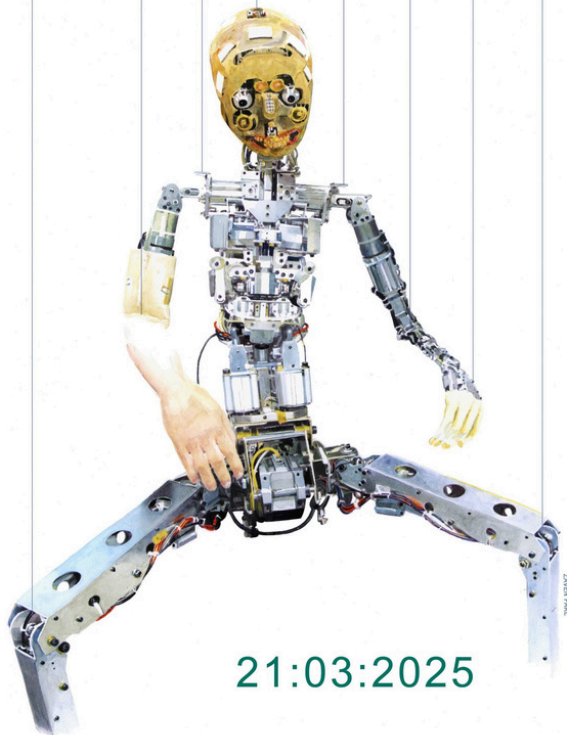


The Newsletter

UNIMA PUPPETEERS TRUST - INDIA

WORLD PUPPETRY DAY



21:03:2025

Source: UNIMA International (for more details click [HERE](#))

From the Managing Trustee

Greetings,

The foundation course is a landmark for UNIMA. To run a serious course and a magazine, Sutradhar, without financial resources we have to be very creative. We are grateful to the Crafts Museum for giving us teaching space for the first phase until end January 2025.

It is time for all to renew their memberships. For any details and info, Email us at puppeteerstrust@gmail.com

Ranjana Pandey

VOLUME 09



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FROM THE MANAGING TRUSTEE

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- Obituary: Late Shri M. Uppalaiah, (Telangana)

UPCOMINGS:-

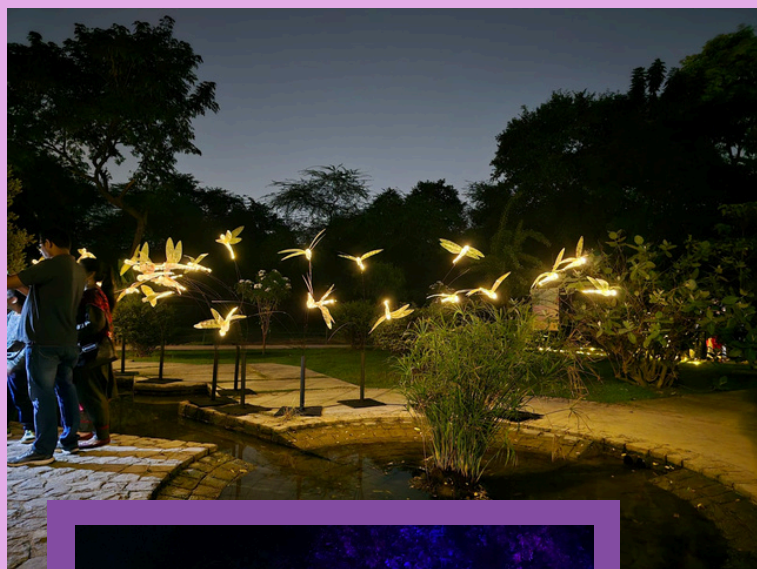
- Webinar no. 6 (Unima Education, Development and Therapy Commission)
- PuppetOscope International Puppet Film Festival 2025

Unima Internationale

- World Puppetry Day 2025: Robots, AI, and the dream of the puppet?
- WPD 2025 poster

THE GIANT PUPPET WORKSHOP BY ANDREW KIM

ANURUPA ROY, THE KATKATHA PUPPET ARTS TRUST (NEW DELHI)



The Katkatha Puppet Arts Trust designed and created The Enchanted Walk, at the KNMA Theatre Festival

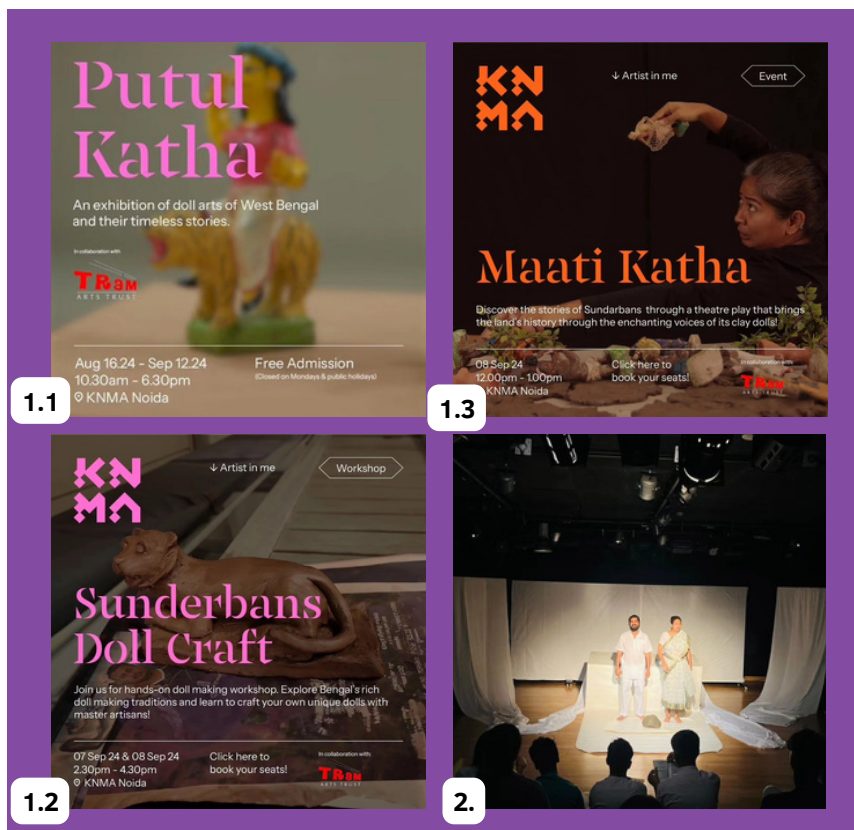
An immersive puppet experience at Sunder Nursery in Delhi from 19th and 20th October 2024.

This interactive exhibition and performance celebrated insects. From being seen as creepy crawlies or undesirable or invisible underfoot to being heroes who have complex lives and biosphere and are an integral part of life on this planet.

The exhibition entailed a walk through a landscape of dragon flies, an interactive cupboard of curiosities and a giant insect puppet walk. The giant insects were constructed during a puppet workshop by master puppeteer Andrew Kim of Thingumyjig Theatre in the UK. The participants were from across India. The workshop was supported by the British Council.

MAATI KATHA

CHOITI GHOSH, TRAM ARTS TRUST (NEW DELHI)



1. RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE DOLL-ARTS OF WEST BENGAL

1.1 EXHIBITION OF 'DOLL ARTS OF WEST BENGAL' & THEIR STORIES' AT KNMA, Noida (Sep'23)

For the last 4 years, Tram has been doing an ethnographic research project on the Doll-Arts of West Bengal & the Stories surrounding them. The project documents and archives the myriad stories surrounding the doll-arts of West Bengal, the artists who make the dolls and the communities whose lives are intricately connected with the dolls. The objectives of the project are firstly to come a little bit closer to our roots; secondly to widely share these little to unknown stories; and thirdly to explore newer relevances for the doll-arts, their stories and artists through varied artistic collaborations with different artforms. In this regard we have put together exhibitions, created a performance called 'Maati Katha' in collaboration with Sunderban doll-artists, and facilitated workshops by the doll-artists and around the doll-arts.

