

# The Magical Menagerie

UK premiere launches in  
Milton Keynes next week

16 July – 8 August



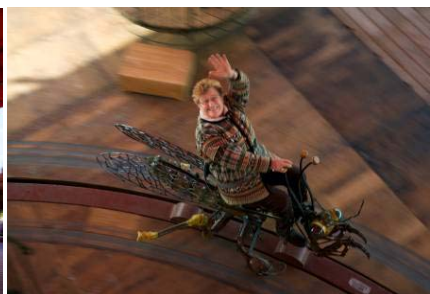
In a spectacular UK first **opening next week**, producers of extraordinary live events Artichoke bring the world of *The Magical Menagerie* - a spectacular carousel of monumental proportions and mythical creatures – to Milton Keynes as part of the Sky Arts Artichoke Season

Pioneering arts organisation **Artichoke** will present the UK premiere of *The Magical Menagerie* – a spectacular carousel of monumental proportions at the first IF: Milton Keynes International Festival, opening 16 July. Transported from its home town of Sénart in France, *The Magical Menagerie* arrived in Milton Keynes on Friday 2 July with a team of artists, engineers, technicians and specialists working together to build the colossal carousel and bring to life its cast of creatures.

Produced by Artichoke in partnership with **Sky Arts** and supported by **Arts Council England**, *The Magical Menagerie* is the creation of visionary artist and engineer **François Delarozière**. Director of French theatrical engineering company, *La Machine*, Delarozière has worked with Artichoke on two of its previous much acclaimed productions, Royal De Luxe's *The Sultan's Elephant* in London, and *La Machine* which saw a giant mechanical spider known as *La Princesse* take over the streets of Liverpool.

Brought to Milton Keynes as part of **IF: Milton Keynes International Festival**, a brand new multi-arts festival produced by **The Stables** in association with **Milton Keynes Gallery** taking place from 16 – 25 July, the carousel will remain in the city until 8 August. Accommodating 49 people each ride, the carousel's giant buffalos, exotic insects and tropical fish will come to life as the carousel starts to turn; its unique, custom-built moving elements controlled both mechanically and manually by its riders.

On 18 July and 1 August, Sky will be holding *Sky Sundays*, offering all visitors a two-for-the-price-of-one ride on *The Magical Menagerie* as well as a raft of extra entertainment designed to keep young and old amused.



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With a surface area of over 300m<sup>2</sup> and weighing 40 tonnes, *The Magical Menagerie* makes an extraordinary impact. The fourth and most ambitious carousel created by *La Machine*, this custom built work of art required the skill and imagination of nearly 50 constructors, artists, engineers, wood carvers, locksmiths, specialists, set designers and technicians to create.



Originally commissioned for the French new town, **Sénart**, as part of its innovative vision to build art into the city infrastructure, it is fitting that the world's largest and only square carousel, known in France as *Le Manège Carré Sénart*, is making its UK debut as *The Magical Menagerie* in the new town of Milton Keynes. Travelling around the world to represent Sénart outside its boundaries, *Le Manège* has previously settled in Madrid, Spain, Portimão, Portugal and Antwerp, Belgium.

*The Magical Menagerie* is the third major commission in the Sky Arts Artichoke Season, which launched in 2009 with Antony Gormley's Fourth Plinth project *One & Other* in London's Trafalgar Square and *Lumiere* in Durham.

On the first *Sky Sunday*, 18 July, **Osadia**, a troupe of insane street performers from Barcelona with a passion for hair, will transform unsuspecting passers-by into flamboyant living artworks. Volunteer models plucked from the crowd will be made-over with an eclectic range of psychedelic new hairdos, leaving a landscape dotted with bizarre relics of Osadia's artistry. Osadia will be joined by **Operaplayhouse**, opera's most dynamic duo **Karl Daymond** and **Pippa Longworth**. Fresh from their Hay Festival success, Operaplayhouse will take visitors on a whistle-stop tour of operatic classics and musical masterpieces with quite a bit of silly behaviour along the way.

Operaplayhouse will return for the second *Sky Sunday*, 1 August, along with the world-famous **Natural Theatre Company**. Renowned for their anarchic, inventive and frankly hilarious brand of street theatre for forty years, they will delight with a specially-created show comprising slapstick comedy peppered with edgy pathos, abundant originality, and a generous helping of daring absurdity thrown in for good measure.

