

AutomataCon 2022 Printable Program

May 20-22 at the Morris Museum

Morristown, new Jersey

Featured Events

A Cache of Kinetic Art: Timeless Movements (museum ticket required)

The convention coincides with the Morris Museum's final juried exhibition of kinetic art, "A Cache of Kinetic Art: Timeless Movements." The exhibition explores broad themes of the human experience and how time manifests in nature through 35 works of kinetic art. Some of the artists in the exhibition will be in attendance at AutomataCon.

Murtogh D. Guinness Collection of Mechanical Musical Instruments and Automata (museum ticket required)

Tour the museum's permanent collection of historic automata and mechanical instruments, one of the most significant in the world.

Exhibitors' Tables (museum ticket required)

The exhibitors' and vendors' tables are open from 10 AM – 5 PM on Saturday and from 10 AM – 3 PM on Sunday.

Spark!Lab (time-stamped ticket from the Museum required)

Spark!Lab, where everyone is an inventor, offers any child (ages 5-12 and accompanied by an adult) a new, informal approach to hands-on learning. Instead of following step-by-step instructions, young inventors will be empowered to problem-solve and overcome real-world obstacles. And a new exploration space has been added for our youngest inventors!

Friday Evening Reception, 6-8 PM (AutomataCon Friday ticket Required)


Join us for a private reception at the Morris Museum consisting of light refreshments and hors d'oeuvres, with music and tours of the Guinness Collection as well as the Cache of Kinetic Art: Timeless Movements exhibit.

Saturday Evening Social

After the convention on Saturday, many attendees gather at the Blue Morel bar and in the lobby of the Westin Governor Morris hotel for an unofficial gathering.

Saturday, May 21st, 10AM – 6PM

Events subject to change. AutomataCon ticket required. As of this writing, masks are required for the Bickford Theatre and Bickford Gallery.

Time	Bickford Theatre	Bickford Gallery
10:00 AM	Writer in the Workshop – Inside Automata Magazine – Marc Horovitz	A Maker in Residence – Storytelling with Machines – Aaron Kramer
11:15 AM	Opening Ceremonies	
11:30 AM	Kinetic Artists Panel – Timeless Movements – Moderator Anne Ricculi	Motion/Emotion: Exploring Affect from Automata to Robots – Sara Woodbury
1:00 PM	Keynote: Science and Splendor at the Courts of Europe – Wolfram Koepe, Marina Kellen French Sr. Curator, Dept. of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts The Metropolitan Museum of Art	
2:30 PM	Art In Public Spaces: Outdoor Kinetic Works – Rein Triefeldt	How They Moved: Four Sixteenth-Century Walking Androids – Elizabeth King
4:00 PM	The Cabaret Effect – Michel Croft	Maker's Mashup – Brett King and Robert Sabuda
6:00 PM	Programming Ends	

Sunday, May 22nd, 10AM – 3PM

Time	Bickford Theatre	Bickford Gallery
10:00 AM	People's Choice Award – Michelle Graves Birds of a Feather – Jere Ryder	A Makers' Conversation: Tom Haney and Aaron Kramer
11:30 AM	Kinetic Artists Panel (Artists Discussion Panel)	Kinetic Surprises: What Could Possibly Go Wrong? – Bradley Litwin
1:00 PM	Mini-Film Festival	The Mechanical Zoo – David Bowman
2:00 PM	Feature Film: Curious Worlds – The Art & Imagination of David Beck	The Mechanical Zoo (cont. to 3pm)
2:00 PM	Private Tour of Guinness Archives (Platinum Ticketholders Only) – meet at elevator	
3:00 PM	Programming Ends	

Saturday Event Descriptions

Writer in the Workshop – Inside Automata Magazine

Marc Horovitz

It was the year following our last convention in 2018 that the online 'Automata Magazine' burst onto the scene, and it has since become a bi-monthly staple for enthusiasts and makers. Editor Marc Horovitz introduces himself and artists Vance Bass, David Bowman, Al Conquergood and Tom Haney, who show us their subject works and discuss the process that exposed them to a worldwide readership!