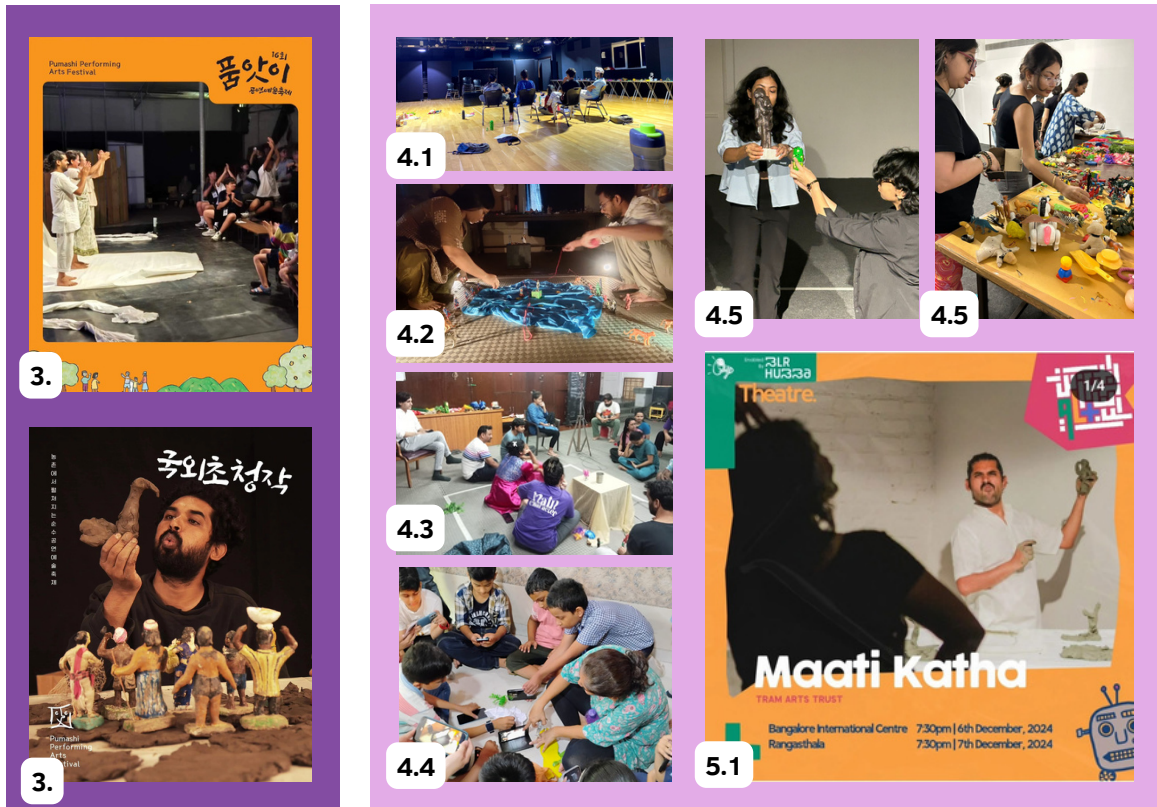
1.2 CLAY DOLL-MAKING WORKSHOP WITH DOLL-ARTISTS OF SUNDERBANS AT KNMA, Noida (Sep'23)

1.3 CLAY DOLL-MAKING WORKSHOP WITH DOLL-ARTISTS OF SUNDERBANS AT KNMA, Noida (Sep'23)

2. 'MAATI KATHA' SHOW AT BRITISH SCHOOL, NEW DELHI – August 2023

TRAM ARTS TRUST

CHOITI GHOSH (NEW DELHI)



3. 'MAATI KATHA' SHOWS AT PUMASHI PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL, Hwaseong, S KOREA - August 2023 & AT THE CHUNCHEON INTERNATIONAL PUPPET FESTIVAL, Chuncheon, S KOREA – Aug-Sep 2023 where the play was awarded with the Special Jury Award.

4. Workshops

- 4.1 OBJECT THEATRE WORKSHOP AT BRITISH SCHOOL, New Delhi (Sep)
- 4.2 OBJECT THEATRE WORKSHOP AT NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA (Oct)
- 4.3 OBJECT THEATRE WORKSHOP AT TIE, NSD (Oct)
- 4.4 CINEMATIC OBJECT THEATRE WORKSHOP AT MEERUT (Oct)
- 4.5 ORDINARY OBJECTS & ANCIENT SCULPTURES WORKSHOPS AT CSMVS, Mumbai (Sep-Oct)

5. UPCOMINGS

- 5.1 'MAATI KATHA' SHOWS AT WIP ALTFEST, Bangalore & New Delhi (Dec 2024)
- 5.2 'MAATI KATHA' SHOWS AT Chicago International Puppet Theatre Festival & South Asia Institute, Columbia University, New York (Jan-Feb 2025)

IRIS CREATIVE EDUCATION

CHARU PRASAD, (MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA)

Event 1: Ganesha and the Moon

Ms. Charu Prasad along with her team of Iris Creative Education did a puppet play at Ganesh Pandal at Omkar 1973, Worli. The play was about how once when Ganesha and his favourite companion Mooshak were visiting the pandals, Moon made fun of them and hence Ganesha cursed the moon and made it disappear.

The balance of the universe was shattered. Lord Brahma came and requested Ganesha to restore the moon's light.

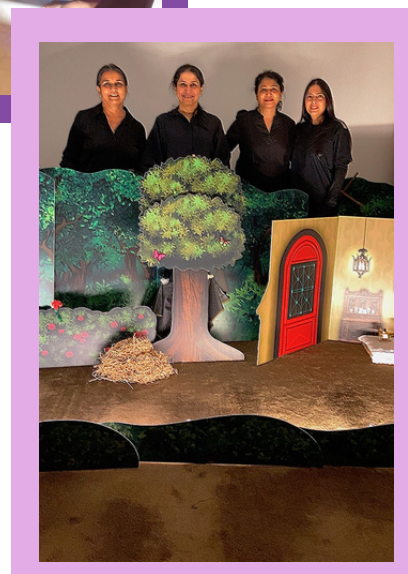
On Brahma's request, Ganesha obliged but on the condition that moon will shine brightly only one night in a month. Rest of the nights, it will be partly visible.

Event 2: Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Wolf

Date: 13th November 24

Place: Tata Memorial Hospital for Cuddles Foundation

About: Iris Creative Education performed a cute little show about little red riding hood and the Big Bad Wolf!



BULBULE 2024

RIDHI AGGARWAL, SWATANTRA TALIM, (LUCKNOW, UTTAR PRADESH)



1. Swatantra Talim build 'curiosity zone' around land sea
2. Show _Humaara Circus_ by Shammem & Vinay
3. Debosmita, a puppeteer, doing puppetry workshop
4. Show _A Light Story_ by Vishal & Sukhmani

Bulbule Children's Festival, organised by Swatantra Talim, is a one of its kind 3-day festival happening in Lucknow that brings children and their whole ecosystem; parents, artists, and educators together for a larger-than-life visual and performing art experience - all at one place! This was the 2nd edition of the festival which took place from 8-10 Nov 2024. From storytelling to puppetry, from workshops to games, from music to stories, the festival promises to be packed with fun and frolic. But of all the ways we engage children, making and puppetry stood out the most. Not only did the festival hold space for puppetry workshops, but also puppets shows, and performative workshops around it - playing with light, shadow and objects.

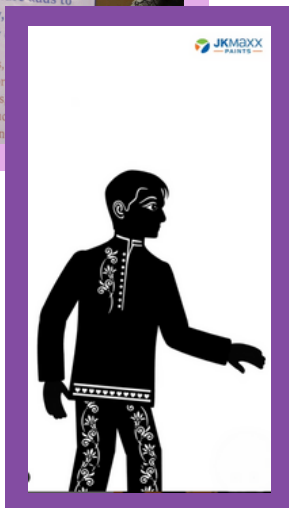
Many of the puppeteers that we met from the Katkatha Puppet Incubation Lab last year became backbones for us at the festival this year, and helped us hone many of our ideas. While some of them held workshops around puppetry and making at the festival, some put together beautiful shows and performances!

