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Sutradhar

A UNIMA India Publication

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A Note from the Editor

The issue is dedicated to our latest Masterclass - by Alain Lecucq and Narguess Majd. They are unusual exponents of a little known and practised form: Paper Theatre.

Alain is a skilled Master who along with Narguess led the participants to an intensive 18 days ending in 4 small "work-in-progress" performances shown to the public on the last day. The quality of the pieces presented were proof of the relentless work put in by all as well as the success of Alain and Narguess' pedagogic style. It is this which was of immense interest to Unima -India's team.

We present articles by the Masters themselves, and notes and photo essays giving us the participants perspective. The Highlight since our last Sutradhar has been the Colloquium organised by UNIMA- India in February 2016. The purpose was to analyse the gains and challenges of running Master Classes in search of a pedagogical model. Many questions that have been thrown up were brought up for a deep sharing and experience amongst the Masters and Alumni, and the Documenters and Mentors.

The four aspects of the Master Classes were thrashed to the bone: Mentoring, Documentation, Masters and their Methodology. In search of such a model we have conducted 4 master classes. Two have been by Traditional Masters and the other two by International contemporary practitioners.

We are thankful for the continued support from Sangeet Natak Akademi for the publication of the Sutradhar. UNIMA India has also completed a documentation film for the UNIMA International archives on the Togalu Gombeyata Tradition.

In the near future the film will be available to all Puppet enthusiasts at the Unima Internationale Library. The Asia Pacific Commission housed in Chengdu China, currently, has played a seminal role in activating the region through its many activities. This film documentation is also under the APC.

A film maker who has an eye for documentation as well as a true interest in the traditional puppetry genres is a fortunate combination. Shankhajeet De combines the needs of this documentation with his own passionate and intimate eye

Ranjana Pandey

**President
Unima-India**

1 Paper Theatre

By Alain Lecucq, Master Puppeteer; Paper Theatre

Paper theatre is a technique in which performers manipulate flat paper figurines. It was invented most probably in England at the beginning of the 19th century. This form of theatre was typically a society play until the 1940s; however, at the end of the 20th century, it attracted the attention of puppeteers and other artists. Ever since, this art has continuously developed and been present on the international stage.

Traditional paper theatre was European and every producing country added particularities to the technique; nevertheless, they all had the same passion: theatre, extremely present in the 19th century European life when performed plays were published and portraits of famous actors were printed and hung on the wall. Unfortunately, there is no official document on how paper theatre started. Although "souvenir sheets", papers with the images of the main actors of a play, seem to be the closest productions to paper theatre both historically and visually. Perhaps cutting out these images and making paper dolls came to someone's mind and it led to further ideas.

A 19th Century Passion

The only real document we have is the proscenium of an assembling theatre edited in 1812 by I.K. Green in London. It is believed that paper theatre was invented at that date. The theatre had a few essential elements to perform a play: a proscenium, often inspired by existing theatres, backdrops and wings, characters in various positions which made their evolution possible during the performance and a text, often an unskillful summary of the original script. The sheets were then coloured by the publisher or by the consumer applying different techniques - hand colour, stencil, and lithography - depending on the country. The owner of the sheets would glue them on cardboard, cut them out and assemble them. He could then perform his play for his family or friends.

These theatres rarely bigger than 50 or 60 centimetres allowed stage designs ideal for the living room. Paper theatres in England were miniature copies of the

successful shows of London according to George Speaight in *Juvenile Drama* (1946), the reference book on the technique. English publishers were numerous. The following are the most important ones: Green (between 1811 and 1816); Jameson (1811-1827); William West (1811-1854); Park (1818-1880); Hodgson (1822-1830); Skelt (1835-1872); Webb (1847-1890); Redington (1850-1876); and Benjamin Pollock (1876-1937).

It was possible to have many sheets for a single text, for instance about twenty for the backdrops and the wings and the same number for the characters. The price was very low (a penny for a black and white sheet, two pence for hand coloured) and they were produced in large numbers.

George Speaight listed more than three hundred scripts published during this period. The author of *The Treasure Island*, Louis Stevenson, wrote an article which attracted the attention of museums and researchers to this technique. That is why we have very precise traces of the English editions. Playing, writing, giving conferences and arousing the desire to bend over the micro-theatres, George Speaight kept the memory of this art alive throughout the 20th century. In *Threads of Time*, Peter Brook wrote: "One afternoon, I was taken to Bumpus, a bookshop in Oxford Street, to see a performance for children on a nineteenth-century toy theatre. This was my first theatrical experience, and to this day it remains not only the most vivid but also the most real."

In Austria, paper theatre was produced at the end of the 1920s and some very large theatres were published by Trentsensky, the first publisher of the country who published 52 plays.

The first German Theatres were published by Jos Scholz in Mayence in 1830. Publishers from all over Germany got involved with the technique. Following are the most important ones: Winckelmann & Söhne in Berlin (from 1830), Gustav Kühn in Neuruppin (from 1835), Schulz in Stuttgart (from 1840), J. F. Schreiber in Esslingen (from 1877) and Robrahn in Magdebourg (from 1880). All the essential elements to make a



theatre were printed, but there was only one sheet of characters in a single position for every script, the sceneries were supposed to be used for multiple plays and not all publishers published the matching text. Walter Röhner recollected these small theatres in Germany during the 20th century.

France published many theatres strangely not related to the country's theatrical life. People could create their own plays in them. Character sheets were relatively few and there was no text. However, the production was remarkable, especially by the publishers of the east of France: Wentzel in Wissembourg (from 1833), Didion in Metz and his successors in Nancy (from 1840), Pellerin (from 1840) and Pinot (from 1866) in Épinal, Haguenthal in Pont-à-Mousson (from 1870), and also in Paris: Ulysse (from 1830), Glémarec (from 1845), Boucquin (from 1862), and Méricand (with the review Mon théâtre, 1904-1905).

