

contains

The Time Machine by H G Wells
New exhibition and publication
Call for submissions

'Consider I have been speculating upon the destinies of our race... And taking it as a story, what do you think of it?'

'Face this world. Learn its ways, watch it, be careful of too hasty guesses at its meaning. In the end you will find clues to it all.'

Where will we be some 80,500 years from now? What would become of our race were current social tendencies to define our evolution? These are the questions that preoccupied H G Wells in *The Time Machine* and its rich mythical science fiction. Profoundly late-Victorian with its themes of the Capitalist and Labourer, it endured in its very human polarisation of desire and repulsion. Comforts and fears are exaggerated; paradise upon the surface is undermined by a dark underworld controlled by a maleficent subterranean race.

Embodying many traditional mythical images of a demonic world, its storytelling is unsettling – portraying a beautiful and curious land, its population grown idle through their paradise-like existence. The novel's importance was recognised by contemporaries of Wells, like Henry James, and has continued to inspire writers, artists and filmmakers alike. It is not for nothing that the most popular computer game of the modern era, *Minecraft*, features a race against nightfall to preserve paradise from hostile creatures.

Invitation

Following the success of our publication in 2015 of a new edition of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and a new publication in 2016 of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, we are delighted to offer a new opportunity to artists to contribute to our third publication, H G Wells' *The Time Machine*, the next instalment in an ongoing series. This project has been made possible with financial support from the National Lottery through Arts Council England and the Fairfield Charitable Trust.

We invite artists to submit electronically, works inspired by the novel. Submission guidelines are below. Selected works will be exhibited at the Contains Art gallery in a specially curated exhibition (June 2017), which will be accompanied by the publication of a beautiful, new version of *The Time Machine*, illustrated with those works exhibited. Akin to the previous editions of both *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *The Tempest*, the reproduced plates endeavour to contemporise the novel for today's audience. Profits from the sale of the book will be re-invested in Contains Art; helping to support the sustainability and resilience of this nascent, imaginative, not-for-profit arts venture.

Please note, due to the need to photograph works for inclusion in the publication the timetable is fairly tight.

Creativity

As with our previous publications, the interest at Contains Art is not simply in literal depictions of the text. We have chosen this novel not only for the contrasting visual scope of its imagery (the paradisaical, Arcadian and Elysian existence of the Eloi precariously resting on foundations of slime and horror, habituated by Morlocks), but also for the relevance of so many themes in the work. A key part of our intent is to explore how great works can be interpreted in ways that are relevant to contemporary art practice and to the interests of contemporary audiences, to provoke discussion, interest and ideas beyond simply the visual presentation of an historic text.

The Time Machine is richly symbolic in its depiction of humanity's decline; its narrative split into two dominant forms of imagery. The depiction of the Eloi living in a perfect long-gone world is ironically situated by Wells in the remotest future. The end of life on earth will not be a simple decline into nothing: the Eloi represent the sunset of a temporary stay of extinction.

Wells was informed by the dominant intellectual movements of his age, Marxism and Darwinism. For Wells, the conflicting race of beautiful carefree beings, living a wholly aesthetic existence, and the brutish creatures living beneath the surface, spending their time in darkness, appearing only at night, were descendents respectively of his present-day bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The latter lived by cannibalistically preying on the former and this is clearly intended to be symbolic, though also complex. It is relevant today in the mutinous actions seen during the race protests in the USA, the global response to Syria, or even the regressive political rhetoric of Brexit. As the traveller himself says:

'What might not have happened to men? What if cruelty had grown into a common passion? What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness, and had developed into something inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful?'

As climate change predicts an unfolding of life on Earth, it is perhaps ironic that life's final bolthole will be the deep subsurface that the Morlocks inhabit. Compared as worms and other unpleasant animal life, the Morlocks are a confusion of human and animal – a subsequent theme explored in *The Island of Dr Moreau*. The descent of the traveller into this underworld is a pilgrimage into hell, one that represents the extremes of human fear. This exaggeration is one of mythical significance and one that continues to find form in popular culture – take the 2005 film *The Descent* which follows a group of liberal Westerners on a caving expedition who find themselves prey to a once humanoid race now monstrously adapted to their darkness.

In all this richness of imagery and ideas we hope you will find the inspiration from which to create works worthy of the great artists who have responded to *The Time Machine* in the past. From contemporaries such as Henry James to *Doctor Who*, the video game *Minecraft*, and countless adaptations and pop-culture references among others, *The Time Machine* is a cautionary narrative that remains strikingly influential.

Schedule

3rd February 2017	Submission Deadline
24th February 2017	Selected artists notified
27 th Feb – 3rd March 2017	Delivery of artworks for photography and framing
2nd June 2017	Private View
3rd June – 2nd July	Exhibition runs

Guidelines

Artists and their works will be selected through an open submission process. The key criteria will be relevance - the intention is to highlight the contemporary relevance of the story for today's audience using imagery as a counterpoint to words. Underlying 'relevance' will be a keen focus on artistic quality - taking into account that works must 'work' in both exhibition and print.

Please submit entries by emailing a photograph of the work to: jon@containsart.co.uk.

Please include with your submission:

- Contact details (phone and email);
- Title of the work, if any;
- Materials (e.g. mixed media on board, digital print, ink on paper);
- Please note if the work is one of an edition (i.e. print run of 10);
- Dimensions;
- Sale price (assume £40 - £60 for framing)
- A short paragraph (max 50 words) about your inspiration, including a note if it responds to a particular passage; and
- A short paragraph (max 50 words) about yourself in the third person.

Example:

Formerly Dean of Design at the University of Arts London; Mike exhibited at Tate Britain in 'Drawing from Turner' (2007) and has work in both public and private collections. He now lives and works at his studio, Three Springs, in Stogursey, maintaining his own eclectic and curious approach to creative practice.

The 20-24 selected works will be reproduced in an A5 portrait-orientated, limited edition (500) publication. These works will be photographed and framed for the exhibition, therein agreeing to copyright permission with regard to reproduction.

Artists may submit up to three works, but it is very unlikely that more than one by any one artist will be included in the exhibition/publication.

Maximum image size guide: 20" x 24". We welcome the submission of 3D works but please discuss with us first.

Unfortunately, we are not able to offer a fee for selected works, but the works may be offered for sale during the exhibition if desired, with a max 20% (+2.75% credit card machine) commission taken.

Framing costs will be covered by Contains Art. Artists will receive the full purchase price of sold work – framing will not be deducted. Unsold work will be returned with the frame. Unframed prints from editions, if sold/ordered during the period of the exhibition, will be subject to commission as above.

Artists will need to be able to arrange to drop off or otherwise deliver works to Contains Art in late March if selected.

Selected artists will be given a complimentary copy of the book. Selected artists may be asked to invigilate one day of the exhibition, where possible. It would be helpful if you could let us know by email if you intend to submit, though this is not a requirement.

Contact Details

For further information please contact Jon Barrett on 07583368072 jon@containsart.co.uk



Previous editions published by Contains Art:

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner - 2015

The Tempest - 2016