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PUPPETRY INTERNATIONAL

MATERIALS:
The Stuff of Puppetry

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the puppet in contemporary theatre, film & media

PUPPETRY INTERNATIONAL

issue no. 39

SPECIAL SECTION MATERIALS

REVIEWS

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On the COVER:
LANDS END
DIRECTED BY PHILIPPE GENTY AND MARY UNDERWOOD
PERFORMED BY COMPAGNIE PHILIPPE GENTY PHOTO: PASCAL FRANÇOIS

Stuff. Puppetry is a theater of stuff, and, as puppeteers, we are in love with stuff. Whether your studio's walls are lined with neat, metal shelves stacked with tidy bins of folded fabrics, turned wooden spheres and polyfoam sheets arranged by thickness, or boasts a collection of rickety folding tables rescued from the dump and piled high with feathers, bones and the inspiring detritus culled from gutters or cast up by the sea, it is all the stuff of dreams, the palette of colors from which the numinous will be made manifest.

This issue is brim belay full of stuff, as some of the world's most experienced puppeteers write with authority and reverence about wood, foam, paper, wool, cloth and salt. These are the materials from which our puppets are made (Bonnie Erickson shares her experiences of creating from foam such beloved characters as Miss Piggy, page 41), or act as metaphors for psychological conflict (Philippe Genty explores the unlikely combination of Kraft paper and hugs, page 18) or are the subjects of our dramas (Lisa Sturz remembers *The Mystery of the Salt Crystal*, an entire play about versatile, indispensable crystalline NaCl, page 47).

2016 marks fifty years since the founding of UNIMA-USA. It is a good time for taking stock. UNIMA-USA plays an increasingly important role in the international organization. Our president, Manuel Moran, is also the vice president of UNIMA and the head of the North American commission, and he stands on the shoulders of such giants as Jim Henson, Nancy Staub, Allelu Kurten, Vince Anthony and others who've given so much to the cause of international friendship and understanding through the art of puppetry. We will be featuring our half-century anniversary in the fall issue of *Puppetry International*.

On a personal note, Bonnie and I recently learned that we have been elected Members of Honor of UNIMA. I am engaged in a personal fundraising campaign to get to the quadrennial World Congress and Festival of Puppetry in Tolosa, Spain, this May to accept the honor personally. You should go, too! For now, you can visit our newly re-designed website, read about our history and meet the other Members of Honor.

-Andrew C. Periale

We are sad to note the passing of renowned author and researcher, Henryk Jurkowski. We will have more on his life in the fall issue.

Welcome Bradford Clark,
our current Peer Review Editor!

Brad is a professor of theater at Bowling Green State University. Clark's love of puppetry and other theatre has taken him to India, Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia, Japan, China, Taiwan, the Czech Republic and the Soviet Union, where he interned as a design assistant at the Bolshoi.

He has served as a peer reviewer for PI for many years.

Our peer reviewed article in this issue is by Rebekah Caputo, page 35.

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Be sure to check out the additional material on the UNIMA-USA website.

FROM KLAKULAK'S *THE JOURNEY*
PHOTO: STEVE MANN

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Major donors are named on page 10.

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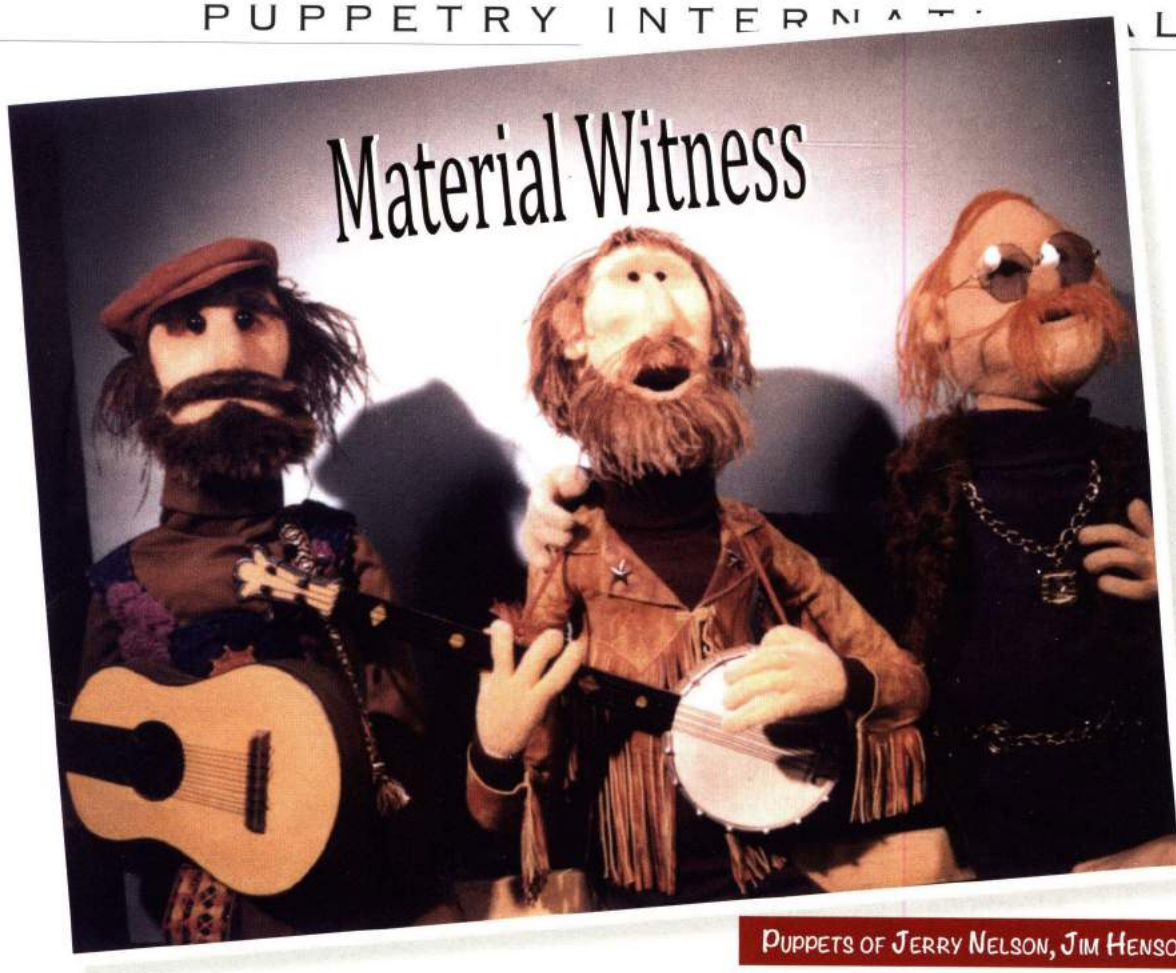


Puppets of Jerry Nelson, Jim Henson and Frank Oz

by Bonnie Erickson

I love process. Anyone who builds puppets must love process. It is difficult to think of another profession that utilizes the variety of skills and range of materials one employs when creating puppets. Often that means also creating the costumes, props and, in the best of all possible worlds, the environment in which they exist. Jim Henson was doing just that with his "Tales from Muppetland" series when I interviewed with him in 1970. I believe there were two things in my portfolio that got me a job in the workshop–my costumes for an opera made entirely out of plastics and the life-sized muslin women I made and dressed in antique clothing.

His first assignment for me was the design and fabrication of the puppet costumes for the television special, "The Frog Prince." I joined Don Sahlin, Caroly Wilcox, John Lovelady, Franz Fazakas and Kermit Love, a truly generous and talented group of artists. They introduced me to the world of puppetry and the joys of anthropomorphization and practical jokes.

By the time we came together, each of us had a wealth of resources and materials at our fingertips and we were happy to share any new bit of information with each other. Whether it was a different way of creating finger holds or a better spring for an eyelid control, the ultimate goal was the perform-ability of the puppet.

The core ensemble performers were Jim Henson, Frank Oz, Jerry Nelson and Richard Hunt. In the shop there were fittings and mini-rehearsals with them and the additional puppeteers involved in the production. They were able to feel the way a puppet fit on the hand, test the weight, try out the flexibility of the mouth and determine the vision from inside a body puppet. The Muppet Workshop was a truly collaborative way to work–a magical environment nurtured by Jim.

My costuming experience had been with humans so there was a bit of a learning curve when it came to creating the "Frog Prince" costumes. Inseams and shoulder slopes were no longer a problem but now I had to consider the weight of the fabric as well as find ways to hide the heads, bodies and arms of the performers. Because they

oriented themselves to each other by watching a monitor placed beneath them, disguising the puppeteers while keeping their vision of the monitor clear was my job. On the set, gaffer's tape, double faced tape and safety pins became my best friends.

In the shop I was being exposed to every style of puppetry imaginable. Over the years, all kinds of puppets–rod, live hand, found object, marionette, stop action, shadow and full body puppets found their way into the stories Jim wanted to tell. He was interested in any new material, technique or discovery that would add to the richness of the productions and felt that play led to discovery. He encouraged it. We all thrived.

We all did research. Don Sahlin found perfectly turned wood spheres for use as universal marionette joints. "Faz" Fazakas developed the remote controls used in Fraggle Rock and later in Jim's films. Kermit Love shaped bamboo to produce the first lightweight skeleton for Snuffleupagus. Jim took us to see a demo of a hand-held flocking device by an inventor whose studio was built over a stream to promote a strong electronic charge. I worked with a national adhesive company to produce a flocking glue that could be colored with acrylic paint. Visiting hardware stores was always inspiring. These are only a few of the things that came out of our sourcing, searching and experimenting.

One of the most useful materials turned out to be a reticulated open cell foam material often referred to as Scott foam. Normally used for things like air conditioning filters, it comes in a variety of thicknesses and number of pores per inch. It is available in white and takes dye beautifully. Although it can be glued, more importantly it can be stitched, making it a big improvement over the soft urethanes for the inner structure of puppet bodies and heads as well as for entire major characters. Jim loved the way the brilliant colors caught the light on camera. Sam Eagle, Dr. Teeth and all of the Electric Mayhem band puppets were originally made using this material.

Many of these "discoveries," though incredibly useful, were not always harmless. I happened to pick up a newly published book citing some of the dangers of artists' materials. We had already found that flocking fibers went directly to any nearby wet surface and had begun to wear goggles, masks and surgical garb in an isolated flocking room. A ventilation system was installed to handle the fumes from the contact cement, the spray paints and the hot wire carving we did to create things like Mount Rushmore out of polyurethane foam. Safety became just one more of the considerations when choosing a material or the way it was used.

In between these specials, "The Muppets" were booked on a number of variety shows. There was a piece written for "The Ed Sullivan Show" that called for a blob of a puppet called "The Glutton." Jim wanted it to sort of billow and bulge. The puppet was made out of flat patterned one inch soft foam, with ears that were carved foam. I worked with Jim on the puppet and found my sculpture background came in handy as I continued to experiment with this style of fabrication.

JIM HENSON AND THE AUTHOR

With "The Muppet Musicians of Bremen" came my first opportunity to design and create a group of puppets and to make them all out of flat patterned soft foam. It was a real challenge to match the four bad guy human character puppets used in close up shots to the masks and costumes worn by the performers for long shots. At the same time I was doing two versions of the humans, the animal musicians were also being made as hand puppets and as marionettes. Each had its own inner structure while the outer surfaces and skins were covered identically.

Although I have built body puppets, Scott foam puppets, puppets out of long fake Icelandic fur, hand puppets covered with fleece, feather boa puppets and puppets out of found objects, soft foam became the material of choice for me. I loved the process of finding a character in a block of foam by carving away material. The least little movement from the performer created expressions that were just not possible with latex casting at the time. The compression of the foam eliminated the hard creases created by using molds and made facial movements very natural looking.

The caricatures of Jim Henson, Frank Oz and Jerry Nelson of Country Trio were among the first designs where I used this technique. George the Janitor, three pigs including Miss Piggy and Statler and Waldorf and others followed. Drawing the shape of the outline of the head from the front on a block of foam and then the profile of the side, the basic shape was cut out on a band saw, then refined with an electric carving knife, detailed with cuticle scissors and finally sanded smooth with a belt sander. The sanding demanded total concentration. I lost mine for a moment and sent an almost completed Statler head through the sander to the other side of the room with a big hole in his head. The next Statler head survived the process.

STATLER AND WALDORF

The original Miss Piggy head lasted the entire first year of taping "The Muppet Show." But when it came time to replace it, the carving proved too time consuming to be practical. Because the carving was so labor intensive, new materials and techniques eventually made it more precise to cast and mold soft foam latex duplicates. However, the process can be costly and if the flexibility is similar, the final product is quite delicate.

For the past seven years, The Jim Henson Legacy and its trustees have been entrusted with the maintenance and exhibition of the Jim Henson Family Collection of puppets, props and objects. Among them are many original puppets, including that original

(L TO R) "FAZ" FAZAKAS, DON SAHLIN, JIM HENSON, AND THE AUTHOR

surviving Statler head. It has been my responsibility to view the collection, create a database, organize and oversee the distribution of the family's generous donations of these objects to The Smithsonian Museum In Washington, The Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta and the Museum of the Moving Image in New York. This oversight has given me a unique perspective regarding the shelf life of many of the materials used in Jim Henson's work over the years.

It is amazing to see how well the "Sam and Friends" puppets have aged. They were created before some of the more unstable materials were used. Puppets with bodies made of fur fabric over plastic boning have survived quite well. At the same time, later puppets using Scott foam have turned to toast in about ten years. The soft foam fares slightly better. The aging of both materials is slowed by a thin coat latex or flocking glue to protect the surfaces. In order to exhibit any of the puppets with Scott foam bodies in a museum, they need to be cleaned out and the shapes replaced with non-toxic materials like FossShape or NuFoam. In the case of Fraggles, all of the outer skins are fine, but the inner structures are gone.

The cast foam latex survival rate of the "Dark Crystal" and "Labyrinth" puppets depends on the amount of light and air exposure they have had. Much of the material has darkened in color and dried out. But amazingly there are conservation techniques that have been rehydrating, stabilizing and sometimes restoring them. Keep in mind that after conservation, these puppets are not performable. There are non-toxic materials that can replace some of those in regular use without losing quality.

However, the materials that best produce the look or movement desired for the end use and performance is what is most important. I don't believe Jim would ever have traded the beautiful color of the Scott foam for longevity.

Bonnie Erickson, in addition to creating some of the world's most beloved puppet characters—Miss Piggy, Statler and Waldorf, to name a few—is recognized as the foremost developer of sports mascot marketing in the United States and Japan. She is a trustee of the Jim Henson Legacy foundation.

On Material

by John Farrell

Thirty-four years ago I quit law school, determined to make my life as a poet and sculptor. Around the same time, my wife, Carol, walked out of a theater professorship. Two months later, we co-founded Figures of Speech Theatre, forging a shared vision of performance grounded in puppetry.

Given that I was terrified of puppets as a child, that I hated theater as a teenager, and that I'd never been introduced to craft (all the tools my father possessed fit in a single kitchen drawer), it's hard to explain my professional preoccupation with puppet theater: the bewitching transformation of lifeless material into performative spirit.

Like many American boys growing up in the 1950s and 60s, I built forts and tree houses and model airplanes—and I loved dinosaurs and trains and chemistry sets—but these interests faded over time. My fascination with American Indians, on the other hand, remained central to my life. By the time I was ten I knew the names and home territories of most of the tribes of North America; I knew which deer sinew Indians used for making bowstrings (the long one running up the back of the hind leg).

For any people, material culture plays a crucial role in survival and identity. For a white kid growing up in suburbia, material culture was really all I had to hold onto in my obsession with Native American life: museums displayed objects; books had pictures; I had my imagination and my hands and whatever materials could be found locally. Deer were not plentiful in the development where we lived so the bows I made were strung with twine. Granite and fieldstone are terrible materials for making arrowheads, and the occasional piece of flint that fell into my hands ended up in shards, but I gained an absolute reverence for the genius and skill that go into making stone points or blades.

One material my neighborhood offered in abundance was birchbark, which I stripped from every fallen birch tree I came across. In my late teens the desire to build a canoe from birchbark drove me to hike the back-country of White Mountain National Forest, looking for suitable trees. Hitchhiking north in the summer of 1975, I got picked up by a man driving a battered station wagon with a chain saw and other tools in the back. Like me, he was headed for the White Mountains. Like me, he was on a quest for birchbark. His name was Henri Vaillancourt, and John McPhee had just profiled him in "New Yorker" magazine, describing Vaillancourt as the self-appointed keeper of the art of birchbark canoe building. I strove for nonchalance, but ended up begging him to take me on as an apprentice. "Nope."

If I found a good tree, would he help me strip the bark? "Nope."

A month later I borrowed a car and drove to Greenville, New Hampshire, where Henri lived. I found him easily enough, in a yard strewn with cedar strips and bark scraps. Would he consider an apprenticeship now? "Nope."

According to McPhee, Henri had built thirty-three canoes by the time he was twenty-four. My obsession paled to passing fancy. I felt like I had met Henrik Ibsen's Boyg, the disembodied menace in *Peer Gynt*, who answers Peer's question, "Who are you?" with, "Myself. Can you say the same?"

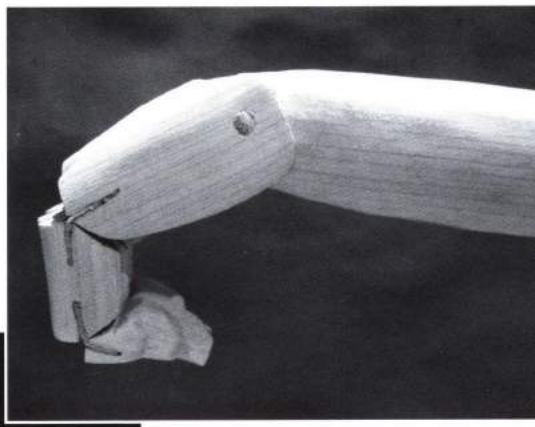
Undeterred, I hiked into the woods behind my grandmother's house, emerging with eighteen-foot-long cedar trunks and a million mosquito bites. A few months later I went to my college Dean, a philosophy professor and concert pianist, and told him I was taking a one-year leave of absence to build a birchbark canoe. He shrugged.

Then I fell in love, ditched the canoe idea, followed a girl to California, finished my degree in Native American history, moved to Maine, dropped out of law school, and founded a puppet company with my new wife.

Our first show came together quickly, and Carol's background in dance and costume design (she earned her master's at UCONN, which is where she got bitten by the puppet bug) made experimentation with puppet/human hybrids a natural choice, so the show had a number of puppets that depended somewhat on the body of the person working them to come alive. Never having built a puppet before, I relied on carpentry skills I had picked up working for a contractor, and made some remarkably awkward and heavy figures.

After a year of touring *YOALO!* we started conceptual work on our next show, *Anerca*. Before we completed the show, however, we were accepted into a seven-week course at the Institut International de la Marionnette, in Charleville-Mézières, France, where we'd be studying in succession with Peter and Barbara Ketturkat from Germany, Josef Krofta of DRAK Theater (in what was then Czechoslovakia) and Roman Paska from the United States. UNIMA-USA backed us with scholarship money and we flew off to a transformative summer of investigation in a field we knew nothing about—theater of objects.

We returned from France with a foundational perspective on puppet theater that shaped all our future work. From that point on, every object we put on stage (animate or inanimate) would be evaluated in terms of its formal, functional and symbolic qualities. The Charleville class marked the end of my casual involvement with puppets (though they still scared the daylights out of me) and the beginning of my realization that the puppet theater was an ideal vehicle for bringing together my loves of poetry and sculpture.



In creating *Anerca*, Carol and I were inspired by the Inuit people's intense connection to their environment, and we focused the main action of the piece on an Inuit shaman woman and the young man who is studying with her. Object theater made us consider the puppets of the shaman and the boy as metaphors, and we knew on that basis that the puppets would be carved of wood and clothed in real fur, because any object placed on stage could (and inevitably would) affect the thematic content

FIGURES OF SPEECH THEATRE'S *SHE WHO LOVES*

of the performance: The puppets' deepest power lay in the root understanding that the material from which they were fashioned would inform the substance of the show.

