



Tricyckle at Tobacco Factory Theatre

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If, when you think of puppetry, you picture models made out of wood or Plaster of Paris, figures in pseudo-human form with moveable limbs and eyes that stare in stillness to tell a linear story – Tricyckle will challenge all of that.

Hoping to ‘break down barriers between high culture and popular art’, Québécois company Les Sages Fous bring to the Bristol Festival of Puppetry (#BFP17) a gentle show that often feels more like an art installation than a piece of theatre. Our loner protagonist contemplates life from the seat of his tricycle, trailer of junk attached, before he sets off round and round the backstreets of the city aka the stage of the Tobacco Factory Theatre, doing impressive laps in such a small space. As the hour long piece progresses, Mr Tricyclist tells his tale through that junk, transforming discarded items into an impressive cityscape and revealing its seedy nightlife, building a circus, witnessing birth and being visited by a Spider Woman, the last reminiscent of Pink Floyd in their The Wall years.

Inspired by the Tricycling collectors of junk in the city of Trois Rivieres, Sages Fous show how rubbish can metamorphose into something of beauty, how objects hold meaning and how bloody imaginative people can be. This is a charming, thoughtful work, which uses shadows to full effect. And the soundscape here is as important as the spectacle – Christian Laflamme has created his own instruments from found objects, his cacophonous score complimenting so well Jacob Brindamour’s almost clown-like on-stage presence.

Tricyckle might well be a see-twice show because, if I was able to watch it again, I would concentrate less on trying to grasp a story and instead I would simply enjoy the flow.