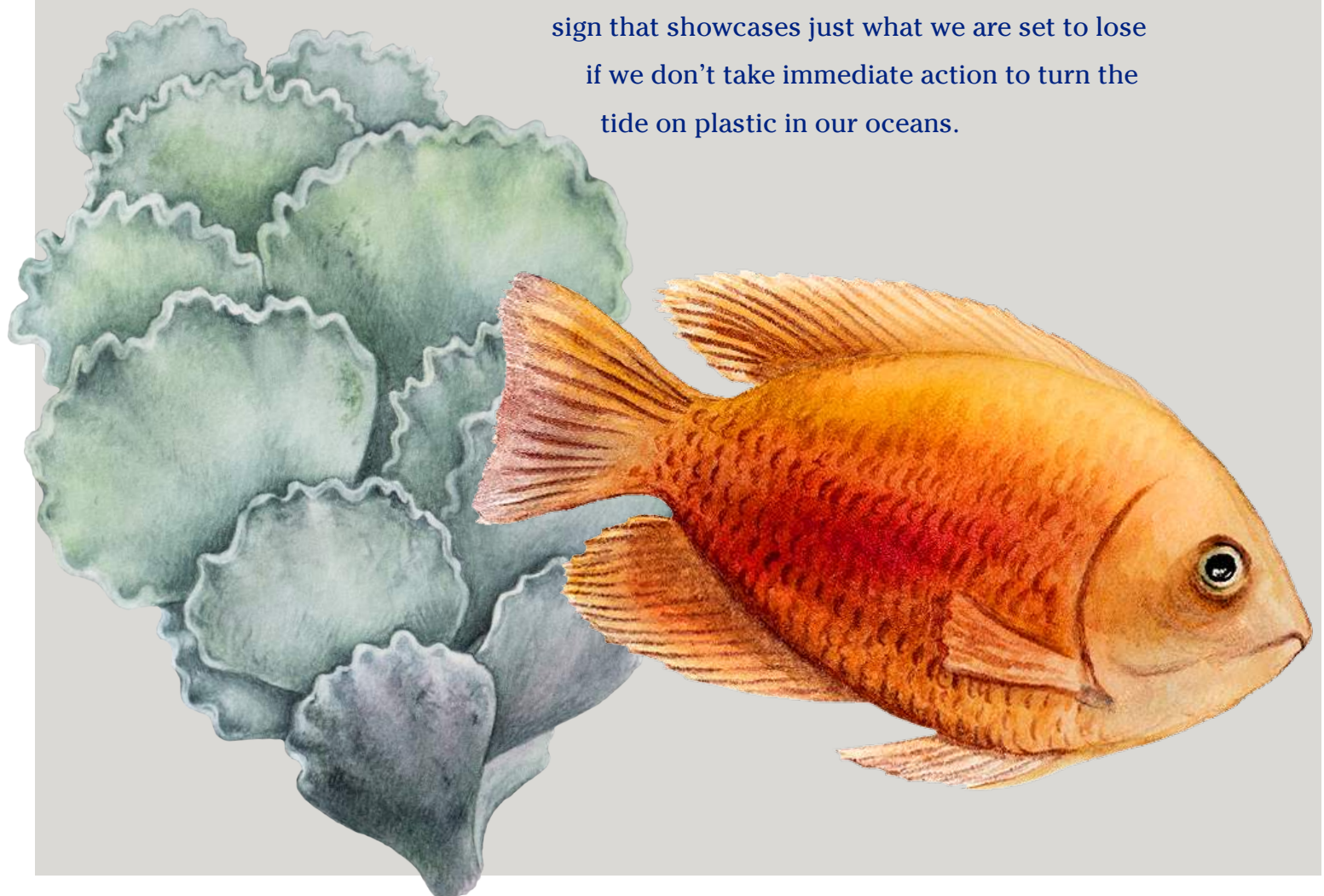
CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

Outline of Project Brief

The Pearlfisher Garden underlines Pearlfisher's desire and challenger mindset to use their design expertise and new Lightweighting design ethos to remove waste, and reduce the environmental impact of everything it creates, with its clients and partners.



Challenging perceptions on both an aesthetic and intellectual level, the Garden drives home its crucial message through a stunningly unique and sustainable design that showcases just what we are set to lose if we don't take immediate action to turn the tide on plastic in our oceans.



