

APRIL , 2024

The Newsletter

UNIMA PUPPETEERS TRUST - INDIA

20TH MAY 2024 : UNIMA TURNING 95



Join the celebration by contributing!
Tell us what UNIMA means to you in one word!
Entries will be compiled into one image to be shared on May 20!

[Click HERE](#) for the latest news from the UNIMA International

[Source: UNIMA Internationale](#)

VOLUME 07



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From the Trustee

Greetings,

Our 5th Annual General Body was held on March 10th 2024

The attendance was impressive. 42 members out of 57 attended. The membership has also gone up.

Congratulations to the Executive for doing a splendid job.

Unima is a platform for establishing global and local connections and participation.

Our members are beginning to take advantage of this opportunity as the attendance of Indian Puppeteers in International events and sessions organised online is going up. Members also have a priority and discount option in all the courses and training programs organised by Unima India. This year we hope to launch the next Foundation Course.

The open discussion after the meeting was lively and brought up the dismal situation of some rare and disappearing forms of traditional Puppetry. There is an urgency to document these.

Padmini Rangarajan and Maneesh Pachiaru were nominated subsequently by the core group as Councillors representing India in Unima Internationale General Body.

Ranjana Pandey



PUPPETRY BEYOND STAGE & RECOGNITION

SUBHASIS SEN, TAL-BETAL PUPPET THEATRE, (KOLKATA)

Puppetry as an art form needs to be propagated with all its tributaries from entertainment to all activities and expressions pertaining to human cause.

Art, as conceived, is for humanity, that covers all aspects of human concern. As a resultant factor, it needs to be communicated with people, the way possible.

We all know, that performance on stage is gradually going out of reach of artists, be in terms of booking schedule and/or escalation in booking rate.

Now is the time to reach out to people instead. From Parks to Clubs, Office, Schools. Colleges, Street corners, Malls, anywhere and everywhere, where there is a scope for propagation and exhibition, which is already taken up by several groups.

Puppetry as an art, connects soul and the crafted puppet is there to hold its soul to get connected with the beholder. Sheer exhibitionism and skills give us physical pleasure and is shortlived like any other art forms. Puppetry is neither a visual extravaganza nor magic on stage. It's highly magical to express life with its form and content. Its own rhythm, when resonates with our heart beat, we own it and an ecstasy fills our heart. This happens when it's Theatrical.

When it enriches our mind and makes us curious, it's Educational.

When it works on our motor nerves and emotions and we're relaxed, it's Therapeutic.

When enigmatic, it's Intellectual.

When metaphorical, it's Serene and Absorbing.

When attacks on our misdoings it calls upon our sensibilities and consciousness and is Awareness.

It is then only that a puppeteer is taken to be as an artist rather than an exhibitionist. Its sheer innocence and gravity is lost in petty show-offs. It has the power to motivate as it's devoid of any ego but with a powerful personality, being natural yet a departure from being realistic. Puppets that are simple (not simplistic) , has the power to draw our attention towards it and keep us engaged in a world of suspension of disbelief.

It leaves the puppeteer hypnotic too, along with the audience with its mysticism and unusual form and character. Puppets are not toys and toying with puppets demean its essence and beauty.

It's the surrogate of a puppeteer, which if handled carelessly, may ruin a performance beyond expectation.

Educated critics, researchers, media, audiences are all responsible in making us educated of this art form as a serious mode of expression throwing lights on different aspect not only on the tangible but the intangible areas too.

