

# String Puppets

Marionettes and their Makers



# History of Marionettes

Puppetry is an ancient form of performance. There is evidence that they were used in Egypt as early as 2000 BC when string-operated figures of wood were manipulated to act kneading bread and other string-controlled objects. Wire-controlled, [articulated](#) puppets made of clay and ivory have been found in Egyptian tombs. Marionette puppetry was used to display rituals and ceremonies using these string-operated figurines back in ancient times and is still used today.

Puppetry was practiced in [Ancient Greece](#) and the oldest written records of puppetry can be found in the works of [Herodotus](#) and [Xenophon](#), dating from the 5th century BC. The [Greek](#) word translated as "puppet" is "νευρόσπαστος" (*nevróspastos*), which literally means "drawn by strings, string-pulling". [Aristotle](#) (384–322 BC) discusses puppets in his work [On the Motion of Animals](#).

History:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wiLh2nmmXQ>

Why Puppets:

<https://puppetnerd.com/why-puppets/>

# Egyptian Puppets

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeM-Zhfl8lg> (making)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSnnJAmTUWw>





Ancient Greek Terracotta Marionettes



# Tunisian Marionettes



# Mali

Marionette dolls are regarded as mystical and sacred objects across western Africa and are typically seen as taboo, especially for women. But female puppet makers have arrived in Mali to prove that puppet making is not just a male practice.

Women from [Burkina Faso](#), [Mali](#), [Ivory Coast](#) and [Niger](#) have come to Mali to prove their puppet-making ability, a craft normally dominated by men. A training workshop provided by a local master of puppet making, Yacouba Magassouba, is helping to feminise the art form by helping women learn the techniques needed to create these highly valued objects.

- <https://www.france24.com/en/20171014-video-women-fight-puppet-making-recognition-mali>









# Czech Puppets

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ap2Fk0VRasI>





# Burmese Marionettes



**Yoke thé** ( literally "miniatures") is the Burmese name for marionette puppetry. Although the term can be used for marionettery in general, its usage usually refers to the local form of string puppetry.











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# Sicily



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXXlyVfNeys> (9mins)  
<https://spoletousa.org/blog/celebrating-world-puppetry-day/>

# Chinese Marionettes



Called "marionette show" in ancient China, a puppet show is a theatre performance in which puppet figures are made to move by puppeteers pulling strings or by putting their hands inside them.

In China, the origin of puppets dates back to the Shang Dynasty, when the custom of burying slaves alive with their deceased masters was practiced. Of the 3,000 funeral objects excavated from the Yin Ruins in Anyang City, there are pottery figurines of slaves with cangues. In the Warring States Period, there appeared entertaining figurines used in story-telling and singing performances as props. And such art forms became popular. After the Han Dynasty, a puppet show gradually developed into a folk art combining opera, literature, sculpture and painting that appealed to both humans and divinities.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Arvuk0DdmWg>  
(contemporary)

# Indian String Puppetry

**Kathputli** is a string puppet theatre, native to Rajasthan, India, and is the most popular form of Indian puppetry. The *kathputli* puppets (*putli* meaning doll and *kath*, wood) are sculpted and painted by the puppeteers themselves, and are composed of a head inserted on a short, thin torso of wood. The arms, made of wood or cloth stuffed with cotton, articulated at the elbow and wrist, hang and move freely on both sides of the body. Since most of the *kathputli* do not have legs, the puppets' long, ground-length cotton voile skirts twirl about when in motion. Two strings, one attached around the puppet's waist, the other to the top of its head, are connected to a loop that the puppeteer manipulates directly between his fingers or lifts to make the puppets dance. The dancer puppet, called Anarkali, however, is a more complex puppet, having around six strings. Traditional *kathputli* string puppets do not have controls. It is a very simple [manipulation](#) technique, yet the result is heightened by the fast movements from above and by the number of puppets assembled on the brightly coloured cloth puppet stage representing a palace.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUaeCU-R6bo>

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5y7muLkAy20> (Indian anti-littering ad)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gncu7U9VsDU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqjAqwncKU4> (short)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lq2HW8ykj0c> (life of Pi)





