

<p>Music/Opening narration</p> <p>0:00 - 0:12</p>	<p>Wednesday November 8th. I'm heading to my first meeting with Bart Roccoberton. He's the head of the puppet arts program at the University of Connecticut. We are meeting in the program's building, where classes happen. It's a small building off campus, where there used to be a mental health hospital. The place is kind of creepy, with its brick building and broken windows.</p> <p>I park on the side of the road, along some other cars and walk toward the puppetry building. Small, simple, and plain.</p> <p>Bart comes up and opens the door. He has a friendly face and a gentle voice. I look on the ceiling and see three big hanging puppets. From that moment, I was drawn into the world of puppetry and was curious to know more about it.</p> <p>This is Maïna Durafour. Learn with me today about puppetry and what it means for humans.</p>
<p>NARRATION</p> <p>0:12 - 1:22</p>	<p>Puppetry is an art that can be found in many cultures. It's also expressed differently throughout the world. The Cambridge dictionary defines puppetry as "the skill or activity of making puppets or entertaining people with puppets." This definition specifies that puppets are "toys in the shape of people or animals, moved with strings or by someone's hand inside." But let me tell you, giving you a definition of what is puppetry is harder than telling</p>

	you what's not puppetry. Here's Bart's definition of puppetry.
<p>Bart Roccoberton, definition of puppetry - interview</p> <p>1:23 - 3:10</p>	<p>"Well there is a simple definition that was actually printed in a book called the art of the puppet by a man called Bill Baird. Bill defined puppetry as an inanimate object, something that has no life, that's made animate to appear that it has life through direct human control for an audience. The audience is very important. If we don't have the audience that we are performing for, it's doll playing, it is not puppetry."</p>
<p>NARRATION</p> <p>3:11 - 3:33</p>	<p>Puppets are not only a fun thing for children and adults. Initially, they are a tool to tell stories. Some of them are really pretty. Some others are ugly and scary. Some of them are realistic and others unrealistic. But puppets are linked by their ability to tell, gather people together and develop imagination.</p> <p>In "Puppetry, a world history", Eileen Blumenthal dates puppetry sometimes between 30,000 and 21,000 Before Common Era. This has been established after archeologists found sculpted figurines representing people.</p> <p>Since then, puppets have evolved throughout humans' society evolution. Early on, puppets were given life by people's imagination and stories. They spread to other societies by the exchange of goods and tradition. This has brought puppets from Northern Europe to the Middle East, from India to East Asia. Generally, puppets have been found almost every time a civilization has lived somewhere.</p> <p>However, for Bart, puppets have probably always existed. If you use your hands to</p>

	<p>tell a story, they become a puppet. How can puppet not have always existed if that's the case?</p>
<p>Bart Roccoberton, puppetry has always been there - interview. 3:33 - 4:15</p>	<p>“It's hard to put a date on it. I look at it in a different way, I believe that puppetry has been part of human kind's existence since the beginnings of tribes. When people started coming together to support each other. We weren't working by ourselves to do the hunting and the gathering and the childcare. There were groups of people, the hunters, the gatherers, the water bearers, the childcare. And so as we came together, we started questioning the world around us. Nature. Nature is an amazing thing. Why are those dark clouds hovering over those trees? And why are those trees doing the movement that they are doing? And the animals? They seem to be reacting to the clouds and the trees. I'm a puppeteer, you need to understand that I have a very good imagination. And I can imagine that early tribes decided that the animals were smarter than them. And decided to try and disguise themselves as one of the animals that seemed to be able to talk to nature. They might carve a mask into the trunk of a living tree, hoping to catch the spirit of the tree in the mask. They would put it on their face, and try to communicate with nature. I'm willing to bet they still got wet, but they also noticed that people around them behaved differently when they put that mask on. And so, masks and puppets in my imagination became the first loggivers, the things that the shaman used to teach. So, put a date on it? I can't do that. But say it was with us from the very beginning of civilization, I can say, yes I believe that.”</p>
<p>NARRATION 4:15 - 4:23</p>	<p>When you think about puppetry, the first thing that may come to your mind is the Muppet show. However, puppetry is much more diverse than that. There are different</p>

