



Thank you, everyone, for making this year's Oakland children's Fairyland Puppet Fair and 75th Birthday Celebration truly unforgettable! There was magic in the air throughout Fairyland's milestone weekend—walk around puppeteers, many puppet shows, and the

make-a-puppet table set the stage for a celebration that honored seventy-five years of imagination and community.

Personally, it was an absolute joy wandering Fairyland's storybook sets, catching shows, and reconnecting with so many passionate puppeteers—seeing longtime friends, swapping stories, and sharing puppet wisdom is always a high point for me. The creative spirit of our SFBAPG family shone bright, and watching audiences—kids, adults, and everyone in between—light up with laughter and awe is a reminder of why we do what we do.

Be sure to check out the rest of the newsletter for fall happenings—there are events, workshops, and get-togethers coming up you won't want to miss. And as we look toward the Fall, please remember: if you know about any puppet shows, parades, or creative meet-ups happening anywhere in the region, send the details to share with our guild—we love to spread the word! Also, our next board meeting is happening on

September 18 at 6:30 in the evening. This will be an online only meeting and you're welcome to join us. If you would like to attend send me an email at

president@sfbapag.org and I will make sure you get the link.

Thanks again for bringing such energy and heart to every gathering this year. Here's to keeping the puppetry spirit alive and making more joyful memories together.

With gratitude and wiggling fingers,

Talib Huff

President, San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild

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Guild Notices

The Board meets every 2 months. The next meeting is Sept 18 at 6:30 over Zoom. Curious to see what the Board discusses and what is being planned for the future? Visitors are welcome. Contact Guild President, Talib Huff at president@sfbapg.org for Zoom link.

Your Guild Library

The Guild library is a treasure trove of puppet books. You can request a specific book(s) from the many books in the library, from the history of puppets, construction, stages, puppets in education, etc. It's easy to see what books are available by going to <https://sfbapg.org/library-online/>. Or if at www.sfbapg.org select Resources. Email Lee Armstrong at library@sfbapg.org and she'll bring your book(s) to the next "in-person" meeting.

Please bring back any borrowed books. If you have a book and didn't return it at Puppet Fair, please mail back to Guild Librarian, Lee Armstrong at 720 Ladera Dr., Sonoma, CA 95476.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Workshop: Tabletop Intensive in Oakland with Fred Riley III

WHEN: September 20-21st , 2025 10-3pm

WHERE: Dresher Ensemble Studio 2201 Poplar Street, Oakland

COST: \$200



DAY 1- 1 Person on One Figure (Essential for DAY 2)

10am-3pm (lunch/snack 12-12:30)

DAY 2- 3 People on One Figure

10am-3pm (lunch/snack 12-12:30)

Step into the world of tabletop puppetry in an immersive and dynamic workshop designed for performers of all levels.

This class offers a unique opportunity to learn the foundational techniques that bring puppets to life through the artistry of gravity, focus, and breath.

Whether you're a curious beginner or a seasoned puppeteer looking to refine your skills, this workshop will cover:

The Basics of Tabletop Puppetry: Understand how gravity informs natural movement and rhythm, how focus is the seed of consciousness, and how breath brings subtle realism to performance.

Solo and Ensemble Techniques: Learn how to animate a single figure with one puppeteer or three puppeteers in harmony.

Fred C. Riley III brings years of performance, directing, and puppetry expertise to this exciting class. His passion for collaborative storytelling and precision movement makes this a must-attend event for artists, educators, and theater enthusiasts alike.

All puppets for the class were designed and built by [@lisazagone](#). They will be available for sale at the end of class. (Just in case you fall in love. Most students took home their puppets last time:)

Get Your Ticket Now: <https://oddsavvy.ticketspice.com/tabletop-puppet-intensive>

<https://www.facebook.com/fred.c.riley/videos/1234529595096930/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

<https://www.facebook.com/fred.c.riley/videos/1312636417039381>

"I took this workshop in July and it was inspiring. Great instruction, lots of hands-on practice!" Lee Armstrong, TV puppeteer

Paul Dresher Ensemble Studio Open House

September 7: 2-8ish

2201 Poplar Street Oakland,

Free, but sign up for tickets. Only a few left <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dresher-ensemble-studio-reopening-fest-tickets-1564423876929?aff=oddtcreator>

Join us for an afternoon of captivating live music, dance, kinetic art, and theater — plus great food and fine wine — as we celebrate our new studio and the vibrant artists who bring it to life.

Fred Riley III will be showing an excerpt from his new piece called Hold, with **Ian Erickson** and **Lisa Zagone** at the Paul Dresher Ensemble Studio Open House on Sept 7. The event starts at 2, and this piece will likely go on around 3. Come early and enjoy music, food, wine and dancing.

