

JAN 21 - FEB 1, 2026

CHICAGO  
INTERNATIONAL  
PUPPET  
THEATER  
FESTIVAL



**THE CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL PUPPET THEATER FESTIVAL** is the preeminent event dedicated to the artform in the U.S. In the heart of winter, the Festival spans 12 days and dozens of Chicago venues, sharing 100+ puppetry activities for 22,000+ guests. Since its launch in 2015, the Festival has highlighted artists from nations such as Chile, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, and South Africa, and as well as from Europe, Chicago and across the U.S. with the goal of promoting peace, equality, and justice on a global scale.

The Festival is a collaboration among numerous Chicago cultural institutions and is made possible by generous philanthropic support from organizations and individuals.

## FESTIVAL PARTNERS



THE  
BIOGRAPH  
THEATER

CENTER  
ON 3656 N.  
HALSTED



CHOPIN THEATRE



the dance center

Columbia  
COLLEGE CHICAGO



experimental station  
BUILDING INNOVATION THROUGH INVESTIGATION



UChicago  
Arts

MUSIC  
BOX  
THEATRE

Northwestern COMMUNICATION  
Virginia Wadsworth Witz  
Center for the Performing Arts



Norwegian Consulate General  
New York

PEMBERLEY  
PRODUCTIONS

PUPPETS  
IN PORTLAND

NISSOY THEATER



sandglass  
THEATER

SRBCC  
SOUTHERN RHODE ISLAND BOUNDARY CRAFTS



STEPPENWOLF



THE  
THEATRE  
SCHOOL  
at DePaul University

Villa  
Albertine  
INSTITUT  
FRANÇAIS  
DE FRANCE À CHICAGO



THEATRE  
Y  
THEATRE  
Y

WARWICK

Cover: *The Sex Lives of Puppets* by Blind Summit. Photo Mark Down

# Welcome to our 8TH EDITION!

Dear Human!

Who better than the puppet to startle us awake?

Who better to shake us free from the mire of our daily living and stir the deep knowledge of our shared humanity? This 8th edition of our Festival is, as always, chock full of astonishing revelations and delightful insights about our selves and others, revealing and revelling in what it means to be human.

This year you have the opportunity to see the hero in *Ram* (*About Ram*), the strength in *Nora* (*A Doll's House*), the brutishness of Roald Dahl's Crocodile (*The Enormous Crocodile*), ribald rompings (*The Sex Lives of Puppets*) alongside stories told from the U.S. in the ignited vision of a NY widow (*Harlem Doll Palace*), a post war, orphaned girl's survival (*The 4th Witch*), a visit to a sci fi author LeGuin's 1960s genderless planet (*The Left Hand of Darkness*), and the rhinoceros' journey (*Rhynoceros*).

Additionally we bring a unique dinner + puppetry experience from France this year as well as brand new works and premieres from Chicago artists—notably the wildly-popular **Manual Cinema**. Meanwhile, world-renown artists bring to Chicago: master classes, panel discussions, exhibitions and more. *Step inside and enjoy the glow!*

Blair Thomas, Artistic Director & Founder



Photo Saverio Truglia

1 THE RHAPSODY THEATER  
1328 W. Morse Ave.

2 MUSIC BOX THEATRE  
3733 N. Southport Ave.

3 CONSTELLATION  
3111 N. Western Ave.

4 THE BIOGRAPH'S  
ZÁČEK MCVAY THEATER  
2433 N. Lincoln Ave.

5 STEPPENWOLF'S MERLE RESKIN SPACE  
1624 N. Halsted Ave.

6 SPECIAL DINNER-SHOW VENUE  
Wicker Park (address disclosed to  
ticket buyers)

7 CHOPIN THEATRE Mainstage  
1543 W. Division St.

8 NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY'S  
WIRTZ CENTER CHICAGO ABBOTT HALL  
710 N. Lake Shore Dr.

9 WARWICK ALLERTON HOTEL  
701 N. Michigan Ave.

10 STUDEBAKER THEATER AT THE FINE ARTS BUILDING  
410 S. Michigan Ave.

11 FESTIVAL HEADQUARTERS + PUPPET HUB  
Fine Arts Building: Balcony (3rd Floor), Studio 433 (4th Floor),  
Little Studio (7th Floor), and Curtiss Hall (10th Floor)  
410 S. Michigan Ave.

12 DEPAUL'S MERLE RESKIN THEATRE  
60 E. Balbo Dr.

13 DANCE CENTER COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO  
1306 S. Michigan Ave.

14 REVA & DAVID LOGAN CENTER FOR THE ARTS  
Theater East & Performance Hall  
915 E. 60th St.



## FREE NEIGHBORHOOD TOUR

A LOYOLA PARK FIELDHOUSE  
1230 W. Greenleaf Ave. *Rogers Park*

B CENTER ON HALSTED  
3656 N. Halsted St. *Lakeview*

C SEGUNDO RUIZ BELVIS  
CULTURAL CENTER  
4048 W. Armitage *Hermosa*

D MARSHALL FIELD GARDEN  
APARTMENTS/ART ON SEDGWICK  
1406 N. Sedgwick St. *Old Town*

E INSTITUTO CERVANTES  
31 W. Ohio St. *River North*

F 345 GALLERY  
345 N. Kedzie Ave. *East Garfield Park*

G AUSTIN TOWN HALL CULTURAL CENTER  
5610 W. Lake St. *Austin*

H THEATRE Y  
3611 W. Cermak Rd. *North Lawndale*

I EXPERIMENTAL STATION  
6100 S. Blackstone Ave. *Woodlawn*

J TULEY PARK  
501 E. 90th PL. *Grand Crossing*

Check back closer to the Festival for  
added locations, dates, and times!

# OPENING + CLOSING

Shows and Events

	WEDNESDAY JANUARY 21	THURSDAY JANUARY 22	FRIDAY JANUARY 23	SATURDAY JANUARY 24	SUNDAY JANUARY 25	MONDAY JANUARY 26	TUESDAY JANUARY 27	WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28	THURSDAY JANUARY 29	FRIDAY JANUARY 30	SATURDAY JANUARY 31	SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1
<b>OPENING NIGHT PRELUDE</b> RECEPTION - Fine Arts Bldg. p.12	11 5:15 - 6:45 pm											
<b>DEAD AS A DODO</b> by Wakka Wakka - Studebaker Theater p.15	10 7 pm		7:30 pm	2 pm 7:30 pm	2 pm							
<b>OPENING NIGHT POST-SHOW</b> PARTY - Fine Arts Bldg. p.12	11 10th Fl.	8:30-10:15 pm										
<b>CLOSING CABARET</b> with Joshua Holden - Rhapsody Theater p.58	1 1											6:30 - 7:45 pm

