

MET MUSEUM PRESENTS

The Return

Created by Reid Farrington

July 11 through August 2, 2015

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Motherboard. "This IRL Choose-Your-Own Adventure Game Lets You Recreate a Smashed Masterpiece." July 10, 2015

Computer Graphics World. "A Masterpiece Comes to Life." July 9, 2015

Broadway World "'The Return' to Premiere 7/11 at the Metropolitan Museum" June 23, 2015

DE LA CHUTE À LA RÉSURRECTION

Douze ans après une chute dramatique, la statue Adam de Tullio Lombardo reprend vie au Metropolitan Museum of Art de New York en versions originale et virtuelle. Quand la technologie, l'art et l'histoire se télescopent et font bon ménage.

YVES SCHAËFFNER

COLLABORATION SPÉCIALE

NEW YORK — Douze ans : c'est le nombre d'années qu'ont mis les éminents spécialistes du Met à restaurer la statue Adam du sculpteur vénitien Tullio Lombardo. Il faut dire que la tâche était colossale.

Le 6 octobre 2002, le piédestal de ladite statue avait flanché et Adams'était retrouvé sur le sol en 28 morceaux et plusieurs centaines de petits fragments.

Si, selon un des gardes de l'institution, le Met n'a pas pris de temps à montrer la porte à l'auteur du piédestal défectueux, la restauration, elle, s'est révélée bien plus complexe. « Le Met a fait appel à de nouvelles technologies et à des méthodes qui n'avaient jamais été utilisées auparavant », précise Reid Farrington, l'artiste multimédia à l'origine de la version virtuelle de la statue datant du XVe siècle.

Le Met a notamment eu recours à un type d'adhésif jamais utilisé pour un projet de cette ampleur. Les restaurateurs ont également choisi de remplacer les traditionnelles tiges de fer par des tiges en fibre de carbone, en plus d'imprimer des versions 3D des morceaux pour faire des tests d'assemblage grandeur nature.

UN RETOUR RÉEL ET VIRTUEL

Le résultat de ce casse-tête herculéen est aujourd'hui visible dans la salle 504 du musée. La statue de marbre a retrouvé sa majestueuse stature de 6 pieds 3 pouces.

Qui plus est, on peut désormais découvrir à ses côtés une version virtuelle d'Adam, tout aussi impressionnante. Cet Adam est la création de Reid Farrington et de son équipe.

S'inspirant du travail des restaurateurs, Reid Farrington a créé une sorte d'avatar du « premier homme », incarné par un acteur portant une combinaison dotée de senseurs.

Le principe s'apparente à celui utilisé dans certains jeux vidéo ou au cinéma, que l'on pense aux personnages bleutés du film Avatar ou au Gollum du Seigneur des anneaux.

La différence ? L'acteur derrière l'Adam numérique performe en direct d'un auditorium situé à proximité, dans le département d'art égyptien. Il est en lien constant et direct avec une actrice qui, elle, est dans la salle 504 avec le public et l'Adam de Tullio Lombardo.

Drôle, informatif, érudit, cabotin, l'Adam de Farrington peut en fait prendre trois formes : il est parfois l'Adam biblique, parfois l'Adam de Tullio Lombardo ou l'Adam virtuel. En compagnie de l'actrice-guide, le personnage projeté sur un écran à deux faces interprète plus d'une vingtaine de petites scènes. La performance s'intitule The Return.

Et c'est le public qui choisit les saynètes en désignant une des parties de la sculpture. Chacune des courtes histoires présente une facette d'Adam.

« Quand le Met m'avait invité à collaborer à un autre projet, j'avais assisté à un séminaire avec des spécialistes de Michel-Ange venus de partout dans le monde. Et j'avais remarqué qu'ils essayaient tous de faire des blagues, d'être accessibles. Ils faisaient notamment des jeux de mots en latin et s'amusaient beaucoup. Évidemment, cela me passait 10 pieds au-dessus de la tête, mais j'ai voulu conserver cet amour et cette passion pour l'histoire de l'art et les rendre accessibles », précise Reid Farrington.

Force est d'admettre qu'il a réussi son pari. Si certains cabotinages peuvent agacer le spectateur, ce dernier se délectera en découvrant les origines de la statue, comment elle a été sculptée dans un seul bloc de marbre, la chute d'Adam au musée en 2002, etc.

Itsnewstoyou

Daring Docent Dishes with Digital Adam at The Met

July 29, 2015



Digital Adam and the Docent reenact what Paradise was like before The Fall

There's no need to check into the Met after hours to see a classical statue come to life. In Renaissance gallery 504 on the main floor, a digital version of Tullio Lombardo's 15th-century Adam is interacting with visitors and a knowledgeable Docent in Reid Farrington's *The Return* performance through August 2.

The Return is quite a production and its illusions created in the Italian Renaissance gallery would make any animation fan jump for joy.

Classical Adam (the marble one) is installed prominently in the gallery where half the performance takes place. Its presence is a miracle, since the beautiful Renaissance sculpture totally shattered in a freak fall in 2002.

To repair it – a complex undertaking — Met team made a digital replica of all the pieces to decide how to fit everything back together again and spent years making it whole.

Now, it's Digital Adam who's the fascinating co-star of the show, brought back to life by performance artist Reid Farrington who envisioned a tribute to the virtuosity of the Met's conservation team who so flawlessly reassembled Tullio's Adam.

The other half of the performance involves an improv actor, a motion sensor suit, and a crew of digital engineers and prop masters, all camped out on the stage of the Met's auditorium in the

Egyptian wing. As the stage actor moves in the auditorium, Digital Adam moves, speaks, answers questions, and holds up a Warhol and a Van Gogh inside his lifesize digital frame in the Renaissance gallery to the delight of the audience and his sidekick, The Docent. See photos on our Flickr feed.