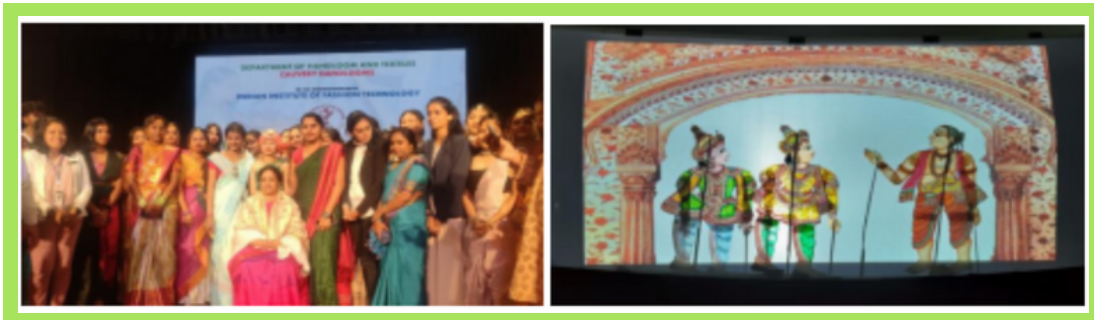
These are my own observation and calls upon a welcoming and healthy debate for posterity and my learnings too.

RANGAPUTTALI YASHODA PUPPETRY

YASHODA SHASIDHAR, BENGALURU



Rangaputtali Yashoda Puppetry (R), a renowned organization involved in rejuvenation of the ancient rural Art Leather Puppetry based in Bengaluru have recently celebrated the International Puppetry Day to signify the importance of protecting the diminishing rural Art. To mark the event, they have made a live Puppet show performed by the student children of the Organization in Bengaluru on 21st March 2024.



Rangaputtali Yashoda Puppetry (R) made a marvelous performance of the mythological story from “Ramayana” during the cultural events of the National Handloom Expo organized by the Karnataka State Cooperative Handloom Weavers Federation (Cauvery Handlooms) at KASSIA Bhavan, Vijayanagar, Bengaluru on 19th January 2024. Smt. Yashoda Shashidhar, the Director of the Organization was facilitated on the occasion.



Rangaputtali Yashoda Puppetry (R), an organization meant for rejuvenation of the Leather Puppetry Art lead by Smt. Yashoda Shashidhar, an international Puppeteer, performed a live show as an esteemed participant in the Bharath Rang Mahotsav, an international event organized by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. Their team has got an appreciation certificate for their participation.

PUTUL NACHER ASHOR (PNA)

SUBHASIS G. NEOGI, (CHANDIGARH)



Putul Nacher Ashor (PNA) The Puppet Theatre Chandigarh conducted Demonstration of Giant Puppets, Exhibition & Puppet W'shops (Daily) in the 5 day Ishara International Puppet Festival 2024 17th-21st Feb.

organised by Department of Cultural Affairs and Tagore Theatre Society, Chandigarh. PNA showed different elements in the festival everyday.

- First, we had a Puppet Exhibition where we showcased all varieties of puppets made with unique materials. PNA exhibited Giants, Bunraku, String, rod puppets, Indian Traditional & Contemporary Puppets.
- Second, we demonstrated functioning of different styles of Rod, String, Kachi Ghori, Giants, contemporary puppets to the students of Government Schools of Chandigarh everyday.
- Third, PNA conducted Puppet Making workshops everyday. Different types of bottle puppets and Muppets with waste materials were made everyday by person of every age groups.

STRINGS OF TRANSFORMATION: INSPIRING CHANGE THROUGH PUPPETRY

DR. MOUSHUMI BHATTACHARJEE, ASSAM



On March 21, 2024, a collaboration between Dr. Anamika Ray Memorial Trust and UNICEF Assam resulted in the formal release of a guidebook for capacity building for community influencers and facilitators on social and behavioral change. The release event was attended by several individuals including Shri Pramod Boro, the Hon'ble Chief of BTR, Mr. Dennis Christian Larsen, Chief of Social and Behavioral Change at UNICEF ICO, and Dr. Madhulika Jonathan, Chief of Field Office at UNICEF Assam and NE India, as well as others. As part of the collaboration, five episodes of puppetry were developed, which touched upon different topics such as education for girl child, trafficking, school dropouts, peace education, and menstrual health and hygiene. The puppet plays aimed to highlight social issues and educate the community on how to bring about positive change with regards to these important topics. The event was a significant step towards creating awareness and progress in these critical areas.