## ALL SHOWS

	THURSDAY JANUARY 22	FRIDAY JANUARY 23	SATURDAY JANUARY 24	SUNDAY JANUARY 25	MONDAY JANUARY 26	TUESDAY JANUARY 27	WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28	THURSDAY JANUARY 29	FRIDAY JANUARY 30	SATURDAY JANUARY 31	SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1
<b>THE 4TH WITCH</b> by Manual Cinema The Biograph's Začek McVay Theater p.17	4 7:30 pm		8:30 pm	3 pm 8:30 pm	3 pm 6 pm						
 <b>ABOUT RAM</b> by Katkatha Puppet Arts Trust Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago p.19	13 13							7:30 pm	1 pm 6 pm	12 pm	
<b>DOES A DOG HAVE BUDDHA NATURE?</b> by Blair Thomas - Chopin Theatre p.21	7 7				8 pm		2 pm 5 pm 8 pm				
<b>A DOLL'S HOUSE</b> by Plexus Polaire DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre p.23	12 12	6 pm	6 pm	6 pm							
 <b>Roald Dahl's THE ENORMOUS CROCODILE</b> by The Roald Dahl Story Company - Studebaker p.25	10 10							1 pm	10:30 am 6 pm	11 am 4 pm	10 am 1 pm
<b>THE HARLEM DOLL PALACE</b> by Alva Puppet Theater - Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts p.27	14 14	4 pm 7:30 pm	4 pm 7:30 pm	6 pm							

# SHOWS cont.

	THURSDAY JANUARY 22	FRIDAY JANUARY 23	SATURDAY JANUARY 24	SUNDAY JANUARY 25	MONDAY JANUARY 26	TUESDAY JANUARY 27	WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28	THURSDAY JANUARY 29	FRIDAY JANUARY 30	SATURDAY JANUARY 31	SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1						
<b>THE HOUSE</b> by Sofie Krog Theatre Steppenwolf's Merle Reskin Space <b>p.29</b>	 5							6 pm 8:30 pm	6 pm 9 pm	2 pm 6 pm	2 pm 4 pm						
<b>LA MÉRIDIENNE</b> by Théâtre de la Massue with Chef Chris Sullivan - Wicker Park <b>p.31</b>	 6	4 pm 6:30 pm 9 pm	4 pm 6:30 pm 9 pm	4 pm 6:30 pm 9 pm	4pm 6:30 pm 9 pm	4 pm 6:30 pm 9 pm	4 pm 6:30 pm 9 pm										
<b>LAURA HEIT SHORT FILMS</b> by Laura Heit Music Box Theatre <b>p.33</b>	 2				7 pm	7 pm											
<b>THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS</b> by Untitled Theatre Company No. 61 & Yara Arts Group - Wirtz Center <b>p.35</b>	 8							7:30 pm	4 pm 8 pm	4 pm 8 pm	1 pm 6 pm						
<b>LATE NIGHT PUPPETRY</b> <b>THE MATCHBOX SHOWS</b> by Laura Heit Constellation <b>p.37</b>	 3	8 pm 10 pm	8 pm 10 pm	8 pm 10 pm	8 pm												
<b>LATE NIGHT PUPPETRY</b> <b>NASTY BRUTISH &amp; SHORT</b> curated by Rough House Puppet Arts - Constellation <b>p.39</b>	 3		10:30 pm	10:30 pm					10:30 pm	10:30 pm							
<b>OIL PRESSURE VIBRATOR</b> by Geumhyung Jeong Chopin Theatre <b>p.41</b>	 7								9 pm	2 pm							
<b>RHYNOCERON</b> by KT Shivak Chopin Theatre <b>p.43</b>	 7	7 pm	3 pm 8 pm	11 am 7:30 pm	3 pm												
<b>THE SEX LIVES OF PUPPETS</b> by Blind Summit The Biograph's Začek McVay Theater <b>p.45</b>	 4				7:30 pm	7:30 pm	7:30 pm	5 pm	5 pm 8 pm	4 pm 8 pm							
<b>TRUST ME FOR A WHILE</b> by Plexus Polaire Reva & David Logan Center for the Arts <b>p.47</b>	 14							5:30 pm 8 pm	5:30 pm 8 pm		2 pm						
<b>FREE NEIGHBORHOOD TOUR</b> with Tian Gombau - Various Locations <b>p.49</b>		4 pm North Lawndale	 H	11 am River North 4:30 pm Old Town	 E	4 pm Hermosa	 C	2 pm East Garfield Park	 F								
<b>FREE NEIGHBORHOOD TOUR</b> with Alex & Olmsted - Various Locations <b>p.50</b>								5 pm 8 pm	 7	4 pm Grand Crossing	 J	4:30 pm Rogers Park	 A	1 pm Austin	 G	11 am Woodlawn	 I

FREE!

# PUPPET HUB + EXHIBITIONS

FREE!

THE SPOKE & BIRD POP-UP CAFE  
by Spoke & Bird - Fine Arts Bldg. [p.52](#)



	THURSDAY JANUARY 22	FRIDAY JANUARY 23	SATURDAY JANUARY 24	SUNDAY JANUARY 25	MONDAY JANUARY 26	TUESDAY JANUARY 27	WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28	THURSDAY JANUARY 29	FRIDAY JANUARY 30	SATURDAY JANUARY 31	SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1	
	Closed	12 - 7:30 pm	12 - 7:30 pm	12 - 4 pm	12 - 5:30 pm	12 - 5:30 pm	12 - 5:30 pm	12 - 5:30 pm	12 - 6 pm	12 - 4 pm	12 - 4 pm	
	<b>EXHIBITION: Laura Heit Two Ways Down</b> <b>EXHIBITION: Andrew Kim Lantern Puppets</b> <a href="#">p.53</a>		Closed	9 am - 7:30 pm	9 am - 7:30 pm	9 am - 4 pm	9 am - 5:30 pm	9 am - 5:30 pm	9 am - 5:30 pm	9 am - 6 pm	9 am - 4 pm	9 am - 4 pm

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

FREE!

ELLEN VAN VOLKENBURG PUPPETRY  
SYMPOSIUM: Panels - Fine Arts Bldg. [p.54-55](#)



BOOK TALKS: Alissa Mello, Mark Down, Dr. Dassie Posner & Claudia Orenstein - Fine Arts Bldg. [p.56](#)



CATAPULT ARTIST INTENSIVE: Professional Development Weekends - Various Locations [p.56](#)

GIANT ANIMAL LANTERN PUPPETS  
Pre-Fest Workshop with Andrew Kim

JAN 11-21

PUPPETRY MASTERCLASSES with Festival Artists - Fine Arts Bldg. (unless otherwise noted) [p.57](#)



	THURSDAY JANUARY 22	FRIDAY JANUARY 23	SATURDAY JANUARY 24	SUNDAY JANUARY 25	MONDAY JANUARY 26	TUESDAY JANUARY 27	WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28	THURSDAY JANUARY 29	FRIDAY JANUARY 30	SATURDAY JANUARY 31	SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1	
			10 am - 12 pm Session 1	10 am - 12 pm Session 2						10 am - 12 pm Session 3	10 am - 12 pm Session 4	
					5:30 pm Making Meaning in Puppetry...	5:30 pm Race, Gender, and Disability...	5:30 pm A Practical Guide to Puppetry					
			Session 1: Led by Samuel J. Lewis II						Session 2: Led by Erica Mott			
			View finished puppets in the Puppet Hub! (see above for hours and location)									
			9:30 am Alva Rogers		9:30 am Michael Jean-Marain	9:30 am Wakka Wakka	9:30 am Anurupa Roy	9:30 am Anurupa Roy	9:30 am Alex and Olmsted			
			9:30 am Manual Cinema	4	1:30 pm Dr. Paulette Richards	1:30 pm Linda Wingerter	1:30 pm Mark Down	1:30 pm Mark Down	1:30 pm Wakka Wakka	1:30 pm Joshua Holden		
			1:30 pm Wakka Wakka		1:30 pm Plexus Polaire							

There's More! Join us for  
**POST-FEST EVENTS**  
Visit [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)  
for dates and more info

## Spring, Summer, and Fall Workshops

Take a live, online workshop from anywhere in the world, or join us for in-person workshops at the Fine Arts Building in downtown Chicago. Live work sessions, group sharing and personal feedback make these enjoyable and productive workshop opportunities.