The audience decides what part of Classical Adam's renovation will get discussed next, but the witty duo soon veer off into other fascinating topics:

What does it feel like to always look good and never age? Does Classical Adam remember back to the marble quarry? Does Biblical Adam remember what Garden of Eden was like before the Fall? Adam's clever responses reveal that his Eden experience was a lot about infinity pools and the good life.

At one point, Digital Adam invites the Docent to portray Eve in his telling of what happened after the Serpent appeared with that apple. Then the attention turns back to Classical Adam, as the Docent shows Lombardo's thinking about that particular moment portrayed in marble.

These two need their own ongoing talk show about history, time and space in some corner of the Met. Until August 2, ask the information desk for The Return's program and go marvel at both the gallery and the behind-the-scenes performances. Or go to the live stream on the Met Museum's website.

After meeting Digital Adam, you'll never again wonder about what's going on inside Classical Adam's cool, calm, beautiful marble head.

This Week in New York

26Jul/15

MET MUSEUM PRESENTS: THE RETURN



Avatar Adam offers insight into the reconstruction of Tullio Lombardo's Renaissance Adam in interactive performance installation at the Met (photo by twi-ny/mdr)

Metropolitan Museum of Art
Venetian Sculpture of the Renaissance (Gallery 504)
Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium
1000 Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.
Daily through August 2, free with recommended admission \$12-\$25
212-535-7710
www.metmuseum.org

A museum disaster, a literal “fall of Adam,” has led to one of the Met’s most intriguing new pieces and a surprising venture into both digital and performance art. In October 2002, Tullio Lombardo’s late-fifteenth-century marble statue of Adam collapsed to the ground and shattered into more than two hundred fragments, its pedestal giving way to its half-ton weight. In reconstructing what Met assistant curator calls “the most important sculpture from Renaissance Venice to be found outside that city today,” the museum employed digital technology that new media artist Reid Farrington has transformed into an educational and very entertaining interactive two-part installation. Farrington has previously used multiple screens and live performers in such presentations as Tyson vs. Ali (a fictional bout between the two champions), The Passion Project (reimagining Carl Theodor Dreyer’s 1928 film, The Passion of Joan of Arc), and Gin & “It” (a complex behind-the-scenes staging of Alfred Hitchcock’s Rope). Now he brings the restoration of “Adam” back to life with the interactive performance

installation "The Return." In the specially designed Gallery 504, "Adam," which was commissioned for the tomb of Venice doge Andrea Vendramin, stands atop a new base, an apple in his left hand, his right hand clutching a bare branch of the Tree of Knowledge. Also in the room is a large-scale two-sided monitor that is like a supersized iPhone in which an animated Biblical Adam and a digital avatar of the sculpture discuss free will, determinism, God, compression and shearing, and other lofty subjects with an actor-docent (Cara Francis, Catherine Gowl, or Stephanie Regina), who navigates the performance by focusing on the museum's groundbreaking reconstruction of the sculpture in brief, ever-changing explanations of specific parts of the sculpture, including the elbow, the torso, and the upper tree trunk. Visitors are encouraged to interact with the digital performer and the docent, so every performance is slightly different.

L'ADAMO DI TULLIO LOMBARDO PRENDE VITA AL MET

16/07/2015



Una scultura dell'artista rinascimentale Tullio Lombardo dà vita ad un'installazione multimediale esposta al Metropolitan Museum of Art per tutto il mese di luglio.

Si tratta del celebre Adamo, lo stesso che si infranse in centinaia di pezzi nel 2002 e che il MET ha provveduto a restaurare in maniera spettacolare.

Da una sua costola nasce questa volta un'opera interattiva che coinvolge dinamicamente i visitatori guidandoli nell'esplorazione dei complessi aspetti della ricostruzione che ha richiesto dodici anni di lavori.

Un intervento storicamente difficile e scientificamente pionieristico. Le energie investite, le ricerche sviluppate e i traguardi raggiunti vengono sintetizzati in un'altra opera d'arte, "The Return" frutto della collaborazione tra il media artist Reid Farrington e i curatori e restauratori del MET.

La statua che cadde dal suo podio in un poetico parallelo con la biblica caduta di Adamo, avrà dunque un avatar digitale e tre distinte personalità basate sul personaggio dell'Antico Testamento, sulla scultura originale, e sui rendering 3D creati dagli scienziati del MET come strumento per ricollocare al loro posto i frammenti della statua.

Ad animarlo: un attore in carne ed ossa vestito di una tuta motion capture, in movimento su un palco nascosto da qualche parte nel museo e impegnato perciò in una performance live.

Une statue italienne reprend vie dans un musée New Yorkais

By Manon Derdevet 16/07/2015



Il s'agit presque d'une nouvelle renaissance pour cet Adam de marbre sculpté par l'Italien Tullio Lombardo. Le Metropolitan Museum of Art de New York propose une installation numérique originale, qui donne littéralement vie à une statue vieille de plus de six siècles.

Après une rénovation de douze ans, l'expert en multimédia et en numérique Reid Farrington a présenté le 11 juillet dernier un écran de deux mètres, installé au centre de la salle des statues vénitienes de la Renaissance du Met.

Intitulé *Le Retour*, cette étonnante installation imagine un Adam qui parle, marche et interagit avec les visiteurs. Reid Farrington a imaginé selon le New York Times plusieurs personnalités pour cette statue élaborée entre 1490 et 1495. Adam n'est plus seulement un jeune homme innocent mais devient, à travers l'écran, un personnage complexe capable de réécrire l'histoire biblique à l'heure contemporaine.