THE KEY OBJECTIVES

FOR THE GARDEN WERE

- **Use ground-breaking experiential design to get selected for RHS Chelsea Flower Show**
- **Use design to highlight the devastating issue of ocean plastic in a thought-provoking and desirable way**
- **Create an immersive and experiential representation of future-focused design thinking to create a call to action for people, brands and business and the industry to commit to - and make real sustainable change**
- **Showcase Pearlfisher's design expertise and sustainable design thinking with the goal of winning one project to cover the production costs of exhibiting at the show**
- **Feature at least once on the daily BBC Chelsea Show programme (aired twice daily)**
- **Extend beyond Pearlfisher's typical design publication press coverage and secure national press coverage**
- **Use this unexpected platform to drive new audiences to Pearlfisher by extending the reach of the Garden's message beyond Pearlfisher's more usual industry and B2B routes and audiences**

To be accepted as an entrant for the annual and globally prestigious RHS Chelsea Flower Show is a highly contested and hard-won honour. From initial sketches to meeting strict entry criteria set by the RHS, to successfully bringing the vision to life in the heart of the city in SW1, Pearlfisher faced daily creative, construction and logistical challenges within a very short design and build lead time.

A bold and unexpected head-turner, the Garden is a challenger idea at every level: it challenges and delights people with its design, creative elements, overall message and call to action to protect the world's largest garden in the form of an inspiring, impactful and educational living legacy for future generations.



DESCRIPTION

The Pearlfisher Garden visualised the plight of a planet drowning in waste with an innovative garden design showcasing the dichotomy between the beauty and destruction present in our oceans.

Working in close partnership with multi gold and silver award-winning garden designer, John Warland, to bring the garden to life, The Pearlfisher Garden consisted of a series of below-water level aquatic tanks that transported visitors into a unique underwater world.



Beneath a 3D-printed sculpture of a Pearl Diver - or Japanese Ama - made from recycled PLA plastic, specimen planting including cacti, succulents and exotics were used to creatively juxtapose the beauty and possible desertification of the world's most precious garden, whilst live fish reminded visitors of the threat to the food chain posed by ocean plastics and their associated toxins.

At the centre of the garden sat 'The Coral Man' from renowned sculptor and environmentalist, Jason deCaires Taylor, illustrating the impact of coral bleaching. The Pearlfisher Garden partner, Ty Nant, provided **500 of their iconic water bottles** to fill the boundary walls of the installation, representing how much plastic packaging is **thrown into the oceans every 2.5 seconds**.



The scope of the project took Pearlfisher from initial concept and sketch right through to completion - working with sponsors and third-party partners to source plants and fish, right through to delivery and onsite construction.

To promote the Garden and extend its vision and message, Pearlfisher created an illustrative and informative visual identity, depicting reduction and loss which they used on minimal print collateral – to meet the criteria of the show - and a dedicated microsite which reduced printing and extended the experience beyond Chelsea.



Beyond the Show, the Garden is designed to be a living legacy to continue to inspire and educate people to rethink the impact of their actions and to encourage designers, brands and businesses to design lightweight life-cycles for the packaging and products of the future.



OVERVIEW OF MARKET

One of the most urgent and distressing problems facing our planet is that of ocean plastic, with 32% of the 78 million tons of plastic packaging produced annually left to flow into our oceans * – the equivalent of pouring one rubbish truck of plastic into the ocean every single minute.

From introducing new Government legislation to each consumer making different daily choices, the pressure is on everyone to be responsible for making change. And, as designers – working frequently with brands to create packaging design – Pearlfisher was very much aware of their own contribution to the waste, and particularly plastic problem. Many brands and businesses – such as Nestle, Coca-Cola and P&G - have publicly pledged to change manufacturing and retail processes when it comes to, for example, single-use plastic, but it is often hard for agencies, despite their best efforts, to make significant change with their clients and partners when their hands are tied by corporate red tape, manufacturing processes, budgets or client appetite for change.



To date, no brand and design agencies have executed any significant initiatives, either independently or with clients, to highlight the industry's responsibility to find new ways to make real, significant and impactful change to shape the future of the design industry – and our planet.

Pearlfisher wanted to commit to turning obligation into opportunity, finding tangible and inspirational ways to educate and bring this new approach to life for their clients – and the wider world – by designing more lightweight solutions from packaging to living, breathing experiences – a design manifesto they call Lightweighting. And nothing could be more real than an immersive and inspiring installation and storytelling experience highlighting the plight of our oceans and what we're set to lose.

Project launch date: May 2017

Design fees: Redacted confidential information

RESULTS

To be accepted as an entrant for the annual and globally prestigious RHS Chelsea Flower Show is a highly contested and hard-won honour. To win a Gold award as a first time and non-horticultural contender is an unbelievable recognition of the power of the Garden's design.