## The Spring 2026 Living Room Tour Save the Dates: April 23, 24, 25

The Living Room Tour events are intimate fundraisers at unique, private locations.

## Chicago Puppet Lab Showcase

The Chicago Puppet Lab is a developmental lab for artists creating new, original puppet theater work. Join us to celebrate their growth and discoveries at this showing of works-in-progress.

## JOIN US FOR THESE SPECIAL OPENING NIGHT FUNDRAISING EVENTS!

### PRELUDE RECEPTION

*Sponsored by Art Legacy Institute  
Hosted by the Festival Board*



**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21  
5:15 - 6:45 p.m.**

**FINE ARTS BUILDING  
STUDEBAKER THEATER**  
410 S. Michigan Ave. 3rd Floor Balcony

\$125/\$250 benefactor  
*Show tickets sold separately*



### POST-SHOW PARTY

*Co-Hosted by Alicia Bird and Jin Ivacic*

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21  
8:30 - 10:15 p.m.**

**FINE ARTS BUILDING, CURTISS HALL**  
410 S. Michigan Ave. 10th Floor

\$75



Photo: Richard Termine

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)



Join top supporters, Festival leadership, staff and artistic directors from this year's international companies to toast the opening of the 8th edition of the Festival. This exclusive, pre-show reception features

drinks, hors d'oeuvres, early access to claim opening night seats and a sneak-peek at exhibitions before they open to the public, followed by the opening night performance of **Wakka Wakka's Dead as a Dodo** (show tickets sold separately).

After the show, celebrate opening night with the artists who have come to town to share their astonishing and delightful acts with you for the next 12 days of the Festival. Enjoy drinks, dessert, and live puppetry performance at the top of Chicago's historic Fine Arts Building.

## INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

### FOCUS ON NORWAY

*It gives us great pleasure to present this Focus on Norway with three outstanding shows.*

Culture is well supported in Norway, a country whose entire population is the equivalent of ours here in the City of Chicago, and their puppetry community is exemplary—robust, and vibrant.

*Special Thanks*



*Norwegian Consulate General  
New York*



**WAKKA WAKKA**  
*Dead as a Dodo*  
*See page 15*



**PLEXUS POLAIRE**  
*A Doll's House*  
*See page 23*



**PLEXUS POLAIRE**  
*Trust Me for a While*  
*See page 47*

We must acknowledge the visionary contribution of the **Company Residencies at Nordland Visual Theatre on the Lofoten Islands** (just north of the Arctic Circle in a fishing village of 1,000 residents), which was instrumental in the development of each of these shows. In fact, with the exception of our first Festival, every subsequent Festival has included at least one show developed through this program. We value the strong work created and were honored to present **Plexus Polaire's** very first premiere in the U.S.

This spotlight on Norway brings Ibsen's singular Nora pushing through her soul-crushing marriage, a futuristic imagining of the Dodo being the first species to reanimate after all had become bones and dust, and an intimate picture of an uncanny ventriloquist dummy terrorizing its master-maker puppeteer.



Photo: Richard Termine

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

# DEAD AS A DODO

WAKKA WAKKA

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21 - SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

Back by popular demand, *Dead as a Dodo* takes us deep within the underworld, where two skeleton friends, a Dodo and a boy, concerned about disappearing completely, notice something peculiar: the Dodo is miraculously sprouting feathers! A wave of transformation begins, shattering the established order of the dead. As the Dodo continues to grow flesh, fear and chaos erupt. The two friends must flee, fighting to stay together as they are drawn into the heart of an epic battle between life and death. Infused with puppetry, humor, and stunningly innovative visual effects, *Dead as a Dodo* is a mesmerizing musical odyssey about survival, transformation, and the power of true friendship.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

OPENING  
NIGHT!

STUDEBAKER THEATER AT  
THE FINE ARTS BUILDING

410 S. Michigan Ave.

\$48; \$40 students & seniors

Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 7 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 23 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24 at 2 p.m. + 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 25 at 2 p.m.

80 minutes

For ages 8 and up

Special thanks to Norwegian  
Embassy in New York

TAKE A  
WORKSHOP  
with the artists!  
See p. 57



CHICAGO

Photo: Katie Doyle

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

# THE 4TH WITCH

MANUAL CINEMA

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22 - SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

A new and fantastic tale from Chicago's Manual Cinema, inspired by elements of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, in which a girl escapes war and flees into a dark forest. Told through shadow puppetry, actors in silhouette and live music, without dialogue or narration, *The 4th Witch* begins on the eve of an invasion of a small town by the local warlord, Macbeth. The girl flees into the nearby forest, where, orphaned and exiled, she is rescued by a witch, who adopts her as an apprentice. As the girl becomes more skilled in witchcraft, her grief and rage draw her into a nightmarish quest for vengeance against the warlord who killed her parents. An inversion of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the show explores themes of grief, war, generational conflict, and cycles of violence.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)



THE BIOGRAPH'S  
ZAČEK MCVAY THEATER

2433 N. Lincoln Ave.

\$48; \$40 students & seniors

Thursday, Jan. 22 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 23 at 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24 at 3 p.m. + 8:30 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 25 at 3 p.m. + 6 p.m.

65 minutes

For ages 12 and up

TAKE A  
WORKSHOP  
with the artists!  
See p. 57



INDIA

Photo: ashrafscape

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST and  
DANCE CENTER OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO present:

## ABOUT RAM

## KATKATHA PUPPET ARTS TRUST

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29 - SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

***About Ram*** is an experimental theatrical piece using excerpts from the Bhavbhuti's "Ramayana" told through animation, digitally projected dance, masks and puppets. Experience this ancient Indian story about Prince Ram, an incarnation of the god Vishnu, who is exiled and must fight the demon king Ravana to rescue his wife Sita. Follows Ram's life, his exile, Sita's abduction by Ravana, his alliance with the monkey general Hanuman, and his eventual return to rule, an epic tale that serves a guide for Hindu principles like dharma, exploring themes of good versus evil, ideal relationships and duty.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

### DANCE CENTER OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE

1306 S. Michigan Ave.

\$35; \$30 students & seniors;  
\$15 Columbia College students

Thursday, Jan. 29 at 7:30 p.m.  
Friday, Jan. 30 at 1 p.m. + 6 p.m.  
Saturday, Jan. 31 at 12 p.m.