We also saw the language spoken by the puppets in performance as both material and metaphor—for the gulf that separates cultures. While audiences couldn't understand the invented language spoken by the puppets in *Anerca*, the language itself contributed to the meaning of the performance. *Anerca* taught us that the juxtaposition of forms (object, shadow, dance, puppet, actor, mask) could be harnessed to a show's conceptual framework as an element of narrative. Material had meaning.

Toward the end of *Anerca*, the shaman decides to take her own life by freezing, and we remove her fur parka, revealing the structure of the body in which her "soul" has lived in performance. Here the meaning of the material with which she is constructed—cloth and wood and rope—took a turn, transcending notions of her connection to the natural world. No longer a metaphor for the Inuit people's unique relationship with the earth, she became a metaphor for the truth that we are *all made of stuff*, animated in our existence by something beyond the material of which we're fashioned.

In 1987 we toured Japan under the auspices of the Foundation Modern Puppet Center in Yokohama, and received an invitation to visit the studio of Toru Saito, a puppet builder in residence at the Center, who had seen *Anerca* and wanted to look at the puppets more closely. That meeting led to two summers of informal instruction from Saito-san, whose generosity I will never be able to repay, and eventually to a six-month fellowship from the Japan-United States Friendship Commission. Instructed by the Commission to "absorb Japanese culture and reflect upon it," we returned to Japan in 1999.

In terms of material knowledge, perhaps the most significant information imparted to me by Saito-san during the fellowship was the formula for making *gofun*, the ground-oyster-shell-and-glue mixture with which Bunraku puppets and Noh masks are finished. A time-consuming, finicky process that begins with the application of torn scraps of old Noh scripts to the carved *hinoki* wood surface of Bunraku puppets, *gofun* creates a finish of incredible luminosity and depth.

She Who Loves, created the year after the fellowship, combined the influences of object theater and traditional Japanese craft and performance. A Comanche story about a girl who sacrifices her most treasured possession to end a drought, the piece opened with a seven-minute prologue set in a large tray filled with red clover seed. Objects emerged from and sank down into the "sand" to

the words of a poem that began, "A hole no larger and no smaller than your soul opens onto the face of the world..."

I carved the puppets and masks for *She Who Loves* from white cedar (the same material essential to birchbark canoe-building), and sealed them with Noh scripts before coating them with *gofun*. When Saito-san came to the U.S. in 2001, to speak at the opening of the exhibit of antique Japanese puppets I curated as part of the World Puppets Portland festival, he took the Ghost of the Mother mask in his hands and studied it at arm's length, letting out the quintessentially Japanese expression of dismay, "Saaaaaa," before turning to me and saying, "Too much expression." The master-apprentice relationship—a defining characteristic in the world of traditional Japanese craft—rides uneasily on American shoulders!

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL PASSION

After the Festival, Saito-san and I traveled the state, satisfying his desire to see American Indian crafts. We visited master Penobscot basket-maker Theresa Hoffman and received a tour of the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor. I regret that we didn't make it over to Henri Vaillancourt's place to see his canoes.

Shows we have created since 1999 all reflect the experience of being in Japan and studying with Saito-san. Our latest performance, *the little match girl passion*, features Carol in a masked role that owes more than a little to the Japanese Noh, and the puppet of the match girl has the segmented Bunraku-style hands Saito-san taught me to make (with one innovation in the control mechanism: "Saaaaa.").

The genius of American Indian material culture and the genius of traditional Japanese puppet craft both affirm a sense that material, whether it's employed at the highest level of culture-making or simply as a choice in the creation of a puppet, has intrinsic importance, and power and beauty.

But I am, in the end, a pragmatist, and because we needed multiple puppets of the little match girl, I did not carve her head in white cedar, but cast it in two-part urethane resin. Ironically, I found that the resin, sanded carefully, possessed a luminosity reminiscent of *gofun*, which called to mind a funny moment in my 1975 visit to Henri Vaillancourt. Asked if he would teach me how to make the spruce-pitch and ash mixture used for waterproofing the seams on a birchbark canoe, he answered, "I don't use pitch. I use roofing cement." Anticipating my next question, he said, "If the Indians had had roofing cement, they would have used it themselves," an answer that, in skipping lightly through contradictory frames of reference, felt more like a Zen koan than a canoe-building pointer.

Pragmatism aside, however, I was unhappy on principle with the bare urethane resin of the first head. On impulse, I covered the match girl's second head with torn scraps of Noh script and *nikawa* glue. The effect was beautiful, but not right for the performance, so I shellacked over the scripts and wrote the text of the Hans Christian Andersen story across her face. Though the writing is invisible from the audience, it satisfies me somehow, for now she is marked, literally and metaphorically, by the tale she embodies.

John Farrell is the Artistic Director of Figures of Speech Theatre. He has also memorized T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, which he performs at intervals.

Beyond Traditions and Cultures:

Relevance of Scroll Painting in Preserving the Use of Natural Colors and Materials

by Atasi Nanda Goswami

MANIMALA CHITRAKAR SINGING

Visual culture is one of the easiest ways to distinguish one group of people from another. Folk art is a term used primarily to describe hand-produced art that has some practical function within a community. It provides for its practitioners a livelihood passed down through generations linked together by an aesthetic tradition, and can therefore be considered a representative part of a given culture. In India, the communities associated with folk art are primarily rural, and therefore have less access to the technologies and media that have so drastically modernized the lives of urban citizens. Because of the slower progress of globalization in rural life, the art of rural communities is frequently regarded as a sort of unchanging cultural time capsule, a residual home for cultural uniqueness to assuage the anxiety produced by the idea of losing cultural heritage in globalized urban centers.

Pat/patachitra/scroll painting

The original meaning of *pat* was a piece of cloth. Most Sanskrit dictionaries include the word *patta* to mean cloth or a kind of fabric, silk cloth, etc., however, it appears that *patta* was originally an Indo-Europian word. In Santhali and Mundari—the two major languages of the Austro-Asiatic Kol tribe—*pat* is not used to mean cloth itself, but the silk or jute fibers for weaving a cloth. In Bengali the word *pat* also means jute. In Santhali (the strongest of living tribal languages), a *patka* is a piece of cloth about sixteen cubits long, which is used as a turban or cummerbund. Thus *patta* in sanskrit came to mean cloth, but could also mean silk or jute. There was also the term *patta bastra*, meaning silken cloth in early times. When paper was unknown, artists drew pictures on cloth and the word *patta* acquired the meaning of the canvas or plaque on which paintings were created.

There are two types of *pat*: the *chauka*, which is a square or rectangle, and the *jarano*, which is a scroll. The *chauka* canvas is used for painting one particular deity or mythical or social subject, or an animal for the children of the pilgrims. These paintings are mainly for sale, and Kalighat paintings are the ultimate form of such *pat*.

Patua/chitrakar/scroll painters

The *patuas*, also known by the surname *chitrakar* (picture maker), are a caste-based artisan community of Bengalis specializing in the production of painted narrative scrolls (*pat*) and the performance of songs to accompany the unraveling of such scrolls. These indigenous bards traditionally painted the lengthy, vertical canvases divided into demarcated frames and sang songs about the narrative contents of the scrolls in exchange for remuneration. Singing and painting has been the group's caste occupation since its origin, according to oral history. Functioning as both entertainers and educators, they wandered from village to village during festival seasons, seeking out patrons to support their craft.

Materials used in Scroll paintings

The study was carried out in Naya, Paschim Medinipur district and Habichak, Purba Medinipur district where these arts are practiced. Scroll painters mostly live in these two villages. Very little information is available on color yielding plants of Bengal. In fact, for these paintings there is no literature available that can throw light on the extraction of colors from plants. Relevant information/data was collected through personal visits to these villages during 2010 to 2015. Interactions with people from all age groups and backgrounds, especially with the older generation, yielded information regarding these paintings.

With a history going back almost 2,000 years, these scrolls usually depict scenes from epics like the Ramayana, Mahabharata or stories from traditional folklore. They are made on layers of cotton cloth glued together with a natural adhesive prepared from boiled tamarind seeds and chalk to create a leather-like surface. The colors used in the scroll paintings were always (and are still) made primarily from various elements from nature—tree bark, lamp soot, gum, etc. Apart from paper and cloth, sometimes palm-leaf manuscripts were used as a substrate on which to paint the scrolls, however, in recent years, this has been substituted completely by the use of paper, skillfully stuck on cloth to give it more stability, and then used as a canvas for drawing.

Brush The tender hairs from the tail of goats, squirrels or mongoose are tied with thin strips of bamboo to give the shape of a paintbrush with the help of threads.

Box A cylindrical hollow is made up of bamboo to keep the brushes.

Color mixing cup The colors are mixed in empty shells of broken coconuts (which serve as a palette) with the help of water and home-made glue.

Organic materials are used for paint. The *chitrakars*, traditionally, made their colors entirely out of vegetables, grass, mud and stone. The color black is made out of the burnt husk of coconut or paddy. For red, artists use ground vermilion; for yellow, turmeric; for green, grass or cow dung. Using these natural pigments is still a matter of pride for many *chitrakars*.

The processes of natural colors that are used in scroll paintings are as follows:

Black Previously a source of black soot was from oil lamps, cooking fires, burnt rice grains or burning bamboo. Now a more modern method is from scraping the soot out of dirty lorry exhaust pipes with a stick. This soot is collected in a plastic bag. This soot is then decanted into a coconut shell. The soot is then worked over with the finger to compress the powder in the coconut shell. A cup full of gum is then added to the compressed soot to make a watery paste. The gum is bought from market and it is produced from the Bel fruit. The black color is ready to use immediately.

Red (Segun/Teak) The new leaves of segun trees are selected and plucked. The leaves are crushed and the color is squeezed out in a coconut shell. The color is left to dry in the sun adding natural glue. The color becomes darker each time it is dried in the sun.

Red-jafran (Saffron) The seeds of saffron are used to extract color. The seeds grow in spiky pods that grow in clusters at the top of the tree. The seeds are removed from the dried fruit pods. The seeds are rubbed by hand and the color is collected in a dried coconut shell. The color is dried in the sun and then natural glue is added to it.

Copper Red Nuts of Betel yield copper red color. Nuts are crushed and mixed with water. After an hour lime is added which gives a copper red color.

Blue (Aparajita) The blue flower named "Lady who cannot be defeated" grows prolifically as a creeper and the petals are plucked. The flower is sometimes rubbed directly onto the paper to transfer the blue color, or the petals are crushed in a coconut shell and then a cap full of gum is added to make a paste.

White (Kusum mati) Kusum mati is a special type of clay and only the whiter ones are used in order to produce the white color. White Kusum Mati are collected and then rubbed onto a plain surface forming a white paste. The white paste is then collected, put in a pot and left to dry. A small amount of gum is added to the paste. This gum is used to ensure that the paint stays on the scrolls.

Red (Pan/Betel leaf, lime, khayer/catechu) These are mostly bought from the market to make red colors. The ingredients are crushed together and the color extracted. The color is collected in a coconut shell and dried in the sun. Natural glue is added thereafter.

Green The leaves of some green vegetables are collected and crushed by a pestle and then the pigments are collected and dried in the sun. Finally, the glue is added. The leaves of the runner-beans, flat-beans, bottle-beans and Indian beans are also taken for producing the green color.

Yellow (Turmeric) Turmeric is a plant in the ginger family. Its roots are the source of a bright yellow dye. In the next step the turmeric is crushed into small pieces using a pestle stone. The small pieces are then gathered and squeezed and the yellow juice is poured into a coconut shell. The liquids are left to dry for a few days and then the gum is added. Different shades of yellow can be obtained using direct sun light. To get a darker color the pure juice is left for longer duration in the sun, but if a bright color is needed, then the mixture is kept out of the sunlight.

These colors, which can be termed as ethno-color, are eco-friendly and non-toxic. Different shades are achieved

AN OLD PAINTER AT WORK

Name of the plants and their parts used to extract the colors:

BOTANICAL NAME	LOCAL/ ENGLISH NAME	FAMILY	PARTS USED	COLOURS OF THE PRODUCT
Clitoria ternatea L.	Aparajita/ Clitoria	Fabaceae	Flowers	Blue
Curcuma longa(L) syn. Curcuma domestica Valet.	Haldi/ Turmeric	Zingiberaceae	Rhizome	Yellow and Vermilion Red
Lablab purpureus(L) Sweet syn. Dolichos Lablab L.	Sem/ Bean	Fabaceae	Leaves	Green
Tectona grandis Linn.f.	Segun	Verbenaceae	Leaves	Red
Bassella alba Linn.	Poi	Basseaceae	Ripe fruits	Violet
Butea monosperma Taub	Palash	Fabaceae	Flowers	Orange
Enhydra Fluctuans Lour	Hinche/ Helencha	Compositae	Leaves	Light Green
Tagetes erecta Linn.	Ganda phool/ Merrigold	Compositae	Flower	Golden Yellow
Wedelia chinensis Merril	Bhringaraj	Compositae	Roots	Black Dye
Augle marmelos(Linn.) Correa er Roxb.	Bel	Rutaceae	Fruits shell	Mucilage

by mixing them. Use of these colors reflects the way in which the lives of these painters go hand in hand with the laws of nature. It also suits the theme of their painting, i.e.the continuing enjoyment of a festive, ritual lifestyle based on the principle of co-existence with the nature.

Discussions

From the overview above, we assume that the *chitrakar* (scroll painter) families still practice paintings with the help of natural color extracts from plants. In this era of economic transformation this method has to be preserved. The young are easily influenced by the benefits of globalization. The artists, who have kept this art and the source of colors intact, must impart training to their children so that they may also pursue these techniques. Some efforts have been made in this direction, which have given positive results.

Traditional significance

These paintings carry traditional significance to the society. Art and culture are adapting mechanisms that help people to survive in their environment. But globalization and commercialization has posed a threat to the identity of ethnic cultures of many societies. These artists are harbingers for maintaining cultural identity. Their paintings are exquisite expressions of creativity. The artists derive their expressions and themes from the surrounding environment, mythologies and cultures. Although these artists do not have any formal education from any institution, they are considered to be prophets of their society. Through paintings and ballads, they remind people of their own roots, their mystic traditions and vivid culture. They move from one village to another, singing ballads based on mythological stories, and thus not only entertain people but also educate them. These stories carry ethnic lessons that show a correct path to straying youth.

Importance for researchers

Besides being used as source of color, these plants have also several other uses in traditional medicine, in making agricultural implements, musical instruments and as edible food products. Fruits, seeds, roots, leaves, twigs and timber of these plants have been in use for these purposes. Hence, cultivation of these plants not only conserves biodiversity but also opens a field for creating sources of livelihoods.

Acknowledgments

I am thankful to the entire scroll painter's family who practice this art.

Dr. Atasi Nanda Goswami is a post-doctoral fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata. She has a special interest in the folk performing arts of West Bengal, India. She is the author of *Alkap* (a Bengali folk drama) and *Beniputul* (glove puppetry in Bengal).

Northeast Kingdom

weapons and tools for decapitalization

by Peter Schumann

weapons

The weapons which decapitalizers use against the big Wrong that ruins life & disinherits the earth are:

a) language for the tame life's wildness, language that confuses the enlightenment & provides the necessary obscurities, truth clichés

b) slogans that yell at current events

c) latex house paints that paint and print the necessary hardware for the uprisers' arsenal: the flags, cantastorias & puppetshow backdrops

tools

The primary tool for decapitalization is the clay that builds the oven that bakes the bread that feeds the decapitalizer. The clay is the subsoil of our landscape. It freezes 5' deep in the winter & tends to heave houses & barns 'til springtime when it sets them down again. Because of this awesome power it is the proper substance for sculpting all urgent oppositions. We live 1 mile from the watershed ridge from where the rivers flow either north or south. The rivers deposit their clay on the outside banks where the rivers decide to flow either north or south. We harvest clay from the Sheffield river & store it in 9 cast iron bathtubs & work it with our feet to the beat of a traditional Northeast Kingdom marching song: tra-ri-ra-lala. For large molds we knead hay into the clay. The finished form is coated with thin shipping-bag plastic. Large cardboard boxes yield excellent paper. They get cut up, soaked in water, the strong outside layers get wrung out and dipped into paste. The paste is cornstarch, cooked to

The most frequently used cloth over the years, besides old bedsheets, was the cheapest available dry good; shroud fabric, meant to clothe the dead.

yoghurt consistency, a potent glue, though not entirely rain- or rodent-proof. Life-size paper mâché citizens require 2-3 layers of glued paper, diligently applied by loving fingers to not miss any of the nooks & crannies of the brand new personalities. (30 years ago we found a $50 deal for ½ ton of cornstarch & we are still pasting away with it.) Sun & wind get employed for ca. 1 day to dry the shell sufficiently for removal from the clay mold & inside-out extra drying time. Poplar whips & maple saplings are staple-plied vertically & horizontally into the larger shells with the help of cardboard strips.

Such are the major tools and weapons with which to fight the Wrong here in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.

Peter Schumann is the founding director of Bread & Puppet Theater, which has performed and led workshops all over the world.

Paysages intérieurs:

Excerpts from *Inner Landscapes*, a book by Philippe Genty

translated by Mary Underwood and Andrew Periale

Sometimes a raw material, by its simplicity, its potential for abstraction, seems to hold greater promise for arousing the imagination than a character that locks it into a trivial dimension. Animating an inert material, giving form to the formless, breathing the breath of life into an inanimate object—isn't that the dream of every puppeteer? Mustn't we return to the beginning in order to go beyond the puppet, to extend "the possible" of the theatre of animation?

Exploration of materials and objects: fishnet, plastic film, brown wrapping paper, deck chairs, ladders, halyards. How to control them, constrain them, recruit them into the framework of the synopsis; I discover them resisting, I persist, and they lose their vigor, collapse in on themselves. I try to learn to listen to these materials. It's complicated, frustrating. The written sequences, sometimes very promising, crumble... Each object, each material has its own temperament, its own dynamic, its personal nature, its intrinsic way to exist, to move, to float, to transform, to oppose, to deform. Through the act of listening, the unpredictable arises, bursts, reveals things buried deep inside ourselves, intuitions ... Moments of drunkenness and happiness! Diverted from their normal function, they create physical barriers that confront dancers and actors like so many metaphors of their inner conflicts.

Objects and Materials

The relationship to objects and to materials in our shows is different than that found in object theater, rather it translates generally in physical confrontation with them into a general incarnation of psychological conflict. In *Désirs Parade*, I had an enormous deck chair (chaise lounge) constructed, without knowing how we would use it—the object fascinated me. To start the game, I hop, jump, grab the bar at the top of the folding part, and do a magnificent re-creation of a trapeze artist. I elevate the folding portion, slide on my belly head first down the canvas; I become a toboggan, elegantly smashing my forehead on the bottom bar—a sign (un-asked-for) that I ought to give up on demonstrations of such machismo! The object reals itself to be a sort of toybox. On their first try, our actors Patrick and Alain laid down side by side in a moment of contemplation, then they folded up the chaise lounge, played with its balance, launched themselves down its slides, bounced as if on a trampoline and turned ludicrous pirouettes. Gradually they found themselves trapped in an infernal mechanism, the repetitive movements of which were reminiscent of the Stakhanovism in Chaplin's *Modern Times*.

Over the course of our rehearsals of *Voyageurs Immobiles*, we rehearsed a scene of embraces between the actors. The embrace is a phenomenon that is striking for the sheer number and complexity of feelings it evokes—at times contradictory—of rejection, possessiveness, bringing up memories, powerful emotions. It implies a path on which to approach the other and then distance oneself, to separate, get away, escape, slowly return, abandon with relief. On the inside, the actors are traversed, carried away, overwhelmed by their feelings, and yet on the outside, we do not perceive that intensity. We suggest the actors go hug their partner with a large sheet of Kraft paper. He runs toward her, surrounding her with the Kraft. She escapes. There, the shredding of the paper reflects those sorts of interactions. Later she encloses in her hands a mouth made from Kraft paper, then devours the paper.