Une performance en direct

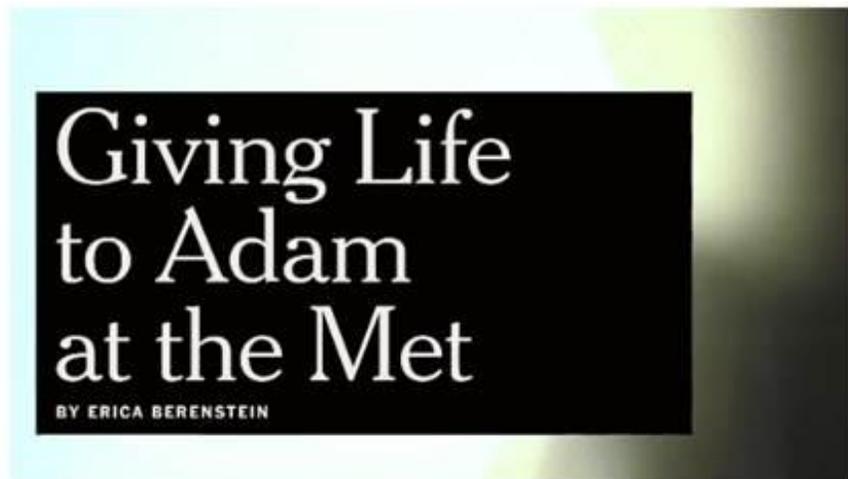
Placée dans le musée pour la durée d'un mois, cette performance en 3D jette un pont entre Renaissance et art numérique, est réalisée en direct. Adam est joué par un acteur, dans un studio adjacent, qui utilise la technique de la «motion-capture» chère à Hollywood, lui permettant de mouvoir la statue en temps réel. Dans la galerie, une actrice joue la «guide» et parle avec la statue pour faire le lien entre l'installation et les visiteurs. Elle donne la réplique à la statue selon un script bien défini, et fait ressortir les différents aspects de sa personnalité.

L'installation revisite ainsi l'histoire d'Adam et celle du paradis perdu, à laquelle fait référence ce jeune homme tenant une pomme dans la main. Farrington mélange ainsi les traditions bibliques, la Renaissance et le présent du numérique au cœur de cette installation très ludique.

Après l'expérience de la «Living Joconde» en France, le dialogue entre numérique et l'art semble plus que jamais d'actualité.

The New York Times

A Shattered Adam Statue Comes to Life at the Met



A sculpture by the Renaissance artist Tullio Lombardo has given birth to a multimedia installation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, on exhibit through August 2. By Erica Berenstein on July 14, 2015. Photo by Brian Harkin for The New York Times. Watch in Times Video »

Link to Video: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/11/arts/design/a-shattered-adam-statue-comes-to-life-at-the-met.html?ref=design&_r=2

BLOUIN ARTINFO

Bruguera's Passport Returned, USC Dropouts Get Gallery Show, and More

BY ANNELIESE COOPER, NOELLE BODICK | JULY 13, 2015

— Met Makes a Statue Speak: After a 15th-century marble statue of Adam crashed to the floor of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in October in 2002, the work has come to life as an interactive video installation at the Venetian Sculpture Gallery. The gregarious statue employs the same technology found in computer-generated characters in movies like “The Lord of the Rings” and “Avatar.” Meanwhile, over in Paris, an interactive Mona Lisa is also coming to life with digital technology. The digital Mona Lisa paintings will be sold for “a few hundred euros,” some embedded on a pendant or jewels.

HYPERALLERGIC

Sensitive to Art & its Discontents

A Once Shattered Statue Is Now Part of a Theatrical Experiment at the Metropolitan Museum

By Allison Meier on July 13, 2015



'The Return' digital performance and Tullio Lombardo's "Adam" (1490-95) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (all photos by the author for Hyperallergic)

"How many times is a sculpture sculpted?" one of the docent performers asks in *The Return*, an interactive digital piece staged alongside Tullio Lombardo's "Adam" (1490–95) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The answer is that everything is in constant flux due to time, but "Adam" had two major points of creation: his Italian Renaissance sculpting and the 12-year restoration after his pedestal buckled in 2002 and the marble statue smashed into bits.

The Return opened last Saturday, running through museum hours until August 2. It's directed by Reid Farrington, who last year at Coil Festival presented *Tyson vs. Ali*, a match between the

two boxers that never happened, imagined with both video and live performance. Similarly *The Return* involves actors in the small gallery where the meticulously reconstructed “Adam” was unveiled last November. One serves as a docent for visitors while in the Egyptian Wing’s Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, another performer plays Adam through motion capture technology, a realtime avatar responding on a six-foot screen in the gallery. This theater is open to visitors who want to witness the tech behind the piece.

“We try to create work that’s very specific to the Met as opposed to a touring concert or something that could happen anywhere else,” Limor Tomer, general manager of concerts and lectures, told *Hyperallergic*. She cited a recent collaboration the museum had with the Civilians theater group in the Temple of Dendur, and *La Celestina*, a digitally mapped opera in the Vélaz Blanco Patio by performance company ERRATICA and shadow puppet specialists Manual Cinema. “It’s about how you do theater in an authentic way in a museum,” she said.

On entering the “Adam” statue’s gallery, which will soon become the museum’s new Venetian Sculpture of the Renaissance gallery, audience members select short stories represented by broken statue fragments. For example, the hand grasping the apple, held upside down in an attempt to hide the fateful bite taken from it, returns viewers to the Biblical story of the Garden of Eden.

“We’re trying to tell the story in a factual way, but give it an emotional color so you can hear it,” Director Farrington said. He noted there’s a parallel between the fall of Adam and the fall of the statue, and the script by Sara Farrington explores this history with the avatar actor taking on various personas, including Adam of the Old Testament, Tullio’s Adam, and a digital Adam based on the 3D scans made of the sculpture during the long period of conservation. “What was important to us was to tell a story that could reach a large audience,” Farrington added.

