	<p>The official newsletter of <b>San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild</b> Looking for updates and missed information? Check for it at <i>SFBAPG.ORG</i></p> <p><i>SFBAGP is a charter guild of the Puppeteers of America, Inc., a non-profit tax exempt organization</i></p>
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## November 2021 Newsletter



## Kamela Portuges - 1963-2021

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## Join Us for our Virtual November Meeting with Swazzle

On Saturday afternoon, November 6<sup>th</sup> from 3-5pm we'll have a special Virtual November Meeting with Guild members **Patrick and Sean Johnson** of **Swazzle**.

### Guild Board and Officers

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**Swizzle** is a CA-based puppet company offering custom-designed and-built puppets, theatrical and custom rental puppets, and live puppet shows. Their team of professional puppet designers and builders has constructed custom puppets for film, television, new media and the stage. Some notable projects include Waffles and Mochi on Netflix, Crank Yankers on Comedy Central, Little Mermaid Live on ABC and The Pee-wee Herman Show on Broadway. Their customizable hand puppets have been rented to such television shows as Disney Channel's A.N.T. Farm, Nickelodeon's The Thundermans and National Geographic's Now We Know, as well as various web series and commercials.

### **How to Join this Zoom Event**

This **free event** is **only available to current members** of the Guild, you can attend by renewing or joining at [SFBAPG.org/Join](https://SFBAPG.org/Join). Joining or renewing now will also extend your membership until the end of **2022**.

All current members will receive an **email invite to this Zoom event Monday Nov 1st, and a reminder Friday November 5th** with the link.

**This event will be recorded**, If you can join us live you will be provided a link to the recording of the tour and workshop.

### **Agenda**

- Meeting Starts at 3:00.
- 3 - 3:05 General meet and greet.
- 3:05-3:10 - Officer introductions and announcements.
- 3:10 - Introduction to Swizzle
- 3:15 - Tour of Swizzle Studio followed by Workshop of puppet building techniques.
- Between 4:30 and 5:00 Q&A





## **Swazzle tour and puppet building demonstration**

Swazzle (<http://swazzle.com>) co-owners Sean and Patrick Johnson will give SFBAPG members an exclusive virtual tour of the Swazzle Puppet Studio. Participants will get an exclusive peek behind the curtain of the workshop that built puppets for Crank Yankers, Kidding, Waffles and Mochi and more! Sean and Patrick will help demystify the puppet building process as they show the tools and materials every puppet builder should have.

Following the tour Sean and Patrick will lead guild members in a special puppet building demonstration where they will illustrate an essential and often overlooked step in the puppet building process. Participants will learn how to turn a 2-D puppet design into a 3-D foam puppet mock-up. Understanding this process is the key to creating original characters out of patterned sheet foam.



More information about Swazzle and great posts filled with building tips and inspirations are on online:

Website: [www.swazzle.com](http://www.swazzle.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Swazzle/](https://www.facebook.com/Swazzle/)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/swazzlepuppetstudio/](https://www.instagram.com/swazzlepuppetstudio/)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/SwazzleAudreyTwo](https://www.youtube.com/user/SwazzleAudreyTwo)

TikTok: [www.tiktok.com/@swazzlepuppetstudio](https://www.tiktok.com/@swazzlepuppetstudio)



## **Interested in Helping Programming?**

Would you like to suggest a program, bring your ideas, and discuss interests for Guild meeting? Our monthly programming meeting happens in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Please contact Nao Kobayashi [programming@sfbapg.org](mailto:programming@sfbapg.org) if you are interested.

