



YORK THEATRE ROYAL AND PILOT THEATRE PRESENT



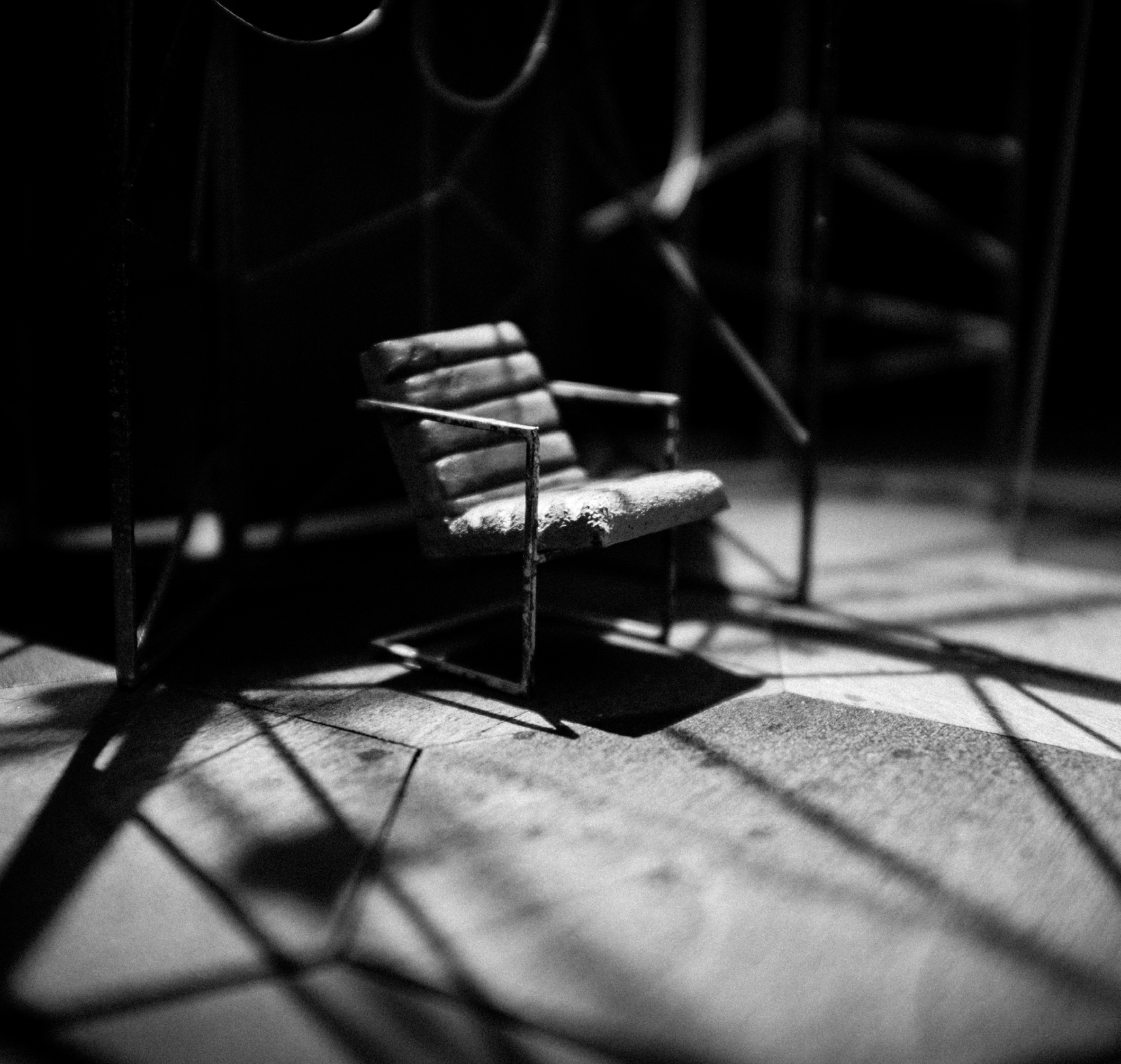
**A WORLD PREMIERE OF E.M. FORSTER'S SHORT STORY**

# **THE MACHINE STOPS**



## **EDUCATION PACK**





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# INTRODUCTION

Pilot Theatre and York Theatre Royal present a world premiere production EM Forster's classic short story *The Machine Stops*

This is a new adaptation for the stage by Neil Duffield, directed by Juliet Forster, designed by Rhys Jarman, with a soundtrack composed by John Foxx, pioneer of electronic music and founder of Ultravox, and analogue synth specialist, Benge.

This is a great show for all secondary students with strong links to literature and performing arts.. It will be a brilliant opportunity for students of Drama and Performing Arts at GCSE, BTEC or A level to experience cutting edge contemporary live theatre.

It is an ideal fit for English GCSE as a companion to studying the original short story by E.M.Forster.

The pack includes interviews, an introduction to the text, exercises, rehearsal photography, and links to online resources to enable students to gain an insight into the process of developing the work from page to stage and to explore the roles in professional theatre.

Touring nationally from May 2016. [#MachineStops](#)

Workshops are available throughout the tour. Contact Pilot at [education@pilot-theatre.com](mailto:education@pilot-theatre.com) or 01904 635755 for more information.