There’s definitely an effort for contemporary humor that might get a little grating if you lingered in the gallery all day (for example, a Digital Adam that despairs about never aging is transformed into a bearded statue complaining about \$4.50 coffees and “kids today”). These skits are clearly meant to engage people briefly, albeit much longer than they would ordinarily stay with a single work of art. Farrington noted that due to our familiarity with screens, paintings and two dimensional works can often feel more accessible than sculpture, which requires more interaction from the viewer. “You walk from left to right and there’s a change to his expression, a shame to biting the apple,” he said.

The Return is at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1000 Fifth Avenue, Upper East Side, Manhattan) from July 11 to August 2.

Renaissance sculpture Adam brought to interactive life with mocap and digital puppetry

By Michael Burns on July 13, 2015



The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is staging an interactive digital performance installation to celebrate the restoration and return of the Italian Renaissance sculpture Adam (ca. 1490–95) by Tullio Lombardo.

The statue suffered a catastrophic fall in 2002, but has been painstakingly restored.

Designed and directed by new media artist Reid Farrington, and commissioned by the live arts series Met Museum Presents, The Return blends digital animation with live performance and motion capture to tell the story of the sculpture's creation, travels and return to the gallery.

Farrington said, "My vision was to bring Adam to life in a believable and genuinely interactive way. By using a motion capture rig and IKinema LiveAction for Unreal Engine 4 to drive the animation in real time, I've been able to deliver the level of realism I wanted."

Animation design consultant Athomas Goldberg of Lifelike & Believable designed and built the digital puppetry system, which enables visitors to interact in real time with 'digital Adam'.

Guests can speak directly to the digital character and pose questions, as well as visit the mocap theatre within the Museum for a behind-the-scenes experience.

The Return has been more than two years in development and from the outset the team agreed to the fundamental principle of no pre-recorded material – everything is generated live to ensure each visitor’s experience is unique and engaging.

The result is two hours of material spanning 14 scenes with two characters – digital Adam and a museum docent who leads visitors through the performance.

As the performance runs all day, during Museum hours, there are three pairs of performers who have been trained to drive the puppetry system when not performing, enabling them to control the pre-set lighting, audio and effects. The 16-camera OptiTrack system is hooked up to Natural Point's Motive software, which streams the mocap data to IKinema LiveAction for solving and retargeting into Unreal Engine 4.

Goldberg said: “We’re using IKinema LiveAction to drive both the characters and the props. There are other full-body IK solutions out there, but nothing that gave me the flexibility and modularity to create a runtime rig exactly to my specifications, with the ability to easily adapt to each of the actor's unique proportions in a wide variety of rapidly changing environments and situations.”

AO

Art Observed

MET DIGITAL INITIATIVE GIVES VOICE TO TULLIO LOMBARDO'S ADAM

July 12th, 2015



Tullio Lombardo's Renaissance statue of Adam, which famously fell from its pedestal at The Met and was smashed to pieces, is back on view after a lengthy restoration, accompanied by a digital video project and performance that gives the work a multi-faceted, occasionally irreverent voice. The project is a continuation of The Met's ongoing emphasis on direct engagement of visitors with its collection through performance and new technology.

FLAUNT

10 JULY 2015

NO MORE I LOVE EWES

Hello Darling, it's Me, Your Weekly Revelations

//GIMME THAT APPLE//

Adam has returned and he's looking for his Eve. Back in 2002, a fifteenth-century six-foot-two marble statue of our original father fell to the ground and shattered. Now, after a twelve-year restoration project, the statue has been resurrected in a special gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. To celebrate the return, Reid Farrington, a multimedia director, has created a live, interactive installation aptly titled "The Return." The exhibition opens tomorrow, with about four shows a day.

Shattered "Adam" Sculpture Gets a Digital Makeover at the Met

By Rebecca Sarvady July 10, 2015



On October 6, 2002, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, every museum director's worst nightmare became a reality. A statue fell. In this case, it was the 15th century, 6'3" statue of Adam made by Venetian sculptor Tullio Lombardo. In what was considered a fluke occurrence, the pedestal containing the statue buckled, dropping Adam to the hard floor, breaking the statue into 28 sizable chunks of marble and thousands of miniscule shards.

For twelve years, a group of restorers tediously recreated the work using these broken pieces (you can see the project's final stages in a time-lapse [here](#)), and in November of 2014, Adam was back on display. But the New York Times reports that a new installation will bring back yet another version of Adam: not one restored out of broken shards and patience, but one made up of 0 and 1's. In an upcoming installment called "The Return," Adam is presented as a digital statue, placed on a 6-foot high screen in the middle of the museum's sculpture gallery. This technological piece of art is part of the museum's modernist attempt to be "engaging people directly rather than merely displaying artifacts behind a monolithic facade."

Created by Reid Farrington and made using \$70,000 dollar software equipment from a New York polytechnical college, "The Return" Adam can carry out several different kinds of scripted

museum conversations with a gallery's prepared Met employee. Motion for the avatar is provide in real-time by actors in a nearby auditorium wearing motion-picture suits.

The Times claims that Farrington's Adam suffers from "multiple personality-disorder," as the statue will talk as three personas: the CPU adam; the marble adam (fully aware of being a piece of marble crafted by man) and Adam, as the biblical figure, which Lombardo based his creation on. Visitors will be able to choose whether they want to hear about the creation of digital adam, Renaissance art, or even get a goofy "What's Up" from the guileless biblical Adam.

The exhibition begins Saturday and will run for three weeks. No where else can someone say they've talked to Adam or seen him "doing a little jig."