60 minutes

For ages 5 and up

TAKE A  
WORKSHOP  
with the artists!  
See p. 57

Special thanks to Sandglass  
Theater Company and  
Puppets in Portland



CHICAGO

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

# DOES A DOG HAVE BUDDHA NATURE?

BLAIR  
THOMAS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25 - MONDAY, JANUARY 26

As charming as it is beautiful, Blair Thomas' most recent puppetry creation takes the form of a large-scale, four-panel crankie in this koan, offering insight into the rascally nature of a dog and his owner. Performed with "technically superb and musically brilliant" Chicago saxophone quartet ~Nois and featuring hand painted, 100-foot long scrolls. With special opening act, *Cowboy Outlaw* performed with Silas Thomas, and based on the true story of an outlaw who's fame and travels outlived him.

CHOPIN THEATRE Mainstage

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1543 W. Division St.

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\$43; \$35 students & seniors

Sunday, Jan. 25 at 8 p.m.  
Monday, Jan. 26 at 2 p.m., 5 p.m.  
+ 8 p.m.

45 minutes  
*For all ages*

*With special support from The Marshall  
Frankel Foundation*

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)



**Spotlight on Norway** (see p. 13)

**FRANCE/NORWAY**

Photo: Tomas Lauvland Pettersen

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

# A DOLL'S HOUSE

PLEXUS POLAIRE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22 - SATURDAY, JANUARY 24

U.S.  
PREMIERE!

Plunge into a world on the edge of the fantastic, where the heroine is a prisoner of her own web of lies, woven over many years.

*A Doll's House* brings together puppets, actors, music and video projections in this eerie retelling of Henrik Ibsen's 1879 play, one of the great Nordic classics. Created by and starring Plexus Polaire's visionary artistic director Yngvild Aspeli, the production features her signature puppetry innovation in a house haunted by hyper-realistic, life-sized puppets, dead birds and a possessed female choir. A fascinating re-envisioning of the world-renowned classic. A must-see.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

**DEPAUL'S MERLE RESKIN  
THEATRE**

60 E. Balbo Dr.

\$48; \$40 students & seniors

Thursday, Jan. 22 at 6 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 23 at 6 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24 at 6 p.m.

80 minutes

*For ages 13 and up*

TAKE A  
WORKSHOP  
with the artists!  
See p. 57

Special thanks to Norwegian Embassy in New York, Kulturrådet, Performing Arts Hub Norway, and Villa Albertine/French Institute



ENGLAND

Photo: Danny Kaan

THE ROALD DAHL STORY COMPANY and  
CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL PUPPET THEATER FESTIVAL present:

*Roald Dahl's*  
**THE ENORMOUS CROCODILE**

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29 - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1\*

*The Enormous Crocodile* is weaving his way through the jungle with his tummy rumbling ... Only the other jungle creatures can foil his secret plans and clever tricks, but they're going to have to find a large amount of courage to stop this greedy brute. From Trunk the Elephant to Muggle-Wump the Monkey, get to know the menagerie of creative puppets in the U.S. premiere tour of this smash U.K.-hit production. You'll go from the jungle into outer space and back again, just in time for a wild dance party! This mischievous musical based on Roald Dahl's snappy book has toe-tapping tunes by Ahmed Abdullahi Gallab, a rib-tickling book and lyrics by Suhayla El-Bushra, and additional music and lyrics by Tom Brady.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

THE ROALD DAHL  
STORY COMPANY



STUDEBAKER THEATER AT  
THE FINE ARTS BUILDING

410 S. Michigan Ave.

\$48; \$40 students & seniors  
(20% Discount for groups of 8 or more with code **CROCODILE8**)

Thursday, Jan. 29 at 1 p.m.  
Friday, Jan. 30 at 10:30 a.m. + 6 p.m.  
Saturday, Jan. 31 at 11 a.m. + 4 p.m.  
Sunday, Feb. 1 at 10 a.m.  
+ 1 p.m.

60 minutes

For all ages

\* Show continues after the festival. To get tickets for Feb 6-21, visit [fineartsbuilding.com](http://fineartsbuilding.com)

TAKE A  
WORKSHOP  
with the artists!  
See p. 57



NEW YORK

Photo: Richard Termine

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST and REVA AND DAVID LOGAN CENTER  
FOR THE ARTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO present:

# THE HARLEM DOLL PALACE

ALVA PUPPET  
THEATER

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22 - SATURDAY, JANUARY 24

Welcome to *The Harlem Doll Palace*, based on the true story of Lenon Holder Hoyt, better known as Aunt Len, a public school art teacher for 40 years who created a doll museum in her Harlem brownstone. Join the dolls from the “dollection” inside Aunt Len’s Doll and Toy Museum as they recreate their journeys to the museum and seek to keep its beloved founder alive while Harlem deteriorates around her. Informed by keen insights and wisdom into the relationships between dolls, children, and expectations, this is a show not to be missed.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

REVA & DAVID LOGAN CENTER  
FOR THE ARTS, THEATER EAST,  
UCHICAGO

915 E. 60th St.

\$43; \$35 students & seniors

Thursday, Jan. 22 at 4 p.m. + 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 23 at 4 p.m. + 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24 at 6 p.m.

80 minutes

For ages 10 and up

TAKE A  
WORKSHOP  
with the artists!  
See p. 57

With special support  
from Cheryl Henson



DENMARK

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

# THE HOUSE

SOFIE KROG THEATRE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29 - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1

*The House* is a puppet comedy thriller for teens and adults that tells the story of the Warehouse Family Funeral Home. On her deathbed, the undertaker changes her last will and testament, as a secret begins to unravel and an evil plan is formed. Puppeteers lead audiences behind closed doors and into rooms which hide unspeakably dark deeds. Their complex puppet performance takes place in a revolving set featuring intricate lighting, strange contraptions and scary sound effects—the perfect setting for a comic thriller filled with hilarious horror, twists and turns and jumping souls.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

STEPPENWOLF'S  
MERLE RESKIN SPACE

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1624 N. Halsted St.

---

\$43; \$35 students & seniors

Thursday, Jan. 29 at 6 p.m. + 8:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 30 at 6 p.m. + 9 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 31 at 2 p.m. + 6 p.m.

Sunday, February 1 at 2 p.m. + 4 p.m.

55 minutes

For ages 13 and up

With special support from the Danish Art Council, Puppets in Portland, Puppet Showcase Theater, and Sandglass Theater Company

CHICAGO  
PREMIERE!

