

Review: Cart Macabre @ Old Vic Tunnels



http://londonist.com/2010/12/review-cart-macabre-old-vic-tunnels.php/upsidedown-room-1_640x428) The Old Vic Tunnels has had a busy 2010 having seen a wide range of public-friendly works within its dank walls including **comedy** (http://londonist.com/2010/07/nursery_festival_review_slapdash_th.php), **theatre** (http://londonist.com/2010/05/theatre_review_ditch_the_old_vic_th.php), **cabaret** (http://londonist.com/2010/08/review_dark_carnival.php) and **art** (http://londonist.com/2010/09/preview_hells_half_acre_old_vic_tun.php) **exhibitions** (<http://londonist.com/2010/11/last-minute-listing-curiously-curiously-old-vic-tunnels.php>) but we think this could be the best one yet. **Cart Macabre** (<http://www.oldvictheatre.com/whatson.php?id=74>) is a unique concept by performance collective **Living Structures** (<http://www.livingstructures.co.uk>) which nudges you out of the comfort zone and somewhere else entirely. We arrived early and availed ourselves of the mulled wine on offer. Before you go in, you are asked to tag and hand over to the care of the ushers everything you came in with (including yourself). Feeling a bit like Paddington Bear heading back to darkest Peru, you are taken on a mortuary gurney into the dark. And by dark, we mean pitch, total and complete with not much in the way of respite throughout the hour-plus journey.

Hidden hands help you to a place on one of the eight four-berth carts before it sets off. Starting gently but getting progressively stranger, bizarre images, video and art installations make you jump, squirm or just admire the ingenuity of the artists. We explored **Brownian motion** (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brownian_motion) with what looked like real blood, we saw a naked woman climb a ladder made of cow thighbones and we watched a woman sleeping in an upside-down room. The huge cast of twenty-plus performers do their level best to scare you either through shock or sheer creepiness. Mostly dressed as sailors, they sing existential sea shanties (try saying that after a mug of mulled wine) as they invade your space from all sides.

This is a brilliantly brave and clever show which delivers more chills than a naked midnight saunter down Oxford Street. The Tunnels' other show this month, **December Nights** (<http://www.dark-carnival.co.uk>) (the follow-up to this summer's great **Dark Carnival** (http://londonist.com/2010/08/review_dark_carnival.php)), is already sold out and we expect this show to follow suit tout suite due to word of mouth and restricted audience numbers.

For an extract of Cart Macabre and some behind-the-scenes action with commentary by the show's artistic director Klaus Kruse, see below:

*Cart Macabre runs 1-2 shows every day until December 22 expect December 13. Tickets are £14 each and are available from **the official site** (<http://www.oldvictheatre.com/whatson.php?id=74>). Latecomers will not be admitted. Sensible clothing and shoes are advised as is an age of 16+. The mulled wine is optional but rather good.*

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