The rise of paper theatre in Denmark occurred much later and essentially by two publishers, Alfred Jacobsen from 1880 to 1924 and Carl Aller from 1914. Some productions were published as inserts in *Illustreret Familie Journal* and were particularly popular.

Other countries consuming foreign productions for long time started to develop their own paper theatre. In Italy Marca Stella (from 1883) and Abbiati (from

1922) in Milan and G.A.I. (from 1914) in Bologna are the chief representatives of the genre.

Spain created its own theatre at 1870 and the research of the architect, Mariano Bayon, provided a broad and totally renewed vision of this production. The chief publishers in Barcelona were Paluzie (1870 - 1939); the inventor of transparent sceneries, Seix y Barral (1915 - 1942); and Sirven (from 1940). In Madrid, La Tijera (from 1917) published magnificent theatres and had the most prolific publishing house for Spanish Cut out plays.

In the Czech Republic paper theatre appeared differently. In reaction to foreign import, publishers decided to ask famous Czech artists to make them very large theatres with paper proscenium and sceneries in which small rod puppets were manipulated.

Hence, the history of paper theatre is the history of an essentially European publishers' production; nevertheless, a few theatres were published in the United States. Traditional paper theatre never addressed theatre professionals and there was only an indirect link between this form and the art of puppet theatre.

Rebirth

In 1988 the tradition served to create a paper theatre festival in Preetz, Germany. Old scripts were retaken and old published theatres were reproduced.

The technique was later applied by two trends: the trend of visual artists and the trend of dramatic artists often interested in contemporary literature. Visual artists' priority is the design and being skilful in the field, they draw or create images that they manipulate later. They do not necessarily work on a text; while dramatic artists serve the direction of their chosen text with visual elements. Therefore, they might ask visual artists to design what they need. However, there is no doubt that both trends influenced each other deeply.

Robert Poulter in England, Walter Koschwitz and Kölner Kastchentreffen group in Germany are three very important names of the visual trend. They have very different styles and interests. Meyerber's *Robert le Diable* or *The Prophet* are examples of Robert Poulter's work. Life in Berlin strongly inspires Koschwitz. He has a paper theatre series on the subject to which he adds a new episode every year. *Kastchentreffen* has a vast range of choice including *The Romantic Rhine*, *La Paloma* song and *Black and White*.

The common characteristic between these groups is the great number of characters and scenery for every show. Seeing many swift changes in a short time, the audience has the impression of going through a narrative album.

We will take a closer look at *Kölner Kastchentreffen*, which consists of a group of artists graduated from the Fine Arts Faculty of Köln. They have continued their relationship based on paper theatre and every once in a while, they choose a theme to work on individually before getting together to show the result to the audiences and to each other!

Fritz Grimm from the Netherlands is another remarkable artist who could be categorized in the visual trend. He employs paper theatre to present the work of the 20th century great artists on stage (*Variations on Kandinsky*). His shows have no text and are accompanied by music.

The second trend consists of dramatic artists and mostly puppeteers. The American *Great Small Works* (old members of *Bread and Puppet Theatre*), the Canadian *Le Petit Theatre de l'Absolu* and our French company, *PAPIER THEATRE* are three of the active groups. The work of this trend is often politically engaged.





Blue skies by Great Small Works, The Commune of 1870 by Petit Theatre de l'Absolu and Moby Dick or My Name is Red by PAPIERTHEATRE are related to the problems of our time.

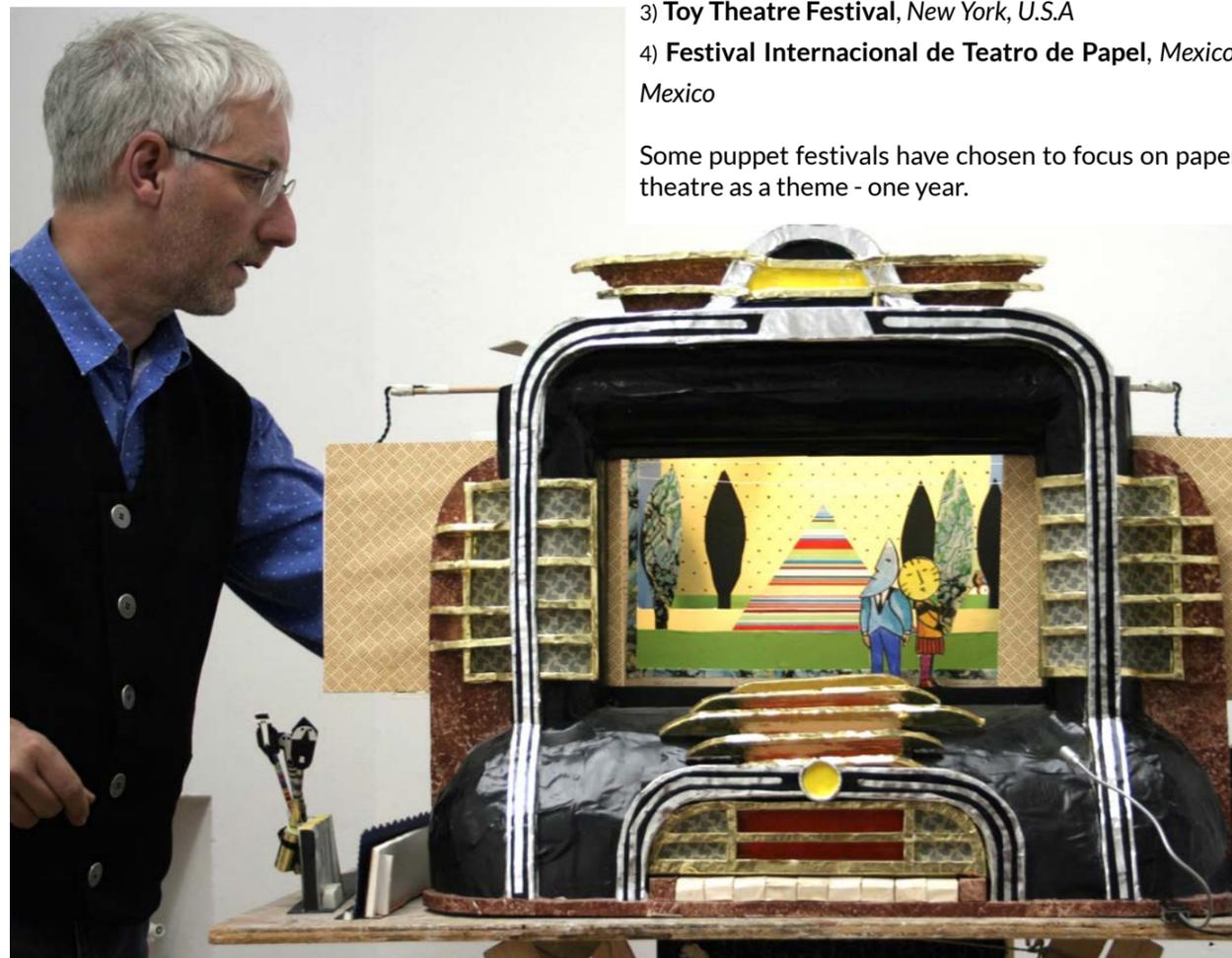
Another characteristic of this trend is addressing frequently adult audiences. Often small in size, not many people can watch the show at a time; therefore selling them might become complicated. However, object theatre, also small in size and very popular, paved the ground for paper theatre. Theatre directors are now used to buying shows for adults with small audience; therefore paper theatre is now accepted as much as the other forms.