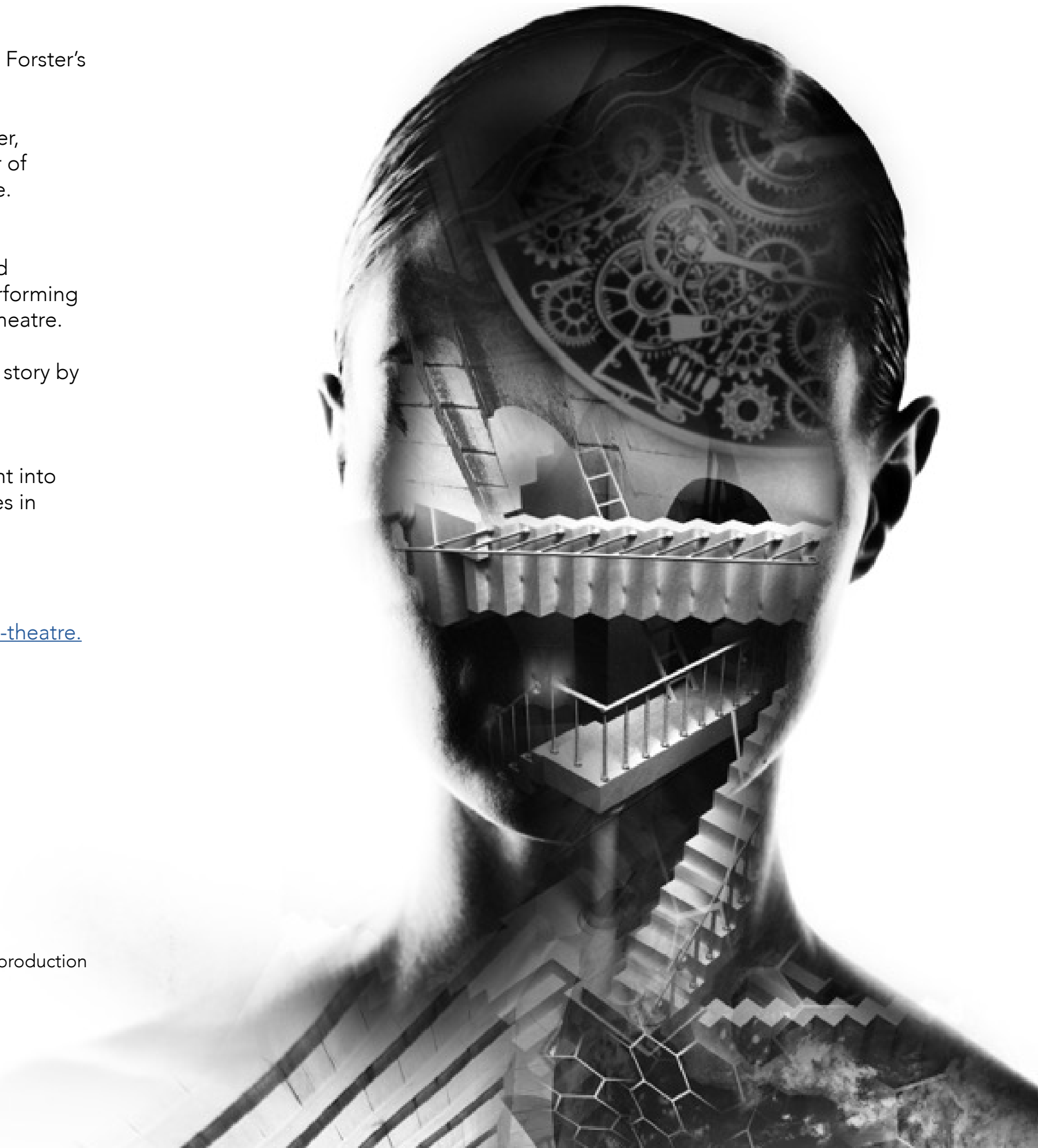
Supported by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.



Photography by Ben Pugh.

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With thanks to the cast, creative, production and admin teams.





## **TOUR DATES**

YORK THEATRE ROYAL  
13 MAY - 04 JUNE

**BOOK TICKETS**

THE POINT, EASTLEIGH  
08 JUNE - 09 JUNE

**BOOK TICKETS**

NEW THEATRE ROYAL,  
PORTSMOUTH  
10 JUNE - 11 JUNE

**BOOK TICKETS**

KOLIBRI SZÍNHÁZ,  
**BUDAPEST**  
16 JUNE - 17 JUNE

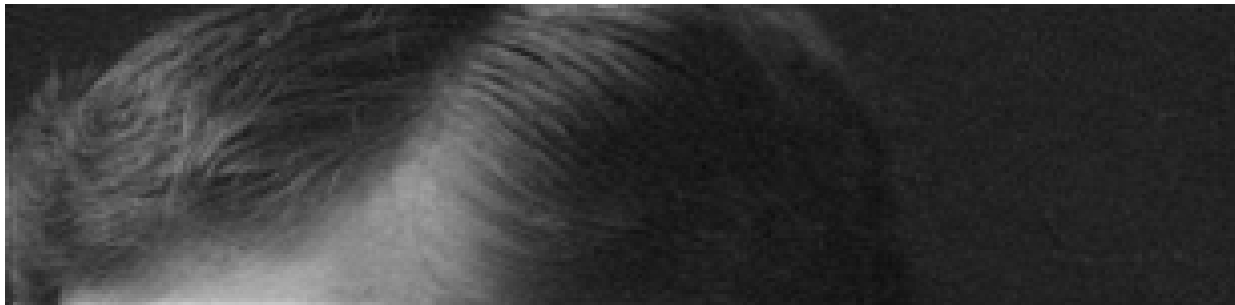


# THE AUTHOR

Forster was born on the 1st January 1879 in London. He was officially registered as Henry Morgan Forster but accidentally baptised as Edward Morgan Forster, a name which stuck with him.

