

*Instituto Cervantes Chicago & Chicago Puppet Fest present:*

## **Rootstock Puppet Co.**

### **TIMBER!**

**January 29-30, 2022**

Instituto Cervantes Chicago, 31 W. Ohio St. in River North

This production is dedicated to Alberta Knause. It was inspired by *The Overstory* by Richard Powers.

Story, Puppets, and Set by **Mark Blashford**

Music by **Turner Blashford**

Second Puppeteer, **KT Shivak**

Scenic Painting, **Hannah Moore**

Lighting by **Aaron Herschlag**

#### **Creator's Note:**

Forest ecosystems are vital to humanity's survival on this planet. They provide food, habitat, building material, medicines, even the oxygen we breathe. Forests are the oldest, most complex societies in existence, but we are only just beginning to understand their intricacies. In fact, we have recently discovered how trees are interdependent: how they communicate with each other, share resources, and continue underground connections through microbial and fungal relationships that have tremendous implications above ground.

For good reason or not North American industrialists began wiping out thousands of years of arboreal development at the turn of the century. To this day the timber industry continues to negotiate for fewer and fewer acres of untouched wilderness. **TIMBER!** addresses deforestation through the folk hero Paul Bunyan and the mythical figure of BigFoot with eight different species of wood: milled, upcycled, recycled, and hand carved into puppets. **TIMBER!** is a story about our insatiable appetite for environmental destruction and how artists and activists can push back against the drum beat of consumerism, the lustful advances of capitalism, and the temptation to meet the climate crisis with complacency.

- Mark Blashford 1/25/22

## **When I am Among the Trees**

Mary Oliver

When I am among the trees,  
especially the willows and the honey locust,  
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,  
they give off such hints of gladness.  
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,  
in which I have goodness, and discernment,  
and never hurry through the world  
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves  
and call out, "Stay awhile."  
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,  
"and you too have come  
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled  
with light, and to shine."