All of a sudden, these hugs took on a very different color, their immensity growing, the Kraft paper accentuates the density of relationships, passionate, wild, possessive. It intervenes, crumples, grunts, croaks, squeaks, revolts, tears; it asserts itself as a demanding partner. It demands its handlers respond to the endlessly diverse forms it takes. It led each of them to expand their focus, to develop a peripheral vision. This reveals to them an amazing engine with which to stimulate the sense of alienation. It is certainly this capacity that leads us to include it in our laboratory-workshops, extending hugs through our exercises on recall, on emotional memory, on improvisation. Other materials will open avenues of exploration and discovery—translucent plastic films will find themselves turned into huge bubbles in "The End of the World." We hadn't imagined the extent to which our creations and workshop-laboratories were mutually nourishing, or how in a physical confrontation the interpretation of materials gives us tools with which to translate psychological conflicts that avoid the occasional aridity of words.

Philippe Genty and Mary Underwood have worked together for many years in Compagnie Philippe Genty. Their work has been featured in theaters all over the world.

FELT: The Alchemy of Fiber

by Heidi Rugg

Lisa Klakulak, *A Journey* photo: Steve Mann

For most people, the word "felt" brings to mind those twelve-inch squares of brightly colored, cheap craft material used in elementary school projects. Seven years ago, I would've agreed with that assertion without even thinking to question it. Felt certainly was not a material that seemed to invite any sort of serious consideration in the world of puppetry.

I stumbled into the world of felt making a few years ago, quite by accident. It started off with a simple needle felting workshop and later progressed into wet felting– the two main ways that felt makers work with animal fibers. My eyes slowly began to open to the possibilities within this material for puppetry as a more natural and sustainable alternative to the more toxic options currently in use. As a puppet builder, I enjoy exploring new materials and end up going down numerous rabbit holes. What began as a mere academic fascination has turned into a true passion for the process, the feel, the look, and the possibilities within felt.

Felt is used extensively in industry and has been undergoing an explosive use in contemporary art. A cursory glance into the world of felting will take you to galleries and museums all over the world. A trip to Pinterest reveals page after page after page of miniature figurines, yurts, doll clothes, high fashion, and, yes, puppets. Felt couture has sashayed down runways, adorned divas, and soared high above awestruck crowds as costuming for performers in Cirque de Soleil. Industrial uses include filters, insulation, soundproofing, and piano key padding to name a few.

But what *is* this material?

FELT: The Alchemy of Fiber

by Heidi Rugg

For most people, the word "felt" brings to mind those

LISA K

POSTAGE & HANDLING for BACK ISSUES of PI

QUANTITY	SHIPPING PRICE-DOMESTIC	SHIPPING PRICE-CANADA
2	$ 3.00	$ 3.50
3	$ 5.00	$ 5.50
4-6	$ 5.00	$13.00
7-30	$11.00	$33.00
31+	$15.00	$40.00

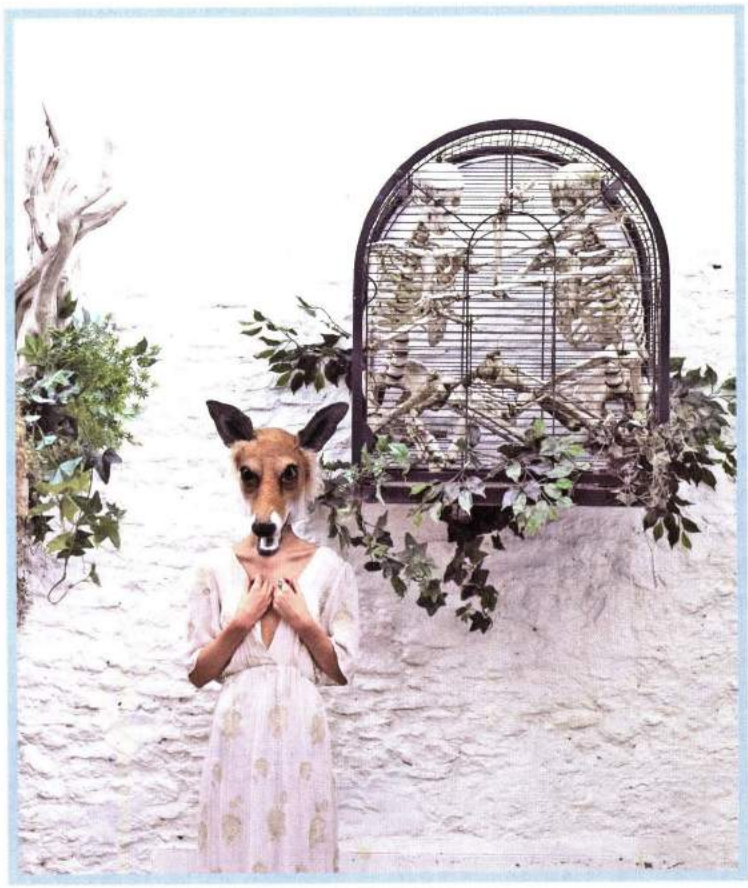
INTERNATIONAL (AIR MAIL) SHIPPING AND HANDLING:

$10 SURCHARGE + 40% OF TOTAL FOR ORDERS UNDER $20

$20 SURCHARGE + 40% OF TOTAL FOR ORDERS $20 AND OVER

From a technical standpoint, felt is any non-woven fabric that is created by agitating fibers – through rolling, rubbing, and pounding – with accompanying heat and moisture to cause the fibers to intermesh and create a unified surface. Think of it as creating "controlled dreadlocks." Most modern felt, such as those ubiquitous craft squares, is achieved through use of synthetic and/or natural fibers manufactured by machines with tiny needles. This mechanical method for creating felt bears little resemblance to the processes developed by our Asian and European forebears dating back to before the Bronze Age.

A close look at a single wool fiber under a microscope will reveal tiny, flexible, overlapping scales (similar to fish scales or a pinecone in structure) extending up the length of the shaft. Wool felt scales are made of keratin, the same tough substance that grows to form horns and hooves on cattle and other animals. Different breeds of sheep produce fibers with very different characteristics. Some breeds produce superfine wool – like Merino – that are often used in spinning fine yarn to make sweaters. Other breeds produce wool with varying degrees of coarseness, which have more applications in creating works with structural integrity. Wool is most typically used for felting, though most animal fibers can also be used to varied effect.



"Vixen" handfelted by Gladys Paulus photo: Bella West

Transforming the wispy fibers into solid form is akin to alchemy. Felt makers manipulate fibers causing them to entangle and interlock at a microscopic level via needle felting and/or wet felting. "Fulling" is another way of working with fibers that is similar to felting; it is what happens to your knitted sweaters after being accidentally thrown into the washing machine. Needle felting is a relatively simple process that involves taking clean, wool fibers and poking them with barbed needles repeatedly to get them into a form. Wet felting is a more visceral process involving the oddest assortment of materials – olive oil soap, pool noodles, bubble-wrap, pantyhose, bamboo mats, and rice paddles, to name a few – to transform the fibers into solid form.

A few years ago I had the pleasure of taking a workshop with Lisa Klakulak, a felting artist based in Asheville, North Carolina. Klakulak is a felt maker who works with the wet felting process, which she believes "demands a much deeper relationship with the material." I had already some experience with felt making, but working with Klakulak took my knowledge to a whole new level. Her understanding of fibers is highly scientific and based on years of experience and many experiments with the material.

It's important to understand the fundamentals of the wet felting process. A felt maker begins with loose fibers that are carefully laid-out in thin layers that crisscross at a perpendicular angle. These thin layers of wool are then compressed with slightly soapy water and carefully rolled up, often in a sheet of bubble-wrap. The soap is necessary as it changes the pH of the fibers; this causes the overlapping scales to open up – similar to a pinecone – at a microscopic level. The wool fibers are rolled, compressed, and manipulated in a way that causes the individual fibers to migrate and the scales then entangle in the layers. As the fibers intermingle and compress, there is considerable shrinkage: Felt can easily shrink upwards of 50-60% (or more!) as it is worked.

Klakulak has a reputation not just for the quality of her work, but also as a teacher. She hosts numerous workshops in the studio built onto her home in North Carolina. Klakulak shares that newcomers to the medium are always surprised by "the control you can muster with the material in terms of drapability, firmness, texture, smoothness." Indeed, upon close inspection, Klakulak's work appears to have a suede-like texture that belies its woolly origins. Her works are informed by the "power of the individual fiber and its ability to move within the context of other fibers."

Klakulak's work *Foundation (2012)* demonstrates both trust and control in the fibers – especially when you know exactly how the piece was created. It's important to understand that *Foundation* is hollow on the inside: There is no armature, no wire – just wool.

To create three-dimensional forms, Klakulak begins working the fibers as described earlier, but usually lays out the fibers over and around a "resist." To understand a resist, imagine you had a cardboard pattern for a circle. Now imagine wrapping this pattern with fabric and removing the cardboard, leaving you with a round, hollow, pillowcase form. A "resist" for felt making would be a waterproof, flexible material such as plastic, EPE Foam, or even cork. The resist is then rolled and compressed along with the fibers until the fibers compress enough to pass a "pinch-test," where the individual fibers cannot be separated from one another. When the felt reaches this state, the resist is removed leaving a hollow area inside. Now the piece is ready to be worked from the outside *and* the inside – pushing, pulling, compressing; you are actually sculpting with the fibers.

In *Foundation,* Klakulak began by experimenting with the basic form of a single vertebra. Working with felt involves a shrinkage rate that varies based on the type of wool you are using, the number of layers of fibers, the thickness of each layer of fiber, and the degree to which the material is felted. Klakulak experimented with the form and the fibers to achieve the correct shape and calculate an accurate shrinkage rate. It took three attempts before she landed on the right form. After further exploration, she worked out her plan. Her starting layout was 13 feet long and the finished piece, after thoroughly working the fibers, came to 25 inches in length.

Klakulak's *Journey (2014)* is another example of a figurative work of felt, though the process is very different from *Foundation*. *Journey* is done with a sculptural approach that is more additive with a handstitched assemblage of parts. This piece also has some stainless steel wire that acts as an armature. The colors in the piece are produced using natural dyes in Klakulak's studio; wool dyes beautifully. The assemblage incorporates silk, linen thread, beach glass, and other found objects.

Klakulak freely admits to enjoying the problem-solving and mathematical components that are involved in felt making. She compares the process to cooking. You do need to measure, but eventually (with practice and experience) you can work intuitively.

Gladys Paulus is a felt artist based in the U.K. who creates sculptural and figurative works using wet felting. I've long admired her work from this side of the pond, and I was pleased to have a chance to connect with her as I wrote this article. Paulus is mostly known for making large, animal masks. Originally a painter, her journey to felt began with an appreciation for the way you could "paint" with the fibers by

Hare headdress by Gladys Paulus photo: Bella West

layering colors and causing the fibers to intermingle to create new shades. She has also made puppets and other smaller works, but her work has grown in scale over the years. When you look at her work – such as *Hare* – it's hard to conceive that it began as wispy strands of wool fibers.

Paulus lives in a rural area on the edge of a small town. She enjoys "having that direct link to nature, the local community, the farmers, and the sheep." She even knows the names of many of the sheep whose wool is incorporated into her works.

Like Klakulak's *Foundation*, Paulus' works are made entirely of wool. There is no wire armature or other understructure. The only exception is the occasional use of rabbit skin glue/hide glue that she works into pieces like *Buck*, a mask used in a theatrical production. It was important to keep the antlers from flopping around as the performers moved. Each mask takes about five days to create, and Paulus describes her process as equal parts planning, laying out the fibers, and then shaping and felting the work.

Planning involves much research and design. For her masks, she will ideally go and see the animal in person, if possible. She especially likes to have a sense of the colors. She spends time experimenting with various fibers, often working to blend upwards of five different types of wool into a piece. She checks how the colors blend and determine the shrinkage rate for the fibers.

Part of her planning involves the creation of the resist. As described earlier, the resist allows the felt maker to begin working with the fibers 2-dimensionally and then opening up the piece to work it into a 3-dimensional form. Paulus' resists are large – think "dining room table" – as there is considerable shrinkage that occurs. Paulus' resists consist of pockets, flaps, and pieces that act as resists within the resist so that ears, eyelids, feathers, and other forms can be felted as part of the whole. There is very little stitching and assemblage in her works.

Next, Paulus moves into laying out the fibers. She typically lays out six layers of wool for each mask, carefully layering the fibers perpendicularly with her carefully selected palette of fibers. She sources as much of her wool locally as possible. Finn, Gotland, Norwegian, Shetland, Icelandic, Blue-faced Leicester, and Alpaca are just a sampling of the types of fibers that might be blended into a piece.

The final phase is shaping, felting, and sculpting the fibers. This is the most physical part of the process, where your fingers are in direct contact with the fibers to compress, push, and pull the fibers. In this part you have to be ready for surprises. Paulus shares that "you just have to trust the gods and let go of a sense of control." It also helps, of course, if your planning and preparation were thorough.

As a material, felt has equal footing in both art and industry, making it a natural fit for puppet making. In a world where fake fur, fleece, foam, and flock dominate, felt brings to puppetry a sustainable option that is rife with possibilities.

Heidi Rugg is a puppetry artist living in Richmond, Virginia in the United States. She is spending a lot of time in the studio experimenting with creating puppets using the wet felting techniques she describes. For more information on her work, visit www.barefoot-puppets.com.

Resources/References:

www.felt makers.com/ International Felt Makers Association

fiddleheadfibers.com/festivals/FestivalRegion.html Up-to-date list of fiber festivals, a great way to connect with shepherds and other resources for wool.

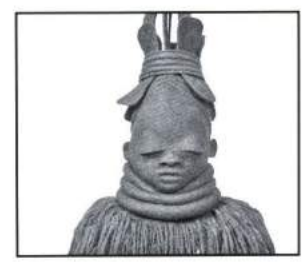
www.gladyspaulus.co.uk/ for more on Gladys Paulus' work and workshops

metricfelt.com/feltwool.htm (Industrial felting/material information)

strongfelt.com/ for more on Lisa Klakulak's work and workshops

www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ0uojUHYdA traditional Mongolian felt making used to create a yurt or *ger* (3:28)

Lisa Klakulak
www.strongfelt.com



Gladys Paulus
www.gladyspaulus.co.uk/

Mend-All,  the New Plastic Wood!

by Nicolas Coppola

After many years of using the classic Plastic Wood, in its distinctive Red and Yellow can, for the casting of marionette heads, a change in its formula during the late 1970s made it unsuitable for our use. The product didn't seem to dry out as well as it had before, and casting was difficult.

In 1986, while building puppets for the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, I learned about Mend-All, a product similar to the old Plastic Wood that was used and highly recommended by Frank Paris.

Mend-All was indeed a fine replacement, and actually a superior product. The finished castings are very clean and smooth and require less sanding. I was surprised to learn that many puppeteers had not used or heard of Mend-All, but thanks to Facebook and Pupt-Crit, the word is out now. The Mend-All people are very helpful and efficient when placing and filling an order.

Nicolas Coppola has been a professional puppeteer since 1954. He is the artistic director of The Puppetworks, and before that, of Nicolo Marionettes. The company is based in Brooklyn, NY.

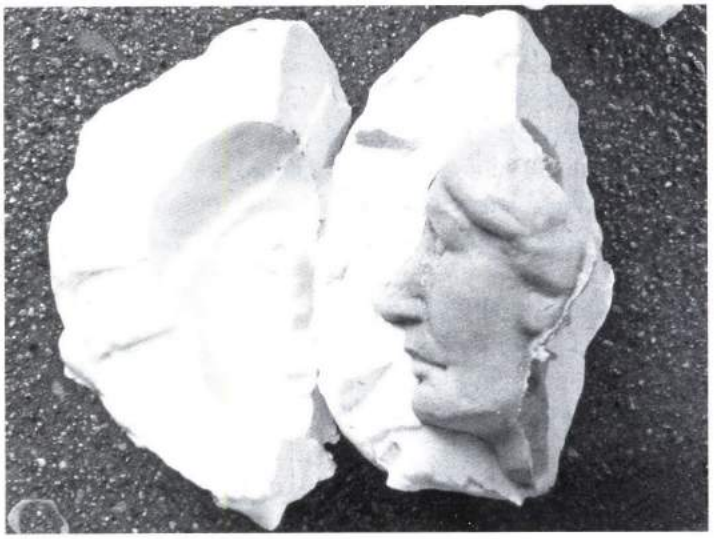
Kevin Frisch

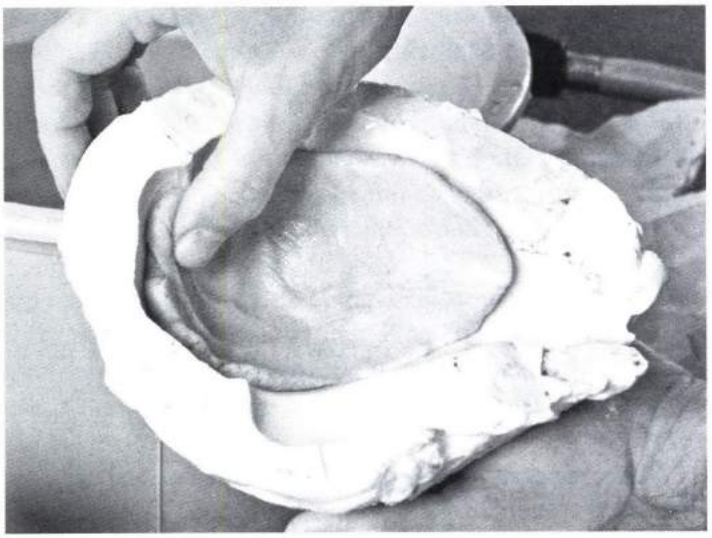
Kevin has posted a fine tutorial on Facebook, showing how he uses the product when crafting heads for his marionettes and for those created for The Puppetworks, Inc.:

youtu.be/lQ-15udp4-o

Mend-All is available from The Alney Group. Ltd., (631) 242-9100, in Deer Park, NY.:

www.mendallproducts.com/





©The Frisch Marionette Company

A Split Broom for Legs:

An Amateur Looks at the Puppet as Material Allegory

by Felice Amato

I am an amateur medievalist and an amateur puppeteer. From the Latin verb to love, one of the hallmarks of being an amateur "is a lack of critical distance from the object of desire" (Adamson 139). I am thankful for this lack or I would never have dared to create my own strange lands and the catalogue of bestial mothers that inhabit them. It was an inevitable outcome of my sculpture practice; everything I made was an anthropomorphic figure asking to move. I thought I could simply make the objects, back away, and the *potential* to be animated would suffice. But my figures were stories and demanded to exist in time and space. I discovered that the punctuation of their stillness with moments of *life* created far more potency. And yet, it all still begins with the making of an object, its materiality and its process of coming into being.

Every figure I intuitively create has a story exuding from its very morphology and materiality; what I reached for, what was at arm's length, how I assembled and shaped it, all resonate with meaning. I make no attempt to disappear what the puppets are made of—like the Middle Ages, when the layers of meaning encoded in any substance were themselves content and not just matter (Sand). The physical properties of materials were entwined with embodied beliefs about their more-than-metaphorical, spiritual and even medicinal properties. Sensuous, skin-like ivory signified chastity when traced back to the tusks of elephants, which were known to be cold-blooded. Fear-crazed elephant mothers battled dragons whose bellies were afire to keep them from draining their babies of their medicinal, cooling, elephant blood (Guerin).

The elephant mother is just one of the many zoological and allegorical mothers described in the Bestiaries of the Middle Ages and Classical Period—so much more than mere catalogues of the real and imagined natural world. They captured my imagination. What had been an ongoing artistic investigation of my own female identity—intimately tied to motherhood—started to coalesce around a body of work I call, "The Mothers of the Bestiary."

