



The official newsletter of
San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild
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From the President

Hi Guild Friends

Would you like to become more active in our Guild and have a voice in programming and <https://www.msn.com/en-us/feedevents?> We have regular programming and board meetings, which any Guild member can attend to get the latest news and contribute your ideas.

Our next Board meeting will be on Nov 4th at Glynn Tree Barlett's home, 526 Ohio Street, Vallejo, before Mary's workshop 10:15-11:30ish. If you'd like to attend, in person or zoom, please contact president@sfbapg.org.

Programming meets the first Tues of the month on Zoom, so the next Programming meeting is Nov 5th from 6:30-7:30. If you'd like to attend, please contact Marisol Himmel at programming@sfbapg.org.

We are planning a Bay Area Puppetry Festival this summer, probably one or two days. The Puppet Festival Planning Meeting is Tues. 11/14 from 7:30-8:30. We are still considering ideas for a place to hold this Festival, such as a Bay Area Community Center, College, Church, Library, Museum, Theater, or Unusual Space, etc. which has...

- A theater or large room with good acoustics.
- Classrooms for workshops. If possible, some with good ventilation for gluing, or easily accessed outdoor area.
- Public space for puppet exhibit
- Cafe, dining room or close to a variety of restaurants
- Central location, accessible ideally by public transit

Guild Board and Officers

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- Inexpensive rent or a share of the ticket sales

If you have ideas for locations or would like to join the 70th Anniversary Committee, please contact president@sfbapg.org. We welcome your ideas!

Lee Armstrong



Happy Dia de los Muertos!

Here's what's happening in November:

Nov 4th and 5th - Tabletop Puppet Building Workshop with Mary Nagler in Vallejo

Nov 7th - Programming Meeting via Zoom 6:30pm We will be planning the next phase of the preparations for our Puppetathlon 2024!

Nov 17th - Open Studio Virtual Show-and-Tell Register here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050E4BAEAB2AA7FC1-44903805-open>

Please send in any other puppet happenings you'd like to share to ModdyPuppets@Yahoo.com

Your Guild Library

Thanks Yous & Stan Winston Subscription Series

Thank you to Nao Kobayashi and Herbert Lange for their thoughtful book donations.

Nao's book is *Making & Manipulating Marionettes* by David Currell. "This is a comprehensive guide to the design, construction and control of string puppets, a craft and performance art that has fascinated audiences for over two thousand years. Topics covered include: An introduction to the marionette tradition and the principles and practicalities of marionette design Advice on materials and methods for carving, modelling and casting puppet parts Step-by-step instructions for the construction of human and animal marionettes using traditional techniques and latest materials Detailed explanations for marionette control, stringing and manipulation Secrets for achieving a wide range of special effects and traditional acts, tricks and transformations"

Herbert, our Guild member living in Germany, sent us "The Puppet Wrangler" by Vicki Grant. This is a very funny book, which my friend Cheryl Wagner says is "Wildly funny. Brutally honest. Surreal and tender." It tells the story of Telly Mercer who is shy and quiet, used to living in the shadow of her older sister, Bess. Then she finds herself on the set of a puppet show, staying out of the way of her overstressed aunt Kathleen. One evening she makes a surprising discovery that launches her on an adventure with an unpredictable and angry puppet.

The Stan Winston School of Character Arts is again available through the Guild Library. If you aren't familiar with this site, it's the world's premier online destination for learning the art and technology of character creation from Hollywood's leading artists and technical wizards. It has a puppet section with notable builders and performers. To get familiar with the puppet tutorials available, go to <https://www.stanwinstonschool.com/>. Then click on the search feature (magnifying glass on the upper right) and type in "puppets." However, you can also visit videos on creature fabrication, stop motion armatures, wiggling, making eyeballs and all sorts of interesting crafts!

