

Wanda Bennett

Playing with Puppets: Shadow Puppetry /Foundations

Workshop Summary

Working in small groups participants will choose a basic story for their shadow performance. This “story” (approx 3 – 5 minutes) may be taken from a book, a poem or may be created from the participants’ imagination; after creating puppets the stories are then narrated or performed to music.

Workshop Outcome

Create puppets and a narrative for a shadow puppetry performance.

Length

½ day to produce basic puppets, 1 day to produce more elaborate puppets and scenery. ½ day sessions require that there be two groups so that there are two sessions during the day.

Audience

Age: Fun for all ages and abilities, the only requirement is scissor skills.

Level: Beginners

Group: Community groups and Festivals and Events

Max No. Participants: All sized groups can be catered for but ideally it works well with 3 to 5 groups of 4 or 5 students, this provides a nice sized audience and means students operating puppets have enough space behind the screen. With very young groups (early primary school) having an extra pair of “big” hands per group is helpful.



Materials List

Participant Requirements:

- Comfy clothing, imagination

Venue Requirements:

- Access to space that can be made dark, and that has some sort of fixing for a very light weight screen to be suspended from
- Access to power points
- OHP projector
- Table and chairs to seat participants
- Tea and coffee facilities if working with Adults
- Ideally the workshop is run in a room or outside space next to the darkened room where the shadow screen is set up. This then gives each group the opportunity to rehearse their ‘show’ before performing in front of the whole group.

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Materials Levy:

\$3 per person

Levy Includes:

- Card, Cane, wire, tape, photocopies, and cellophane. Tutor provides the following equipment – reference books, CD player, musical instruments, shadow screen, scissors, pencils, hole punch

Workshop Outline

- Intro to shadow puppetry, materials used and history.
- Choosing or creating a story. Creation myths / stories are great as they generally use lots of symbolic characters e.g. sun, moon, animals etc.
- The participants then choose key characters and scenery that can be drawn in silhouette to create the puppet. These are then drawn or traced onto black card, cut out, reinforced and then attached to canes in order to operate behind the shadow screen.
- Break
- Groups rehearse and try to introduce sound effects into their performance
- Groups take it in turn to perform and be the audience.



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.