My interest in the monstrous and the maternal started even before my return to graduate school and the end of my marriage. It's a deeply personal exploration disguised (even to me) in allegory, myth and confession, now gathered up and loosely bound into a series of performances. I would be tempted to say that the primary content of the work is "failure" but, as the puppets attest, it is actually about a cobbled-together persistence and triumph that comes from a material reframing. It's a space for monstrosity as well as the sacred, the tragic and the humorous.

In this world rich with visual culture, the Middle Ages have taken hold of my imagination. Part of the appeal is the very overt and sensory materiality of the art. Not grasping at mimesis, its power came and comes from elsewhere. Materials like ivory, were selected to negotiate between the world of matter and the world of the spirit (Kessler 29) through accumulated meanings. The stranger the figures are, the more they seem oddly familiar. And "oddly" is a sacred way to be familiar. It's a powerful way to be familiar. It's like the uncanny, the un-home-ly, the *unheimlich*—something puppets do so well.

The puppets I make have shaped the telling and the tales themselves. In the Middle Ages, craftspeople did not seek to overcome their materials but rather welcomed in their qualities and their limitations—meaning trumping mimesis. Raw, unrefined, made by hand; for me, this overtly material gesture at humanity finds resonance with a time when objects were created to build "a cognitive relationship between the physical world and the heavenly realm beyond" (Kessler 40).

According to medieval art historian Herbert Kessler, "Overt materiality forces the viewer to bridge the gap between object and image through the exertion of imaginative will" (Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art* 20). Are not puppets material made alive in the gaps through the exertion of imaginative will? While Kessler wasn't speaking about puppets, it is important to consider the plethora of figurative performing objects employed in the Middle Ages in service of the sacred—material mediators.

Through performance, my figures acquire another layer of cumulative meaning, but they already point to the making itself as performance, the residual memory of which is part of their bodies. My puppets' bodies are sets of verbs because, as Glen Adamson tells us in *Thinking Through Craft*, "Craft only exists in motion" (4). In attaching, for example, I choose efficiency and gesture. Wrapping becomes a powerful way that functions to attach but also brings with it millennia of human activity: covering, tying on, grouping, gathering, quantifying, protecting, controlling, adorning, revealing, concealing and, not least of all, redefining the shape of something.

There is a moment when I finally feel a connection with a figure I have been making. Materially, she has come into her own—not through perfection but through sufficiency: a rightness in tactility and metaphor. Is it the pencil line near the eye and the patch of wool on the side of the face doesn't fully match the rest? It agitates a bit, a quality so very human.

We benefit from medieval concepts like "reliquary" and "spolia" even when they don't quite fit. In an effort to speak about humanity, artist Mike Kelley turned to thrift stores for his spolia of cast-off stuffed animals and handicrafts. They called to him because of their degraded state and invisibility. As raw materials they were full of pathos and intrinsically humble—but the struggle to elevate them is where we find the content of his work (Adamson 160)—their ability to evoke both "sympathy and disdain" (Adamson 161).

In the privacy of my apartment, I place my hands on the puppet and sense the possibility of transferring my own presence—through breath, through gaze, through belief. This is perhaps what Kenneth Gross describes in his article, "The Madness of Puppets":

> It lies in the hand's power and pleasure in giving itself over to the demands of the object, the curious will to make the object into an actor, something capable of gesture and voice, with a will of its own. (I call this a madness, but it could as well be called an ecstasy.) It will have something to do with the made puppet itself, so often a crude and disproportioned thing [...] (182).

There is awe in these moments and a touch of shame that children feel animating a doll or toy when it suddenly seems public and observed. I am not a virtuosic manipulator, but the power of the material and the presence it evokes often means the puppet doesn't have to move a lot. This is the way the Dan Hurlin's Disfarmer puppet is described in *Puppet*, by David Soll:

He could sit there at the table the whole time, just lean against it and breathe a bit, maybe turn and look and the viewer is feeling all the emotional content.

This powerful simplicity of a gesture is something Elina Gertsman explores in *Visualizing Medieval Performance*. Gertsman is specifically interested in the experience of the performance of sacred objects such as the Vierges Ouvrantes (sculptures in the round of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child, which could be opened as triptych shrines, revealing powerful, iconographic scenes within (96). Our gaze is tactile. Our sensual knowledge of materials allows us to read what is heavy and dense, what is soft, what has the resilience of skin.

Charged emotional states benefit from a certain distance, an uncanniness that allows us to abide in agony, woundedness, regret, loss and guilt—feelings that, along with joy or an elephant mother's protective rage and tenderness, can all be found in the signifier of "mother." By grounding experiences in a body—in a fantastical body or even a monstrous or chimeric body—openings, transformations and wounds become allegorical material. Medieval objects such as the *Vierge Ouvrante*, show that the very simple performance of "opening" can be a powerful synecdoche.

The Bestiary offers allegories and visual imagery that allow me to work with the monstrous and the marvelous. The oddness of the contents works on the imagination in powerful ways; allegory forces a search for meaning and truth. These mothers don't fit our sensibilities. This dissonance is interesting. For example, the 13th-century Harley Bestiary offers this about ape mother:

> The female ape always gives birth to twins, one of which she loves and the other she hates. When she carries her young, she holds the one she loves in her arms, but the one she hates must cling to her back. When the ape is pursued by a hunter, she tires from running while carrying her two children; when she is in danger of being caught, she drops the child she loves in order to escape, but the one she hates continues to cling to her back and is saved (Medieval Bestiary: Ape).

"The Mothers of the Bestiary" is about dissonance and my problematic relationship with mothering. I kept and keep house tenuously and with exertion. The struggle required to go against one's nature is evident in the makeshift construction and the mess of materials that define my puppets. The kitchen is a good place to make work. There it is easy to impregnate wool with wax that can be scraped off the linoleum later. The stove boils coffee or Kool-Aid mixed with pomegranate juice and a puppet falls in face first; now I must search for the meaning of the puppet's red face. There is alchemy involved—and risk. When a figure isn't right it may require an irreversible step—dipping the head in shellac or cutting off the legs—life processes that alter one irrevocably.

The objects I make are honest products of my life circumstances: interrupted and uncertain. Originally a ceramicist, I all but gave up on using fired clay because of time. This pushed me to new air-dry, open pore concoctions that included glue and paper pulp or cattail fiber. I found myself accumulating things. "Hoarding" my sister says. Not, I assured her, if I incorporate them into figures. Just as the reliquary gives voice to the relic, the use of the cast-off is given "fresh testimony," be it a potholder or steel wool (Kessler 36). Irrational but exuberant, out of my illogical frenzy to dumpster dive and thrift there has emerged a cast of emblematic figures.

I spend hours slowly crafting faces from materials like needle-felted wool. The meditative pricking at the shadow below the lower lip, the way the wool depresses under my thumb and rebounds like real flesh, the way it spreads light around its form, all these things gratify me equal to the hours spent. The animal-ness of the wool—evidenced in part by the faint smell—further underscores the connection between us mothers of different species. I often leave the wool its natural color, like the *grisaille* of stained glass.

The materials I incorporate have a palimpsest quality, the *scriptio inferior* of other times and places. I sing: "There's a woman with legs of broom...." It was a decorative broom with a gap in the middle of the bristles from which I made two legs (like tracing the ivory back to the blood). She becomes the two-track trail woman, always sweeping parallel lines, never finishing. Because she has two legs, two lives, two destinies

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Roser *Papier Methode*

by Bart. P. Roccoberton, Jr.

"You must listen to the material. You must learn to see." This was the constant guidance from Albrecht Roser as he taught us to sculpt using the *Papier Methode*.

FIGURES, ALBRECHT ROSER, *ROBBI MATROSEN KOPIE*

Paper Sculpture was introduced to us at the University of Connecticut's Puppet Arts Program in 1977 when Albrecht Roser and Ingrid Höfer of Germany were invited by Department Head John Herr to come for a semester-long guest artist residency. It was Professor Roser's first extended teaching appointment and he was doing it in a language that he had only learned months before. In addition to benefitting from Roser's expertise in string puppetry, the explorations with paper led the students to new possibilities of puppet sculpture and expression.

There are only two shapes that can be formed with a single piece of paper, without imposing your will on it: the cone and the cylinder. Initially, we worked from the cylinder. We were allowed only 4 cuts: one vertical and three horizontal, which defined a nose, mouth and neck for the sculpture. We were challenged to, "Listen to the material." We needed to maintain the dynamic tension in the paper as we drew together the tabs formed by the cuts. If the paper started to pucker or crinkle, we were not "hearing" what the paper was telling us. We were held at this simple phase for several weeks. We called it our Easter Island Period.

From the cylinder, we moved on to the cone, using only three cuts: one vertical and two horizontal. Our initial sculptures were realized in brown paper from grocery bags. At that time, this material contained a lot of long fibers, allowing the surface tension in the sculpture to be dynamic and highlighting when we breached (didn't listen to) that tension. Today, because we recycle the materials that shopping bags are made from, the fibers are short and don't offer the same internal architecture. So, we constantly look for appropriate sculpting mediums. Sometimes, a roll of Kraft paper will serve the needs – but not always, if it is manufactured from recycled materials.

To turn the sculpture into a model for the finished puppet, it is necessary to realize the sculpture in a stronger material.

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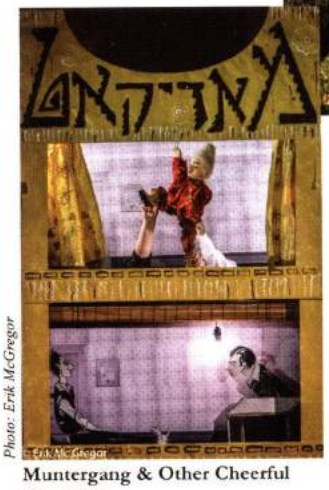

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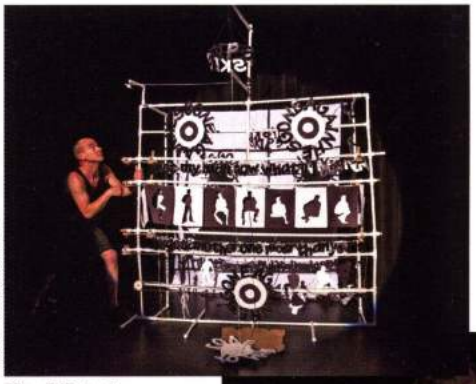

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The sculpture, being crafted from a single sheet of paper, is carefully cut apart so that it falls into a flat pattern. The pattern can be enlarged or reduced so that the final puppet is a different size than the original sculpture, but still the same likeness.

With the pattern made, it can be applied to different materials for the realized puppet or mask. We use polyfoam, if we have sculpted a body. We can then use the same pattern to create a fabric skin or lining. If we are intending to make a large figure where weight is a consideration, we will utilize ethafoam or L-200 impact foam. There have been projects where time and cost were primary considerations, so the finished figure was fabricated from a strong paper.

The major consideration when choosing to create the model in paper is that that material is a single layer. Papers composed of multiple layers, such as poster board, do not allow the dynamic tension that was present in the original sculpture. Oak tag and certain card stocks prove to be the best model-making materials. When creating a head or hands for a hand puppet or marionette, we would turn to file folders for the model. However, once again, because of recycling, the fibers in most file folders available today are short and are no longer the best materials for creating the model.

A special exercise led us to the sculpting of hands. Professor Roser held up his hand as if he were holding a ball. "Imagine that my hand is a cone. The point is at my wrist. My fingers define the circumference of the cone's opening." Since that day, all of my puppets have expressive, sculptural hands. When I have achieved the sculpture of the hand that the character needs, I simply flip the pattern over to create its match.

Once we had thoroughly practiced the simple cylinders and cones with the limited cuts, we were told that it was time to have a deeper conversation with the material in order to convince it that we respected its potentials and wanted to add to its possibilities. Professor Roser would point to his eye and ask, "What is this shape?" "What is the shape of the tip of my nose? My chin? My ear?" He was teaching us to see. An eye socket is a concave cone. An eyelid is a partial convex cone. The nose tip and chin can be two or three conjoined cones.

We started to make more cuts into the sculpture, forming additional shapes within its structure. We were still guided not to impose our will on the paper. "Make it a conversation. Find an agreement." Maintaining the dynamic tension remained a prerequisite. This phase of our work made the patterns much more complex. When an eye socket is formed, its edge is "hardened" by pinching the paper. Smile lines, jowls and nose ridges can also be formed with hill and valley lines. Documenting these lines and the matching tabs formed by the cuts before flattening the single sheet sculpture into a pattern is essential.

When Professor Roser taught us the *Papier Methode*, we were making heads and hands for Roser-style "shoulder marionettes." We needed to harden the model for durability. We transferred all details of the pattern onto a sheet of oak tag. We developed a tool to help us curl the tag in order to "convince" the flat material that it wanted to be a three dimensional object. Hill and valley lines were scored from the appropriate side of the tag stock so that the hardened lines of the sculpture would easily reform. Once the model was formed, we used the pattern to cut the Celastic™ that would be used to harden the model.

DESIGNS BY THE AUTHOR

Celastic™ was a felt embedded with plastic colloid. It was originally developed to harden the toes of work boots. Although a strong and malleable material—ensuring that anything fabricated with it will last several millennia—it had to be dipped in acetone to "melt" the colloid. It could then be placed over a three dimensional model. When the acetone evaporated, the colloid hardened to a nearly indestructible state. Many puppeteers applied Celastic™ like papier mâché, using small pieces to cover the surface of their model. This meant many hours spent dipping their hands into a toxic material while breathing its fumes. Hand protection and a respirator were mandatory precautions.

Roser's *Papier Methode* introduced the cleanest and quickest use of Celastic™. Because there was a pattern, you cut a sheet of the material, dipped it and covered the entire surface of the model at once. In 1992, However, the German company that was its source stopped manufacturing it. Determined to find an efficient way of hardening puppet heads sculpted in the *Papier Methode*, Professor Roser and I started looking for a substitute. Papier mâché could not be considered because its moisture would destroy the paper model underneath. We started looking at many different possibilities. Albrecht developed a putty using fine saw dust and ground paper, which proved to be quite strong. We realized that the fibers of the wood and paper interlocked into a resilient architecture. But, the challenge remained that this was yet another wet material. We needed to establish a moisture barrier on the paper model.

ROSER'S NACHTIGALL KAISER

While visiting my home one summer, Albrecht informed me that he "got it!" He then demonstrated how he carefully spread Duco Cement™ on the interior of the model to form the necessary barrier. My response was, "Albrecht, we have been forced to stop using acetone. This is actually a good thing. We now need to find a less toxic means of creating the moisture barrier." So, I picked up the challenge. After a few days of intense exploration I found the solution that we still use today: wood glue (polyvinyl acetate). We carefully brush on three layers of the adhesive "so thin that it dries as it comes off of the brush." Properly applied this sets up the necessary moisture barrier for the application of the putty.

For several years, Albrecht and I passed the formula for the putty mixture back and forth, shuffling and reshuffling the proportions and adhesives in the mix. What started as Roser Putty would become Roccoberton Putty, and then again Roser Putty. In 1996, I added a final ingredient that caused Albrecht to declare that, "it is now Roccoberton Putty." While doing my laundry, I was thinking about the need to mix up a batch of Roser Putty to harden several models the next day. As I cleaned the lint catcher of our clothes drier, I realized I was holding a hand full of fiber. I experimented with the means to emulsify the sawdust, ground paper and drier lint. The result is a putty that is hard to cut with a knife when applied as thin as 1/8 of an inch.

I have continued to create using the *Papier Methode* since 1977. I will admit that it took five years of constant work to be able to gain a good understanding of what I was doing. Since then I have created hundreds of puppets using the method. I have made a twelve-foot fish for a production of *Pericles* and a walk-around polar bear for *A Winters Tale*. For an industrial show for State Farm Insurance, I fabricated a ten-foot-tall Red Queen whose three-foot diameter head weighs less than six pounds.

For a production of Stravinsky's *Firebird* that I directed in Taipei with Jo Cheng's company, Oo Do Yo Oh (The Puppet and Its Double) and the National Symphony of Taiwan, the leading children's book illustrator in Taiwan, Aman A-man, was chosen to design the puppets. Having seen my puppets, she wanted to use the *Papier Methode* for the design. In a pre-production visit I quickly demonstrated how I would work from a single sheet of paper to create a character. She couldn't do it. When I returned a month later, she had drawn all of the characters, as she wanted them to appear, considering Paper Sculpture. Challenged, I asked to try to sculpt in paper what she had drawn. Within 15 minutes, I had realized exactly what she had designed! We quickly moved forward creating more than 30 larger-than-life figures to her designs.

I find that puppets and masks created with the *Papier Methode* have a dynamic stage presence. They are of their own world, yet they are related to our world. The concave and con-

DESIGNS BY THE AUTHOR

vex curvatures have a remarkable ability to play stage light. I have taken advantage of the ability to reduce and enlarge the pattern to create multiple puppets of the same character in various sizes. In 1988, while directing the Institute of Professional Puppetry Arts at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, I had the opportunity to give a paper sculpted rod puppet of the "Phantom of the Opera" (then opening on Broadway) to Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York. When it was suggested by George White, Founder and Executive Director of the O'Neill Center, that I should also give a similar puppet to Andrew Lloyd Webber to thank him for offering a benefit performance for The O'Neill, I was informed by the British Embassy that I could not give the same gift to Webber that I had just given to the Duchess. So, I reduced the pattern and gave him a miniature.

Perhaps the richest lesson Albrecht taught us was one that was never spoken. At all times he explored new materials and techniques and experimented with the possibilities of applying them. By his example we learned to be curious about everything. Albrecht Roser's creative ingenuity and his willingness to share it continue to have an effect on the art of puppetry throughout the world. Thank you, Albrecht!

Bart. P. Roccoberton, Jr. is the director of the Puppet Arts Program at the University of Connecticut. Previously, he was the director of the Institute of Professional Puppetry Arts and was a founding member, and later director, of Pandemonium Puppets.


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Exploring the Uncanny in Paper

by Rebekah Caputo

Paper is a man-made material, manufactured in thin sheets from the pulp of wood or other fibrous substances. It can be used for writing, drawing, printing, or as wrapping material. When creased or molded it retains form. When manipulated by the hands of a puppeteer, paper has infinite metamorphic qualities. It can depict a living creature, the waves of the ocean or an animated abstract form.

This practice-based research investigates paper as stimulus in improvisation, the material's ability to stimulate an "uncanny reaction" as defined by Sigmund Freud and the impact of this in puppet theatre. Although subjective by nature, and therefore with limited outcomes, the inquiry provides a strategy for investigation that can be utilized by others for future exploration. The research was completed during a series of manipulation-based improvisations, working with a group of eight musicians and puppeteers who would either participate or provide audience feedback. These experiments, known as *Animate LIVE*, took place at Sluglow's The HUB (Leeds, UK), a small black box theatre. Several solo improvisations were also conducted at Sunny Bank Mills (Farsley, UK), a large, empty and derelict mill. Many materials were explored: tree branches, bubble wrap, old exhaust pipes, mannequin limbs, even an old seated hair dryer. Fascinatingly, it was paper's metamorphic qualities and ability to retain shape that held the most manipulation possibilities, emotional reactions and potential for psychoanalytical comparison.

The Uncanny is an emotional and psychological response to viewing or experiencing an event that is subjectively disturbing and uncomfortable. It calls upon the most primitive of fears to upset and unsettle the viewer:

> The uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar (Freud, 124).

The use of The Uncanny derives from the German *Das Unheimlich, unheimlich* being the opposite of *heimlich* (homely*), and therefore not homely or uncomfortable; something that was once comfortable and is now unfamiliar. Gross wrote "the ghostliness of the uncanny creeps, slowly but irresistibly, into the common light of day" (Royle, 22). The feeling slithers in and unsettles when it is least expected.