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# Native American Puppets

- <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=284299885921456>



# Tony Sarg

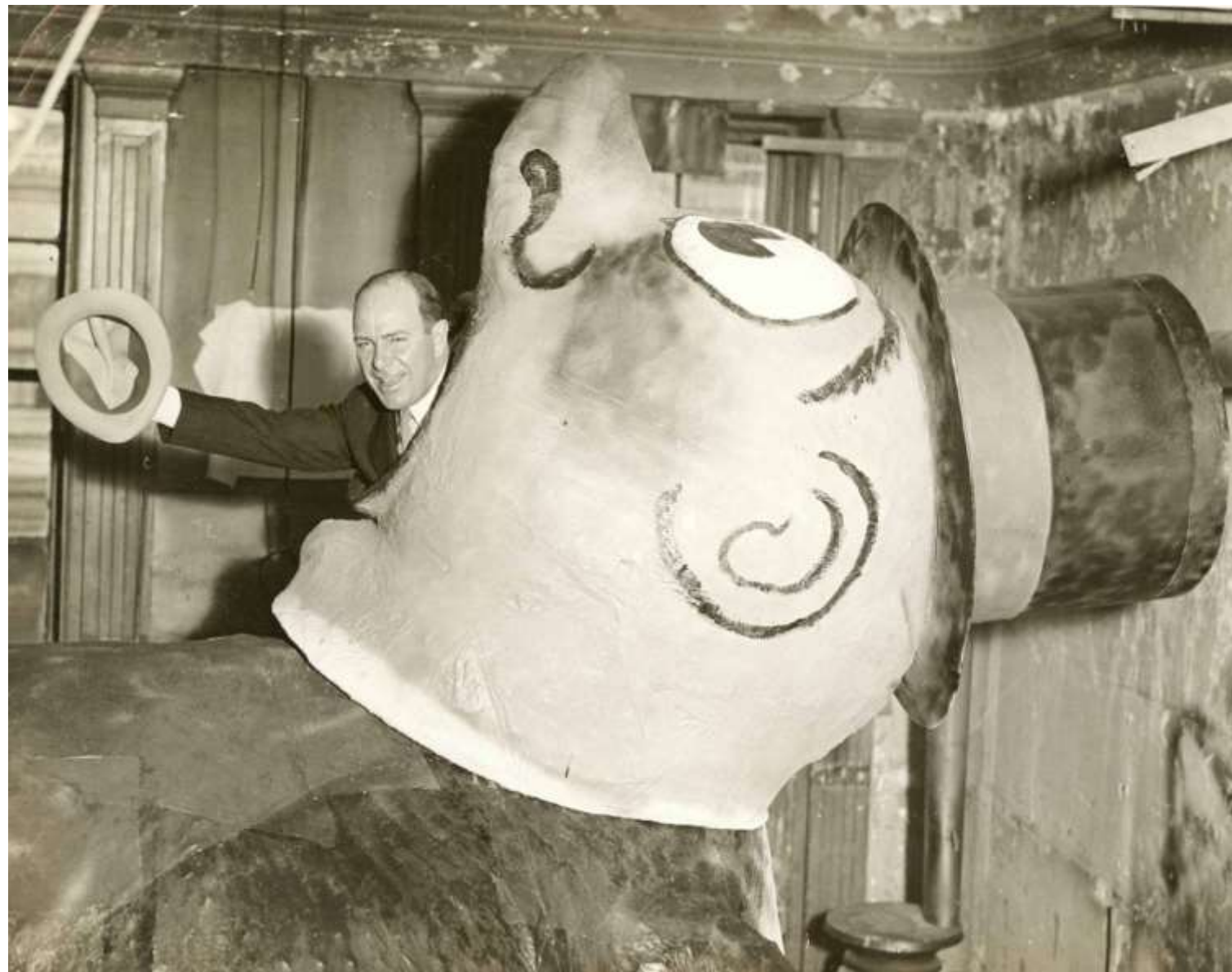
Anthony Frederick Sarg, known professionally as Tony Sarg, was a German American puppeteer and illustrator. He was described as "America's Puppet Master", and in his biography as the father of modern puppetry in North America.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/gifts-tony-sarg-american-experience-pbs/>











# Bob Baker Marionette Theater

The Bob Baker Marionette Theater, founded by Bob Baker and Alton Wood in 1963, is the oldest children's theater company in Los Angeles. In June 2009, the theater was designated as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument.

