

Wanda Bennett

Playing with Puppets: Body Shield Puppetry /Foundations

Workshop Summary

This class is a fantastic introduction to large-scale mask making, movement and performance skills. Using recycled cardboard and newspaper as a base the participants will create body size masks with exaggerated 3D features. These are then covered with PVA soaked muslin to give texture and strength and then painted. The masks/shields are reinforced with bamboo poles which also act as handles to move the mask /shield.

The finished mask is then “played” with and different methods of movement explored. The use of these large shields that cover most of body generally enables even the shyest of students to enjoy movement and drama.

Workshop Outcome

Create large scale masks and learn performance skills through drama and movement games.

Length

1 day to include an inspirational story and time to ‘Play’ with mask, a more basic workshop may be run in a ½ day session. ½ day sessions require that there be two groups so that there are two sessions during the day.

Audience

Age: Primary school students or Adults working with youth.

Level: All levels of ability.

Group: Community groups and Festivals and Events

Max No. Participants: 1 average size primary school class with the assistance of class teacher and 1 helper Or a maximum of 12 students if no teacher is present, for participants 8 yrs and under 1 extra parent or teacher aid ‘helper’ would be appreciated.



Materials List

Participant Requirements:

- Old clothes, great imaginations and willingness to have fun!!

Venue Requirements:

- Large area for students to work and perform in – under cover school play areas are ideal – large tarps to protect the ground when painting and gluing.

Materials Levy:

Approx \$3.50 per students (when working with school groups schools are requested to provide their own paint and brushes)

Levy Includes:

- Cardboard, bamboo, string, tape, eyeballs, muslin cloth and PVA glue and various materials for hair.



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Workshop Outline

Workshops are started with the reading of a story with very vivid and interesting characters e.g. – “Where the Wild Things Are” Maurice Sendak. This provides inspiration for the workshop, and establishes the idea of “making for performance” not just to produce a piece of artwork. It’s also a really fun way to look at books and storytelling.

- 5 minute Movement activity
- Design mask and draw and cut out of cardboard
- Add reinforcement poles
- 10 minute Break and movement activity
- Build up features with news paper and tape
- Cover with PVA
- Stretch damp muslin cloth over mask and cover with another coat of PVA
- Paint



Artist Bio

Wanda Bennett specialises in contemporary fibre weaving and wearable art, creating large-scale sculptures, installations and processional puppets. With ten years’ teaching experience, Wanda is also experienced in street performance and community projects combining visual art, drama, music and film. Wanda has studied, exhibited and worked in both Australia and Europe.