

FALL and WINTER 2019 Issue #46

PUPPETRY INTERNATIONAL

the puppet in contemporary theatre, film & media



NUTS 'N' BOLTS –
the joints, controls and mechanisms
that make puppets (and puppeteers) work

CENTER FOR PUPPETRY Arts



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PUPPETRY INTERNATIONAL

issue no. 46

Editorial by Andrew Periale 4

SPECIAL SECTION — NUTS'N'BOLTS
 PUPPETS, BOOTHS AND BUSINESSES: HOW DO THEY WORK?

Chiryu Karakuri Ningyo Company and an Action-Packed Marvel by zach dorn 6
 Dissecting the Mechanisms Behind the Dick Myers Rod Puppets by Seth Shaffer 10
 Puppetry Gives you Wings: Ogrodnik, Coatimundi, Bread & Puppet 14
 Marionnettes de zinc du Chat Noir by Greg Pellone 16
 Ready-made Puppet Shows: An Interview with Jason Yancey by Esther Fernández 20
 How to Make a Minotaure by La Machine 22
 Tilting Rod Puppet Head Mechanism by Hobey Ford 25
 How Traditional Sicilian Puppets Move by Malgorzata Skotnicka-Palka 26
 A Marionette Stage in my Pocket by Kurt Hunter 31
 Guidelines for the Integration of Puppets in other Performing Arts by Blair Thomas 34
 An Ancient Automaton 39
 The McMaster-Carr Catalog 40

REVIEW

Jennifer Goodlander's new book on Southeast Asian puppetry review by Kathy Foley 38

On the COVER: FROM CHAPEAU LA MER BY COATIMUNDI see page 14



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Welcome to PI #46- the Nuts'n'Bolts issue

The past few issues of PI, which dealt with the themes of Social Justice and Intangible Cultural Heritage, were decidedly “heady,” and we felt it was time to get back to what we puppeteers do best: Make stuff. More specifically, we make figures that can move in ways that enable audiences to see in them the gods, demons, tricksters, heroes and other characters that make up the great stories of human culture.

How do we accomplish such feats of almost magical transference? Nuts and bolts, cables and rocker arms, controllers and mechanisms of every sort. Sure, fine sculpting, costuming and wig-making help with the illusion, but if the puppet is incapable of moving well—it ain't happening, folks. The pages that follow are full of the little secrets that puppeteers use to create the illusion of life in your standard shadows, rod puppets and string puppets as well as



a simple marionette stage created in front of an audience, the physically demanding Karakuri ningyo festival puppets, and the larger than life *Minotaure* from the French company “La Machine.”

One thing you won't find in this issue is the humble hand puppet. While there are specialized mechanisms used in some hand puppets, for the most part, they perform as a sort of enhanced hand pantomime. Also, PI #48 will be devoted in its entirety to the hand—its puppets, its expressive capacity, its care and feeding.

So come with me as we return to the informative reading of our collective youth, when *Popular Mechanics*, *Popular Electronics*, *Model Railroad Hobbyist* and even *Boy's Life* helped fill our weekends and after school hours with the occult knowledge of how to make really cool stuff!

ANDROID "GABRIEL" OR "FIFTH" FROM KOLOKSAI, FIFTH GENERATION. CREATED BY DUDCHENKO KOLAKSAJ
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UNIMA turns 90 this year.

At the recent celebration of this milestone, many puppeteers met in Prague, the city where UNIMA was created in 1929. Michael Meschke, referring to our organization as a grand old lady, gave a wonderful address. He revised it for the Festival International de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mézières, which will be on our website [unima-usa.org]. Here is a little bit of his original speech from Prague.

For UNIMA as an organization:



MICHAEL MESCHKE

What will UNIMA be like in the future? What characters will shape her action? [...] My wish is that UNIMA remain a non-bureaucratic, border-crossing institution for contacts and exchange between artists of the world and all those who love the arts.

May this international union for the puppet theatre live up to her natural destiny as the highest qualified authority in matters of ethics, social justice, trade union business, action for the young, initiator of solidarity when needed, to mention just a few fields of activity—now and tomorrow.

Our old lady is a mirror of the world, she can bring out the best and the worst in us. If she has lived as much as ninety years there must be something about her that protects her from disaster. Could it be an unselfish soul?

PHOTO: MICHAEL KERSTEN
 FROM TV.NU/PROGRAM/MARIONETTMASTAREN-MICHAEL-MESCHKE

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The Fettig Project

At the recent national festival of the Puppeteers of America, we noticed a big focus on mechanisms, including one on building a Fettig mechanism. If you want to know more about the effort to build these sorts of things, go to their site, thefettigproject.com

Here's a taste:

Named for Hansjürgen Fettig, author of *Rod Puppets and Table-top Puppets: A Handbook of Design and Technique* (most recent edition is 1997; all editions are hard to find or outrageously expensive!), The Fettig Project will create a 3-D interactive exhibit of rod puppet mechanisms that will travel to puppetry festivals and conferences to inspire, educate, and inform puppeteers and puppet builders.



ROD PUPPET BY PENNY BENSON



- Andrew Periale

Chiryu Karakuri Ningyo Company and an Action-Packed Marvel

by zach dorn

I am in Chiryu City, a small town in Japan's Aichi Prefecture. Carefully stepping over props and Asahi cans, I am taking photographs and attempting to interview the lead puppeteer inside the city's humble civic center. A puppet theater sits in the center of the room where hundreds of strings stretch across the stage, crisscross over wooden beams, in and out of eye-hooks, and through the anticipatory fingers of puppeteers. The strings coil into the wooden bodies of a dozen automated puppets known as karakuri ningyo or "mechanical dolls."

While it is largely unknown in the west, karakuri ningyo is one of the most popular forms of puppetry in Japan. Each year, there are thousands of performances across Japan often aligning with fall and spring harvest festivals, or matsuri.

Today, Chiryu City has one of the most popular and oldest karakuri ningyo troupes in the world. There are fifteen members, ten of which are crammed inside the stage surrounded by puppets, scripts marked with hand-inked illustrations, and shashigane, which are wooden rods custom built to unlock each karakuri ningyo's internal mechanisms. During their bi-annual performances, the troupe usually performs on the top of an 18-foot festival float; however, for this week's rehearsals they use this portable stage, a 100 square foot wooden frame that fills the entirety of Chiryu City's cozy community center.

As I move from one side of the room to the other, I push my back against the wall and delicately slide, careful not to disturb the concentration of the performers. The team of puppeteers is like a crew of rowers, pulling strings, skillfully twisting shashigane, and quick-changing puppet costumes in harmonious collaboration.

Two long wooden beams, the *toi*, organize the numerous strings, passing each thread through carefully marked holes. These are the same *toi* that will eventually be used on the

top of the float and, along with the puppets, are invaluable components. After every rehearsal, the puppeteers wax the internal strings with resin and then carefully pack the tracks for safekeeping.

Although it's considered an amateur troupe, Chiryu Karakuri Company is one of the most skilled and elaborate groups I've come across during my time as a Julie Taymor World Theater Fellow. In 1992, they represented Japan at UNIMA's World Conference in Slovenia and have performed internationally in Italy and Australia. Most recently, led by scholar and teacher Yasuko Senda, they made their France debut at the Festival Mondial Des Théâtre des Marionnettes in Charleville-Mézières. Like most karakuri ningyo companies, the group only performs one program, *The Battle of Ichi-no-Tani*. In the world of Japanese mechanical puppet theatre, the show is an action-packed blockbuster. The 15-minute spectacle is filled with dramatic Edo-era ingenuity: puppets skillfully shooting bow and arrows, a samurai showdown, and a gleeful warrior twirling a skewered corpse on the end of a spear.

With the unique assistance of a *tayu*, or narrator, it's one of the few karakuri ningyo companies that weaves their audience through a narrative, recreating a legend from the 12th century's Genji and Heike feud. Like *yoruri ningyo*, karakuri ningyo began as a Shinto ritual performed during festivals to offer gratitude to the gods. However, during the Edo era, as *ningyo joruri* diversified into itinerant performance, comical entertainment, and historical dramatization, karakuri ningyo held fast to its Shinto roots. Today, the majority of performances are brimming with the same rhythmic movements, symbolic transformations, and spectacular gestures of the original ritualistic shows. *The Battle of Ichi-no-Tani*, with a cast of historical characters, live narration, and a 15-minute runtime, offers something totally different.



THIS COMPANY'S VERSATILE DASHI DOUBLES AS A NINGYO JORURI STAGE



COSTUME PULLED BACK TO REVEAL ADDITIONAL HEAD INSIDE THE ONEROUS OKABE PUPPET

The development of karakuri ningyo into historical drama might be due to another unique feature of Chiryu's company. On the first floor of the dashi, a platform extends specifically for *ningyo joruri* performances. These shows, which occur before the robotic puppets take the stage, date back to the matsuri's Edo era origins.

It's likely that this integration with local *yoruri ningyo* troupes influenced the karakuri company to try its hand at historical storytelling and incorporate the bunraku trifecta: *tayu*, shamisen, and puppeteer. The dashi reflects this synthesis, with a center tier that is dedicated to the narrator and shamisen player, forming a towering theater with three different stages.

Like most puppet troupes in Japan during World War II, Chiryu's karakuri ningyo performances ceased. It took some companies decades to recuperate after wartime due to the destruction of puppets, lack of national pride, and economic strain. Luckily, Chiryu City found the funds and spirit to rejuvenate the dormant tradition. In 1950, The Chiryu Karakuri Ningyo Company was founded by Mr. Shinji Sakata. Today, the company is directed by his son, Morohiko Sakata, and has almost twenty members. It's a diverse group of insurance salesmen, farmers, students, an architect, and a few city officials.

Some of the men have been performing together for almost thirty years, but there are still plenty of new members. In order to survive, there has to be. While the masters of other Japanese traditional arts, such as *noh*, *bunraku*, and *kabuki*, are often in their seventies and eighties, karakuri ningyo takes an unexpected amount of endurance and dexterity.

In order to reach the top tier of a dashi, you must pull yourself upwards through tiny compartments, your hands gripping the floor as puppeteers navigate around you. Once at the peak, you balance between wooden cross beams as you stretch your neck upward to manipulate the puppets, trying to avoid the glare of the sun.

My original expectation was karakuri ningyo would be similar to handling a marionette, requiring a sense of elegance and specificity. While the puppet's movements can be crisp and expressive, there's nothing graceful about the manipulation. As I jostle rods and tug at string, it feels like operating heavy machinery. I often struggle to garner enough strength. The puppets, fabricated from Hinoki wood, are heavy and difficult to command, not to mention they're filled with interior mechanisms, additional costumes, and hidden characters.



For example, the onerous puppet of Okabe includes a collapsed miniature Shinto shrine and an additional puppet head. He also wields a spear that swings another karakuri ningyo around on its end. To manipulate Okabe, it doesn't just take practice, but serious muscle-power.

Now I see karakuri ningyo's manipulation as being more similar to the powerful puppet machines from "Walking with Dinosaurs" than

to marionettes or rod puppets. I'm awed by the troupe's greatest trick of all—they make it look easy.

After rehearsals, as the group gathers around the small television set with beer and *kameda* crisps to watch footage of past performances, the youngest members hang by the stage.

They're trying to get a grasp on the puppet, Kojiro, a boy warrior who must draw a bow and strike his arrow at the center of a target. There's no illusion.

The puppet must really pull off the coup. Manipulating only Kojiro's arms and hands through a series of strings and rods, it's even more difficult than shooting the real thing.