An inheritance was left to Forster by his aunt which enabled him to commit time and focus to his writing. His academic success led him to King's College, Cambridge, where he first studied Classics, followed by a further year's study of History.

Forster began writing fiction during his time at Cambridge and became a member of a discussion society known as the Apostles, many of whom, including Forster, went on to be part of the influential group of writers, intellectuals, and philosophers known as the Bloomsbury Group.



After university, he travelled in Europe with his mother, which provided a source for some of his novels, including *A Room with a View* (1908). Whilst travelling he tutored and lectured, committing fully to writing when he returned to England. He is most known for his novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907), *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1910), and *A Passage to India* (1924), but he was also notable essayist, literary critic, travel writer, and skilled short story writer.

Much of his work dealt with the impact of class difference and societal structures. Through these themes he was able to explore the need for humans to meaningfully connect with each other and the barriers that prevent it. In his essay *What I Believe* (1938), he wrote "With personal relationships. Here is something comparatively solid in a world full of violence and cruelty."

Forster self-identified as a Humanist, acting as President of the Cambridge Humanists from 1959 until he died. He was also Vice-President of the Ethical Union in the 1950s, and a member of the Advisory Council of the British Humanist Association from its foundation in 1963. Forster wrote that "The humanist has four leading characteristics – curiosity, a free mind, belief in good taste, and belief in the human race." Later, he was made a fellow at the University of Cambridge and in 1945 he moved to Cambridge permanently, living there until his death in 1970.

# THE STORY

First published in 1909, *The Machine Stops* has been republished numerous times, and included in the popular anthology *The Science Fiction Hall of Fame*. Set in a post-apocalyptic world where humans live beneath the surface of the earth, this short story explores the human need for communication, connection and the obstacles that inhibit it, namely technology.

In this subterranean world, each person exists within their own individual cell and humanity is dependent on the Machine, a technological provider of everybody's perceived needs. Travel is no longer necessary or desired and all contact is made through Skype-like video calls.

This story, written over a century ago, is astoundingly prophetic and poignant for us in 2016, and is a chilling prediction and exploration of our increasingly complex relationship with technology. It focuses on themes such as human being's dependence on technology and the consequences of active counter culture, as well as isolation, totalitarianism, the struggle for freedom and loss of identity.

One of the protagonists, Kuno, alone questions their now total dependency on technology to live and communicate with each other, but in his struggle to break out can he reach the Earth's surface before the Machine stops?

# DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

## JULIET FORSTER



### So why did you want to direct this piece?

Well I first read the story in 1998 and it immediately captured my imagination because I think we read stories all the time, read books all the time, but actually I don't very often read things that I think, this would make a really interesting stage production. And at the time, it was in the lead up to the millennium, and lots of people were talking about the millennium bug and the fact that once we got to the year 2000, all the machines would reset and nothing would work anymore. An anxiety that there would be a huge apocalypse and everything would go horribly wrong, and of course none of that did happen but there was lots of panic about it in those days. At the time I thought, 'oh it would be an interesting piece, The Machine Stops', That kind of reliance on technology, it would just be interesting to do it at that time. But, as the years have gone on, and we have kind of developed into the future that we now have, where we are so much more reliant on technology, the technology is in everyone's homes, there is a sense that we are both connected and isolated from each other through the increasing use of technology, that the story just becomes more and more interesting, and it is a really dramatic story so it's a good one to put on stage.

### How did you start the process of putting this short story on stage?

Well, I talked to a couple of writers, but I decided to work with Neil Duffield, who is a playwright that I have worked a lot with before, and he has done many adaptations of books, and I knew that he would come up with an interesting approach to it and respect Ian Forster's voice. So, we worked on it together. The form of the piece was something we jointly found, because over time, although there is only really two characters in the story; Vashti and her son Kuno; the character of the machine, and the dominance of it means that it's something that needs to be given its own manifestation on stage. It was a process of working how we would put all of that together and make it work in the right form, because all the time we are trying to find the form that most suits the content of what you're telling.

### And what do you think the biggest challenge of the play is?

Its probably trying to create such an enormously different world. This is a world where everybody lives under the surface of the earth, to completely transport an audience, to get them to understand that world, and to buy into it, but at the same time, we have to visit other locations. We go up in an airship at one point, we go to another room across the other side of the world, then we actually break out to the surface of the earth, so I think being able to get all that into the play and make that workable is a big challenge. And there is a bit where an air ship crashes into the earth at the very end, and it all splits apart, which I don't know how I'm going to do just yet. We also have to work to help audiences understand what is happening to people in that world, I think is a challenge to do, and to get the machine understandable onstage.