In order to qualify the value of this reaction, it is vital to understand the theory from its psychoanalytical origins. Psychiatrist Ernst Jentsch first investigated this phenomenon

Images courtesy of Robinia Farnaby

in the early twentieth century, exploring the sensation over the reason. Jentsch described it as a feeling of "intellectual uncertainty," a feeling of confusion, disorientation or questioning of what is known to be right and true (Freud, 125). When explaining the intellectual process of encountering a new thing out of context, Jentsch writes:

> This can be explained to a great extent by the difficulty of establishing quickly and completely the conception connections that the object strives to make with the previous ideational sphere of the individual – in other words, the intellectual mastery of a new thing (Jentsch, 8).

To underpin his theory he used wax dolls and automata as his stimulus and stated their impact on human understanding to "doubts (as to) whether an apparently animate being is really alive" (Marynowski, 482).

Unconvinced by Jentsch's arguably rather simplistic perspective, Sigmund Freud claimed it to be "rich in content, not exhaustive" (Freud, 124) and began to underpin the theory with more complex psychoanalytical discussion, culminating in his 1919 text *The Uncanny*. Freud defined the sensation as a psychological response to an aesthetic or visual stimulus that could be considered disturbing or unnatural, a feeling of fear or dread (Freud, 124). He expanded this further, claiming The Uncanny response is a physical manifestation of the Oedipus complex, and wrote:

> The uncanny element we know from experience arises either when repressed childhood complexes are revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs that have been surmounted appear to be once again confirmed (Freud, 155).

Freud continued to attempt to define the sensation with several distinct areas including: the inanimate having resemblance to the living, the severing or removal of body parts and the recognition of the double, or ego, over self (Freud, 138-150). All of these are attributed to *The Death Drive*: the paradoxical motif of humans being compelled towards, whilst fearing most, the only thing they can be certain of in life, their own death. Stating that "the aim of all life is death" (Freud, 84), Freud's theory manifests in puppetry; the puppet resembles a living being and the construction of the puppet consists of severed limbs. Equally, for the puppeteer manipulating the puppet, controlling its actions is similar to the ego and the superego, a doubling of identity. There are clear parallels in puppetry and Freud's analysis of The Uncanny, but how does it specifically manifest in paper, and what is the theatrical potential of this?

In addition, the writings of Freud and Jentsch appear to argue The Uncanny as being negative or primitive. However, it is human and instinctive; it resonates with our greatest fears and dares us to confront them. This sensation can be experienced as seductive or fun. John Bell writes:

> The "uncanny" power of puppets persists, not necessarily as a problem to be surmounted but as a theatrical sentiment to be felt, appreciated, interpreted, and celebrated (Bell, 51).

Bell's unusual approach to the topic offers grounding for this enquiry to build upon. This investigation will examine the potential of utilizing and celebrating the discomfort and unsettling quality of The Uncanny and determine when this process is achieved in paper.

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* "Homely" (British) or "homey" (American)

At *Animate LIVE* on the 24th of September, 2014, rolls of white paper formed the stimulus for improvisation. The aim was to allow the paper's natural movement to lead the manipulation. The rolls of paper were hung from a washline. The manipulators were instructed to animate the paper and, as bits tore off, they were to reattach them to the installation using clothespins. Initially the process appeared contrived because the puppeteers imposed their own intention upon the paper, molding it into creatures. Although the paper appeared to have an autonomous life force, with clear point of focus, breath and weight, its playful tempo and inquisitive exploration of the space produced humorous, delightful or even cute episodes. It did not produce a deep emotional, instinctive and disturbing response paramount to The Uncanny. After several improvisations the paper installation had taken a new sculptural form, with many pieces creased and shaped, hanging from the wash line. The musical tones had become dark and sinister. The puppeteers were then given flashlights. By moving them around the installation, the creases in the paper became pronounced, appearing like veins, crumpled sections became translucent, offering depth, and shadows were cast by the varying textures, imparting movement and life. At this point an audience member called out, "Ugh! It looks like dead meat hanging." In his mind it reminded him of a disgusting image, leaving him uncomfortable and unnerved.

This manifestation of an uncanny response had almost supernatural potential as the paper transformed into something completely different before the audience's eyes. This in turn provoked an affecting and powerful response of discomfort. Suggesting that the audience member was reminded that the reality we recognize to be true is "not all preordained and that human superiority over the material world is not something to count on" (Bell, 50). This lack of control and understanding unsettled the audience member enough to exclaim aloud, demonstrating the potential of an uncanny response in an audience.

As the investigation into improvisation and paper developed, The Uncanny began to manifest not only in the audience, but also within the puppeteer. The internal monologue (or what Freud would call "the superego") revealed itself in her consciousness, separating the physical and conscious forms:

> By slow degrees a special authority takes shape within the ego; this authority, which is able to confront the rest of the ego, performs the function of self-observation and self-criticism, exercises a kind of physical censorship, and so becomes what we know as "conscience" (Freud, 142).

From a Freudian perspective, this acknowledgment of the internal double induces an uncanny effect, the recognition of the body as a thing apart from the consciousness. This in turn suggests one's own impermanence, and ultimately one's impending death (Freud, 142). From a puppetry perspective this example of The Uncanny has great implications for the quality of manipulation.

When conducting a solo improvisation at Sunny Bank Mills, brown paper alone was used as manipulation material. The improvisation began by exploring the paper's natural movement, gently creasing it into a three-dimensional shape and guiding it through the space. However, the puppeteer was unable to focus the conscious self on the paper. Instead, the superego questioned the technique and process. In turn, the puppeteer became acutely aware of his or her own physical form separate from consciousness. This internal doubling left the puppeteer uncomfortable, disorientated and self-aware. This manifestation of The Uncanny in the puppeteer led to an inability to focus and subsequently manipulate convincingly, and in this example, the paper's sense of animation and autonomous life force was absent.

In contrast to this, when completing a group improvisation at *Animate LIVE* on the 21st of July, 2014, the opposite was achieved. Three puppeteers were each given a roll of brown paper. They were accompanied by pianist Matthew Alpin and found sound composer Aled Jones, who used microphones to amplify and distort the natural sounds of the paper. The focus was concentrated by the sound. All puppeteers were led by the paper's natural movement and retained a union of the physical and conscious form. Fascinatingly, at times the three pieces of paper moved together as one organism, adopting each other's rhythms and expressions of emotion, suggestive of an independent life force possessing them. The complicity between puppeteer, puppet, and viewer was present, as Gross writes, "pulling both real and hallucinatory bodies into play" (Gross, 14) and producing a hypnotic synergy of movement and music. Paper had an autonomous life force, meandering between sinister creature and abstract form. For the spectator, a sense of captivating unease was imparted as he or she waited and watched for the next recognisable form to appear.

The early twentieth century psychoanalytical investigations into The Uncanny considered it primitive, supernatural and something not to be desired. However, when applying this process to contemporary puppetry practice, the condition is transformed into an affective and powerful dramatic tool. In the context of paper, as Bicât writes, "the limits of reality are infinitely elastic" (Bicât, 25). It can maintain form, and the creases leave impressions on the surface, providing depth

and texture to the image. When this metamorphic quality is framed with theatrical elements such as music and light, the effect can possess sinister and unsettling qualities. Paper can be anything and it isn't always pretty.

Further investigations into The Uncanny offered a unique insight into the psychological needs of the puppeteer, leading us to conclude that for the inanimate to appear alive, the puppeteer must disappear to the audience. This is not only achieved through technique and transference of energy, but also through an ability to be focused and present in the moment. Hazardously, however, when the superego manifests in the mind of the puppeteer, censoring and challenging their process, a doubling effect manifests. The puppeteer becomes aware of their consciousness separate from their body and is unable to convincingly manipulate.

Alternatively, when the puppeteer is present, the metamorphic state of paper, its ability to retain shape and develop texture, makes it effective in evoking an uncanny reaction, morphing from image to abstract, from creature to formless. The audience becomes unaware of the selfless puppeteers, seeing only the material's movement and imparted meaning. The audience invests emotionally and psychologically in the uncanny moment. These deep animistic tendencies open the audience on a primitive and spiritual level, allowing for a powerful and deeply affecting theatrical experience. The Uncanny is a result of this powerful exchange, and paper is the medium.

Rebekah Caputo is a puppeteer and theatre maker based between Aarhus, Denmark and Leeds, UK. She is a devisor with Odd Doll Theatre of Puppetry and works independently with interdisciplinary artists to create performance and investigate the potential of puppetry as a collaborative art form.

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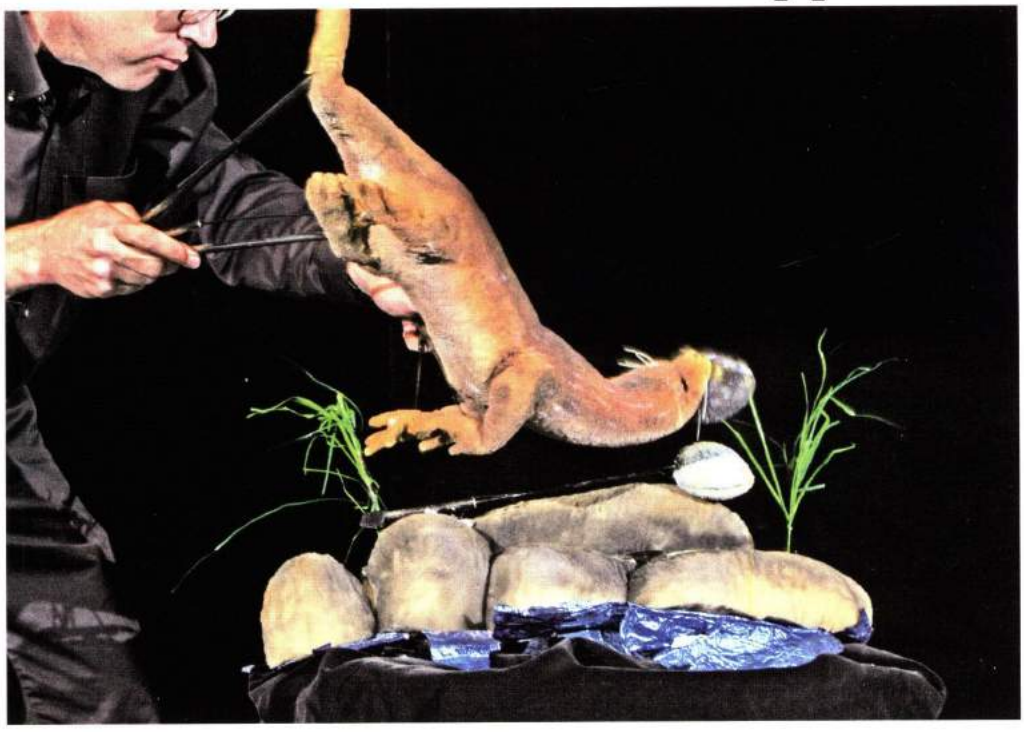
Carved Foam Rubber Puppets

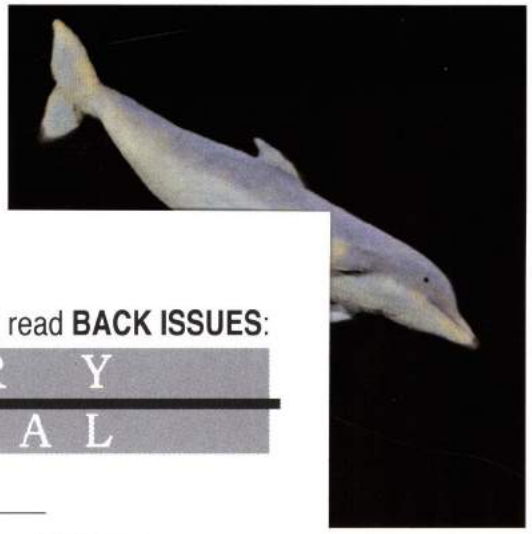


by Hobey Ford

Jordi Bertran video
https://youtu.be/CcoPdlpYuhc

Le petit bonhomme en mousse -
LE PLUS GRAND CABARET
DU MONDE

Foam rubber is almost everywhere in the puppetry world, thanks to its lightweight and flexible nature. I am here to talk about carved foam puppets and their unique quality of movement. Foam rubber, or polyurethane foam, has been used as a puppet-making medium for over fifty years. Sheet foam achieved fame among puppeteers through the Muppets, but Arlyn and Luman Coad were the first to carve blocks of foam into puppets in the 1960s. I use very soft, medium density foam rubber. Most of my carving is done with an electric meat knife and scissors. The beauty of foam is that once you carve a creature, all the movement is built into the medium; every cell of the foam is in motion. The foam's flexibility indeed sometimes has to be limited with armatures serving as bones in the structure. Through manual manipulation, faces can be made to grimace, shapes to transform or even turn inside out. Most people approaching carved foam want to cover it, as it is delicate and easily damaged. Covering the foam is



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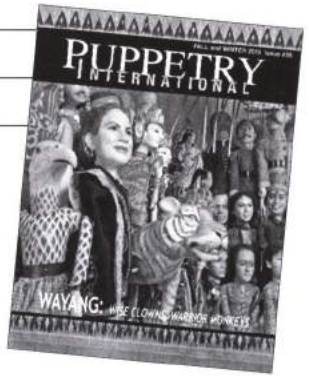

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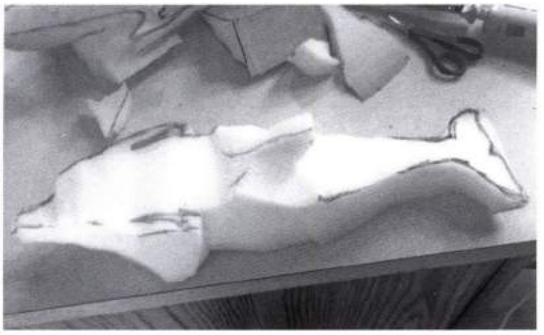
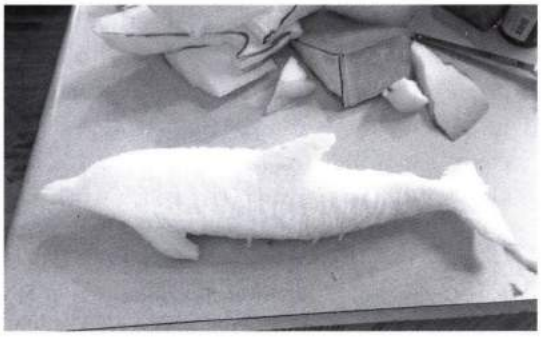




Hobey Ford's Golden Rod Puppets have delighted audiences since 1980. He is the creator of Peepers Puppets and is a Kennedy Center teaching artist.

the very thing you don't want to do if you want to exploit its movement qualities. I have used the foam to create the illusion of creating a clay pot by squeezing and holding the carved clay bowl as if it is a ball of clay and, while miming the shaping of the clay, slowly releasing the bowl, allowing it to come back to its original shape. The effect is simple to manipulate but uncanny to the observer. I manipulate carved foam puppet figures with rods, hands or sometimes—as with carved faces—from within. Very few puppeteers have utilized carved polyfoam. Jordi Bertran from Barcelona, while not using carved foam, gets foam's lovely movement qualities, making a very human character out of a few snippets of foam. Up and coming group Poncili Creación from Puerto Rico create all their puppets from carved foam, manipulating it directly with their hands. With carved foam puppets, the main event is the overall movement of the figure, which allows a kind of animation not possible with other mediums.

COLOR PUPPET PHOTOS: JIM KRANSBERGER

Unfolding - Investigation of Form and Content:

The Use of Tyvek in the Creation of a Puppet Theatre Production

by Margarita Blush

My journey as a puppet theatre director began at the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts (NATFA) in Bulgaria. At NATFA I studied with world-renowned puppet theatre artists whose own training was deeply motivated by the 20th century Russian theatre. As a result, the fundamental principle of directing imparted at NATFA was the "conceptual approach" to the work. In my understanding and practice of this approach, a concept is never a random whim, but a solid vision developed through extensive research. Deeply rooted in the research, the concept melds the interplay of form and content to produce a holistic theatrical expression. Each element and aspect of a theatre production *must* arise from the concept and in its turn, further the concept. I have fully embraced this way of working, and the relationship between form and content has been of upmost importance in my process as a puppet theatre director and creator of original work. The conceptual approach is a vibrant way to create engaging work that captures our imagination and affects us on a profound level.

The relationship of content and form is relevant in any artistic practice, but it becomes even more focused and significant in puppet theatre, where so many forms, techniques and materials converge. Either form or content can be the starting point in the creation of artistic work with the same level of success and relevance. The Western approach tends to be more often driven by content that finds its right form, while in Eastern (Japanese in particular) practices, it is often the form that needs to be filled with the right content. The point is that artistic works can be created with either the form or the content as the starting point. What's important, however, is that the artist can articulate this relationship at some point in the artistic process if the work aims for the highest level of artistry.

Exemplifying both the conceptual approach and the intricate relationship of form to content is my recent production of *Unfolding*. The narrative that follows connects the concept to the innovative use of a specific and meticulously chosen material (Tyvek), which demonstrates how the sophisticated correlation between form and content can give a production tremendous artistic depth. The material used in the production (form) corresponds to the theme and idea of the show (content). Every element in the show is supported by this relationship and helps to take the audience on a visceral journey with a strong emotional and intellectual impact.

AYA AND BIRD

AYA AND CRONE
PHOTOS: ADAM LOBELSON

Unfolding is an original puppet theatre production that examines the themes of women's wisdom and self-discovery. The show features handcrafted puppets, live acting, unique scenography and composed music. *Unfolding* was developed through an immersive devising and rehearsal process during which the show's international artistic team came together in a laboratory setting to create a unique production where all theatrical elements work together in a conceptual theatrical approach.

The idea for the show was born out of the quote, "We don't receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us or spare us" (Marcel Proust). Looking at my life—past, present and future—as a woman, an artist and a mother, I found myself compelled to examine the idea of discovering wisdom through a journey into the deep feminine where our wise, wild woman awaits. My desire was to create a production that reminds women of their insight, wisdom, strength and power.

The inspiration for this project arises from all things female—from goddess myths and world folklore to prejudices women still face and overcome every day. *Unfolding* is a magical "21st century fairy tale" that provides a metaphor for the contemporary woman's path to empowerment and self-discovery. As in a fairy tale, a woman goes on a journey over mountains and through dark forests to encounter a series of obstacles and hardships. She braves storms and fear, overcomes distractions and doubts, and meets a wise crone as we follow her life's journey.

The conceptual approach compelled us to discover the embodiment of the theme and idea of the show. In the case of *Unfolding*, the search was for the visual expression of feminine wisdom and Proust's quote that captures the idea of the production. We asked the questions: What is feminine wisdom; Where does it come from; Where does it live; How is it expressed; How is it transmitted between women; How is it transmitted to the world?

