

CLASSIC DRIVER

Automata as an Art Form: The M.A.D. Gallery

Lead

Describing itself as “a captivating universe of kinetic art where Horological Machines and Mechanical Art Devices reign supreme”, the M.A.D. Gallery in Geneva proves there’s more to the world of ‘complications’ than a moon-phase, multiple-time-zone watch.

The man behind the gallery is Maximilian Büsser, the founder of MB&F watches. MB&F makes some of the world’s most unusual watches, employing mechanisms more often seen in antique clockwork toys or fairgrounds.

The jump from watches to the similarly unique works of mechanical art was an obvious one.

“We saw the M.A.D. Gallery as the perfect platform to showcase our own machines, as well as other pieces of kinetic art by other creators whom we greatly admire,” said Büsser.





Artists exhibiting in the gallery include the Japanese Tatsuya Matsui, who has exhibited work at the Venice Biennale, New York's MoMA, as well as the Museum of Decorative Arts inside the Louvre. Since 2001, when he founded Flower Robotics Inc., Matsui and his team have invested their energies into developing humanoid robots – machines that do not just mimic the appearance of human beings, but also move with the same grace and poise while even remembering the different effects their posturing has had on onlookers.

Berlin artist Frank Buchwald started his career as a freelance painter and illustrator before deciding to focus on creating 'light objects'. His Machine Lights series comprises 12 different models, each one manually produced from as many as 200 individual components made from raw steel and brass which are then meticulously hand-burnished to create a black surface structure. Meanwhile, bulbs and light tubes with partially visible filaments or yellow surface evaporation help his creations to emit a mysterious glow.

Büsser is delighted with the project: "MB&F create machines that tell the time, not to tell the time. They are unique examples of mechanical horology but, more than that, they are pieces of three-dimensional kinetic art.

"The same goes for all the creators featured in the gallery: their craft transcends a practical purpose and their creations assume the status of artworks."

The MB&F – M.A.D. Gallery can be found at Rue Verdaine 11, 1204 Geneva, Switzerland.

Photos: MAD Gallery

Gallery

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