Once Shattered, a Met Museum Statue Now Moves and Talks

The interactive theater piece is part art-history lesson, part comedy routine

By Jennifer Smith July 10, 2015

Video Link: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/once-shattered-a-met-museum-statue-now-moves-and-talks-1436570743>



Tullio Lombardo's "Adam," restored after a fall, moves and talks through virtual versions of itself in "The Return," an interactive theater piece by Reid Farrington open July 11 to Aug. 2 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photo: Cassandra Giraldo

Tullio Lombardo's "Adam," the 15th-century sculpture that shattered into hundreds of pieces in 2002 after its pedestal gave way, already has been reincarnated once.

This month, visitors who stop by the Metropolitan Museum of Art to see the reassembled version will encounter not one Adam, but four: the 6-foot, 3-inch-tall marble statue, plus three virtual versions, played by a live actor in a motion-capture suit.

It is all part of “The Return,” an interactive theater piece by director and new-media artist Reid Farrington that playfully tweaks museum conventions, with the aid of an 80-inch LCD display mounted in the Met’s Venetian sculpture gallery.

Part art-history lesson, part comedy routine, the installation uses animation and video-game technology to guide viewers through the stories behind the creation, fall and painstaking 12-year restoration of a Renaissance masterwork carved more than five centuries earlier.

An actress playing a docent invites visitors to choose from a menu of statue fragments—the elbow, for example, or the left hand. There are 13 in all, each of which triggers a different scripted episode.

“The right leg broke off here and here,” the avatar known as Digital Adam said on-screen at a recent rehearsal. “The left leg broke into six fragments. Here,” he said, pointing to spot on his stony thigh. “Here. Here. Here. Here and here.”

After the pedestal supporting the 770-pound statue collapsed, the Met’s conservation team made laser scans of the marble fragments. The images were used to create three-dimensional models that enabled the team to virtually reassemble the statue and perform a structural analysis that helped them predict how different adhesives and materials might perform.

“The whole thing was inspired by the scans,” Mr. Farrington said during a break between rehearsals.

Digital Adam, the avatar who gets the most screen time, primly explains the facts behind the sculpture’s fall and reassembly, sometimes jumping in to contradict the docent’s account.

Other segments introduce Tullio’s “Adam,” who describes his creation from a hunk of white and blue-veined Carrara marble extracted from a Tuscan quarry by “a team of peasants and ex-cons.”

Picking the statue’s left hand—the one holding the apple—launches a tour of a verdant, pre-fall Garden of Eden. Biblical Adam, a genial version of the statue who talks like a stoned surfer, gambols through digital grass and takes a dip in an infinity pool before biting into the forbidden apple.

“OK, freeze,” said the docent, played at this rehearsal by actress Catherine Gowl. “That, that, is the moment Tullio Lombardo was striving to capture in his sculpture of Adam.”

Down the hall at the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, where the stage has been transformed into a motion-capture studio, her acting partner, Gavin Price, mimed taking a bite of the apple.

“Oh my God. Whoa,” said Mr. Price. He wore a head-mounted microphone and a black stretchy unitard dotted with about 50 small balls, markers that allow his movements to be captured by banks of digital cameras mounted around the stage. “This is the best Crunch Fruit I’ve ever tasted in my life.”

Three sets of actors play the roles of Adam and the female docent, who strolls around the small gallery, asking visitors questions and circling the two-sided LCD display.

When not performing, the actors also pitch in with technical duties, controlling lighting and other variables.

The idea behind “The Return” is “to play with the way you spend time with a sculpture,” said Limor Tomer, general manager of the museum’s concerts and lectures program.

The installation posed multiple challenges. First, Mr. Farrington had to create a piece of theater that would work in a gallery that only holds about 40 people at a time.

It is also the most technologically complicated performance piece the Met has mounted yet, Ms. Tomer said.

“We’re pulling together a lot of technology used for film and videogame production, and applying them to live production,” said game designer Athomas Goldberg, who wrote the software knitting the pieces together.

Glitches can—and do—occur. Sometimes the software crashes, prompting the system to play “Tijuana Taxi” by Herb Alpert while it reboots.

At one point in the rehearsal, Ms. Gowl moved to the rear of the LCD display, passing through a blind spot in the hidden cameras that help Adam monitor what is happening in the gallery.

“She’s on the other side of you,” Mr. Farrington said, making a spiraling motion above his head.

He encourages his actors to embrace such hiccups: “Everybody knows that with technology things break down, so we just own it and let the audience know that it’s OK and part of the performance.”

During the piece’s July 11 to Aug. 2 run, the auditorium will be open to the public, so people can see the back end of the motion-capture process, warts and all.

“Every mistake is an opportunity,” Mr. Farrington said. “When the sculpture fell and broke, that was a huge mistake. But I think the Met has done more than own it.”

A Shattered Adam Statue Comes to Life at the Met

By FRANK ROSE JULY 10, 2015

What if Adam could talk? Not just any Adam, but the 15th-century marble statue that crashed to the floor of the Metropolitan Museum of Art — all 6 feet 3 inches of him — one dismal October evening in 2002. The Adam that was recently, after a 12-year restoration project, installed in a special gallery for Venetian sculpture of the Renaissance. What might he say?

For three weeks starting Saturday, visitors can find out. Reid Farrington, a multimedia director, has brought the statue to life, on a six-foot-high video screen at the center of the Venetian Sculpture Gallery. As presented in “The Return,” the interactive installation Mr. Farrington has created for the Met, this newly imagined Adam is liable to offer up a learned disquisition on the use of fig leaves in Renaissance art or an irreverent “What’s up, dudes?”

