

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL®

KURIOS™

CABINET OF CURIOSITIES



WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MICHEL LAPRISE

PRESS KIT

KURIOS™ – *Cabinet of Curiosities*

In an alternate yet familiar past, in a place where wonders abound for those who trust their imagination, a Seeker discovers that in order to glimpse the marvels that lie just below the surface, we must first learn to close our eyes.

In his larger-than-life curio cabinet, the Seeker is convinced that there exists a hidden, invisible world – a place where the craziest ideas and the grandest dreams await. A collection of otherworldly characters suddenly steps into his makeshift mechanical world. When the outlandish, benevolent characters turn his world upside down with a touch of poetry and humor in an attempt to ignite the Seeker's imagination, his curios jump to life one by one before his very eyes.

What if by engaging our imagination and opening our minds we could unlock the door to a world of wonders?

ABOUT THE SHOW

KURIOS™ – *Cabinet of Curiosities* is *Cirque du Soleil*'s 35th production since 1984.

Cabinets of curiosities are the ancestors of museums, also known as cabinet of wonder in the Renaissance Europe. Aristocrats, members of the merchant class and early practitioners of science formed collections of historical relics, works of art or mysterious travel souvenirs or artefacts.

KURIOS™ – *Cabinet of Curiosities* has a cast of 49 artists from 17 different countries. About 60% of the artists have already worked with *Cirque du Soleil* before.



10 CURIOUS FACTS ABOUT THE SHOW

- To make the Accordion Man's attire, the costume-maker spent an entire week sewing inside the costume.
- Rima Hadchiti, the artist who plays Mademoiselle Lili, is 3.3 feet tall and weighs 41 pounds. She is one of the 10 smallest people in the world.
- The mechanical hand weighs 750 pounds and measures 15 feet by 6.8 feet.
- More than a hundred costumes were created to dress the cast of KURIOS.
- There are 426 props in the show, the most of any production in Cirque du Soleil's history.
- Some 65 trucks transport close to 2,000 tons of equipment for KURIOS™ – Cabinet of Curiosities.
- The 122 tour members come from 23 different countries. Some have been touring with Cirque du Soleil for more than 15 years.



- This is the first time that Cirque du Soleil presents a welcoming act on top of the big top before the show starts. When weather permits, 3 artists climb up the big top and greet the guests from above while playing music and acting. Guests get a taste of the KURIOS experience as soon as they enter the site.
- It took the team of props makers approximately 250 hours to build Mr. Microcosmos' round belly.
- All performers are responsible for applying their own make-up every show, which can take them between 40 minutes to two hours.



CREATIVE TEAM

The creative team of KURIOS™ – *Cabinet of Curiosities* consists of 17 creators under the artistic guidance of Guy Laliberté (Guide) and Jean-François Bouchard (Creative Guide).



GUY LALIBERTÉ
Guide and Founder



JEAN-FRANÇOIS BOUCHARD
Creative Guide



MICHEL LAPRISE
Writer and Director

Michel Laprise worked in theatre for nine years as an actor, director and artistic director before joining Cirque du Soleil in 2000. At *Cirque du Soleil*, Michel spent five years as a talent scout before taking on, in 2006, the role of Special Events Designer. In that capacity, he directed the act with Quebec diva Diane Dufresne during the Opening Ceremonies of the Montreal 2006 Outgames; the large-scale performance event created for the launch of the Fiat Bravo in Italy (2007); the *Cirque du Soleil* performance event celebrating Quebec City's 400th anniversary (2008); the launch of Microsoft's Kinect console at the 2010 Electronic Entertainment Expo, broadcast on MTV; the opening show at the Eurovision Song Contest held in Russia in 2009; and the Opening Ceremonies of the 2010 FIBA International Basketball Federation World Championships in Istanbul. In 2012, Michel collaborated with pop star Madonna, providing artistic direction for her performance at the Super Bowl XLVI halftime show; he later went on to direct her MDNA tour. In 2013, he directed the musical *Robin des Bois - Ne renoncez jamais* which toured in Europe. Michel co-wrote and directed the VR movie "*Kurios: Inside the Box*" which won 3 prizes, one of them being the Emmy Daytime award in the Outstanding Interactive Media category. Michel is currently working on 2 *Cirque du Soleil* upcoming shows.



