

European puppets // Toni Rumbau - A traveller in the puppet world / Europe - Vol. 2 - Museu da Marioneta collection

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Editorial

This is issue number zero of **Notícias da Marioneta - Puppet News**, where we share information on the **Museu da Marioneta** (Puppet Museum) and on the puppet world both in and outside Portugal. The Art of Puppetry, timeless and inclusive, which we almost all recall as being linked to our childhood but which, in fact, is so much more, as it has existed since time immemorial. In its diversity - it is an art consisting of several arts - it opens an endless potential of relationships and dialogues. In constant renovation, receptive to the emergence of new forms and technical processes, the puppet theatre has become increasingly closer to performance, dance and cinema. Flowing between the continuity of popular, ritual or playful forms, the puppet communicates in a way that is understandable by everybody, regardless of their culture or language. The puppet reveals the mark of whoever imagined it, the talent of whoever produced it, the body, gestures, mimicry of whoever manipulates it, allowing for a multitude of possible expressions. Between the music, the text, oral expression, scenography, puppet theatre addresses a great diversity of topics - individual or collective, religious, profane, political, philosophical or pragmatic, realistic or imaginary and fantastical. Over time, puppets have been a privileged means of conveying human beings' most inner and genuine questions and doubts. Comical, satirical, poetic, dramatic, erudite or popular, conservative or confrontational, playful, pedagogic or therapeutic, the puppet remains a timeless and particularly expressive mediator.

The **Museu da Marioneta** in Lisbon has one of the best puppet collections in Europe. It is also a place in which a programme is developed around the life of puppets, i.e., around the work of different puppeteers and companies. The Museum, and here I speak of museums in general, is currently an inclusive place of culture par excellence: any person, regardless of their academic background, their religious or political options, their age, identity, etc. is welcome in the museum.

We hope that the **Notícias da Marioneta** fulfils Paul Claudel's definition of a Puppet - "Puppet is a word of action" (*La marionnette est une parole qui agit*) and it is a way of communicating and sharing information thus contributing to the heartbeat of the Art of Puppetry. **Welcome to the Museu da Marioneta!**

Ana Paula Rebelo Correia
Director of the Museu da Marioneta (Puppet Museum)



// String Puppet / Austria | 19th century / Museu da Marioneta Collection

EUROPEAN PUPPETS

9 May celebrates Europe Day, which is a good reason to talk about European puppets.

The oldest representations of puppets in Europe that have reached our days are illustrations of illuminated manuscripts, where the puppet theatre is seen as a small castle with its figures. These representations are 500 years old! But puppets no doubt existed long before that. The puppet is a reflection of human life, and in Europe it accompanied cultural identities and characteristics of several European countries. Curiously, every country has its character – the *Robertos* in Portugal, *Dr. Faustus* in Germany, *Punch & Judy* in England, the *Pupi* in Italy, *Polichinelle* in France, etc – and all of them, being different, act with the same self-criticism and humour. European glove, rod or string puppets have enlarged their horizons and today their presence cuts across other arts, such as the performing arts or theatre, interacting with popular or more erudite music, and also accompanying the imaginary horizons of new technologies.



String puppet

Author: Ildeberto Gama
Portugal | 20th century
Museu da Marioneta Collection
MM1717



Rod puppet

Pupi
Author: unknown
Sicily - Italy | 20th century
Museu da Marioneta
Francisco Capelo Collection
MMD1968



Glove puppet

Author: Frieder Simon
Germany | 20th century
Museu da Marioneta Collection
MM4999

Until close to the early 20th century, with differences depending on the country, the art of puppetry had been associated with travelling. With a more symbolic presence in religious events, a more playful presence in non-religious contexts, there were countless puppeteers who travelled Europe and who used their carts as the stages of their performances. We must not forget the religious context of Mediaeval Europe, the pilgrimage routes, and the impact that the images had on a population the majority of whom had no access to reading and writing but had a profound connection to beliefs and superstitions. Puppets represented a part of each person in satire, in political revolt, in daily life. Over the centuries, this process brought together oral and written traditions, different types of music, erudite and popular influences that resulted in a fertile process of assimilation which retained its creative force, currently very present in European puppet theatre. In Italy there was the *Commedia dell'Arte*, a theatre of masks and improvisation which spread throughout the whole of Europe and that would give rise to the Neapolitan mask *Pulcinella*. In Paris, there was *Polichinelle* that quickly became the spokesman for irony and the French taste for excess: it lost its mask and exchanged its white hat for an elegant bicorne hat. *Pulcinella's* white outfit was replaced by a tight-fitting suit, with belt and striped trousers; it grew a hunch and belly, which made it look

