

THE ART OF PUPPETS AND MARIONETTES

Ellen Schulze - Puppet Workshops

MEET THE ARTIST:

Ellen Schulze began her theatre training as a mime, but her interest was captured by miniature performers that can speak and move only when she helps them. These magical performers are puppets. Since 1986, Ms. Schulze has worked exclusively in puppet theatre. Her experience reflects almost every variety of puppets that can be imagined, including hand puppets, mask and rod puppets, Bunraku, shadow puppets and marionettes. Her work with the Great Arizona Puppet Theatre of Phoenix included performances in both solo and company puppet shows, as well as conducting workshops in the design, construction, scripting, and performance techniques of puppet theatre. She has performed at schools, festivals, preschools, and private parties.

One essential aspect of quality puppet theatre is the ability of the puppeteer to make their audience forget that the animated, tiny actor before them is merely a creation of wood and cloth. Ms. Schulze has that rare ability that allows an audience or class to look at a puppet and believe that the “performer” is fully alive, with feelings and emotions that matter.

Ms. Schulze studied at University of Nevada/Las Vegas with an emphasis in Special Education, and trained professionally at Chabot University of Mime, Hayward, California. She studied privately at the Mime and Mask Theater under mime artist Richmond Shepard, and has worked professionally as a mime since 1978. She has conducted workshops funded by the Arizona Arts in Education program and for Arizona Commission on the Arts. She has created and performed puppet shows for organizations as disparate as the Desert Botanical Garden in Arizona and city water departments throughout the state. Ellen came to California at the special request of Jim Gamble, Artistic Director and Founder of The Art of Puppets and Marionettes. She has been leading classes for Mr. Gamble’s company since 1992.



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ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS:

Ellen Schulze offers two different workshops:

Introduction to Puppetry: Examines four different types of puppets (hand, rod, shadow and marionette) and provides information and examples of simple puppets that students can construct themselves. Students participate in a discussion of puppet theatre as Ms. Schulze leads them through a series of hand exercises that professional puppeteers use to prepare for a performance. Students may assist in scenes from RUMPLESTILTSKIN (hand puppet), THE THREE LITTLE PIGS (rod puppets), THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF (shadow puppets) or a marionette demonstration.

Puppet Construction and Puppet Plays: (More than one workshop per class may be required, depending on project selected.) The type(s) of puppets to construct may be chosen in advance of the program or classes may choose the type of puppet they wish to construct after the introductory session. After the puppets are completed, **if time permits**, the workshop(s) will include a performance experience, with students learning simple puppet manipulation and acting techniques.



BEFORE THE WORKSHOP:

Your class will be participating in:

- Introduction to Puppetry - One Session
- Puppet Construction/Puppet Plays - _____ Session(s)

If your class is taking part in **Introduction to Puppetry**, you can prepare them by using the following suggested exercises:

- Ask your class about the puppet shows they have seen. Where did they see them? What did they like about the performances? Did something good happen to the puppet actors, and did the audience cheer? Did something bad happen to the puppet actors in the play, and did the students worry about them? Did the puppet actors ever seem to be real people?
- Ask your class to compare a live performance to a puppet performance. What are the differences? What are the similarities? Some items to discuss would be: actors, stages, plot or story, costumes and action. Were there physical actions the puppets did that real actors could never do?
- Have any of your students ever used puppets? When? What was it like? Did they give the puppet a different voice than their own?
- Why do puppets seem to be so magical?

If your class is taking part in **Puppet Construction/Puppet Plays**, please prepare by paying close attention to the following:

- Make sure that on the day of the workshop (not including the introductory session), all students have a clear, clean working area.
- If your class did not participate in the Introduction to Puppetry workshop, you may wish to use the above suggested exercises to increase their awareness of puppet theatre prior to their construction workshop.

AFTER THE WORKSHOP:

- What parts of the workshop did the students like best? What did they learn about art? What did they learn about themselves?
- Review what they learned about puppets and puppet theatre. What did they learn about manipulating puppets? What did they learn about expression an emotion?
- Encourage them to use their puppets in a variety of new ways, as well as repeating ideas they have already done.