

THE MARIONETTE UNIT®

Set in an alternate Victorian London, where horrifying steam engines puppeteer slave labour in bleak backstreet workhouses, *The Marionette Unit* is the first graphic novel from new publisher TMU Workshop.

The Marionette Unit story first started in 2009 as a short film project, created by filmmakers Azhur Saleem and James Boyle. After completing a script and funding round, a short teaser was filmed, produced and posted online to incredible feedback. An online community began to build around the IP and in order to help build a package for a future *Marionette Unit* feature film or TV show, Saleem and Boyle decided to build on the IP's growing audience via a graphic novel series.

Over a year in the making, *The Marionette Unit* graphic novel is a unique collaboration between Saleem, Boyle and stalwart UK comic artist Warwick Johnson-Cadwell (*Tank Girl*, *Gungle*). The project has helped the team explore both serialised storytelling and world-building narrative in a new medium, while protecting against the 'unknown IP' label by building an audience organically.

STORY

The Marionette Unit graphic novel follows Beatrice Shaw as she searches for her missing sister, Melodie. Unfortunately for Beatrice, Melodie was last seen at a workhouse run by Henri Dubré; a shadowy industrialist who has forged man and machine in an abominable dream of never-ending efficiency.

As Beatrice enters this terrifying world, she must find a way to break free of the mechanical clutches around her and confront Dubré before all hope is lost of ever finding her sister again.

Part sci-fi, part historical fantasy – *The Marionette Unit* blends elements of *From Hell* and *At the Mountains of Madness* in a thrilling tale of greed, industry and London's mysterious underbelly.

WRITER/CREATORS

Azhur Saleem and James Boyle are London-based filmmakers with a decade's experience in narrative filmmaking. They have worked with leading studios and broadcasters, while their films have played at festivals worldwide. *The Marionette Unit* marks their debut graphic novel.

ARTIST

Warwick Johnson-Cadwell is a stalwart of the UK comics industry. His work includes a much celebrated take on *Tank Girl*, the books *Nelson* and *Gungle* for Blank Slate, as well as *Derek Danger* with his longtime collaborator Robert Ball.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Release Date: 6th April 2016

Purchase URL: www.themarionetteunit.com

Publisher: TMU Workshop

Format: Softcover / Perfect Bound

Price: £12.99 SC UK / £9.99 Digital UK

BISAC Category: COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS / Science Fiction

Page Count: 96

Dimensions: 13.25" x 10.18"

THE MARIONETTE UNIT®

NOTES AND QUOTES FROM THE CREATORS

Full interview questions available within press pack

James Boyle

"The world of The Marionette Unit is an alternative take on Victorian London. Set in 1847, imagine a time where steam technology as opposed to electricity has become the prevalent form of power; airships, gyrocopters and steam powered vehicles are everywhere, with that this world is grimy, textured, and contains mysterious characters at every turn."

Azhur Saleem

(on transitioning from film to comics)

"As a director, one of the steps I take when realising a script to the screen is the process of storyboarding. I'll break down each scene and start to visualise it first in my head, then on paper. The process of working in the comics was really no different, except here I didn't need to worry about building a giant set or hiring over 200 extras! I could literally set my imagination free when beginning the process of visualising the story."

James Boyle

(on collaboration with Warwick)

"Warwick was someone who we were aware of as fans of independent comics, we felt his art style would fit the tone and story perfectly. We were introduced to him by Daniel Humphry at OFF LIFE who agreed that it would be a great fit. As our debut release, our first foray in publishing and coming from a film background, it took a little while to get into a working rhythm for production. But once we all settled in we

found the process quite straight forward and looked forward to the end of the week immensely when new pages would arrive!"

Warwick Johnson-Cadwell

(on collaborating with filmmakers)

"Working with a screenwriter for the first time has been good fun. My tendency is to draw narratives with a cinematic or theatrical view in mind. My compositions and character direction are often influenced by screen images, then applied to the comic frame, so I very much enjoy the process of storytelling and translating a cinematic piece onto the page. It's been a great experience!"

Azhur Saleem (on the blending of Victorian and science-fiction genres)

"Interestingly we first termed our genre 'Victorian Sci-fi' and it was only after we began working on the story that we were introduced to the world of Steampunk. I've always had a fascination of mixing two differing times together and this sub-genre was perfect to realise the world of The Marionette Unit in."

Warwick Johnson-Cadwell (on what he would like readers to take away from the graphic novel's aesthetics)

"I hope that readers will finish the story having felt they have met new characters and visited a place that they had not been to before. Finding them engaging, intriguing and hopefully leaving them keen to return."