The collaboration between the Dr. Anamika Ray Memorial Trust and UNICEF Assam came about as a result of their shared commitment to promoting social and behavioral change, particularly in the context of community development and the well-being of children and adolescents. Both organizations recognized the need to address various pressing issues affecting society, such as education for girl child, trafficking, school dropouts, peace education, and menstrual health and hygiene.

With a mutual understanding of the importance of utilizing effective communication methods to bring about positive change, they decided to leverage the power of puppetry. Puppetry is a captivating form of storytelling that can engage and educate audiences, making it an ideal medium to convey important messages in an interactive and memorable manner.

UNICEF Assam, being a globally recognized organization working towards the welfare of children, saw the potential of collaborating with a trusted partner like the Dr. Anamika Ray Memorial Trust. The trust, was already active in social development initiatives, thereby showcased their expertise in using puppetry as a means of communication and behavior change.

Recognizing the value of combining their strengths and resources, both organizations came together to develop the guidebook for capacity building for community influencers and facilitators. This collaboration aimed to equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively use puppetry and create meaningful impact in their respective communities.

By uniting their efforts, the Dr. Anamika Ray Memorial Trust and UNICEF Assam demonstrated the power of partnerships in advancing social and behavioral change, ultimately working towards a better future for communities and the well-being of children in Assam and beyond. It has been proved over and over again that the use of puppetry as a communication medium has proven to be effective in conveying important messages and bringing about behavioral change. It offers a unique and engaging way to capture the attention of audiences, particularly children and communities, and effectively communicate key messages.

BURDWAN THE PUPPETEERS

PARTHA PRATIM PAUL, (BURDWAN)



On the verge of its journey of 24 years, Burdwan The Puppeteers outreached its activities throughout this year, especially concentrating on School Theatre. Puppeteers conducted several workshops with school children, canvassing the magical arena of modern puppetry and puppet making. Puppeteers were able to perform their different productions more than 20 occasions within the tenure in between Nov'23 and March'24. Burdwan The Puppeteers achieved the honour to perform in several prestigious platforms, such as Katkatha Fringe Festival in Delhi, PaschimBanga Nattya Utsav, Tripura International Puppet Utsav.



Performances and Activities are enlisted month wise below:

"BURDWAN THE PUPPETEERS" Performed its newly show **"MOON'S MAGIC"** directed by Tandra Kundu at two pre-primary school and 10 th Think Art Festival. We performed 15 th School show in last four months and three school workshops. Our two team members Anuradha and Tandra both participated at "Puppet Incubation Lab" by Kat katha Puppet Arts Trust and make a new production named **"VALMIKI"**. We completed 98 th Show of our production **"SAPLING"** which was made in a Workshop, mentored by Anurupa Roy and directed by Anuradha Paul in the year 2019. This year we celebrated **"WORLD PUPPETRY DAY"** with two newly show directed by our Sunday Class students. In last four months we participated two National and two International Puppet & Theatre Festival.



PUPPET PEOPLE ASSAM

DRISHNA KALITA, (ASSAM)



PuppetPeople Assam founded by Drishana Kalita, conducted a mass awareness campaign through puppet shows based on the topics of girls' education, substance abuse and child marriage among adolescent youth of villages near the Assam-Meghalaya border, in collaboration with Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Nidhi (RGVN) . The campaign held in March 2024 covered 10 villages of the area and was witnessed by over 5000 people from different tribes and communities.