The young men practice over and over, most of the time unable to get Kojiro to successfully string the bow. One of the old-timers approaches, beer in hand, and takes a stab at it. He tugs on the strings. Kojiro draws. Bullseye.

zach dorn is a puppeteer and animator based in Los Angeles. In 2016, he was selected as one of three inaugural Julie Taymor World Theater Fellows. His newest puppet show, *Sponge Hollow*, premiered at REDCAT in downtown LA this summer. www.zachdorn.com



Andy Gaukel



Calm Blue Sky

Nick Lehane



Chimpanzee

Kalan Sherrard



Kosmos Inverse: The Morphology of XOS [Appendix 0]



Congratulations to Jim Henson Foundation grant recipients Basil Twist, Nick Lehane, Andy Gaukel and Kalan Sherrard, and board member Richard Termine whose work was presented at the 2019 World Festival of Puppetry in Charleville-Mézières, France

September 20-29, 2019

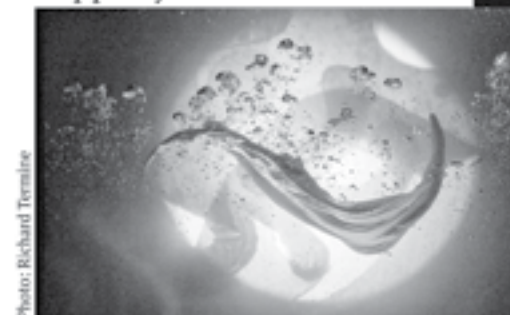


Richard Termine
Photography



The Photography of Richard Termine
American Puppet Theatre Today

Basil Twist
2019 World Festival of
Puppetry Featured Artist



The Art of Basil Twist
photography of Richard Termine



Dogugaeshi

DISSECTING THE MECHANISMS OF THE Dick Myers Rod Puppets

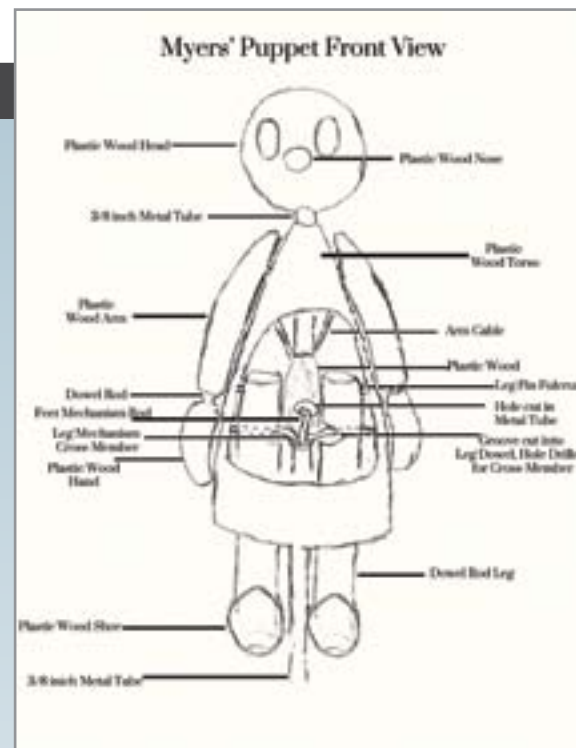
by Seth Shaffer



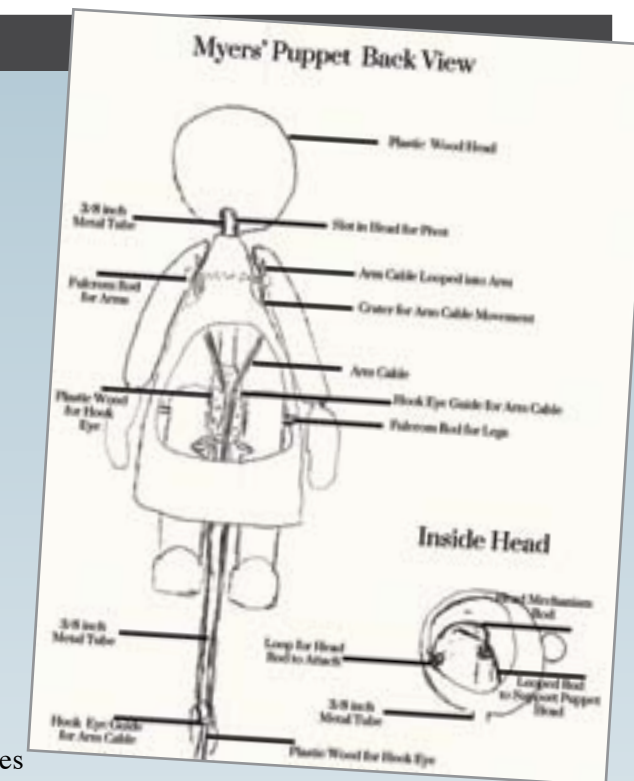
"DICK MYERS DEVELOPED THE ONE-PERSON SHOW IN A MOST AMAZING WAY, CREATING INTRICATE SPRING MECHANISMS INSIDE HIS ROD PUPPETS." FROM THE PUPPETRY JOURNAL

When it comes to mechanized puppets, there are many amazing examples across the world. It is difficult to discuss puppet mechanisms without acknowledging the work of American puppeteer, Dick Myers. Myers's work was a seemingly overnight sensation after a unique style of rod puppetry made its debut on June 25, 1966, at the Puppeteers of America Festival in San Diego, California. The unusual style of his puppetry and witty and charming script writing transformed Dick

Whittington and his Cat from a well-known tale (and at the time overperformed story) into a unique and inspiring show. There are several aspects of Myers's performance that helped him achieve this. Vivian Michael wrote, "*Dick Whittington and his Cat* was simple, direct and, from puppets to staging, lighting, voices and music, it had a charm that puppets should have...although there were human characters in the play, their simple designing and studied movement forced them to remain puppets." ("*Puppet Parade.*" *Puppetry Journal* 18.2 (1966): 12. Print.)



DRAWINGS BY SETH SHAFFER



What made Myers's puppet designs different than most? His shows had a mechanized flow. They seemed to be run by a mechanical process as opposed to a human one, almost as if the puppet stage was one giant cuckoo clock mechanism: an automaton. The reality was behind a curtain; a meticulous man was controlling every movement, every gesture, every technical effect, etc., to create the illusion of a mechanical show through technical development, rehearsal and precision. A key aspect in his shows' feel was in the mechanical design of his puppet. Johan Vandergun (*Lampoon Puppets*) remembered how Myers once claimed he would sometimes spend three months in developing a new mechanism within a puppet in order to achieve a specific movement. In fact, even the puppets with the traditional Myers mechanisms (those we are about to explore) would take Myers around a month of meticulous precision before he deemed the puppet ready for performance.

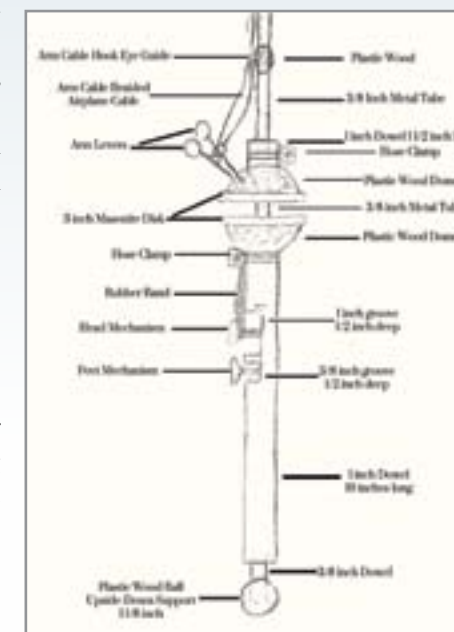
In the following excerpt from my book, *The Dick Myers Project*, published by Charlemagne Press, I explore and break down the art and mechanics behind Dick Myers's rod puppets:

Understanding the basics of Myers's mechanisms is essential in understanding how his puppets move. The following explanation explores the traditional Myers mechanism. The measurements are mostly consistent from puppet to puppet, however there are some slight differences depending on the puppet. The control rod of the puppets has different "buttons" and levers to control the actions of each puppet. When

it comes to creating these mechanisms, precision is key. There is almost no room for error, one bad joint could make the mechanisms bind up and not work smoothly.

The handles of Myers's puppets are made with a 1-inch dowel. This dowel has a 3/8-inch hole drilled from the top to the area where the mechanism rods come out of the handle. Once this hole was drilled, the dowel rod would then be split with a bandsaw for the entire length that the hole was drilled. This ensured that the dowel could clamp tightly around a 3/8-inch metal tube. From the control rod (this dowel) to the top of the puppet, a 3/8-inch metal tube provided both the backbone support of the puppet, as well as the necessary conduit for the leg and head mechanisms. This tube is tightly secured into the control rod by a metal hose clamp.

Glued to the very top of this control rod is a 3-inch diameter disk made of Masonite (earlier puppets were made of copper). The bond between the Masonite and the control rod is further strengthened by a dome of Plastic Wood. Myers poked holes into the Plastic Wood to increase its surface area. If this was not done, Plastic Wood would dry on the outside and stay wet on the inside, making it not as secure of a bonding agent. By poking the holes, Myers ensured that the Plastic Wood would dry and cure quickly and evenly.





A shorter 1-inch diameter dowel has a 3/8-inch hole drilled all the way through and sliced with the bandsaw just like the control rod. This shorter dowel also has a 3-inch Masonite disk glued (this time to the bottom) and a Plastic Wood dome to ensure its strength. The two disks are essential to hold the puppet upright at play-board level when the operator is not holding the puppet. There is enough room left between the disks to sandwich a slot on the playboard of the puppet booth. Myers used long pieces of plywood with slots cut into it in order to allow the puppets to remain on stage, thus freeing his hands to control other puppets, lighting, etc.

Before the control rod is secured to the metal tube, the mechanisms for the feet and head must be completely set. The head and foot mechanisms are controlled through two separate buttons located on the control rod, and grooves were cut out to give the mechanisms room to move.

Myers chiseled out a little more than enough space for each of these mechanisms to move effectively.

For the foot mechanism, a metal rod runs from between the legs of the puppet to the control rod. At the legs of the puppet, Myers cut a section of the metal tube, allowing the feet mechanism rod to exit the tube. On the tube around the cut, Myers reinforced the tube by wrapping it with Plastic Wood. The foot rod was bent towards the front of the puppet and soldered to a separate metal rod, the cross member. This cross member went through each of the puppet's legs, through a drilled hole. The puppet's legs are made of 1-inch dowels. Where the cross member enters the legs, Myers carved away a slot in the leg, enabling the cross member to rock back and forth with enough clearance. Above where the cross member attaches to the legs, each leg is attached to the puppet through another rod. This rod is the fulcrum on the legs and provides the pivot point for the legs to move forward and backwards. Down at the puppet's control rod, the foot rod is bent and spiraled into a button. The puppet operator rocks the button right and left, transitioning that energy up the foot rod, to the cross member, and into the legs of the puppet. This movement ensures that when the right foot moves forward, the left foot moves back, and vice-versa.

The head mechanism rod extends from the control rod of the puppet to inside of the puppet's head. The rod is arched inside the puppet's head from the 3/8-inch tube to the back of the puppet's head. From there, the tube is attached to a hook-eye that is secured to the back of the puppet's head using Plastic Wood. The arch of the head mechanism rod is important to be precise because if it is done wrong, the head rod would seize up and not operate effectively. The 3/8-inch metal tube does not extend to the top of the puppet's head, but instead is supported by a separate rod in the very center of the head. This rod is attached to the lower cheeks of the puppet and extended up to the 3/8-inch metal tube (almost like a widened, upside-down "v"). The rod is twisted into a loop that rests on the very top of the 3/8-inch metal tube. The head mechanism rod exits the tube while threading through the middle of that twist, thus keeping the head in place. The bottom of the puppet head has a slot just a little wider than the 3/8-inch metal tube, which ensures that the head can move up and down smoothly, and only in the intended directions. The head-mechanism rod is bent into a button at the control rod, much like the foot-mechanism rod. The head-mechanism rod can move right, left, up and down, enabling the puppet's head to move in the same ways.