A Maker in Residence – Storytelling with Machines

Aaron Kramer

Santa Monica-based artist Aaron Kramer brings project-based learning to schools. The children imagine their own storylines, develop the characters and “discover” materials with which to build their own dioramas. Ultimately, it is their mechanical, mainly hand-turned creations with names like, “Veronica and the cursed Violin,” that act out scenes for the class. Lots of video content, - this talk will hold particular appeal for 2nd thru 12th grade educators.

Opening Ceremonies

AutomataCon Founder and Convention Chair Brett King welcomes you to the show.

Kinetic Artists Panel – Timeless Movements

Anne Ricculli, Randall Cleaver, Miron Abramovici, Josh Hudak

Featuring the fourth and final exhibition of the juried 'Cache' series, on display now are 35 works created by 26 artists, each which explore the themes of measuring, marking, embracing and/or resisting time. Dr. Ricculli leads a discussion by three contributing artists: Miron Abramovici, Josh Hudak and Randall Cleaver. Following the panel, we take a walk to the museum's Main Gallery, where the objects will be shown and demonstrated by the panelists and other additional artists. Each attendee will have an opportunity to vote for their favorite work in the People's Choice Award, with the winner to be announced later in the convention.

Motion/Emotion: Exploring Affect from Automata to Robots

Sara Woodbury

New on the scene since our last convention is the Barry Art Museum at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA. Motion/Emotion: Exploring Affect from Automata to Robots is a special, public exhibition that takes place through the end of this year. Shown are works that induce a wide range of emotions in the observer, starting with historical automata from the Museum's permanent collection. Central to this is a discussion of “The Uncanny Valley.” Following are evocative presentations by sculptors Elizabeth King and Joseph Morris. And finally, a look at the science of robotics as seen through projects at ODU. Sara Woodbury is a Ph.D. Candidate in American Studies at William & Mary College.

Science and Splendor at the Courts of Europe

Wolfram Koeppe, Marina Kellen French Sr. Curator, Dept. of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Our keynote address will be delivered by a man who has assembled the most spectacular exhibitions of art and technology of our day. Dr. Koeppe will illustrate princely Kunstkammer from the Renaissance to Enlightenment periods that were used to help further one's reputation as a worldly and wise ruler. Featured are bejeweled, miniature creatures; a musical automaton clock with spinet and organ, by Viet Langenbucher, c.1625; and the Miraculous Writing Machine by Friedrich von Knauss, c.1760.

How They Moved: Four Sixteenth-Century Walking Androids

Elizabeth King

Drawn from the forthcoming book, *Mysticism and Machinery – A Sixteenth-Century Automaton and its Legend* (Elizabeth King and W. David Todd, photographs by Rosamond Purcell, Getty 2023), King will show video of four surviving tabletop walking and gesticulating automata in collections in Europe and the U.S. and discuss their significance in the history of artificial life.

Art In Public Spaces: Outdoor Kinetic Works

Rein Triefeldt

The introduction of moving objects into public areas entertains a host of considerations, - from initial artist's concept to the challenges posed by expanded viewing angles; from method of installation to such basic questions as, "Will the public be able to touch it?;" and, from the selection of weather-resistant materials to the energy source, such as wind, water, or, solar power, - the latter in which the globe-trotting, award-winning sculptor Rein Triefeldt specializes. Please join us as he leads a colorfully illustrated discussion of these facets and more!

Maker's Mashup

Brett King, Robert Sabuda

Join makers Brett King and Robert Sabuda for a "shop talk" on tools and techniques, covering topics such as 3D design and printing, CNC technologies, woodworking techniques, adhesives, painting, motorization, and public display.

The Cabaret Effect

Michael Croft

Numerous automaton-enthusiasts can trace their initial leap of faith to the day that they discovered the UK's Cabaret Mechanical Theatre. Collector Michael Croft takes us from CMT's origins as a "slightly odd" crafts shop in Falmouth, Cornwall to its highly visited location at London's Covent Garden. Sue Jackson nurtured a virtual colony of automatists: makers Markey, Fuller, Spooner, et.al. are each seen describing their particular approach, and Croft lends insight on the influences and creative traits of several others who have been inspired to produce to the present day.