### What new insights do you think this stage adaptation offers?

I think because we are developing a physical manifestation of the machine that is played by humans, you get a much clearer sense of how much of humanity has been lost. I suppose that's how it works in symbolic terms, that you will understand how much of our natural self as humans has been compressed into the walls of this machine, into the workings and the mechanisms that actually separate us from each other. I think you will get much more of that within it and I think you'll really identify quite strongly with the character of Kuno, who is the one who tries to break out of it all.

Interview continued on the next page...



**And I guess directing a piece like this, what kind of approach will you take in rehearsals?**

Well because it's such a physical piece, a lot of it will be working on movement, we've got a lovely big metal structure that the characters who are playing the machines are going to move around. We're going to work with, its very easy to become a little bit, kind of, stereotypical and a bit naff with machine kind of type movements and mechanical movements, but what I'm interested in drawing on is the sort of, movement language of insects, so that idea of being under the earth, and sort of ants, which are quite alien like in their own way, they're quite, they're sort of the least human of most of the kind of creatures on earth, and using that kind of language to inform how they behave and how they move. So we will be doing a lot of that playing. I like actors to come with their own ideas and to be playful and to try things on stage and to explore how we make that world kind of happen. I'm not the kind of director that wants to tell everybody exactly how they move in every way and which bit of the set they stand on, so I think there will be a lot of that and a lot of building and getting our heads right into what I would mean to be in that world and how that might affect us physically, so for the humans within the piece as well, what its like if you're that isolated, what does then direct contact mean, if you're so on your own all the time.

**What new insights do you think this stage adaptation offers?**

I think because we are sort of giving a physical manifestation of the machine played by humans, I think you get a much clearer sense of how much of humanity has been lost, I suppose that's how it works in symbolic terms, that you will understand how much of our natural beings as humans has been sort of compressed into the walls of this machine, into the workings and the mechanisms that actually separate us from each other. So I think you will get much more of that within it and I think you'll really identify quite strongly with the character of Kuno, who is the one who tries to break out of it all.

**And what advice would you give to a young person who wants to pursue a career as a theatre director?**

Direct as much as you can. Doesn't matter if you are just directing work at school, you're directing something within your drama club, within your youth theatre, volunteer to try and get your hands dirty doing it, there's definitely no substitute for that, but also just see as much as you can, even if you think it's a piece of work that you're not quite sure sounds that interesting to you. The more different types of work that you see on stage, the more you can compare and contrast, the more you can see what works and what doesn't work, so really building up your understanding of theatre language and trying it out. I think those are the first two sort of steps you have to do, where you go and train and what you have to do, there are lots of different ways in, but actually having that experience and that real in depth understanding of theatre through seeing it, I think there is no substitute for that.

# DESIGNER INTERVIEW

## RHYS JARMAN



**Can you talk us through the stages you have gone through in coming up with the final design for the machine stops?**

Designing for theatres can be a lengthy process, especially with a play like this because it's set in a fictionalised place, so you don't really have the anchor of being able to look up on the internet the place in which its set, and know exactly how that looks. This process is much more about taking elements of the piece and finding out what they're inspired by, I suppose, and finding visual languages for those things to represent on stage.

Its really a way of creating our own world, so that's kind of been one of the biggest challenges of it. Trying to create that language for telling this piece takes quite a long time. And so you try things and they fail, and you try other things and those things sometimes fail but then some things will be successful and it's those successful things that you take further, and eventually you start piecing this puzzle together. I think it will probably still change as well, but for the most part I think we've landed on a world for our show.

Interview continued on the next page...



### **Were there any particular aspects to this story that inspired you?**

Yeah, from the first time I read it actually, I thought it was really interesting. I think a lot of the work that I do, when I look at my portfolio of stuff I've made in the last 8 years, a lot of my work is quite conceptual. Its quite weird, its not necessarily that clear, its quite ambiguous stuff. I do a lot of work with physical theatre that's becoming dance, so there's a lot of worlds that are created and suggested but they're not necessarily prescribed as you would in a normal play. So a lot of my work is that kind of stuff so when I read this play and realised that this was a piece that could kind of fit into that category, I found that really compelling, and you just realise that there's so much you could do with it, and I think that's what's interesting about it. Yes, there's really wonderful things inside it, like there's themes that people could get really excited about, which to a degree I do, but I think its having the freedom with a piece like this that's really compelling, knowing that you can draw on so many different things for inspiration I think.

### **How did you become a designer?**

How did I become a designer? I always liked doing art in school and I did a foundation in art and design which I loved, and I still didn't know what I wanted to do.



I liked doing everything; drawing, sculpting, taking photographs, everything; and so theatre seemed like this opportunity to use all of those different practices in one kind of discipline really, so that's why I think I do it because it gives me this platform to create stuff that you can use a whole range of skills and you know you can be pretty wild with the stuff you manage to create, stuff that you really would have the chance to I think if you were potentially just a fun artist. Yeah, something like that.

### **Do you have any advice for any younger people who would be beginning that sort of career path or thinking about becoming a designer?**

I think, it's a very difficult road, very difficult career path, but it's a very wonderful career path. I think if you're a creative person you have to choose a career where you can be creative, otherwise you will never be happy, I think that's true.