Both the head and the leg mechanism rods are bent and looped out of the control rod. The loop is covered in Plastic Wood creating

a "button." A piece of sandpaper is glued onto the Plastic Wood button to give an abrasive surface for the operator to easily control the puppet. I believe that Myers set all the mechanisms on the puppet first, then bent the mechanism rods at the bottom. Only after this would he have clamped the control rod into place. The feet stay in a neutral position by gravity pulling downwards on the leg dowels; however gravity works against the head control. If the head control is left alone without a return, the head would rest with the puppet looking at the ceiling. Myers discovered that rubber bands make a great return to ensure that the puppet's head is in neutral position and is facing forward. This rubber band wraps around both the head mechanism button and the hose clamp that is used to secure the control rod to the 3/8-inch metal tube.

The arms of Myers's puppets are cable controlled. The arm control mechanism is located above the upper 3-inch disk that support the puppet on the slotted shelf. Myers created two levers, one for each arm, and attached them to the puppet by placing a metal pin through the bottom of the levers before securing the pin with Plastic Wood. He incorporated the metal pin into the design of the Plastic Wood dome for the shorter upper dowel rod. The arm control levers are made of metal rods that have a soldered bent "u" shaped rod attached. The end of the rod, where the operator pulls down, is covered with a Plastic Wood ball. Braided airplane cable is looped through the "u" shaped rod attached to each lever, and then soldered to itself. This cable runs up the outside of the 3/8-inch metal tube. Myers secured two hook eyes onto the metal tube (using Plastic Wood) that help guide the cables up the puppet; one is part way up the metal tube and the



second was placed behind the cut made in the metal tube for the leg mechanism. The cables are routed through the puppet's body and out through crater shaped holes drilled behind the shoulders of the puppet. The holes are crater shaped to minimize snag and resistance on the cable.

Myers drilled two holes in the top of each of the puppet's arms. The top hole was drilled from the back of the arm, all the way through to the front. The second hole is drilled just under that top hole, and only goes about halfway through the arm. Myers then channeled out a little Plastic Wood to bridge the holes together. The airplane cable enters the top hole from the back, threading through the arm. I believe that Myers then applied Duco Cement to the tip of the cable, and then placed it into the lower hole. He waited for the cement to dry before pulling back on the cable, allowing it to rest inside the channel that bridges the holes before he applied a little Plastic Wood over the cable, hiding the cable from the front.

The puppet's arms are attached to the puppet by a rod that extends the entire length of the inside of the puppet. At each end of this rod, Myers soldered a washer and created a dome of solder. The smooth solder is what the Plastic Wood arm pivots on. From below, the operator pulls down on the arm levers, putting tension on the cable, pulling at the top of the arm and lifting the arm up. Gravity works as the natural return for the puppet's arms. If it was necessary to keep the arms up (such as in the ballroom dance with Geraldine and the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*), Myers would create hooks that the arm levers could rest in, allowing the puppet's arms to remain up and freeing the operator's hands to control other mechanisms.

SETH SHAFFER holds an MFA in Puppet Arts from the University of Connecticut, where he remounted the work of Dick Myers. He currently is a Drama and Music teacher in Chandler AZ, where he incorporates puppetry across the curriculum.



BERND OFTEN SHARES HIS PUPPETRY IDEAS ON HIS FACEBOOK PAGE, "WORLDS OF PUPPETS BY BERND OGRODNIK"

Wings for elves and angels, demons and fairies, birds, bats, butterflies and that avian aspirant: Icarus. Examples that have particularly struck us over the years include the cardboard cutout wings used by Bread and Puppet performers, and the amazing wooden pack worn by the explorer in Coatimundi's production *Chapeau la mer*, in which an actor, facing an enormous monster, draws his sword while the wooden box on his back

WINGS

have long been an indispensable part of the puppet-maker's repertoire.



opens, causing a great set of wings to unfold and flap by means of an intricate clockwork mechanism. It had the audience gasping at the sheer beauty of the assemblage.

BERND OGRODNIK, the multi-talented German-born artist whose company, "World of Puppets," now based at the National Theater of Iceland, came up with a great design for a wedge of nine swans using an interesting bit of rigging. Bernd tells me it was designed as a rod puppet/marionette hybrid: string puppets worked from below!

As for the particulars of the rigging, we'll let Bernd's pictures speak for themselves.



COATIMUNDI COMPANY PERFORMS "CHAPEAU LA MER"
WWW.COATIMUNDI.EU
SEE FRONT COVER



BREAD AND PUPPET THEATER PERFORMS "BASIC BYE-BYE"
PHOTO: GREG COOK, FROM WONDERLAND, AN ONLINE MAGAZINE OF ARTS AND ACTIVISMS
GREGCOOKLAND.COM/WONDERLAND

MARIONNETTES DE ZINC DU CHAT NOIR

by Greg Pellone

In his book *Dolls and Puppets*, Max von Boehn revives George Jacob's romantic and lovely observation of shadow puppetry: "It is the art form which approaches nearest the poet's dream, the creative power which reaches consummation in a waking dream: it can therefore reflect the poetic conception in all its freshness and original form, vainly striven after otherwise." Recent scholars still can't seem to agree on the exact origins of this unique form of puppetry, but according to Fan Pen Chen it may have beginnings in Central Asia or India. Regardless, it is generally considered the oldest form of puppetry.

The basic requirements for shadow puppetry are quite simple: A light source, an object set in the path of that light and a surface on which to project its shadow. But the results can range from very basic representations to extraordinarily complex compositions that are visually astonishing. Shadows can range from translucent to opaque, static to dynamic or a hybrid of all shadow elements. For some, the shadows entertain and provide caricaturistic humor, for others the shadows represent a spiritual plane of existence and, as Chen relates, can serve liturgical functions as well as the metaphysical fabric for ceremonial rites.

From its likely roots in Asia or India, the art of shadow puppetry eventually spread to different countries around the world. Depending on locale and available resources, the materials used to create shadow puppets have included wood, leather, cardboard, metals, plastics, cloth and almost anything else that can project a shadow. The shadow form adopted by the artists of 1800s France and known as ombres Chinoise (Chinese shadows), were primarily static, opaque figures quite similar to the silhouette portraits that were popular at that time.

Le Chat Noir (the Black Cat) was a nineteenth century entertainment establishment in the bohemian Montmartre district of Paris. It opened on 18 November 1881 at 84 Boulevard de Rochechouart by the entrepreneur Rodolphe Salis, moved several times, and closed in 1897 not long after Salis's death.¹ Le Chat Noir was promoted by Salis as the most extraordinary cabaret in the world, a nightclub where the patrons could sit at tables eating and drinking, while being entertained by songs, music, poetry and ultimately by epic shadow productions.² Although there were earlier purveyors of shadow theatre in France such as Seraphin and Eudel,³ in 1882 Henri Rivière joined the artists of Le Chat Noir cabaret in Paris and soon became one of the leading proponents of avant-garde shadow puppetry. His artistic vision and innovations lead to advancements in color, lighting and dramatic presentation that elevated the art of shadow puppetry to a sophisticated form of theatre.⁴ As the art became more popular and under the clever management of Salis, Le Chat Noir hosted some forty-three théâtre d'ombres, or shadow shows, between 1887 and 1896.⁵ Behind a screen on the second floor of the establishment was a large backstage performance area where Rivière worked with other artists to produce the shows.

During complex productions, sometimes requiring no less than 12 assistants, a sophisticated lighting apparatus with an oxyhydrogen lamp was used to project



ZINC FIGURES BY CARAN D'ACHE, MUSÉE DE CHÂTELLERAULT

colored backgrounds in addition to the other ingenious scenic effects designed by Rivière.⁶ The shadow puppets they used, originally cardboard cutouts, were created primarily from lightweight and relatively economical zinc. Fortunately for us, the use of more durable zinc figures became the standard at Le Chat Noir after 1886,⁷ which helped preserve this unique art form.

It is very curious that in much of the literature in English concerning the history of the shadow theatre at Le Chat Noir, there is no mention of how the zinc shadow figures were expressly created. We are told how and when they were used in performances and we can examine the many fine examples that have survived over the years. There are references mentioning that they were cut from zinc, but we are left wondering how the figures evolved from the artist's concept to the eventual fabrication out of metal. Who actually cut these finely detailed specimens from sheets of zinc and how was it done? Although I was unable to find any references about the craftsmen or the methods used in English literature, with some persistence, the assistance of Jérôme Legrand (a curator at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris) and some lengthy translations, I was able to locate a bit more information in French print. Unfortunately, even in the French literature, there is

precious little biographical information about the metalsmiths who actually worked with the artists of Le Chat Noir and the techniques they used to produce the exquisite figures used in many of the performances.

In 2004, a doctoral student of the National Heritage Institute, Department of Restorations, selected three old zinc shadow puppets to analyze from a collection of Le Chat Noir figures housed at the Museums Châtellerault in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region in France and published a paper in 2008 outlining restoration and conservation efforts.⁸ Two of the shadow pieces were slightly different versions of the Three Riders (*Trois chevaliers*) created by Caran d'Ache for his production of *The Epic (L'épopée)* and the other a silhouette of a Warrior Knight (*Chevalier guerrier*) created by Albert Robida for his play titled *The Night of Times or Elixir of Rejuvenation (La nuit des temps ou l'élixir de rajeunissement)*.⁹ Besides providing historical background, the paper also includes rare insight into the creation of zinc puppets.



"KNIGHT OF NIGHT OF TIMES"



HENRI RIVIÈRE, CABARET OF THE CHAT NOIR
STAGEHANDS MOVING ZINC FIGURES BEHIND THE SCREEN FOR
THE EPIC, CA. 1887-94 MUSÉE D'ORSAY, PARIS



REPLICA ZINC PUPPET BY AUTHOR
(REAR VIEW SHOWING WIRE SUPPORTS)

It goes into some detail about how the artists designed and drew their puppet character ideas and scenery on paper. These preparatory drawings were then glued to sheets of zinc. Many of the zinc shadow figures in existence still have remnants of these paper preparatory templates glued to them. The sheets were taken to Parisian metalworkers or zinc craftsmen—a Monsieur Barat was one of the craftsmen mentioned—who then cut out the silhouettes based on the templates using snips, files, drills, punches and foot-pedal driven scroll saws. Barat’s workshop was located in the same neighborhood of Le Chat Noir and just a short walk away for Robida and d’Ache.¹⁰

Assorted shadow figures were created by the artists and metalworkers of 1800s Paris and used at Le Chat Noir to produce avant-garde performances. Unfortunately, most of the credit for these wonderful creations went to the artists who used them in the theatre and not to the metalworkers who actually fabricated them. We congratulate a virtuoso violinist for a performance but tend to overlook the craftsman who made the instrument! In homage to these

craftsmen and the spirit of inquiry, I decided to attempt to reproduce one of these puppets in zinc using similar methods and tools.

The puppet I chose to recreate for this study was the Warrior Knight from *The Night of Times* play by Albert Robida, one of the three cut by M. Barat that I mentioned earlier. The play, written by Robida and given at the Paris cabaret in 1889, tells the story of Florimond Bridel, an older professor of physics and chemistry, who realizes that he missed his youth. He creates an elixir that interrupts the aging process and also sends him back in

time to the era of dinosaurs as well as various epochs including the Bronze Age, Merovingian times, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Regency and the Revolution before returning him to his studio many years after leaving it!¹¹

The puppet is a singular figure, suited in armor characteristic of the fourteenth century and armed with swords and a shield personalized with a heraldic lion. He seems to be turning some type of crank, but some historians and conservationists working on preserving this puppet were not sure about the purpose of his task. Some hypothesize that he is operating a type of medieval polishing device.¹² My own theory is that he is turning a winch, perhaps to open a small portcullis, since Robida’s imaginative drawings are filled with knights, ladies-in-waiting and castles, but this is pure speculation on my part.