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zqUp\\_rOVCC0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zqUp_rOVCC0) Bob baker
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCL5BoA1h6E>







# William Addison Dwiggins

William Addison Dwiggins, was an American type designer, calligrapher, and book designer. He attained prominence as an illustrator and commercial artist, and he brought to the designing of type and books some of the boldness that he displayed in his advertising work.

- <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/w-a-dwiggins-a-life-in-design--2#/>





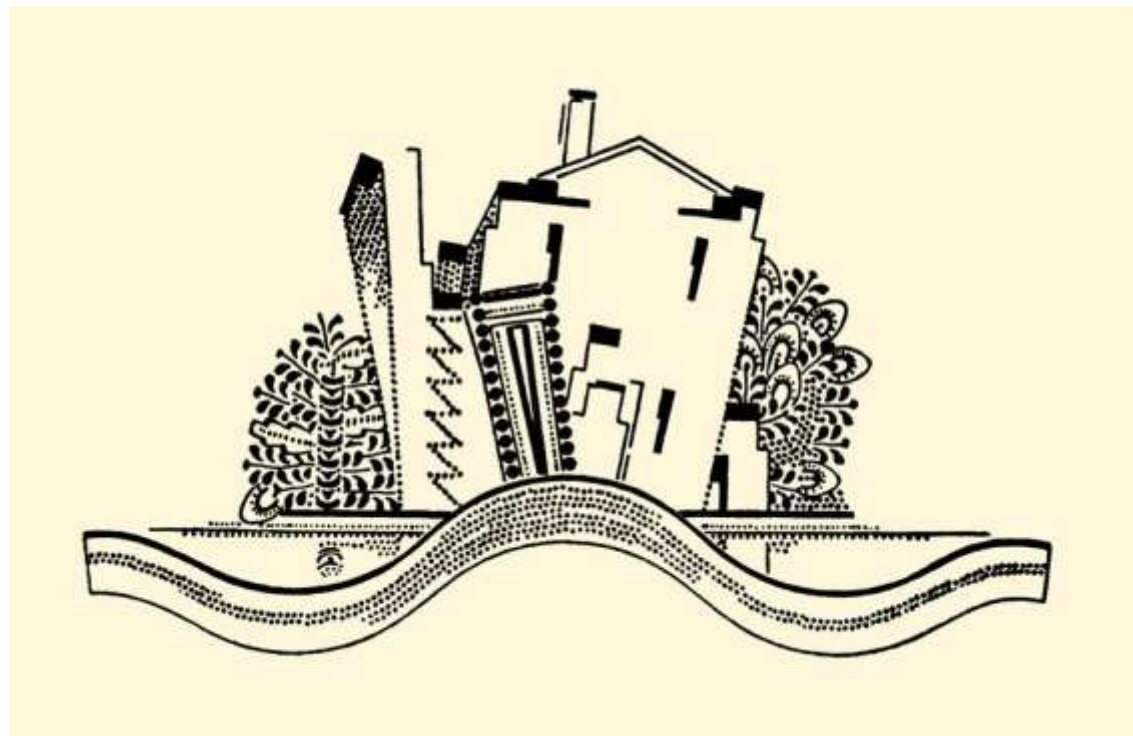
WILLIAM ADDISON DWIGGINS

# STENCILLED ORNAMENT AND ILLUSTRATION



EXPANDED EDITION

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# Albrecht Roser

Albrecht Roser was a German master puppeteer based in Stuttgart, Germany.

Roser has made a major contribution working with marionettes. He first came to public attention in 1951 with his marionette, *Clown Gustaf*.<sup>[4][5]</sup> Another of his characters, *Grandmother*, is outwardly charming but savagely humorous in her observations about all aspects of society and the absurdities of life.<sup>[1]</sup>

Roser has toured worldwide with resounding success. He has made 7 tours through Asia and Australia and 17 tours in North and South America.<sup>[4]</sup> A large number of his tours were organised with assistance from the German Cultural Institute.