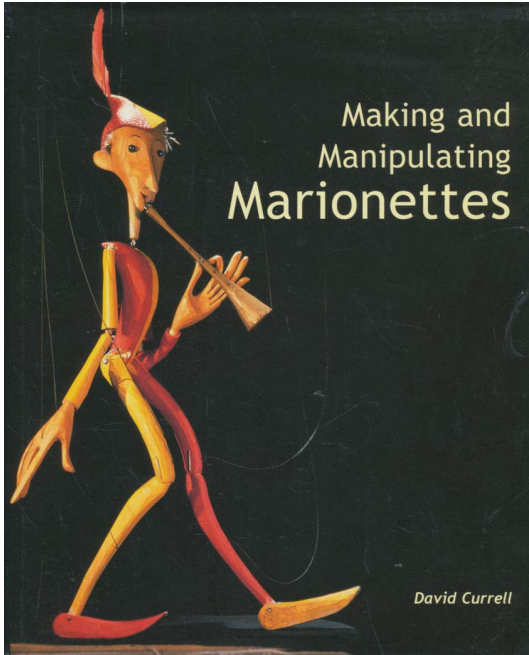
Right now, this subscription is available to check out. Each Guild member can request a 10 day check out and you can always check out another checkout, when available. Contact Lee at library@sfbapg.org, and she will provide you with the password. If the subscription is checked out, you'll go on the waitlist for the next available check out. Don't delay, contact Lee today!

If you'd like to get started immediately with these amazing tutorials and the Guild subscription is already checked out, you can sign up at <https://www.stanwinstonschool.com/> for a free 7-day trial.

100's of courses available. Check out Pathways, <https://www.stanwinstonschool.com/pathways>, with groups of courses: Basic Design, Basic Painting, Puppetry, Molding and Casting, Mechanical and Animatronics, Filmmaking, Fabrication Basics, etc. These courses open new doors and possibilities!

The Guild Library is a treasure trove of hundreds of books on puppetry. History of puppets, construction, stages, puppets in education, etc. It's now easy to see what books are available by going to <https://sfbapg.org/library-online/>. Or if at www.sfbapg.org select Resources, then Library.

Library borrowers need to have been members for at least 6 months. You can peruse the catalogue then request books by emailing Lee Armstrong at library@sfbapg.org. They will be brought to the next "in person" event. If you have a library book to return,



Manual Cinema's Unique Vision of "Frankenstein"

Mary Nagler

During Covid, Manual Cinema performed "A Christmas Carol" via zoom for our Holiday party. A number of Guild members and puppeteers attended their performance on Oct 28 at the Mondavi Center at UC Davis. Afterwards, they invited the whole audience up on stage to see how the magic was created. Hundreds of people took the backstage tour which was very generous of the Manual Cinema troupe to provide. Here are some enthusiastic comments and photos of the back stage visit.

Saw Manual Cinema's beautiful performance of FRANKENSTEIN at UC Davis on Sunday! Absolutely stunning! Incredible female ensemble! – Heather Gobbee

It was such a great show. Loved the backstage tour! B&W for all! Good! Pam Wade
Merging the personal life of Mary Shelly and her grief at the loss of her child with the birth of Frankenstein made for a powerful script. The ability to see the shadows on a raised screen, while viewing the puppeteers below, manipulating images on four overhead projectors and live video cameras was fascinating. Like being behind the screen and in front of it at the same time. – Lee Armstrong

One of the delights of coming for my visit was the opportunity to see one of my favorite puppet companies; Manual Cinema at UC Davis. I have seen them perform several times and have had the opportunity to see how they do many of their amazing shadow illusions by attending a workshop they did in conjunction with their

performance in Portland. Their production of Frankenstein held many surprises, and their use of many different puppet styles was intriguing both because of how it was presented on their large screen, and how they were doing it right before our eyes! Magical! -

If you'd like to know about MC's technique, there's an excellent 54 minute video explaining

their method, provided by the SF Exploratorium

<https://www.exploratorium.edu/video/behind-scenes-manual-cinema>



Images of Manual
Cinema and their
techniques.

Lambe Lambe Workshop

Marisol Himmel

I had the privilege of attending Puppet Soup's Lambe Lambe virtual workshop thanks to a scholarship from the National Capital Puppetry Guild. This four week course was attended by puppeteers from all around the world, from Ontario to Saudi Arabia. It consisted of slideshows, videos, live tutoring, and my favorite: collaborative puppet exercises that really tested my range of puppetry motion and emotion and led to some unexpected discoveries not only about puppetry but also about myself.

Over the course of this unique online workshop we learned about the origins of Teatro Lambe Lambe, its roots in Brazil (where our instructor Fagner Gastaldon is from) and

created our very own Lambe Lambe theater box.