Using the Kodak Color Control Patch and size guide photographed with the puppet by the restorers in 2004, I estimated the approximate size of the original puppet to be about 15” by 17” (the official size recorded is width: 39 cm and length: 47 cm). The image of the figure was enlarged to the appropriate size by computer and then reproduced on heavier paper stock at a local print shop. Although common in Europe and



REPLICA ZINC PUPPET BY AUTHOR, IN SHADOW

used especially in France for bars and table tops, finding a piece of 23 or 24 gauge zinc sheet in the U.S. large enough to accurately reproduce this puppet in actual size was a challenge.

Once I received the sheet of zinc, the paper image was cut out and glued to the blank. Using the image as my template, I first began by removing the areas inside the figure using my electric scroll saw. Not to bore you with the process (pun intended), I would drill a small hole in the area to cut out and then insert the saw blade and reattach it

to the machine, a tedious procedure, which was probably even more so for the Parisian metalsmiths who used the same method, but with period tools including the foot-pedal driven scroll saw. I also used snips, small drills, files and a jeweler’s saw to remove material, shape and finish the puppet. On the original Châtellerault puppet, armatures made from a galvanized ferrous alloy wire were soldered onto the performer’s (upstage) side of the puppet to provide structural reinforcement and stiffen the figure to reduce the risk of deformation during manipulation.¹³ I added similar supports to my replica using 11 gauge galvanized steel wire. I tested my soldering method on some scrap pieces of zinc to preclude any disastrous and costly mistakes! I made one slight modification and branched off the wire support of the rear leg and up to the sword blade that extends out behind the figure. Finally the surface of the puppet facing the audience was painted flat black to reduce reflections. The reproduced zinc puppet is shown here in final form and in shadow projection.

During its short history, thousands upon thousands of individuals viewed Le Chat Noir’s shadow theater productions according to Cate and Shaw.¹⁴ It is remarkable that the zinc shadow puppets of Le Chat Noir have survived so well for over 130 years and are a marvelous tribute to the skills of the artists and craftsmen who created them. Museum conservationists and restorers are now using modern methods with advanced technology and chemistry to preserve these remarkable metal artifacts of puppet history for future generations.¹⁵



LE CHAT NOIR BY ALBERT ROBIDA

Today, it’s difficult for us to imagine the wonder, beauty and *je ne sais quoi* the patrons of the shadow theater at Le Chat Noir in Paris likely experienced in the 1800s. Reproducing this historic puppet from zinc was a fascinating study that provided a brief glimpse into that past, and in the present moment allowed me to experience “...the art form which approaches nearest the poet’s dream.”

GREG PELLONE has traveled extensively and now lives on an island on Treasure Island, Florida, USA. He is an artist, puppet collector/maker, researcher, writer and occasional performer. He is the curator and conservator of the Pellone/Barrett Puppet Collection, an accumulation of over 500 puppets and related artifacts from countries worldwide.

Endnotes

- ¹ Fields, Armond, *Le Chat Noir; A Montmartre Cabaret and Its Artists in Turn-of-the-Century Paris*. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1993.
- ² Cate, Phillip Dennis and Mary Shaw, *The Spirit of Montmartre, Cabarets, Humor and the Avant-Garde, 1875-1905*. Rutgers, 1996.
- ³ Blackham, 72.
- ⁴ Fields, Armond. *Henri Rivière*. Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., 1983.
- ⁵ Fields, Armond, *Le Chat Noir; A Montmartre Cabaret and Its Artists in Turn-of-the-Century Paris*. Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1993. p.31.
- ⁶ Cates, Phillip Dennis, Cazaux, Thierry, Gérard, Raphaël and Vila, Dominique, “*Les Silhouettes du Chat Noir.*” *La Revue du Musée d’Orsay*, no. 17, Automne 2003, pp. 36-47.
- ⁷ Massiot, Bénédicte, (2008) *D’ombre et de lumière : Conservation-restauration de trois silhouettes du cabaret du Chat Noir de Montmartre (Musées de Châtellerault)* (National Heritage Institute, Department of Restoration dissertation). www.alienor.org/publications/bibliotheque-chat-noir/massiot_2008.pdf. p. 38. Accessed June 2018.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid, 14-24.
- ¹⁰ Ibid, 40, 43.
- ¹¹ Ibid, 20-22.
- ¹² Ibid, 23.
- ¹³ Ibid, 44-45.
- ¹⁴ Cate, Phillip Dennis and Mary Shaw, *The Spirit of Montmartre, Cabarets, Humor and the Avant-Garde, 1875-1905*. Rutgers, 1996. Pg. 63.
- ¹⁵ Massiot, Bénédicte. (2008) *D’ombre et de lumière: Conservation-restauration de trois silhouettes du cabaret du Chat Noir de Montmartre (Musées de Châtellerault)* (National Heritage Institute, Department of Restoration dissertation). www.alienor.org/publications/bibliotheque-chat-noir/massiot_2008.pdf. pp. 86-124.

READY-MADE PUPPET SHOWS OR A NEW VISION FOR OUTREACH

An Interview with Jason Yancey

by Esther Fernández

I have followed the work of Jason Yancey in puppetry and outreach since the 2000s, when I started working with adaptations of Spanish early modern theater. In 2018 our paths crossed again, and we decided to co-found the Dragoncillo Puppet Troupe with Jonathan Wade and Jared White. This collective is dedicated to disseminating the history, culture, and Hispanic literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries using shadow puppets to perform plays for young audiences guided by our mission of outreach.

While it is not uncommon for puppets to travel or serve as pedigree instruments in the hands of a puppeteer, the challenge resides in making puppets “come to life” seemingly of their own accord via the puppet’s movement when a non-professional puppeteer handles a puppet, which is one of the peculiarities of the Dragoncillo Puppet Troupe: Dragoncillo members are *not* puppeteers—with the exception of Yancey. Yancey, Associate Professor of Spanish at Grand

Valley State University, is the only member with formal training in theater and more than twenty years of experience building and performing with puppets for diverse audiences. The Dragoncillo Puppet Troupe arose as an extension of a puppetry course he designed and has been teaching since 2010. In this course, advanced students learn to read and analyze children’s literature while they write and produce original puppet shows in Spanish, a process that culminates in several weeks of performances at local Spanish immersion elementary schools.

Springboarding from this experience, Yancey devised a self-contained show, whose equipment can be packed in two travel bags, and where performers with no previous experience in puppetry can rehearse a full show ready-made by the troupe with no memorization required—*in less than two hours*. Yancey’s name might not resonate among professional American puppeteers because he has voluntarily dedicated himself to education: however, the mechanics behind these ready-made shows are visionary as they offer an innovative way for scholars to reconsider outreach, articulating heretofore inaccessible literatures and themes to young, eager audiences.



Jason, I mention “ready-made” as one of the characteristics of these shows. Can you talk about the mechanics behind these pre-made shows?

Working with students poses a unique set of production challenges. Not only are students notoriously difficult to schedule, all of the work invested in training them walks out the door with the diploma. My approach with Dragoncillo attempts to directly address these challenges by using techniques to minimize our reliance on the availability and skill-level of the performer.

The foundation for each show is a film that we rear-project onto a nylon screen supported by pipe and drape masking. As it plays, the film not only supplies the backlight for the shadow puppet show, it allows for detailed background images that change automatically throughout the performance, as well as built-in music and sound effects to accompany the action. Immediately below the scene, in a portion of the projection visible only to the puppeteers, the film displays two

columns of scrolling dialogue and stage directions. This feature removes the need for memorization without a reliance on “canned” or recorded dialogue. The performers simply follow along with film, manipulating the puppet in the light while reading their lines off the screen. In this way our shows maintain high production values but require very little time to rehearse.

Compared to other puppet shows geared more towards entertainment, the movement of the puppets we use are more constrained. How do these differences inform/impact our audiences?

I envision Dragoncillo’s relationship to its audience as a sort of theatre on a traverse stage. On one side of the screen we usually have an audience of children who, generally speaking, have never seen a puppet show of any kind, much less one using shadow puppets. They sometimes speak Spanish but rarely know anything about its artistic tradition beyond the name Don Quijote. For those behind the screen this most often represents their first time acting in a play, first

time visiting an elementary school since their own experience, and first time seeing or handling a puppet. Their grasp of Spanish language and literatures may exceed that of their audience but not by much. What both groups share, among other things, is an attraction to the puppet—that fascinating little cartoon they’ve just witnessed spring to life. For this reason we are less concerned with deftly manipulated puppets—something probably beyond the abilities of our performers anyway—than connecting actor and audience to both puppetry and, more importantly, to the cultural message we hope to impart.

What is the role of puppet’s movement in these shows, and how are your puppets designed to achieve these movements?

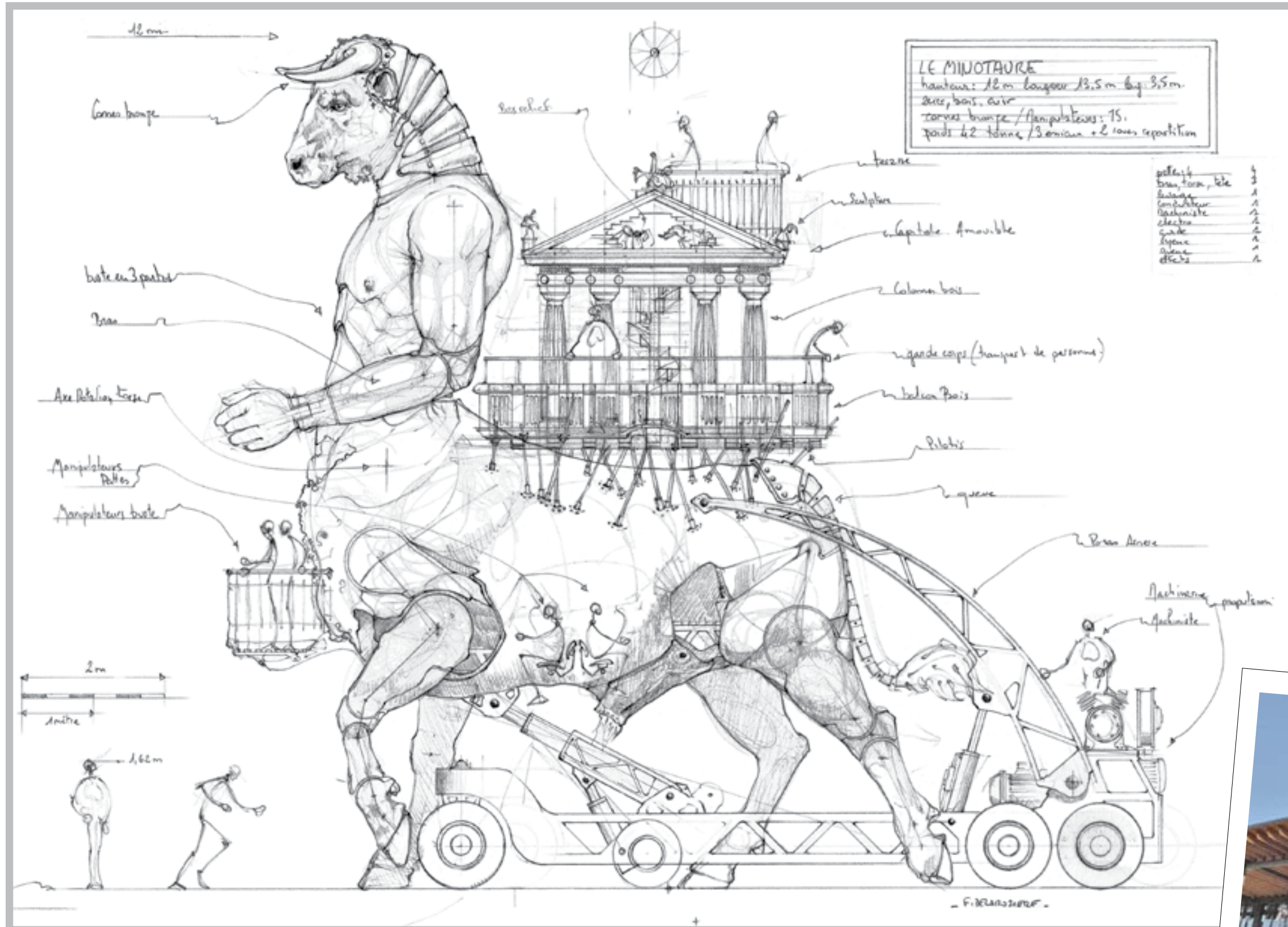
Because I design our puppets for simplicity in the hands of a neophyte performer, I chose to work with shadow puppets over alternative and more difficult-to-master forms, and build them for maximum expression with minimum input.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

PUPPETS DESIGNED AND MADE BY JASON YANCEY
FOR *SECOND HANDS*, AN ADAPTATION OF *LA ROPAVEJERA* BY FRANCISCO DE QUEVEDO
PHOTOS COURTESY OF JASON YANCEY AND DRAGONCILLO PUPPET TROUPE

A PERFECT PROJECT FOR THE DO-IT-YOURSELFER!

