Art in motion

Kinetic sculptures whirl into three-dimensional animations

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The most intriguing exhibit that is displayed in a piece of art is the title of the show: "About Time: Works by Gregory Baranowski.

The exhibit is at the Brooklyn Museum of Art and features a series of kinetic sculptures that are rendered in three dimensions. The sculptures are made of metal, wood, and other materials and range in size from small to large.

The sculptures are arranged in a sequence that moves from left to right, creating a sense of movement and progression. The artist used his skills in metalworking to create these pieces, and the result is a sense of fluidity and energy.

The title of the exhibit, "About Time," is a nod to the idea of time as a constant force in our lives. The sculptures are meant to represent the passage of time and the evolution of ideas.

Baranowski's work is both abstract and figurative, with a focus on the human form. The sculptures are designed to be dynamic and engaging, with a sense of movement that is both fluid and powerful.

The exhibit is open to the public and is located in the Brooklyn Museum of Art. It is a must-see for anyone interested in contemporary art and the evolution of sculpture.
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Kinetic FROM/CLS are arranged, top to bottom respectively, on a large, cylindrical armature. As the armature rapidly spins, thanks to a motor at its base, its is illuminated by strobe lights. Moving at 13 revolutions per second—slightly slower than the speed of some film—the objects become animate. The hands wash themselves, from which the resul- tant ladder strips and falls into a paper bag. The bag turns over, and out of it falls an egg that plops onto the head and leaves open. Because it happens in three dimensions right before the viewer’s eyes, the effect is jarring, to say the least.

In our high-tech world, Barzaman’s works are welcomed by tech-savvy viewers. Barzaman likes what occurs with them to a home-made flipbook that a child could make. “A 3-D object rotates in front of you, the strobe light is triggered to fire and you see an image. The next one is rotated into position and then, flash, another image, flash, another image until the pages of a flipbook flipping by giving you the image after image. Each image is slightly different, just as in an animation.”

While studying philosophy at the University of Wisconsin, the artist became intrigued with Nietzsche’s belief that, in a world without absolute truths, art is uniquely free to invent its own world. He then became a sculptor who, as a self-described “motionless” intrigued by film animation, began looking around 12 years ago with one of the earliest forms of anima-
tion, the zoetrope. The zoetrope is a 19th-century invention in which a slotted metal drum, open at the top, revolves around a central axis. Inside are placed a sequence of pictures on strips of paper. When the drum is spun and the pictures are viewed through the slits, the images appear to move.

Instead of putting images inside of one of the first drums he con-
structed, Barzaman placed paper cutouts on the outside. For the con-
tacts, he traced the projected frames of a Super-8 film he made of a friend walking.

“Then I synchronized a strobe light to it, and wasn’t too surprised that, certainly enough, the little cutouts were walking,” Barzaman says.

That’s when it dawned on me that the objects could have depth.

They didn’t have to be two-dimen-
sional images. That was my moment. That got me excited—the idea of being able to create a narrative in real time and with three dimensions.”

Though that opened up a world of possibilities, Barzaman realized that his newfound art form was inherently restricted, in terms of time, by the size and scale that his sculptures could take.

“I’m restricted by the fact that my timeframe has to occur within one revolution of a cylinder,” Barzaman says of his sculptures, which he likes to fling. “If I could make one a city block long, I’d have a 6-second film, maybe even a minute.

But even with these limitations, he has managed to create some complex works, such as “No,” “Never Alone,” which he named after a baptismal ritual. In the piece, a central shrouded figure stands inside a cylindrical armature. On the revolving armature, sculptures of bodies dangling in vertebrae and holding eye charts and opened books that reveal images of a man doing a “billed street dancer” all “wants” the figure, says the artist.

The other two works on display are a bit less complicated, but just as magical. In “Forty,” a birthday cake trousers into a Masonic blazer, its candles becoming wiggling snakes, as it spins 12 feet above the floor.

Standing under the vortex, like center of the ceiling-mounted pieces, Barzaman, now 40, says of “Forty,” which he created in 1993 on the eve of his 40th birthday.

“Do you have any idea what I felt about my 40th birthday?”

And truly, proving once again that he is not without a sense of humor, Barzaman created “Postcards From the Fringe,” which is a revolving postcard rack of sorts that features numerous postcards he designed with colorful images of what he calls “environmental consciousness” like the shrinking of the White House to the size of a snowboard or the shrinking of a Circle Line cruise ship into the waiting space of a toilet seat.

“Now off to the Circle Line, a veritable old institution in New York, and quite a lot of fun,” Barzaman says with a smile.

This exhibition is a must see.

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