We were encouraged to find inspiration in something personal for our piece and put as much of ourselves into it as we dared. I struggled for two whole weeks to narrow down my ideas. I finally landed on using my name as the inspiration for the piece. “Marisol” means “Sea and Sun” in Spanish. That narrowed down my setting. Around the same time, I was reminded of a story from Nayarit, Mexico of a woman whose fiancé was lost at sea only three days before their wedding. The woman waited on the pier in her wedding gown for her love to return, and continued to do so for years, earning the moniker: “The Madwoman of the pier”. This was the story I would tell in my show!

Lambe Lambe shows are presented using miniature puppets or objects or occasionally with the hands of the puppeteer as characters themselves. This proved to be a true challenge for me. As a ventriloquist I am able to lend expression to my interactions with the puppet with my own facial expressions. Ventriloquy by its very nature is very dialogue dependent.

I was entirely out of my comfort zone not speaking and not being seen, telling a sad story using only my hands.

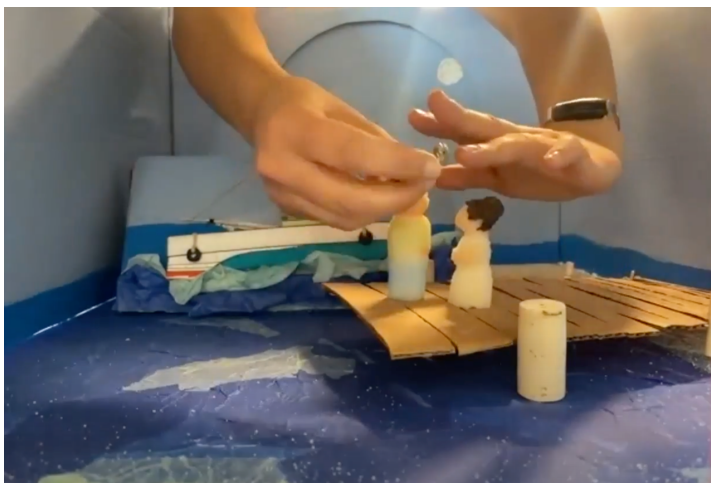
This true story of Rebeca Mendez Jimenez and her long lost love, Manuel, was related by Rebeca herself to Fher Olivera, lead singer of Mexican pop/rock band, Maná. The band immortalized her story in the song “El Muelle de San Blas” which was released in 1997. The song turned out to be a big hit for the band and it played on the radio throughout my adolescence.

The chorus of the song makes repeated use of the word “Sola” (she’s alone). It spoke to me as a young teen when my friends moved away; as a young adult when my sister got married; and most recently during the Covid-19 pandemic. Though the setting is a happy one and the song is somewhat upbeat, the lyrics paint a different picture, one I wanted to explore and translate into movement. Lambe Lambe shows are traditionally short, usually 2 - 5 minutes in length, so why not use the song as the sound track for my theater box performance?



I got to I got to work creating the scenery, the sea, the sun, the boat, and (most importantly) the pier.

Through this workshop I was introduced to a new sculpting material, Milliput, which Fagner taught us to use and guided us in creating a



modified czech style marionette puppet. I tried using Milliput to create the figures for my Lambe Lambe and did create prototypes that I used to practice and lay out my pacing, but ultimately I decided to carve my figures out of foam. This would allow me to manipulate the figures differently and create some transitions similar to sleight of hand magic.

Having such tiny puppets meant my movements had to be smaller and more meaningful. My puppets have no facial features. How would I convey his love for her? How would I show the depth of her sadness? I would have to literally lend a hand. I would slide a ring onto my finger to show their relationship. I would wring them to show her concern as the boat left.



While there is a lot of freedom in Lambe Lambe to experiment within the minimal space and to find clarity within your story, the most important aspect is the fluidity in which the show is performed. This proved a true test on the final day of the workshop when we were to present our Lambe Lambe in front of a live Zoom audience of not only our fellow attendees, but their and my invited guests. Being nervous doesn't exactly help with fluidity. When it was my turn and the spotlight was on the inside of my box theater, I took a breath to steady my hands before beginning and was reminded of a point that our instructor Fagner repeated many times throughout the course: "Share your breath with the puppet, even in the moments of stillness,"

I am so grateful for the opportunity to take part in such an immersive class. I feel that I grew as a puppeteer and as an

artist. I have found that my progress in puppetry has come as a quieting of sorts. It's tempting as a beginner to kermit-arm-flail through every puppet performance, but the real magic of puppetry can be found in the pauses; the quiet moments that allow the audience to FEEL. Those are the moments in which the puppet is truly alive.