CHANTAL TREMBLAY
Director of Creation



STÉPHANE ROY
Set and Props Designer



PHILIPPE GUILLOTTEL
Costume Designer



RAPHAËL BEAU
Composer and
Musical Director



BOB & BILL
Composers and
Musical Directors



YAMAN OKUR
Acrobatic Choreographer



BEN POTVIN
Acrobatic Choreographer



SIDI LARBI CHERKAOUI
Choreographer

CREATIVE TEAM (continued)



SUSAN GAUDREAU
Acrobatic Choreographer



ANDREA ZIEGLER
Acrobatic Choreographer



JEAN-MICHEL CARON
Sound Designer



JACQUES BOUCHER
Sound Designer



MARTIN LABRECQUE
Lighting Designer



ROB BOLLINGER
Acrobatic Performance
Designer



GERMAIN GUILLEMOT
Acrobatic Performance
Designer



BORIS VERKHOVSKY
Acrobatic Performance
Designer



DANNY ZEN
Acrobatic Equipment
and Rigging Designer



ELENI URANIS
Make-up Designer

THE CHARACTERS



THE SEEKER

Master of the house, the Seeker is a humanist as ingenuous as he is ingenious. With childlike innocence, he believes in an invisible world where the craziest ideas and the grandest dreams await. He will find out that wonders are available to those who trust their intuition and imagination.



THE CURIOSISTANIANS

They are the inhabitants of an imaginary country called Curiosistan and they turn up in the Seeker's world in order to ignite his imagination.



MR. MICROCOSMOS

An authority figure, Mr. Microcosmos is the leader of the group. This serious chap is the embodiment of technological progress; his world is sturdy and evokes the steam train, massive building structures, the Eiffel Tower and the Grand Palais. This is man as a microcosm, running on his own steam and traveling in his own self-contained, self-subsisting ecosystem. Full steam ahead!



NICO THE ACCORDION MAN

The perfect handyman, Nico is a little shy, a tad awkward, and extremely sensitive. Nico's accordion costume allows him to bend very low or stand straight up so he can be at eye level with absolutely everyone.



KLARA THE TELEGRAPH OF THE INVISIBLE

Klara can receive alpha waves by turning on her heels and pointing her hoop skirt in various directions. She has a language of her own and symbolizes our obsession with telecommunications during the golden age of the railroad when the telegraph and the gramophone were invented.



MADemoiselle LILI

She represents Mr. Microcosmos' unconscious mind, his intuitive self, his fragile and poetic side. Mademoiselle Lili is a painter, an actress and a poetess. She lives inside her host's overcoat. Through the door in his belly, you can catch a glimpse of the furnished interiors of the little lady's abode, complete with armchair and other necessities of the Victorian home.



THE KURIOS

Since there is so much work to be done before his dream becomes reality, the Seeker surrounds himself with a brigade of assistants including the Kurios Winch and the Kurios Plunger. These quirky robots were built from scraps and recycled parts by the Seeker himself. These imperfect, dysfunctional creatures have the distinct smell of metal, leather and the unbridled imagination of their inventor.

THE ACTS



CHAOS SYNCHRO 1900

A locomotive pulls into the train station and lets off a motley group of passengers straight from the 19th century: eccentrics, acrobats, a juggler, percussionists and dancers in their Sunday best. In a fusion of acrobatics, percussion and choreographies, they create inside the cabinet of curiosities a festive ambience that radiates freedom and charm.



CRADLE DUO

A strongman and a porcelain face doll awakened by an electrical discharge emerge from their musical box and jump to life. The two artists climb on top of an apparatus 13 feet above ground. In a number based on mutual trust, the catcher turns into a human trapeze and flings his partner in the air where she performs more and more intricate somersaults.



AERIAL BICYCLE

An acrobat jumps on her acrobatic bicycle suspended in midair and hangs on in a variety of positions — on the handlebar stem or on the wheel, by a foot or by an arm. She even settles onto the seat, hands on the handlebars and feet on the pedals... but she and her bike are upside down!



INVISIBLE CIRCUS

An oddball ringmaster directs a miniature circus with invisible artists. Ranging from teeterboard to high diving to riding a unicycle on a tightrope, the acts all materialize in our minds by the sheer power of visual and sound effects — a poetic and comedic nod to the traditional circus arts.



CONTORTION

Four deep-sea creatures that embody electric eels inside the Seeker's cabinet come to life in this stunning, fast-paced and fluid contortion act. The wriggling artists execute a series of incredible pyramids and figures at an astonishing pace using the Mechanical Hand as a platform.



UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

Dinner guests are stunned by the telekinetic powers of one of their table companions who can make a chandelier suspended above their heads move. Another guest challenges him by piling up chairs in an attempt to reach the chandelier. All of a sudden, the group realizes that their exact double exists in a parallel universe right above them where the same scene is unfolding... but upside down! In this original chair-balancing act, they will compete against each other through feats of ingenuity and daring to achieve their ends.

THE ACTS (continued)



ROLA BOLA

A fearless Aviator who happens to be an expert in the discipline of rola bola makes a soft, graceful landing in his small propeller plane, which he will use as a platform. Balanced on his impressive, tottering structure, the artist and his cylinders and planks rest on a moving platform. The suspended apparatus moves up and down and swings in a long pendulum motion – an incredible feat requiring an extraordinary sense of balance.



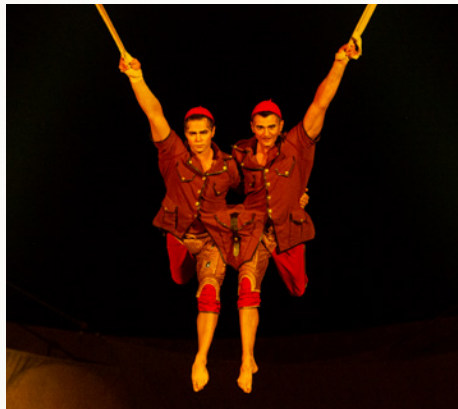
ACRO NET

Above a vast ocean, underwater creatures pirouette, bounce and rebound on a net that covers the entire stage. Their street-style performance is mixed with pure trampoline techniques. The net is tuned so that the artists standing on the surface can use their legs to modulate the amplitude of the bouncing motion, at times creating a slingshot effect that propels their teammates almost to the top of the big top.



COMIC ACT

A man brings a woman from the audience on stage and invites her into his world. He will try to seduce her but will be interrupted in turn by a parrot, a Tyrannosaurus rex and a cat.



AERIAL STRAPS

“Siamese twins” hanging in the air from straps are separated at last when they fly high above the stage in a series of acrobatic figures, sometimes as a pair, sometimes solo. The two artists soar to impressive heights and crisscross above the stage while performing synchronized figures that require flawless timing.



YO-YOS

This master of time spins his yo-yos (transformed into pocket watches) in all directions, speeding up and slowing down time at will. He deftly wields the small objects at lightning speed, even twirling two yo-yos at once as if they were the spinning hands of a clock.



THEATER OF HANDS

In this moment imbued with simplicity and poetry, an artist uses only his fingers to tell a story that is filmed and projected in real time on a hot-air balloon that serves as a screen. The finale of the tiny characters' adventure unfolds in the audience!



BANQUINE

A group of 13 artists perform spectacular sequences of perfectly synchronized acrobatics and human pyramids that showcase the amazing agility of the human body. In addition to standing three and four high on each other's shoulders, the artists take off, somersault and crisscross in the air on three levels: the ground, a monolith positioned centre-stage, and in the audience.

SET DESIGN

The set design of KURIOS™ – *Cabinet of Curiosities* puts the spectator in a well-defined place: the curio cabinet of a Seeker filled with unusual objects collected on his travels. Set in what could be called a retro-future, the scenic environment makes several references to the beginning of the industrial revolution during the 19th Century without being tied to that period. “It’s like Jules Verne meets Thomas Edison in an alternate reality, out of time.” explains Set Designer Stéphane Roy.

In this parallel reality, it is the steam engine and not the internal combustion engine that reigns supreme. The set evokes the start of the industrialization era, but as if science and technology had evolved differently and progress had taken on a more human dimension.

AN ALTERNATE POETIC REALITY

The performance space is dominated by two structures called “cabinets;” one explores the topic of sound and the other, the topic of electricity. Built by the Seeker using scraps and pieces collected over time, the two large towers also serve a “wave sensors” made from miscellaneous components such as gramophones, old typewriters, electrical bulbs and turbines. In actual fact, these objects were salvaged from junkyards then dismantled, amalgamated, given a patina and joined together using tubes and pipes.