Le Minotaure is an astonishing piece of work by “La Machine,” from Toulouse, France.



This is one of those figures—like some of the work we’ve featured by Theatre Royal Deluxé over the years—that pushes the outer limits of what a puppet can be, or can do, and yet the complex engineering involved does not keep spectators from feeling an emotional connection with it. Perhaps it is the very fact of those exposed hydraulics and mechanics, and the visible presence of manipulators, that eliminates the distancing effect of the “uncanny valley” that is the undoing of humanoid robots. But that is a subject for another day.

Last year, Yael Rasooly — theater artist and incandescent chanteuse — had the good fortune of spending several weeks with La Machine as they rehearsed for the figure’s premiere. Being able to sit in on rehearsal was a fantastic opportunity and Yael told us how touched she was with the sheer professionalism with which the work proceeded. The figure itself takes fifteen operators, but there are many others involved with special effects, which are integral to the performance. One can imagine that, with something this large and complex, and where the potential for injury is ever present, the need for such discipline is paramount.

Nuts and bolts? Sure. More than most of us will need in a lifetime. Yet how inspiring to know that there are those among us who will go that far, who will take the risk in order to astonish us with something truly grand!

[ed.]



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PHOTO: JACQUES VALENZA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19 –

Each of our puppets is cut out of black ABS plastic for high durability and affixed to a 1/8” steel rod using a pair of 6mm machine screws and wing nuts that we can break down to fit in travel-sized luggage. For some puppets the ABS is additionally glued to a sheet of clear acrylic with details like facial features easily drawn on using an enamel paint pen.

The puppets used in 2018’s *The Fabulous Johnny Frog* included a finger lever that articulated a character’s arm. Although simple, I found that inexperienced and nervous fingers often struggled with the effect and either overused it or completely ignored it. For 2019’s *Second Hands and The Ladies’ Man*, the play was conceived as a “rubber hose” cartoon from the 1930s, and many of the characters’ limbs used latex tubing to join hands and feet to torsos in a way that looked the part and practically bounced themselves in the puppeteers’ hands.

One of the plays we adapted for our 2019 production explored the notion of a second hand shop where customers enter to purchase more attractive replacements to their own undesired body parts. For this effect we used interchangeable heads and limbs held together with complimentary rows of small, neodymium magnets. As each character entered the stage the shopkeeper, shown in the actual silhouette of the actor, carefully removed the puppet’s offending part and snapped on the more attractive alternative. This effect using shadow puppets and magnets actually enhanced the impact of the seventeenth-century source material originally conceived for actors to play off stage.



How does the audiovisual component of these shows enhance the movement and the life of puppets in these shows?

The audiovisual elements of our shows are designed to support all aspects of the experience while preserving the unique contributions of a live vocal performance.

The entire show is operated as a PowerPoint presentation with roughly 60 slides. During the introduction a member of our company used a wireless remote to advance through slides illustrating everything from Spanish geography and culture, to theatrical practices and an in-depth exploration of shadow puppetry. These slides often incorporate a large number of comedic or surprising video elements embedded over static images. This dynamic approach blurred the line between the technical and the practical and helped lay the groundwork for the puppet show itself. For *Second Hands and The Ladies’ Man*, I used Final Cut Pro to add an aged film filter over the stylized black and white background to produce the jittery, scratched and at times slightly blurred look we associate with vintage film stock.

The combined result of these elements in performance looked something like an interactive television screen playing cartoons from the 1930s, where shadow puppets—regardless of how well they were manipulated—moved about with an added measure of authenticity.

Yancey’s techniques of puppet construction, combined with the modern technology of projected digital imagery, goes a long way toward allowing Dragoncillo’s mission of imparting historical, cultural and linguistic knowledge. This new type of ready-made shows involving non-professional artists has become the first priority for a troupe devoted to outreach and public engagement.

ESTHER FERNÁNDEZ is Assistant Professor at Rice University. Her research principally attended to eroticism and the Spanish comedia; visual and material culture; and performance analysis of classical theater’s most contemporary adaptations. She is currently working on a monograph on animated props in ceremonial and theatrical contexts, where material representations of religious and “non-religious” worlds took place in pre-modern Iberia and their contemporary legacies.

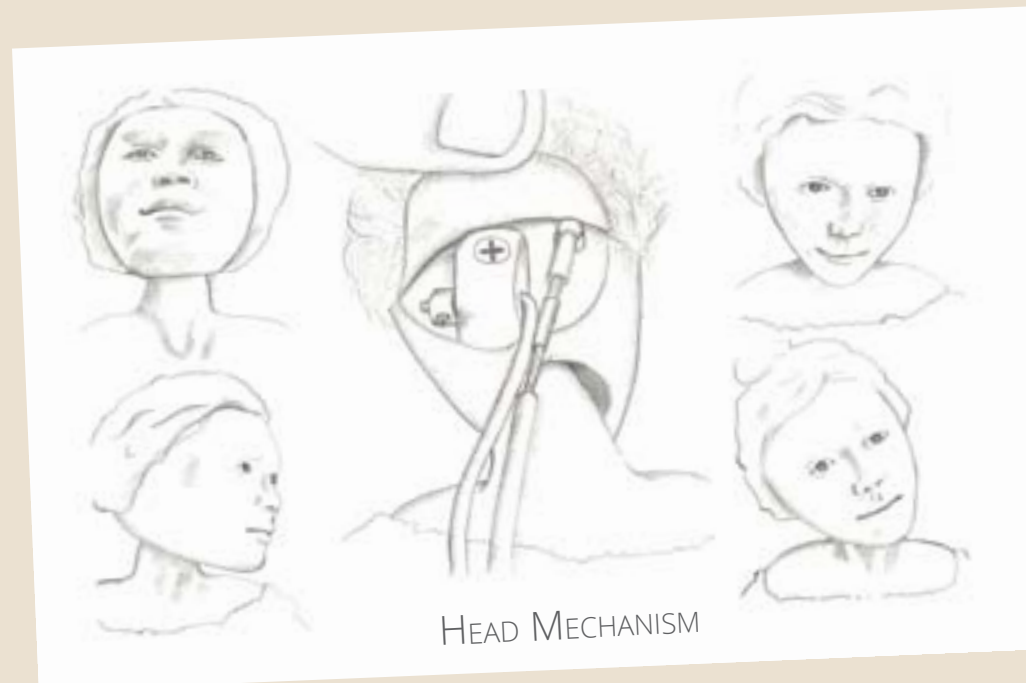
TILTING ROD PUPPET HEAD MECHANISM

BY HOBEY FORD

[Excerpt from the author’s new book, Rod Puppetry]

Around 1998, I began work on a touring production of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. It opened at The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, on Halloween in 1999. I already had good results with the universal head control. After carving this character, Katrina Van Tassel, I began to manipulate her head in my hands. It was very compelling when I tilted her head and she began to express emotion.

I wanted to make a mechanism for tilting the head, expanding on my modification of the Eastern European universal head control, which only offered up-and-down and side-to-side movements. I began by making a cord joint attaching Katrina’s head to her neck. The head has a socket at its base so that the neck fits up into the head ¼ inch.

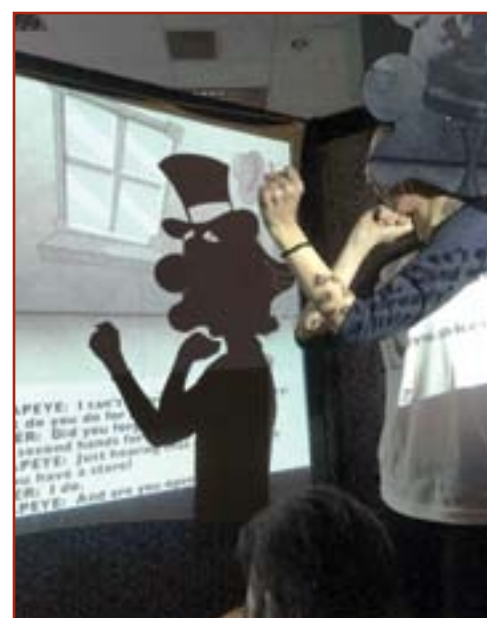


Katrina’s head is flat on the back to make a base for the head control rod. The swiveling head control is attached by one screw, so that the piece can rotate around the screw.

- 1 The *head control knob* slides up and down and rotates on the main body support rod. This makes the head look up and down and side to side. The thumb fits nicely into the control.
- 2 The *head control rod* is attached to the top of the head control knob. It will run up to the swiveling head control joint.
- 3 The *head tilt control* seesaws where it is screwed to the other side of the head control knob. This tilts the head side to side.
- 4 A small *trailer hitch* is used to attach the tilting linkage to the head tilt control.
- 5 The *head control linkage* is jointed to the head tilt control. This linkage runs up to a trailer hitch on the back of the head and causes the head to tilt.
- 6 The *main support rod* is attached to the top of the control handle. The body is supported at the top of the rod.
- 7 The *main control* is gripped with the lower three fingers while the index finger and thumb operate the head controls.

HOBEY FORD is a puppeteer and the inventor of “Peepers.” He is a former board member of UNIMA-USA.

Hardcover- www.lulu.com/shop/hobey-ford/rod-puppetry/hardcover/product-24186503
Ebook- www.lulu.com/shop/hobey-ford/rod-puppetry/ebook/product-24191870



TO SEE A VIDEO ON “BUILDING THE PUPPETS,” PLEASE VISIT:
www.dragoncillo.com/gallery-1



IT'S ALIVE!

How traditional Sicilian puppets from opera dei pupi move and behave

by Małgorzata Skotnicka-Palka

The Paladin of Charlemagne, in immaculately shining armor, with a dashing colorful feather on his helmet, pulls out his sword with a dashing movement and, with a battle cry splits a Saracen fighting with him in half. By himself, he overcomes a dozen warriors who lie at his feet. In the next scene he will defeat the fairy-tale dragon, but now he is on his

way to rescue his beloved Angelika, captured by repulsive enemies. Quick and loud patter of the shoes of the puppeteers who are hidden behind the stage adds drama to the battle scene. The outcome of the match is known in advance—the paladin always wins. In such

a theatrical way, Sicilian viewers of traditional street puppet performances learned the history of the Franks. The theater of Sicilian puppets is not just exciting and colorful stories; the techniques of puppet movements are very original and worth taking a closer look.