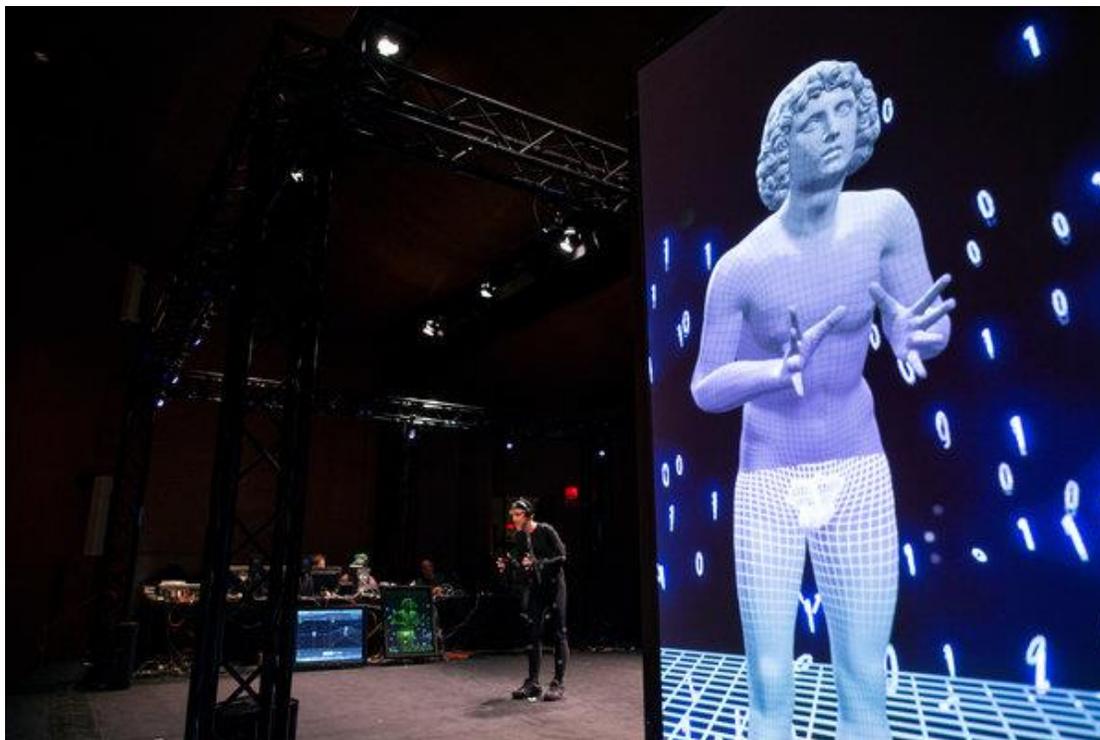
Mr. Farrington’s creation appears to suffer from multiple-personality disorder, because he does in fact have three personalities: There’s Digital Adam, an avatar based on the 3-D rendering that the museum’s conservators ordered up in their effort to figure out how to put the fallen statue back together. There’s Tullio’s Adam, named after Tullio Lombardo, the Renaissance sculptor who completed the original work around 1495. And there’s biblical Adam, a rendering of the scriptural figure the statue depicts.



Stephanie Regina, an actress portraying a museum docent, engaging with the digital avatar of Adam in “The Return,” an interactive installation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. At right, Tullio Lombardo’s original marble sculpture. Credit Brian Harkin for The New York Times

The performances are live, with all three Adams played by a single actor wearing a motion-capture suit, on a stage elsewhere in the building. Inside the gallery, a second actor plays a docent who talks with museumgoers, while engaging in a running dialogue with the three faces of Adam on video — not to mention the occasional on-screen guest. “Let’s hear from God how great Eden was,” the docent says at one point.

The statue itself, newly reconstructed from 28 large pieces and hundreds of minuscule shards, looms over the whole scene from its perch in a niche in the wall. Like much Renaissance art, it tells a story — a youth looking anxiously toward the heavens, an apple in his hand, his lips apart. But Mr. Farrington’s installation is much more in line with museum trends, which put a premium on engaging people directly rather than merely displaying artifacts behind a monolithic facade.



Jack Frederick, center, surrounded by the motion-capture gear that conveys his performance as the digital Adam. Credit Brian Harkin for The New York Times

Digital Adam and Tullio’s Adam both have a certain kind of smarts — one thinks like a computer, and the other has long existed, first as stone buried within the earth, then as a block of marble in a Venetian studio, and finally as a sculpture representing man at his fateful moment. But biblical Adam “is a 17-year-old dude,” Limor Tomer, head of the Met’s concerts and lectures division, said as she watched Mr. Farrington and his tech team tinker with the installation earlier this week. “He knows nothing. He has no life experience.” Some may find this characterization surprising — the guy did eat from the tree of knowledge after being warned not to. And then, on being expelled from the Garden, he was, like, “huh?”

In fairness to Adam, curators and conservators at the Met had more or less the same response when Ms. Tomer suggested bringing in Mr. Farrington to tell the story of a statue through a video. It was Thomas P. Campbell, the Met's director, and Luke Syson, head of its Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, who decided on Adam.

Since video can be confusing to museum visitors who have no idea how long it's been playing or when it will end, "The Return" tells the story of all three Adams in modular fashion. Digital renderings of 26 of the 28 major pieces from 2002 appear on-screen, a few at a time; audience members pick one, setting off a scripted, three-to-six-minute exchange between the avatar and the docent.

The dialogue — written by Sara Farrington, Mr. Farrington's wife — tends toward the dramatic, with the docent in particular at risk of overacting. Still, it conveys information about such subjects as the corrupt Venetian doge for whose tomb the work was commissioned, the accident that befell the masterpiece at the Met and, yes, fig leaves. And the overall effect, based on technology assembled by Todd Bryant, the project's creative technologist, is remarkable.