About Swatantra Talim

It is a not-for-profit organisation working in the space of stories, play and making with children from rural and public schools of Uttar Pradesh since 2013. It is focussed on bringing transformative impacts on learning, cognition, well-being, life skills and life choices among the most socially and economically marginalised children and youth of this country.

PEP UP

REKHA VYAS, (MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA)



SHOWCASING THE TIMELESS ART OF SHADOWGRAPHY AND PUPPETRY

1. Virtual Diwali Celebrations:

PepUp introduced international audiences to the magic of epic Ramayan tale through mesmerizing shadow puppetry at virtual Diwali events for:

- Airbnb employees in the US and Australia
- Americas at Amdocs employees
- Clari Software employees

2. Somaiya School Literature Fest

PepUp performed a live Ramayan show and conducted an engaging puppetry workshop, captivating students with the art of storytelling through shadows and puppets.

3. Ecole Mondiale School Literature Fest

We brought the enchanting Dragon Shadow Story to life and conducted a puppet-making workshop, sparking creativity and curiosity among the young students.

4. Diwali Advertisement for JK Max Paints

PepUp designed a fascinating Diwali-themed advertisement using shadow storytelling for JK Max Paints, blending tradition and innovation in a visually compelling campaign.

These events exemplify PepUp's commitment to reviving and innovating traditional art forms while connecting with diverse audiences worldwide.

RAVAN BADH

BINITA DEVI, (KAMRUP, ASSAM)



Successful Stage Performance of Binita Devi's Ravan Badh at Sangeet Natak Akademi

The Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar for the years 2022 and 2023 was conferred on 22nd November at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi, by the Sangeet Natak Akademi. From 22nd to 27th November, the talents of the awardees were showcased through various performances. On 25th November, Ravan Badh, a puppet play directed by Binita Devi, a recipient of the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar, was performed at the Meghdoot Bhavan of the Sangeet Natak Akademi. The play was scripted by Simanta Sharma, a Senior Fellowship awardee from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

The production received immense appreciation from students, artists, and distinguished guests present. The puppets were operated seamlessly, ensuring every scene was beautifully presented. The play embodied the nine emotions of the Natya Shastra, making Ravan Badh an exceptional experience for the audience. Characters such as Ram, Sita, Lakshman, Ravan, Surpanakha, and Jatayu, portrayed through puppetry, captivated everyone. Notable moments included Hanuman setting Lanka ablaze, the battle between Ravan and Jatayu, and Jatayu's heroic attempt to rescue Sita. Surpanakha's transformation from a demoness to a beautiful woman, attempting to enchant Ram and Sita, left the audience spellbound. Lakshman cutting off Surpanakha's nose was another highlight, leaving viewers deeply engaged.

Executing such a production through puppetry is challenging, yet every scene was skillfully rendered. The flawless manipulation of the puppets mesmerized the audience, immersing them in the artistic magic of the play. The dialogues, rich in literary beauty, struck an emotional chord, making each scene uniquely impactful.

RAVAN BADH

BINITA DEVI, (KAMRUP, ASSAM)

The music, directed by Papu Goswami, added a melodic charm that enhanced the overall experience. The puppets were operated by Binita Devi, Dhruv Jyoti Kalita, Hardik Sharma, Palak Kairi, Pranab Jyoti Rabha, Devpratim Goswami, Karismita Talukdar, and Simanta Sharma, while their voices were provided by Swapna Das, Himanshu Sharma, Binita Devi, Hardik Sharma, Anita Devi, Kritartha Sharma, Deepa Mohanta, Himanshu Das, Pranab Jyoti Rabha, and Rajanobh Sharma.

The ability to captivate the audience at the Sangeet Natak Akademi is a testament to Binita Devi's exceptional direction. Simanta Sharma's script also deserves credit for touching the hearts of the audience. Binita Devi's plays are known for their connection to social themes and spiritual narratives. This play has already been performed across various states in India under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, receiving widespread acclaim.

Binita Devi's contributions to Assamese puppetry ensure it remains a treasured art form, destined to shine forever. May her legacy continue, advancing Assamese folk art and elevating its global presence. We hope that puppet theatre rooted in Assam's traditions continues to thrive on the world stage.



ANAMIKA RAY MEMORIAL TRUST (ARMT)

DR. MOUSHUMI BHATTACHARJEE, (GUWAHATI, ASSAM)



Embracing the Digital Future: ARMT's DREAM Project Takes Flight in Kamrup

In a rapidly evolving digital world, where the screen has become a ubiquitous presence in the lives of young minds, the Dr. Anamika Ray Memorial Trust (ARMT) in Guwahati has launched an ambitious initiative to address the challenges and opportunities of digital literacy. The DREAM project, an acronym for Digital Realities Educating and Applying Mindfulness, stands as a beacon of hope and education for the school children of Kamrup district, who are increasingly entangled in the web of mobile phone usage.

Recognizing the pressing need to prepare the next generation for a digital future, ARMT's extensive campaign aims to equip young minds with the knowledge and skills required to navigate the digital landscape responsibly and effectively. This innovative non-governmental organization is rolling out a series of informative sessions that delve into the advantages and disadvantages of the internet, providing a balanced perspective on the growth chart of internet usage.

The campaign is designed to uncover the secrets of the internet, shedding light on its vast potential as well as the lurking dangers of internet addiction. Through engaging content, ARMT addresses the signs of screen addiction and its consequences, offering practical advice on how to balance screen time. This holistic approach ensures that children are not only aware of the digital world's pitfalls but are also empowered to harness its benefits for their educational and personal growth.

ANAMIKA RAY MEMORIAL TRUST (ARMT)

DR. MOUSHUMI BHATTACHARJEE, (GUWAHATI, ASSAM)



Central to the DREAM project is the commitment to using mindfulness as a tool to foster digital well-being. By integrating mindfulness practices, ARMT encourages students to develop a healthy relationship with technology, emphasizing the importance of mental and emotional well-being in a hyper-connected world. Adding a unique and culturally resonant dimension to the campaign, ARMT is also using puppetry as a tool to spread their message. Puppetry, with its rich tradition in storytelling and engagement, captivates young audiences and makes the learning process both enjoyable and memorable. Through specially crafted puppet shows, ARMT effectively communicates the principles of digital literacy and mindfulness, ensuring that the message resonates deeply with the children.

The initiative has garnered significant attention and support from various stakeholders, including educators, parents, and community leaders, all of whom recognize the vital role of digital literacy in shaping a bright future for the youth. As ARMT's DREAM project takes root in Kamrup, it stands poised to make a lasting impact, fostering a generation of digitally savvy, mindful, and empowered individuals ready to thrive in the digital age.

Through the thoughtful and comprehensive efforts of the Dr. Anamika Ray Memorial Trust, the DREAM project is not just a campaign; it is a movement towards a more informed, balanced, and enlightened digital future for the children of Kamrup district.

RANGAPUTHALI PUPPETEERS

M R SRINIVASA RAO, (BENGALURU, KARNATAKA)

The activities were completed from Sept 2024 till Nov 2024 by Rangaputhali Puppeteers.

1. On 23/09/2024, Rangaputhali Puppeteers have given Ramayana and Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaj Puppet show performance @ Chitradurga during Hindu Maha Ganapathi (known as the 2nd largest Ganesh festival celebration of India) with grand success.

2. On 27/09/2024, we have given small contemporary skit in Vipra Business Forum about their activity promotion along with Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaj Puppet show.

3. As Navratri / Dussara in Karnataka is being celebrated as 'Bombe Habba' (Festival of dolls), Rangaputhali Puppeteers have given many performances such as Swami Vivekananda and Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaj puppet show performances in Hubli / Dharwad region and also in Rashotrothana Vidya Kendra, Dharwad. Got an appreciation letter from them for retaining this rare art form of India. (letter copy attached)

4. In Bangalore, Rangaputhali Puppeteers have given Ramayan puppet show continuously for 3 days in Garuda Mall during Dussara festival from 9/10/2024 to 11/10/2024 which was a grand success.