The Pearlfisher Garden has totally surpassed all desired objectives to act as a call to action to the public, brands, businesses and the design industry itself and is paying off – creatively and financially – for Pearlfisher with new sustainable design projects.

- **FIRST TIME A BRAND DESIGN AGENCY SELECTED FOR THE RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW**

Pearlfisher was a first-time entrant and 2018 also marks the first year that a brand design agency was selected to create a garden. Not to mention that The Pearlfisher Garden was just 1 of 29 Gardens selected to exhibit.

- **RHS GOLD AWARD WIN**

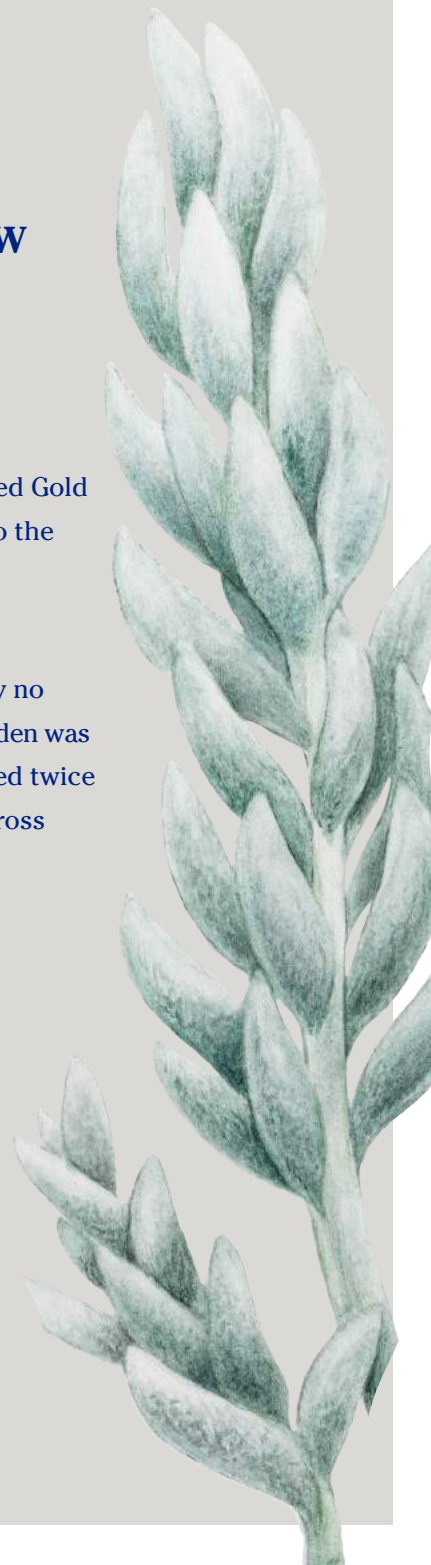
Every year, the most experienced and prolific garden designers strive to win a coveted Gold medal at Chelsea. To win Gold as a first-time designer and exhibitor was testament to the brilliance of the design concept and execution.

- **COVERED 7 TIMES ON THE BBC IN 5 DAYS**

Despite being selected for Chelsea Flower Show, coverage is never guaranteed and by no means are all gardens at the show shared by the press. However, The Pearlfisher Garden was repeatedly profiled on the BBC's daily RHS Chelsea Flower Show programme which aired twice a day for the whole week of the show. This coverage reached 11.5 million viewers across the week, smashing Pearlfisher's target to be featured once.

- **PHENOMENAL MEDIA COVERAGE ACROSS THE GLOBE**

The Pearlfisher Garden garnered international print coverage across the globe – reaching approximately 18 million people through print media, including leading titles such as The Times, The Guardian, The Evening Standard and Harper's Bazaar. In total, it secured (redacted confidential information) of high-profile coverage meaning it beat the agency's target by 400%!



- **AN UNPRECEDENTED ONLINE MEDIA STORM**

The Garden was viewed approximately 450 million times online through influential digital publication channels helping Pearlfisher achieve its objective to extend its reach and message beyond the more usual design industry and B2B platforms.

- **INCITING CONSUMER ACTION**

Throughout the show, Pearlfisher ran a campaign to get visitors and followers of The Garden to pledge to change one thing about their consumption of single use plastics . (redacted confidential information) people signed up and pledges included moving to reusable bottles rather than single use plastic bottles, organising beach cleans in local communities and stopping use of cosmetic products with microbeads.

- **GENERATED NEW PROJECT WINS FOR PEARLFISHER**

(Redacted confidential information) new project wins have been created as a direct result of the profile and success of the Garden are 500% more than the objective!

- **CREATED A SIGNIFICANT NEW REVENUE STREAM**

The new business wins have increased Pearlfisher's revenue stream by 13% compared to the previous year.