Let us say that paper theatre suffers from the same problems puppet theatre faces in the Western Europe: absence of permanent halls, groups with very few members, decrease of culture budget and difficulties of recognizing puppetry as an "art". But the technique is often warmly received perhaps due to its novelty!

Some puppet companies produce paper theatre shows from time to time and are often invited to puppet theatre festivals or festivals devoted to paper theatre. There are four paper theatre festivals, which take place regularly:

- 1) **Pretz Papier Theatertreffen**, Pretz, Germany
- 2) **RITP**, Charleville-Mézières, France
- 3) **Toy Theatre Festival**, New York, U.S.A
- 4) **Festival Internacional de Teatro de Papel**, Mexico, Mexico

Some puppet festivals have chosen to focus on paper theatre as a theme - one year.



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2 A Conversation with the Masters: Alain Lecucq and Narguess Majd

By Ranjana Pandey



The three Master Classes preceding were completely different. There was practically no space given to Dramaturgy by the Master. The Mentor was left to guide the content and the dramaturgy while the Master dealt with the material, form and technique.

Why is Dramaturgy such an overwhelming part of the pedagogical process of this Paper Theatre Master Class? 8 days out of 18 were spent on the text, analysis, dramaturgy exercises. Every participant had to painfully go over his chosen text, line by line. What do you want to say? Why? Does the text really say it? Are you sure? Each line of it? Does it add up to your central idea?



This conversation with Alain and Narguess answers my question:

Q: If you had not found Paper Theatre, Alain, which form would you have adopted as a puppeteer?

A: I was already doing shadows for 15 years! (So flat forms and paper!- I thought).

Q: Did you always do Shadow Puppetry?

A: I did do other kind of puppets but I did not really like three dimensional forms. It was actually serendipity

which led me to Paper Theatre. I took a break from Shadow Puppetry- for personal reasons.

I began to work for an Antique Dealer, dealing in books. (Oh! Paper again) for 4 years. And during that time I collected artefacts, texts, puppets, publicity posters, theatre announcements and photographs and memorabilia all about Paper Theatre in England. It came to me to mount an exhibition of my collection. The exhibition, to me, seemed pretty dead! A Theatre exhibit without any theatre? No fun! (now he became animated.

So to have some fun I begin to do a small demo- just like that...you know like a show- and- tell. And then I do a small contemporary piece and one day when I am doing this, in walks a rather well known French author. Tiens! he exclaims. This is interesting. How about using my text to make a performance?

And that is how it all began- just like that, says Alain with a flourish of his hands.

Today 30 years down the line when I look back I know the difficulties I faced. Nobody knew Paper Theatre. What the hell is this? you could see it on their faces. I know that I was helped a lot by Object Theatre. It had already trained audiences for intimate performances- small theatre for a few people only.

Today I am the only one. I have been teaching for 15 years. (Only?)

Yes ! because before that," he says honestly, "I was finding my way and working it out."

Now, I can say confidently what makes Paper Theatre so different, so special. It is the centrality of the text, paper and the flatness of it which makes it what it is.

Of course I have explored the boundaries within this framework . In my shows I have introduced actors and other elements also which are not traditional, like lights and big props, but that is all.

Let people first understand, accept and recognise what Paper Theatre is! They must not confuse it with toy

theatre, miniature object theatre...it will get all mixed up and become a hotch- potch. I am quite clear about the importance of purity in the form. This is why I feel it is still too early to tamper with the form and create collaborations and experiments with other media.

"Some collaborations work. My collaboration with authors has been very successful. I have worked with well known author Orhan Pamuk. The show has been appreciated. You see, the text is really important. This is why for me Dramaturgy plays such a pivotal role in the teaching of Paper Theatre."

Just then walks in Elisa- a tourist visiting the crafts museum. She is looking very intrigued. Its one of



those crazy coincidences. She had attended Alain and Narguess workshop 10 years ago in far away Italy!!!! You could see how deeply she had imbibed her experience with Alain and Narguess. She remembered every bit of it! Like the 9 participants in Delhi will for years to come.