5. On 16/10/2024, its a proud and memorable moment, as Rangaputhali Puppeteers have given Swami Vivekananda Puppet show performance @ Ramakrishna Ashrama, Belagaum, where Swami Vivekananda has stayed in Belgaum for 12 days in 1891. We got the very good responses from them.

6. During Kannada Rajyotsava, Rangaputhali Puppeteers have given many puppet show performances in prestigious apartments such as Brigade, Prestige and many more by promoting this rare art of India. Even we have customized some puppet show performances according to their tastes.



RANGAPUTHALI PUPPETEERS

M R SRINIVASA RAO, (BENGALURU, KARNATAKA)



7. On 14/11/2024, Rangaputhali Puppeteers have given a puppet show live demonstration along with performance and encouraged the young audience of Global City International school to learn about this art form.

8. On 29/11/2024, Rangaputhali Puppeteers have given Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj puppet show in Pustaka Habba 2024 (Book Festival) in association with Samskara Bharathi, Bengaluru.

Apart from these, here are some of the works we are doing in nearing days.

1. On 1/12/2024, Rangaputhali Puppeteers is conducting a puppet workshop during Bangalore Hubba.

2. Rangaputhali Puppeteers artists Sri Ananda Murthy and Sri Ramakrishna have been selected for puppet making workshop (Pavakathakali - Kerala Puppets) @ Dhaatu in association with South Zone Central Central Centre from 01/12/2024 till 13/12/2024.

3. Our upcoming project - Rani Ahilyabai Holkar script is almost done and are ready for recording. This is with the support of Samskara Bharati, Bengaluru.

4. Rangaputhali Puppeteers are very soon coming up Swami Vivekananda and Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaj puppet show in Hindi language also to reach many audiences.

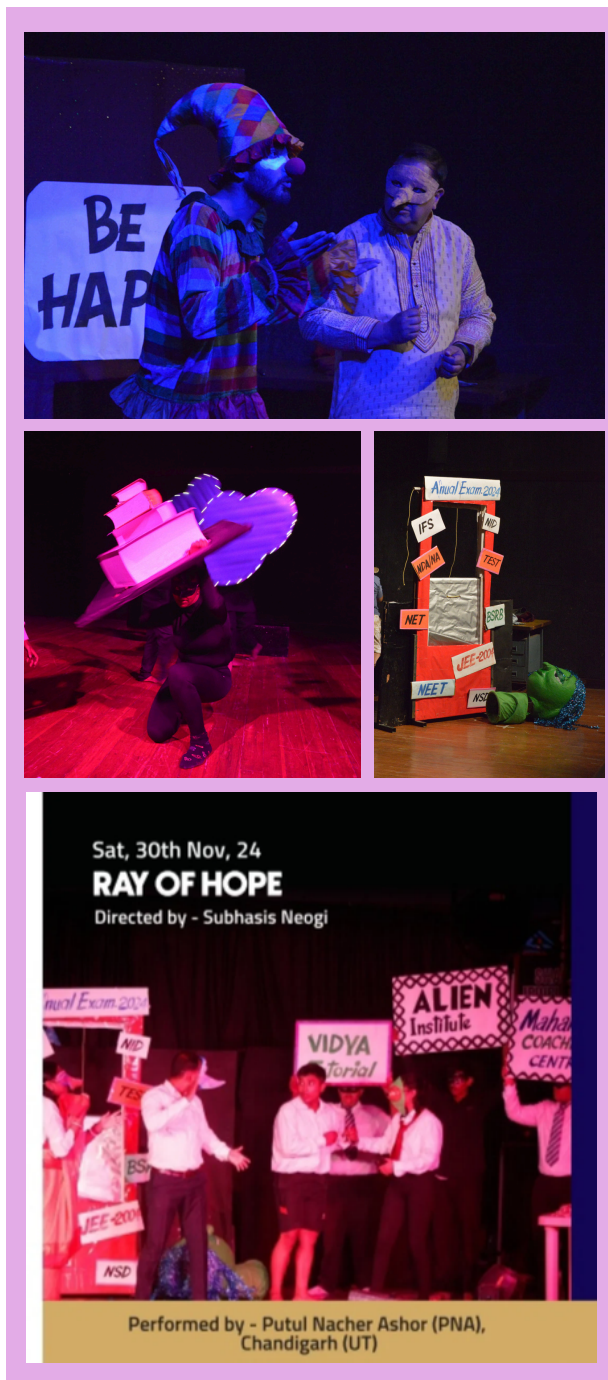
PUTUL NACHER ASHOR (PNA)

SUBHASIS G. NEOGI, (CHANDIGARH)

This story revolves around a student Chintu who wants to live his dreams but is stuck in the conventional system of Education. He goes to class and gets nightmares of his subjects as he is not able to understand anything. His father forces him to be rich but he chose to be happy and this becomes a horror for him. We all have dreamt or been forced to dream to become pilots, engineers, doctors, architects, civil servants, etc. But unfortunately, not every dream gets fulfilled. Kids too have their own dreams but then why we are forcing our dreams & aspirations on them?

The world is Changing and so is the education system. Government of India has set new Education Guidelines NEP-2020. It is not necessary that learning and cramming from books will make him/her successful. There are many more career opportunities now except engineering and medical. Subjects like Fine Arts, Computers, Dance, Music, Theatre, etc have become and inevitable parts of education now.

NEP-2020 mentions that learning should be holistic, Integrated, enjoyable and engaging. Children would have a wider perspective of the world only if we give them a chance to see the world. Unfortunately, by the passage of time we are just running behind financial growth and career. And all the participants of this race forget the importance of Humanity and Happiness. Humanity is the biggest religion of the World. Before choosing any career, choose to be a good human. We all our masters of our own lives. Live your life to the fullest.



BURDWAN THE PUPPETEERS

PARTHA PRATIM PAUL, (BURDHAMAN, WEST BENGAL)

25 YEARS OF WITH PUPPETRY

A GROUP OF CONTEMPORARY PUPPETS FROM WEST BENGAL IS GOING TO CELEBRATE THEIR SILVER JUBILEE IN 2025.



Burdwan The Puppeteers" (BTPs) is a band of puppet players who have been staging puppet drama from the dawn of the Millenium i.e., from 2000. This group started from the town of Burdwan which is almost a hundred kilometers away from Kolkata, the chief centre of art and culture of East India and earned their reputation in the field of Indian puppetry in a broad spectrum over the years. From the stage of inception, BTPs pursued at promoting Indian culture in general and to increase the popularity and appeal of a difficult art of puppet theatre among the masses in particular.

From the very beginning, BTPs aimed to involve children in theatre. They started school theatre a long ago before the concept surfaced to the level nowadays. BTPs started to conduct puppet workshops in both Govt. and private schools on a regular basis which have been traditionally maintained by their successors over the years. From time immemorial, kids are eternally fascinated with Dolls and toys. Later, use of puppet as a narrative tool was perhaps to be considered as one of the most astounding techniques used by an artist, a marionette. A puppet can say many things without any eyebrows furrowed from the audience, a puppet could bring around many topics or anecdotes quite smoothly with all giggle and chuckle. Where a throwing of discourse in between actors in flesh can turn the auditorium into a powder keg, a puppet will deliver the same but in the most possible frictionless manner, just as flat as a pancake. Simultaneously, If the puppeteers are kids, then the impact of that discourse gets quite elevated, adult audiences remain much more precisely engaged with them. Over the ages, the puppet theatre has been transformed into a restricted genre of theatre art, traditional forms are practised regionally in scattered plot, contemporary and modern Indian puppet theatre has not been able to get much popularity in the young generation despite every and all efforts from diverse communities, organizations and the authority. Burdwan The Puppeteers realized, by all means in puppetry they have to have proper communication with the young ones, they have to make contents that would get hold of them, they have to deliver the puppetry in a manner that would blow their minds. The younger kids get associated with puppetry, the more this art form will flourish, having been this Planted in their motto, BTPs initiated a continuous and systematic training format in a weekly puppet fun session; - their famous 'Sunday Class' where Kids play with clay, draw pictures, paint a fabric, make models with different materials etc. There they learn how a puppet is made, they are trained to manipulate and manoeuvre puppet, they get to know about different traditional forms of puppet. BTPs coordinate several workshops yearly and kids get exposure from many resource persons of this fraternity. Gradually, a legacy has been developed due to their remarkable effort for the last ten years, those kids who started puppetry from their six or seven, now do perform, design, direct in BTPs productions. They also train the budding puppeteers in 'Sunday Class' as mentors.

