



SPRING 2008

BALLARD INSTITUTE PUPPETS GO ON NATIONAL TOUR!



Rufus and Margo Rose marionettes from
The Ant and the Grasshopper (1950)

Fifty puppets from the Ballard Institute collection have joined an exciting exhibition of contemporary puppet-influenced artworks created at Philadelphia's Institute of Contemporary Art, and will be on tour with that exhibition to four more cities across the United States through the fall of 2009. "The Puppet Show" brings together works by 29 different artists of several generations who have all, in one way or another, been inspired by the techniques, philosophies, and possibilities of puppet theater, including "manipulation, miniaturization, agency, and control," as ICA Senior Curator Ingrid Schaffner put it. The exhibition concentrates on sculpture, video, and photography, as well as pieces involving actual puppets and puppet performance. According to Ballard Institute Director John Bell, who served as an advisor to the exhibition, the puppets

from the Ballard Institute collections serve as a grounding, a reference point in the real world of puppetry that offers a context in which to see the other elements of the exhibit.

The Ballard Institute puppets on display include works by Bil Baird, Margo and Rufus Rose, Frank Ballard, Tony Sarg, Marion Harris, Marjorie Batchelder McPharlin, Basil Milovsoroff, and Charles Ludlam; as well as shadow puppets from Java and Bali; a Sicilian marionette; a rod puppet from the Kungsholm Miniature Grand Opera; and a set of Czech marionettes.

The Ballard Institute contributions to "The Puppet Show" are displayed in a special exhibit structure created by exhibition designer Terence Gower. This "Puppet Storage" room is the first thing visitors experience as they enter the exhibition, and sets the stage for what follows. Ballard Institute Graduate Assistant Stefano Brancato

(cont. on page 2)



BIMP to Become New Home Of Haines Marionettes

The Ballard Institute is augmenting its collection of twentieth-century American puppets with over 425 marionettes and props created in the 1930s by Frank and Elizabeth Haines.

See page 2 for details...



Puppets on Tour ... (cont. from p.1)

made a special trip to Philadelphia to deliver and install the puppets at the ICA, and their presence has already drawn favorable responses. Exhibit curators Ingrid Schaffner and Carin Kuoni termed the BIMP contributions “wonderful” and “amazing”, and Terence Gower exclaimed “These puppets are beyond my wildest expectations!”

“The Puppet Show” opened at the Institute for Contemporary Art in Philadelphia on January 17, and will be on display there until March 30. It then travels to the Santa Monica Museum of Art (May 16-August 9, 2008); the Contemporary Museum in Honolulu (September 5-November 23, 2008); the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston (January 17-April



Charles Ludlam's Punch and Judy Handpuppets in *The Puppet Show*

12, 2009); and the Frye Art Museum in Seattle (May 16-September 13, 2009).

According to Ingrid Schaffner, “The Puppet Show” poses “a larger cultural question: why do puppets matter now?” Over the next two years, thousands of people across the United States will have a chance to find their own answers to that question, and puppets from the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry will no doubt be a factor in their thinking. We are excited that “The Puppet Show” will allow so many Americans to become acquainted with the Ballard Institute and its resources, and happy that the exhibition will give us national exposure.

Haines Marionettes ... (cont. from p.1)

The Ballard Institute is augmenting its collection of twentieth-century American puppets with over 425 marionettes and props created in the 1930s by Frank and Elizabeth Haines.

BIMP Advisory Board member (and UConn Puppetry Arts Program alumnus) Stephen Kaplin and BIMP director John Bell (pictured at right) viewed the Haines collection in the New York City storage facilities of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, which had decided to de-accession the puppets after storing them for many decades.

Kaplin and Bell discovered that the Haines marionettes were an exquisite collection of puppets, “with wooden carved heads and bodies of the highest craftsmanship,” and costumes “of superlative quality,” as Kaplin put it. The puppets are all well preserved, and most are in perfect working order. In addition to the puppets themselves, the collection includes scenic backdrops, props, set pieces, play-scripts, 78 rpm records, and the Haines’ sound system. In short, the collection represents an complete inventory of a Depression-era puppet company in the United States. “In my professional opinion,”

Stephen Kaplin wrote in a report to the Ballard Institute, “the collection is a unique treasure,” and “a true rarity.”

