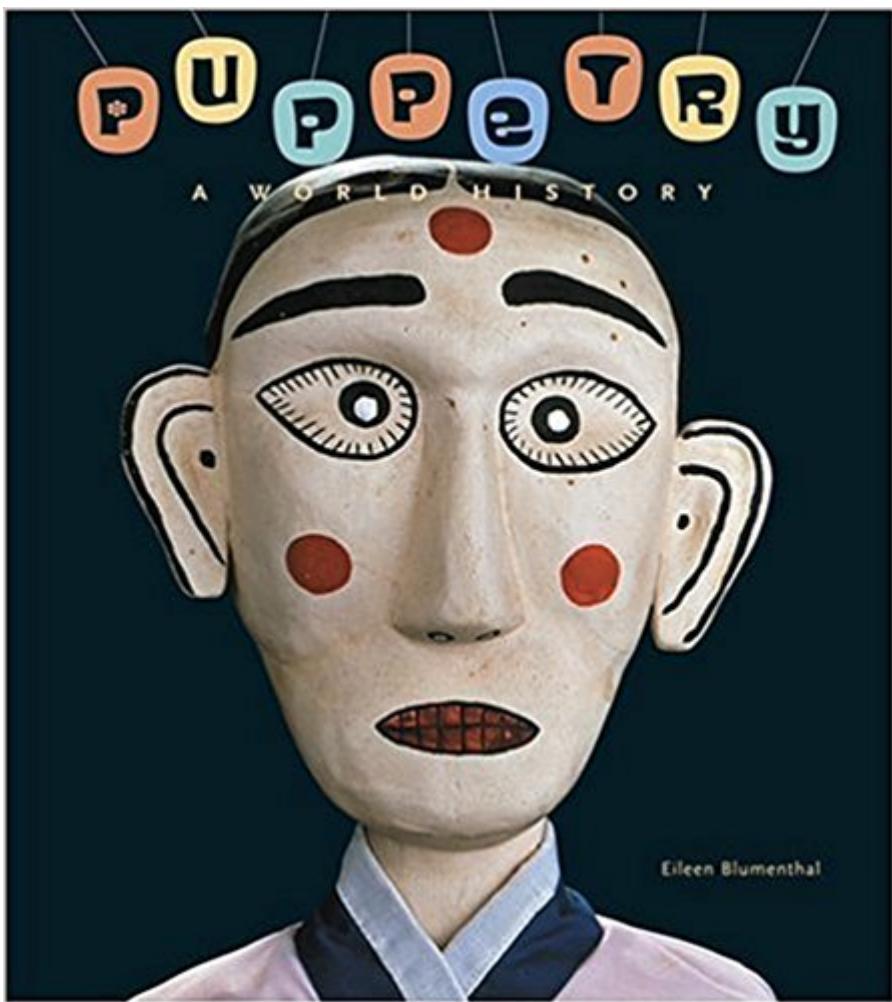


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# Puppetry: A World History



## Synopsis

Puppets have existed in one form or another in nearly every culture throughout human history. From the intriguing shadow puppets of Java to the romantically challenged Miss Piggy, from African carved-wood actors with outsize genitalia to merry maniac Mr. Punch, puppets are incredibly diverse, reflecting the varied cultures, environments, and personalities of their creators. In this lavishly illustrated volume, Eileen Blumenthal provides a comprehensive overview of the history and techniques of puppetry, examining the unique nature and abilities of puppets and illustrating the countless roles they (and their creators) have played in societies across the globe for thousands of years. She draws on examples from an astonishing array of puppeteers, performances, and historical artifacts, providing readers with an in-depth view of this intricate world of constructed actors and the eclectic, and often eccentric, artists who create them. With a lively and accessible text and a wealth of illustrations, this one-of-a kind volume will be treasured by lovers of both visual and theater arts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There is much more to puppetry than Jim Henson's creations or children's puppet shows, as this thoroughly researched book makes abundantly clear. Through her narrative and 350 illustrations, Blumenthal, a professor of theater arts, takes the reader through an exhaustive history of the puppet world, from prehistoric times to Tony-winning Broadway hit Avenue Q. Blumenthal's approach is different than that of previous historians: rather than giving the "where, when and how" and dividing