- **DRIVING TRAFFIC**

The Garden drove a 200% increase in traffic to the Pearlfisher's website during the show, 93% of which were new users. Pearlfisher also saw an average follower increase of 30% across its key social media channels – Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

- **FIRST DESIGN AGENCY TO JOIN WRAP UK PLASTICS PACT**

Pearlfisher is the first design agency to join WRAP's UK Plastics Pact as a result of The Garden's profile and Pearlfisher's commitment to its new Lightweighting philosophy. This positions Pearlfisher amongst the most influential brands – including Arla, Coca Cola and P&G – retailers, manufacturers, Government representatives, NGOs and recyclers who are working to achieve ambitious targets including ensuring 100% of UK plastic packaging is reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025.

- **HIGH-PROFILE AND ONGOING BRAND PARTNERSHIPS**

Pearlfisher secured support and sponsorship from 3 high-profile brands already committed to their own sustainable initiatives: Ty Nant, Beam Suntory and Plastics for the Oceans UK.

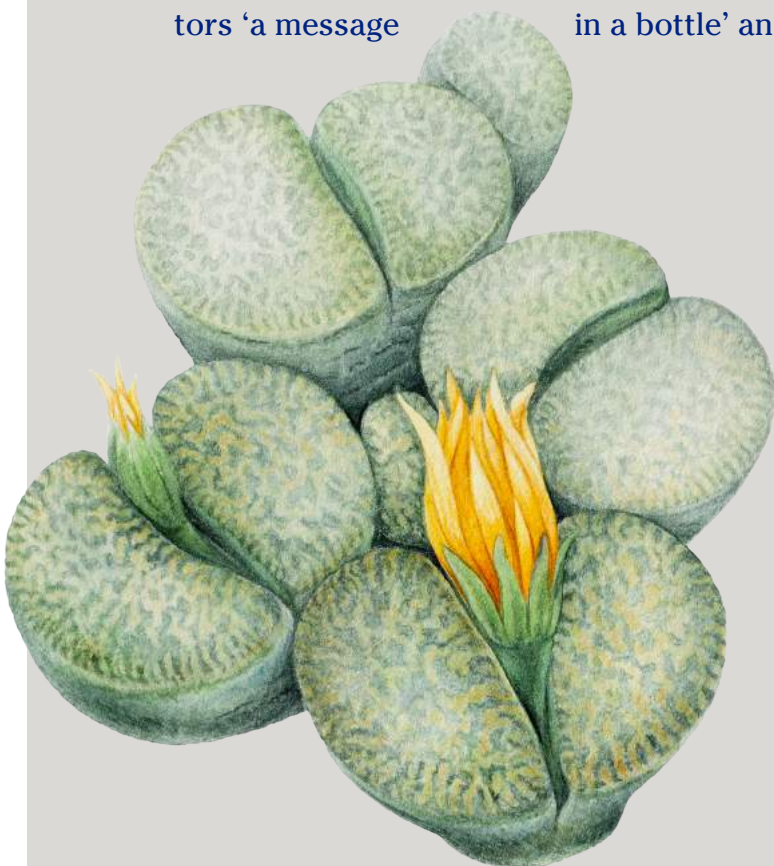
- **A LEGACY BEYOND CHELSEA**

Pearlfisher is currently in conversation with a number of cultural and educational institutions looking to house the Garden which is currently featuring in a private garden exhibition in Dorset.

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

To minimise printing and further environmental impact, Pearlfisher built a dedicated microsite to promote and share news of The Pearlfisher Garden to the media, industry and businesses - with the design also being shared across all social media channels. The RHS featured the Garden, along with all other show gardens, via their website and social media prior to the show. They also made available Pearlfisher's press release to attending press during the show. However, given Chelsea is a design show, all communication related to the design of the Garden. There was no additional promotional or marketing activity either by Pearlfisher or the RHS, cementing the fact that the strength of the idea and the design attributed to the wealth of immediate international interest and press coverage.

Extending the message during the week-long run of the show was fuelled by daily news feeds and interviews on the twice-daily show on BBC2 – an opportunity only afforded to the gardens deemed to have the best design. Pearlfisher also created its own printed promotional materials in the form of t-shirts, information leaflets (required by the RHS) and a re-usable water bottle to literally give interested visitors 'a message in a bottle' and help them lightweight their own impact.



Research/data sources

- * Source: *World Economic Forum – The New Plastics Economy Report Royal Horticultural Society, Chelsea Flower Show 2018 summary report*
- *Kantar World Media, 29th May 2018, Chelsea Flower Show 2018 Media Report*