

# PHANTOMAT workshop

November 12 -15

University of Plymouth/Plymouth Arts Centre



*Phantomat* is a project being developed by Bulgarian Artist and Scenographer Venelin Shurelov for the Black/North Seas Festival. (<http://www.intercult.se/>) Venelin will be in residence at the University of Plymouth to work with a group of volunteers on a prototype of the project. He is interested in working with an interdisciplinary group of artists-technologists-performers-sociologists- historians-philosophers and anyone else interested. The working group is open to 2nd and 3rd year BA students and Post Graduate Students at the University of Plymouth and is limited to 12 people.

## **ABOUT VENELIN SHURELOV ([www.subhumantheatre.com](http://www.subhumantheatre.com))**

Born 1977. Graduate of the National Art Academy of Bulgaria. Formed the international art collective 'Via Pontica' (2002) and the 'Subhuman Theatre' (2004). Lives and works in Sofia, Bulgaria.

## **SubHuman Curiosity**

Venelin Shurelov's leitmotif is the human body, its physical and spiritual path: motion versus immobility, suppleness, brittleness, fragility, interaction with constructions and inner emotional landscapes. Theatre and performance play a major role in his creative repertoire, which also includes drawing, sculpture, installations and film. Shurelov likes to get the public involved in his works, by disturbing their sense of routine, by questioning the mundane.

## **ABSTRACT**

*Phantomat* is coined from two words: Phantom and Automat. Phantom derives from the Greek word *phantasma* and it means a shadow of a being, apparition, illusion, spectre. In platonic terms it means the image of reality after it has been distorted by our 5 senses. The idea about the phantomats was born during a visit to Skegness where almost the whole community



(from all ages children to elderly) seem to be possessed by the penny arcade culture. One person in front of one machine, doing repetitive motions, in silence, not communicating with other people. The machine reduces the subject to a machine. The machine is always the winner, the reduced subject is always the loser with no prospects of change. This was an extreme example of alienation in a commercialized public space. The absence of public art and public spaces for relaxation and contemplation added to this sensation. The only places in Skegness that offered an alternative were the beach and the sea which were almost always empty. The idea of the phantomat was born from the need to subvert the commercialized space by mimicking it but offer contemplation, reconnection with the city and with oneself.

## FOCUS

During the workshop we will work with ONE prototype model of PHANTOMAT. We will use the frame of the eyes to present/create an alternative inner landscape.

**Space and Time\***: It can be any space that gives a certain context which we can comment upon, contemplate upon, guide through the space etc. It can be a shopping mall, a forgotten building, a forgotten space (unused) in the town, outdoor or indoors. For more see the project description below. The presentation of Phantomat is an endless loop of images and sound for one person at a time per Phantomat. Its length can be decided according to the needs of each space. From a couple of minutes to many hours.

\* It is not necessary to use a real space - we need to imagine different possibilities of how to situate this object into public space.

## ABOUT PHANTOMAT THE LARGER PROJECT

The project consists of a series of humanoid looking machines (Phantomats) that operate on the principle of the penny arcade machines. The difference is that once you pay a penny to this machine you are always a winner. The idea is to install the Phantomats in a specifically chosen place. The audience will have the chance to go from one to the other in a specific route that is guided by phantomats themselves. Each Phantomat will have a certain audio visual content related to the actual place the phantomat is situated in. The content will vary from place to place and it will relate in a different way in each situation (city or location). The content can consist of images, interviews with local people, sounds, music and the same can be distorted or manipulated. The video material will be shown in the eyes on each Phantomat. We are still considering whether to have headphones for the audio part or have the sound come out from speakers. The last Phantomat does not have a video material but a camera that projects on the screen everything that comes on its way in real time. The idea is to have the image of the person standing in front of the Phantomat projected in the eyes of the Phantomat. A mirroring, a reconnection.

## PARTICIPATION

If you would like to take part in the Phantomat project fill out the attached application and e-mail it to Anya Lewin([a.lewin@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:a.lewin@plymouth.ac.uk)) and Venelin Shurelov ([labarshur@yahoo.com](mailto:labarshur@yahoo.com)).



PHANTOMAT Workshop is an InterArts\_Lab project.