

Masked marvels

ARTCATTO BRINGS THE POWERFUL, ENIGMATIC AND SUPERBLY DETAILED WORK OF PHILIP JACKSON TO THE ALGARVE THIS SUMMER

His commissioned public sculptures include British royalty, including the Queen and the Queen Mother, alongside military heroes, historical figures and football



legends, but this summer, the highly acclaimed British sculptor Philip Jackson is bringing a touch of mystery and theatrics to the Algarve with his own work as he joins forces with the Loulé-based ArtCatto gallery.

Inspired by Venetian balls, masquerades and carnivals, ecclesiastical costumes and dramatic operas, the exceptional figures created by Jackson are graceful and awe-inspiring, and will set the scene for a spectacular Venetian Evening hosted by the Conrad Algarve hotel on July 23, in conjunction with ArtCatto, where Jackson's smaller pieces will be exhibited from July 30 until the end of August.

Philip Jackson was first inspired by Venice when he was undertaking a project there 40 years ago, and, "like most people, I fell in love with the place, the mystery, the intrigue, the melancholy..." He absorbed the work of 17th and 18th-century painters and was enthralled by the extraordinary masked figures. "You couldn't see the faces or the bodies, but you could understand what they were doing through the art of body language," explained Jackson.

On his return home, he developed that skilful use of body language and went on to develop the so-called Mask series, which was later showcased at a hugely successful exhibition in Venice. It is this magical place, filled with intrigue and romance that inspires the Venetian Evening at the Conrad Algarve, with fine Italian food, Venetian music, costumes and a carnival atmosphere enhancing the 13 hauntingly elegant sculptures created by Philip Jackson.

Born in Scotland, Philip Jackson first fell in love with sculpture as a child, when he spent much of his time reading during school holidays while staying with elderly relatives.

His favourite book was on Greco-Roman sculpture, and aged 11 he bought his first book on the art form. "The penny dropped that this was what I wanted to do, and it's been an obsession ever since."

He went on to study at the Farnham School of Art and has become one of Britain's most famous sculptors with an outstanding international reputation. Having been appointed Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (CVO) in the Queen's Birthday Honours list 2009, his numerous high-profile commissions speak for themselves: working in bronze, Jackson's works include many monuments across the world and statues of royalty, football legends and the recently unveiled statue of Mahatma Gandhi in London's Parliament Square. In fact, the never-before-seen bronze maquette of Gandhi will be unveiled to the public at the summer event – there is only a limited edition of 25 pieces of this maquette worldwide. "I particularly like projects that have an emotive element. With the memorials, for example, you can't help but be affected."

In Portugal, the sculptor is showcasing a cross-section of his work, some of which he is currently developing. "I'm very excited about this exhibition and it's a great pleasure to be working with someone as professional as Gillian, who represented me in London and with whom I collaborated for the hugely successful exhibition in the UK in 2007. The party is a wonderful idea, my wife and I are looking forward to seeing my work at both the Conrad hotel and ArtCatto gallery in Loulé."

In the belief that, placed in the right location, "a sculpture can absolutely sing", be sure to expect a symphony at the Conrad Algarve on July 23. ■



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