Visitors to the museum will be able to watch the motion-capture actors performing in the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium. Credit Brian Harkin for The New York Times

Mr. Farrington first gained notice for "The Passion Project," an unconventional blend of film and theater that was staged in 2008 at Performance Space 122 in the East Village. A veteran of

the Wooster Group, he had created that half-hour theater piece by incorporating fragments from Carl Dreyer's twice-destroyed silent film, "The Passion of Joan of Arc," into a live solo performance that one reviewer called "luminous." He has since worked repeatedly to combine movies and television with live performance. "I used to direct my brothers," he said over lunch in the Met's cafeteria. "I have a childlike desire to go inside a film and bring the audience with me."

"The Return" is his first work to rely on motion capture. This technology has been used for years in movies and video games to record actors' performances and map them to computer-generated characters — for Gollum in Peter Jackson's "The Lord of the Rings" and the Na'vi in James Cameron's "Avatar." But only recently has the technology advanced to the point that a relatively affordable system can transform a motion-capture session into a live performance by a digital avatar.

Mr. Farrington and his team created "The Return" on a \$70,000 hardware system that was lent by New York University's Polytechnic School of Engineering. It relies on the Unreal Engine, a now classic software tool that was originally developed in the late 1990s for the video game Unreal and was adapted for "The Return" by Athomas Goldberg, a Vancouver-based game design and computer graphics consultant.

Of course, none of this will be evident to museumgoers watching the three Adams on-screen in the Met's Venetian Sculpture Gallery. But anyone who wants a peek behind the curtain can head over to the Egyptian Wing to the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, take a seat and watch the actor who plays Adam firsthand.

Around Labor Day, after "The Return" has ended its run, this gallery will resemble others at the Met, with a Renaissance statuary — including a Madonna and Child by Pietro Lombardo, Tullio's father — and a hushed contemplative feel. But for the next three weeks, the place will seem not quite so scholarly.

During a break in a rehearsal on Tuesday, Carolyn Riccardelli, the conservator who spent 12 years leading the effort to piece the shattered statue back together, looked at the screen and caught the sculpture's avatar doing a little jig. "He's dancing!" she cried in disbelief. "I can't get over it."



This IRL Choose-Your-Own Adventure Game Lets You Recreate a Smashed Masterpiece

Written by Kari Paul July 10, 2015

In 2002, the pedestal at the Metropolitan Art Museum holding Tullio Lombardo's marble statue Adam collapsed beneath it, causing the masterpiece to fall and shatter into dozens of pieces. Today, you can interact with an avatar clone of him through a groundbreaking choose-your-own-adventure style digital exhibit.

For more than a decade following the crash, conservators at the Met worked exhaustively to put Adam back together using laser mapping and 3D printing to replicate and test different parts of the statue. By late 2014, he was almost as good as new and returned to public view. Now, the museum has passed along the 3D scans used to recreate Adam to director and new media artist Reid Farrington and the Media and Games Network program at New York University, who have created a digital performance installation that allows attendees to interact with a digital version of the statue in real time.

The project debuts on Saturday in the Museum's Venetian Sculpture of the Renaissance Gallery. Upon entering the space, users can interface with a digital screen portraying an avatar version of the statue Adam, which is puppeteered by an actor behind the scenes in the Met's theatre. The three rotating actors who play Adam wear a motion picture capture technology suit like those used in Avatar and Lord of the Rings. Standing on a stage surrounded by 16 cameras tracking his motion, the actor plays out a storyline written by playwright Sara Farrington and programmed into the system.

Guided by an actress hired for the exhibit who plays the docent, users pick one of the major pieces that broke off of the Adam statue from the screen. Based on what they choose, they are taken through different storylines, like the life of digital Adam, Biblical Adam, or the actual statue Adam. Farrington said the project is teaching viewers the history of the work and bringing the restoration process to life

"The thing that is really important to understand is sculpture is a time-based art, and modern audiences are not trained to understand how to read sculpture like a curator or like a conservator is," he said. "So what we are doing is asking the audience to come spend time with the sculpture and think about it more than just an object that you're confronted with and more about the story behind it, the character of Adam, its place in history and its travel through time, 500 years ago to today."

The interactive exhibit is built primarily using the Unreal engine, a common platform for game development. Athomas Goldberg, a game designer and animator, said he worked as the puppet master on the project, pulling together various software and hardware pieces after the museum provided them with digital scans of the reconstruction process.

“We assembled the pieces for ourselves and identified them with the 3D animation software and then we had to do a number of things: one we had to unbend the characters limbs into a pose we could animate. we also had to fill in the cracks between the parts,” he said. “What the restorers had to do in marble, we had to do in pixels and polygons and sort of fill in those cracks.”

In a statement, Limor Tomer, the general manager of concerts and lectures at the Met, called the installation, “the most ambitious project we’ve commissioned to date.”

“This performance installation literally breathes life into a stunning sculptural masterpiece,” she said.

The museum hopes the installation will allow viewers to learn about the history of the statue, which portrays the biblical Adam’s fall from God after eating the forbidden fruit, and its parallel, physical fall in the Met—the irony of which is not lost on anyone.

“How amazing is it that Adam fell,” the narrator says at one point in the presentation. “And not Andy Warhol’s Vegetarian Vegetable Soup.”

The Return will be on display at the Met Museum through Sunday, August 2.



A Masterpiece Comes to Life

9-Jul-2015

IKinema's LiveAction for Unreal Engine 4 is playing a surprise role at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York this month.

The Met is staging an interactive digital performance installation to celebrate the restoration and return of the renowned Italian Renaissance sculpture Adam (ca. 1490–95) by Tullio Lombardo. Designed and directed by New Media Artist Reid Farrington, and commissioned by the live arts series Met Museum Presents, The Return blends digital animation with live performance and motion capture to tell the story of the sculpture's creation, travels and return to the gallery.