Sunday Event Descriptions

Birds of a Feather

Jere Ryder

The history of mechanical singing birds is rooted in the practice of the elites in teaching natural birds to sing familiar melodies in addition to birdcall. Here we are taken on a tour of exotic examples from public & private collections, ranging from a Jaquet-Droz bird-in-cage, c.1785 to a Griesbaum “pop-up” of the 1960’s. Shifting gears, we then enter the workshop of Tim and Torry Wahler of *Antique Toys & Automata* to witness their re-feathering of a walking peacock by Rouillet-Decamps. And then, Jere shows us his re-pluming of a bird cage clock, c.1790-1810, along with side-notes about the endangered species act (CITES). Ryder serves part-time as Conservator of the Guinness Collection.

“People’s Choice Award” Announcement (MAIN Gallery)

Anytime during AutomataCon, you are encouraged to experience this special exhibition, A Cache of Kinetic Art: Timeless Movements, which is being shown in the Morris Museum’s Main Gallery. There you will find some of the artists showing off their own works. You are invited to participate by voting for the “People’s Choice Award!” A ballot box is prominently located in the gallery, and the “People’s Choice Award” will be announced by assistant curator Michelle Graves on Sunday morning.

A Makers' Conversation

Tom Haney, Aaron Kramer

Two well-known and long-respected makers engage in a dialogue reflecting upon their individual careers making kinetic art. Their insights, curiosity, passion for objects and the mysteries of found patinas will be discussed. Both artists share a love for empathetic storytelling with machines, where the narratives and the users are central to the action.

Kinetic Surprises: What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

Bradley Litwin

Bradley Litwin is a multi-discipline artist. He is a maker of kinetic sculpture and automata, hailing from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This is a survey of a few of his more challenging projects, offering a close look at the thought processes that go into the design and execution of some of his more ambitious works. He describes what he thought 'should have' worked, versus what actually happened, - and why!

Kinetic Artists Panel

Brett King (moderator), John Gaughan, Lu Iyu, Kate Thompson, Chris Fitch

Join automata and kinetic artists and makers John Gaughan, Lu Iyu, Kate Thompson, and Chris Fitch for a discussion of the life of an artist and maker, including their work, motivations, and techniques.

The Mechanical Zoo

David Bowman

Artist David Bowman is a self-taught kinetic sculptor who, since 2013, has been creating “living” figures that are each fashioned around an imaginative tale. Built from antique, Meccano set pieces, found materials and purchased hardware, they are each powered by different means. Here we discover numerous creatures of the wilderness, and specially featured are Hotaru, the Firefly; Raphaos, the Dodo bird; and we are shown exactly how Bowman built Pulpo, the Octopus.

Short Film Festival

A number of short films related to automata and kinetic art will be shown in the Bickford Theatre. Some of the filmmakers will be on hand to answer questions. The scheduled lineup includes:

- Lost & Found by Joey Bania
- Clockwork Monsters: The Art and Automata of Thomas J. Kuntz by Ronni Thomas
- The Making of "Bird of Paradise" by Chris Fitch
- House of Automata by Euan Myles
- Haunted House Automata by Kieron Rose

Private Tour of Guinness Archives (Platinum Ticketholders Only)

Platinum ticket holders are eligible to take a private guided tour of the Guinness archives with museum staff, where they will see automata and musical devices that are not currently on display to the public. Ticketholders should meet at the elevator for the tour at 2PM on Sunday.

Feature Film: 'Curious Worlds' – The Art & Imagination of David Beck

An intimate portrait of the understated but vastly accomplished artist, David Beck (1953-2018), who was known to a select group of collectors and curators. His intricate, kinetic sculptures might be the objects from a dream: fanciful buildings and detailed animals with humorous scenes that are rendered on a tiny scale. This documentary film captures the artist at work in his studio and interviews with those who were lucky enough to know him. Courtesy of Olympia Stone of Floating Stone Productions.