3 My Introduction to Paper Theatre, and How I Survived

By Puneeta Roy



Raju, Matia, Sonu... unforgettable characters spring forth from the pages of Shyamal Kumar Pramanik's short story "Survival", to share their gnawing hunger and degrading struggle to survive. Not an unfamiliar "Dalit" story. Yet they come home with me every night. I have signed up for a Paper Theatre workshop for 3 weeks mid March, not actually being a puppeteer! From making documentaries, corporate films and Television programs for 20 years, I had gone back to my first love Theatre and was enjoying exploring its power as a tool to communicate and empower. At the core of it all was the consuming fire of storytelling, and as I realized, the greater the skill of the teller, the more magical the story.

"Alain Lecucq and Narguess Majid are Master Puppeteers, who will be focusing on the dramaturgy of the story, on the "What", "Why" and "to Whom" you want to communicate with. You would enjoy it". WANurupa's words have me hooked!

I send in my application, get an acceptance and for the next 3 weeks, starting 14th March, I jump into my car at 8am and zip down the highway from Gurgaon, to make it on time for the 9:30 workshops at the Crafts Museum. This means no morning walks or exercise but such is my enthusiasm, that everything else is put on hold for 3 weeks. Of course I will pay the price of excruciating cervical pain once we go back to our "normal" lives, but I am so much richer for the experience!

It is an enchanting 3 weeks of stepping into a fairy tale world of make believe and watching it come alive! Starting with making simple paper stages and stories from personal experiences, we are exposed to some mind boggling videos of shows that Alain has done as well some of the most creative and innovative ones from across the world. I remember crawling back to the workshop space feeling most disheartened and almost embarrassed about what we had presented on the first day. The Bar of Excellence has suddenly gone

so high, we have not even made our first baby steps!

Alain and Narguess are amazing as they alternate between being teachers, parents, guides and friends, adding to the warm bonhomie that has developed within the group. Starting with 11 participants, 9 of us complete the course, exploring 4 different stories through completely different formats.

My team mate Binitesh and me choose to work on Pramanik's story "Survival" and spend the first few days diving deep into the themes and sub themes that the story opens up for us. Out of the 5 to 6 strands that seem to flow through the story, we have to crystallise our thoughts to choose one Central idea that will be our touchstone for all the creatives thereafter.

Wading through the complexities the story throws up for each one of us, we struggle to define that simple connecting thread, little realizing how important this will be, in keeping our entire presentation true to our central theme.

It is an enchanting 3 weeks of stepping into a fairy tale world of make believe and watching it come alive!

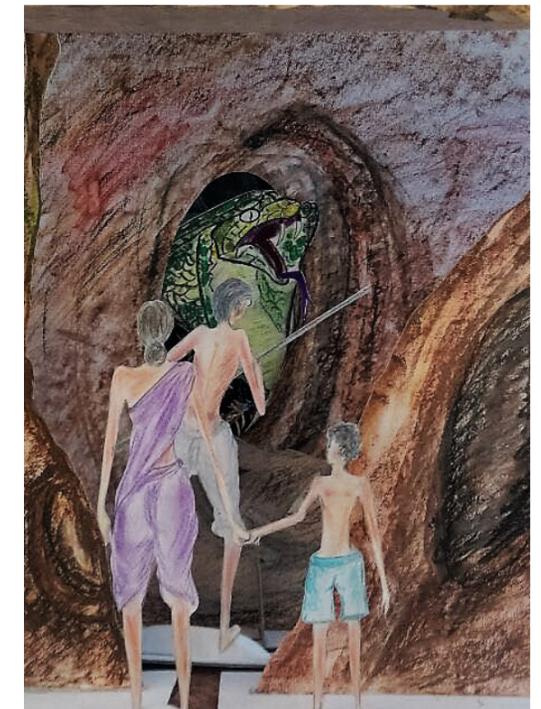
As I put pencil to paper and start allowing the story to flow into the storyboard, it comes alive in a way I have not experienced before – so simply and so quickly. I am Raju, fighting against the bitter cold, to feed and protect my wife and son – Matia and Sonu. It is my mother who has died an excruciating death while my father watches helpless in the famine, and I am determined this will not be the fate of my child.

Bini and me discuss, argue, agree, work together, reflect individually, share our thoughts and arrive at a consensus most times. It is fascinating to see a baby being crafted by two completely different individuals, drawn to a common theme, and to see it evolve from paper sketches into human characters as we draw and colour and fix them to cardboard sliders with "spines" glued to their backs.

Our little wooden stage is built by a carpenter simultaneously and as backdrop after backdrop slides into its slot on our stage, the characters or "paper puppets" glide on to share their tale of desperation and sheer grit to stay alive. At our final presentation at the India International Center, we add the magic of sound effects and focussed lighting and I am told that the effect is quite mesmerising. "Where would we be taking this show from here" is a question I am asked by many members of the audience.

Yes, where indeed would I be taking the show? Bini has gone back to Mumbai to teaching at his Film Institute, but I do have Raju and Matia and Sonu with me, who sit in my office room and look at me questioningly everyday! I owe it to them, to Alain and Nargis, to Ranjana and Anurupa, to our wonderful group who worked together and to Bini and me, to keep them alive and introduce them to all those out there who want to receive them.

Ah, the forest beckons and I promise we shall all walk through it again – soon!