During International Women's Day celebration week, Drishana Kalita, Founder, PuppetPeople Assam was invited as panel speaker at United Nations, New Delhi. The event also saw the book launch of "Hum:When Women Lead" which features Drishana Kalita and her puppetry team from Assam alongwith 85 'inspiring women leaders' from around the country, according to the United nations-Women, India. In the event, Drishana shared about her decade long journey of retelling Assamese folklore while using folk puppetry "**Putola Naas**" as a powerful medium to change the narrative of gender empowerment and societal acceptance of gender violence. The event was organised and attended by leading international organisations including UN Women and Ford Foundation, in addition to women leaders from across India.

TRIPURA PUPPET THEATRE

PRABHITANGSU DAS, (TRIPURA)



March 21st marked World Puppetry Day, and like every year, Tripura Puppet Theatre celebrated the occasion in their own HaripadaDas Performance Space, Tripura. The theme for this year was "The Climate." Keeping this idea in mind, the artists of Tripura Puppet Theatre presented a puppet show titled "Janmadin" (Birthday), emphasizing how trees sustain our ecosystem and environment and the necessity of planting on every birthday. The puppet show was directed by Prabhitangsu Das, with puppeteers including Kinjal Bhattacharya, Abheri Dam, Suhane Goswami, Arkadyuti Deb Roy, Tatsam Sarkar, Abhigyan De, Mayukh Bhattacharya, and Adrija De. A year-long puppet making and puppetry training program, KALA DEEKSHA, is initiated by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and the Sangeet Natak Akademi under the guidance of Shri Prabhitangsu Das with children. Alongside the golden jubilee celebration of Tripura Puppet Theatre, "A Puppet Show in Every Month by the children, for the children," was initiated and started from April 2023. For a year, every fourth Sunday of the month, these junior puppeteers presented puppet plays. This month marked their twelfth performance. Such an event organized by young artists is unheard of anywhere else in India.

TRIPURA PUPPET THEATRE

PRABHITANGSU DAS, (TRIPURA)



50th anniversary of Tripura Puppet Theatre

This year marked the illustrious 50th anniversary of Tripura Puppet Theatre. To commemorate this milestone, the organization orchestrated a magnificent puppet theatre festival at Rabindra Shatabarsiki Bhawan, Agartala, from February 26th to 28th, titled 'Tripura International Puppet Utsav 2024' TIPU '24. The overwhelming turnout of spectators over the three days once again underscored the vibrant cultural spirit of the people of Tripura, providing not only entertainment for children and youth but also evoking nostalgia among the elders. Herein lies the true success of the festival.

On February 26th, the festival commenced discreetly with a fully packed auditorium. The esteemed guests Sri Jishnu Debbarman (Former Deputy Chief Minister, Govt. Of Tripura), Sri Tinku Roy (Honorable Minister of the Dept. Of Youth and Sports, Govt. of Tripura), Sri Subrata Chakraborty (VC, SLCAC) and Padmashree Suresh Dutta. During their speeches in the inaugural programme all the guests emphasized the significance and relevance of puppet theatre in modern times, lauding the 'Tripura Puppet Theatre' organization for its commendable initiative as it is the first time numerous artists in the realm of puppet theatre , an international puppet festival of such a large scale, involving five countries, has never been organized before in East and Northeast India . The esteemed Padmashree Sri Suresh Dutta, was felicitated during this inaugural program.

TRIPURA PUPPET THEATRE

PRABHITANGSU DAS, (TRIPURA)

Following the inaugural ceremony, three puppet shows were presented on the first day. The initial production, 'Rani Lakshmibai', by 'Tripura Puppet Theatre, directed by Sri Prabhitanngsu Das, showcased a seamless blend of dedication and professionalism. The second show, 'Mona Bori Baay Re', by "Sri Krishna Putul Nritya Sangstha" Tripura, embodied the essence of primitive string puppetry. Lastly, 'Penguin In My Pocket', a production by the 'Kart Hunter Marionettes' group from America, featuring the solo performance of Mr. Kurtis Loran Hunter, captivated the audience with its astonishing stage presence.



