

Time Out London

THE THREE PEAKES CHALLENGE

Three members of the same family, legendary illustrator Mervyn Peake and grandkids Florence and Eddie, all have exhibitions on in London at the same time. Can you complete our intrepid art expedition and see them all?

SPOOKY PEAKE



For a show at Tintype (► April 6), Florence has assembled a group of imposing junkyard mannequins with hidden sound works inside them. The figures chant and recite recorded incantations, taken from a series of palm readings done by the artist herself – a trick she learnt from yet another talent in the family, her grandmother.

SKATEY PEAKE



For his solo show, 'Adjective Machine Gun', sibling Eddie has turned one of White Cube's south London galleries into a recreation of London Zoo's iconic modernist penguin enclosure, around which a scantily-clad man in a see-through onesie rollerskates all day (► April 21). Yes, it is about voyeurism and gender – how did you know?

VINTAGE PEAKE



Though best known for his 'Gormenghast' novels, Mervyn's book illustrations are fascinating insights into the writer's obsession with islands. It's humorous and surreal stuff, to be sure and certainly worth the trip to Mottingham, where Mervyn went to school (showing at the Gerald Moore Gallery ► May 19).

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TINTYPE

Garageland Magazine

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Florence Peake's 'Chorus: Swell the thickening surface of' at Tintype

Walking the stairs to Tintype gallery a murmuring chatter gradually comes into earshot. Several people are talking at once, their voices overlapping. They are not, however, vying for attention; their speech is hushed and their words intimate. 'I was an only child', says a subdued male voice. 'Something ambitious in me, and yet I crack.'



Entering the gallery, the owners of the voices come into view. A lady with wispy ginger hair is slumped in the corner of the room, unable to get up, her long arms flung high above her head. She wears a lurid dress of orange, green, yellow, and red, and an equally garish hat of purple and blue. The fanciful attire is made from fluorescent vinyl sheeting; her arms, simple wooden planks coated in coloured packing tape; and her face and feet, bunches of pink tissue paper. A tangle of multi-coloured cables sprouts from her hip. They are attached to a car radio. This is the source of her voice.

Next to her is another woman. She is standing, though only just; she leans forwards, propped up against the gallery wall by her oversized wooden arms. Auburn hair spills forward from under a vivid green cape, and at its bottom, orange and green legs protrude to meet turquoise high heels. Her angle is such that the heels of the shoes are lifted from the floor. It seems that perhaps she has had too much to drink, and has stopped to throw up, but there's no one to hold her hair. 'It's a tender process after betrayal; things can easily shatter again' she says.



Photo Cameron Leadbetter

A figure seated on the floor begins to speak in a male voice. 'Something about our similarity reassures me.' A lumpen heap of paper and synthetic hair implies the form of a body out of which sprout two stubby plaster legs. 'Something holds me back', he says. 'What is it? Oh yes: criticism.'

The voices form a chorus, though, rather than a group joining in homophony, they diverge and intertwine, like many private prayers spoken simultaneously. Just as the simply constructed figures find themselves on display, compromised and dishevelled, so the voices express aloud an imagining of a silent everyday chorus. Hushed internal monologues from a secret inner-life, very much present, but usually unspoken.

Travis Riley

Florence Peake
Chorus: Swell the thickening surface of
Tintype, London EC1
6 March - 6 April 2013