Survival - Ekhono Adim(A Dalit story by Shyamal Kumar Pramanik) Directed by Puneeta Roy and British Baruri

The Four Performances: Manjil Meen(The Yellow Fish)



SUTRADHAR

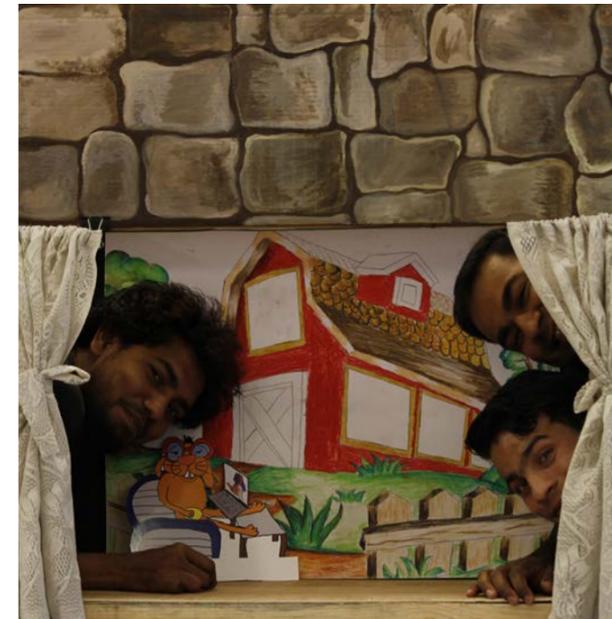


Manjil Meen (The Yellow Fish) ; A Short Story by Ambai, Directed by Vilramjeet Sinha and Vikrant Dhote

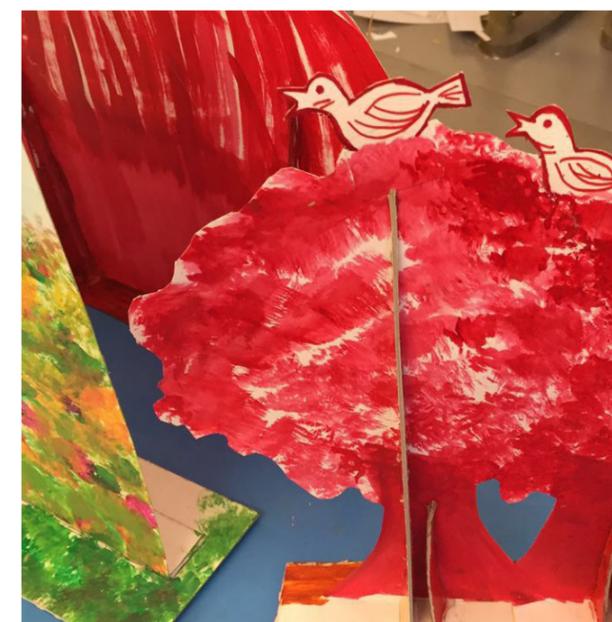
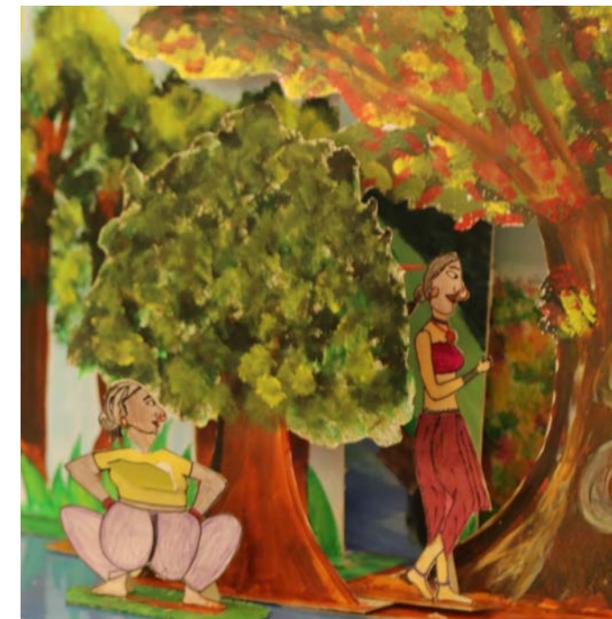
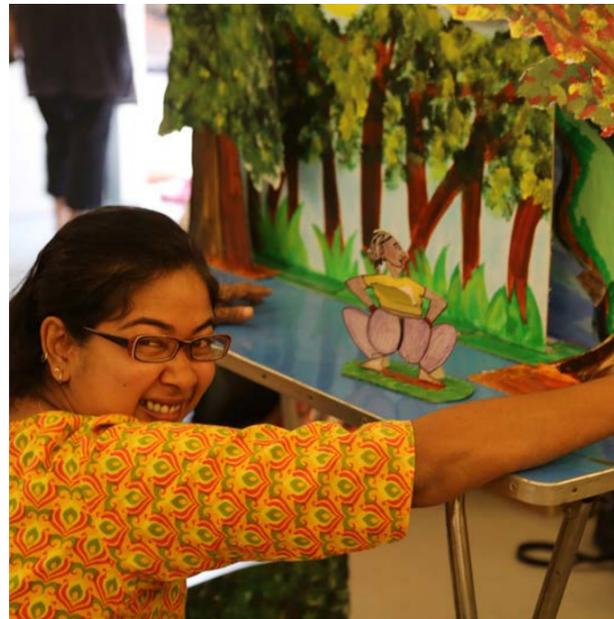
The Four Performances: Little Red Hen



SUTRADHAR



The Little Red Hen (a universal folk tale for children)Directed by Atul Sinha,Karim and Basheer John