**Nicky Webb, Co-Director, Artichoke**, said:

*"We are thrilled to be working with La Machine again to bring The Magical Menagerie to the UK for the very first time. All our work is about giving the public unforgettable, magical experiences that make them look at their surroundings in a different way. Milton Keynes is the perfect location for The Magical Menagerie, which was inspired by the similarly purpose-built 'new town' of Sénart in France."*

**Monica Ferguson, Festival Director, IF: Milton Keynes International Festival:**

*"IF: Milton Keynes International Festival will redefine Milton Keynes as a place of artistic adventure. We are delighted to be working with Artichoke - who never fail to delight with the fantastical experiences they create - and our partners Milton Keynes Council, Milton Keynes Partnership, and Milton Keynes Economy and Learning Partnership to deliver this incredible project which is a real highlight in our ambitious programme."*

*The Magical Menagerie* is produced by Artichoke in partnership with Sky Arts and supported by Arts Council England for IF: Milton Keynes International Festival 2010, produced by The Stables in association with Milton Keynes Gallery with support from Arts Council England, Milton Keynes Council, Milton Keynes Partnership, and Milton Keynes Economy and Learning Partnership.

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Arts Council England has topped its original £462,000 investment in IF: Milton Keynes International Festival with an additional £100,000 to make *The Magical Menagerie's* inclusion in the festival programme possible.

**Sally Abbott Regional Director, Arts Council England**, commented:

*"In my mind, The Magical Menagerie perfectly represents the curiosity, wonder and exhilaration that the arts can bring to people's lives. We are delighted to be able to support such a fantastic addition to what is already a hugely exciting festival programme. I look forward to seeing you there!"*

**John Cassy, Director, Sky Arts**, added:

*"We're delighted to support Artichoke in bringing The Magical Menagerie to Milton Keynes. It promises to be a fantastic day out."*

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## Ticket Sales Information

Box Office:	Telephone: 01908 280800 Online: <a href="http://www.ifmiltonkeynes.org">www.ifmiltonkeynes.org</a>
Weekday Prices:	Single Ticket £4.00 (£3.00 in advance) Family Ticket (2 adults + 2 children or 1 adult + 3 children) £12 (£10 in advance) School groups of 10 or more by arrangement: £2.50 each
Weekend Prices	Single Ticket £5.00 (£4.00 in advance) Family Ticket (2 adults + 2 children or 1 adult + 3 children) £16 (£14 in advance)
Dates & Times	Open 12 noon until 8pm daily from 16 July – 8 August Closed Mondays 26 July and 2 Aug

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## Editor's Notes

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### Artichoke

Artichoke is a registered charity, funded by Arts Council England. Artichoke works with the best creative minds to produce extraordinary shows that live in the memory forever, and believes that the arts should take place not only behind the closed doors of theatres and art galleries, but also in public places.

In May 2006, Artichoke presented the biggest piece of free theatre ever seen in the UK, Royal de Luxe's *The Sultan's Elephant*. The story of the little girl giant and the 30 foot tall elephant won the hearts of the nation and the press claimed a million people filled the streets of London to watch. In 2008 the company joined London and New York by means of Paul St George's *Telectroscope*, and people gathered day and night on both sides of the Atlantic to reunite lost family members or simply to catch a glimpse of life across the pond. Also in 2008 the company mounted the flagship event for Liverpool's Capital of Culture celebrations, with *La Machine's* 50-foot high mechanical spider and her adventures in the city. And in 2009 the company produced Antony Gormley's 100-day long invasion of the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square in London, *One & Other*, and *Lumiere*, a festival of light in Durham.

Sky Arts has generously committed to working with Artichoke for the next two years. Their support will enable Artichoke to develop new opportunities for artists to create work across the country and new ways to delight, surprise and challenge audiences everywhere.

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### François Delarozière & La Machine

François Delarozière is one of the founders of French theatrical engineering company, La Machine, which has been creating large-scale artistic events all over the world for more than fifteen years. Delarozière, a graduate of the Fine Arts School of Marseille, France and art director of La Machine, has worked with Artichoke on two of its previous productions, Royal De Luxe's acclaimed *The Sultan's Elephant* in London (2006) and *La Machine* which saw a giant mechanical spider known as *La Princesse* take over the streets of Liverpool (2008).

Delarozière is also the inventor of three other carousels: the *Manège Magique* (1994), the *Beau Manège à Toulouse* (1996) and the *Manège d'Andréa* (1999).