29



FRANCE

Photo: Lin Delpierre

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

LA MÉRIDIENNE

THÉÂTRE DE LA MASSUE with  
CHEF CHRIS SULLIVAN of  
TWILIGHT KITCHEN

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22 - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28

Don't miss this unique dining and puppet experience. A farm-to-table, family-style dinner for 12 people, pairs with a five-minute puppet show, *La Mériddenne*. The event begins as guests take their seats in a beautiful, private, chef's kitchen for a delicious, multi-course meal created by Chicago chef **Chris Sullivan**. One by one, each dinner guest is taken into another room for a private viewing of the puppet play which illuminates the human experience over time. The puppet showman, invisible and tucked away in his theater, shares with his viewer a vision of humanity, slipping away like a dream, back to the universe.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

PRIVATE WICKER PARK LOCATION

(address shared two weeks prior to event. Please note: **not ADA accessible**)

\$125 per seat (includes gourmet dinner plus puppet show)

Thursday, Jan. 22, Friday, Jan. 23,  
Saturday, Jan. 24, Sunday, Jan. 25,  
Monday, Jan. 26, Tuesday, Jan. 27,  
and Wednesday, Jan 28  
at 4 p.m., 6:30 p.m. + 9 p.m.

60 minutes  
*For ages 18 and up*

With support from French Institute in Chicago



PORLAND

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

# LAURA HEIT SHORT FILMS

MONDAY, JANUARY 26 - TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

Laura Heit, who you can also see in *The Matchbox Shows* (p. 37) presents her short film works, spanning two decades. This program showcases numerous animation techniques including drawing, stop-motion, and puppetry. Disquieting and evocative, her work seamlessly crosses genres to unfold poetic visual narratives. This collection of films employs a strong handmade aesthetic and an irreverent sense of humor to bring together ideas and stories that make visible hidden corners of the human psyche. A debut presence for Heit and the Festival at Chicago's historic Music Box Theatre.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

## MUSIC BOX THEATRE

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3733 N. Southport Ave.

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\$20; \$15 students & seniors

Monday, Jan. 26 at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 7 p.m.

50 minutes

*For ages 8 and up*



NEW YORK/CHICAGO

Photo: Zach Sun

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

# THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS

UNTITLED THEATRE  
COMPANY NO. 61 and  
YARA ARTS GROUP

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29 - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1

*The Left Hand of Darkness* is a new work based on the 1969 novel by famed sci-fi author Ursula K. Le Guin, wherein a lone human emissary to an alien world tries to facilitate inclusion in a growing intergalactic civilization. To do so he must bridge the gulf between his own views and those of the newly encountered, completely dissimilar culture whose inhabitants spend most of their time without a gender. This adaptation was written and co-directed by Edward Einhorn, Artistic Director of UTC61 with puppetry and co-direction by Tom Lee, Co-director of the Chicago Puppet Studio and Chicago Puppet Lab, Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

WORLD  
PREMIERE!

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY'S  
WIRTZ CENTER CHICAGO  
ABBOTT HALL

710 N. Lake Shore Dr.

\$35; \$30 students & seniors

Thursday, Jan. 29 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 30 at 4 p.m. + 8 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 31 at 4 p.m. + 8 p.m.

Sunday, February 1 at 1 p.m. + 6 p.m.

120 minutes

(with intermission)

For ages 16 and up

TAKE A  
WORKSHOP  
with the artists!  
See p. 57

With special support from Carol Farver  
& Robert Needelman, Julie Moller, and  
The Marshall Frankel Foundation



PORLAND

Photo: Sean Meredith

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

# THE MATCHBOX SHOWS

LAURA HEIT

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22 - SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

Laura Heit walks on stage with a glass of wine wearing a sequined tube top. She takes her place behind a table and begins to bring to life her miniature cabaret. Playing the part of Miniature raconteur, sequined pyromaniac, Laura Heit performs teeny tiny puppet shows inside matchboxes. A dead boyfriend, a sausage fairy, a tiger whisperer, a perfectionist, a bath-loving ghost, and many others play their parts in these uncanny micro plays. The miniature stages come to life with crankies, and pop-up paper engineering. The puppet shows are simultaneously projected on a screen behind the table making the little tiny details of this portable variety show delightfully larger than life.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

## CONSTELLATION

---

3111 N. Western Ave.

---

\$25; \$20 students & seniors

Thursday, Jan. 22 at 8 p.m. + 10 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 23 at 8 p.m. + 10 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24 at 8 p.m. + 10 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 25 at 8 p.m.

50 minutes

*For ages 13 and up*



CHICAGO/INTERNATIONAL

Photo: Richard Termine

ROUGH HOUSE and CHICAGO PUPPET FEST present:

# NASTY, BRUTISH & SHORT

FRIDAYS and SATURDAYS, JANUARY 23 - 24 and JANUARY 30 - 31

## CONSTELLATION

---

3111 N. Western Ave.

---

\$20; \$15 students & seniors

Friday Jan. 23 at 10:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24 at 10:30 p.m.

Friday Jan. 30 at 10:30 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 31 at 10:30 p.m.

60 minutes

For ages 16 and up

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)



SOUTH KOREA

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

# OIL PRESSURE VIBRATOR

GEUMHYUNG JEONG

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30 - SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

Geumhyung Jeong is a South Korean artist interested in the human body, the objects that surround it, and the blurred boundaries between who controls who, what controls which. *Oil Pressure Vibrator* articulates her fascination with the excavator and its movements, wielding heavy machinery to break into the complexities of sexuality. Narrated live (with English subtitles), it is a quest interwoven with performance, documentary film and genre-defying video work. For all its wildness, it is also a contemplative and starkly beautiful show... an intrepid performance-lecture that plunges a big bucket into preconceptions about sexuality, technology and the body.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

CHICAGO  
PREMIERE!

CHOPIN THEATRE Mainstage

1543 W. Division St.

\$43; \$35 students & seniors

Friday, Jan. 30 at 9 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 31 at 2 p.m.

60 minutes

For ages 18 and up



Photo: Richard Termine

CHICAGO

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

RHYNOCERON

KT SHIVAK

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22 - SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

A Chicago premiere, *Rhynoceron* traces the true events surrounding the arrival of a one-horned rhinoceros to Renaissance Europe, sparking an obsession that continued for hundreds of years. Through acts of hunting and collecting, KT Shivak's life-size, life-like rhino puppet transforms in front of our eyes from a natural inspiring wonder to an object of human greed. Celebrated for exquisite puppet design, Shivak has won awards for designs on stage as well as for film, including Chicago's coveted Jeff Award.

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

CHICAGO  
PREMIERE!

CHOPIN THEATRE Mainstage

---

1543 W. Division St.

---

\$43; \$35 students & seniors

Thursday, Jan. 22 at 7 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 23 at 3 p.m. + 8 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24 at 11 a.m. + 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 25 at 3 p.m.

70 minutes

For ages 10 and up

With special support from Deb & Andy Wolkstein, Julie Moller, and The Marshall Frankel Foundation



ENGLAND

Photo: Charlie Lyne

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

# THE SEX LIVES OF PUPPETS

MONDAY, JANUARY 26 - SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

*The Sex Lives of Puppets* pulls back the covers on puppet sex in contemporary Britain: filthy, funny, shocking and touching...lots of touching. This collaboration between Blind Summit's puppets and the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles is not so much "birds and bees," more "nuts and bolts." Co-writers/directors Ben Keaton and Mark Down, took inspiration from real-life responses to lead an impish cast of improviser puppeteers, and a veritable smorgasbord of different puppets, to explore sex and humanity and expose the underbelly of puppet eroticism.