The two cabinets are attached to the main arch – another wave sensor – that dominates the stage. The opening at the centre, at the back of the stage, evokes the mouth of a railroad tunnel through a mountain; it is mainly through this opening that artists move in and out of the spotlight and that equipment and props are taken on and off the stage.

The show is a tribute to imagination and curiosity. This makeshift mechanical world celebrates the coming together of pre-existing objects. “All these objects – the bugle, the typewriter – come with their own history and it is from their association that a new meaning emerges,” says Roy. “Further proof that the who is greater than the sum of its parts.”

THE MECHANICAL HAND

A huge *steampunk*-inspired mechanical hand appears during the show either as a character or as a performance structure. Operated by two artists using a pedal and gear mechanism, the all-fiber-glass hand is an automaton built from various parts that look like wood, metal, marble and iron. In the Set Designer’s mind, the Seeker built the hand with rare objects collected on his travels: a wooden finger found in Sienna during the Renaissance, a nail picked up in a Greek temple, and so on. The mechanical hand is a paragon of the DIY (do it yourself) ethos and evokes the richness and the materials from the era of the greatest scientific discoveries. It is on this hand that the contortion act and the “Hands Continent” scene unfold.



SET DESIGN (continued)

AUTO-NOMOUS STRUCTURES

For greater emphasis on the performance, every act in the show is presented on an independent structure – a module or a promontory – integrated into the set design. The stage was lowered 14 inches and a bank was installed all around the stage (the bank is a 23-inches-wide raised walkway on which two rails are installed for transporting various props).

Presented on their separate, distinct structures, the acts in the show represent the curios that jump to life inside the Seeker's workshop. During the Cradle Duo act, for instance, a giant leather chest opens up to reveal, encased in sumptuous Moroccan cushions, two characters that look like mechanical dolls. Another example: the aerial straps artists perform on a gigantic "drop of mercury" made entirely of fiberglass and covered in silver leaf.

A "REAL" IMITATION WOODEN FLOOR

Building the stage floor presented a real technical challenge. To create the impression of a real wooden floor, a 3D finish was produced. Silicone was poured onto century-old planks of wood to produce a mold into which varnish was poured. A total of 26 coats of paint and clear varnish were applied alternately to give the wood its rich finish.

SET DESIGN CLOSE-UPS

- The train in the "Chaos Synchro" act extends out from Mr. Microcosmos' costume over a distance of 62 feet. The train's structure is all aluminum and the outer shell is made out of a mostly vinyl canvas. Fiberglass mosquito screen was used for the windows.
- Standing 11.5 feet tall, the Seeker's chair is decorated with recycled pieces of metal.
- The hot-air balloon used in the "Hands Continent" scene is made of fabric and has a built-in blower system. It serves as a projection screen 14 feet in diameter. The gondola is made of metal and tulle.
- The turbine at the back of the stage behind which the musicians are installed is made of thermally molded plastic over a metal structure.
- The tarpaulin at the back of the stage is made of 2231 square inches of fabric that was given a patina.
- The stage floor is composed of 160 independent panels.



COSTUMES

THE CURIOUS ATTIRE OF A HYBRID WORLD

A fitting tribute to the power of the human imagination, the costumes of KURIOS™ – *Cabinet of Curiosities* are the result of a visual exploration of the beginnings of science, of the discoveries and inventions that led to the industrial revolution of the 19th Century – from the steam locomotive to electrical power to electromagnetic waves. They embody and celebrate the advancements of science, but in an imaginary, parallel world. While the visual references may seem self-evident, the show's curious yet familiar characters and costumes transport the audience to a time suspended somewhere between past and future, in an alternate reality, as if science had evolved without the internal combustion engine and as if the golden age of the steam engine had continued on, uninterrupted.

HYBRID FORMS AND OVERSIZED SHAPES

The costumes of the Visitors from another world (Mr. Microcosmos, Klara and Nico) are the result of unusual blends and odd associations: e.g. the attire of the Seeker Assistants (the Kurios) – oddball half-human, half-mechanical characters built from scraps and recycled parts by their ingenious and ingenious creator.

Costume Designer Philippe Guillotel explored unusual shapes that have affinities with the Bauhaus costumes or of Alfred Jarry's Father Ubu to create startling and often amusing characters.