her work by region or time period, she employs a thematic approach, including, among others, chapters on puppet characters, sex and puppets in politics. This approach pays off, and the photos here range from an African fertility puppet to the iconic Miss Piggy to a disturbing likeness of Margaret Thatcher wielding a meat cleaver. Although some images may border on creepy, the book is beautiful to look at, and the writing is largely accessible. This would be a welcome addition to the libraries of performing arts buffs who want to learn more about a lesser known form. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**\*Starred Review\*** In its long history, puppetry has played many parts. It has taken central roles in shamanic rites and been vilified by medieval churchmen as devilry, romanticized as a repository of folk wisdom, infantilized as a mere adjunct to children's theater, and valorized by visionaries (among them, the great designer-director Edward Gordon Craig) as a superior, potentially more expressive form of theater. Today some puppets, most notably Jim Henson's Muppets, are so popular that they are no longer recognized as mere puppets. Meanwhile, on Broadway, one of the most elaborate and expensive puppet shows ever fabricated, Julie Taymor's multimillion-dollar musical *The Lion King*, has been filling the house since 1997. Though most people don't think of puppetry as a high-toned cousin to Punch and Judy, Blumenthal makes that connection and many more in this rich, exhaustively researched, lavishly illustrated history spanning from prehistory to the present. In carefully polished prose, she chronicles the myriad roles puppets and puppeteers have played, and although writing from a Western European-North American perspective, she doesn't neglect non-Western forms (Javanese shadow puppets, Japanese rod puppets, the Bamana puppets of Mali, etc.). She also explores the ways this ancient art form has been reinvigorated and transformed by advances in the electronic arts. A fine addition to any library's theater arts collection. Jack HelbigCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This book is still intriguing me for as soon as I got it until now almost 30 days later has so much new information that I have never encountered before in its entirety. It is never repetitive and visually entralling something I will treasure for a long time. It took me 4 months to make up my mind - do I need another puppet book - well it was worth it. thank you

I have given this book as a gift to two other puppeteers. It is a wonderful perspective on puppetry in recent history. Great book, one worth having to understand the depth and breadth of the world of puppetry.Judith O'Hare, You and Me Puppets

This book is good, but I thought there would be more bigger, clearer, & colorful photos. There are only a few photos on some of the topics and some only have one. I also thought it would be organized by country & area or time period but it's not.

This book is a wonder. How the author could bring together the quantity of scholarly information and beautiful photographs under one cover is beyond thinking. Even persons who have no interest in the subject will be fascinated and entertained by the variety, ingenuity and artfulness of the puppets.

A wonderful book! Thanks

This is not a history book told in a chronological order. It is a survey with a point of view that jumbles puppeteers and their puppets into themes. It is extremely well researched, but because of the many, many listings of puppeteers and the odd juxtapositions of their work, it might be hard for a reader to get a sense of which puppeteers were actually more influential and successful than others. Some very famous people are not mentioned at all, and some, frankly contemporary, mediocre puppeteers are given great mention. Also, the field of children's theatre which is quite important and which many puppeteers take very seriously, is given short shrift.

The reason I got this book is the cover page pic. It's not what I have thought it will be with lots of fun, weird puppets of the world. I like lots of pics so this is not a great book for me. Overall, I can't say it's bad as I received the book in very good condition even though it is second hand.

This is one of those luscious, lavishly illustrated coffee-table books that doll and puppet aficionados will drool over before shelling out \$65 to obtain a coveted copy. Within the 272 pages, artistic as well as historic photography of puppets dating from antiquity to modern times chronicle the history of this captivating art form. The accompanying text is scholarly, but approachable and easy to read.

The history of this art form is fascinating, really. The author structures her massive effort into chapters detailing the history of puppets, types of puppets, and uses for puppets, including sex acts, illustrations for violent stories, and political commentary, as well as public service (Sesame Street), and ventures into the spirit world. I love her opening statement: "They can be gods, idiots, or worms. They are able to nurture children or terrify adults. They survive indefinitely without normal biological

aging but also can die and come back to life again and again."Recommended reading for anyone interested in puppets, their history and uses in popular culture.

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