Frank and Elizabeth Haines turned to puppetry as a means to make a living in the early years of the Depression, and were successful for many years in the Philadelphia area creating and performing for both children and adults. In addition, their puppets were used in some of the first television commercials, in the early 1940s. When puppetry proved less lucrative for them, they turned to doll making, and became renowned across the country for their skilled and meticulous creations of ethnic bridal dolls, and their many books on the subject.



John Bell examining the Haines's custom-built 1930s sound system

(photo of John Bell by Stephen Kaplin)

Puppet Arts News

BART. P. ROCCOBERTON, JR.

Hua Hua Zhang (MFA 2001) and her troupe, Visual Expressions, performed *Butterfly Dreams* at the Painted Bride Performing Arts Center, Philadelphia last April. Visual Expressions includes performers David Regan (BFA 1996/MFA 2001), Ceili Clemens (BFA 1997), Lynn Cohen (MFA candidate) and Director/Light Designer Bart Roccoberon. The show will be performed again in Guadalajara, Mexico in June of 2008. Hua Hua has also recently performed *East Meets West* at a Puppet Festival in Norway.

Following the Puppet Arts Program's second successful hosting of Eric Bass' Sandglass Institute last summer, it has been decided that two sessions will be offered in the summer of 2008. The second is specifically intended for participants who are returning for more in-depth training.

The Jim Henson Memorial Guest Artist Program brought several wonderful artists to the University of Connecticut in the Fall of 2007: Warren Blessing from Connecticut Valley Wood Carvers joined the Materials Techniques class as the students carved their puppet heads. With Warren's guidance, the Puppet Arts Program now has a top notch multi-wheel sharpening station; Larry Gilleland offered intense sessions in the development of touring stages and unique marionette jointing; and The Happy Puppet Family of Taiwan (represented by three generations of traditional Hand Puppet-



Two puppets belonging to
The Happy Puppet Family of Taiwan

eers) performed and lead Masterclasses as the semester began. Ken Ko (MA candidate), who is one of the family's third generation, will teach traditional Taiwanese techniques in the Hand Puppetry class

this semester.

Through the Henson Guest Artist Program a conference on Mechanical Puppetry is being planned for Spring 2008 in conjunction with the UConn Department of Engineering, Marty Robinson and Morton Schindel of Weston Woods Animation Studio.



Mark Gale's Wolf from *Peter and the Wolf*

Peter & the Wolf, designed by Mark Gale (BFA 1995), was first performed with the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra in 1993. The show was remounted by the Puppet Arts Program in November and was performed in the Bushnell Theatre with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Narrated by WTIC's Colin McEnroe.

Lauren Horoszewski (MA Candidate) is creating puppets to be part of the Connecticut Repertory Theater's upcoming production of *Love's Labour's Lost* (February 28 - March 09), directed by Gabriel Barre.

Two Puppet Arts MFA Productions will be presented in the Spring 2008 semester: *Meet the Samsas* (March 27 - April 06), a retelling of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* by Mary Gragen and Sara Beth Parks; and *Little Things* (April 30 - May 04), an exploration of small things in big life situations, by Mary Nagler.

The Puppet Arts MFA Productions for Spring 2009 have also been determined. They are *Icarus* by Stefano Brancato and Michael Bush and *A Tell Tale Heart* by Lynn Cohen.

Shadows and Substance Exhibit Extended

In a change from tradition, the Ballard Institute decided to extend the run of *Shadows and Substance*, the exciting explosion of global shadow puppet traditions mounted by Sandy Listorti and other Friends of BIMP in the Ballard Institute Museum. The exhibit, which featured stunningly beautiful shadow figures from Java, Bali, Malaysia, India, Thailand, China, Turkey, Greece, France, and the United States, underscored in dramatic form the world-wide ties among shadow puppet traditions, especially in South Asian cultures. The exhibition was open for special tours for elementary, high school, adult, and senior groups, on Wednesdays, Fridays and weekends, by appointment. *Shadows and Substance* was available for viewing until April 1, 2008, when Sandi Listorti and Robin Sanchi dismantled it to make room for the next Ballard Institute exhibition, *Puppets through the Lens*.

John Bell Joins the Ballard Institute

The new director of the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry is John Bell, a puppeteer, theater historian, and teacher. John is married to puppeteer Trudi Cohen, and their son Isaac is 17. John and his family live in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where John also works as a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT.