If you're going to be a designer, I think just keep creating, keep making your art, keep making your work and I think that the best designs are probably the people with the most creative minds, so if you can train your brain now in whatever you're doing, to be, to push all those boundaries and to find creative solutions to whatever your task is, that's the best kind of place to start for theatre really. And don't worry about all the university stuff or career path yet, just enjoy it I think. It has to come out of a place of enjoyment, the work, otherwise what's the point?



# CAST



Gareth Aled / Machine 1 & Passenger



Maria Gray / Machine 2 & Attendant



Caroline Gruber / Vashti



Karl Queensborough / Kuno

# WORKSHOP OFFERS

The production will be staged on, above and below a metal cage-like structure, using daring physical movement, music and powerful storytelling.

The play and accompanying workshops (see below) will provide a great opportunity for students studying Drama and Performing Arts, or English at GCSE, BTEC or A level.

This production will have Pilot's trademark characteristics of innovative design and relevance to young people, with accompanying education resources both online and in the form of a workshop programme and post show discussions.

To book workshops, or for any related queries, please contact Pilot Theatre directly e-mail [education@pilot-theatre.com](mailto:education@pilot-theatre.com) or phone the Pilot Office on 01904 635755.

## OFFER ONE

### Exploring The Machine Stops

A bespoke workshop to fit your students' learning needs at either Key Stage 4 or 5 in English or Drama

- A practical and dramatic approach, using techniques which allow for a close exploration of the themes, form and issues of Pilot's production of The Machine Stops.

Costs: £200 for a workshop or £300 for 2 workshops on the same day.  
Up to 30 places per workshop

## OFFER TWO

### Rehearsal full days (English, Drama and Theatre Studies GCSE and A Level)

1. An approach to devising- Creating the world of The Machine. Explore the movement and ensemble techniques used in the production to create the omnipresent 'Machine' and learn how a chorus can narrate, become and move the story on.
  2. Giving students the opportunity to experience working as a group of actors with a Theatre Director using both the play and the students' response to the themes and characters as a starting point for devising the students own pieces.
- Both days can include a presentation of the students work at the end of the day.

Costs: £300 The day can accommodate up to 30 students.

# WORKSHOP ONE

These exercises are designed to introduce some of the themes and the adaptation process before students see the production. The students should know at least the basic premise of the story, but don't need to have read it.

## INTRODUCING THE WORLD OF THE PLAY

### 1. Warm-up

Prisoner/ Jailer: Players in pairs are in a circle with one person sitting on a chair as a prisoner and their partner standing behind them as their jailer, hands behind their back. One jailer has no prisoner. The jailer with an empty chair calls the name of a prisoner in the circle. That prisoner must escape from their jailer and move to the empty chair. Their jailer must attempt to stop the prisoner escaping by placing a hand on their shoulder. Discuss the theme of freedom and restriction, prevalent in Forster's work. In the game, no-one achieves genuine freedom, they just keep exchanging one identical prison for another, but no-one questions it, as those are the rules of the games. Relate to *The Machine Stops*: within the established culture of the Machine, they are all, in a sense, willing prisoners, each in their own cell trapped in their own chair, seemingly content. Kuno is genuinely representative of counter culture, as he questions the rules of the Machine, and struggles to gain his freedom.

### 2. Everyone's an Expert

a) In Forster's subterranean world, the pursuit and communication of ideas and opinions has taken over from almost all other forms of work. Participants split into pairs and label themselves A or B. Each student decides on their specialist subject – this could be a serious topic that they know something about, an obscure area that they think they could improvise their way through, such as "Elizabethan choral music", or something very familiar such as my pet dog, my favourite book, my family etc.

b) A goes first and lectures their partner for a full minute on their specialist subject without stopping. They should speak authoritatively and aim to educate their partner, drawing on evidence (spurious or otherwise) to back up their claims. They should not feel restricted by facts but can stretch the truth as much as they like as long as they carry it off with confidence and conviction.

c) At the end of the minute, B feeds back to their partner on what came across as particularly "expert".

d) They swap over so that B lectures A, who then feeds back.

e) All As now stand in a line facing Bs who become an audience. They give their lecture again, this time to the whole group, starting with the person at the end of the line, and gradually adding the others in so that all lecturers are speaking at once. Swap over so that B's have their turn. Discuss what the exercise made them feel, both when speaking and when listening. What did they enjoy, what did they dislike, what did they do as a result? How, if at all, does this relate to our world? Forster describes irritation as "a growing quality in that accelerated age". Discuss.

### 3. Master and Servant

a) In groups of 3s, each person is labelled A, B or C. A starts as the Master, B and C are the servants. The Master must continually order their servants to do things for them, the servants must comply graciously and without speaking. Swap around so each person gets a go and playing the Master.

b) Discuss how it feels to have to do nothing for yourself, but to have every comfort provided for you. Relate to the world of *The Machine Stops*, where people largely sit on their chairs all day, without needing to lift a finger for themselves, as the Machine provides for their every need. Are the benefits/drawbacks to this type of life?