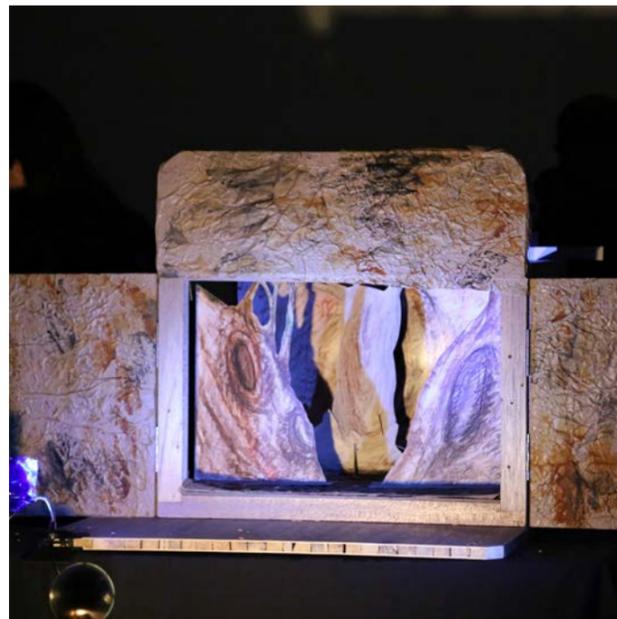
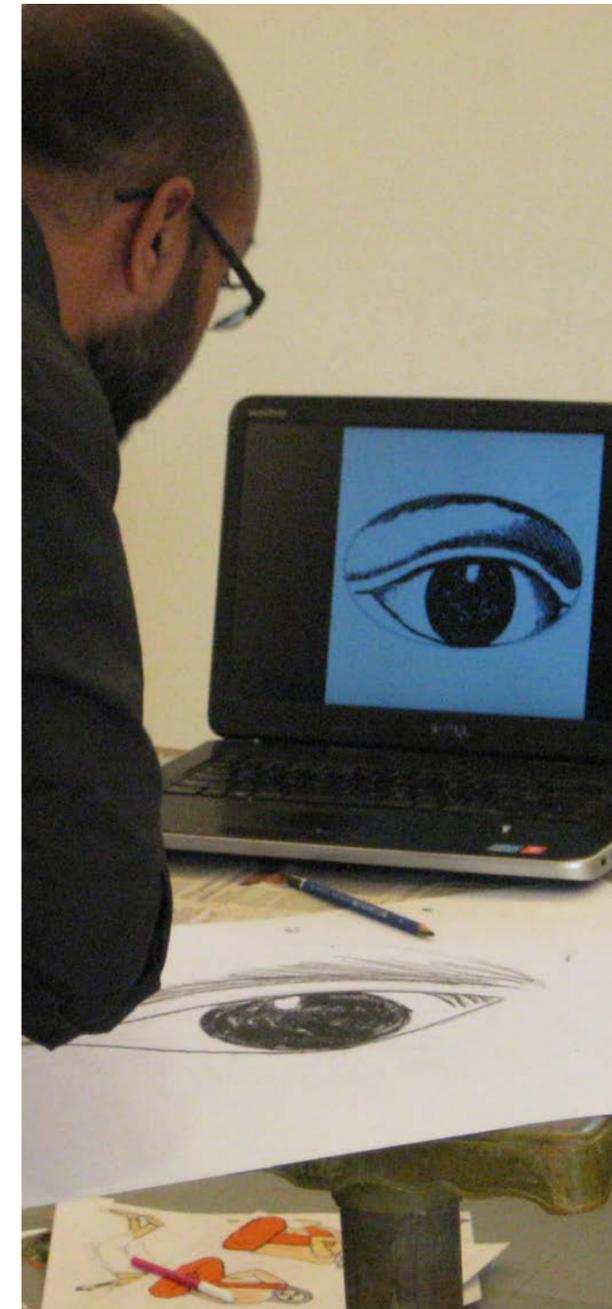
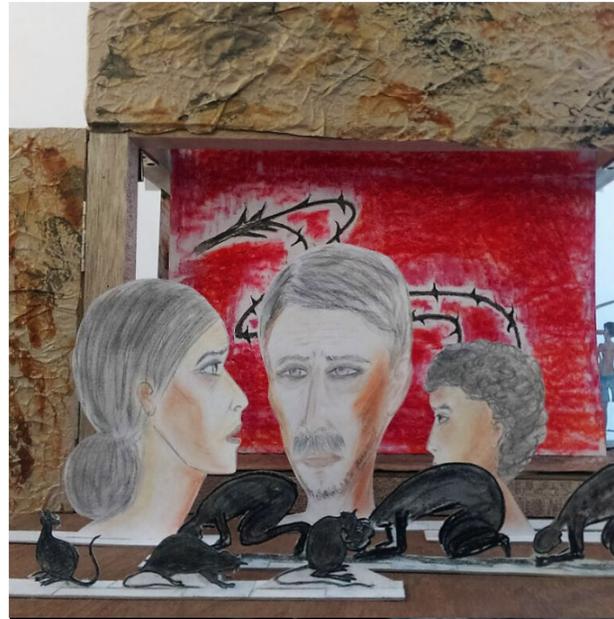
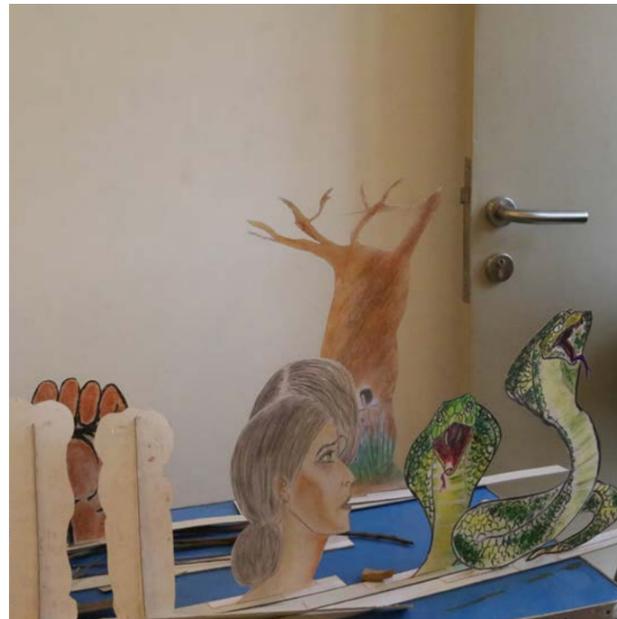


The Other Side (a different take on Surpankha - Ramayana, inspired by a text by Amit Chaudhuri) Directed by Choiti Ghosh and Seema Kukreja

The Four Performances: Survival



SUTRADHAR



Survival - Ekhono Adim(A Dalit story by Shyamal Kumar Pramanik) Directed by Puneeta Roy and British Baruri

4 Dramaturgy: Week One

By Binitesh Baruri



MONDAY

As we began day one. There was no theory, no preamble. We just began cutting up paper, creating theatres and telling stories. And then we went straight to texts. We chose, made teams. And began working.