BURDWAN THE PUPPETEERS

PARTHA PRATIM PAUL, (BURDHAMAN, WEST BENGAL)



BTPs first production was 'Ichhapuran'- an awareness puppet programme to highlight the nationwide Pulse Polio Campaign in collaboration with Burdwan zilla Parisad, Govt. of W.B. Many of their productions have raised issues regarding climate challenges, social injustice, oppression in mankind etc. BTPs, been consistent with their intentions by telling a tale of mankind projecting through the puppets, to the human audience delivered with the easiest accessible flavour of theatre as could be possible. Their performances charmed the mass pan-India, irrespective of language. Burdwan The Puppeteers is also recognized for its innovative and creative approach towards diverse genres of contemporary puppetry in practice and application. Their tenacity in building surrealistic aspects is evidently reflected in many productions, especially in 'Moon's Magic', 'Nil Barno Sheyal' etc. With the amalgamated movement of the puppeteers along their rod and string puppets in 'Birpurush'; incurring actual business and actions in puppets in 'Sat Bhoot', 'Mama Bhagne Kupokaat'; involving them in handling and reciprocating with the real materials like pulling out the plastics from the roots of a dying plantlet in 'Sapling'; - in every act of BTPs, they attempted Constructing moments and moods with extensive "humanlike" treatment of their puppets. They also have been experimenting with different methods and forms in their applications; - e.g. the extensive use of Bunraku Puppet in 'Me and my Friends' have quite captivated the audience. One noteworthy observation on the pattern of the productions of this organization is nurturing multiple directors on board simultaneously. Senior directors are jointly operating with the junior ones, exchanging thoughts and concepts and in many productions, junior directors are working independently with complete freedom and authority.

BTPs reputation have led to receive many prestigious invitations from different central cultural organizations; - they have performed in Kolkata Doordarshan; participated in 'Putul Tamasha' by EZCC, NEZCC; they have also participated in 'Putul Yatra' for several times organized by SNA etc. Their productions in different significant national festivals such as in all over India. have received great accolades from the people.

Another significant attempt of BTPs was to facilitate a broader platform for representing different regional puppets to a larger section of society by organizing their national puppet theatre festival 'Putul Khela' since 2016, where the people of West Bengal enquire to the performances of puppeteers from different states and forms. Many young puppeteers of BTPs are doing research mainly on several aspects and scope of contemporary puppets.


On the verge of their silver jubilee year, BTPs have finally inaugurated their intimate theatre space and Puppet Laboratory- 'Putul Ghar' in August. This year's Children's Day in November was quite special, as BTPs arranged a special screening of their recent production 'Ranga Vanga' to students of different schools in their 'Putul Ghar'.

In the coming days, the future objective was briefed from the director of BTP's Sri. Partho Pratim Paul that they have an aspiration to continue their work with the children in a more integrative manner and would like to expand their horizon in designing their upcoming productions.

NORI ART AND PUPPETRY CENTRE

RATNAMALA NORI, (HYDERABAD, TELANGANA)

Seva Bharath Award 2024 presented to **Shri Satyanarayana Sarma Nori and Smt Ratnamala Nori** of the Nori Art and Puppetry Centre Hyderabad for their services to society through the art of puppetry



organised by

HEAVEN HOMES SOCIETY


SEVA BRINDAVANAM

Sponsored By

Telangana

Smt. Varalakshmi .G
Organizer, Founder
Heaven Homes Society
Ex Film Sensor Board Member

SEVA BHARATH AWARDS 2024



Satyanarayana Sarma Nori & Ratna Mala Nori
Puppetry Artists
Nori Art & Puppetry Center

INVITATION

Celebrating 20 years of empowering women , ensuring their security , and promoting their health at the heaven homes society's anniversary award Ceremony!

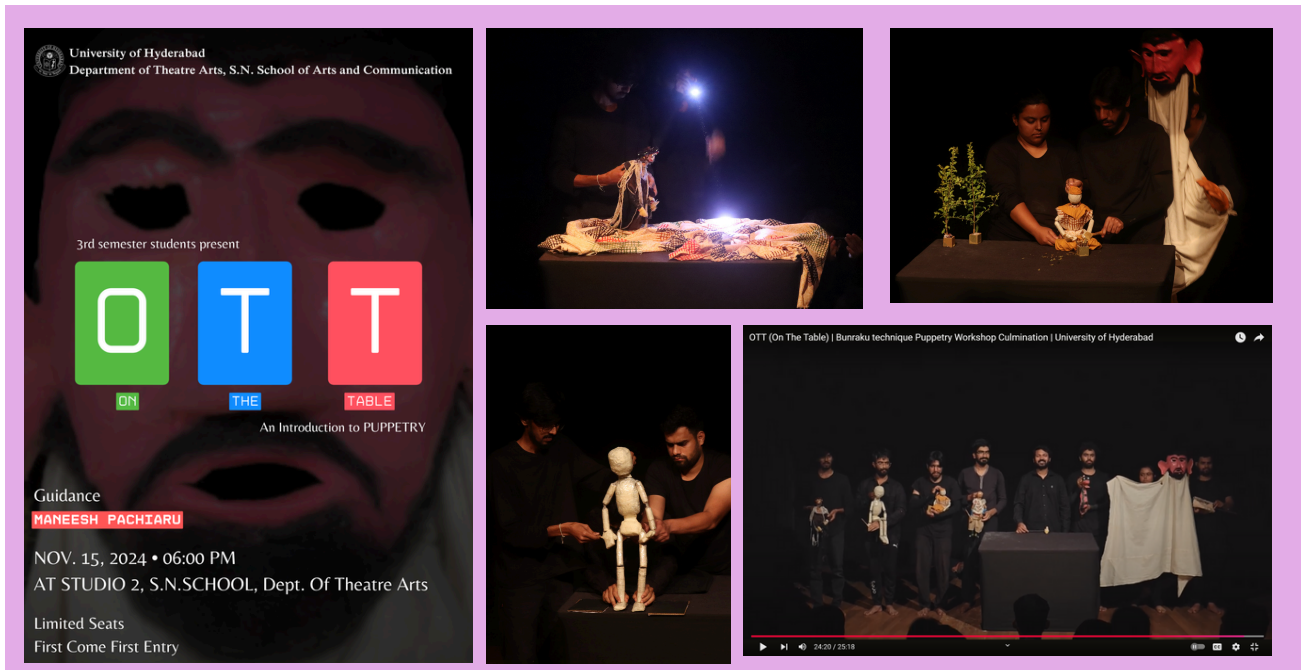
ON

DEC 06, 2024 | 9 AM TO 1PM

VENUE : RAVINDRA BHARATHI

OTT - ON THE TABLE

MANEESH PACHIARU, (CHANDIGARH)



Hyderabad, November 15, 2024 – The Department of Theatre Arts at the Central University of Hyderabad concluded its 15-day workshop titled “Basic Introduction to Puppetry” with an open class demonstration, “OTT – On The Table”, captivating the audience with a display of creativity, experimentation, and storytelling. The workshop, held from October 28 to November 15, 2024, was facilitated by puppeteer and theatre practitioner Maneesh Pachiaru, who guided the 3rd-semester students of the 2023-2026 batch in exploring the basics of puppetry and the Bunraku technique.

OTT – On The Table: An attempt to hands on puppetry

The open class demonstration showcased the students’ journey through the intensive process of learning puppetry. They explored techniques to animate the inanimate by experimenting with one-person, two-person, and three-person puppet control. The presentation featured improvisations and narratives developed during the workshop, highlighting the creativity and dedication of the participants.