PHOTOS: MATEUSZ PALKA

The Sicilian puppet theater isn't based on typical drama—it is rather a traditional example of prose theatre, in which the main motif of theatrical performances is the story of the conquests of Charlemagne and his paladins fighting the Muslim warriors who conquered the Iberian Peninsula, thus posing a threat to the Kingdom of the Franks and the whole Christian Europe. Theatrical performances are based on knightly epic poems: *The Song of Roland* (unknown author) and *The Frenzy of Orlando* (*Orlando Furioso*) by Ludovico of Ariosto. *The Song of Roland* is the oldest and the most outstanding poem from the series about the deeds of Charlemagne (*chanson de geste*). It is also the oldest French epic, the first epic of the Celtic era. The source of the story *Opera dei pupi* is also the *History of the Paladins of France*, a knight's novel by Giusto Lodico, written in episodes in the years 1858–1860. The main characters of the performances are Roland¹ and Rinaldo²—the knights of Charlemagne, the Norman knights of King Roger of Sicily and Angelika of Cathay³. A fairly hermetic and static system is visible, in which you know in advance who is good and who is bad. The good is beautiful, the bad—ugly. The good is right and honest, the bad—cunning. The good is a Christian, the bad—a Muslim or pagan, which in the case of traditional pro-Christian and Eurocentric interpretation was rather the same.

Opera dei pupi differs from other forms of puppet theater staged in Italy, which is dominated by performances prepared with the participation of light puppets manipulated with strings. Often hand puppets (*burattini*) are used there. These dolls usually play a comic show that is created purely for entertainment. In no way, however, do they refer to knights' culture, as *Opera dei pupi* does.



THE ANTONIO PASQUALINO INTERNATIONAL PUPPET MUSEUM, PALERMO, 04.01.2018



PERFORMANCE OF *LA BATTAGLIA DI ORLANDO E RINALDO PER LA BELLA ANGELICA*, THE ANTONIO PASQUALINO INTERNATIONAL PUPPET MUSEUM, PALERMO, 19.11.2018

The look of Sicilian puppets still refers to the frescoes inside the Norman Palace (Palazzo dei Normanni) and Palazzo Chiaramonte-Steri in Palermo, which inspired the first puppeteers.

There are different traditions of *Opera dei pupi*. The best known are dolls from Palermo and Catania. The Sicilian puppet can be made of various types of wood, such as beech, walnut, lime or cypress. In Palermo the lacquer skeleton is made of nine wooden parts (feet, calves, thighs, bust, hands) connected by a wire. It is moved by using two rods, one that, in order to support the doll, passes through the body and comes out of the puppet's head, the other is connected to the right hand of the doll, and makes the hand mobile. This, for example, allows the doll to take out the sword to fight. The puppet has thickened, jointed knees, which makes it possible, for example, to kneel or take a step forward. In addition, strings are attached to the puppet, thanks to which it can make additional movements, for example: move the left hand or raise the visor. These functions also enable the theatrical gestures of the doll. The puppet is manipulated with the help of wires and strings. A very important element is the movable head of the figure—attached to the body with a hook, which adds realism to the

show and allows for rapid, decisive movement. The doll has loosely attached legs that move with the force of inertia. Thanks to such a design, it reacts to the animator's movements—not directly, but the puppeteer can still control it well. The doll is about 65 cm high, weighing from 7 to 10 kg.

Every puppet has its own character and, sometimes, movement. For example, devils were often falling from the sky above directly into the scene. They were spinning, flying, scaring and then they disappeared into the sky again.

The dolls from Catania are bigger, they measure about 140 cm, weigh about 20 kg, have stiff knees and they keep swords in their hands all the time—they do not put them in the scabbard like marionettes from Palermo. Because of their considerable weight, their movements are wider and more expressive than those of Palermo puppets.

The rod coming out of the marionette's head and strings (except for the rod moving the right hand) are connected with a wooden handle held by the puppeteer, ending with a hook to hang up the figure. To help operating the marionettes, puppeteers often help themselves by leaning their arms on special armbands hanging from above.

Marionettes have intricately carved facial features, realistic glass eyes and very expressive personalities. They are dressed in extravagant costumes—knights have embossed brass armor with decorative plumes. Girls and women are dressed in fancy, fabulous dresses, made of precious fabrics that are painted or decorated with embroidery. Their costumes and props are made with great attention to detail.

Each performance is a joint work of three puppeteers (*marionettisti dei pupi siciliani*) colloquially known as *pupari* and an organ grinder, who, according to tradition, turns a crank of a barrel organ, creating a musical setting for performances.

Opera dei pupi performances are very dynamic. Duels and fights, rapid twists and dialogs with curt retorts are characteristic for them. Sicilian puppets are technically adapted to an impromptu fight. Thanks to the rigid rod, you can move them fast and spontaneously—which is much more difficult with string marionettes. The mechanics of controlling the Sicilian puppets directly affect the nature of the performances. Each scene ends in a noisy battle, during which you can hear the humming of armor made of brass and the striking of swords. Fighting puppets are shouting, screaming, sighing, muttering and screaming. Battle scenes are choreographed with extreme precision. Knights are facing each other and at the same time striking with swords. Knights' enemies—Saracens—lose their skirmishes usually in a spectacular way. The viewer watching the show does not expect that during the fight, under the impact of a sword, the doll will suddenly lose its limbs, its head or its face (which is connected to the rest of the head at the bottom with a hinge and at the top with a string. The doll may be cut into two parts: the right side, supported by a rod



THE ANTONIO PASQUALINO INTERNATIONAL PUPPET MUSEUM, PALERMO, 04.01.2018

to her right hand and the left side—held by a rod passing through her head. Sometimes its armor will fall, and the shield may crash into two parts. The performances also use special stage effects, such as an unexpected blood leak (visible only after the decapitation, and earlier cleverly hidden from the viewers' eyes by a knight's shield) from wounded or dying puppets. Christian knights are the defenders of the knights' virtues, in the battle of good and evil, they win triumphal victories.

Puppet movements during battle scenes are repetitive, the duel takes place in the rhythm of sounds tapped by stamping puppets' clogs against floor boards. The mechanics of puppets allow them to fight with two enemies at the same time—it turns once to the left, once to the right, inflicting continuous blows. The fights are very rhythmic—puppets approach each other and move away alternately, like in a dance-like battle, brutal trance, until finally one is defeated—of course, it is always the opponent of our positive and good hero. The large weight of the dolls is an advantage—defeated enemies are falling

by gravity on the ground and are arranged in gruesome piles of immobile bodies that grow as successive marionettes are slaughtered.

These scenes are exaggerated, they cause terror and at the same time they make people laugh. The grotesque representation of the struggle results from the direct transfer of the convention of a literary work to a theater performance. These motifs are also characteristic of Italian art, in which the aesthetics of the monstrosity were present.

The dolls themselves are also often grotesque—some enemies have disproportionately large heads. They are reminiscent of large children, and this effect deprives them of seriousness. The way in which heroes recite their issues is also exaggerated—often they fall into exaltation and their speech turns into a song or even a wail. Dialogues are sometimes improvised.

The performances feature many fairytale, fantastic characters: demons, angels, wizards, monsters, fire-breathing dragons, various animals such as snakes and lions. These are usually made of papier-mâché.

An important role for the dynamics of *opera dei pupi* shows is also played by numerous hand-painted backgrounds that change between particular scenes. They signal a new location of the action. They usually show battlefields, forests, surroundings and interiors of castles, military strongholds and palaces.

In 2008, the *Opera dei pupi* was included in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, not because of the dolls themselves, but in recognition of the puppeteers' skills. The *Opera dei pupi* is one of the most original and characteristic attractions of Sicily. There are several puppet theaters in Palermo: Teatro Pupi Enzo Mancuso, Teatro dei Pupi Siciliani—Famiglia Argento, Teatro dell'Opera dei Pupi, Museo Internazionale delle Marionette Antonio Pasqualino. Performances can also be seen in many other places in Sicily, including Teatro dei Pupi Siracusa, or Teatro Stabile dei Pupi Siciliani in Caltagirone.

One of the most important artists who contributed to the preservation and renewal of the *Opera dei pupi* tradition is the Italian puppeteer Mimmo Cuticchio, the son of the composer, pianist and puppeteer Giacomo Cuticchio. In 1973 he founded the Teatro dei Pupi Santa Rosalia in Palermo, and in 1977 also the Figli d'Arte Cuticchio, which aims to cultivate the tradition of the *Opera dei pupi*. His artistic activity continues to this day.

Traditionally, theaters were family-owned companies—knowledge and experience regarding the technique of construction and operation of puppets were passed on to future generations.

MAŁGORZATA SKOTNICKA-PALKA is a PhD in the field of modern history, graduate of the Institute of History at the University of Wrocław (Poland), where, since 2006, she has been cooperating with the Department of Didactics of History and Social Knowledge at the Institute of History. Research interests: contemporary history, didactics of history, social history, public history, culture.

Endnotes

- ¹ Roland— a historical figure, a Frankish military leader under Charlemagne. He is the main character of *The Song of Roland*.
- ² Rinaldo— a fictional character belonging to the Carolingian cycle, one of the twelve paladins of France who were chosen guardians of the Emperor Charlemagne; is a cousin and rival to Orlando, both are striving for the favor of beautiful Angelika.
- ³ Angelika— a princess from the Orient, for whom the two most important paladins from France, both in the service of Charlemagne: Orlando and Rinaldo, compete with each other.

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Meet *Stevie Anne Nemazee*, our 2019 Scholarship Recipient

Stevie Anne Nemazee is an experimental puppet artist, designer, and writer with a passion for cinematic landscapes, performing objects, and character design.

She holds an MFA in Theatrical Design from the California Institute of the Arts and a BFA in Film Studies from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Stevie works in the animation industry as a stop-motion puppet and armature fabricator. She has worked for studios including Chiodo Bros (Killer Klowns From Outer Space), Stoopid Buddy Stoodios (Robot Chicken), and Bix Pix Entertainment (Tumble Leaf).

When she isn't working for the man, Stevie works as a freelance puppet designer and model builder in addition to developing her own work. She was most recently honored to be chosen as an Emerging Artist for her piece "Herb the Beige" at the 2018 Eugene O'Neill National Puppetry Conference.

Stevie has chosen to study with Puppets in Prague for a two-week animation course taught by Zdar Sorm, Katarina Tazarova, and Milan Vins.

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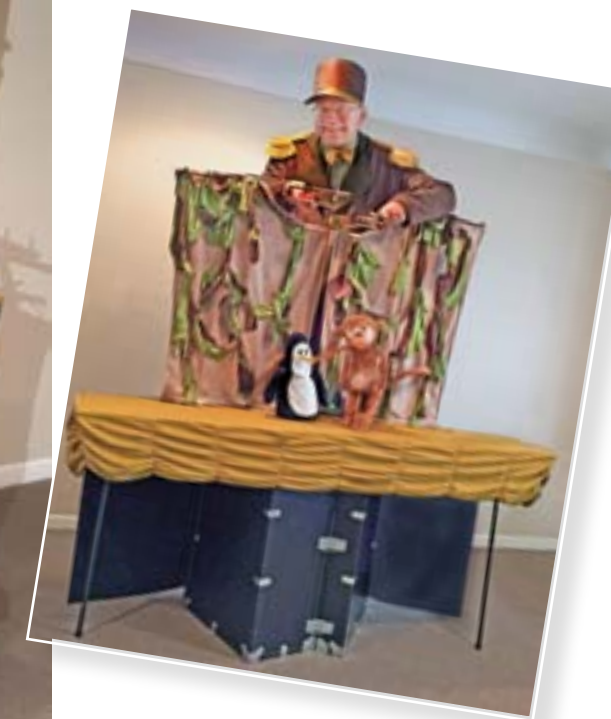
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A MARIONETTE STAGE IN MY POCKET

by Kurt Hunter

At its heart, *Penguin in my Pocket* is an odd little marionette show about a scientific penguin and an artistic monkey. It celebrates imagination in art and science. Playing the storyteller/puppeteer, I start the show with everything for the show in the pockets of my bulky trench coat. "Everything" includes all of the pieces of the stage, the marionettes and assorted props. The stage is quickly assembled as the audience watches. Designing and building the marionette stage for the show involved finding simple solutions to a variety of problems. (The simple solution is always the goal.) I think some of these solutions can be easily adapted by other puppeteers solving other problems.