Walking with Amal in Washington DC

You may have seen in the news, or on Facebook, the coverage of a twelve-foot-tall puppet depiction of an eight-year-old Syrian Refugee girlchild named Little Amal. She is “Walking” across the world and is currently in America to bring attention to the plight of refugee children the world over. I learned she would soon be coming to the Washington DC area and would be walking down Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Capitol. I decided to walk with her, in support of her cause and in support of the puppeteers who are making this journey with her.

The walk was sponsored by The Laboratory for Global Performance & Politics, The LAB, along with The Collaboration on Global Children’s Issues. Each city on “The Walk” has a theme, and this walk’s theme was Little Shoes, Big Journeys. They were looking for people with performance experience to volunteer to help. They were asking for people to donate shoes, that would be sent to refugee children and parents in the refugee camps, and for people to come walk with Amal, not as a demonstration, or a protest but as a procession to welcome her to the city. I signed up to help.

En route, the Crowd would be making an "Ocean" for Amal to cross of silver survival space blankets that would later be donated to a homeless shelter.

I could not make the rehearsals, so I went early on the big day and was tasked with taking hundreds of silver blankets, and their instructions, out of their little Ziplock baggies, so we wouldn't leave a trail of trash to the Capitol! I handed out flyers and invited passers by to join us and soon a large crowd began to assemble.

There were about seven musicians playing Dixie tunes and when Little Amal appeared on the scene, the tone became very exuberant, and we started off. I waved my silver blanket as part of the sea and with everyone else tried to capture the moment with my phone! Little Amal stopped and danced a few times, and I was impressed at her presence and the astute manipulation by her stilt walking main puppeteer and his two assistants on her hands. Her main puppeteer was encased in her basket-like torso for good visibility and a welcome breeze. He was sunburned by the end, and I learned that he was used to being on her feet for usually a half hour to forty minutes, but we had passed that long ago. At one point along the route we made a storm with our blankets, and Little Amal held onto a streetlamp until it died down. Then we continued on.

At the end of the procession, multiple rings of shoes greeted us around a stage for the speeches. A Somali woman who had been a refugee as a child recited a moving poem of her experiences and three Senators greeted Little Amal personally. The Performing troupe, peopled by a number of new friends from the National Capitol Puppetry Guild (Of which I am a member) picked up small shoes and held them to their ears like they were listening to a phone call, as the voices of refugee children were heard talking about their experiences. It was a very moving experience. I was glad I came.

As the crowd dispersed and Little Amal left to give her puppeteers a well-deserved rest, I collected space blankets from the crowd and helped gather up the shoes. I was glad to have walked with Little Amal on this small part of her global journey and marveled at the unique experience her puppeteers have -traveling all over the globe doing a good work on behalf of the children displaced by so much unrest. Her presence was large and powerful and made me feel proud to be a puppeteer.

(PS. I am greatly looking forward to the workshop this coming weekend and a chance to see my dear old friends and make some new ones!! I hope to see you there!) –
Mary Nagler



Member News

Dalrymple and the Wild Daimons took to the stage on October, Friday the 13th at Harlows in Sacramento, California performing a Mystical Puppet Rock Opera entitled, S ist Fur Stonehenge as part of a Spinal Tap Tribute showcase.

Remember the famous scene in Spinal Tap where the band shows up to a gig and the marquee boldly proclaims~ PUPPET SHOW! and underneath almost as an afterthought,
(with spinal tap)?

This inspired the promoters of the Spinal Sac event to ensure the marquee at Harlows also reflected that a puppet show was most definitely coming to town.

Dalrymple and the Wild Daimons headlined the evening with a fully realized Stonehenge puppet show. Including Rumpelstilzchen confounding the crowd with myth-laden stonehenge riddles and Dortchen Wild belting out an operatic stonehenge meditation class where she helped the audience to magically produce the stone of their own inner stonehenge and then be able to physically touch it. The idea behind the performance piece was to provide a transformational experience of empowerment for the audience.

The 4 piece ensemble comprised of Dalrymple MacAlpin: puppeteer, vocals, guitar, piano, harp, Michael Wronski: upright and electric bass, Cory Van Kol: Drums,percussion and Jesse Krautkramer: tenor sax and synthesizer, are based in Nevada City, California and will next appear live on, November 18th in Grass Valley at the Un-Church, debuting another Mystical Puppet Rock Opera entitled, The Golden Thread.



More Member News:

A new video from Mr. Elephant - Music and Books for Kids- Full video can be seen on the Mr. Elephant YouTube channel!