The name “OTT – On The Table” aptly reflected the format, where puppetry performances took of course on the table as stage, demonstrating how simple props and carefully choreographed movements could bring lifeless figures to life. The choice of the Bunraku-inspired method added depth to the presentation, as students worked collaboratively to manipulate puppets with an attempt at precision and grace.

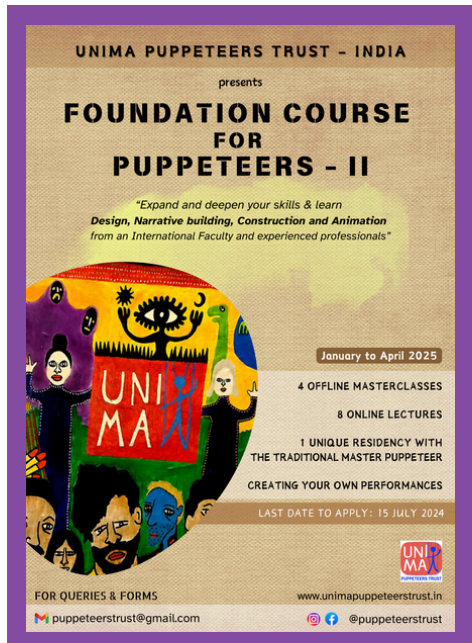
‘The Basic Introduction to Puppetry’ workshop, culminating in the vibrant “OTT – On The Table” demonstration, offered students a valuable opportunity to explore puppetry as both an art and a tool for performance. While mastery in puppetry takes years, this short-term workshop was a step towards understanding its foundations and applications. The insights and experiences gained will continue to shape the participants’ artistic journeys, enriching their approach to theatre and storytelling.

The complete presentation is available on the YouTube link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbhwDL5BPYc∓v=qbhwDL5BPYc∓t=11s>

FOUNDATION COURSE FOR PUPPETEERS - II

UNIMA PUPPETEERS TRUST - INDIA



Key Faculty Members

The program will be led by an esteemed panel of experts, including:

- Asha
- Dadi D. Pudumjee
- Gunduraju Ji
- Anirban Ghosh
- Anurupa Roy
- Neel Chaudhuri
- Milind Shrivastva
- Ranjana Pandey
- Sylvie Ballion

The course will conclude in August 2025, marking a new chapter in the professional journey of these young puppeteers.

FOUNDATION COURSE FOR PUPPETEERS 2025 BY UNIMA PUPPETEERS TRUST-INDIA TO BEGIN IN JANUARY

The UNIMA Puppeteers Trust-India is set to launch its much-awaited second Foundation Course for Puppeteers from January to August 2025. Designed to nurture emerging talent, the course will host five shortlisted candidates nationwide. The selected participants are Deepali Tiwari (Allahabad), Ridhi Aggarwal and Kuldeep Kannoja (Lucknow), Sakhi Upadhyaya (New Delhi), and Tandra Kundu (Bardhaman).

The training is hybrid, combining intensive offline sessions with online lectures and practical internships. The curriculum aims to provide a holistic approach to puppetry, covering sketching, narrative building, puppet construction, manipulation techniques, dramaturgy, and performance design.

Offline Sessions Highlights

1. January - Delhi:
 - Topics: Sketching, Puppet Building, Anatomy, Sculpting, Glove Puppetry, Bunraku.
2. February - Hassan & Delhi:
 - Focus: Shadow Puppetry Masterclass on Togalu Gombeyatta (Hassan, Karnataka) and Modern Shadow Puppetry with OHP (Delhi).
3. March - Delhi:
 - Modules: Scriptwriting, Dramaturgy, Music and Soundscape, Lighting Design, Public Show Presentation.

Online Modules and Internship (April-July)

From April to July, students will attend online lecture series and engage in internships to gain hands-on experience. The course organizers have issued a Call for Internship Offers inviting professional puppetry groups, freelance practitioners, and schools to collaborate. Key requirements for hosting an internship include:

- Providing local transport and accommodation for candidates.
- A minimum internship duration of 4-6 weeks.
- Submission of a detailed report and photo documentation by both the host and the intern.

Interested hosts can email their proposals to puppeteertrust@gmail.com

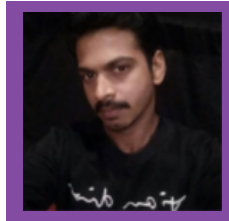
FOUNDATION COURSE FOR PUPPETEERS - I

UNIMA PUPPETEERS TRUST - INDIA



Jagannath Sinha (7th generation traditional string puppeteer, Tarer Putul, West Bengal)

- I'm Jagannath, a traditional string puppeteer from Bankura, West Bengal. I've been part of the puppetry world for 17 years, starting with my family's team and my grandfather. Six years into my journey, I joined the contemporary puppet team, Burdwan The Puppeteers, under the guidance of Mr. Partha Pratim Paul.
- In 2017, I attended my first master class in Rajasthan, mentored by Dadi Pudumjee. This marked a turning point in my understanding of puppetry. The following year, I participated in the Foundation Course of Puppetry in Delhi, which began as a challenge. Initially, I felt overwhelmed and doubted my place there. However, with support from mentors, I gradually embraced the course and grew passionate about puppetry.
- One of the highlights was the shift to Hasan to learn traditional shadow puppetry. The process of making leather puppets and exploring this art form fascinated me. After returning to Delhi, our performance at the final show deepened my appreciation for the craft. Yet, I felt that the course duration was too short to delve deeply into each topic, leaving room for improvement.
- Back in Bengal, I applied the knowledge gained from the foundation course to my work, significantly enhancing my skills. This course played a crucial role in shaping my journey. I strongly believe the foundation course should be revived, expanded, and introduced widely. It has immense potential to inspire and educate future puppeteers, ensuring the survival and evolution of this beautiful art form.



Sajeesh Pulavar (8th generation traditional leather shadow puppeteer, Tholpavakoothu)

- I attended the UNIMA Foundation Course in 2018. I was very excited about the program, but also a bit confused about everything happening in the world of puppetry. Initially, I thought all forms of puppetry were the same and believed that, as a traditional puppeteer, I could easily adapt to it. However, attending the course gave me a deeper understanding of the diversity in puppetry.
- Interestingly, after completing the foundation course, I started conducting glove puppet workshops more often than shadow puppetry. The ideas I learned during the course greatly influenced my workshops. The key lessons were taught by authentic masters like Puran Bhat, Gunduraju, Dadi sir, Ranjana ji, and Anurupa ji, making it a truly wonderful experience with the UNIMA team.

Now, I regularly conduct workshops at TTC and B.Ed colleges, and I am proud to say that I am a full-time puppeteer. Thank you, UNIMA!

UNIMA HERITAGE AWARDS

IDOYA OTEGUI, UNIMA INTERNATIONAL

UNIMA's Commission of Heritage, Museums and Documentation Centers (HMDC) considers that since our Association is the only one of its kind whose field of action is the art of Puppetry, it has the obligation to ensure the cataloging and subsequent conservation of all forms of puppets that can be considered patrimony. Because heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. Without patrimony, without heritage we are nothing, all we are today, all we can be in the future is because we have had a past...

To this end, our commission have set different objectives, one of which is to reward, encourage, and ultimately recognize the work of those people who have dedicated their lives to protecting this ancestral art form, but also those young people who have decided from their youth to work so that the art does not disappear and we can continue enjoying this rich theatrical discipline. The way to recognize it is the launch of the UNIMA Certificates of Recognition for Preservation of Puppetry Heritage.

By creating these Certificates of Recognition for Preservation of Puppetry Heritage, the UNIMA Commission for Heritage, Museums and Documentation Centers wants to recognize those people who have either dedicated their lives to the protection, dissemination, or research of the puppet heritage or those young people who have decided to dedicate their lives to defend, protect, disseminate or investigate the puppet heritage.

