

A Touring Exhibition

The Fateful Fable of 13



An exhibition of illustration and sculpture, with strong educational resources, created by writer, illustrator and sculptor Matthew Roby

Photography by John Baxter.

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INTRODUCTION

Matthew Roby is an artist well known for his fantastical tales and imaginative characters. He conjures up worlds of pure fantasy with irreverent wit and deft skill, allowing him to evoke chuckles of real pleasure from even the most serious observer.

The Chapel Gallery, working with Matthew, successfully achieved funding from the Arts Council England to commission the artwork for our first National Touring Exhibition *The Fateful Fable of 13*. An exhibition that is the culmination of Matthew's work so far and brings together three strands of his art practice - the written word, illustration and sculpture - in a uniquely engaging exhibition.

The storybook, *The Fateful Fable of 13*, combines elements of poetry and prose and introduces the viewer to a cast of thirteen extraordinary individuals. Twenty-six illustrations of these characters are exhibited in all their vivid, richly rendered glory and they are shown alongside thirteen skillfully executed mixed-media sculptures.

Born on Friday 13th, Matthew was compelled to investigate the effects of superstitions and if the simple number 13 could have any real bearing on a person's misfortune. Surely this is superstitious nonsense... But what if 13 wasn't just a number? What if 13 was *Thirteen*, an actual living being and a substance of pure bad luck!

In *The Fateful Fable of 13*, *Thirteen* does exist and has started to search out the twelve doomed individuals unlucky enough to be born in the fabled fleeting month of Thirteenber. Once found, they will fall like dominos, each character causing the next one's grim and grisly demise.



Matthew is, without doubt, a gifted storyteller, weaving narratives that appeal to all ages on a variety of levels. Moreover, he's the prodigious master of an array of creative techniques, from 3D modelling, welding and assemblage to the rendering of complex compositions in his 2D work.

He is influenced by all manner of things from popular culture and figures who've proven particularly inspiring for Matthew are Tim Burton, Guillem Del Toro, Roald Dahl, Edward Gorey and Spike Milligan. The keen viewer will find visual gags and deft references to iconic films, television shows, books and music. However, perhaps Matthew's richest areas of inspiration are the colourful idiosyncrasies of friends, family and those he meets in passing each day. All source material to be observed, assimilated and used in his work.

Matthew is an artist whose lively imagination knows no bounds. This latest body of work is engaging, inventive and, most importantly, fun! So, don't hold back, *enjoy!*

The Fateful Fable of 13 is a Chapel Gallery National Touring Exhibition.

Thirteen, illustration by Matthew Roby

ABOUT THE ARTIST

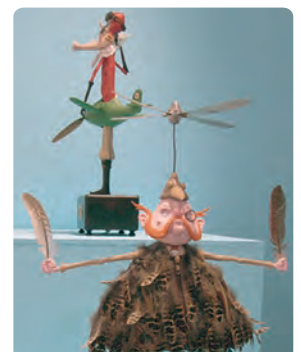
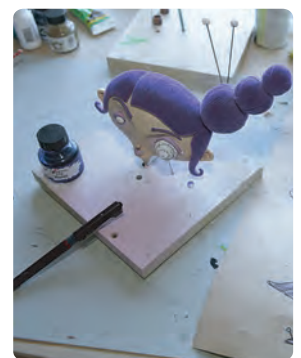
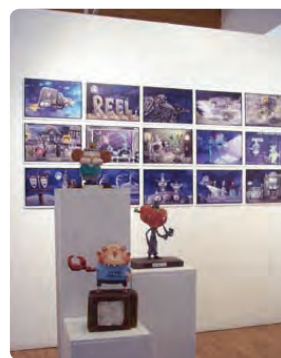
Matthew Roby is an illustrator, sculptor and writer who creates fantastical characters and strange tales. He has ten years experience as a visual arts practitioner including solo and group exhibitions throughout the UK and abroad, both private and public art commissions and independently produced animation. He has also written and illustrated two books for children. Matthew is a well established art educator who has facilitated a variety of workshops exploring a range of ideas and media.