John first became intrigued with puppets when, as a college student in Vermont, he saw Bread and Puppet Theater performing breathtaking spectacles about the crucial issues of the day: the Vietnam War and its effects on American society. After graduating, John began working with Bread and Puppet, and was a member of the troupe for a dozen years, during which he learned about puppets, their history and their potential as the company toured Europe, North Africa, and North and South America. Intrigued by the global ubiquity and deep history of puppets, John next studied theater history at Columbia University, earning his Ph.D. there in 1993.

While living in New York City, John, Trudi, and four other puppeteers founded Great Small Works, a theater company dedicated to reviving

traditional performance forms in contemporary contexts. Among other things, Great Small Works has lead the "Toy Theater Revival" with productions of its own small-scale spectacles and a series of international toy theater festivals which have earned national acclaim.

John is a contributing editor to *Puppetry International*, the publication of UNIMA-USA, an organization on which he serves as a board member. He is also a contributing editor to *TDR*, the journal of performance studies, and the author or editor of many books and articles about puppet theater, including *Puppets, Masks, and Performing Objects* (MIT Press), *Strings, Hands, Shadows: A Modern Puppet History* (Detroit Institute of Art), and *American Puppet Modernism*, which will be published by Palgrave-Macmillan in July, 2008. "It is an amazing opportunity to be part of the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry," John recently said. "Frank Ballard's work is simply awe-inspiring, and it is an honor to follow his path, and to work with all the Friends of BIMP, and such great colleagues as Bart Roccoberton, Dean David Woods, Stefano Brancato, and my other new friends at the UConn School of Fine Arts. My work here so far has been extraordinarily exciting, and I look forward to helping continue the role of the Ballard Institute as a pre-eminent puppet resource for the



January Workshop

On January 7, twenty-five UConn Residence Life Hall Director staff members took a shadow puppet workshop and *Shadows and Substance* museum tour with Puppet Arts Program graduate student Mary Nagler and Ballard Institute graduate assistant Stefano Brancato. Benjamin Gelb, who organized the event with the Ballard Institute said "It was great!"

***Puppeteers of America* Audio-Visual Library Coming to BIMP**

As the result of discussions between the Puppeteers of America (PofA) and the Ballard Institute, plans are underway to make BIMP the new home of the PofA Audio-Visual Library, one of the United States's richest collections of films, videotapes, and DVDs documenting the world of puppets. Together with the UConn Puppet Arts Program's own audio-visual collection, as well as the existing films, videotapes, and dvds at the Ballard Institute, the Puppeteers of America Audio-Visual Collection will make UConn the home of what is most likely the largest such assemblage of moving images related to puppetry in the United States. The PofA Collection, while administered and cared for by the Ballard Institute, will serve as the central resource for the PofA's audio-visual lending library, which offers recordings to members of the Puppeteers of America. The films, videotapes, and DVDs at the Ballard Institute will be housed in the Kay Janney Library, and be accessible on-site to scholars and visitors.

Jim Henson's *Scooter* Returns to BIMP

Scooter, the bespectacled Muppet character in a green athletic jacket who served as Kermit's gofer in the backstage world of *The Muppet Show*, has returned to the Ballard Institute after a long hiatus in New York City. The Jim Henson Legacy, an organization dedicated to preserving and perpetuating Henson's contributions to the worlds of puppetry, television, motion pictures, special effects and media technology, has graciously returned one of its Scooter puppets to the Ballard Institute for an extended loan. Puppet Arts Program Technical Supervisor Paul Spirito has build a special display case for Scooter's display, and he will reappear in public as part of *Puppets through the Lens*, together with images of his original operator, the late Richard Hunt.

ATTENTION UCONN Puppet Arts Alumni

Email your news to us at BIMP@UCONN.edu
for inclusion in future **BIMPrints**



Ballard Institute Founder Frank Ballard celebrates his 77th birthday (December 7, 2007) with John Bell, Puppet Arts Program Director Bart Roccoberon, and Adah Ruth Ballard.

Ballard Institute Receives Larry Smith Puppets

Thanks to the generosity of Cincinnati puppeteer Larry Smith and his Boston colleague Wayne Martin, the Ballard Institute recently became the new home of rare puppets created and used by Larry Smith in *The Uncle Al Show*, the longest-running children's program in the history of commercial television. *The Uncle Al Show*, according to Larry's website, ran from 1950 to 1985 on Cincinnati's WCPO-TV Channel 9. Smith first worked on the show in the station's art department, building puppets for "Uncle Al," and later began to perform his creations as well on the program. At the same time he also developed his own television show, called *Puppet Time*.

