Exhibitions will project moving image maestro’s work

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But a truly unique element of his work will also be marked in the more modest surroundings of his home-town of Kingston upon Thames where a special exhibition, Muybridge Revolutions will be mounted, thanks to a £49,700 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

Muybridge, who was born in the town in 1830 and died there in 1904, bequeathed nearly 3,000 objects to the local museum providing it with one of the world’s most important historic collections of pre-cinema moving image artefacts.

One of the most influential photographers of the 19th century, Muybridge is best known for his photographic sequence work undertaken in the United States where his stop-motion photography captured, for the first time, animal and human movement in great detail. This included proof that galloping horses do actually lift all four hooves off the ground at once. His work influenced art, science and photography, and he is recognised as one of the founding fathers of cinematography.

Starting in April, a major exhibition looking at all aspects of his work will open at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington. This will transfer to Tate Britain in early September. The exhibition will contain a number of items lent by Kingston Museum but, at the same time, Kingston will open its own exhibition featuring a number of items that have never before been on public display. There will be a complimentary show at Kingston University’s Stanley Picker Gallery including work produced by contemporary artists who have been given special access to the collection.

Commenting for the Heritage Lottery Fund, Head of HLF London Sue Bowers, said: “As cinema is now exploiting the potential of digitally-enhanced and computer-generated imagery as never before, there is certain to be renewed interest in Muybridge. People will have not one but two exhibitions in London so as to learn even more of this pioneer’s amazing achievements.”

As well as developing the stop-motion photographic process, Muybridge also invented the zoopraxiscope, one of the first ever machines capable of projecting a moving image. It worked by using specially-designed glass picture discs derived from his original photographic sequences. Only 70 such discs are known to exist in the world and 67 of these are in the possession of Kingston Museum, many of which will be on display during the exhibition. The Museum also holds thousands of the inventor’s ‘magic lantern’ slides which supported his world-wide lecture tours.

As well as mounting the local exhibition Kingston Museum will launch a new schools resource pack, a series of workshops and a programme of academic lectures inspired by Muybridge’s work. The grant will also enable the museum to conserve parts of its collection as well as making more items viewable both online and in the exhibition.

Museum curator Peta Cook, said: “As Eadweard Muybridge's enduring artistic legacy continues to be a source of inspiration for international artists, scientists and cultural theorists we wish to take this opportunity to put Muybridge, and specifically the Kingston collection, back onto the global stage. Muybridge was an exciting character whose work never fails to intrigue. He was an innovator, pioneering photographic explorer and entrepreneur who, in many different ways, changed the way his audience viewed the world.

“Forming a significant part of a major development project around the Muybridge material at Kingston, this exhibition represents a pivotal point in the Museum’s on-going work to secure an exciting future for this world-class collection.”

Derek Osbourne, leader of Kingston Council, said: “We are delighted to be sharing these wonderful exhibits with Tate Britain and farther afield in Washington. Not only are they an important part of Kingston’s heritage but also play an integral role in the development of photography and cinematography with Muybridge’s influence still making a mark on modern cinema.

“As well as promoting Kingston museum on an international level we are clearly excited at the opportunity to be exhibiting parts of our collection that are being displayed for the first time. This truly will be an enthralling year for any fan of Muybridge’s work.”

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

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