



Press Release

Cabaret Mechanical Theatre & The Ride of Life

Exclusive retrospective show of world-famous automata comes to East London

Exhibition runs April 6th – May 5th 2007

The first ever major retrospective show charting 28 years of Cabaret Mechanical Theatre will be unveiled at the Kinetica Museum, Old Spitalfields Market on April 6th, and will include a previously unseen section of their illustrious undertaking 'The Ride Of Life'.

Through more than 80 pieces of hand-made automata, the exhibition will tell the enthralling story of the company, sailing through the theatre's humble beginnings as a craft shop in Cornwall, its move to London's Covent Garden to become the first and only collection of the finest contemporary automata in Britain, right up to the current day.

With its dark humour and clever insights the Cabaret Mechanical Theatre has inspired an army of fans and collectors, from Clive Owen to Arlene Phillips. In the words of Anthony Horowitz: "Here was a world of completely insane machines that turned, twisted, talked, danced, swam, ate spaghetti and dropped dead - all at the touch of a button." Alongside it all was a story of pioneering and exceptional artists and of the three generations of women who made it all a reality.

Cabaret Mechanical Theatre spent sixteen years, from 1984 to 2000, in a permanent exhibition space in the Covent Garden Piazza which included the work of automatists such as Peter Markey, Paul Spooner, Ron Fuller, Tim Hunkin, Lucy Casson, Carlos Zapata, Jan Zalud and Keith Newstead. During this time the theatre provided a central place where British made automata could exist in an environment reminiscent of the old end-of-the-pier arcades. The cavernous venue became one of London's major tourist attractions and captured the charm, creativity and humour of true British ingenuity. Founder Sue Jackson played a vital and pivotal role, not only in the development of CMT, but also in terms of influencing the making of contemporary automata in Britain over the past 20 years.

Meanwhile, the Ride of Life, developed as a satire on the British way of life, was a large-scale project commission in the late 1980s by the Meadowhall Shopping Centre in Sheffield. It was to become a huge automated theme park and ride created by the top British automatists of the time and cover a colossal 25,000 sq ft area of the shopping centre. It was designed to be a landmark in the history of automata. What started as a wonderful dream in the booming 80s had a very rude awakening with the recession of the 90s and after working on the project for 3 years it was suddenly axed. Cabaret

Mechanical Theatre has been working alongside Ron Fuller, one of the original artists, to restore the only surviving scene to its original glory for this exhibition.

The Kinetica exhibition will also include a special series of talks to accompany the show by the legendary founders of CMT and prominent British automata artists, as well as hands-on workshops where children and adults can learn the basic principles of creating their own automata.

CMT TALKS

Tim Hunkin - 11th April – 6pm

Popular Art

From Covent Garden to Southwold (via Florida and Japan)

Creator of the best homemade coin-ops in the business, the multi-talented cartoonist and engineer discusses how working with CMT and his involvement with the Ride of Life have influenced how he works today, especially his arcade, the 'Under the Pier Show' on Southwold Pier.

Sue Jackson & Sarah Alexander – 18th April – 6pm

'Cabaret' - Life in wood

The creator of CMT Sue Jackson and her daughter Sarah Alexander host an evening of highlights from the world of contemporary automata, from CMT's early days in Falmouth to the present day, including a screening of the award winning Granada TV documentary about the Ride of Life and Special Guests.

Will Jackson - 25th April – 6pm

'Robothespian'

Will Jackson founder of Engineered Arts and the inventor of 'Robothespian' will talk about the way he is using automata and robots in interactive displays and automatic mechanical theatres.

Paul Spooner – 2nd May – 6pm

Automatist and trained disappointment counsellor, will be helping automata owners with their difficulties. Bring in your malfunctioning automata and Mr Spooner will help you to understand its problems and give you some insights into the way he works as an automata artist.

CMT WORKSHOPS

Key workshop leaders from the legendary Cabaret Mechanical Theatre will be holding a special series of hands-on workshops at Kinetica. CMT will be instructing on the basic principles of how to make your own automata.

During the workshops all participants will create their own kinetic sculpture from everyday objects, which they will be able to take away with them.

Workshop Dates: April 9th/10th/21st/22nd/29th

All workshops will be at 2pm

Cost: £12.50 / £8.50 concessions - All materials included.

About Kinetica

Kinetica, the UK's first museum dedicated to kinetic, electronic and experimental art, is situated within a new building over two floors in Old Spitalfields Market, East London. This building was provided through generous sponsorship from Ballymore properties Ltd. The project was brokered by FutureCityArts and has attracted a major award from Arts Council England. Ballymore Properties Ltd and Kinetica Museum Ltd have received an investment from Arts & Business New Partners to develop their creative partnership.

Admission: FREE

Address: Kinetica, SP2 Pavilion, Old Spitalfields Market, E1 6AA

Nearest Tube: Liverpool St / Aldgate East

Public enquiries: 0207 684 1261

Website: www.kinetica-museum.org

Opening hours: Monday/Tuesday - CLOSED
Wednesday – Sunday: 11am to 6pm

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