By the late 1950s, *The Uncle Al Show* was broadcast Saturday mornings on 130 different stations from coast to coast, and regularly beat *Captain Kangaroo* in television ratings. Smith left WCPO in 1960 to work with *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie* creator Burr Tillstrum on a Broadway show, but returned to WCPO and *The Uncle Al Show* in 1961. Smith is now retired, but still lives in the Cincinnati area.

The Larry Smith puppets donated to the Ballard Institute include Snarfie R. Dog, Hattie the Witch, and Spooky the Ghost, and will be shown, together with video clips from *The Uncle Al Show*, in our *Puppets through the Lens* exhibit opening this Spring.

New Exhibit Focuses on “Puppets Through the Lens”

Puppets through the Lens, the next exhibition at the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry, will show the vivid and powerful relationships between puppets and cameras as they appear in film, television and the internet. The new exhibit, whose gala opening will take place Sunday, April 27, will include important historical and contemporary examples of film, television and internet puppetry from the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry, as well as other collections throughout the country.

Puppets through the Lens will showcase works for television and film created by Jim Henson, Bil Baird, Janie Geiser, Larry Smith, and Rufus and Margo Rose; as well as internet puppetry projects by UConn graduates Jim Napolitano and Tim La-



A production photo from the 1938 production of *Jerry Pulls the Strings*



An image from Janie Geiser's stop-action puppet animation film *The Red Book* (1996)

gasse. “One of the most important characteristics of modern puppetry,” according to Bell, “is its intimate connection with moving pictures from the early days of film in the late nineteenth century to the very first experiments with television in the 1930s, their development with *Howdy Doody*, *Kukla, Fran and Ollie*, *Sesame Street*, *Between the Lions* and other

sic Park, and the latest examples of puppet performance on YouTube and other internet sites. “The connections between puppets and cameras,” Bell continued, “are fascinating because they actually involve two different kinds of puppet or object performance: first of all the puppets, manipulated by a puppeteer, and secondly the images of those puppets, projected on a screen, cathode ray tube, or computer monitor.”

The exhibition is being curated by BIMP director John Bell, together with Puppet Arts Program head Bart Roccoberton, and an exhibition committee that includes Paul Spirito, Sandy Listorti, Robin Sanchi, Stefano Brancato, and UConn alumnus Stephen Kaplin.

The April 27 opening of the exhibition (at 2 p.m.) will include entertainment and refreshments, as well as notable guest puppeteers, speakers, and entertainment. The Ballard Institute is planning a *Puppets through the Lens* speakers series of events at the Ballard Institute to celebrate the exhibition and allow museum-goers to understand the techniques and potential meanings of media-focused puppetry in greater depth.

The Ballard Institute would like to extend its warmest thanks to all those who have offered us their support in recent months:

Jane Henson
Robinson and Nancy Grover
Maury and Sonia Cohn Foundation
Victoria H. Michanczyk
Michael J. Michanczyk
James A. Meadows

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Joann Chandle
John P. Balaguer
Paula L. Schiller
Elizabeth Wardwell

Dene H. Keithline
Collen Fogarty
Jeffery Sciortino
Tom Fogarty
Michael A. Ballard

BIMP Volunteers Rally for Work Day

Over 25 Friends of the Ballard Institute came out to the Institute's Depot Campus home on Saturday, January 12 to accomplish an array of tasks necessary for BIMP's well-being.

Working in both morning and afternoon sessions, the community volunteers divided into different groups, rolled up their sleeves, and went to work.

Under the supervision of Dotty White, a crew



Cynthia Jones sewing curtains

consisting of Sandy and John Listorti, their two nieces, and Steve Long reconfigured the storage of Frank Ballard rod puppets in the Bolton Cottage.

Murphi Cook and her roommate Annie cleaned the many shelves of flat files procured from UConn's Central Stores Surplus to

house shadow puppets, posters, and design plans. Karen and Bill Patterson cleaned a set of wooden upholstered chairs (also from Central Stores Surplus) for the BIMP conference room, and washed the Mansfield Cottage carpets with a rug cleaner Stefano Brancato procured.

Cynthia Jones measured and sewed sun-blocking curtains for the Bolton Cottage, which were mounted onto rods by John Listorti and Lynette Pinto. Lynette and Sandy Listorti swept and mopped the floors of Bolton Cottage.