These contributions could for example include:

- Highly recognized practitioners whose work has kept traditional puppet theater alive, especially in complicated contexts.
- Exceptionally strong and effective advocacy for puppet heritage that has promoted or supported its preservation and recognition.
- The creation of an institution related to Heritage: Museum, Documentation Center.
- Researchers, writers or curators whose work has greatly contributed to the understanding and appreciation of the art of puppetry.

In the 2024 edition of the Certificates of Recognition we are very happy and proud to have received 40 Nominations from 17 Countries. The jury have given 37 awards from 15 countries, from them 6 are from India:

Bhaskar Kogga Kamath - Karnataka - string puppets

He has started a small museum on the premises of his traditional Yakshagana Gombeyatta string puppets and a small theatre where he not only introduces his style and technique, but also attracts other young youth, dancers and musicians to perform. His tradition is acclaimed in his state and beyond, his style and tradition is rare as of now we only know of 2 families of his tradition and this is the older lineage.

Chithambara Rao - Tholubommallata - shadow puppets

He has been working on the preservation and dissemination of the unique Tholubommallata traditional Leather Puppetry art through his shows and workshops to spread the leather puppetry art in and out of the country.

UNIMA HERITAGE AWARDS

IDOYA OTEGUI, UNIMA INTERNATIONAL

Gunduraju - Karnataka - shadow puppets

He is a traditional leather shadow puppeteer from Karnataka is a master orator and storyteller. He is a repository of non mainstream versions of the epics and stories that have no written source but are carried only in the oral or performed form. He has also trained many non traditional puppeteers through various workshops including UNIMA India's masterclasses, thereby passing on the stories and the performing form, leather making techniques and paint making techniques to also those who are not within his community.

Lakshmana Pulavar M - Tholpavakoothu - shadow puppets

He is a Puppet making, manipulating, puppets, performing, teaching, puppetry, research in new puppets. He belongs to the traditional Tholpavakoothu (Shadow puppetry) family with a rich historical background in a remote village koonathara Kerala State he had studied Tholpavakoothu by his great guru and father from the age of six. Lakshmana Pulavar, is a performer of puppets and is passing on his form to his sons and nephews. He is a regular performer at the temple festival held from February to May in Kerala.

Puran Bhatt - Kathputli - string puppets

Amongst many of the Kathputli tradition of Rajasthan, he stands out in his very high quality of his puppets, manipulation techniques and production values, as is normal his whole family sons and daughters are also involved in their tradition, besides this Puran holds workshops and training programs of his tradition and innovations in taking it forward to a larger audience, with youth, children as also foreign participants.

His work is acclaimed in India and abroad, his linear family tree goes back many generations, he has taken his tradition to new heights and amongst many stands out with his thought on his tradition, is both traditional and bridge creations in modern techniques.

Sadananda Pulavar - Tholpavakoothu - shadow puppets

He hails from a family with expertise in traditional shadow puppetry art form for over six generations back. He has in his possession valuable manuscripts along with the puppets of the art obtained ancestrally. The manuscripts are old which were composed around two centuries ago. The manuscripts of Kamba Ramayana written in Tamil language are the basics of shadow puppetry art. As a part of the revival of Leather Puppetry Art, he is presently making new leather puppets and composing scripts that enable future generations to learn and understand much about 'Shadow Puppetry Art'. He is recovering old manuscripts that are in palm leaves, publishing them, enabling the next generation to easily access and perform the text.

We, the Heritage, Museum and Documentation Centers Commission, really hope that these Certificates will encourage every involve in puppetry, but especially young people to continue respecting, researching, documenting, cataloguing... the traditions, the heritage that are so important for the future and the evolution of puppetry.

By Idoya Otegui

President of the Heritage, Museum and Documentation Centers Commission
UNIMA International

OBITUARY

PADMINI RANGARAJAN, (HYDERABAD, TELANGANA)



M. UPPALAI AH (1932-2024)

At the age of 92 years, **M. Uppalaiah**, who was the **senior member of the Ammapuram traditional Koyya Bommalata troupe from Telangana**, passed away on November 16, 2024. Certainly, he was a driving force in holding all of the members of the puppetry company together, and he exerted every effort to ensure that this art form continued to exist. He was also an active performer in the film "Vedhi Bhagvatham-Yakshagana," in which he portrayed a variety of characters. In addition to being a brilliant interpretation of the dialogues in the form of prose and poetry, he was also a versatile puppeteer who was able to manage many different types of puppets. The late puppeteer trope of Telangana and the puppetry family all over the world have suffered a tremendous loss as a result of this.

Om Shanthi!!

UPCOMING WEBINAR

UNIMA EDUCATION, DEVELOPMENT AND THERAPY COMMISSION

UPCOMING ZOOM WEBINAR WITH:
Carmela Núñez Linares and Leovaldo Díaz Fernández: Ice Puppets – "On the Omniscience of Mutant Reality"

Date: Monday, 20th January 2025

Time: 15:00 CET

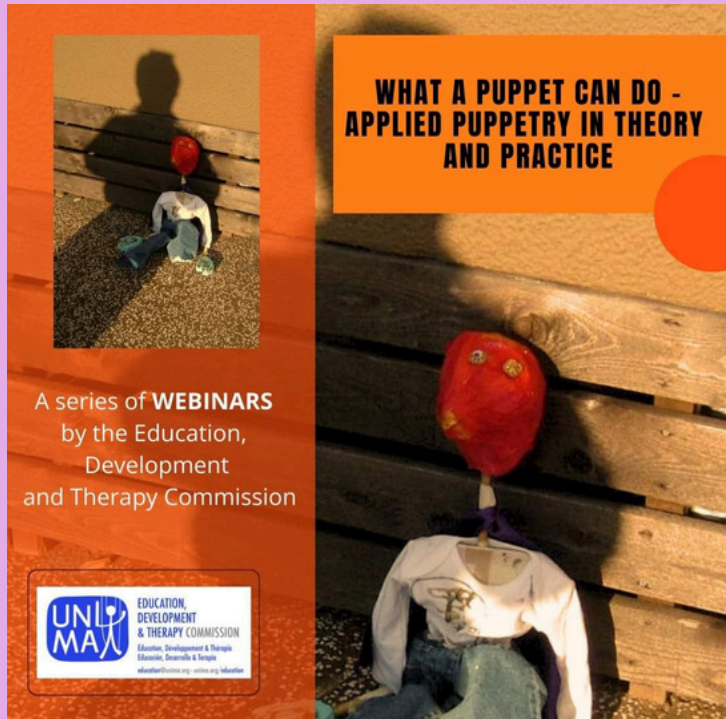
Language: Spanish

In this webinar, artists Carmela Núñez Linares and Leovaldo Díaz Fernández will share their experiences in creating and staging the play *Títeres de Hielo*, which premiered in May 2019. This work, crafted using figures made from ice, explores themes of existence, ephemerality, and the transient nature of life. It delves into fundamental questions about meaning, as the puppets embody sensations of weight, erosion, and fading away, symbolizing humanity's own fragile and unique existence.

✓ **More info and registration link in:**

<https://www.unima.org/en/what-a-puppet-can-do-applied-puppetry-in-theory-and-practice/>

#EDT #Commission #PuppetryArts
 #WebinarSeries
 #EducationandTherapy #UNIMA



**WHAT A PUPPET CAN DO -
 APPLIED PUPPETRY IN THEORY
 AND PRACTICE**

A series of **WEBINARS**
 by the Education,
 Development
 and Therapy Commission

UNIMA EDUCATION,
 DEVELOPMENT
 & THERAPY COMMISSION
 Education, Development & Therapy
 education@unima.org unima.org/webinars

Webinar No. 6:
**Ice Puppets – "On the
 Omniscience of Mutant Reality"**
 With: Carmela Núñez Linares and
 Leovaldo Díaz Fernández

Monday 20th Jan. 2025
15:00 CET
 Language: Spanish
 Where: Zoom

UPCOMING FESTIVAL: PUPPETOSCOPE 2.0

KATKATHA PUPPET ARTS TRUST, (NEW DELHI)

PuppetOscope: An International Puppet Film Festival (2nd Edition) to Enchant New Delhi



- The vibrant world of puppetry will come alive at the second edition of **PuppetOscope: An International Puppet Film Festival**, organized by the **Katkatha Puppet Arts Trust** and supported by **Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhawan**. The festival, set to take place at the prestigious India International Centre, promises an enthralling experience for audiences from **April 3rd to 6th, 2025**. With an impressive lineup of 20 films from 10 countries, the festival will be a celebration of puppetry's magic across various mediums, exploring its role in cinema, performance, and storytelling. PuppetOscope is an extension of the seminar titled **"Out of the Shadows"**, which delves into the plurality of shadow puppets and their significance across cultures and mediums. The discussions will explore the dynamic relationship between India's rich tradition of puppet theatre and its intersections with cinema, television, animation, and mass communication. The seminar also aims to reflect on how evolving media forms influence and reshape puppetry's narrative potential.