Who's Under the Puppet? (meet our members)

Heather Gobbée relocated from Brooklyn, NY to Sonoma California in 2019 right before the Pandemic hit. Heather is a Movement educator, yogi, professional actor & creative visionary. With a Masters Degree in Acting from Brandeis University, CA Teaching Certification in Theatre Arts, and extensive certifications in yoga & yoga therapy for both children and adults, she's decided to join the Puppet Guild and bring these talents to her puppetry. She has taken courses with Pam Severns, Alex Griffin, and David Fino. She LOVES physical comedy and has had the pleasure of two immersion workshops with Bill Irwin. Heather is very excited to participate in Mary Nagler's Puppetathlon building workshop this weekend (Nov 4-5) and was thrilled to be a volunteer puppeteer on Images in Motion's Halloween shoot.

"Puppets can speak volumes when words fall short. They help humans address social, emotional and behavioral issues, assist the resolution of traumas, cultivate awareness and encourage PLAY. I want to address some hot topics through the body and puppetry with a sense of compassion and humor. I believe in the power of big belly laughs and honking clown noses around serious issues." Heather's current projects involve visually & physically representing how humans make mind/body connections...how they fall in and out of in harmful false narratives, and their potential harm on our humanity.

Heather is also interested in learning more about the technical and mechanical aspects of building large puppets. She would like to create workshops in CA and NY,

where youth can engage in building large puppets to facilitate self expression, assist them in the navigation of every-day life, and the overwhelming stress of global issues. "The bigger the issue...the larger the puppet!" Heather is very interested in meeting other Guild members who would like to collaborate on projects.



Heather Gobbie (write up above)



Ricki Vincent (write up below)

The Puppetry Institute in Santa Cruz The Puppetry Institute <https://www.thepuppetryinstitute.org> is an amazing space, tucked inside the Capitola Mall. I was welcomed in by **Ricki Vincent** who showed me the setup, complete with a puppet building station, a video setup, colorful furs stacked high and other materials to encourage people of all ages to build a puppet and explore a 3D world. Ricki is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Institute, a non-profit art center which brings art to all, including under-served and at-risk youth. Ricki has had a colorful career in the arts. At age 4, with his grandmother's help, he constructed his first puppet. A precocious eight-year-old, he built puppets and staged puppet shows for paying audiences. As an adult, he ran a successful tattoo shop, produced a popular public access TV show and created avant-garde theater. In 2017, as a resident artist at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, he started the pilot program "The Puppetry Institute." Check out the Puppet Workshops, Live Dragon Shows, Dragon Academy and more. Ricki would like to connect with Bay Area puppeteers, both pro and amateur who are interested in seeing his work, sharing their own or might like to volunteer at the Institute.

If you'd like to share your story in Meet The Members, contact Lee Armstrong, Guild Librarian library@sfbapg.org

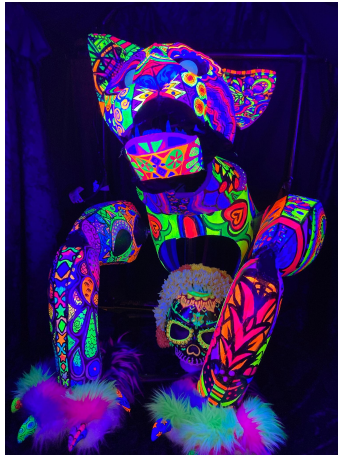
And Ricki Vincent just had an event! (see above writeup)

Here's some pics from The Puppetry Institutes Halloween event in Capitola. Puppets were created people lined up to feed their kids to our big Audrey II CHONK THE CHUPACABRA made a glorious debut and no goats were harmed Feel free to use any of the pics you'd like.

Happy Halloween

--

Ricki Vincent, Artistic Director
The Puppetry Institute of Santa Cruz
making the world a cooler place... one puppet at a time!
<https://www.facebook.com/ThePuppetryInstitute/>
<https://www.thepuppetryinstitute.org/>



More Member News: Maker' Faire in Vallejo

Puppets and guild members were well represented at the Maker Faire on Mare Island, Vallejo, last month. Magical Moonshine Theatre brought their giant osprey and fish. They were assisted by Tree Bartlett, Gary, and the Holson family. More puppets were seen, including a remote control skeleton pushing a stroller, and a gorgeous bird marionette by Laura Mathews. LauraMathewsArt.com





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