Matthew's work draws on many influences, including films and literature, with references to popular culture, contemporary media and remembered people and places. He filters real life observations through his vivid imagination and blurs the boundaries between reality and make believe. Matthew takes familiar characters and creatures and reinvents them, furnishing them with extraordinary personalities. His work is easily accessible and possesses a real spirit of fun. His illustration and sculptural pieces demonstrate a sense of immediacy that is of definite value in terms of visitor engagement and audience development.

Adept at an impressive number of techniques, Matthew's 2D works incorporate pencil, ink, paints and sprays. His sculpture is created using various materials including clay, mixed metals, wood and found or recycled objects. Matthew's lively imagination, irreverent wit and mastery of techniques aside, perhaps his true ingenuity lies in his ability to inject warmth, character and energy into each 'being' during their creation.

"There's usually a story behind my characters; a depth and personality that viewers can connect with, no matter how absurd they appear on first impression. Narrative themes have long been my inspiration, and this particular body of work was born of my curiosity regarding superstition and fate. Do things really happen for a reason or are sequences of events entirely random? Are we in control of our destiny or is it already written?"

Matthew Roby, January 2010



A selection of images relating to Matthew Roby's work and process.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The Fateful Fable of 13

'It is said to be a terrible curse, to be born under the shadow of 13. As it's fated that Thirteen itself; a real being of pure bad luck, will come for you when least expected and bring about your unfortunate demise.'

The Fateful Fable of 13, Matthew Roby

Matthew Roby has created a captivating collection of unique characters and illustrated tales, all linked to the infamous and unlucky, number 13.

Both educational and inspirational, this exhibition brings to life Matthew's fictional fable of 13 extraordinary but ultimately doomed characters through the written word, a series of illustrations and a collection of mixed media sculpture. In his engagingly grim fairytale for the 21st century each character is cursed from birth, having been born under the shadow of 13. All are inextricably bound together by fate, doomed to cause one another's farcical deaths in a chain of unfortunate events.

Weird and wonderful characters, including Penelope Pincushion a plucky, one-eyed seamstress, Claude Pincher a.k.a. Lobster Boy, a heroic half boy/half crustacean and WW1 Pilot, Sir Cedric Spiffington, are inventively realised in three-dimensions and are exhibited alongside the associated drawings and illustrated tales.



Claude Pincher a.k.a. Lobster Boy, illustration and mixed-media sculpture by Matthew Roby. Photography by John Baxter.

EXHIBITION ARTWORK

The exhibition consists of thirteen **colourful characters**:

1. *Baron Von Birdbrain* (Eccentric inventor of flying hats)
2. *Frankie 'The Tickler' Feathers* (1930s gangster)
3. *Drongo Dumbbell* (Circus strongman)
4. *Greta Gumbo* (Sweet-oholic, bubble gum blowing champ)
5. *Sir Cedric Spiffington* (WW1 pilot)
6. *Enchanting Esmerelda* (Fortune teller)
7. *Sylvia Sugarplum* (Gardening fairy)
8. *Claude Pincher a.k.a Lobster Boy* (Boy with heroic alter ego)
9. *Lionel Vinyl* (1970s roller disco champ)
10. *Jeff Glowbum* (mad teleporting scientist)
11. *Penelope Pincushion* (patchwork seamstress)
12. *The Magnificent Carrotini* (Bumbling magician)
13. *Thirteen* (crooked creature of bad luck)

The exhibition consists of **twenty six 2D and thirteen 3D artworks**:

* *Thirteen 'Character Portrait' illustrations.*

Sepia toned, framed illustrations of each characters face.
34 x 40 x 3.5cm.

Digital print of original illustration. Limited edition 1 of 40.

* *Thirteen 'Storybook illustrations'.*

Full colour, framed illustrations of each character as featured in the storybook.
51 x 47 x 3cm.

Digital print of original illustration. Limited edition 1 of 40.