Mr. Microcosmos – The “bigger is better” ethos that drives the retro-futuristic aesthetic of the show is on the opposite side of the spectrum of the miniaturization that characterizes the electronic era. A case in point is the costume of the potbellied Mr. Microcosmos. “He’s like a mechanical Obelix [from the Franco-Belgian cartoon characters Asterix & Obelix], but instead of holding a tiny dog in his arms, he lugs around a small lady in his belly wherever he goes, and he’s hardly aware of it,” says Guillotel.

Mr. Microcosmos carries Mademoiselle Lili, his intuitive counterpart, inside his costume using a sling not unlike a baby carrier. Rima Hadchiti, the artist who plays Mademoiselle Lili, is 3.3 feet tall and weighs 41 pounds. She lives inside her host's overcoat. Through the door in Mr. Microcosmos' belly, we can see the furnished interior of Mademoiselle Lili's quarters, which include an armchair as well as other essentials of a Victorian home. At the beginning of the show, an extension of Mr. Microcosmos' coat unfolds into a locomotive out of which emerge a swarm of travelers from the 19th Century.

Nico the Accordion Man – Nico's accordion costume allows him to bend very low or stand straight up so he can be at eye level with absolutely everyone. His pants are folded like a piece of origami from an unwoven textile (like the material normally used in shoe lining) and are inspired by the early photography camera darkrooms.

Klara the telegraph of the invisible – Klara wears an antenna skirt made of hula-hoop-type rings. By swirling around and pointing her apparatus in various directions, she can receive invisible electromagnetic waves. Her hoop skirt is inspired by Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and is shaped like early parabolic antennas. The print on her leotard evokes electrical circuits and connections.



COSTUMES (continued)

TRANSFORMED BASIC MATERIALS

Philippe Guillotel chose five or six main materials that he used extensively and in all possible forms. For example, certain parts of the Travelers' costumes and the top part of the Accordion Man's costume are made from a stretch material to which metal foil was added. This comfortable and washable material makes it easy to create very realistic faux leather. The images on the metalized polyester jersey fabric are actually photos that were printed using a technique called sublimation, which sets the images in the fibers of the material.

3D printing was also used to create volumes that seem heavy but are in fact as light as they are tough and durable. This technique was used, for instance, to build the yoke held by the artists who carry the clouds. The clouds per se are made of thermally molded pieces of Plastazote (polyethylene foam).

COSTUME CLOSE-UPS

- During the Cradle Duo act, the costumes worn by the two "mechanical dancers" that emerge from the box like Fabergé jewels evoke a pair of wax dolls. The cut is inspired by early sportswear and vintage circus costumes. The materials, however, are quite modern and highly sophisticated (velour effects and faux leather appliqués in gold).
- The costumes in the acro-net act are an allusion to the way film director Georges Méliès imagined Martians; hence the scales as well as the fin and fishtail.
- The rola-bola specialist wears a translucent aqua-colored overcoat. The fabric is reminiscent of the first plastics such as Bakelite and Rhodoid.
- Mr. Microcosmos' belly alone weighs a little over twenty pounds and has its own independent systems for lighting and ventilation.
- More than a hundred costumes were created to dress the cast.
- All costume elements that come in contact with the artists' skin are washed every night. Two people spend 2 hours every day, 6 days a week, for a total of 24 hours a week, doing the laundry.



VILLAGE ON WHEELS



Cirque du Soleil's mobile village includes the Big Top, one large entrance tent, the artistic tent, kitchen, offices, warehouses and more. Completely self-sufficient for electrical power, the site relies only on a local water supply and telecommunication facilities to support its infrastructure.

The site

- The site takes 6 days to completely set up and 2 days to tear down. This includes the installation of the Big Top, entrance and artistic tents, box office, administrative offices, and a kitchen and dining area for cast and crew.
- Some 65 trucks transport close to 2,000 tons of equipment for Kurios.
- In each city, the tour relies on 150 local staff to get the job done.

The Artistic tent

The artistic tent includes over 800 costume pieces (including accessories, shoes, and wigs) and is used as a wardrobe area, dressing rooms, a fully equipped training area and a physiotherapy room.

The kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of the village. Not only does it serve between 300 to 400 meals every day (including to the artists), it is also the meeting place where cast and crew chat and catch sports events on TV.

The Big Top

- The Big Top stands 62 feet high, is 168 feet in diameter and is supported by 4 masts, each 85 feet tall.
- It has a seating capacity of about 2,600, and a team of approximately 100 people are needed to raise the structure.
- More than 1,200 stakes are driven 4 feet into the ground to hold the tents in place.