The second day, February 27th, witnessed three more captivating puppet shows. Agartala experienced a surge in attendance, with many spectators standing due to limited seating availability. 'Neelbarna Sheyal' by 'Burdwan The Puppeteers, directed by Partha Pratim Paul, reimagined a famous story from the 'Panchatantra', blending tradition with contemporary elements flawlessly. 'Raja O Kathbirali', entirely performed by the by child artists of Tripura Puppet Theatre, under the direction of Riman Das, Litan Das, and Dipankar Bhattacharya, exemplified the organization's mission to instill a love for puppetry in the younger generation. The third show, 'Dustu Rakhal', by Dhaka Puppet Theatre of Bangladesh, directed by Arthur Baptist, garnered great success through its exceptional presentation and delightful comedic elements.

TRIPURA PUPPET THEATRE

PRABHITANGSU DAS, (TRIPURA)



On the final day of the festival, February 28th, in the morning session there was a seminar topic - **Puppetry and Theatre : Effective**. Tools of Learning and Awareness . In the evening four shows graced the stage. Anuradha Paul and Tandra Kundu of Budwan The Puppeteers performed their 98th performance of **'Sapling'**. **'Images of Truth - Satya Ki Pratirup'** by 'Ishara Puppet Theatre Trust' from New Delhi, directed by the legendary Padmashree Dadi Padamjee, mesmerized the audience with its portrayal of Mahatma Gandhi's life and philosophy. **'Beni Putul'** traditional glove puppet by Rampada Gharai of West Bengal showcased the essence of Bengal's folk culture, while **'Kathputli Nritya'** by Sri Ajit Bhatt of Rajasthan was driven by outstanding music. The festival's grand finale was **'Mamulengo De La Mancha'** by **'Traspusteros Teatro'** group from Spain/Brazil, directed by Isabela Brochado. This musical drama, blending the puppet cultures of Spain and Brazil, left spectators awestruck with its exceptional shadow work, lighting effects, and skillful glove puppetry, delivering an entertaining and satirical experience.

OUR MEMBERS 2024

UNIMA PUPPETEERS TRUST - INDIA



AJEET BHAT



ANIL DUTH



ANKIT RAVANI



ANURUPA ROY
(Trustee)



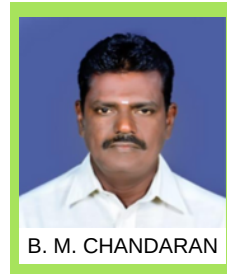
ASHA



DR. ATUL SINHA



AVINASH KUMAR



B. M. CHANDARAN



BINITA DEVI



CHANDNI ZALA



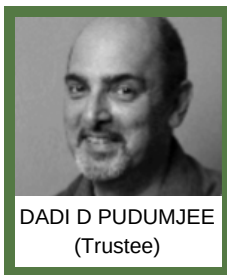
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DEVIDAS H A



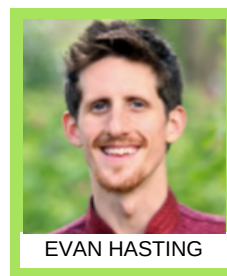
DHARAMENDRA A



DRISHNA KALITA



DR. MOUSHUMI B



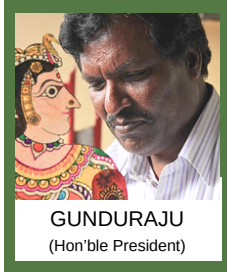
EVAN HASTING

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UNIMA PUPPETEERS TRUST - INDIA



GARIMA ARYA



GUNDURAJU
(Hon'ble President)