From 2:00 to 6:00 p.m., performances will take place throughout the Dresher Studio and the second-floor lobby, featuring the **Dresher Davel Invented Instruments Duo**, **Odd Savvy's** puppet theater for two performers and one musician, the **sfSound Group**, and **Bjll Dingalls**. You'll also hear **Lisa Mezzacappa's 5-ish** ensemble, dance from **dNaga Dance Company**, a solo piano set by **Brett Carson**, and chamber music from **Martha & Monica**, and **Diane Grubbe & Frank Johnson**. Also on view will be **Paul Dresher's invented instruments** and **Sudhu Tewari's** kinetic and interactive artworks. Performance times will be announced soon.

At 7:15 p.m., the celebration continues with an evening concert presented by the West Oakland Sound Series, featuring **Saki Minamimoto** (voice/poetry), Ben Goldberg, Motoko Honda, and Nathan Clevenger, followed by a unique set with **Thollem and ROVA.**)



Explore 2 Workshops “Puppet Building & Performance” & “TV Puppetry” this Fall

Images in Motion, Sonoma’s award-winning television puppetry production company, is sharing the art of puppetry with two hands-on workshops this fall.

The first, **“Explore Puppet Building & Performance,”** will take place at the Sonoma Community Center on **Sunday, October 5**. The second, a **TV Puppet workshop**, will be held at the fully equipped Images in Motion Studio in Sonoma on **Saturday, November 8**. Participants may register for either session individually or attend both for a complete puppetry experience. Both workshops will be led by **Lee Armstrong**, regional Emmy® Award-winning puppeteer and co-owner of Images in Motion.

Both workshops are open to teens and adults, and are especially relevant for puppeteers, actors, teachers, librarians, youth leaders, and parents who are seeking creative tools for education and storytelling.

Participants of the October workshop will build a mouth/rod (Muppet-style) puppet from a kit which includes quality materials – presewn head/body, arms, hands, arms, flexible mouth, eyes, feathers, fur and more! Please preorder your kit by Wednesday, October 1st. The second part of the day will be character development and cover manipulation fundamentals to bring your puppet to life. This class was sold out when it was offered last. Here are a few photos.



This TV workshop is recommended for those with some prior puppetry experience, as we will build on this to develop skills in front of the camera. Or attend the Oct. 5 Build a Puppet & Performance workshop.

Please bring a puppet you would like to work with, or puppets will be provided. If you built one in the Oct workshop, that would be perfect!

Lee Armstrong is endlessly fascinated by the movement of inanimate objects—especially when they come to life through puppetry and video. She's a co-founder and Producer at [Images in Motion Inc.](#) in Sonoma, where she's helped bring stories to life for clients like the USDA Forest Service, LeapFrog, PBS, and more. Her puppeteering credits include three seasons on Jim Henson's Emmy-winning *Fraggle Rock*, *Being John Malkovich*, *Moneybone*, and a range of PBS shows and commercials. Lee's work has earned her two regional Emmys, and TV/film productions she has contributed to have been recognized by ten national Telly Awards, National Ad Council, KidsFirst, and more. She's also shared her passion through teaching—lecturing for years at UCSC on Jim Henson's legacy, and leading workshops on puppetry nationwide.

Workshop Details & Registration: (There are only 12 spaces in each workshop)

- **Explore Puppet Building & Performance** – Oct. 5 10-3:30 at Sonoma Community Center. \$65 for class & \$35 for puppet making kit [Register Here](#)

TV Puppetry – Nov. 8 10-3:30 at Images in Motion Studio, Sonoma. \$50 for class, some scholarships available through Images in Motion. To apply for a scholarship or to presave a space, email images@vom.com. TV Puppetry Registration link will be in the Oct newsletter.



From Guild Member Risa Lenore:

[Community Diorama EXTRAVAGANZA](#)

Berkeley September 2- October 4th

Join fellow community members in the month-long co-creation of dioramas. The small gallery space will become filled with story, stories in boxes (and beyond).

Have you ever walked into a room in a museum space or historical center that was filled with dioramas that set your imagination soaring? Well! Now, you too have the opportunity to participate in the creation of wondrous displays for

visitors. Become the builder, curator and storyteller alongside fellow community members in a collaborative display, a gallery of stories, scenes, moments captured.

This is collective experimental scenography. (With some puppets somewhere, of course!)

Guided by puppeteer, artist and educator Risa Lenore, we will collectively build scenes and their accompanying stories to share with the public. This is a month-long, all-ages community project. Though, Tuesday nights are Adults only.

SEPTEMBER 2 - OCTOBER 4 -Tuesday 6:30-10pm (adults only), Wednesdays 2-5pm,
Saturdays 12-5pm, Final showcase: Saturday October 4th 1-6 pm

at Oxtail Studios 2976 Adeline St, Berkeley, CA. (next to LACIS)

Wheelchair accessible.