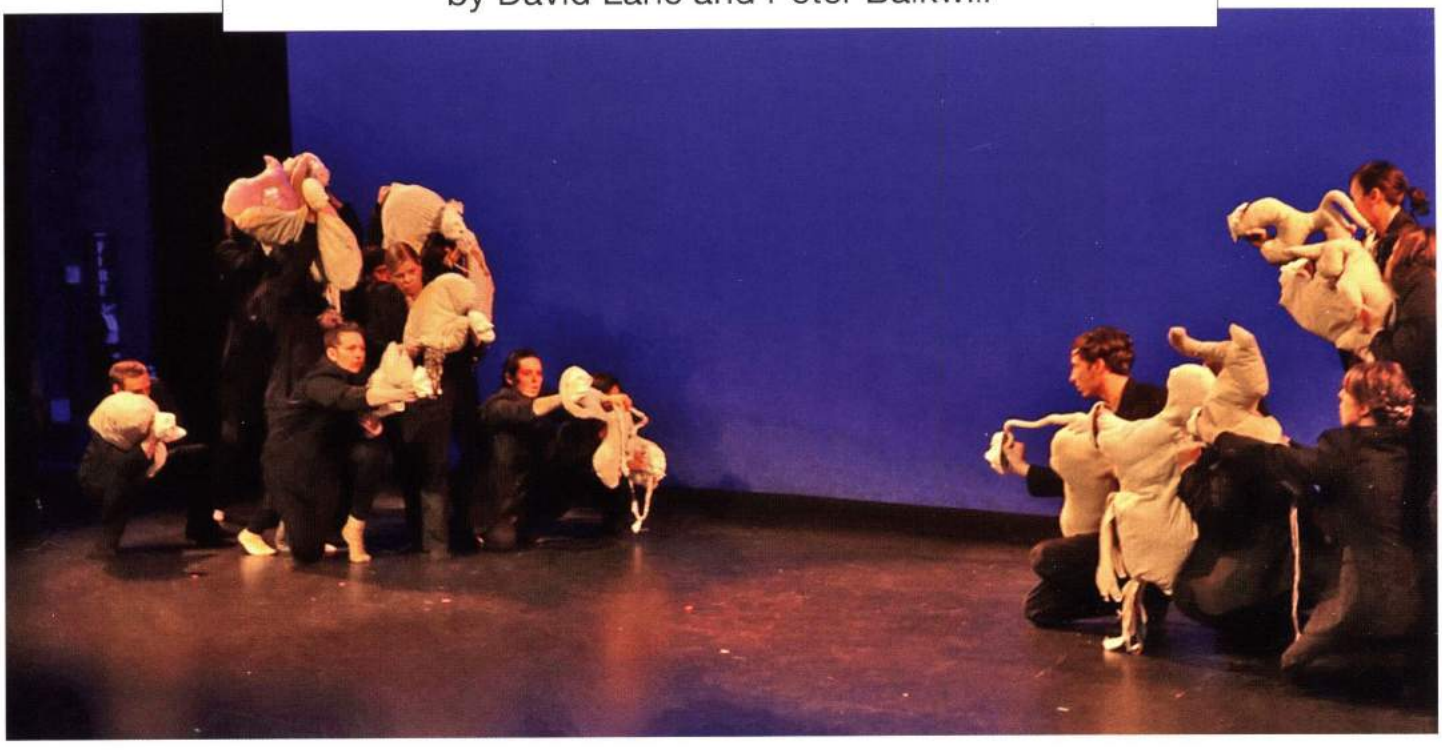
We began thinking how feminine wisdom has layers and fluidity—it is intuitive, but also intellectual; it is experiential, but also rational; it is fluid and enigmatic. It has been hidden or subdued over centuries and millennia, and still has not found full recognition of its value. The world we live in is still not fluent with ideas and concepts such as "intuition," "collaboration," "spirit," "crone" and many others.

Our literary research ventured in many directions—myths, fairy tales and their interpretation, forgotten women authors, etc. The goal was to find and formulate an image, an "ideograph" (as Julie Taymor defines her idea of a concept) that captures the nature of feminine wisdom as authentically as possible. At this stage of the process, I was already working with my Bulgarian designer, Dimitar (Mitko) Dimitrov. Together we searched and found inspiration in nature—rocks, trees, birds. We saw feminine shapes everywhere. At the same time, we wanted to include the "intellectual" side of wisdom and find an expression that will include that aspect. We were interested in the written word and "records" left throughout history. The exploration in these two directions led us to the idea of a scroll. A scroll is ancient and contemporary, it captures wisdom and intellectual knowledge, but it also seems to hold and hide more. It is a bit "softer" than a book, more feminine somehow, possibly because it can be rolled and unrolled, folded and unfolded. We decided that the entire production will be one scroll that hides and reveals the life's journey of the heroine, Aya. One scroll–one life! We had arrived at our concept!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

Puppet Souls

by David Lane and Peter Balkwill



The animation of a puppet is a mysterious occasion and creates questions that raise a myriad of possible answers. Of course there are the technical aspects of articulation that can be levied in support of an answer, things like *Breath*, *Focus*, *Manipulation* and a sense of a *Fixed Point*—all of these certainly help to move a puppet through the varying levels of tension connected to the dramatic action of a story. But what is it that compels us to believe that the puppet is actually alive? After all, isn't it just an assemblage of various corporeal materials, systematically gathered and fused to create a representation of a human or animal? Why then do we care so much about it as though it were an actual being, something with a spirit? These are the questions that have wrinkled our foreheads since the earliest moments when we bandied crude effigies about the fire, casting shadows on damp cave walls: the dance of puppetry in its youngest moment.

In pursuit of the answer we embark on a journey with the most basic of stuff—cloth material, fabric, textiles, what mummies are wrapped in, what we clothe ourselves in and what we bundle our babies in as we tuck them down to slumber. And we apply this tackle in abstract physical movement exercises. We stretch our ponderings into the abyss, not expecting an answer but more to cast a collective net into the waters of possibility, to see if we might gain an inkling of understanding within the immediate community of our group.

One of the directions in which we maneuver is the application of Suzuki's actor-training methodology. We have a particular interest in the investigation of our Ki energy—the individual's personal and physical relationship to this essential force, then stretched and shared with the group's collective energy. In some regard we look to find the individual in the ensemble while identifying the ensemble as a single entity, and then we begin to ask ourselves: How does a puppet fit into all of this?

As part of our integrated movement pedagogy, objects are introduced into participants' hands during Suzuki-inspired floor work. At times, limp-limbed-cloth dolls, bamboo sticks, mops, suitcases and umbrellas have been used. The approach has two objectives. One is to give the performer an added weight to feel—such weight is like a little push or resistance that reminds the puppeteer of their connection to their center, and helps them stay grounded with weight "underside." The second is to explore a simple relationship to something with form, not to express with the object as though it were a pup-

pet but to experience how it changes the way we move, and how our energy begins to flow through this object. In most cases we begin to find the exercises more interesting as we become unified with the articles in hand.

Everyday objects serve their purpose, but at times, they are unwieldy and sometimes difficult to manage when walking in a clump, or soaring tightly in a group.

The solution has been to develop a specialized object that could fit this purpose, but also open up possibilities for other types of exploration within the context of our practice. Much of our early work stems from a desire to deconstruct our understanding of what a puppet is, and so we invest mostly with abstract shapes so that the puppet is discovered as opposed to known. In pursuit of a tool that would serve many functions we created a hybrid pillow of sorts, but with shapes that present larval-mask-like possibilities, at times with limbs and tails, so that they can be tied to sticks or attached to each other.

At the outset we didn't know what we were creating, but with the very first step in this exploration, we knew we were on to something with great potential—but what to call them? It is hard to say who uttered the words and perhaps it wasn't even spoken but just collectively and instantly understood. We had each created our own puppet soul.

The construction involves hand sewing by the participant—soft muslin, unbleached is ideal—and then hand stuffed with raw cotton batting, a dense filling with a palpable weight.

This action, the builder's touch, and the concentration and act of creation, seems to affect the very nature of the object itself—creating an intimate connection between the object and the maker, as their vital energy (Ki Energy) is extended into the very centre of the thing. The repeated pull of embroidery thread across the surface . . . the folding in of batting and then cinching up of the membrane . . . questions of symmetry, lines of beauty, mass, negative space . . . and the tug, paw and maneuvering of the object as it forms in the builder's hands all contribute to a sense of parentage, where a direct line of pedigree is apparent from builder to thing.

It seems that for some of our workshop participants, the puppet soul was at very least a comfort item; often the would carry off their constructed object to meals, or when on a break . . . using them as a pillow, or as a kind of surrogate teddy bear, perhaps evoking memories of that childhood toy so brazenly sold off at a garage sale when the teen years hit.

The designer may add a single black dot if they desire. A thin micron pen works for this task or black stitching can be applied.

The construction of the puppet soul is itself an exploration, and serves to get the participants to work with their hands early in the process, breaking down the barriers and inhibitions that accompany the notion of building puppets. There are no patterns, so the participants must work with what they have in front of them. The braver ones will just use the scraps discarded by the other builders. Others decide to draw on the cloth to get an outline, then cut shapes that are assembled mostly by hand, resorting only to the sewing machine when edges require a smooth, elegant line.

A question arises: Should the facilitators let the participant know what they are building before they begin, or should they keep the object's identity a secret so that the participant's subconscious is at work in the forming of the shape? This is a tricky notion. When the builder discovers the implications of what the object is, they are then put into a direct relationship of whether or not they think it is a beautiful thing—they must allow the endearment of the puppet soul to grow over time, must use it in practice, feel its weight, become accustomed to its smell and appreciate its ugly appearance. The puppet soul's beauty is revealed in the course of these explorations,

D. LANE

in which the creator develops a relationship with her object, imbuing its simple materials with her own life-force.

During our summer workshop, the purpose of the puppet soul was kept secret from the participants until they were well on their way to completing the task. If truth be told, the grizzly act of snipping, stuffing, and crude stitching gave us pause and cemented in these workshop leaders' minds the direction we would take in adding a theme to our group's investigations. As needles pierced the rough-hewed fabric shapes, and the still-seeded cotton (oatmeal colored and containing the DNA potential for life) was being forcefully packed into the textile sheaths, our imaginations were "pinged." Rag corners were tacked up and then stitched to the main mass. Others used embroidery thread across the surface to create patterns or to secure some strange appendage. Shapes like internal organs appeared—many evocative of kidneys, lungs and hearts, while others revealed an inferred eye, a nose, a crooked ear, a tongue. Looked at in a certain way, the hint of a face might be revealed for a moment, then disappear when repositioned—the way one sees a gnome or a sprite in the bark of a tree. It did appear to us, the workshop leaders, that the trusting participants had allowed us to cast them in the most curious of roles. The story being played out in front of us very much resembled the marvelous and fantastical tale of Dr. Victor Frankenstein, as imagined by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. The modern Prometheus myth was repeating itself before our very eyes.

Recently, the larval puppet souls have migrated their way out of the studio workshop and into performance. We have begun to explore a theatrical set that is made up of sewing machines and bins of fabric and stuffing. There is something calming about the massing up of textiles and puffs of bedding like landlocked clouds—the hum and churn of the needles yum-yumming through the cloth. As a warm-up to the arrival of the audience, the puppeteers are busy fabricating strange lumps that will later come to life and then be sold in the lobby as caged creatures-cum-pets. In addition to the already potential puppet souls, we begin to steal little masks onto the shapes, heightening the possibility for characters to emerge.

But in all that they can accomplish and compel us to imagine, the greatest potential is in the willing participant of the workshop and the singular creation that springs from that occasion.

Is the puppet soul, then, in some way a mirror reflection of the builder's unconscious self? Their psychology? Their shadow world? Is it possible for the builder to draw up within the material fabric the intangible hopes and fears of their own second self? Is it merely projection, and therefore all within the mind of the builder? Or is there a mystical transference, as the puppet soul becomes the fetish object of our training ritual?

Those questions will have to wait until the next article, but will continue to burble and boil within us as we continue the journey of the puppet soul.

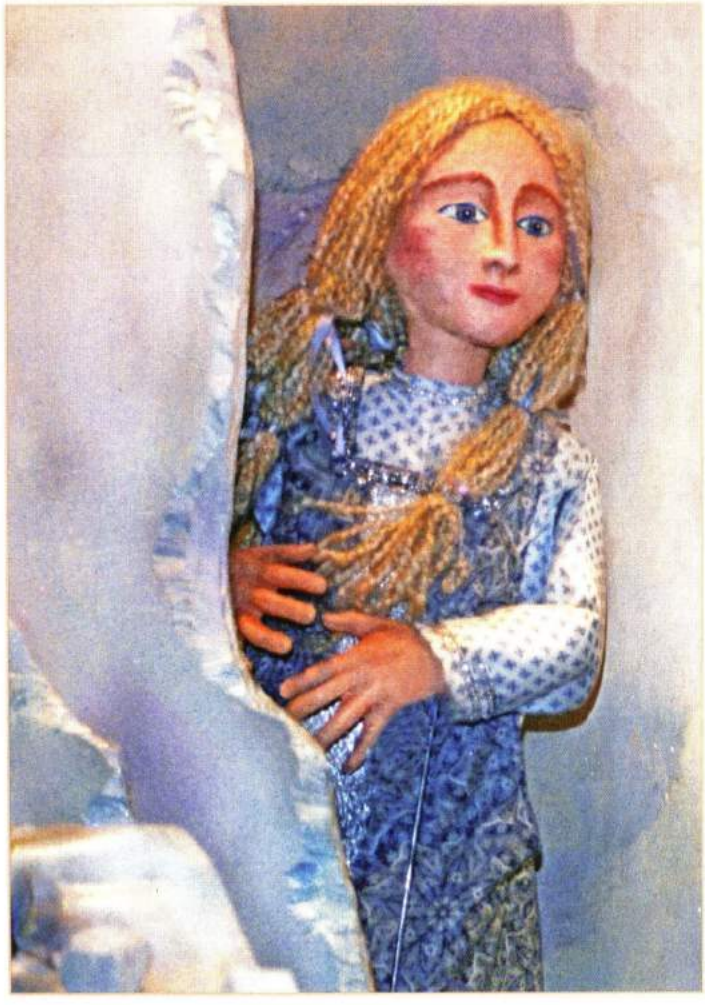
David and Peter are founding members of the Old Trout Puppet Workshop and are co-directors of the New England Puppet Intensive with Natalie Balkwill. This is a sister program to the Banff Puppet Intensive. David lives in North Adams, Massachusetts where he teaches performance and leather mask making at Siena College. Peter lives in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and is also the Education Director of the Canadian Academy of Mask and Puppetry.

The Mystery of The Salt Crystal

by Lisa Aimee Sturz

Salt feeds the cells that feed the brain that keeps our thoughts alive
Salt's in our blood and sweat and tears; it helps us to survive
Wars were waged and wars were won to gain some precious salt
Without this crystal compound, life comes to a halt

Asheville, North Carolina is the headquarters of the Grain and Salt Society, a company that imports gray sea salt from France. I became friends with the owner whose father wrote a book about the healing properties of this particular salt, which is directed from the ocean into a series of natural clay channels. Over time, the water evaporates and the salt remaining is harvested with long wooden tools that protect the salt's integrity including eighty-eight trace minerals that help the body absorb nutrients and aid the process of osmosis.



A short time later I came across an old legend about a father who plans to leave his kingdom to one of his three daughters. Like the famous King Lear, he is flattered by his two older daughters who declare they love him more than gold and jewels. His third daughter is banished when she states, "I love you more than salt."

I researched the origins of this legend and learned it coincides with a devastating salt famine that resulted from heavy floodwaters washing away much of Europe's salt reserve. In medieval times, most animals were slaughtered in the Fall as they could not store enough hay to last the winter. They preserved their meat and fish in salty brine to prevent bacteria from growing. Lack of salt can lead to dehydration, mental illness, paralysis and death.

It struck me that salt was a matter of life or death. I decided to create an engaging puppet show weaving modern technology and science with medieval lore. The legend served as a romantic setting of royalty, lost love and regret, complete with storybook costumes. I created a scenario in which the banished daughter's tears wash away the salt in her father's kingdom. She, Salina, finds comfort in the wisdom of the Salt Queen who lives in a crystalline salt cave.

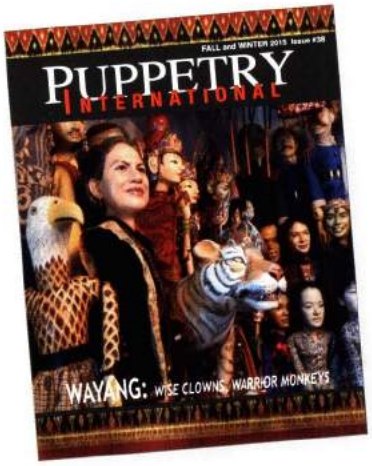
Salt originates in rocks called halite. Found from the polar regions to the equator, it has even been detected in meteorites. Over time, seeping rainwater dissolves some of the salt and carries it to the ocean through underground streams and rivers. Scientists believe that billions of years ago, the entire Earth was covered with ocean. When some of that water evaporated, it left huge deposits of salt. In some cases it left underground salt caves. There is a cave in Germany thousands of meters long with a railroad going through it. The US government uses a salt cave to preserve our country's most valuable legal documents and store barrels of oil because the salt stays at a stable temperature with little humidity.

The Salt Queen becomes a vehicle for conjuring "live" characters from different time periods that further explain salt's unique gifts. A Roman warrior recalls how the word "salt" comes from the Latin word for "salary" as soldiers and workers were paid in salt. Soldiers also applied salt to their battle wounds. Mr. Big brags about over fourteen thousand industrial uses of NaCl (sodium chloride) including antifreeze, soaps, paints, refrigeration units, plastics, pesticides, glass, cleaning fluids and paper. A California surfer expounds there is enough salt in the ocean to cover all the landmasses on Earth to a depth of five hundred feet.

The salt content of our mothers' wombs resembles that of the primordial ocean. Perhaps this is an indication that we did evolve from the sea? Who knows which came first, the salt or the egg?

Lisa Sturz is the founding director of Red Herring Puppets. She has worked for many prestigious organizations, including: Walt Disney Imagineering, Jim Henson Productions, Lucasfilm, PBS, NBC, ABC, UNC-TV and the Center for Puppetry Arts.

Setting the Record Straight



In PI #38 there were two errors in the Table of Contents. The correct spelling of Kristin Haverty's title is "Seperti Sangut," and Ms. Lis's first name is "Marianna."

Our apologies.

Salt of the Earth

by PuppetCinema
Adapted and Directed by Zvi Sahar
BAM Next Wave Festival, Fishman Space, New York
October 29, 2014

Puppetry as a genre is intimately linked to what some might call the "old world." Rich in folk traditions and a favorite of the wandering performer, puppets are historically members of the "poor theater." Even the materiality of the performing object itself suggests this: beautiful artworks crafted from wood, string, paper, felt. PuppetCinema, a touring company based in Israel, found a way to pair this earthy tradition with new media technologies, creating a richly textured piece that is very equally puppet and cinema.

Salt of the Earth is based on *The Road to Ein Harod* by Amos Kenan. It is a surreal dystopian adventure that follows a Jewish man as he escapes Tel Aviv to Ein Harod after a military coup. This is also the summary of the production, but it's the form rather than the content that steals focus. The five members of the ensemble took turns manipulating one puppet and other objects to create scenes for the camera, all for the sake of a cinematic image projected onto a large screen at the back of the stage. The audience was invited to watch the "film" while simultaneously watching its creation.

This medium of live cinema-making is a distinctly modern form, well suited to current generations of short attention spans. There were always a multitude of things to watch: the narrator, who directly addressed the audience; the ensemble busily setting up the next scene; or the actual projection at the back of the stage. The audience was not allowed to choose one focus and follow it through; its focus was purposely re-directed throughout. The projection screen went black at times, requiring the audience to watch the live performance in front of them, but at other times the video camera moved between the action and the audience, guiding the audience's vision back to the screen.

The video camera was therefore a strong mediator, transforming the dynamic of a typical puppet show. Often in puppetry, as in film, there is a sense of magic to the performance, a question of, "How did they *do* that?" Whether the audience is granted vision of the puppeteer or not, the puppet beckons to the audience, inviting them to an imaginative space. And the puppeteers create that magic in a physical space removed from the realm of the audience, whether that's backstage, below the hand puppets, or above the marionettes. But in this production, the camera troubled these conventions. The camera separated the audience from the "liveness" of the event, while at the same time making it more intimate. The camera might physically block the audience from the puppet, but it also moved the audience's vision into the puppet's intimate space—we could see all the tiniest stitches, the texture of the fabric, and the rod sticking out the back of its head. All the makings of "magic" were clearly displayed.

The camera played the additional role of transforming other objects onstage into puppets. Each of the ensemble members played a role in front of the camera as well as behind it, but they did not appear as humans. Instead, the camera removed the individual body parts from their whole. The audience got a close-up of the fabric of a woman's slip, and eventually we found her shoulder and the left side of her chin. Or we got a man's mouth taking a drag of a cigarette. Or a shoe. The camera transformed each of these into an object that performed its role.