The heart of PuppetOscope 2025 lies in its screenings, featuring films, the discourse around the films, puppetry in cinema, and Lecture demonstrations that bring puppetry to the forefront of storytelling. These films are categorized into Documentary, Children's Film, and Fiction, representing a blend of cultural heritage and creative innovation from across the globe. The curated selections aim to engage audiences of all ages, bridging traditional and contemporary approaches to this timeless art form. A unique highlight of the festival is the Shadow Puppet Festival, which combines tradition and modernity through a series of performances and screenings:

- All-night performance of Togalu Gombayatta: The traditional leather shadow puppetry of Karnataka will be presented, showcasing the intricate craftsmanship and enduring cultural significance of this ancient art form.
- Shadow Puppeteers from Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu: Renowned puppeteers from the region will perform, alongside a screening of R.V. Ramani's critically acclaimed film *"Nee Engey"*.
- Contemporary Shadow Puppet Performances: Cutting-edge presentations from Indian artists will demonstrate how the traditional form continues to evolve in response to contemporary narratives and aesthetics.

An interactive exhibition of puppets will allow attendees to engage directly with the artistry and technical ingenuity behind puppet creation. This hands-on experience will deepen the audience's appreciation of puppetry as a multifaceted art form. Additionally, a cutting-edge VR experience titled *"The Infinite Libraries"* will transport visitors into immersive, puppet-inspired digital worlds, blending technology with storytelling to offer a glimpse of puppetry's futuristic possibilities.

The festival also includes a parallel program for university students, featuring a series of interactions, and talks, enabling students to focus on the interplay of puppetry, dramaturgy, form, narrative, and the historical evolution of puppet theatre. This initiative seeks to inspire a deeper understanding and appreciation of puppetry among the next generation of artists and scholars.

WORLD PUPPETRY DAY 2025 : ROBOTS, AI AND THE DREAM OF THE PUPPET?

UNIMA INTERNATIONAL



What do puppets dream of? Do they dream of sheep in the same way that a cyborg might dream of cyborg sheep? Is the puppet just a preliminary stage in a history of progress, in which the puppet would be the prefiguration of the autonomous creation of a robot? Is the term 'robot' part of the imagination of a play by Karel Čapek (R.U.R, Prague, 1920)? And does it mean "slave"? Or is it the Kabbalistic "Golem" creature that haunts the streets of Prague (Gustav Meyrink, 1915)? Or the even more terrifying Frankenstein, in the patchwork of a body that is assembled part by part by stitching (Mary Shelley, 1818)? Mechanics meets flesh. Calculation meets sentiment. Artifice emancipates itself to create a doubling of nature, or even a new nature. Artificial intelligence further reframes the question of intelligence and free will, or even the subjectivity of a robot created in the image of man, or of the gods that man wishes to build, new idols or future hybrids of gesture, speech and thought... Is the robot a mechanical puppet with a mind? Will the robot one day be more than human? Does an android have a face? "Does it dream of electric sheep at night (Philip K. Dick, 1966)?

Does artificial intelligence have a conscience? Can algorithms be thought? The virtual is not so much virtual as it is already real. New doors and new windows to multiply the possibilities of looking, understanding or simply feeling and developing the senses and creativity. Prometheus is never far away, and isn't Pinocchio's dream to become a real child? The puppet has never been so much the subject of man's essential question. Aren't we all puppets in the sense that we ourselves are puppets and puppeteers? Can we imagine a puppet becoming a puppeteer in its own right? The puppet is a word, a gesture, a material, a resonance, a dream of material that requires spirit. Every object is a puppet. Spinoza dreams of the uncanny valley (Mori, 1970).

Can machines dream? Can puppets dream? What is a dream? Can you create spirit from matter? The myth of the demiurge meets the myth of the puppeteer. The creator of Nature meets the creator of theatre. Creating is always about creating a dramaturgy. What happens when you enter a puppet museum? Are the objects already just lifeless objects, strange and already immaterial in their materiality? The puppets look at us and speak to us. A puppet is much more than a simple or complicated mechanism. Bastien and Bastienne (a puppet opera by 12-year-old Wolfgang Mozart) dream of love and sheep. Multiplicity and daydreams. So let's draw a sheep? (Antoine Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*, 1943)

Like every year, World Puppetry Day has a theme – the theme of the robot, of the nature of the material, of the puppet who is no longer just a puppet but also a puppeteer, of the double who is never really a double, of the object that becomes the subject, of the gesture that becomes the horizon, of the landscape that becomes a butterfly, of the flower that becomes a face. This proposal is crazy, disturbing and as challenging as it is intriguing. It is as contemporary as it is ancient. It lies at the very heart of the practice of puppetry, as the primary poetic intention of all creativity. Artifice is always much more than artifice. Eternity, always another eternity for a time that changes, because eternity changes at every moment. And incredibly, the future changes the past and the eternity of memories, so that we can always dream. .

Dimitri Jageneau

General Secretary of UNIMA International

Source: <https://www.unima.org/en/world-puppetry-day-2025-robots-ai-and-the-dream-of-the-puppet/>

WPD 2025 POSTER

UNIMA INTERNATIONAL



Artist: Zaven Paré

Puppetry has always been at the forefront of avant-garde movements. A pioneer in the field of technological arts, Paré replaced traditional puppet strings with cables to create his first electronic puppets in Canada, and later at the Cotsen Center for Puppetry (CalArts, 1999).

Starting in 2007, he initiated the Robot Actors Project with Professor Hiroshi Ishiguro (Intelligent Robotics Laboratory, Osaka University), which includes several stage productions featuring humanoid and android actors directed by Oriza Hirata.

Zaven Paré has been awarded the French American Fund for Performing Arts twice, as well as the Villa Kujoyama residency, the Japan Society for Promotion of Science grant, and the Prêmio Sérgio Motta em Arte e Tecnologia in Brazil. Notably, he created the electronic puppet of the god Ganesh for its namesake festival in Mumbai in 2014, a project featured in a documentary on ARTE in 2016. Following his artistic and research contributions, he was the guest of honor at the Moscow Puppetry Festival in 2019, and more recently served as the curator for an exhibition on robots at Japan House in São Paulo.

His devices and research serve both the performing arts and various fields of robotics engineering. His creations are part of the collections of the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry in Storrs, the Puppetry Theatre in Moscow, the Museo internazionale delle marionette Antonio Pasqualino in Palermo, the Lutkovno Gledališče Maribor, the Muzeum loutkářských kultur in Chrudim, the Swiss Puppet Museum in Fribourg, the Museum of Ethnology in Neuchâtel, the House of Puppets in Tournai, the Peruchet Museum in Brussels, and the Museum of World Puppets in Lyon. Additionally, his archives as a costume designer, set designer, and props master are mainly held at the Centre National de la Danse in Pantin, the Gaston Baty Library at Sorbonne University, and the Performing Arts Department of the National Library of France (BNF).

Zaven Paré is also the author of several books, including *The Golden Age of Japanese Robotics* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2016), *The Anthropomorphic Show: Between Apes and Robots* (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2021), and a forthcoming work, *Laboratory Theater: Preludes to Robot Interaction Design* (Nanterre: Presses Universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2025).

Download the poster from the link below:

<https://www.unima.org/en/poster-for-world-puppetry-day-2025/>