In 1977, Roser was invited to spend a semester as guest artist at the University of Connecticut, United States of America, by the Department of Puppetry. In 1983 he established the Figurentheaterschule Stuttgart, a school for puppetry at the Conservatory for Music and the Dramatic Arts, where he was professor and head of the department.

Roser's work was admired by master puppeteer [Jim Henson](#), who made a film on Roser's work.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wctMoYc9F2U>



# Scott Land

Scott Land is a producer, puppeteer and actor. He started puppetry at the age of ten after seeing Bob Baker perform his marionettes at the National Orange Show in 1972. While later studying psychology at UCLA, he worked for Bob Baker Marionettes as a puppet builder and as Baker's own roadshow puppeteer.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIKfKA0tXW8>





# Hobey Ford

Together with his team of adorable "Foamies," Hobey makes animals of all sorts emerge in movement and music to form a full-on puppet ballet. Watch as the habits and habitats of the world's mightiest beasts and tiniest bugs come into furry focus right before your eyes.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2clNdbwPYw>



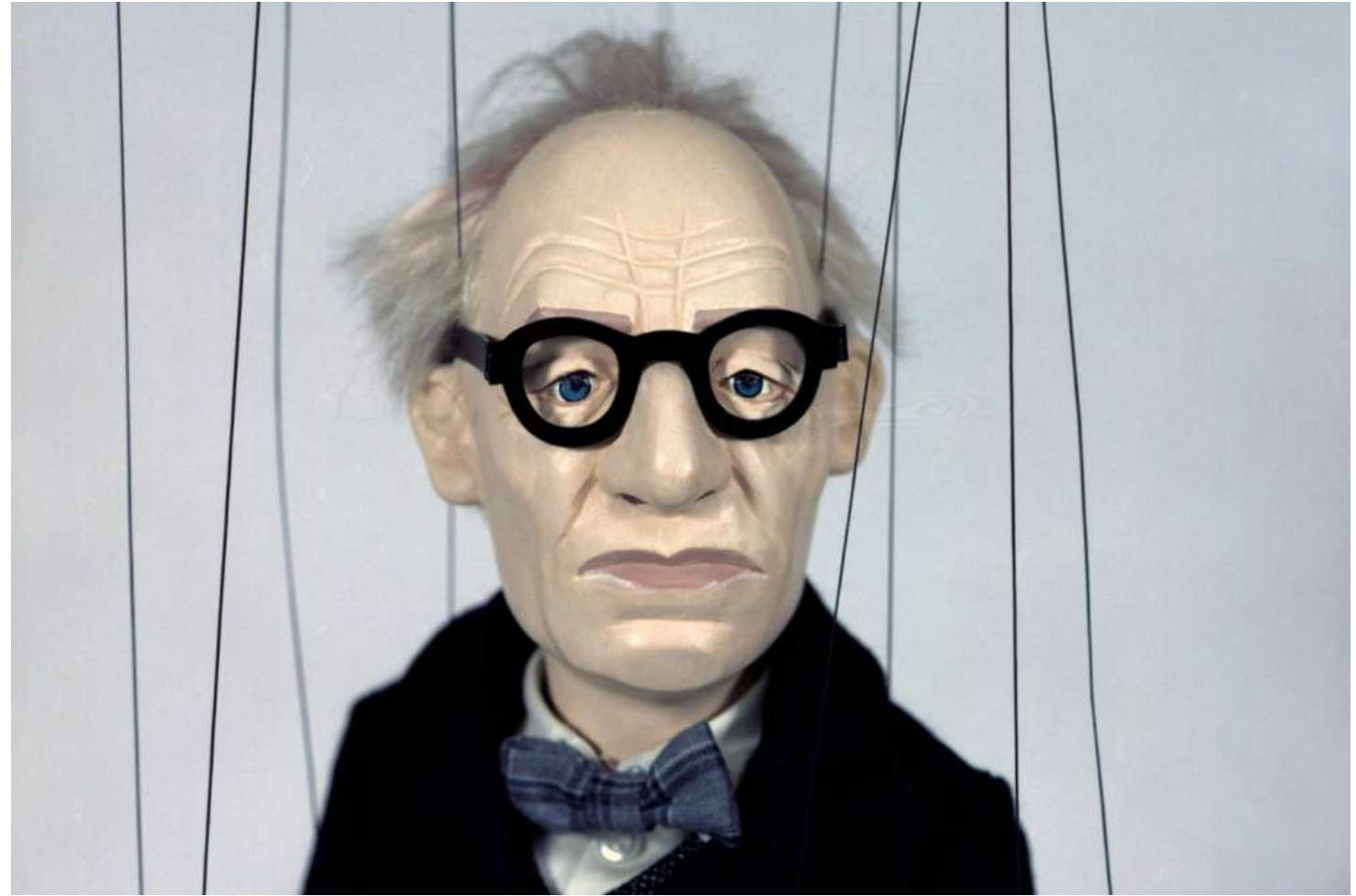
# Pierre Huyghe

Pierre Huyghe is a French artist who works in a variety of media from films and sculptures to public interventions and living systems.

- <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s4/pierre-huyghe-in-romance-segment/> (le Corbusier puppet)







# Pedro Reyes

Created after the artist met Professor Noam Chomsky, the new satirical play features Chomsky onstage alongside Elon Musk, Ayn Rand and Karl Marx, with a zany plot involving a technology contest, a contraption called the Print-a-Friend and a surprise appearance by Donald Trump. Making its world premiere at MIT's Simmons Hall on April 26 and 27, 2018, 'Manufacturing Mischief' has been conceived as part of Reyes' residency as the inaugural Dasha Zhukova Distinguished Visiting Artist at the MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology.

"My goal is to create a new puppet play that deals with issues of technology, ideology and the current political climate from a critical perspective, while also serving as entertainment and speaking both to scholars and a broader audience alike," says Pedro Reyes. "My time at MIT has been influential in creating this piece, and it is an honor to create a work inspired by Professor Noam Chomsky."

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEfIdJHsEF0> (Noam Choamsky)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rl36u4NpuB0> (Carl Marx)