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## Sky Arts: On Screen, Online, On stage, and On the Streets

Sky is all about providing choice. That includes giving arts lovers the content they are passionate about, and making great arts accessible to everyone.

### **On-screen**

Sky Arts is the only stable of television channels in the UK dedicated entirely to the arts, screening 24 hours a day, every day on Sky Arts 1, Sky Arts 2, Sky Arts 1 HD and Sky Arts 2 HD. Highlights include a world first in opera simulcasting, screening the first night of ENO's *La bohème* on Sky Arts 2 whilst simultaneously broadcasting all of the backstage action live on Sky Arts 1; *Songbook*, a series of one on one interviews and acoustic performances from seminal songwriters and *The Book Show* - the only television programme in the UK dedicated solely to books. Sky Arts also run 24 smaller scale partnerships a year with arts organisations from across the UK. Each partnership sees Sky Arts produce a specially filmed *Sky Arts At...* documentary, giving viewers a unique view of the artistic process from behind the scenes. 2010 partnerships include Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Artes Mundi and National Theatre of Scotland.

### **Online**

[sky.com/arts](http://sky.com/arts) showcases the variety of content available on Sky Arts' channels with with highlight clips, programme information and offers.

### **On the streets**

Sky is also one of the largest corporate sponsors of arts in the UK, working with The Guardian Hay Festival and the English National Ballet amongst others. Sky Arts has a two-year partnership with Artichoke, the UK's leading public arts producer. The first project in the Sky Arts Artichoke Season was Antony Gormley's proposal for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square. One & Other. This was followed by *Lumiere*, a festival of light in Durham.

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## IF: Milton Keynes International Festival

Taking place from 16-25 July and inspired by the unique architectural landscape of the city, IF: Milton Keynes International Festival presents a world-class, multi-arts programme which will include large-scale family events, concerts, theatre, dance, music and visual arts installations in unusual locations across central Milton Keynes – such as boulevards, parks, public squares, disused buildings, and also using the online and digital realm.

Produced by The Stables in association with Milton Keynes Gallery, it was developed with the initial support of £462,000 from Arts Council England South East following a collaboration between The Stables and Milton Keynes Gallery, both Regularly Funded Organisations of Arts Council England.

Following the inaugural festival in 2010, the next IF: Milton Keynes will take place in 2012.

[www.stables.org](http://www.stables.org) [www.ifmiltonkeynes.org](http://www.ifmiltonkeynes.org)

## Arts Council England

Arts Council England (ACE) is the national development agency for the arts investing funds from the National Lottery and the Government into arts organisations and artists. The mission of Arts Council England is great art for everyone, believing that the arts have the potential to change people's lives; support young people to fulfil their potential; and make an important contribution to the economy.

Arts Council England is committed to supporting the development of Milton Keynes' cultural infrastructure. Their investment of more than £462,000 to the international festival lies at the heart of that.

The Arts Council has been a longstanding investor and supporter of the city's cultural offer. The Stables and Milton Keynes Gallery are receiving a total of £1.9 million in regular funding during 2008-11. In addition, recent project funding into the city's arts organisations includes:

- Rendezvous - £118,508 to support The Stables to work with the MK Dons to bring singing back to the terraces
- MKFringe - the 2009 Milton Keynes Fringe Festival was supported with more than £43,769 in Grants for the arts funding towards a programme of public art across the city, featuring the work of both local and international artists

Milton Keynes City Orchestra – last year ACE awarded the orchestra £54,774 for its project Make Music, which is creating more opportunities for the people of Milton Keynes to get involved with the orchestra and experience the joys of making music

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# Contacts

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## For further information / Use of pictures / Interviews

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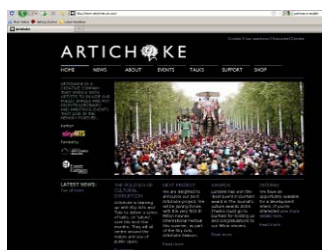
## Websites



[www.ideageneration.co.uk](http://www.ideageneration.co.uk)

For:

- Online Press Office
- Client list
- Company contact details



[www.artichoke.uk.com](http://www.artichoke.uk.com)

For:

- Information on Artichoke
- Information on *The Magical Menagerie*



[www.ifmiltonkeynes.org](http://www.ifmiltonkeynes.org)

For:

- Festival information
- Full programme details
- Purchase tickets