In collaboration with



Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

BLIND  
SUMMIT

CHICAGO  
PREMIERE!

THE BIOGRAPH'S  
ZAČEK MCVAY THEATER

2433 N. Lincoln Ave.

\$48; \$40 students & seniors

Monday, Jan. 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 29 at 5 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 30 at 5 p.m. + 8 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 31 at 4 p.m.

+ 8 p.m.

100 minutes

(with intermission)

For ages 18 and up

TAKE A  
WORKSHOP  
with the artists!  
See p. 57



**Spotlight on Norway** (see p. 13)

**FRANCE/NORWAY**

CHICAGO PUPPET FEST presents:

# TRUST ME FOR A WHILE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28 - SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

*Trust Me for a While* brings us into the curious and rather fraught relationship between a failed magician and his professional puppet collaborator. In this wild, suspenseful and entertaining horror-comedy, director Yngvild Aspeli explores her fascination with the ventriloquist dummy. A show replete with off-the-rails mischief, it plays on the traditionally tense and intimate relationship between ventriloquists and their dummies while startling the audience with contemporary questions like What is real? What is fake? And, what happens when reality flails between the two?

Get Tickets at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

**PLEXUS POLAIRE**

**U.S.  
PREMIERE!**

**REVA & DAVID LOGAN  
CENTER FOR THE ARTS,  
PERFORMANCE HALL**

915 E. 60th St.

\$43; \$35 students & seniors

Wed., Jan. 28 at 5:30 p.m. + 8 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 29 at 5:30 p.m. + 8 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 31 at 2 p.m.

45 minutes

*For ages 15 and up*

Special thanks to Norwegian Embassy in New York, Kulturrådet, Performing Arts Hub Norway, and Villa Albertine/French Institute

**TAKE A  
WORKSHOP  
with the artists!**  
See p. 57

Chicago Puppet Fest and Chicago Park District's Night Out in the Parks present:

FREE

# NEIGHBORHOOD TOUR

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22 - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1

The Free Neighborhood Tour brings free, family-friendly performances to locations outside of Chicago's theaters to foster an appreciation for puppetry throughout the city. The tour offers a range of high-quality puppetry styles to create opportunities for community enjoyment while expanding the city's base of puppet enthusiasts. The Tour once again presents **two free, family-friendly puppet shows**, this year from Spain and Baltimore, to venues and community spaces all over the city.

## VARIOUS LOCATIONS

*See the following pages and check the website for added shows!*

## FREE

30 minutes - *Stone by Stone*  
60 minutes - *Happy Birthday, Mon Ami*

*For all ages*

*Special support provided by:*

*Pat Yuzawa-Rubin*

*Chicago Park District*



Learn more at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

FREE  
EVENTS

# STONE BY STONE

TIAN GOMBAU

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22

4 p.m. at **Theatre Y**

3611 W. Cermak Rd. (*North Lawndale*)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 23

11 a.m. at **Instituto Cervantes**

31 W. Ohio St. (*River North*)

4:30 p.m. at **Marshall Field Garden**

**Apartments/Art on Sedgwick**

1406 N. Sedgwick St. (*Old Town*)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24

4 p.m. at **Segundo Ruiz Belvis**

**Cultural Center**

4046 W. Armitage Ave. (*Hermosa*)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

2 p.m. at **345 Gallery**

345 N. Kedzie Ave. (*Garfield Park*)



SPAIN

Spanish puppet artist **Tian Gombau** was walking barefoot on the beach one day when he suddenly realized there are so many stones on earth. He started to classify them and keep them as precious treasures, thinking, if you look at what's inside them, one realizes there is something more than just a stone. The result is an ingenious, endearing, imagination-awakening experience for children using only inanimate objects. **30 minutes**

FREE  
**NEIGHBORHOOD TOUR (CONT.)**

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MON AMI

ALEX AND OLMSTED



Class, cultures, and expectations clash when Jacques' American cousin Sam visits him in Paris for a birthday celebration. Winner of a 2024 Jim Henson Foundation grant award, *Happy Birthday, Mon Ami* combines glove puppetry, live music, and audience participation to create a delightful hour of fun for the whole family. **60 minutes**

#### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28

**6 p.m.** at **Center on Halsted/John Baran Hall**  
3656 N. Halsted St. (*Lakeview*)

#### THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

**4 p.m.** at **Tuley Park**  
501 E. 90th Pl. (*Grand Crossing*)

#### FRIDAY, JANUARY 30

**4:30 p.m.** at **Loyola Park Fieldhouse**  
1230 W. Greenleaf Ave. (*Rogers Park*)

#### SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

**1 p.m.** at **Austin Town Hall Cultural Center**  
5610 W. Lake St. (*Austin*)

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1

**11 a.m.** at **Experimental Station**  
6100 S. Blackstone Ave. (*Woodlawn*)



Learn more at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

*“...tiny, enchanting and exquisite.”*

—Broadwayworld



BALTIMORE

Photo: Leah Huete

# THE PUPPET HUB

Your Puppetry Destination:  
Food, Drink, and Exhibitions

FRIDAY, JANUARY 23 - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1

## THE FINE ARTS BUILDING

410 S. Michigan Ave., Studio 433, 4th Floor

*Presented in partnership with The Spoke & Bird Cafe*



Bursting with site-specific activities, the **Puppet Hub** is the perfect place to relax between shows, meet up with friends and make some new ones! Take a break at the **Spoke & Bird Pop-Up Cafe**. While you snack, enjoy the pop-up shop for Puppet Fest merch, as well as two special exhibitions: **Two Ways Down**, featuring festival artist Laura Heit's hand-drawn animation and film inspired by Hieronymus Bosch's "The Garden of Heavenly Delights," and a room full of **giant lantern puppets** created in the pre-festival workshop with **Andrew Kim** of Thingumajig.

*Hub and Exhibitions are **FREE**; cafe items are available for purchase.*



Photo: Richard Termine

FREE  
EVENTS

## Exhibitions at the PUPPET HUB:



Photo: Mario Galucci



Photo: Courtesy Andrew Kim

## Two Ways Down

by **Laura Heit**

This showcase of visiting festival artist Laura Heit's exquisite hand-drawn animation and film **Two Ways Down** takes inspiration from Hieronymus Bosch's "The Garden of Heavenly Delights." Reflecting on the momentary nature of life, marvel how Heit's fantastical piece uses thrown shadows from tabletop dioramas and reflected and refracted animated projections to create a fleeting world.

Learn more at: [chicagopuppetfest.org](http://chicagopuppetfest.org)

## Giant Puppet Lanterns

from **Andrew Kim's Workshop**

Come check out the giant lantern puppets created in the pre-festival workshop with Andrew Kim of Thingumajig. Andrew has created and performed puppet and mask plays, parades and events for over 30 years. He is the founder and former Artistic Director of the Hebden Bridge Handmade Parade and the Todmorden Lamplighter Festival. He has led masterclasses in England, Scotland, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Bulgaria, South Korea and several cities throughout the USA.