Puppets and bodies are not the only performing objects in this space. In fact, the star of the show might be the tons of stark white salt. The show began with one actor silently pouring a bucket of salt onto the barren black box floor. The audience watched it flow onto the

stage, coming alive with its movement. The first section of the show consisted of what I can only call painting with salt, which, it turns out, is a beautiful medium. The ensemble built deserts, mountains, neighborhoods and streets, complete with the dividing line, all with salt.

This materiality is a fruitful theme throughout the production. "Salt of the Earth" usually refers to people who are grounded, who have a solid head on their shoulders. In Israel, it more specifically refers to people who give themselves over to Israel. And in this production, we were reminded what the salt of the earth really is—salt. Salt is life-giving, adaptable, and capable of creating a fresh canvas of brilliant white potential, as it did in the final tableau of the play. The puppet echoed this simultaneity of straightforward materiality on one hand and symbolism on the other. The puppet was built from a military bag from the Six-Day War of 1967. It does not symbolize the war—it *is* itself a trace of the war. But it is also a character, at times brought to life as the hero of this epic, and at other times just a puppet, moved about the space like a rag doll. The puppet, like the salt and the actors' bodies, were all equal objects with storytelling potential.

This puppet cinema form became most interesting when the worlds of the material live performance and the symbolic cinematic image collided. Like when the camera followed a truck driving on a mountain road until it bumped into the narrator's shoe. Or when the narrator violently grabbed the camera onstage in the moment he was grabbing a gun in the story, making the image on screen spiral out of control.

PuppetCinema is a company boldly experimenting with form for a new generation of puppet audiences. The form and content coalesce to provide the audience with more questions than answers, more potentials than final products, and more ideas than can possibly be summed up in one review. This was salt that stuck, beautifully seasoning everything it touched.

–review by Sarah Lucie

New Modes of Puppetry Studies

reviews by John Bell

Michael Buonanno, *Sicilian Epic and the Marionette Theater.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014. 225 pages. $45.

Ellen S. Rixford, *Figures in the Fourth Dimension: Mechanical Movement for Puppets and Automata.* New York: Ellen S. Rixford, 2015. 512 pages. $80.

Kamil Kopania, *Animated Sculptures of the Crucified Christ in the Religious Culture of the Latin Middle Ages.* Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2010. 354 pages. $39.99.

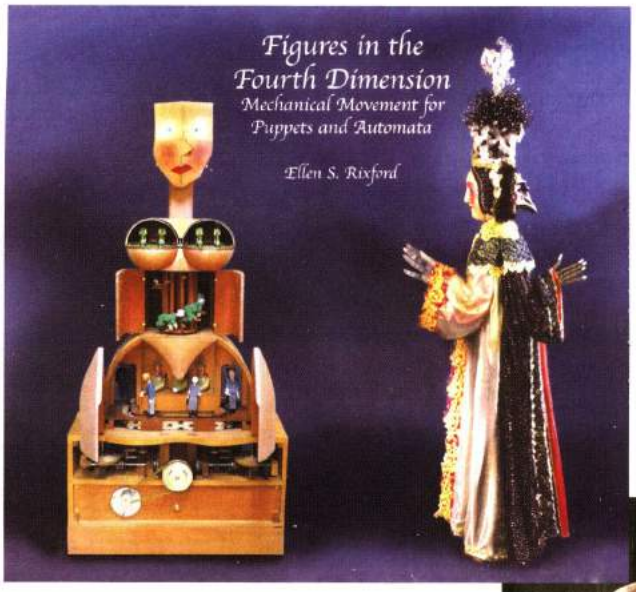
Three recent books show the fascinating ways that puppetry in the 21st century is broadening its definitional range.

Sicilian marionette theater--the *opera dei pupi*—has long caught the imagination of scholars and puppeteers. Michael Buonanno studied Sicilian puppetry at the Museo Internazionale delle Marionette during an extended stay in Palermo, and *Sicilian Epic and the Marionette Theater* focuses on the dramaturgy of the complex multi-episode epics that are the foundation of the form.

Joan Gross focused on the linguistic aspects of Liègeois Tchantches theater in her 2001 book *Speaking in Other Voices: An Ethnography of Walloon Puppet Theaters*, and Buonanno employs a similarly specific focus here, although his subject is really the interpretation of dramatic literature and folklore rather than Gross's attention to linguistics. Buonanno finds the dramaturgy of the Palermitan *opera dei pupi* to be richly complex, including "many genres of Sicilian folklore, including not only epic but also farce, saints' lives, bandits' lives, Christian myth, fairy tales, and city legend." These overlapping layers of meaning reflect the history of Sicily as a meeting place of French, Italian, African, Greek and other cultures over many centuries. Sicilian marionette theater, like other epic puppet traditions such as Javanese *wayang kulit*, mixes grandiloquent stories of knights and kings, and good and evil, with a lower, "popular" level of more humble characters (Buonanno terms them "masques") who get at similar questions of proper conduct and social mores while being easier for popular audiences to identify with.

Buonanno analyzes specific episodes of the Carolingian Cycle—romantic stories of Charlemagne, Roland, and Renaud—and how those vaguely 9th-century adventures in chivalry, Christian-Muslim conflict, and what he terms "the dichotomy of knight and masque" shift to a new juxtaposition between "the saint and the bandit." The heroes of the *opera dei pupi*, Buonanno asserts, can at different times act like the saints or bandits dear to Sicilian culture, and in this way the stories of the medieval French cycle can connect to closer-to-home themes strongly represented in Sicilian folk music, cantastoria, and such popular-culture vehicles as *The Godfather* films. Buonanno's close reading of specific episodes, drawing on folklore studies as well as literary analysis, gives much-needed attention to this important form of puppetry. *Sicilian Epic and the Marionette Theater*, as an excursion into tight-focused textual studies, complements John McCormick's recent histories of Italian puppetry (*Pupazzi* and *The Italian Puppet Theater*).

A difficulty of the book is that while recapitulating specific episodes, Buonanno transforms dialogic text into literary narrative. This is puzzling and frustrating—imagine if you tried to analyze *Macbeth* by reading a narrative synopsis rather than the play itself—and it means we don't see the actual words used in the puppet plays. However, aside from this, Buonanno's book is a valuable addition to our understanding of one of the richest of global puppet traditions.

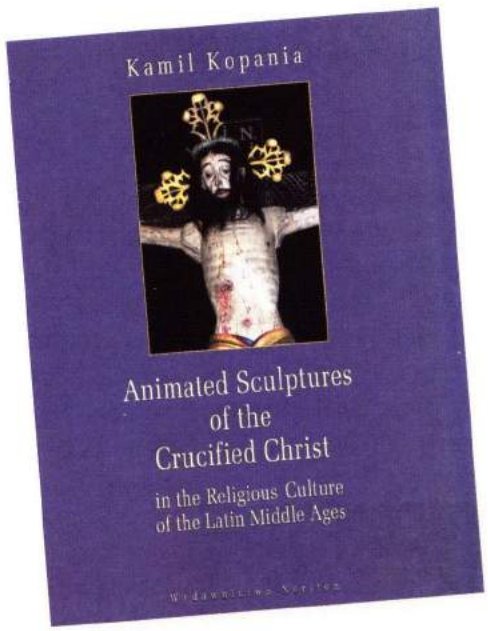


Definitions of puppetry are always complicated. One can assert, for example, that there are "five types of puppetry" (hand puppets, rod puppets, marionettes, shadow puppets, and "full-body puppets"); but in fact puppetry is always messily overlapping limits into all sorts of ritual objects, dolls, and machines—material performers that act in the four dimensions of height, depth, breadth, and time. Ellen Rixford's self-published *Figures in the Fourth Dimension* gets at this overlap in an astoundingly rich way with an in-depth overview of "mechanical movement for puppets and automata." Mechanisms have long been part of puppetry around the world; they are smart ways to add to the movement vocabulary of a puppet figure, and puppets and automata share the same principles, materials, and goals. Rixford's book is a deep exploration of these hybrid forms not only showing us the history of puppet and automata mechanics from the 18th century to the present with luscious large-format photographs, but also explaining in detail with meticulous diagrams exactly how such mechanisms work.

Rixford is an accomplished puppeteer and professional automaton maker, and she begins with an analysis of "The Basics" of mechanical movement, including power sources, cranks, levers, cams, gears, and the more advanced realms of "Geneva wheels," pawls, the "fusée, and contemporary technologies of electric switches and relays. One can delve into this as deeply as one wishes—even if one's technological understanding is decidedly limited.

Rixford's range of interests spans continents and centuries. Her treatment of the 18th-century automata of French craftsmen Henri Maillardet, Peter Kintzing, and David Roentgen is breathtaking, as is her approach to contemporary automata makers who work in the classic manner. Rixford covers sixteen other contemporary automata makers as well, including Peter Markey (the founder of a vibrant community of mechanical theater makers in Falmouth, England) and other artists from across Europe and the Americas, and details her own fascinating collaborations with Mayhew Lu. While the goal of "Golden Age"automata makers in the 18th and 19th centuries was uncanny verisimilitude, Rixford's book shows that contemporary automata makers work more with nonrealism and visible mechanics. *Figures in the Fourth Dimension* also profiles the mechanisms of Punch and Judy and Japanese *bunraku* puppets, as well as ventriloquist figures by Bill Nelson and Dan Lavender, and the mechanisms of such popular contemporary puppeteers as Jim Kroupa, Phillip Huber, and Joseph Cashore.

As a self-published labor of love, *Figures in the Fourth Dimension* incorporates its author's own idiosyncratic approach, and sometimes one wishes an editor had, for example, identified the geographic location of each builder. However, Rixford's magnum opus will be extraordinarily useful and enlightening to puppeteers and automata makers to come, just as Hansjürgen Fettig's 1974 *Hand and Rod Puppets: A Handbook of Technique* has become a must-see compendium of puppet "mechs." We know that technology has become evermore central in contemporary global culture, but many of us shy away from trying to understand it. Ellen Rixford's book shows how puppets and automata have always been aspects of technology culture over the past three centuries, and how they are incorporating new technologies in live, four-dimensional performance.



Polish puppet scholar Kamil Kopania takes an in-depth look at mechanical sculpture of a different sort in *Animated Sculptures of the Crucified Christ*, a revelatory and comprehensive analysis of the ways that the central figure of Catholic ceremonies was not simply a material image on a cross, but a dynamic sculpture whose performance was central to church ritual throughout the medieval period. The late Henryk Jurkowski (who advised Kopania on *Animated Sculptures*) once wrote that the evolution of puppetry began with non-theatrical idols and fetishes, then proceeded with "ritualistic statues [...] trapped in their immobile form" until it emerged into the familiar form of the puppet proper. Kopania's study complicates this view by proving that statues depicting Christ crucified were not immobile theatrical props, but instead dynamic performing objects.

In his study of over 126 medieval Christ figures from European churches, Kopania shows that although they ascended and descended from the cross and were deposed in sepulchers—the origins of medieval drama—the figures did many other things as well. They had various combinations of jointed heads, arms, legs and knees; moving eyes, mouths, and tongues; leather-skinned abdomens that could drip blood when pierced; and carved-out spaces for holy relics. The figures functioned in many different church activities, from liturgical ceremonies marking the crucifixion and resurrection, to non-liturgical events on Good Friday, including ceremonies performed on the street, and religious dramas performed for both laymen and clergy. The aesthetics involved with these moving sculptures ranged "from symbolic-allegorical to naturalistic," depending on the location and prevailing artistic tastes of the particular community.

In his new interpretation of medieval material culture, Kopania argues that a mere human being "could not have been the object of cult worship on the part of the faithful"—only an animated sculpture could enact the role of Christ. This charged religious power of a representational object has often been understood as central to the identity of traditional puppets the world over, related to the shaman status of puppeteers, and the belief that puppets themselves represent a direct connection to the immaterial world. Medieval art history tends to see crucifixes as sculpture alone, and studies of medieval drama usually focus on the activities of performers rather than objects. *Animated Sculptures of the Crucified Christ* shows that something more complex was (and to a great extent still is) going on in Catholic churches. Kopania's book is a strong contribution to the academic realm of "material culture studies," but it also helps contextualize our understanding of object performance, ritual spectacle, Christian puppetry, and puppet history in general. •

The Picturesque and Mechanical Theater of Peter Blancan – Part II

by Ryan Howard

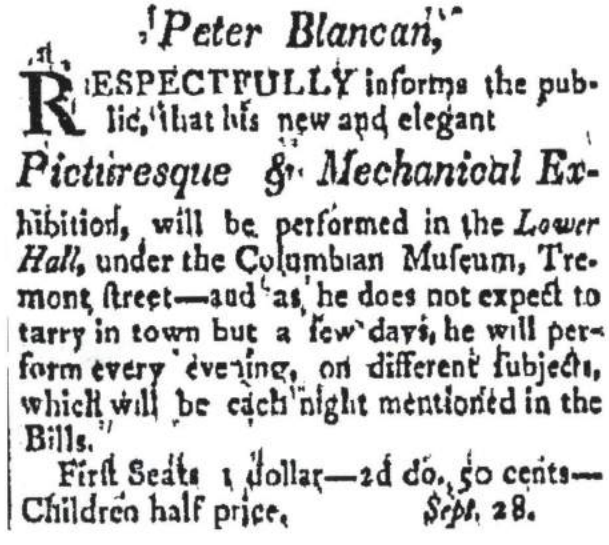
When I wrote the first part of this article, I believed that the earliest appearances of the Theatre Pitoresque & Mechanique of Peter or Pierre Blancan[1] were at the Charleston Vauxhall Garden between 13 June and 8 August 1808. But it is now known that there were performances of this spectacle as early as May 1807 at the salon of the dancing master Peter Fayolle, 260 King Street[2] (in the Charleston city directory for 1807, Blancan is listed at 195 King Street). These shows were presumably in French, since the newspaper ads are in French. This was a reflection of the ethnic makeup of the state: South Carolina had a larger percentage of inhabitants of French origin than any other of the thirteen original colonies.[3] The ads for these shows do not include Blancan's name or his characteristic circular device. The ads for the Vauxhall shows include the circular device but not his name, although one of the shows was for the benefit of a "Miss Blancan." But the descriptions of the show in the 1807 ads clearly refer to the same spectacle as that recorded at the Vauxhall and in Boston and New York. The Theatre Pitoresque & Mechanique was also transported outside of Charleston: There is a record of payment by Fayolle and Blancan to the city treasurer of Savannah, Georgia, to procure a licence for "theatrical performances."[4] This probably explains the presence of Blancan's name in the list of letters remaining in the post office at Savannah on 1 April 1808.[5]

Some new information about Blancan's family has come to light since the publication of the first part of this article. The marriage contract of Pierre Blancan and Pauline Gellibert, both residents of Bordeaux, France, was dated 22 August 1792.[6] An inventory of the property of "the late Pierre Blancan, turner and mechanician of this city," submitted in March 1814 by Blancan's widow, Pauline Blancan, and two of his associates, the Philadelphia jewelers Simon Dauce and René Roche Duche,[7] includes, in addition to household furnishings, clothing, and metalworking tools, "one small theatre of arabesque figures and transparent [*sic*]," valued at eighty dollars. It is interesting that Blancan preserved relics of this aspect of his performance at a time when he had apparently given up show business in favor of metalwork. The *Journal Officiel de la République Française*, 31 August 1895, preserves a record of 22 November 1833 showing that Blancan's widow had returned to Bordeaux: "Gellibert (Pauline) veuve Blancan, 21 rue Gouvion, à Bordeaux." We also now have the name of Blancan's second son: Jean Baptiste Blancan was born on 28 December 1808 in New York, the son of Pierre and Pauline Gellibert Blancan. Later, presumably with his mother, he moved to Bordeaux, where he was a commodities broker between 1846 and 1852.[8]

Blancan's Italian (or French) *fantoccini*, like the European models, were capable of complicated movements, and they also often underwent magical transformations, another characteristic of the European prototypes. For example, there was a dance by a Spanish beau, playing his guitar, which changed into a Spanish lady; and a dwarf who repeatedly changed into a giant (the expanding figure was a standard feature of later variety shows). Another standard figure was the lady whose arms changed into two girls and whose hoopskirt was pulled up over her head, transforming her into a balloon, which then ascended with the two girls.[9] Paul McPharlin explains that this trick was inspired by the 1780s fashion for hoop skirts and balloon ascents, but he believed that the first known American example was that of the marionettist Joseph LeMonier in 1826.[10] This lady in other shows was sometimes given the name Madame Blanchard, as a tribute to Sophie Blanchard, a pioneer of ballooning;[11] however, Sophie Blanchard was not the earliest female aeronaut, and there were actually puppet-show examples earlier than the date of Blanchard's first ascent.

According to Professor Jurkowski, the transformations of the late commedia dell'arte and the opera were the models for the metamorphosing puppets, which could transform themselves much more easily than living actors.[12] Magical transformations and "laughable tricks, leaps, and machinery"[13] were frequent in the Harlequinesque pantomimes at the Theater in Charleston during Blancan's Charleston period. For example, the pantomime *Care and Mirth, or, Harlequin Skeleton* opened with the magic tree, which changed into a pedestal, with Harlequin discovered on it.[14] Blancan tacitly acknowledged his debt to the spectacular side of the regular theater in his description of his scene and dialogue of a fairy, who changed the form of her face three times, and then "ascended into the air, mounted on a glory, in the manner of the scene in the Paris Opéra in which Venus descended and ascended into the clouds."[15]

I believe that Blancan's performances with *fantoccini* prove him to have been a pioneer of the nineteenth-century variety marionette show, but the other parts of his performance were perhaps even more significant as precursors of later developments. McPharlin notes that



Peter Blancan,

RESPECTFULLY informs the public, that his new and elegant

Pictiresque & Mechanical Exhibition, will be performed in the *Lower Hall*, under the Columbian Museum, Tremont street—and as he does not expect to tarry in town but a few days, he will perform every evening, on different subjects, which will be each night mentioned in the Bills.

First Seats 1 dollar—2d do. 50 cents—Children half price. Sept. 28.