# Cashore Marionettes



A performance by the Cashore Marionettes is a celebration of life. The program consists of a collection of engaging pieces encompassing a broad range of themes, each delivered with a simplicity that expresses the essence of the moment.

When I was ten or eleven years old, my parents took me into a large gift shop at the New Jersey shore while we were on vacation. This is where I first saw a marionette in person. It was hanging from the ceiling — a pirate, colorfully dressed. I remember looking at this marionette for a long time, imagining the possibilities. It was hanging high out of my reach. I was naturally shy, and my family had moved on to somewhere else in the store, so I had to work up all my courage to ask the saleswoman if I could try moving the marionette. She turned me down.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFQG2mnWF7A> (6 mins)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk7u5pWBmPs> (4 mins)





# Basil Twist

Basil Twist is a New York City-based puppeteer who is known for his underwater puppet show, "Symphonie Fantastique". He was named a MacArthur Fellowship recipient on September 29, 2015.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOzdN4iu28o>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1YatoKv3yU>







# Ronnie Burkett

Ronnie Burkett, OC is a Canadian puppeteer, best known for his original theatrical plays for adults, performed with marionettes. Burkett, who hails from Medicine Hat, was the puppeteer for Ralph on the TV Ontario series Harriet's Magic Hats during seasons three and four.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6oH2jDOjZlo>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dP3JWXJILcw>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dP3JWXJILcw&t=108s>







# Barnaby Dixon

Barnaby Dixon is a **British puppeteer and YouTuber** who created the True History of Thra, performed by SkekGra and UrGoh in The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCNZy2bNRi8> (finger puppets)
- <https://thekidshouldseethis.com/post/glowing-puppy-puppet-barnaby-dixon>

"It's nice when the puppet becomes the center of attention and you can kinda separate yourself from performance, while also observing it."

barnaby DIXON, ep5







# Assignment Suggestions...

- Make a marionette:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLa2-zOr-Fg> (I used crumpled tin foil and masking tape instead of paper)
- Create an artwork that uses movement and line to create emotion:  
check out this War Horse video for inspiration:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGLDMFub5jU>
- Create an artwork that pays homage to a favorite puppet.
- Use string in an artwork