Chicago Puppet Fest presents:

THE ELLEN VAN VOLKENBURG

# PUPPETRY SYMPOSIUM

SATURDAYS - SUNDAYS: JAN 24-25 and JAN 31 - FEB 1

All panels located at:

THE FINE ARTS BUILDING  
LITTLE STUDIO, 7TH FL

410 S. Michigan Ave.

FREE and open to the public

Moderated by Paulette Richards

The Ellen Van Volkenburg Puppetry  
Symposium brings together practicing

Festival artists with  
scholars to consider  
the intersection of  
puppetry with other  
disciplines and ideas.

TAKE A  
WORKSHOP  
with the moderator!  
See p. 57



Artists often regard their creative talents as a gift that they are called to share, whether they receive financial compensation or not. As a result, it can be difficult for artists to negotiate equitable compensation for their work within a money economy that tends to commodify their creative output. This symposium series examines the benefits and drawbacks of different funding sources including government funding, commercial ventures, and strategies community supported artists use for audience building.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

## Panel 1 - The Labor of Gratitude

In *The Gift: Creativity and the Artist in the Modern World*, Lewis Hyde posits that the creativity of the artist is a gift that comes from a source outside the artist's control. Artists labor in gratitude for many years to fully realize the power of their gifts and finally claim them only in sharing with others. This panel invites participants to trace the labors of gratitude they have undertaken in their artistic development and how they have navigated the demands of the market.

**Panelists:** Drew Dir and Julia Miller (*The 4th Witch*), Ash Winkfield and Alva Rogers (*The Harlem Doll Palace*), Laura Heit (*The Matchbox Shows*)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

## Panel 3 – Find a Good Reason to Sell Out

In the United States, commercial success is often treated as the measure of artistic success, yet not all works reach broad audiences and not all audiences can afford the art that matters most to them. This is especially true in children's theater, which is hard to fund through ticket sales alone. This panel will discuss commercial strategies pursued by artists to support their work and will consider what constitutes a good reason to "sell out."

**Panelists:** Michael Jean-Marain (*Roald Dahl's The Enormous Crocodile*), Yngvild Aspeli (*A Doll's House*), Sofie Krog (*The House*), Andrew Kim (*Thingumajig Theater*)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

## Panel 2 – We Let Out These Works on the Vote of the People

The 1935 Federal Theater Project was a New Deal program designed to create employment for theater artists thrown out of work during the Great Depression, allowing some artists to remain in the field and deepen their craft. Meanwhile, racially integrated Federal Theater Project productions sparked controversy as left-wing propaganda. This panel will explore some of the benefits and tradeoffs of creating art with public funding.

**Panelists:** Yngvild Aspeli (*A Doll's House*), KT Shivak (*Rhynoceros*), Gwen Warnock and Kirjan Waage (*Dead As A Dodo*), Mark Down (*The Sex Lives of Puppets*)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

## Panel 4 – The Art of Asking

Puppetry is a powerful community building activity that historically functioned within the gift economy in cultures all around the world. Recently, artists like Amanda Palmer have refined *The Art of Asking* on digital crowdfunding platforms. Palmer received over \$1 million from fans for an album, but faced criticism for bringing local musicians on stage and not paying them. How can puppetry thrive and contribute to a gift economy that builds community equitably?

**Panelists:** Anurupa Roy (*About Ram*), Geumhyung Jeong (*Oil Pressure Vibrator*), Tom Lee and Edward Einhorn (*The Left Hand of Darkness*)

## BOOK TALKS + THE CATAPULT

### BOOK TALKS

Fine Arts Building, Little Studio  
410 S. Michigan Ave., 7th Floor  
FREE



### THE CATAPULT

The Catapult Artist Intensive returns with **two professional development weekends** designed to advance the form and expand understanding of the field of puppetry in the United States. Each weekend, artists of all disciplines are taken on a three-day, curated, guided experience of festival programming. Join an intimate cohort, escorted by a professional leader, for discussions, backstage access to the shows, and more.

#### SESSION 1: JANUARY 23 - 25

Led by **Samuel J. Lewis II**

For more details and to register, visit: [ChicagoPuppetFest.org/catapult](http://ChicagoPuppetFest.org/catapult)

#### SESSION 2: JANUARY 30 - FEBRUARY 1

Led by **Erica Mott**

## WORKSHOPS

### MASTER PUPPETRY CLASSES with Festival Artists

Fine Arts Building, Little Studio, 410 S. Michigan Ave., 7th Floor (unless otherwise noted): **\$65 each**  
Workshops are designed for adult artists working in any discipline. Everyone welcome

#### Alva Rogers

(*The Harlem Doll Palace*)

**Friday, January 23**

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

#### Manual Cinema

(*The 4th Witch*)

**Friday, January 23**

9:30 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.

*Workshop at The Biograph Theater*  
2433 N. Lincoln Ave.

#### Plexus Polaire

(*A Doll's House and Trust Me for a While*)

**Sunday, January 25**

1:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

#### Michael Jean-Marain

(*Roald Dahl's The Enormous Crocodile*)

**Monday, January 26**

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

#### Anurupa Roy

(*About Ram*)

**Wednesday, January 28**

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**Thursday, January 29**

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

#### Mark Down

(*The Sex Lives of Puppets*)

**Wednesday, January 28**

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Thursday, January 29**

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

#### Alex and Olmsted

(*Happy Birthday, Mon Ami*)

**Friday, January 30**

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

#### Joshua Holden

(*Closing Cabaret*)

**Saturday, January 31**

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Learn more &  
**REGISTER!**

[ChicagoPuppetFest.org/Workshops](http://ChicagoPuppetFest.org/Workshops)

**SAVINGS!**  
Register for two  
workshops,  
get the third  
half off with code  
**26BUNDLE**

## CLOSING NIGHT EVENT

### CLOSING CABARET

Co-hosted by Julie Moller, Jordan Shields & Sarah Donovan

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1

6:30 pm - 7:45 p.m.

THE RHAPSODY THEATER

1328 W. Morse Ave.

#### TICKET LEVELS:

**\$35 Basic ticket:** Regular unreserved seating, *includes 1 drink ticket*

**\$50 Regular ticket:** Regular seating, *includes 2 drink tickets*

**\$75 Booster ticket:** Regular seating, *includes 2 drink tickets*

**\$150 Donor ticket:** Reserved seats, *includes 2 drink tickets*

**\$250 Benefactor ticket:** Reserved seats, *includes 2 drink tickets*

**\$500 Superdonor ticket:** Preferred, reserved seating, *includes 2 drink tickets*

**\$1,000 Superstar ticket:** Optimal, reserved seating, *includes 2 drink tickets*

**\$2,000 Underwriter ticket:** Prime time, optimal reserved seating, t-shirt & tote bag, *includes 2 drink tickets*

For these benefit events the portion of the ticket price over \$20 is tax deductible.