### 4. Working with Narration

a) Narrating the Action Game. Four volunteers are chosen, the rest are an audience. Two players are the actors in an improvised scene, two other players are the narrators, who stand either side of the acting area, and each narrate the action and thoughts of one of the characters. They take it in turns to narrate, and the actors must accept whatever information is being given about their character by the narrators, but they speak their own improvised lines, when cued with "he/she said..."

b) The scene is given as set in a future, sci-fi inspired world. As we will only see the empty space and the actors, the narrators are encouraged to consider what details they might need to explain, or describe for the audience so that we fully understand the world.

c) Play and swap around so that other participants can be an audience/or have a go.

d) Discuss what worked well and what didn't.

e) Participants are then split into groups of 3 or 4, and are given an extract of the text of the original short story. They discuss the tone of the narrative voice. Who might be telling this story? Where are they in time? How engaged with the story are they? Where do they sit in relationship to what's happening on stage?

Turn over to see some different possibilities that you could explore...



- narrator as a disengaged story-teller/narrator, outside of the action
- an anthropologist talking about a bygone civilisation showing archive footage
- narrator as an emotionally engaged story-teller, e.g. a survivor from the days of the Machine
- Members of the Central Committee of the Machine extolling the virtues of the Machine (propaganda for the Machine)
- A more abstract approach, e.g. the ghosts of Kuno and Vashti telling the story moving in and out of the action, the Machine itself tells the story etc.
- Groups experiment with a few different approaches including their own ideas, then settle on a narrator/s and stage the extract accordingly. Cut the text, add dialogue as required.
- Show back and discuss the impact of different styles of narration.

## TEXT EXTRACT

### Extract 1

Imagine, if you can, a small room, hexagonal in shape, like the cell of a bee. It is lighted neither by window nor by lamp, yet it is filled with a soft radiance. There are no apertures for ventilation, yet the air is fresh. There are no musical instruments, and yet, at the moment that my meditation opens, this room is throbbing with melodious sounds. An armchair is in the centre, by its side a reading-desk - that is all the furniture. And in the armchair there sits a swaddled lump of flesh - a woman, about five feet high, with a face as white as a fungus. Vashti. It is to her that the little room belongs.

### Extract 2

Then Vashti generated the light, and the sight of her room, flooded with radiance and studded with electric buttons, revived her. There were buttons and switches everywhere - buttons to call for food for music, for clothing. There was the hot-bath button, by pressure of which a basin of (imitation) marble rose out of the floor, filled to the brim with a warm deodorized liquid. There was the cold-bath button. There was the button that produced literature, and there were of course the buttons by which she communicated with her friends. The room, though it contained nothing, was in touch with all that she cared for in the world.



### Extract 3

The air-ship service was a relic from the former age. It was kept up, because it was easier to keep it up than to stop it or to diminish it, but it now far exceeded the wants of the population. Vessel after vessel would rise from the vomitories of Rye or of Christchurch (I use the antique names), would sail into the crowded sky, and would draw up at the wharves of the south--empty, so nicely adjusted was the system, so independent of meteorology, that the sky, whether calm or cloudy, resembled a vast kaleidoscope whereon the same patterns periodically recurred. The ship on which Vashti sailed started now at sunset, now at dawn. Night and day, wind and storm, tide and earthquake, impeded man no longer. He had harnessed Leviathan.

### Extract 4

By these days it was a demerit to be muscular. Each infant was examined at birth, and all who promised undue strength were destroyed. Humanitarians may protest, but it would have been no true kindness to let an athlete live; he would never have been happy in that state of life to which the Machine had called him; he would have yearned for trees to climb, rivers to bathe in, meadows and hills against which he might measure his body. Man must be adapted to his surroundings, must he not? In the dawn of the world our weakly must be exposed on Mount Taygetus, in its twilight our strong will suffer euthanasia, that the Machine may progress, that the Machine may progress, that the Machine may progress eternally.

# WORKSHOP TWO

These exercises are designed to explore some of the challenges in staging the play after students have seen the production, and to deepen understanding of the rehearsal process.

## REHEARSING THE PLAY

### 1. Warm-up

**Eyes Up/Eyes Down:** Participants stand in a circle. Everyone looks at the ground. The teacher gives the instruction "Eyes Up" and everyone looks up and straight at someone else in the circle. If that person is looking back at you – your eyes meet – both people must sit down. The teacher calls "Eyes Down" everyone looks at the floor again, then "Eyes Up", and so on. Students should decide who they will look at before raising their head – rather than changing their mind and trying to avoid eye contact. Play until the last one or two are left standing. Discuss what happened when eyes met. What did it feel like? Discuss the power of eye contact, and how in this production we had to limit the use due to the nature of the world of the play.

### 2. Connection and Disconnection

a) In pairs, improvise a scene where the two of you are best friends, and you have some amazing news to share.

b) Replay the scene, but this time you cannot touch, or even come very close to each other, and you cannot make eye contact.

c) Share back one or two and discuss the differences.

d) Now in the same pairs, play the scene between Vashti and Kuno. Play the scene how you would naturally want to play it.

e) Discuss how little actual relationship there has been between the two of them, how touching has become obsolete – and this is normal for Forster's world. Now play the scene again observing the same rules as before: no touching and no eye contact. How does this change the scene and the intentions in the text? How does it change how the characters feel? How does it affect your staging decisions? If they were to make eye contact at one point in the scene, where would it be? What happens if Kuno gets very close to Vashti, even if he doesn't touch her?

f) Show back the scenes and discuss.