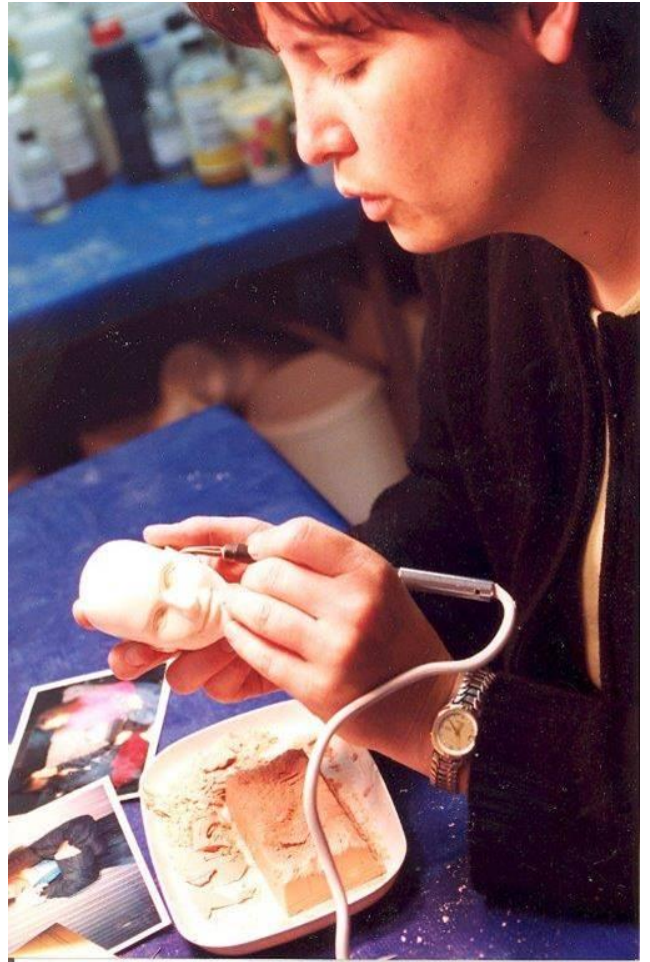
## In Memoriam, Kamela Portuges

Kamela Portuges-Robbins (1963-2021) was a Renaissance woman; a talented puppeteer, gifted artist and passionate teacher. She was born in Manteca, and grew up mostly in Burney Falls until, as a teen, she moved to the house that she helped her father build in Cottonwood.

Kamela graduated from high school two years early, and at age 16, she started her freshman year at Humboldt State University. By the time she was 20, she had earned a Masters degree in Theater, and a second degree in Marketing. To our knowledge, she never made use of the Marketing, but she took to puppetry and the theater with a drive rarely seen outside those professions. Before turning 30, Kamela had received 3 regional Emmys for her work, as a designer, writer and puppeteer.

She met her business partner, Lee Armstrong, at a Puppet Guild workshop in 1986. They formed Images in Motion Inc. in 1989 and her husband, Kieron Robbins, joined the company in 2002.

For over 30 years, she was the production designer at Images in Motion, giving their puppets a unique look. She designed sets, wrote scripts, directed, and edited. She was fearless in acquiring skills as varied as welding and fabrication, building radio control mechanisms, computer modeling, and 3D printer repair. Commercial clients included Pixar, Lucas Films, Disney, Academy of Science (San Francisco), Monterey Bay Aquarium, Leapfrog Toys, Mattel, Crayola, and many others.





Her film credits include *The Fly 2*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Being John Malkovich*, *Monkeybone*, *BiCentennial Man*, *Life Aquatic*, *Pushing Dead*, and *The Sky Is Everywhere*, plus numerous commercials.

Kamela was a Past President of SFBAPG and taught workshops on puppet construction and performance at local, regional and national festivals.

In recent years, she taught a large lecture course to 300 students at UC Santa Cruz on script writing called *Pixar: Story Matters*, using Pixar's animated movies as the model.



She also taught workshops to hundreds of fire fighters, teachers, librarians and students. She was an amazing mentor to many, sharing her love of the arts with anyone who had an interest.

Kamela Portuges-Robbins passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in Eureka on October 21, 2021, of natural causes. She is survived by her husband, Kieron Robbins and her sister and brother-in-law, Shelly and Odd Rustand and niece, Aubrey Rustand. There will be a celebration of life in the future, but no date has been set yet.

Donations can be made in her memory through SFBAPG, to further the studies of Guild puppeteers. [https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted\\_button\\_id=6MBSK7QLK24K4](https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=6MBSK7QLK24K4)

Kamela considered being able to do what she loved her greatest accomplishment. She would be disappointed to leave us so soon. She had so much she still wanted to do!

-We'd like to gratefully acknowledge the use of excerpts from *A Century of California Puppetry* by Randal J. Metz and Kevin Menegus.



**Editor's note:** Kamela was a long time guild member who taught numerous guild workshops, served as guild president, and was supportive of so many of us in so many ways. She will be sorely missed. I know that our members will join us in expressing our deepest sympathy to her family, her colleagues at Images in Motion, and her husband, Kieron. Photo of Kamela with Michael (your editor) and Valerie Nelson by Greg Hayes at the Guild 50th Gala. Photos below shared by Lee Armstrong.



**Kamela and Images in Motion gang at a birthday celebration. With (back row L to R) Mary Nagler, Adie Valavanis, Lee Armstrong, Kieron Robbins and, front row, Bill Ferguson and Kamela.**





**Awards! Kamela, shown here with guild co-founder Mike Oznowicz (to her left), Bill Ferguson and Lee Armstrong.**



To Right, above, Kamela with long time friend and collaborator Mike Wick.

To Right, Lee and Kamela at a Puppeteers of America Festival in Berkeley in the 1990s. Below, Kamala's favorite puppet, now, sadly, missing her puppeteer.



## Giant Puppeteer Volunteers Wanted

No experience needed. On December 10, Michael and Valerie of the Vallejo Giant Puppet Project have been asked to bring out the giant Mariano and Benicia Vallejo puppets for the grand opening of an art stair of mosaics in Vallejo. The ribbon cutting will take place around 5pm on December 10th. Each of the two puppets takes 3 puppeteers, and this event will be much shorter in both time and distance than the puppets' normal July 4 parade journey. The puppets are lightweight at about 17 lbs each and have a structure that allows them to stand, self-supported with the puppeteer inside for resting moments. Join us and become a part of history! If interested, let Michael and Valerie know at [mail@magicalmoonshine.org](mailto:mail@magicalmoonshine.org).



Send newsletter items to [newsletter@sfbapg.org](mailto:newsletter@sfbapg.org)- Deadline is generally the last day of each month