The initial inspiration for *Penguin in my Pocket* wasn't artistic. It was mechanical. I wanted to create a one trunk show. After years of performing shows made up of marionette variety numbers and vignettes, hauling around marionette platforms and marionettes that only spent a few minutes on stage, I liked the idea of a compact show that only involved a few characters. I admired performances by puppeteers like Peter Allen and Gwen Bonar, who could totally engage an audience with a story involving a few hand puppets.

My love, however, is marionettes, so I would still need a marionette stage to get the characters up to the audience sightlines. I've designed and built quite a few stages over the years, so I had some previous tricks to draw upon. Since the trunk the show would pack into had to be structurally sound, I decided to build the stage around the trunk. Standing on end, a trunk would be a good height for the stage floor. I found a commercially produced trunk, the "Indestructo" travel trunk by Rhino Trunk and Case. It was heavier than I was hoping, but the size and construction were designed so that it could be checked luggage on a flight. The trunk required some minor modifications. The handles and wheels on the ends had to be removed. I added a leather handle on the side, mostly for looks, but it was also functional.

For the bridge, the platform I would stand on, I started with a commercially made folding aluminum platform. Since one end of the bridge would attach to the trunk, I only needed half the platform and cut it



in half. In puppet stage construction, bolts and wing nuts are one of my pet peeves. Getting bolts through holes and threading wing nuts is a time-consuming process. In most cases a slot instead of a hole can be used, so that the bolt never has to be removed and the wing nut can stay on the bolt. I used this approach for an arm I added to the trunk that supported the cut end of the aluminum platform.

To keep the platform from sliding on the arm, I created pegs by cutting the heads off of heavy nails and filing the tops round. I inserted them into holes drilled into the top of the arm. The pegs lined up with holes drilled into the bottom of the aluminum platform.

To get as much playing area as possible, I wanted the stage floor to be as big as possible, while still fitting into the trunk. With a fold in the middle, I was able to get a five-foot-long stage floor. To keep the weight down, I built the floor from two layers of corrugated plastic. The piano hinge in the middle was attached with aluminum pop rivets. The floor needed to attach securely to the top of the trunk and it needed to attach very quickly. Using plywood the same thickness as the sides of the trunk and strips of aluminum, I built three pieces that attached to the bottom of the stage floor. The aluminum strips and the stage floor created slots that slipped over the edge of the trunk.

To keep the far ends of the floor from sagging I created legs from 1/2 inch aluminum tube covered with black gaffer's tape. The legs each have a rare earth magnet attached to the top of the tube with gaffer's tape. They connect to the stage floor at small steel plates riveted to the corrugated plastic. The magnets allow the legs to be attached very quickly and are strong enough to hold the full weight of each aluminum tube.

The stage also needed backdrops and places to hang the marionettes. All of this was built onto two long aluminum tubes that insert into and extend up from the top of the trunk. At the corners of the top end of the trunk, holes were drilled to accommodate short aluminum tubes that

were permanently attached inside the trunk and just came up to the surface of the trunk. A hardwood dowel was anchored into the end of each of the long aluminum tubes. When assembling the stage, the dowels go through small holes in the stage floor and fit into the tubes in the end of the trunk. They also keep the stage floor from sliding off the edges of the trunk. A screw in each dowel fits nicely into a notch in the end of each short tube in the trunk, preventing the dowels from turning.

Crosspieces made of flat aluminum stock were attached to the long tubes to hold the backdrops. The tubes needed to be longer than the length of the trunk would accommodate, so each of the long tubes was cut in two. A hardwood dowel was permanently affixed to the bottom of the top half allowing the two ends to be put back together. A screw was inserted into the dowel to fit into a slot in the other tube to keep the pieces from rotating. Two nylon cords were used to keep the two ends close together. Two cords were used instead of one, so that when the top tube was held with the bottom tube hanging below it, the bottom tube would line up with the top tube. The screw head was directly over the slot.

Additional arms made of aluminum angle (or "L") stock were bolted on, so that they could fold down to create places to hang the marionettes.

In the end, I didn't quite succeed in creating a one trunk marionette show. With very careful packing, the stage, puppets, props and my coat and hat will fit in the trunk, but not my wireless mic and concertina. The trunk packed that way also tops out at about 70 pounds. *Penguin in my Pocket* is a two trunk show and I'm happy with that. Hopefully some of the simple solutions that worked for this show can make life a bit easier for other puppeteers.

KURT HUNTER is a Minneapolis-based puppeteer working primarily with marionettes. In 2008 he received an UNIMA-USA Citation of Excellence in Puppetry for *Sock Puppet Serenade*. In 2018 he was awarded a Family Grant from the Jim Henson Foundation for development of *Penguin in my Pocket*. The creative team for the production included director Laura Wilhelm, composer Arthur Clyde, costume designer Robert L. Graff, creative consultant Paul Mesner and Kathy Hunter, who did a bit of everything.

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GUIDELINES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF PUPPETS IN OTHER PERFORMING ARTS

by Blair Thomas

A theater director calls and says they would like puppets in their production. The first two questions you ask are: When does it open? *and* Is there a budget?

Today there are frequent opportunities for puppetry to be integrated within other disciplines such as theater, opera, dance, music or film. These guidelines address the processes of this integration into a larger work of a different genre—a project when the puppet is asked to function as a tool within a vision dominated by other disciplines and to serve the larger vision, as a visitor, like a Drosselmeyer on Christmas Eve. The processes of puppetry are distinct and often opaque to artists and organizers outside the field of puppetry. These steps are to help puppeteers articulate the navigation of this collaboration. In paid work, puppetry lacks the traditions and protections established by unions and the standards established in other performing arts; perhaps these guidelines can fill the absence of those protections.

I. SCOPE OF WORK

First, understand the limitations of the project in time, money and scale to set the framework for your work. All limitations are just the fixed points within which creativity excels.

Time

Request to be included on the concept and design schedule, traditionally set to include the costume, set and lighting designers. Set your build schedule with

the goal to deliver a functioning puppet by first rehearsal. This is best achieved with test sessions staged for the director prior to the onset of rehearsals to allow for their full attention on your puppet's design and performance achieved. Anticipate the need for changes and adaptations throughout the dry rehearsals, tech rehearsals and preview performances up until opening night.

Money

Do your best to detail the costs for the scale of what they would like to achieve with their production. Anticipate the need for compromises along the way, with ways to source in-kind materials and labor. But don't lead with those offers. This is always a balance between the limit of the producer's financial resources and the opportunity the project is providing you.

Scale

The puppet design should work in concert with the larger visual design as a dynamic complement to set, costume, projections, etc. Additionally your design should anticipate the size of the house and the restrictions of the sightlines to ensure an effective solution. Other basic scale questions: How much playing space does the puppetry get? How large is the opening for entrances? How are the puppets stored offstage? How many manipulators are designated for performance?



STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER, LOOKINGGLASS THEATRE COMPANY PHOTO: RICH HEIN

2. CONCEPT AND DESIGN

Familiarize yourself with the source material, script or music, etc. and research past productions of this work, collecting the documentation of these design solutions. In this way you can go into an initial meeting informed. But first allow the director to present their vision of the project and listen closely to their interpretation for descriptive images and their desired effects. Additionally, the other designers could also present concepts, aesthetics and ideas that need to or are seeking to engage with puppetry. The director may have specific styles or forms already decided or they may not even know the range of possibilities.

Puppetry design solutions will arise as they talk, and here is the point where you sell your skills and credibility with persuasive descriptions. Present any images of your past work or of other samples or solutions that help illustrate your ideas.

The decision to contract you could be made in one meeting or there could be multiple meetings and with different people. These

initial stages are crucial as the concept design of a puppet, especially in a production where no puppet has previously existed, will determine which roads the production will go down. Different styles of puppets carry their own distinctive performance presence, and this impacts the story telling and adds to or detracts from the larger vision of the work. Allow your joy for puppetry to direct you to the ideas you propose, gravitating towards simple concepts and designs.

If you are asked to produce drawings, propose instead that you could produce a limited amount of sketches. I advise not to produce full design drawings until you've been contracted for the gig. First agree on your design fee, then you can begin the work.



PINOCCHIO. HOUSE THEATER OF CHICAGO PHOTO: MICHAEL BROSILOW



3. SUBMITTING A BID

The producer of a new musical version of *The Snow Queen* filled with puppets sat me down after his director told him he wanted to hire me and flatly asked: What does a puppet cost? I had to back up a little to explain. The jobs at hand are concept/design, fabrication, puppet direction, performance manipulation and puppet maintenance over the course of the run. If they are not regularly producing puppet theater work, this delineation may not be obvious to them. They may just have one budget number under “puppets,” but all these tasks will need to be covered, so define the categories of the work producers expect from you. In the professional theater, the tasks under the “puppet” category could be likened to the combined equivalent work of a costume designer, the costume shop, a choreographer, an actor and the wardrobe running crew, all standardly different budget lines.

At some point the producer will request a bid for the puppetry work. They may have quoted you a fixed budget number as an amount that’s worked for them before or maybe they just made up a number as if it were another props budget. But you should clarify that the puppetry work falls under the following five categories. When it is itemized under these categories it clarifies for them the work they are asking you to do.



CHICAGO PUPPET STUDIO, FINE ARTS BUILDING PHOTOS: BLAIR THOMAS

Design Fee— propose a flat fee for your design, specify that this fee is for the currently scheduled run; a remount in the future would require another contract.

Labor Costs— delineate an hourly rate for a proposed number of hours.

Material Costs— maybe itemize some materials, but a general number should work. You will use a lot of materials already in your shop.

Puppet Direction— usually a flat fee.

Puppet Maintenance— set up an hourly rate weekly for the duration of the run.

Ownership of the puppets— In your bid specify that upon the closing of the scheduled run of the show the puppets will be returned to you. This stipulation may raise an eyebrow, but you can respond that the fee will need to be higher if they are buying the puppets from you. In the early years of Jim Henson’s career insisting that this condition was a key to his success in the long run. Producers will not always grant this condition, but it is worth the request. When I designed and built a puppet show of the *Selfish Giant*, our contract stipulated the ownership of the puppets would pass back to me after 5 years. In that case the material property of the show was the puppets and I was able to perform it independently from then on.



K.T. SHIVAK AND TOM LEE SOLVE THE GROWING-NOSE PROBLEM ON THE PINOCCHIO PUPPET HEAD



SIRENS FROM *MONUMENTS*, AN INDEPENDENT FILM BY JACK NEWELL PHOTO: TOM LEE PUPPETEER/DESIGNER: K.T. SHIVAK

4. DEVELOPING NEW WORK

If you were invited to be the puppet artist as one of the principal creators of a new work, the production will most likely be built over months and/or years, depending on the producer’s resources and constraints. This typically involves separate workshop and development periods leading up to the rehearsal and full production. Often this allows for design solutions to larger production issues that the director and playwright are seeking to solve.

This is an optimal situation as it affords the opportunity to build prototypes and test them in workshop settings. In this case the budgeting for the workshops could simply be flat fees for work, materials and fabrication. At the least, a single two-hour workshop session preceding the full rehearsal period would be fruitful. Better, though, is a week in the room with puppets and performers and ample

time before the next workshop or rehearsal period to return to your shop for repairs and rebuilds.

If you are offered this opportunity, you can make a separate agreement with each workshop. If the final production is reliant on puppetry, with major characters portrayed as puppets, for example, you and the puppetry design should be part of the production’s artist’s royalty payments.

Today, puppetry has an opening in the cultural field, not offered to it in the past. Innovative design and fabrication needs time. Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones worked for almost a year on building just the prototype horse puppet for the production of *Warhorse*. And that was just the beginning of extensive work to achieve the stunning success of that puppetry design.

Don’t begin work until you’ve reached an agreement and signed a contract. Even if a deadline is looming, the contract is their responsibility. You would compromise yourself to deliver any designs or fabrications before having a signed agreement.

It is our responsibility to insist on the proper conditions for puppetry design when it takes the stage outside of the puppet theater.