### 3. Chair Exercise

a) We learn a lot about a character through their interaction with other characters on stage, but we should be able to read a character from the second they step onto stage and interact with their surroundings. This becomes even more important in a play where there is little interaction between characters and a lot of focus on Vashti on her own, sitting in a chair. So it's been important to build the actors relationship to the objects that surround them. This is particularly interesting when arguably the characters in this world have more relationship with things than they do with people! But it can be quite difficult to react to an inanimate object, unless we project something real onto it.

b) Participants are asked to place a chair in the space and stand as far away from that chair as they can.

c) Stress THE CHAIR IS A CHAIR. It will never become human and everything they do to/around the chair should be lifelike actions that they would do to a chair (i.e. they wouldn't hug a chair).

d) Work through a list of 'people' the chair could be: a best friend, a teacher they are in trouble with, an estranged family member, a baby etc. Starting with 'best friend', discuss how they feel about approaching/seeing their best friend and how they feel around them (e.g. comfortable, at ease).

e) Participants are then instructed to approach the chair with all the emotions and thoughts they may have in relation to what the chair is. Once reaching the chair they must decide where to 'settle' - do they sit on it, stand over it, sit away from it? But it is always still a chair.

f) Show back some examples.

### 4. Creating the Machine

a) In pairs, create a machine using repetitive sound and gesture.

b) Build one big machine by fitting the component parts together into a circle and adjusting movements here and there as needed to make a coherent whole. If the group is big enough, create two machines, so that students can "visit" each other's machines being inside the circle and experiencing what living in each machine world is like, otherwise give opportunities for individuals to break out of the action and visit it.

Turn the page for the rest of this exercise...



c) Give characteristics to the Machine: A Machine full of hate; a nurturing, loving Machine; a fully sentient, arrogant Machine that thinks it is superior to humans; a very cool, slightly sexy Machine; a subtle, subversive Machine, keeping its head down and biding its time etc. Through each of the different characteristics, the structure of the Machine should remain essentially the same, although of course the rhythm, scale, volume and style of the movement will change.

d) Finally create a super sleek Machine that begins to go wrong and then gradually breaks down. As it breaks down, the component parts of the Machine become human.

e) Discuss what the students made of the Machine in the production they saw. What decisions did they think we had made about the nature of the Machine. Why did they think we had opted to have actors embody the Machine, and what was the impact of this?

f) One decision that was made was that although the Machines needed to be non-human in their characterisation, we didn't want them to be too robotic and mechanical. Consequently, we drew on the movement of insects to create an aesthetic for them, partly because of the "under the earth" association, partly because many insects such as ants and bees work almost as a single unified mind – which reflected well the idea of one big Machine, and partly, as insect behaviour can seem quite alien to us.

g) In pairs, have a go at the extract from the script. Pick an insect - an ant, a bee, a beetle, a fly, a worm or another creature, and use this to influence your movement and your voice. Play it first at 100%, then gradually reduce it down so that there are just flashes of it. Show back.



# SCRIPT EXTRACT

## KUNO AND VASHTI TEXT

Vashti: I have had the most terrible journey. It simply is not worth it, Kuno. My time is too precious. The cabin had no isolating mechanism – the sunlight almost touched my face. And I had to endure the most disturbing contact with other travellers.

Kuno: It's good to see you...

Vashti: I can only stop a few minutes. Say what you have to say and then I must return.

Kuno hesitates a moment, not quite knowing where to start.

Kuno: I've been threatened with Homelessness.

Vashti: .... I beg your pardon.

Kuno: I've been threatened with Homelessness. I couldn't tell you through the Machine.

Vashti: Kuno, Homelessness means death. The victim is taken to the surface of the earth and exposed to the outside air.

Kuno: I know what it means.

Vashti: But why? What for? What have you done?

Kuno: The tremendous thing I spoke to you of has happened.... I've been outside. I've visited the surface of the earth.

Vashti: But why shouldn't you go outside? I don't understand. It's perfectly legal to visit the surface of the earth. One simply summons a respirator and obtains an egression permit. It's not the kind of thing a progressively minded person would want to do, but there's no legal objection. No reason to be threatened with Homelessness.

Kuno: I didn't obtain an egression permit.

Vashti: I don't understand.....Then how did you get out?... You couldn't have. It's impossible.

Kuno: I found a way of my own.

Vashti: .....But.....but that would be wrong. That would be completely wrong.

Kuno: Why?

Vashti: (shocked) Kuno.....The Machine does not appr.....

Kuno: The Machine! Always the Machine!  
You think it's sinful of me – is that it? Immoral? That's what the Committee said when they threatened me with Homelessness. You sound as if you're beginning to worship the Machine

Vashti: I worship nothing. Religion does not exist. The Machine destroyed all that fear and superstition long ago. I only meant that to find a way of your own was.....Anyway, it doesn't matter, it's irrelevant. There is no other way out.

Kuno: So it is always supposed.

Vashti: The only way out is through the vomitories, for which one must have an egression permit. The Book says so.