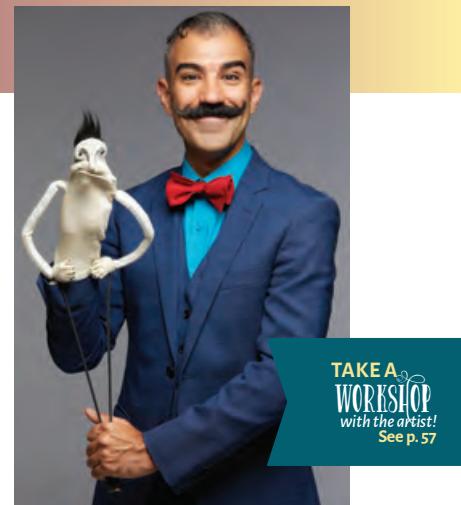


Photo: Brendan Burke

**Festival favorite Joshua Holden** and his right-hand man, the charmingly misanthropic **Mr. Nicholas**, co-emcee this final must-see evening of wildly unforgettable puppetry featuring performances by Artistic Director and Festival Founder **Blair Thomas**, **Mark Down** of Blind Summit, and other artists.

## LEAD SPONSORS

It's not too late to help out!



We gratefully acknowledge the following leading contributors for their generous support:

Cheryl Lynn Bruce & Kerry James Marshall



Julie Moller

Kristy & Brandon Moran

Jentes Family Foundation, Justine Jentes & Dan Kuruna



PAUL M. ANGELL FAMILY FOUNDATION



The Marshall Frankel Foundation



DRIEHAUS FOUNDATION



MacArthur Foundation



Norwegian Consulate General  
New York



Villa  
Albertine

CONSULAT GÉNÉRAL DE FRANCE À CHICAGO  
Consulat Général  
French Consulate General

## SUPPORTERS *cont.*

*It's not too late  
to help out!*



### \$200,000 and up

Cheryl Lynn Bruce\* &  
Kerry James Marshall  
Ferdi Foundation / Julie Moller\*  
Kristy\* & Brandon Moran  
**\$100,000 - \$199,999**  
Jentes Family Foundation,  
Justine Jentes & Dan Kuruna  
**\$50,000 - \$99,999**  
National Endowment for the Arts  
Paul M. Angell Family  
Foundation  
The Reva & David Logan  
Foundation  
**\$30,000 - \$49,999**  
City of Chicago Department  
of Cultural Affairs and  
Special Events  
Richard H. Driehaus  
Foundation  
The Marshall Frankel  
Foundation  
Illinois Arts Council  
John D. and Catherine T.  
MacArthur Foundation  
**\$2,500 - \$4,999**  
Patti Gilford & Barry Bialek  
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The Jim Henson Foundation  
Pritzker Foundation  
Deb & Andy Wolkstein  
**\$15,000 - \$19,999**  
Beatrice Barbareschi &  
David Pritzker

Mia Park & Ali Levy,  
*in honor of Paul Levy*  
Manaaki Foundation,  
Sue Crothers-Gee & Bill Gee  
Robert & Mayari Pritzker  
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Nina & Steve Schroeder  
**\$10,000 - \$14,999**  
Anonymous  
The Chicago Community Trust  
Chicago Park District Night  
Out in the Parks Program  
Ginger Farley  
Cheryl Henson  
The Jane Henson Foundation  
Sarah Donovan &  
Jordan Shields\*  
John Supera\*  
Chuck Thurow  
Pat Yuzawa-Rubin\* &  
Jack Rubin  
**\$5,000 - \$9,999**  
Jennifer & Jonathan Bunge  
Nancy Needles & Arne Rode  
**\$2,500 - \$4,999**  
Carolyn Toren & Tomas Petkus  
**\$20,000 - \$29,999**  
Lannan Foundation  
The Jim Henson Foundation  
Jin\* & Joe Ivacic  
Nancy & Michael Timmers  
**\$1,000 - \$2,499**  
Alicia Bird\*  
Nancy Bishop  
Candice Goldstein &  
Abraham Steinberg

Nancy Juda & Jens Brasch  
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Honey Goodenough  
Sinane Goulet  
Jeremy Goyette  
Susan & Peter Gray  
Vesna Grbovic  
Liz Aviles & Michael Sauer  
Nancy & Randy Blankstein  
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Rupa Datta &  
Ravi Datta-Nemana  
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*It's not too late  
to help out!*

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# SUPPORTERS *cont.*

*It's not too late  
to help out!*



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\*Indicates member of the Board  
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**Please note:** This list includes gifts  
received between 4/1/25-12/5/25.  
If you notice an error, please accept  
our sincerest apologies and let us  
know so we can make it right.

## LIVING ROOM TOUR

2026 Co-chairs: Alicia Bird, Cheryl Lynn Bruce, Patti Gilford

Thank you to our 2025 Living Room Tour Co-chairs: Alicia Bird, Kim Ohms

**Hosts and Co-Hosts:** Eighth Blackbird Studios, Jacqueline Souroujon Henderson & Hank Adams, Justine Jentes & Dan Kuruna, Manual Cinema, Julie Moller, Kristy & Brandon Moran, Bici & David Pritzker, Nina & Steve Schroeder

**And Committee:** Liz Aviles, Tanya Bermudez, Leah Bohannon, Ruth Border, Irena Čajková, Maureen Mizwicki, Klára Moldová, Elizabeth Monkus, Ted Phillips & Jackie Zydeck, Salena Potter, Margaret Radnick, Eva Silverman, Emily Stoltzfus, Dee & Ron Tevonian, Steve Widerman. Interested in joining the 2026 Living Room Tour Committee? Let us know: [info@chicagopuppetfest.org](mailto:info@chicagopuppetfest.org)

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## SPECIAL THANKS

Basil Twist, Shoshana Bass, Charlie Branda, Krista Bryski-Richard, Barbara Busackino, Marc Chevalier, Brenda Coughlin, Adrian Danzig, Matthew Duvall, Ginger Farley, Fine Arts Building Staff, Fine Fröhlich, Vanessa Valliere & John Gregorio, Gwei Lun-Mei, Jacob Harvey, Lela Headd & Zygmunt Dyrkacz, Paul Heflen, Cheryl Henson, Heather Henson, Teresa Hernando Rojo, Brett Holmes, Lisa Kaplan, Rowena Liu, Midwest Academy for Gifted Education, Bill Michel, Charla Moseley, Kim Ohms, Diane Pascale, Mike Reed, Michael Reed, Andrea Sáenz, Roell Schmidt, Matthew Sostrin/Mayer Brown, Spektrix Staff, Spoke & Bird Staff, Connie Spreen, Meredith Sutton, The Saints, Omar Torres-Kortright, Jeff Usow, Will von Hartz, Naomi Walker, Michael Wallace, Zac Whittenburg, Kristi Widgery ...and thank you to our fabulous Box Office Team, Drivers, and Volunteers!



**Chicago International  
Puppet Theater Festival**  
The Fine Arts Building  
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