	<p>categories of puppets, like shadow puppetry, masks made out of animal carcass or skin, and puppets that are placed on the body of the puppeteer. It can also simply be objects put on your fingers and create a story from that. There are so many ways to produce a puppet show, and it is expressed differently in the world.</p> <p>Puppetry, despite the way it is expressed, is also a means of communication. Looking back in history, puppets have been used to transmit knowledge to people who could not read. It has also been a way to explain the inexplicable and try to answer questions about death, life and nature.</p>
<p>Bart Roccoberton, the story of puppetry - interview 4:24 - 4:51</p>	<p>“The puppet has a unique power. We have examples of puppetry being part of funerary rituals in China where the shadow puppet might be used to tell the story of what would happen to a deceased person, as they leave this world. In Europe, we have the example in medieval times, when we, the people, could not read. The priest wanted us to know the holy stories and so puppeteers were brought into the church to perform the holy stories, so that we, the people, would understand them. They performed the nativities so frequently that puppets became known as little maries, marionettes, ok? In England, there’s the example of Mr. Punch criticizing the king. And when the puppeteer was about to be arrested, he said “no, no, it wasn’t me, it was the puppet,” and he got away. So puppets are able to express thoughts that we might not be able to express ourselves.”</p>
<p>NARRATION 4:51 - 5:02</p>	<p>The UConn Puppet Arts program seeks to teach students different puppeteer techniques and develop their imagination continuously. Indeed, puppets, as you may have understood by now, really engage with people’s imagination. And that process starts when the puppet is being</p>

	<p>conceptualized by its creator.</p> <p>The material used to create a puppet can be anything. Fabric, wood, plastic, paint, rocks or metal. There are an infinite number of possibilities concerning the shapes, the materials, the colors and the mechanism. Puppets are often more complex than they appear to be. And building them is a process that takes time and thoughts.</p>
<p>Natural sound + Harley - interview</p> <p>5:02 - 6:10</p>	<p>“So I made a mold of some eyes I’m gonna make for this puppet. So I made the mold, and then I casted it. So what I came out with is this, which has had a bunch of rough edges. It's, like, in the shape of, like, a teardrop. And now I'm sanding down all the edges is to make it smooth. I can paint it and have it look finished.”</p>
<p>NARRATION</p> <p>6:10 - 6:20</p>	<p>This was Harley. She is a student in the puppet arts program. She and other students have their own dedicated space to work on their production. While I was observing the students' work space, I met with another girl. Her name is Lili-rose, and she presented to me her friend, “The invisible man.”</p>
<p>Lili-Rose Mindenhall and the invisible man - interview</p> <p>6:21 - 7:16</p>	<p>“This is the invisible man, he’s a glove puppet, so it’s just one hand and then your fingers are in here. And I made the sweater and the scarf. And the head is just styrofoam covered in lots of paper-mâché and then, with a layer, like cloth for bandages.”</p>
<p>NARRATION</p> <p>7:16 - 7:29</p>	<p>Beyond being a form of art, puppetry is also helpful for adults and children to express their thoughts and emotions. It is commonly used in therapy and children’s hospitals to facilitate communication between adults and kids.</p> <p>And this has been true since the beginning</p>

	of puppetry
<p>Bart Roccoberton, puppet teach us things - interview</p> <p>7:29 - 8:19</p>	<p>“The mask and the puppet were used to teach, to help people understand how to behave with each other. Today we use it in all different situations. Many of our alumni from the puppet arts program here at UConn go on to work in therapy. And work with students who are, or individuals who might be autistic, who find a way of expressing themselves through the use of a puppet or to a puppet. It’s used in medical situations, to help young children understand what they might be going through with an operational procedure, so yes, it is very much part of a learning process for us.”</p>
<p>Jaron Hollander, puppets stands outside of humans - interview</p> <p>8:19 - 8:28</p>	<p>“Puppets can say things, because you’re doing it next to you, that people can’t get away with. Puppets get to stand a little bit outside of humans and observe, and we get to see their observations in ourselves.”</p>
<p>NARRATION</p>	<p>But puppetry can also simply be entertainment. Jaron Hollander, another student from the puppet arts department presented his first show on December 1st. His show is a mix of theater, and different kinds of puppets.</p> <p>During the interviews, both Bart and Jaron insisted on the live performance and how a puppet show can be more unusual than other kinds of shows.</p>
<p>Jaron Hollander, what type of puppet on his show - interview</p> <p>9:16 - 9:23</p>	<p>“The puppetry goes from the shadow puppetry, the entire set is basically a puppet. There’s very like muppet like and puppets, there’s these aliens which I guess are broad and direct manipulation puppets that take multiple performers to animate.”</p>
<p>NARRATION</p> <p>9:23 - 9:42</p>	<p>Puppets are not only a tool for communication. They are also a tool to</p>