JAGANNATH



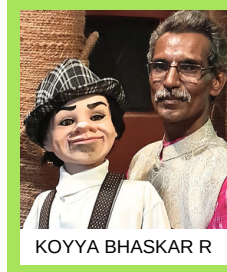
KAPIL DEV



KAREN SMITH



KHURSHID SHIEK



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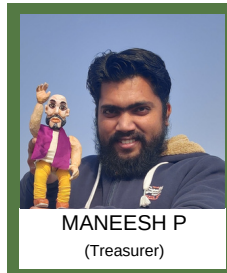
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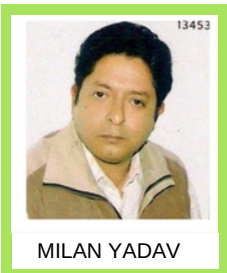
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(Treasurer)



MANSINH ZALA



MILAN YADAV



MD SHAMEEM



NITU KUMARI



PADMINI R
(Gen. Secretary)



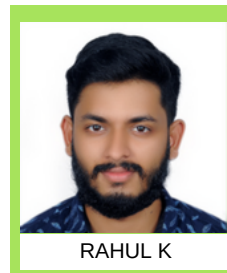
PARTHA P PAUL



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UNIMA PUPPETEERS TRUST - INDIA



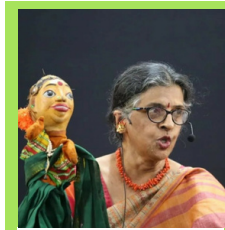
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RANJANA PANDEY
(Managing Trustee)



RATNAMALA NORI



RAVI BHATT



REKHA VYAS



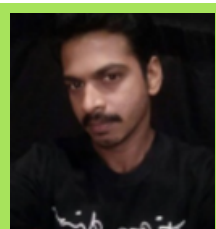
RIDHI AGGARWAL



RINTI SENGUPTA



S A KRISHNAIAH



SAJEEESH PULAVAR



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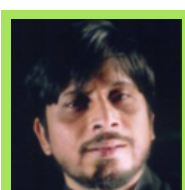
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MESSAGE: WORLD PUPPETRY DAY

MS. INES PASIC

Ines Pasic

Of Bosnian origin, after finishing her studies at the Sarajevo Conservatory, she met her theatre teacher and partner Hugo Suarez Flores. Interested in the expressive possibilities of each part of the body, they developed their own style and language, combining manipulation, mime and dance techniques. Hugo and Ines's productions were presented at more than four hundred international festivals in Japan, USA, Canada, France, Spain, Brazil, Argentina (among some), and were awarded various prizes from critics and audiences.

As soon as the activities in Peru have premiered and had the seasons of their productions in Alliance Française theaters (Lima and Cuzco), San Isidro Catholic Cultural Center, Lima Municipal Theater, Peruvian-North American Cultural Center (IPNA), Ricardo Palma Cultural Center, British Peruvian Cultural Center e.t.c.

Hugo Suárez, with whom she studied mime techniques and founded Hugo and Ines Theater in 1986. In 2003, Ines Pasic founded Gaia Theater and directed "The Worlds of Fingerman".

This show has participated and has been praised in several festivals around the world.

"The Worlds of Fingerman" has been the winner of the MASQUE award from the Academy of Performing Arts of Quebec - Canada, as the best foreign production of the year 2006 - 2007.

In 2011 she directs "Red Tread" which has been presented in Lima and Buenos Aires. Since 2012, she has been touring with the solo show "From the Blue", which has won the audience award as the best show at FIL (international festival of scenic languages) in Rio de Janeiro.

In 2015, the International Festival of Animated Forms Firas Titelles Leida, Catalonia, where she presented "From the Blue!", awarded her the prize for best performer.

Some of the places where she has taught courses for professionals have been at the international festival Bonecos do mundo Brasil 2013, 2014, the Seville International Puppet Festival 2015, Eugene O'Neill Performing Arts Center in USA Connecticut 2015.

In September 2015 the company, of which "Teatro Hugo and Ines" is co-founder, received "Sirena de oro", recognition that the international figure theater festival in Italy, "Arrivano del mare", awards each year to the people and institutions that have left their mark on the development of figure theatre. Until today. Ines Pasic has directed and created shows: The "Worlds of Fingerman", "Red Thread", "From Blue", "Odyssey" and "Cabaret Gaia".