Members' News

From Eugene Rodriguez

I attended the Puppets in Prague workshop this past June. It was an amazing experience. The other attendees, who were all wonderful and very talented, came from all over the world. Leah and Mirek who lead the three-week workshop, along with being so knowledgeable about the art and history of puppetry, were such beautiful teachers and hosts. A life-changing experience. As a result, I am now writing a play for the stage, tentatively titled *Long Distance*, that will include actors, puppets and filmmaking and my grandparents (from the other side) as narrators. This is the marionette of my grandmother, Eulalia, that I created at the workshop.



Puppets In The House

by Camilla Henneman

I just got back from a wonderful regional festival in Wisconsin. Puppets In The House was sponsored by the Great Plains Region. Laurie Everitt and Brant Bollman directed the event. It had a fantastic variety of

shows and workshops. I have tried to cover as much as I could. The performances represented a fantastic variety of styles ranging from hilarious to heartbreakingly tragic. Our own Art Gruenberger performed “Three Billygoats Gruff,” a hilarious fast paced mash-up of Well loved fairytales. Madison J Cripps performed his “A Slice Of Crazy Pie” it was a frenetic, one man Vaudeville show with music, audience participation, and multi instrument performance verging on fun insanity. Matthew McGee performed a show called “Pip and Squeak Go To The Show” about two lovable comical mice (based on characters created originally by Rob D’Arc) looking for a show which turns out to be their show. Puppet Kebab presented “The Snowflake Man” based on the true story of Wilson Bentley, who became the first person to photograph a single snowflake crystal. Miss Pussycat and Quintron presented “MG Xing Ever Gras”, a table top Puppet show about two kittens getting ready for Mardi Gras. The sweetness of the simple puppets made from recycled materials and the brilliant , high energy and rather goofy performance style made this a really fun show.

“A La Carte: in a Fool’s Kitchen” by Z puppets Rosenschnoz and Gabriella sweet was a comic battle between a clown friend chef and a Wiley lobster set to live accordion music. Liz Howls presented “Happy Accident“ A nightmare, exploration of bizarre and often tacky American culture, and absurdity. Parasol Puppets presented a traditional and yet contemporary Punch and Judy show. Peter Allen gave a hilarious, traditional, and yet totally relatable Punch and Judy show for the Puppets in the Park community event on Saturday, which was open to the public. “Learning To Fly” by One Double O Four Eight was one of the most powerful pieces of theater I have seen at a festival. It is a 2 person show set in one of the twin towers on 9/11. It chronicles the fictional story of 2 people caught in the second tower in real time as the attack unfolds.

On Friday night there was a curated slam. Honestly, I was behind the stage and missed most of it but what I saw was terrific. Saturday night started to wrap up the festival with Pot Pourri, emceed by Kurt Hunter It was a wide variety of shows with some high spots and a few touching moments.



The Workshops

As always happens, you have to make choices, particularly for workshops. Puppets in the House assembled a really great variety of workshops. I heard nothing but raves about the workshops I didn’t attend. I will cover the workshops I attended.

The first workshop that I went to was Matthew McGee’s “The Wonder of Cotton Sculpting. Matt has been using a process for sculpting heads that’s fast, really cheap and child friendly (no fumes, yay!!) His method

uses aluminum foil, masking, tape, white glue, and water. Briefly, it involves making a rough shape from crumpled foil, which you can cover with masking tape or not. Then white glue, thinned a little with water is brushed onto the surface. You unroll the cotton balls.(I hadn't realized that they were rolled up, but they are.) and wrap the strip of cotton around your areas of wet glue. Then you take a brush with more glue and saturate the cotton. You can build up as many layers as you wish and you don't have to let it dry in between unlike papier-mâché. After it has set for a few minutes, you can then use your fingers to mold the surface or continue using a brush and or sculpting tools. It is super hard and durable. I'm really excited to see what I can do with it.



The second workshop I took was “Manipulate Me: ensemble puppetry with Aretta.” It was basically a table top Puppet workshop with the simplest table top puppets imaginable. She took strips of fabric and tied knots at the joints. Three people worked with one puppet and she went through some basic manipulation techniques. If you've got boxes full of fabric that you'll never use, or old sheets or clothes, they would be perfect for making these puppets. Sometimes I want to follow Aretta around like a puppy and soak up everything she does. She is such a knowledgeable and generous teacher, who seems to have boundless energy and patience.