In these situations the puppet has been asked into the collaboration to serve as a unique contribution and singular contrast to other performers on the shared stage or screen. Its stage presence is singular, capable of reflecting back the audience’s projected thoughts and feelings. Whether as an actualized stage metaphor or distilled character replica, this reflective phenomenon and contrasting presence activates an expansion of the vision of the shared stage. The capacity of puppetry to expand the audience’s experience is its chief attribute in the collaboration. These steps seek to establish the conditions conducive to activating the unique alchemy necessary for puppetry to synthesize concept with material design.

Last year, **BLAIR THOMAS** joined forces with Tom Lee and K.T. Shivak to establish the Chicago Puppet Studio, the design and fabrication wing of the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival. It was a natural outgrowth of requests for puppetry design from other arts organizations. In that time they have made designs for Lookingglass Theatre Company’s *Steadfast Tin Soldier*, House Theater’s *Pinocchio*, Jack Newell’s independent feature film *Monuments*. Blair is the founder and artistic director of the Chicago Puppet Festival and adjunct associate professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

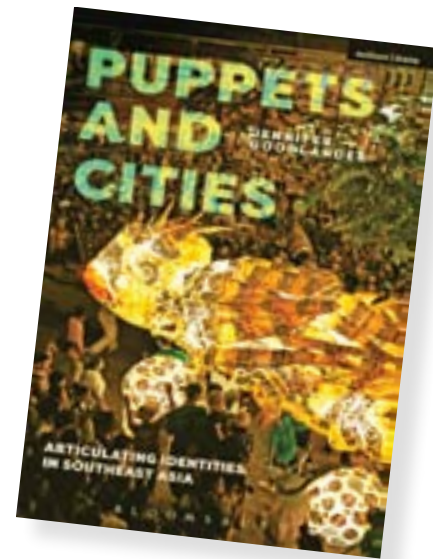
Puppetry and Identity in Southeast Asia

Jennifer Goodlander, *Puppets and Cities: Articulating Identities in Southeast Asia*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, Methuen Drama, 2019. 205 pp. \$102

In the concluding lines of this book, Jennifer Goodlander argues she has shown “how space and event come together [to clarify identities in Southeast Asia, and how] puppets in museums, city streets, and on stages offer insights into the different formations those identities inhabit” (181). Goodlander’s major contribution is documenting selected current urban companies and collaborations. Readers will enjoy learning whom and what to seek in Jakarta, Siem Reap, Bangkok, Luang Prabang, Hanoi, Pagan, etc. She gives brief background on the history of forms and groups, and places the companies in post-independence national history and city formation. She also argues for social media as a new urban space, museum display as a space of cultural critique, and performance as political encapsulation. The book has breadth.

Goodlander argues puppetry groups can be read as representative of the social situation of their city and uses various theoretical tools to dissect performances: post-colonial theory, semiotics, performance theory, etc. She aims for ethnography refitted to urban, mediated, and globalized arts. Taking on wide geography and using limited samples as metonymy for something large (a national discourse) is poetic but sometimes difficult. This text for me sometimes pushes quickly to “big picture” analysis before details are worked through.

This is not unusual for authors who try to span Southeast Asian theatre’s diversity: Catherine Diamond’s *Communities of the Imagination: Contemporary Southeast Asian Theatre* (Honolulu: Univ. Hawai’i, 2012) attempted similar breadth for theatre and could be similarly critiqued. Goodlander admits hers is very much a work in progress (181) and as she continues to research puppetry in this region will continue to fine-tune her arguments. She is, of course, right that Southeast Asia urban performance invites deep interrogation.



The book has seven major essays. “Cities, Puppets, and Identity” tries to set up the components that will be touched on in each work: geography, history, and the contemporary city’s cultural identity as mediated by the chosen puppet form/company. In the following essay, Goodlander analyzes two Jakarta museums: Museum International Indonesia, whose ethnographic collection dates from the Dutch Colonial era; and the Wayang Museum Jakarta, founded in 1975, which, with a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Grant, did a recent “makeover” reflecting contemporary museological concerns (how to make museums fun while respecting heritage). She emphasizes hierarchies in inter-ethnic representation.

Goodlander then turns to Cambodia: She examines a *sbeik thom* (large shadow puppet) show near the site of the former World Trade Center, in a New York festival of Cambodian culture, discussing deviations from normal practice by in-mixing dancers. Due to the World Trade Center proximity, she reads an American 9/11 experience as being linked to the Khmer Rouge holocaust. Next she looks at a recent annual Cambodian community processional performance initiated by UK puppeteer Stuart Cochlin, with giant lit figures in Siem Reap. Goodlander takes on complex issues of foreign aid in Khmer reconstruction and its impact on intercultural arts exchange. For Thailand, she considers the monarchy and class politics as she discusses the rise and ebb of the Joe Louis Puppet Theatre, which innovated three-person danced

puppets that look like classical models but have *bunraku*-like manipulation influences. She also details the Kum Nai Puppet Theatre (which reconstructs older-style rod puppets) and Sema Thai (a group that does educational programs for children). An additional chapter delves into various companies’ use of the internet for promotion and feedback in different countries. Goodlander discusses a *Star Wars* Malay *wayang kelantan* shadow play and ends with an ASEAN intercultural collaboration in Penang, Malaysia by puppeteers from across Southeast Asia (with Japanese funding and participation). This performance meshed multiple styles in a joint story. All Goodlander’s topics are of interest, but slight puppet bodies are sometimes weighed down with Western cultural studies theories, before we hear on-the-ground voices of creators, pro-ducers, or audiences.

Details of the repertory are occasionally off. Sita/Sida in the *Ramayana* does not have “several trials by fire” (186) but, usually, just one (although she indeed knows other suffering). Goodlander also states: “Setyaki (seen with the *Mahabharata*’s five Pandawa brothers and their cousin Kresna) further removes these characters (Pandawa) from the Hindu epic and recasts them as a Javanese myth” (31). But of course the character Setyaki is part of the Indian story, so how his appearance makes this “Javanese” per se needs clarification.

Small misunderstandings of repertory, history, and locale also occur. For example, *dalang* Slamet Gundono is not a good choice to represent “local Sundanese identity” (102), as he is Javanese. More copy editing would eliminate occasional spelling mistakes. Despite quibbles, this is an ambitious and interesting dive into selected companies and their puppetry in Southeast Asia. It covers diverse geography, spatially and intellectually.

– review by Kathy Foley
University of California, Santa Cruz

ZASHIKI KARAKURI IS SMALL AND DESIGNED FOR DOMESTIC USE. THEY WERE ORIGINALLY ARTICLES OF LUXURY FOR FEUDAL LORDS DURING THE EDO PERIOD. THE MOST FAMOUS WERE PRODUCED IN THE MID TO LATE EDO PERIOD, WITH WESTERN CLOCKWORK MECHANISMS, THOUGH SAND, MERCURY AND EVEN STEAM POWER WERE USED.

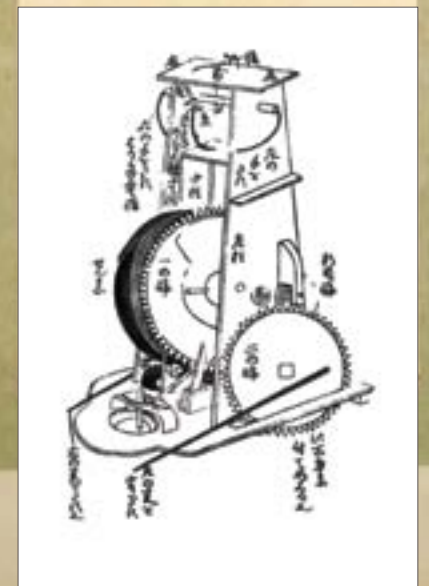
TOP AND MIDDLE FIGURE, BY TAMAYA SHOBEI IX, [BRITISH MUSEUM]
PLAN FROM ‘KARAKURI ZUII’ - ‘KARAKURI, AN ILLUSTRATED ANTHOLOGY’ PUBLISHED IN 1796 [MUSEUM KYOTO]



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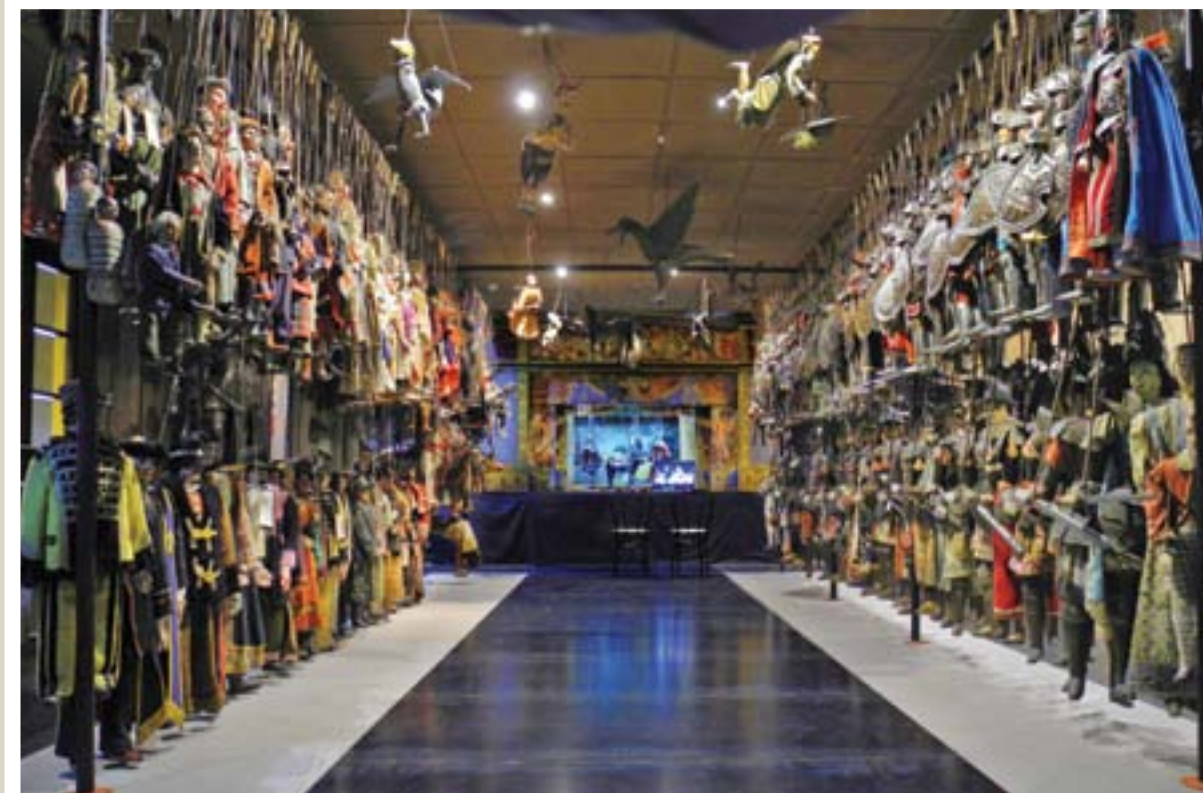
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THE ANTONIO PASQUALINO INTERNATIONAL PUPPET MUSEUM, PALERMO [SEE PAGE 24] 1/4/2018 PHOTO: MATEUSZ PALKA



FROM THE NORTHWEST PUPPET CENTER, HERE IS A DECAPITATION TRICK PUPPET BY CARTER FAMILY MARIONETTES IN THE STYLE OF SICILIAN OPERA DEI PUPPI.



NOTE THE DEEP GROOVE AT THE BACK OF THE HEAD THAT ENABLES THE HEAD, FOLLOWING A "HICCUP," TO COME FREE OF THE BODY. AT THE END OF THE PRODUCTION OF *TOM THUMB THE GREAT* (BY HENRY FIELDING), LORD GRIZZLE GETS DECAPITATED BY TOM. CARVING: STEPHEN CARTER ARMOR: WALTER WHITE PHOTOS: DMITRI CARTER.

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