TUESDAY

We began working on the dramaturgy of the text. We read our text over and over, and discussed between the members of our team, over and over as to what the essence of the story was. We figured first, that each member of our team liked the story for different reasons. If for one, an image was important, for another it was the idea that was primary. Our readings were very different, and we did try to convince each other about our own opinions and also tried to argue against what we felt contradicted our own readings. The goal that was given to us was that we must come up with a sentence that would present what we wanted to say through our play. It was frustrating, but it became apparent slowly as to why this was important. The same text can spark off myriad readings. But to achieve clarity in our communication, we must have complete clarity about what we wish to say, and so we need one line. One sentence. One premise. Finally, in the evening of Tuesday, we got there. Not absolutely satisfied, but close.

WEDNESDAY

We attacked the text again. Having now decided on a particular point of view and an approach and premise, we checked each line of the text, trying to see if our premise was there in the text or not. This wasn't too tough and most of our text did match our premise. But we did figure that there were extraneous elements in the text that we could eliminate without harming the text and still maintain our central argument. So this

is what we did. This is when I figured, that everybody reads a text not according to the text in question but according to who they are. Beginning with my own self. And that I desperately try to impose myself on it too. I also learnt that texts can be flexible too, swinging a number of ways with equal felicity. Tricky bastard.

THURSDAY

We rewrote the text. We rewrote it like a screenplay. Always keeping in mind the questions, what do I want to say, why do I want to say it, how do I say it. And although we went through the text with a fine toothed comb asking these questions as a guide to writing the screenplay, we still had to write it twice. And even now, I wonder if we did always ask and answer the relevant questions. I fear we may have skipped a few lines and paragraphs...

We rewrote the text. We rewrote it like a screenplay. Always keeping in mind the questions, what do I want to say? Why do I want to say it? How do I say it?

FRIDAY

We got down to storyboarding, and then re-did this on Saturday, and are still doing it today, Monday. The process over the last week was intense, frustrating, and extremely enlightening.

Usually, I end up taking for granted my own motivations for writing a screenplay, and then as images come to mind, I rarely question their genesis or utility. And then I end up surprised and even shocked when what I end up depicting doesn't say what I intended to initially. I think we should always go after a text with this kind of focus and clarity. Read the damn thing. Ask yourself what it means to you. Then check back in the text whether it is even saying the same thing or not. Then sharpen your premise, and recheck. Then re write the text according to your central idea.

This central idea shapes everything differently. It makes the text more focused, and for a while it feels that the text is losing texture and substance. But since you know that, you know that it is up to you to make it say all that it can eventually. And eventually, once

you have re forged your text, you make a storyboard, always checking if your images maintain your central idea or not. In this process, try and keep things simple. When you overload an image, it loses meaning by losing focus and clarity. Symbolism is culture specific and does not connote the same thing to different people.

Form follows function.



Paper Theatre: Master Class



The master class was held in the Crafts Museum, a Mecca for Craftsmen. The space lends itself beautifully to the essence of this Master Class - Paper and Performance. The room is bright and cheerful, strewn with material.

The participants take to the intensity of the immersion. Those who could not -left quickly.

The Masters are present but not interfering. Active intervention was very noticeable during the process of Dramaturgy. They generously gave technical guidance in building the stage, in using and sourcing the right material. There after, the participants are given a lot of freedom in choosing their own aesthetics, material and design of stage.

The idea is "You are creating images. Give the audience time to understand the image....take the leap of faith and use their imagination, to get into the story and character. Believe in your character, speak (little) for it, believe in it, enough to take the story forward. Do not describe or over explain."

Making has its own dynamism. Everyone was deep into the process. The groups worked very harmoniously.

The participants: One Animator, Five Theatre performers, One Graphic Artist, Two Film Makers/Producers.

For most of them working intensively with drawing and painting was new.



The weeks go by swiftly and the shows are being rehearsed. The publicity is out. The posters have been put up. The hall is booked. There are repeat performances!

The Four Performances

1. Manjil Meen (The Yellow Fish) is a short story by Ambai Directed by Vilramjeet Sinha and Vikrant Dhote
2. Survival- Ekhono Adim is (A Dalit story by Shyamal Kumar Pramanik) directed by Puneeta Roy and Binitesh Baruri.
3. The Little Red Hen is (a universal folk tale for children) directed by Atul Sinha, Karim and Basheer John.
4. The Other Side is (a different take on Surpankha-Ramayana, inspired by a text by Amit Chaudhuri) directed by Choiti Ghosh and Seema Kukreja.



5 Colloquium



A Colloquium was held on February 10th and 11th, 2015 at the India Habitat Center and India International Center.

The day began with a Short Introduction on what the Master Class is, by Anurupa & Ranjana. **The main points were:**

1. It was deemed a rare opportunity for those wanting to learn from generational puppeteers.
2. Specially in the context of India's fast changing culture, there is an urgent need to document puppet traditions and know more about them.
3. To create a lab like environment, for experimentation, to create an immersive experience for both masters and participants.

The Gains

1. **Documentation** has emerged as a key element of this process.
2. **Mentorship** has come to be recognised as an important factor of the Master Class. However it has to be refined and revisited.
3. The imperative question that remains to be understood and explored further are Pedagogic discourses that emerge through these master classes and how to be able to integrate an aspect of Dramaturgy within this space.