"Body Odissey" and "About Tenderness" are works co-produced and created for the Torino International PIP Festival and Mostar Puppet Theater in 2019.

In all productions the accent is placed on the investigation of metaphysical concepts. Gaia theater explores different languages of body expression such as mime, dance, animation, music and with minimal use of verbal text.

Another important point for the artist is to highlight the sensitivity and feminine gaze on the histories of the world that, until recently, were analyzed and interpreted almost exclusively from the point of view of patriarchal culture.

Circular and ecological vision in her works reflects the yearning towards the possibility of being a responsible creator of her individual and collective reality.

WPD 2024

UNIMA INTERNATIONAL



Ines Pasic

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WPD 2024

UNIMA INTERNATIONAL



Greetings on behalf of UNIMA worldwide to all puppeteers for the World Puppetry Day!

For my dear colleagues, walkers of the shared dream, interpreters of the timeless actuality...

We are people who exercise one of the humblest professions. The paradox is that, despite this, we converse, debate, and rage with the divine world with the intimacy and frankness of an old married couple.

Every time a wooden head comes to life in our hands or strings of a puppet reaffirm the connection between all living things, we rediscover ourselves as protagonists of the story represented. Every time an animated object reveals the memories that inhabit us or the arcane mysteries become present in a play of light and shadow, our historical time is betrothed to the timeless. When the characters that live on the surface of our skin take possession of parts of our body, we discover that a man contains within himself the whole of humanity. Beyond all the possible forms of our art, when we give ourselves to the game with puppets, we are officiating an ancient ritual. We make palpable and visible what is not, and at the same time, we make the puppeteer and the audience experience their own transcendence.

We are living in wonderful and at the same time frightening times, but wasn't it always like this? Like humanity, are we walking on the edge of extinction itself or perhaps we were never this close to making Prometheus' fire our own? Such irreverence! Is it a sign of our stupidity or a quantum leap in our consciousness? Will we reach the critical mass that will bring about the necessary change, or will we be diminished by inertia, misinformation, or fear?! How many answers and proposals can we give and how many can we realize?! Can puppets save the world from climate change, wars, or slavery? I don't know! The world is what it is, and there are no guarantees for anyone or anything.

As a wonderful poet said, "you make the path by walking". What I know, from experience and practice of this wonderful art, is that puppets are the light in the darkness, the sun behind the clouds of human tragicomedy, the shelter from the storms of badly wounded hearts. They are an invitation to live with enthusiasm and fight for a better version of oneself. They strip us of conveniences and "politically correct" things. They take away the masks of gravity of those who have already lived and know it all. They teach us to play like children, without expectations or worries. They are our adventure, our heaven, and our firm steps on earth. What better gift to give to the world and to oneself than the awareness of one's own humanity!

Hand in hand with our puppets let's make a "good face to the times to come" because they are an excellent pretext to take the puppets out of the trunks and make a good show.

Happy World Puppet Day



WPD 2024 POSTER

ARTIST: PARK LI (TAIWAN)(李公元)



I am an elementary school art teacher from Taiwan. Since childhood, I have had a passion for doodling, daydreaming, strolling, and photography. I have been involved in hand puppet shows with students for 17 years, deeply fascinated by the art of puppetry.

The school I used to work in had a Taiwanese children's traditional puppet show troupe. I used to perform with the children in this troupe. We have performed in Canada, the United States, Japan, China, Australia and other places. Taiwan's puppet show is a very exciting one. Performing arts, I am very proud that we have such beautiful puppetry performing arts.

I am very happy to have the opportunity to create poster of the World Puppetry Day. I think puppetry is a beautiful performing art in the world, full of surprises and imagination. I hope my pictures can give everyone this feeling.