	<p>amuse people and offer a different kind of performance than other traditional arts. A puppet show does not have to be fully written. The actors can improvise according to the public energy or what comes to their mind.</p>
<p>Jaron Hollander, the importance of live show - interview + sounds</p> <p>9:42 - 10:02</p>	<p>“It makes it fun, spontaneous, it gives the performer in general the ability to make it fresh and new every time. We can react to the audience that’s there, it’s much more of a live experience. When you go to the theater, the fact that everybody gets their line exactly the same every time, each thing happens exactly as it did last time, but when it doesn’t have to be, it makes it more of an event to go to. To me, it’s why you do, you go see a live show, as opposed to movies which do a lot of special effects and naturalism and all these things way better than you can on stage. For the live show, you gotta do the things that are best about, you know, that medium.”</p>
<p>NARRATION</p> <p>10:02 - 10:08</p>	<p>Because puppetry requires the use of your imagination more than anything else, it is a universal language. You don’t need to understand what others are saying, you just need to imagine what they are trying to tell you. You don’t need to understand the words that are said. The corporal language, the facial expression, the screams or the whispers, they all make your imagination work and they tell you something.</p>
<p>Jaron Hollander, puppetry is an universal language - interview</p> <p>10:09 - 11:24</p>	<p>“We define a language, that is, if you can see, you can understand it. And then to deal with people that don’t speak our language but are now speaking the language, this common language, it’s amazing how different audience is in different countries, react and appreciate, or not.”</p>

<p>NARRATION</p> <p>11:24 - 11:31</p>	<p>Not only puppetry can be a universal language. But it is rare to not find a culture that has puppetry.</p> <p>Do you remember how Bart defined a puppet? Well, some cultures themselves sometimes don't realize that they use puppets.</p> <p>Bart told me about a trip he took in the Caribbean islands one day. One of the islands he visited said they did not have puppetry. But, as often with cultures, he was nicely surprised.</p>
<p>Bart Roccoberton, puppetry in other cultures - interview.</p> <p>11:31 - 11:53</p>	<p>"Years ago, I was preparing to do some work in the Caribbean islands and there was one island where they said "we have no puppetry here." But then I looked at their carnival celebration and I said to the man "oh you do have puppetry here, you express it in different ways that I express my puppets but this is puppetry. Your mask work and the costumes, that's a form of puppetry. You're expressing something beyond the human endeavor everyday." So, I think it comes about that the puppets are used to explain ideas and to celebrate human life."</p>
<p>Maïna + Bart, what makes puppets a unique form of art? - interview</p> <p>11:54 - 12:02</p>	<p>"So, what makes puppets different than any other form of art like literature, or paintings? Because, they also teach us something about life, about many things. So do you think it's because, maybe, humans can project themselves in puppets or is there something else in the art of puppetry?</p> <p>I would say that all arts require the engagement of the imagination. Puppetry's experience of that engagement is immediate. You know, when I look at a painting, I can imagine the story being told by the composition of the painting, I can look at the techniques of the artist and the</p>

	<p>way they express themselves, but when I experience a puppet production, I am being asked as an audience member to actively involve my imagination, now. Because all the puppeteers can do is take an object that looks like something, move it, and make a sound. And, of course the puppeteer is trying to express an idea, they're hopefully, getting the audience to understand the same situation. But the audience works as hard as the puppeteer to create the life of the puppet, ok? The puppeteer is not creating life, he's doing all the things necessary for the imagination of the audience to join. And so, we frequently say that the audience works as hard in a puppet production as the performer, they just don't sweat as much as we do."</p>
<p>NARRATION</p> <p>12:03 - 13:29</p>	<p>Puppetry has so much to offer. At first, it seems like an art that is forgotten. But it's present in our everyday life. It was there when you were a kid. And it's been present in our adult life, with the unrealistic movies we watch. It's there when you tell a story to someone and you use your hands.</p>
<p>INTERVIEWEE</p> <p>13:29 - 13:40</p>	<p>"There is so much about puppetry, we have so many different forms of puppetry. When people ask me to tell you what a puppet is, it's easier to tell you what it is not. Because we could take a bottle of ketchup and tell a story, and that's a puppet. It's hard to say, to express an idea that cannot be presented through puppetry. Delicate things are offered, there are situations, internationally, that are being expressed through puppetry right now. When we see large images in protests on the street, these large iconic images of politicians or situations, it's intended to stir something within us. That is the power of the puppet. It's able to reach into us, and draw our imagination and our thoughts to a place where we create ideas together."</p>

<p>INTERVIEWEE</p> <p>13:40 - 14:36</p>	<p>Beyond the simple use of puppetry, there are artists who dedicate their life to offer people a way to use their imagination. Puppetry is an art that has accompanied us, since the very beginning of our lives.</p> <p>All arts matter. Not only because they are enjoyable and entertaining. They are a way to express voices, promote culture, and fight narrow-mindedness.</p> <p>Today, during my reporting, I learned that puppetry was an amazing form of art, and that it could say so much.</p> <p>And you, what did you learn?</p>