Owl Project

Mid Pennine Arts presents
Contemporary Heritage: A new way of seeing

16 March – 31 October 2013
Turton Tower, Blackburn

mpa
art+people+places

K-Scope

K-Scope forms part of Contemporary Heritage, an ambitious programme of contemporary art commissions inspired by Lancashire's heritage. Mid Pennine Arts in collaboration with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council have commissioned Owl Project to create a site specific installation in response to Turton Tower.

Through **K-Scope**, Owl Project invite the viewer to enter an imaginary space where fact and fiction combine, and where technology develops on a tangential path to the one we see around us, encouraging reflection on our own technologically mediated world. For this commission Owl Project have created two elements that link the Tower and the garden; inside is a wooden analogue computer that weaves light, and outside three fantastic listening horns exhibited in the Tower's gardens.

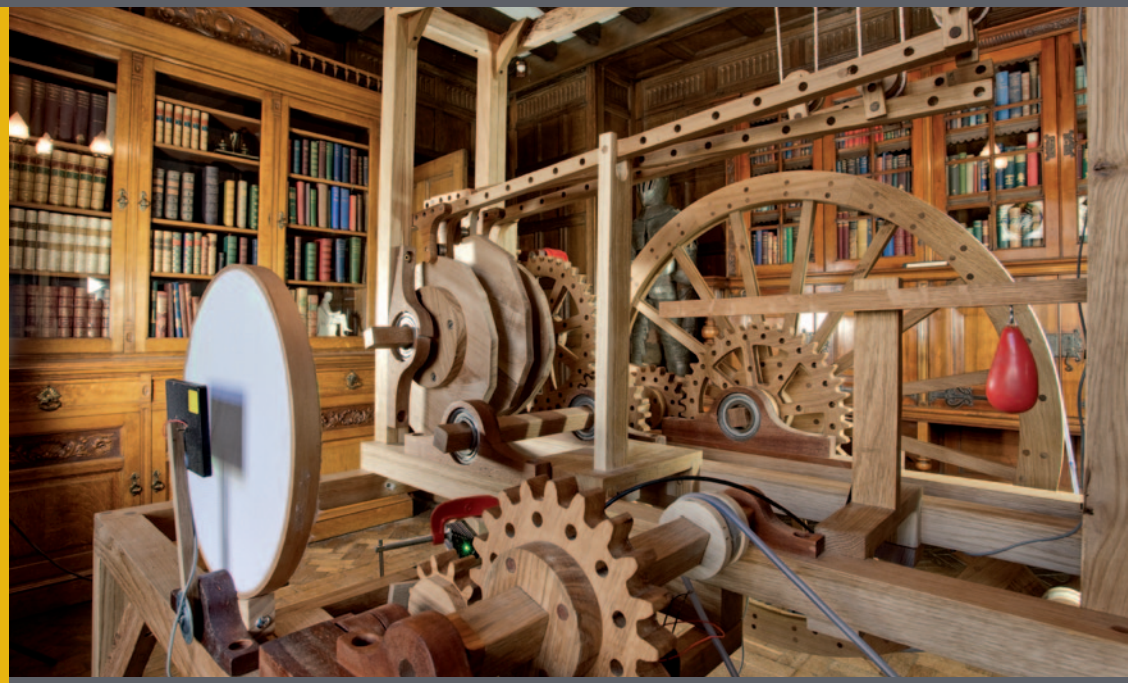
"We became fascinated by the notion that James Kay had developed a series of tunnels and maybe a workshop underneath the Tower. This is not as fanciful as it might sound – if the loom riots forced contemporary inventors to hide their machines throughout their houses, then so might Kay. What is in this catacomb, we wondered?"

In the garden look out for the beautiful wooden structures with their complex contours based on tractrix curves. Owl Project's speaker horns invite you to listen in, and imagine what unseen activity might be going on underground from the sounds that you hear…

Inside the Tower, inspired by James Kay's inventions, Owl Project drew an analogy with current technological developments; the path from weaving and early machine programming to modern computers, fibre optic communication, and even optical computing. Owl Project in effect connect these two different eras by replacing flax with light as a raw material in the **K-Scope**, an imagined early form of analogue computer that you will find in the Tower's Library. Good at modeling real world events, analogue computers started appearing around the same time as James Kay lived at Turton. The first ones were used to predict tidal flow, working in a continuous manner rather than the discrete snapshops that current digital computers use. In terms of Owl Project practice, this new machine weaves sound from light in a similar way that their 2012 Cultural Olympiad work ~Flow, based on a floating water mill, 'milled' data into sound instead of grain into flour.

The **K-Scope** is manually operated and visitors are invited to try it out themselves. **Turn the machine's red handle to control the speed of one of the spinning mirrors**; the other is controlled by the data disks. The resulting light pattern on the cloth screen is the combined effect of the mirrors' spin on the machine's laser beam. No computer is complete without a sound card, and Owl Project have used a system that then turns the laser light into sound, which comes from the spinning laser light passing through the material of the screen. It is the very weft and weave that creates the sound you hear, as the **K-Scope** is cranked into action.

To create the data disks contemporary data from the Blackburn and Darwen region has been used. Owl Project imagine James Kay sitting at his desk exploring how different sets of information interact, maybe analysing his accounts, planning how to minimise injury in the mills, or possibly conducting experiments as an early pioneer of sound synthesis. The disks on the machine and in the library are labelled. See what data Owl Project have chosen as you turn the red operating handle.



This is an interactive work. Turn the handle backwards or forwards to see how the data disks alter the light pattern produced.

Please take care operating the **K-Scope** and turn the handle slowly and steadily to operate it effectively. Be aware that the machine has moving parts, and adult supervision is necessary at all times when children are engaging with the artwork. For assistance in operating the artwork please ask a member of staff.

Contemporary Heritage is an ambitious programme of contemporary art commissions inspired by Lancashire's heritage. The installations animate each site and offer visitors a rare chance to experience major works of art by artists of national and international standing outside an urban environment.

Experience **K-Scope** with your family and friends, take in the history of the building and learn about the people that have inhabited it.

Also don't miss Contemporary Heritage commission **Flicker**, a site specific installation by Catherine Bertola at Gawthorpe Hall, Padiham during 2013.

Turton Tower
Chapeltown Road
Turton
Lancashire
BL7 0HG

Open Wednesday to Sunday
(and Bank Holidays)
12 noon - 4pm

Admission Prices:
Adults £6
Concessions £5
Accompanied children FREE
FREE admission to the gardens

SPEAKER POSITIONS

Will you be able to hear the sound of James Kay's amazing subterranean workshop?

FOLLOW US

www.midpenninearts.org.uk/turton-tower
www.owlproject.com

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/teamMPA

Twitter:
@teammpa #K_Scope

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
Lee Pilkington

mpa art+people+places

Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

BLACKBURN with DARWEN BOROUGH COUNCIL

TURTON TOWER
HISTORY · TRANQUILITY · DISCOVERY