

MANIPULATE Festival's hybrid programme for 2021 announced by Puppet Animation Scotland

MANIPULATE Festival returns in brand new form against the odds this January. Combining a bespoke multi-city outdoor installation artwalk, and a digital programme packed with performance, screenings and workshops, including an international celebration of womxn in animation on and off screen.

The innovative festival of international, award-winning visual theatre, puppetry and animated film will return for its 14th edition in a new hybrid format. [MANIPULATE DigitalFestival](#) will provide festival fans and new audiences the opportunity to enjoy the line-up from the comfort of their own homes from the 29 January – 7 February 2021, and for those in select Scottish cities – Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow – the chance to experience a specially commissioned outdoor kinetic sculpture series, called Restless Worlds from the 21 January – 21 February 2021.





Each year MANIPULATE Festival brings audiences together to experience boundary-pushing performances. With the aim of providing a spark of light at the top of a new year and making the tail end of winter a whole lot more interesting, the 2021 festival programme will celebrate themes of connection,

isolation and renewal.

The programme comprises an exciting blend of artists who were originally lined up to perform live at the festival's Edinburgh home of Summerhall, and have now adapted their work to film or are experimenting in a digital space, alongside artists whose work was specifically created for an online or outdoor context. Collaborations and creations in the programme comes from Chicago, Berlin and South Africa alongside Scottish and UK makers including Shona Reppe and MHz.

Dawn Taylor, Puppet Animation Scotland's new director came into the role in August of this year, as the pandemic had completely taken hold. Inheriting an already programmed line-up of live performance, Dawn and the Puppet Animation Scotland team had to swiftly reimagine the festival in a whole new way.

She said, "In the challenging circumstances that the pandemic has thrown up for our sector, the immediate priority for myself and the Puppet Animation Scotland team was finding a way to generate work for as many artists as we could. Commissioning, hosting installations and digital theatre – all these represent uncharted territory for Puppet Animation Scotland, but we have been overwhelmed by the creativity and ingenuity of artists in meeting this brief.







“It’s clear that there are challenges to come for us as a society this winter, and so we also wanted to create something exciting and concrete that audiences can put in their diaries and look forward to. We’re thrilled to be able to keep providing boundary-pushing creative experiences through MANIPULATE in 2021.”

In response to the ever-changing covid regulations and the real, tangible need for a live artistic experience, the kinetic sculpture installation artwalk, Restless Worlds will open at the Lyceum, Edinburgh (21-24 January), before visiting various locations across the city centre of [Edinburgh \(27 January-1 February\)](#), Aberdeen (4-10 February) and Glasgow(13-21 February).

Eight artists have been commissioned to create stories combining moving sculpture works for windows and soundscapes around each city. Inspired by Boccaccio’s 1353 novel The Decameron, where ten strangers shelter together in hiding from the Plague, finding their way through the quarantine by telling each other stories, this series of works will be created by some of Scotland’s leading puppeteers, sculptors and animators.

Audiences will download a map and audio files to their phones to follow the trails and discover these moving worlds. Providing joy and escapism in a moment of wider social and cultural upheaval, the selected artists and their curious creations include:

Multi-award winning Scottish theatre makers, designers and puppeteers Shona Reppe & Tamlin Wiltshire present Shattered – an intricate hospital for broken things repaired through Kintsugi, the Japanese art of repairing objects with gold lacquer; filmmaker and multidisciplinary artist Lucas Chih-Peng Kao and visual artist, puppeteer and theatre maker Katanari offer a peek into a curious collection of imaginary beings from the past or the future with Creaturium: The Lost Ones; and visual artist Chell Young uses a scale model and the timeless and utopic Renaissance architecture of Florence to theatrically demonstrate deceit and disinformation in the present day with Trials of Bliss.

Sculptor, puppet-maker and designer Guy Bishop presents The Diktat Synthesizer – a curious machine generating regulations governing social behaviour in the era of COVID-19 using wheels and life-size figures; Sharmanka Kinetic Theatre and novelist Heather Parry explore the classically gothic themes of isolation, love and the loss of innocence with Apple Eaters – a creative fusion of work featuring music by Brian Irvine and vocal performance by Kirsty Logan; and theatre practitioner, Gavin Glover in his signature faulty optic style presents a cabinet of curious journeys and impossible science with A Rock and a Hard Place.







Joining them puppeteer, performer and multidisciplinary artist, Jessica Innes creates Mr Holdcroft – a specially designed living room and animated film of an elderly puppet combating isolation; and Scotland-based Canadian visual artist Samuel Watterworth challenges viewers' perceptions of self, presence and connection by pulling them into the installation Here. We're Not with interactive visuals and found audio from radio frequencies around the world.

DIGITAL FESTIVAL / MANIPULATE Festival #14 will take place from 27 January to 7 February, with a visually led performance programme of 15 events, featuring international and Scottish artists spanning puppetry, visual and physical theatre,

animated film, aerial and contortion, alongside workshops, social events and discussions.

MANIPULATE will provide further opportunities for creatives to develop their artistic practice, through a series of workshops specially designed to respond to artists' needs in the current climate including Rene Baker, with Bringing the Metaphor to Life and Ariel Doron with Object Theatre & the Virtual Stage.

The full programme of [live and digital events is listed here](#)

Tickets for the 2021 festival are on sale now, visit [MANIPULATEfestival.org.](https://MANIPULATEfestival.org)