* *Thirteen sculptures.*

Mixed-media sculptures.

Dimensions range from *Claude Pincher aka Lobster Boy* at 40 x 31 x 15cm to
Drongo Dumbbell at 78 x 73 x 18cm.

Limited edition 1 of 3.

* *The Fateful Fable of 13* by Matthew Roby. Storybook, edition 1000.

(Additional storybooks are available for sale).



Frankie 'The Tickler' Feathers, by Matthew Roby
Photography by John Baxter

EXHIBITION ARTWORK CONTINUED

1. Baron Von Birdbrain 2. Sir Cedric Spiffington 3. The Magnificent Carrotini 4. Enchanting Esmeralda 5. Jeff Glowbum 6. Sylvia Sugarplum
7. Frankie Feathers 8. Claude Pincher aka Lobster Boy 9. Lionel Vinyl 10. Drongo Dumbbell 11. Penelope Pincushion 12. Greta Gumbo 13. Thirteen

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



12



ADDITIONAL CONTENT

The exhibition is provided with additional resources. These include:

Interpretation

- * 2 x A1 mounted exhibition statements
- * 13 x A5 interpretation panels. One relating to each character.
- * 39 x small, mounted price panels.

Marketing and Publicity

- * Press Release
- * A CD of press images of artwork
- * Teachers' Resource Pack
- * Advertisements placed by Chapel Gallery in national press
- * Listings inclusion organised by Chapel Gallery in national press.
- * 100 Blank Preview invitations (for overprinting).
- * 50 Exhibition Posters (for overprinting).
- * Exhibition Catalogues (for sale or return across the exhibition's duration).
- * Character Postcards (for sale or return across the exhibition's duration).

Health & Safety

- * Risk Assessment re: Handling of Artwork

The Fateful Fable of 13
by Matthew Roby
7 May - 2 July 2011

a national touring exhibition organised by the Chapel Gallery.

Artist Matthew Roby has created a captivating collection of sculpture and illustration with each artwork inspired by his dark sense of humour and vivid storytelling.

2011 Tour Dates
Chapel Gallery, Ormskirk: 07 May - 02 July
Cooper Gallery, Barnsley: 23 July - 03 Sept
Balman Gallery, Corbridge: 08 Oct - 31 Dec

Tour from May 2011 to Sept 2013
(for availability etc please contact gallery).

This tour includes extensive resources for education and engagement.

Chapel Gallery, St. Helen's Road,
Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 4QR
01695 571328
chapel.gallery@westlancs.gov.uk
www.chapelgallery.org.uk

LOTTERY FUNDED
Lancashire County Council

Matthew Roby, Sketch for Sir Cedric Spiffington and Claude Pincher aka Lobster Boy. Photography by John Baxter

The Fateful Fable of 13
At the Chapel Gallery, Ormskirk 7 May - 2 July.
'It's fated that Thirteen itself, a real being of pure bad luck, will come for you when least expected and bring about your unfortunate demise.' Matthew Roby has created a captivating collection of sculpture and illustrated tales, all linked to the infamous and unlucky Number 13. Together, this motley crew creates a grim fairytale for the 21st Century, one that exploits Roby's appealingly dark humour, vivid storytelling and his ability to inject life into each weirdly wonderful character. The Fateful Fable of 13 is a national touring exhibition organised by the Chapel Gallery.
T: 01695 571328
E: chapel.gallery@westlancsdc.gov.uk
www.chapelgallery.org.uk

The Fateful Fable of 13 Aaron Von Eitdrain
16 craft&design May/June 2011

Net gains
The new website Miratis offers a diverse range of British craft and design. Curated by founder Lisa Harrison, it includes such makers as ceramist Emma Clegg, glass artist Sam Sweet and milliner Uma Turan. It meets the 'need to combine premium retailing practice with authentic craftsmanship, and some of the best designer-makers currently working in the UK,' says Harrison. The former city worker's CV includes stints at Deloitte, Fidelity Investments and ICI, and she's keen to bring her business acumen to the crafts world. 'With my background, we have created a prestige shop window - one that appeals to the affluent consumer, for whom style and individuality is paramount in their choices, but who are also time-pressed,' she explains.
www.miratis.com