The Alumni Speak: Sharing of the Master Class Experience

- Barbara Kolling, Material Theatre Master Class: by Choiti Ghosh and Ranjana
- Puran Bhat, Kathputli Master Class: by Shravana, Gagana and Sammitha
- Shri Gunduraju, Togalu Gambeyatta: by Vidyun Sabhaney and Partha Prathim Paul.

Breakaway Group Discussions: Three groups went away to discuss and propose ideas for the following areas and presented ideas on:

1. Research and Documentation
2. Casting a Wider Net
3. Masterclass Models and Mentoring

Casting a Wider Net was deemed imperative for the success of future Master Classes and the creation of a Puppet School. Until now Unima- India has been using limited number of portals/vehicles on the Internet.

To expand the network, creating a reach beyond the inner core which is already part of this journey, we have to consistently, in a systematic way include more and more people in this journey as participants, stakeholders, by standers and future players. A data base of ever expanding circles has to be developed.

To expand substantially the catchment for future Master Classes, we will need to find not just participants, but Documenters, Mentors and Masters. A concrete and systematic plan for doing so was proposed. Certain Outreach exercises to find new people, practitioners and stakeholders were planned.

Master Class Models and Mentoring Training

1. There is a need for a framework within which the Master Classes may be curated.
2. There is a need to identify more Masters. The accountability of the Masters needs to be framed worked to understand honestly what is being shared and what held back.
3. Masters do not always know how to break down knowledge. Does this make a case for tutoring Masters? The Mentoring of Masters could be a solution for achieving higher standards.
4. Already interesting pedagogies appear in the Master Classes

Identifying key learning aspects that are articulated beyond skills has now become important.

Clarity should be sought on Mentorship of participants and its many aspects, along with understanding the role of the Apprentice.

Is Mentorship necessary? Is it invasive, harsh unnecessary? Some participants felt pushed and stressed by the need to come up with an end product or even a project idea. For most it was a journey of discovery and the initial project idea transformed into something entirely different by the end.

The period of gestation for the learning in the Master Class to be digested, and to appear in the practise of the participants, is long; it may be one year as Choiti shared with her experience of the Material Theatre Master Class.

Therefore the parameters of success and the markers of completion of a process have to be organic and individualised rather than standardised.

Research and Documentation

The film documentation of the Master Classes was shown to the participants. It was unanimous that the Documenters eye was valuable when visible. The style and depth of documentation and research has to be arrived at.

The written documentation is also best done by some one with an outsiders eye. Vidyun shared her experience as a Documentor during the Togalu Master Class.

Of course there is a need to streamline research and documentation methods. For this collaboration with Aparna Collective may be a route as they have specialised in developing frameworks for the same.

It became clear that there is a need to develop a common language, that look at technique and form.

Structure of Master Class: It was clear from the

discussion that the two week model or even the three weeks that were spent at the last Master Class were insufficient." We are but scratching the surface " was the unanimous opinion.. "Transmission of a tradition, thousands of years old, a practise so rich and layered cannot happen in such a short residency."

So, what then is the vehicle of transmission which should be developed? There were many suggestions.

1. A structure for a longer program was suggested- possibly spread over 6 months in which there are two Master Classes. The gap months will be filled with prescribed reading and writing and an internship for observation. This can be documented and become a litmus test for feasibility of such a model.

2. Some Questions Raised: What are the fundamental elements of a basic training / Tareeka in puppetry? Which schools of Puppetry may be studied for developing curriculum frameworks ? Some names were suggested: The Puppetry Lab NYC? Dramatiska? Turku or Stuttgart?

3. Aim to create conscious labs in the future, with a better understanding of participants.

4. There was a suggestion to broaden the scope of the Master Class by bringing in other disciplines like - Architecture, Animation, Toy making.

It was a rich two days of discussion and sharing among participants, Masters, pedagogues and practitioners. The many diverse trains of thought were welcome as an opportunity for discourse had been created after decades.

In the future a Think Tank is required. It could possibly include South Asian countries who have faced similar dilemmas between tradition and modernity, Pedagogical Institutes in the West who have made their mistakes and learnt from them, Academicians who have a historical and sociological understanding of the cultural context of Puppet Traditions. Theoreticians who can help us understand and create a relevant framework appropriate for Indian sub continent and



its complexity.

In the mean time there is a need to work out possible areas for collaboration between Unima India and other interested agencies such as Sangeet Natak Akademi, ICCR, IGNC A and pedagogical spaces such as IIT Powai, Srishti School of Design, Shiv Nadr University, The Ashoka University, Theatre training spaces, Private Individual Master led Puppetry Training Schools (Koga Kamath,Ramesh Pulavar)

UNIMA India's Vision

As a society and a unique body UNIMA India is committed to playing a non -partisan role, away from the politics of culture, keeping a single minded goal of Upscaling the Puppet Arts.

Drawing attention to traditions of Puppetry and their struggle to keep abreast of the shifting audience aesthetic and demands. Debates and discourses have rarely heard the voices of the Masters themselves. We commit ourselves to create opportunities for the same, for showcasing their relevance and make opportunities for transmission of the tradition.

Reaching maximum number of people with the intention of creating awareness and demand. To create a platform for discourse dialogue and information sharing. To explore issues of contemporary expression and practices. To explore a relevant pedagogy which addresses both the contemporary artist and the generational performer. Work to find a model which serves both.

We would like to underline the following:

- 1) This process of exploration (the Masterclasses being conducted by Unima India since the last 3 years) is important and needs to be documented.
- 2) We have adopted a methodology which includes mentoring of the participants along with documentation. Our experience has taught us that mentoring and documentation are valuable cornerstones of any model developed.
- 3) The concrete goal of this Colloquium was to come up with some refined propositions taking us closer to an appropriate model for the next few Master Classes.

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