The final workshop I took was a two-part workshop from Madison Crips “An Exploration in Marionettes.” This was another brilliant workshop. If you've seen, Madison shows the pacing can get frenetic, and Madison appears to be on the edge of sanity. However when you take a workshop from him, you get to see the patient and skillful teacher that is the other side of Madison. He taught a workshop that truly uses my favorite technology, a stick tied to a stone. In his workshop, he provided a simple controller, which was a stick with notches cut on one end, a hole in the center and a hole on the other end. He had participants choose a big piece and a little piece of wood. They were odd shapes of wood left over from other projects, and he had

drilled several holes in each of them. Madison showed us a brilliant method of permanently attaching the strings using glue and a toothpick. We attached the two pieces of wood to each other with a short string and each of the pieces to the controller. Then we played with learning the movement that the pieces naturally wanted to do. We explored our own puppets and then worked in pairs to interact. I felt like I learned so much while having a terrific amount of fun.

All in all it was one of the most enjoyable and informative festivals I have attended. One last word. Go to the festivals! That is where it is happening. It doesn't matter if you don't know anyone. By the time you leave, you will have friendships that you will continue to build on for a lifetime.

More Events

Samson Y Hiss' *Carnival of Psychos*

A circus opera/play/theatre music brain melt featuring a live band of carnies.

September 25, doors at 7:30 PM. Show at 8 PM,
September 26, doors at 6:30 PM. Show at 7 PM,
Oakstop - California Ballroom, 1736 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA ———For all ages, Runtime approx.
90 minutes==General Admission Tickets: \$25 (\$30 at
the door)



Calamitous carny, Samson Y Hiss, the award-winning composer and record-holding one-man band, wheels his psychotic ooze of circus horror, opera, and theatre, *Carnival of Psychos*, to Oakland. The theatrical experience features an original story, operatic vocals, circus performers, stunt artists, overhead projectors and a live band. For Tickets: [Samson Y Hiss' Carnival of Psychos Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#)

Sfpuppetslam Oct 5th

💎💎 Calling SF Bay Area Puppeteers! 💎💎

Do you have a weird, wonderful, or totally unexpected puppet act hiding in your workshop? 💎

This is your chance to test it, twist it, and bring it up on stage at the Ignite SF Puppet Slam 💎

💎 When: Oct 5, Eclectic Box, San Francisco

💎 What: A night of short puppet performances

💎 Apply by: Sept 7

[#IgniteSFPuppetSlam](#) [#SFPuppets](#) [#PuppetSlam](#) [#BayAreaPuppeteers](#)

The Monkey King

SF Opera, San Francisco
November 14–30, 2025



He's arrogant. He's disobedient. He's becoming the most powerful being in creation, and he's about to wreak havoc on heaven. Based on the classic Chinese novel Journey to the West, The Monkey King makes its much-anticipated world premiere at the War Memorial Opera House. This new, action-packed opera combines high-energy music and text with puppetry, dance, Peking opera, and Buddhist sutras to tell the tale of the Monkey King's beginnings.

Basil Twist is the Puppetry Director, Set, and Puppetry Designer for this production. He was responsible for creating the puppets and designing the overall visual world of the production, which transforms the stage with silks, puppets, and projections to bring the fantastical story to life. Guild members Esther de Monteflores and Fred Riley III are puppeteers in this production!

Very few tickets available: <https://www.sfopera.com/buy-tickets/>

Check out their Livestream option: <https://www.sfopera.com/operas/the-monkey-king/livestream/>



Manual Cinema's "The 4th Witch"

Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley

Nov 22, 2025, 8pm

(very few tickets available!)

The amazingly inventive visual storytellers of Manual Cinema return to Cal Performances with another meticulously crafted, gloriously handmade production.

The 4th Witch follows a young girl, orphaned during wartime, who becomes unwittingly apprenticed to the three witches from Shakespeare's Macbeth. As the truth of her family's fate is revealed, she must choose between paths of reconciliation and vengeance. Told without text—like a silent film coming to life on stage—the story explores themes of war and generational conflict through shadow puppetry, actors in silhouette, immersive sound design, and live music.

"Manual Cinema has created a whole new art form. In a digital world, this beguiling analog throwback...has proved enormously popular" (Chicago Tribune).

[About this Performance](#)



New episode of Under The Puppet is here and my guest is Jeanne Lauren. Jeanne Lauren worked in the creature shop that was building some of the most iconic creatures for Return of the Jedi. She also worked on the film ensuring the creatures looked good on screen and more importantly, that their performers were comfortable while wearing the creature suits. Her own company, Skyana has been designing puppets, mascots and costumes for Corporate events and television for decades. I talk to Jeanne Lauren about all these things and more, including her appearance as a biker in the 1986 film Howard the Duck, on this episode of Under The Puppet. Available wherever you get your podcasts or at underthepuppet.com <<http://underthepuppet.com/>>

Grant Baciocco, Puppeteer. Creator. grant@throwingtoasters.com MrGrant.com



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