

present

## A Day at the Architects by Paul Spooner

Rodić Davidson Architects is hosting an exhibition of new work by automata maker, Paul Spooner

*“The plan is to make six objects; one for each of the six windows looking onto Bury Place. Two are done, two are thought of and two are neither done nor thought off.”*

The pieces will start to arrive in mid-March 2019.

Done: ‘Physics for Cats’. Powered by a mouse wheel, a version of Galileo’s Inclined Plane apparatus gradually tilts a track on which a cat on a trolley is free to roll. When the forces of friction and gravity are overcome the cat travels from one end of the track to the other. Momentum is destroyed by buffers at either end of the track and springs that absorb some of the shock. A pair of boxwood spheres hanging under the cat’s tail demonstrate inertia.

Done: ‘Cork Cathedral’. There are two cathedrals in the city of Cork. The Protestant one was designed in the Gothic Revival style by William Burges, architect of Cardiff Castle and nearby Castel Coch. There are several towns that are named after building materials; Stone in Staffordshire and Boulder, Colorado, for example, but none offer as much fun for the playful mechanic as Cork and its Belgian twin, Liège.

Thought of: ‘Solid, Liquid, Gas’ and ‘We want a Window and we want it Here’.

Paul Spooner (b. 1948)

Despite having an engineer for a father, Paul Spooner went to art school and despite receiving an art education from three of the titans of the business, Harry Thubron, Jon Thompson and Tom Hudson, he never became a proper artist but, in his early thirties, took up the then almost extinct profession of automatist. A series of fortunate circumstances led him from the schoolteaching and lorry driving jobs he’d done after art school; he moved to Cornwall with his wife Sue, he met Peter Markey, who had been making mechanical sculptures and selling them in Sue Jackson’s shop, Cabaret, in Falmouth. Cabaret Mechanical Theatre became a destination for enthusiasts of mechanical playthings, with works by Paul, Peter Markey and Ron Fuller. Paul installed “The Last Judgement”, a coin-operated machine, in the window of the shop and used the proceeds to buy a lathe. Since then he hasn’t stopped producing devices, made mostly of wood, mostly small enough to fit on a mantelpiece but sometimes of more ambitious sizes.

Ben Davidson, Rodic Davidson Architects says:

*The influence of the Cabaret Mechanical Theatre in Covent Garden, in part, defined my direction in life. I remember visiting on many occasions, in my teens, on family trips to London from Cheltenham, where I grew up. I was utterly fascinated and the influence, I am sure, formed part of my decision to study architecture and my continued love of experimentation, exploration and tinkering with models and mechanical things.*

Rodic Davidson Architects is based very close to the old location of Cabaret. The practice occupies premises at 1 Pied Bull Yard in Bloomsbury - no more than a 10min walk away from the basement vaults in Covent Garden market that Cabaret occupied between 1984 and 2000

Paul Spooner is represented by Cabaret Mechanical Theatre.  
For further information please contact Sarah Alexander - [sarah@cabaret.co.uk](mailto:sarah@cabaret.co.uk)