Tempting fate
A new touring exhibition organised by the Chapel Gallery, Ormskirk, has storytelling at its heart. *The Fateful Fable of 13* (7 May - 2 July) presents a fantastical cast all drawn from the imagination of illustrator and sculptor Matthew Roby. Fitting into the long and honourable tradition of dark tales for children, from *Struwwelpeter* to Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, Roby details the gruesome demises of his 13 characters, 'each one cursed from birth, having been born in the mysterious months of Thirteenber'. Through sketches and sculptures we meet the likes of mad teleporting scientist Jeff Glowbum, 70s rollerdisco champ Lionel Vinyl and 1930s gangster Frankie 'The Tickler' Feathers.
www.chapelgallery.org.uk

CRAFTS MAY | JUNE 2011 11

Copies of advert placed in CRAFTS and editorial already generated in national press such as CRAFTS.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Education Workshops can be planned to be inclusive of all age ranges and ability levels. It can enhance the creative curriculum by making links with other national curriculum subjects.

Matthew Roby has ten years experience as an Arts Educator and is able to plan and facilitate workshops focusing on a variety of media including sculpture, textiles, junk modelling plus mixed media and illustration. These workshops provide an engaging experience with first hand insights into the artist's creative process and the exhibition's production. Students will develop aesthetic understanding, imaginative thinking and problem solving techniques.

Matthew also encourages language and writing skills with workshops inspired by quirky stories and poems. Subject to availability, he's also happy to discuss his work and working methods during a guided tour of the exhibition.

The exhibition will arrive with Gallery Activities planned to encourage visitor engagement and participation.

These include:

- * *Teachers Resource Pack*. A informative pack that includes further information relating to the exhibition including an interview with the artist.
- * *Activity Trail*. A fun-packed activity booklet for young people to complete and take away.
- * *Laminated Detail Sheets with A4 mounted activity panel and Answer Sheets*. (These include photographs of artwork details and encourage observational skills.)
- * *Create your Own Unlucky 'Thirteenber' Character*: An A4 mounted activity panel and drawing sheets.

The Gallery Activities are included within the hire fee.

A workshop planned and facilitated by Matthew Roby can be discussed with the Chapel Gallery team.



Various family friendly events and education workshops.

CONDITIONS OF HIRE

The Fateful Fable of 13 is available to hire at a cost of £1,000 for up to and including eight weeks and £1,500 from nine to twelve weeks. This fee includes transportation both ways. Longer exhibition periods can be negotiated subject to availability but this will mean an increase in the overall hire fee.

Please note: Full conditions of hire will be forwarded with official booking forms after initial expression of interest and Provisional Booking Form is received.

PROVISIONAL BOOKING FORM

Please print, complete and return while saving a copy for your own records.

Gallery Name:.....

Gallery Address:.....

.....

Contact Name:

Position:

Telephone:.....

Email address:

I confirm that the above Gallery is interested in booking *The Fateful Fable of 13* during:

JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEPT | OCT | NOV | DEC

2011 | 2012 | 2013 | (circle as appropriate)

Please note that, although every effort is made to ensure that the exhibition period requested is secured, this is subject to availability.

I have read and agree with the conditions of hire and understand that a fee of £1,000 (up to and including eight weeks)/ £1,500 (nine to twelve weeks) is payable (circle as appropriate) on confirmation of the booking.

The Gallery agrees to indemnify all artworks while exhibited and during onward transit.

Signed: Date:

Please retain a copy of the above agreement and send the original to:

Ruth Owen, Gallery Officer
Chapel Gallery, St. Helen's Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 4QR
T: 01695 571328 E: ruth.owen@westlancs.gov.uk
W: www.chapelgallery.org.uk



LOTTERY FUNDED