Bill, Lynette, John Bell, and Cynthia drove over to the old Central Stores Warehouse on the UConn Main Campus with a tool box full of pliers and screwdrivers, to reconfigure metal shelves that will house the Haines marionettes coming to BIMP. Gary Jones, Sharon Murphy Boski, and Sharon Perkins rounded out the group and helped out at various tasks.

UConn's catering service provided lunch while the hard-working Friends of BIMP took a break in the Conference Room, after which they went back to work until 5 p.m. The results of all this dedicated energy are readily visible to Ballard Institute visitors, and another great example of the community goodwill and spirit that make BIMP possible. Other work days are planned for the future. Join us for the fun!



Bill Patterson cleaning chairs.

Staff Bio—Stefano Brancato

Stefano Brancato is the new Ballard Institute graduate assistant, and has been working with John Bell since last fall. Stefano is an M.F.A. candidate at the University of Connecticut's Puppet Arts Program, and received a B.F.A. in Acting from Marymount Manhattan College in 2001. During his years at Marymount he co-created an experimental theatre troupe with acclaimed director Elizabeth Swados, Company Mud. During his four years working with Company Mud and Swados, Stefano discovered the art of puppetry, and designed and co-created four productions: *The Golem*, *Subliminal Strategies*, *The Violence Project Workshop*, and *The Violence Project*.

While in New York City Stefano also accumulated many acting credits. Some of his favorites include Podgers in *Lord Saville's Crime*; Flute in *A Midsummer's Night Dream*; Sergy in *Platonov! Pla-*

tonov! Platonov!; Ricky in *Fragments of Ricky the Super Hero*; and Jack Kerouac in *Ti Jean Blues*. He did several walk-ons in the last season of *Sex and the City* and sang in a back-up choir for Mark Anthony at Madison Square Garden's *Jingle Ball*.

Stefano has also worked as Assistant Designer with Cass Daley Designs, focusing on event design, planning and interiors. Recent clients have included Scalimandre Fabric, Adleson Galleries, Amy Tan, The Pilot School, Dupont and the Hudson River Museum. He has been commissioned as lead designer on several projects.

Stefano has been awarded The Starr Scholarship, The National Italian American Scholarship, and The Zachs' Scholarship.

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Editor: John Bell

Staff: Stefano Brancato

Production: Karen Patterson

Outstanding Volunteer



Long-time Ballard Institute volunteer Kay Janney is the 2008 recipient of the Outstanding Volunteer Award, given by the UConn School of Fine Arts. According to Dean David Woods, "the award honors the accomplishments of a volunteer who has an outstanding record of service to the School of Fine Arts and to the University of Connecticut, and demonstrates a strong commitment to the Arts."

Since 1966 Kay has taught theater at UConn's Storrs and Avery Point campuses, and has worked with Frank Ballard and Bart Roccoberton on the development of the Puppet Arts Program since its inception, and then the creation and development of the Ballard Institute. In particular, Kay took on the creation and sustenance of the Ballard Institute library and archives, which now bear her name: the Kay Print Janney Library.

Ballard Institute & Museum of Puppetry 2008 Calendar of Events

COMING IN APRIL

Puppets through the Lens

**Grand Opening: Sunday, April 27, 2008,
2:00 P.M.**

- ◆ For information on additional events, visit our web site at www.BIMP@UCONN.edu
- ◆ For email updates on events and other BIMP happenings, send your email address to us at BIMP@UCONN.edu.

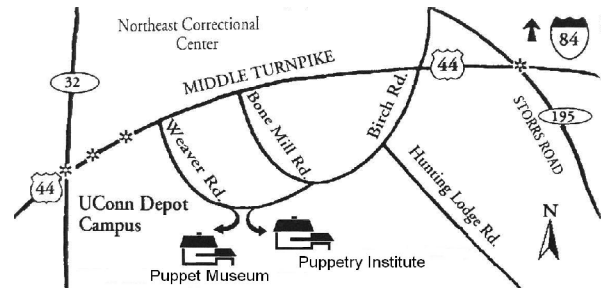
MUSEUM HOURS (starts April 27)

Friday, Saturday, & Sunday—Noon to 5:00 PM

For more information, or to arrange group tours

Call: 860-486-4605 or

Email: BIMP@UCONN.edu



FRS 430 413

Ballard Institute & Museum of Puppetry

University of CT, Depot Campus

6 Bourn Place, U-5212

Storrs, CT 06269-5212

On the web - www.bimp.uconn.edu



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