Kuno: Well the Book is wrong. I didn't use the vomitories. I didn't even summon a rail-car.

Vashti: Then what did you do?

Kuno: I walked

Vashti: ...Walked?

Kuno: On my own two feet.

Vashti: Kuno, this is ridiculous. I do believe you're making the whole thing up. How could you have possibly walked to the surface? It's impossible.

## **MACHINE TEXT**

Machine 1: Imagine, if you can, a small room, hexagonal in shape

Machine 2: like the cell of a bee.

Machine 1: It is lighted neither by window nor by lamp,

Machine 2: yet it is filled with a soft radiance.

Machine 1: There are no apertures for ventilation,

Machine 2: yet the air is fresh.

Machine 1: There are no musical instruments, and yet

Machine 2: the room throbs with melodious sounds. An armchair is in the centre,

Machine 1: by its side a reading desk.

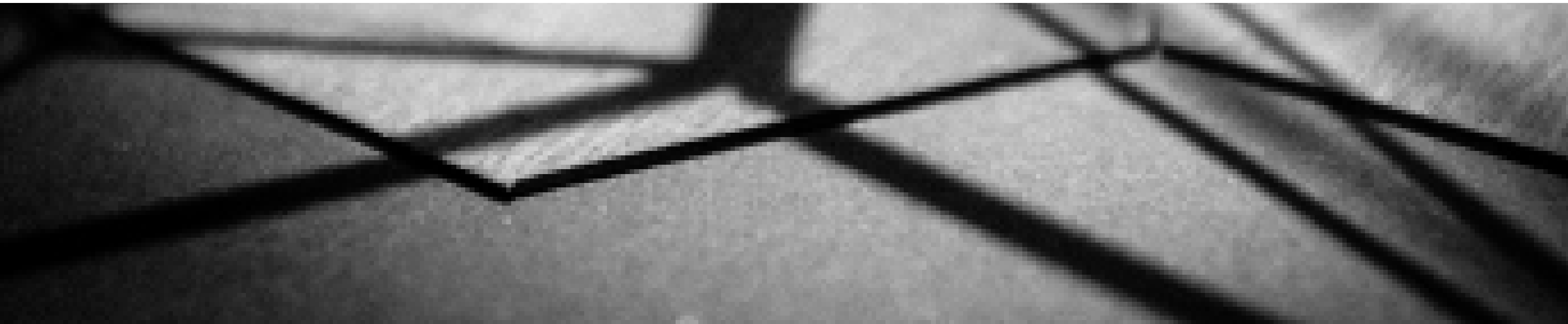
Machine 2: There is no other furniture. In the armchair sits a swaddled lump of flesh.

Machine 1: Her name is Vashti.

Machine 2: It is to her that this room,

Machine 1: deep below the earth's surface,

Machine 2: belongs.





# REHEARSAL SHOTS















## DESIGN EXERCISE

We commissioned an artist from [We Three Club](#) to create a propaganda poster inspired by *The Machine Stops*.

What you see above is their design.

What do you understand about propaganda and how it has been used in the past and how is it still used?

How does We Three Club's design relate to *The Machine Stops*?

What aspects of the design make it a propaganda poster?

Is it effective as a propaganda poster?

Work together in groups or as individuals to create your own propaganda poster inspired by *The Machine Stops*.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

Find out more about the E. M. Forster

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33208?docPos=12>

Read and download a free version of E.M. Forster's *The Machine Stops*

<http://www.ele.uri.edu/faculty/vetter/Other-stuff/The-Machine-Stops.pdf>

Listen and download a free LibriVox audio recording of the short story read by Jerome Lawsen.

[https://archive.org/details/machine\\_stops\\_0904\\_librivox](https://archive.org/details/machine_stops_0904_librivox)

"We are not going to stop making progress, or reverse it, so we must recognise the dangers and control them," Stephen Hawking

Read and watch Stephen Hawking describe the possible dangers of technological advancements.

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/jan/19/stephen-hawking-warns-threats-to-humans-science-technology-bbc-reith-lecture>

### OTHER ADAPTATIONS

A television adaptation, directed by Philip Saville, was shown in the UK on 6 October 1966 as part of the British science-fiction anthology TV series *Out of the Unknown*.

Playwright Eric Coble's 2004 stage adaptation was broadcast on 16 November 2007 on WCPN 90.3 FM in Cleveland, Ohio. You can find a downloadable version of the broadcast here: [http://davidhansen.org/Radio\\_Drama.html](http://davidhansen.org/Radio_Drama.html)

BBC Radio 4 have aired Gregory Norminton's adaptation as a radio play:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b048jcvg>

[TMS: The Machine Stops](#) is a graphic novel series adaptation written by Michael Lent with art by Marc Rene, published by Alterna Comics in February, 2014.

Mad Magazine #1 (Oct-Nov, 1952) included [Blobs, a 7-page story drawn](#) by Wallace Wood where two inhabitants of 1,000,000 AD discuss the history of man and his evolution into "blobs" totally dependent on the Machine. The sudden breakdown of the Machine, and what results, perfectly reflect the 1909 story "The Machine Stops".

[PILOT-THEATRE.COM](http://PILOT-THEATRE.COM)