(English ad) Boston *Democrat*, 28 Sep 1808, p. 3

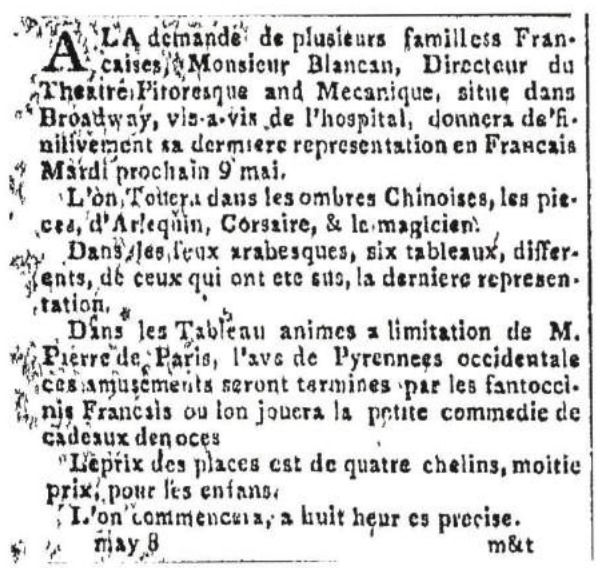
in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, puppet shows became "more and more obsessed with lighting effects."[16] Blancan's "Chinese shades," "arabesque fires," and "animated pictures" all reflected this concern for lighting effects, but, more specifically, they were all based on the projection of moving images in light and shade. In this, they were part of a historical development that went back to Giovanni Battista della Porta in the sixteenth century and reached a culminating point in the cinematic projections of the Lumière brothers in 1895, a development documented by Laurent Mannoni in his fascinating study *The Great Art of Light and Shadow: Archaeology of the Cinema*.[17] Mannoni believes that this phenomenon resulted from deep levels of the human psyche, that "the dream of being able to project moving illuminated images on a wall or screen is almost as old, in the history of humanity, as the dream of flight," and that it reflected "one overriding godlike desire: to recreate life, to see a human alter ego . . . , living and breathing on the screen."[18] In his introduction to Mannoni's book, Tom Gunning writes: "In our dawning age of new movement media, we can see Mannoni's work as outlining a tradition not simply for cinema but for video, computer-generated images, virtual reality, and a host of new media that pursue the delights that Mannoni chronicles—virtual images made of light and shadow."[19]

Blancan's presentations with an emphasis on light included Chinese shades or shadow plays. According to McPharlin, after shadow figures were introduced in New York by William Patridge in 1770, it seemed for a while that they "might supplant three-dimensional puppets altogether in popular favor."[20] I have not learned much about Blancan's shadow theater except that it was inspired by the famous shadow showman Dominique Séraphin, and that Blancan's performance in French on 9 May 1809 included "dans les ombres Chinoises, les pièces d'Arlequin, Corsaire, & le magicien."[21] Séraphin's plays *Arlequin corsair* and *Le Magicien Rothomago* were part of his repertoire during the period of his personal direction of his theater in Paris, 1784-1790.[22]

Another of the features of Blancan's entertainment was titled "arabesk, pyrricks, & hydraulick fires," or sometimes simply "arabesk" or "arabesk fires." (The feux pyrrhyques & hydrauliques were a feature that Dominique Séraphin added to his shadow show in the 1780s.[23]) This part of Blancan's show consisted of representations of moving water and fireworks, for example, a beautiful water castle, dedicated to Minerva, goddess of war; a cascade in the garden of Versailles; a cascade in the temple of love, dedicated to the ladies of Charleston (or the ladies of Boston); a cascade of the palace of the emperor of China; a cascade of the king of Poland; and the temple of Jupiter, "ornamented with Chinese pavilions and superb fireworks." McPharlin identified Blancan's "arabesk fires" as "fireless fireworks," and elsewhere in his book he implies that this was the type of spectacle performed by Peter Gardiner in Williamsburg on several occasions, one of which was seen by George Washington; according to the *Virginia Gazette* of 19 November, 1772, this included "a magnificent piece of machinery, called *Cupid's Paradise*, representing seventy odd pillars and columns, with the appearance of Neptune and Amphitrite, and music suitable thereto. The whole to conclude with a magnificent set of fireworks, such as Catherine wheels, Italian candles, sea fountains, and sunflowers with the appearance of the sun and moon in their full lustre."[24] McPharlin provides an image of an eighteenth-century Italian *gioco di luce* in the Museum for the Arts of Decoration, Cooper Union, New York, suggesting that it has a type of mechanism that could have been used to create the appearance of flowing water and fireworks on the puppet stage:

> This consists of a flat oblong cabinet or box, standing vertically, the inside covered with white metal foil to intensify the light from a candle placed in it. On the face of the box, over an opening, is placed an opaque paper disc with transparent arcs radiating from its center; through these the light of the candle shines. Before this disc, which is turned by the weight of falling sand in the box, are placed paper slides, the most translucent sections of which are cut into a pattern of sparks and rays. Given an effect of glimmer by the turning lights and darks of the disc, the Catherine wheels or sunflowers, rockets or Roman candles, fountains or flowerpots seem to move and flame.[25]

McPharlin adds that fireworks of several kinds were a common feature in the spectacular pieces of the Victorian theater (at the Theater in Charleston, on 14 May 1808, the program concluded when Mr. Sully, as Harlequin, for that night only, took a leap into the crater of Mount Vesuvius at the moment of eruption).


A LA demande de plusieurs familles Francaises, Monsieur Blancan, Directeur du Theatre Pitoresque and Mecanique, situe dans Broadway, vis-a-vis de l'hospital, donnera de'finitivement sa dernier representation en Francais Mardi prochain 9 mai.

L'on jouera dans les ombres Chinoises, les pieces, d'Arlequin, Corsaire, & le magicien.

Dans les feux arabesques, six tableaux, differents, de ceux qui ont ete sus, la derniere representation.

Dans les Tableau animes a limitation de M. Pierre de Paris, l'ave de Pyrenees occidentale ces amusements seront termines par les fantocinis Francais ou lon jouera la petite commedie de cadeaux denoces

Le prix des places est de quatre chelins, moitie prix, pour les enfans.

L'on commencera, a huit heur es precise.

may 8 m&t

(French ad) New York *Commercial Advertiser*, 8 May 1809, p. 2

The high point of Blancan's show was his "animated pictures." In his ad in the *Mercantile Advertiser* of 26 December 1808, Blancan informed the public "that he came to this city with a kind of amusement entirely unknown in this country." McPharlin alleges that everything in Blancan's program was familiar to American puppet show audiences, and accuses Blancan of being "blissfully ignorant of his predecessors" in claiming to introduce something entirely new. But contrary to

McPharlin's belief that all of the components of Blancan's show were well known in America, the expressions "pittoresque et mécanique" and "animated pictures" certainly signify that the show was influenced by a theatrical form that was just emerging in France. The ad known to McPharlin identifies the model for Blancan's animated pictures as "those of the celebrated Vetor in Paris." McPharlin wondered "Who was the celebrated Vetor? Perhaps it should have been Victor, but I have found no Parisian showman of that name."[26] He was unable to find such a person because there was no such person. In other ads, the "animated pictures" that Blancan recognized as his model are identified as "those of the celebrated Peter in Paris."[27] And in an ad printed in French announcing a performance in that language, we learn the exact identity of this elusive showman: "M. Pierre de Paris."[28] Jean-Claude Pierre (c. 1739-1814), who was generally known in the earlier post-revolutionary period as citoyen (citizen) Pierre and later as M. (monsieur) Pierre, established his Théâtre pittoresque et mécanique in Paris in 1802 and directed it until his death, after which it continued to have success under the direction of his assistants. The essence of this new theatrical form was the fusion of the painterly and the mechanical. An early observer described it as "the spectacle of painting animated by mechanics, the whole united with infinite art and taste."[29] The painterly qualities, created by the use of magic lanterns, took precedence over the mechanical: "It is only a piece of machinery, but to which painting, the art of the distribution of light, the science of perspective, etc., add a great interest. Thus, the mechanical is, so to speak, only an accessory."[30] Pierre's theater was so well known and popular that its name came to be associated with this form of theater in general. An English observer described a typical scene from the theater's later period: "This scene is enlivened by numerous animated figures; carriages of every description cross the bridge; boats sail up the river; pedestrians crowd the banks; the sun gradually rises; the appearance of the sky perpetually changes, and occasionally the grand accompaniments and effect of a storm are portrayed."[31] Undoubtedly Blancan visited Pierre's theater during his 1806 trip to France and in his "animated pictures" he sought to achieve effects comparable to those of the French showman. He perhaps was also influenced by other French artists who were working in a similar vein: He claimed to have "brought a variety of amusements taken from several theatres of Paris, in which the art of Mechanism unfolds to the eye of the connoisseur the beauties of nature."[32]

Alexander Anderson (1775-1870), "Theatre Pitoresque & Mechanique," engraver's proof, D 2." Alexander Anderson papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. This is the pristine impression of the image that appears in many of Blancan's ads. The personages represented are Pierrot and Punch, who apparently did not actually appear in Blancan's shows.

Two of Blancan's animated pictures, which supposedly reflected the influence of M. Pierre's theatre, represented "a beautiful and entirely new view (never exhibited before) of an elegant country seat in the Pyrenees, painted by an eminent artist," and a hunting scene in which a sportsman and his dog were seen in pursuit of game; one of the sportsmen was seen firing his gun at a hare and succeeding in killing it, and was seen returning with his prey; a deer was seen pursued by dogs, and the sportsmen were seen returning with their game. Blancan added that "these different pieces of mechanism have their motion as natural as life, and cost three months work to the artist to perfect them."[33] Another animated picture was a picturesque view of the bridge and village of Lodi, with many fashionable carriages, before the battle. The Austrian troops were seen evacuating the village and crossing the bridge; their camp was also seen, and many boats and canoes crossing the river.[34] At the battle of Lodi, 10 May 1796, Napoleon Bonaparte defeated a rear guard of the Austrian army.

I have found no evidence of the way Blancan achieved the effect of movement in his animated pictures, but some idea of his methods can probably be derived from what is known about the procedures of Étienne Gaspard Robertson for his Phantasmagoria, a spectacle that flourished in Paris at the same time as M. Pierre's Théâtre pittoresque et mécanique. The Phantasmagoria was a ghost show that made use of the magic lantern, the predecessor of the later slide projector, to give the impression of the apparition of phantoms and other supernatural beings. Images painted on glass slides were projected onto the rear of a translucent screen, and movement in the projected image was created through the movement of the projector and by means of mechanical slides. The latter consisted of two pieces of glass, one over the other, showing slightly different positions of the subject, so that moving them back and forth created the illusion of movement similar to the succession of images in a strip of celluloid film. Robertson, and probably Blancan, also used the newly invented Argand oil lamp, a much better source of illumination than earlier oil lamps.

It is regrettable that no descriptions or reviews of Blancan's productions have been found other than those that he wrote himself. He died at age fifty, and perhaps he would have received more attention if he had had a few more years. But I believe that from what we now know it is possible to recognize him as a significant figure in American popular entertainment of the early nineteenth century.

Ryan Howard, Ph. D., is an emeritus professor of art history at Morehead State University. He is the author of Paul McPharlin and the Marionette Theater and Punch and Judy in 19th Century America, as well as numerous articles and reviews related to the puppet theater.

Harlequin Skeleton, London: Robert Sayer, 1772 - People's Magic Library: www.marianotomatis.it/biblioteca/index.php?lang=EN

Endnotes

1 In Part 1, I referred mistakenly to Peter (Pierre) Blancan as Peter C. Blancan. Peter C. Blancan (Peter Chery Blancan), was Peter Blancan's son.

2 Charleston *Oracle*. 9 May 1807, p. 4, and other dates.

3 Walter B. Edgar. *South Carolina: A History*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1998, p. 50.

4 "To Licenses [. . . .] Received from Rannie & Berry, and Fayotte [*sic*] & Blancan, for Theatrical Performances, 164.00" "Cash in the hands of J. Marshall, City Treasurer, from August 21st, 1807, to August 21st, 1808." *Columbian Museum* Savannah, Georgia. 26 Aug 1808, p. 4.

5 "List of Letters Remaining in the Post Office, 1 Apr 1808: Peter Blancan—2." Savannah *Republican*, 5 Apr 1808, p. 4.

6 Archives départementales de la Gironde. 22 Aug 1792.

7 Inventory of possessions of Pierre Blancan. Pennsylvania Wills and Probate Records, 1683-1993, 1814, Case Number 78.

8 Archives Nationales, Paris - inventaire - série F12 - Bourses de commerce, courtiers de commerce et agents de change, Ancien Régime- env. 1866. Répertoire établi par Christine Demeulenaere-Douyère, 2008, p. 44.

9 Charleston *City Gazette*. 6 Aug 1808, p. 3.

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22 *Feu Séraphin: histoire de ce spectacle. Depuis son origine jusqu'à sa disparition, 1776-1870*, Lyon: N. Scheuring, Éditeur, 1875, p. 5. The text of *Arlequin corsaire* is printed on pp. 45-62. This play was retitled *Arlequin patriote* during the Revolution.

23 Ibid., pp. 5-6.

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25 McPharlin. op. cit., p. 52.

26 Ibid., p. 92.

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28 New York *Commercial Advertiser*, 9 May 1809, p. 2.

29 Abel Rémusat. *Le coup de fouet, ou, Nouvelle revue de tous les théâtres*, 1803, p. 151.

30 "Théâtre pittoresque et mécanique du C. Pierre," *La décade philosophique, littéraire et politique*, Paris, 1803, p. 571).

31 *Encyclopaedia Londinensis*, 1821, pp. 484-485.

32 New York *Mercantile Advertiser*, 31 Dec 1808, p. 3; 4 Jan 1809, p. 3.

33 Charleston *City Gazette*, 6 Aug 1808, p. 3.

34 Boston *Columbian Centinel*, 24 Sep 1808, p. 3.

PUPPET AS MATERIAL ALLEGORY
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

that never can reconcile, mother and woman (or lover or artist or...) never meeting and always a gap apart... leaving the dirt of the world like a mountain range or a scar or a brush stroke. What would be her sound track (beyond the words I have just told you)? The roar of the furnace, the creak of stairs, a song I made up in a bout of insomnia, the birds at 4 AM, a love letter's close, an angry text from my teenage daughter? All of it is offered up to the Bestiary to catalogue as allegory and fact.

Felice Amato is an artist whose work takes many forms of narrative, including sung and spoken text, sculpture, installations and puppetry. In her self-designed PhD program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, she incorporates folklore, gender studies and other areas of scholarship into a fabricated and performed investigation of the female self. She is also the mother of Eva and Rosie.

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The Use of Tyvek

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

As the tale unfolds, so does the scenery. Aya is born from the scroll; every experience she has or lives through is found somewhere in it. Small things become large, objects appear unexpectedly, and shadows project on surfaces from the set. The scenery crumples, unwraps, folds and expands with her emotions, thoughts and adventures as she makes her way through the journey.

The idea was to create the entire scenography (puppets, sets and costumes) primarily out of paper (or paper-like materials). The visual research for the show continued in all aspects of paper art: pop-up books, origami, paper sculpture, paper installations and many more. We were drawn to a "softer," "rounder" feel and an aesthetic that we believed to be more feminine. It was also of paramount importance that the material we would work with will have durability, aesthetic qualities, and allow for more discoveries and play in the creation process.

Mitko proposed to use Tyvek. Tyvek has recently gained a lot of popularity in the world of puppet theatre, because it is a very strong material that can also be painted and manipulated in various ways. Yet, *Unfolding* would use Tyvek in a way that has not been done to this point—the *entire* production would be made from Tyvek! (Puppets are a small exception—their bodies are carved of wood and covered with papier mâché – still very much in the concept of paper. The hair and costumes are created with Tyvek.)

The explorations of Tyvek provided us with many amazing qualities—some expected, based on research, and some surprising. In addition to its known qualities, we discovered that it can create and hold very interesting shapes, which we used in the performance—for example we created a mountain, a cradle, a dress for the puppet that brought her to human scale, a storm and many other images. Tyvek has a beautiful "glow" under theatre lighting, which was a great enhancement to the set and costumes when they were lit. In addition to the "glow," Tyvek is gorgeous when lit from behind or within. Its fibrous texture is visible and the random patterns are stunning! It resembles the moon, which is a very important feminine symbol and is used in the production. This effect intensified and complemented the shadow sequences. The fibers also connected with my "unfolding" research that lead me as far as String Theory and the idea that the entire universe folds and unfolds.

Various kinds of Tyvek can be used for numerous things—we used different grades and types for the set, costumes and puppets. The material is very light—Mitko brought almost the entire set in two suitcases from Bulgaria. A production that filled half of the black box performance space at the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry can be "folded" and carried in a few suitcases. An enormous added benefit was the Fire Marshall's approval of the fire resistant qualities of the material (Grade A). We breathed a huge sigh of relief when we didn't have to break down the installed set to fire proof the material.

We are very inspired by our original and unique use of Tyvek in the production! It supported the creation of the show conceptually, technically and aesthetically—all categories that are of paramount importance to us as creators of puppet theatre. In *Unfolding*, form and content come full circle—they weave and work together, reflecting and enhancing each other. Every decision, every image and every movement in the production is a synthesis of form and content, infused with aesthetic, intellectual, spiritual and emotional substance.

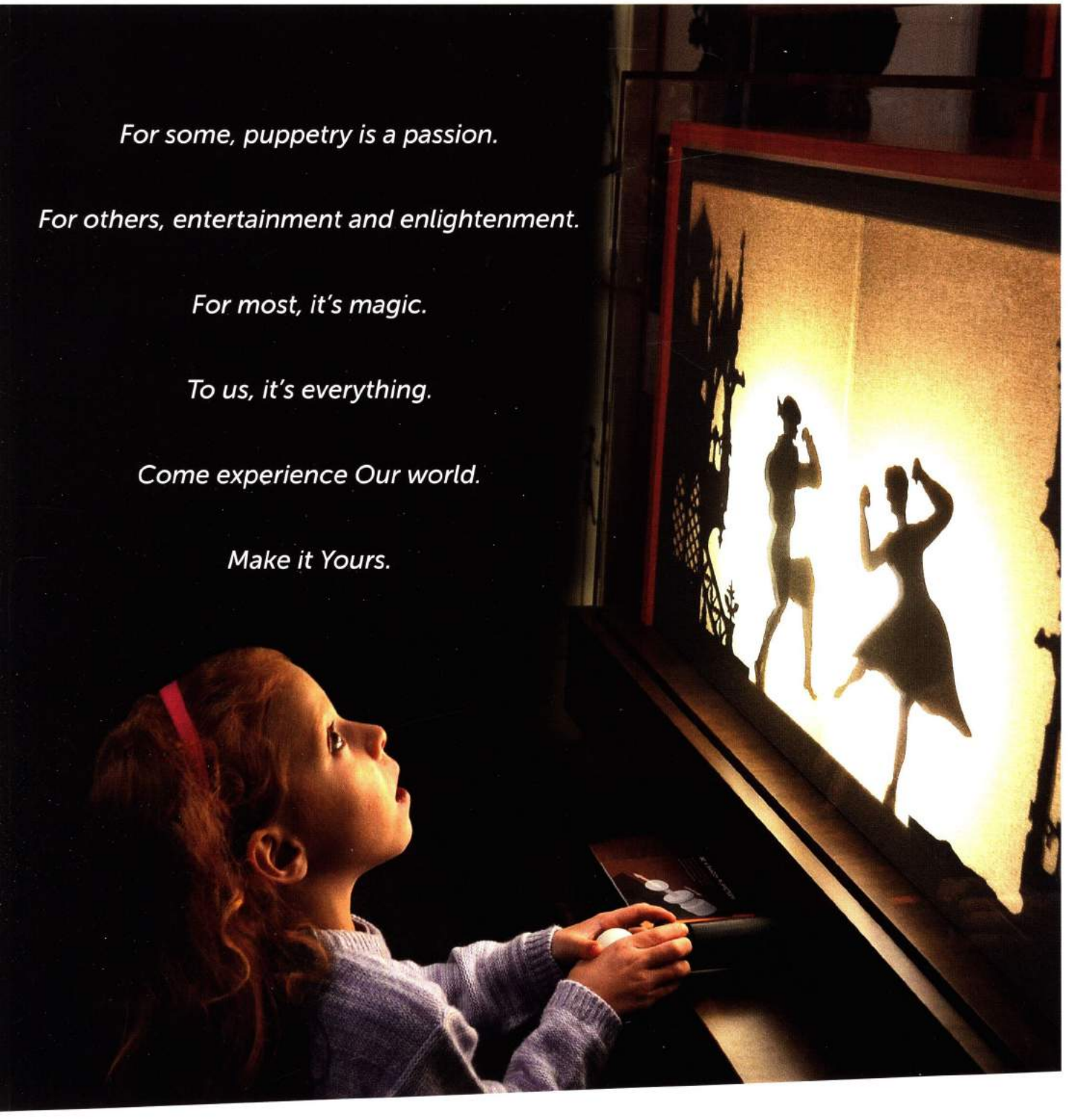
Margarita Blush is a puppet theatre artist who has worked throughout Europe and the U.S. She is an Assistant Professor of Performance and Directing at the Puppet Arts Program at the University of Connecticut and serves on the Board of UNIMA-USA.

Unfolding was created by an international artistic team: Bulgarian-American director and project lead Margarita Blush, Bulgarian scenographer Dimitar Dimitrov, American performers Lucia Rich, Sarah Nolen and Ceili Clemens, Iranian-American composer and musician Amir Khosrowpour and American lighting designer Adam Lobelson. The noteworthy team of artists was deeply invested in bringing forth their talent, experience and passion to create this unique and relevant work.

The show received The Jim Henson Foundation Seed (2014) and Project (2015) Grants and was also supported by the University of Connecticut School of Fine Arts. It premiered at the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry in September 2015. We are currently exploring opportunities to tour the show internationally.

For further information, please contact Margarita:

www.MargaritaBlush.com



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