Farrington said: "My vision was to bring Adam to life in a believable and genuinely interactive way. By using a motion-capture rig and IKinema LiveAction for Unreal Engine 4 to drive the animation in real time, I've been able to deliver the level of realism I wanted."

Animation Design Consultant Athomas Goldberg of Lifelike & Believable designed and built the digital puppetry system, which enables visitors to interact in real time with "digital Adam." Guests can speak directly to the digital character and pose questions, as well as visit the mocap theatre within the museum for a behind-the-scenes experience.

The Return has been more than two years in development, and from the outset, the team agreed to the fundamental principle of no pre-recorded material – everything is generated live to ensure each visitor's experience is unique and engaging. The result is two hours of material spanning 14 scenes with two characters – digital Adam and a museum docent who leads visitors through the performance.

As the performance runs all day, during museum hours, there are three pairs of performers who have been trained to drive the puppetry system when not performing, enabling them to control the pre-set lighting, audio and effects. The 16-camera OptiTrack system is hooked up to Natural Point's Motive software, which streams the mocap data to IKinema LiveAction for solving and retargeting into Unreal Engine 4.

Goldberg said: "We're using IKinema LiveAction to drive both the characters and the props. There are other full-body IK solutions out there, but nothing that gave me the flexibility and modularity to create a runtime rig exactly to my specifications, with the ability to easily adapt

to each of the actor's unique proportions in a wide variety of rapidly changing environments and situations.”

IKinema Chief Executive Alexandre Pechev said: “With the diversity of applications for motion capture these days, we believe there will be many more new ways of using live quality solving in life-like rendering environments. This is one great example, and I’m sure IKinema and Epic Games will continue to play a role in this highly creative field. Bringing Adam to life has been extraordinary and ground-breaking work, and we’re delighted that LiveAction and Unreal Engine 4 have been able to deliver the level of realism required.”

The Return is part of the 2015-2016 season of Met Museum Presents and runs from July 11 to August 2, 2015.



'The Return' to Premiere 7/11 at the Metropolitan Museum

by Visual Arts News Desk June 23, 2015

A digital performance installation premiering at The Metropolitan Museum of Art this July will combine innovative animation technology with live performance to investigate dynamically the long restoration of Tullio Lombardo's shattered sculptural masterpiece Adam (ca. 1490-95). The Return, created by director and new media artist Reid Farrington, will offer a startling new experience for Met visitors through its pioneering use of interactive digital theater.

Tullio's Adam is now considered one of the greatest sculptures of the Italian Renaissance. The Return-designed specifically for the Met, and staged in the recently created gallery devoted to Venetian Sculpture of the Renaissance (Gallery 504)- will premiere on Saturday, July 11, and run continuously during Museum hours through Sunday, August 2. The installation of this gallery was made possible by Assunta Sommella Peluso, Ignazio Peluso, Ada Peluso and Romano I. Peluso.

Tragically, in 2002, the modern pedestal on which Adam stood buckled and the piece fell to the floor, breaking into more than 200 fragments. It took 12 years to restore the sculpture using methods that were technically arduous and, like Farrington's responding work, extremely advanced scientifically.

"Tullio's Adam is all about creation, God's and the artist's," said Luke Syson, Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Chairman, European Sculpture and Decorative Arts. "So I'm truly thrilled that the sculpture has inspired Reid to create a new work of art, one that is as innovative in our own day as Tullio's was in his."

Free with Museum admission, this commission creatively, poetically, even humorously parallels the statue's fall from its pedestal with the biblical narrative of Adam's fall from grace in the Garden of Eden. A digital avatar was created from the 3D scans of the broken pieces of the sculpture that were instrumental in planning its reconstruction. This avatar, seen through a life-size digital "window" in the gallery, will be controlled by live performers using a motion-capture system. A performer "docent" in the gallery space will lead visitors through the work's extraordinary story arc. Museumgoers will hear from a variety of characters: Biblical Adam; Tullio Lombardo's Adam; and The Digital Adam, the avatar of the sculpture inspired by the digital Adam that Met scientists and conservators created to rehearse the restoration process.

Controlling the avatar in real time, the live motion capture performers and a team of technical operators will be located in The Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, which will be open so that visitors can step behind-the-scenes and observe the studio environment and motion-capture aspects of the production. Over the course of the production's 23 days, three separate teams (one "Adam" and one "Docent") will perform the script, which was written by Sara Farrington. The story incorporates high tech new media as well as Renaissance masterworks, and explores the scientific conservation triumph that brought about the return of this masterpiece.

Reid Farrington (who was behind *Tyson vs. Ali* in 2014) creates visual art pieces that use contemporary digital technology as a method of storytelling. Alongside a team of animators and software developers, he undertook 18 months of intensive research, and he worked in collaboration with curators from the Met's Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts. *The Return* is an inventive installation and historical guide, and a pioneer in digital technology.

"*The Return* is the most ambitious project we've commissioned to date," said Limor Tomer, General Manager, Concert & Lectures at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. "This performance installation literally breathes life into a stunning sculptural masterpiece, and through the virtual puppetry of game designer Athomas Goldberg, and the support of R. Luke Dubois at New York University's Media and Games Network, Reid Farrington has created an unprecedented performative experience that will connect the visitor to the work of art in a completely new way."

The Return is presented in conjunction with the exhibition Tullio Lombardo's *Adam: A Masterpiece Restored*, which was on view at the Met November 11, 2014-June 14, 2015. As of July 11, when performances of *The Return* begin, the sculpture will have been moved from its exhibition location at the center of the Venetian Sculpture of the Renaissance gallery to a specially constructed niche, a few feet away within the same gallery, where it will reside permanently.

The Return is made possible by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. Additional funding is provided by Sarah Billingham Solomon.