physically grotesque. On stage it became part of the Comic Opera where it remained throughout the 17th and 18th centuries until the French Revolution. Personifying the feelings of revolt and the aspirations of the people, a little later emerged the figure of *Guignol*, created by a bankrupt cloth merchant, who became a puppeteer and gained fame at fairs and other itinerant events where, between performances, he would distract the patients whose teeth were being extracted, at the same time being a satirical teller of the current news of the regions he passed through. Punch (England) from the 18th century is very different from the one that we have now. Actually, only after the French Revolution, as a result of the ideological changes and attitudes in Europe, did the glove puppet become more popular and reached its climax on the continent, creating a multiplicity of characters and different forms of popular theatre. With a hooked nose, big smile, rosy cheeks, a hunchback wearing a red hat, the new Punch, child of the revolution, is anarchic, violent and libertine. In Europe, every country or city has a puppet that represents a specific characteristic of its inhabitants: *Robertos*, *Pupi*, *Petruskas*, *Dom Cristóbal*, *Dr. Faustus* are part of the paradigmatic figures of the history of European puppetry. However, today puppets are much more than just puppets and have an indispensable presence on the panorama of contemporary performing arts.

TONI RUMBAU - A TRAVELLER IN THE PUPPET WORLD

In 1976 Toni Rumbau founded the puppet theatre company La Fanfarra, later known as the *Teatro Malic* de Barcelona (1984-2002). As a puppeteer and researcher, he has travelled the world. He is the author of several works on the art of puppetry, as well as several novels and essays. In 2012, he published *Rutas de Polichinela. Títeres y ciudades de Europa* and launched the digital journal [Titeresante](#).



Toni Rumbau / Photo by Albert Fortuny

On the occasion of the book launch on European puppets the **Notícias da Marioneta** spoke to Toni Rumbau and asked him two questions regarding his connections with the world of Puppetry:

We know that your entrance into the World of Puppetry is related to Portugal and to a landmark moment in your life. Can you tell us a little bit of that story?

My entrance into the world of puppetry happened in Portugal where I arrived with Mariona Masgrau in August 1974. We liked Lisbon so much that we decided to stay and live there and Mariona could not return to Spain for political reasons. We got to know the São Lourenço e o Diabo Puppet company and we started to work with them in Cultural Awareness campaigns organised by the MFA (Armed Forces Movement): we were in Viseu and in the Azores. The experience was so intense that it changed the course of our lives. I explain it in my book 'Malic, la Aventura de los Títeres', published in Portuguese by the Puppet Museum.

You have worked on the history of European puppet theatre. How do you see the "state of the art" of puppet theatre in Europe and what future do you think lies ahead for it?

In Europe, the puppet theatre, animated forms and objects, is at the peak of its creativity. I would even say that it is increasingly more present in the field of theatre and contemporary scenic innovation. One of the great trumps of puppet theatre is to be able to combine tradition and avant-gardism. The puppet is a meeting point based on difference: between different audiences vis-à-vis the actors and between different cultures. Its close relationship with the topic of the Double and Otherness is also decisive.



EUROPE Vol. 2 - PUPPET MUSEUM COLLECTION

The 2nd volume of the Puppet Museum Collections dedicated to EUROPE is available in the Museum shop. Written by Toni Rumbau the book takes us on a voyage around several European countries where, among the religious and non-religious, puppets have a continuous presence in artistic expression. It is a book for everyone which presents in short texts the history of the *Commedia Dell'Arte*, *Polichinelle*, Punch & Judy, the shadow theatre during the Ottoman era and the Pupi from Sicily, among others, with a series of photographs of European puppets from the Museum Collection.

EUROPE - 2nd volume of the Puppet Museum Collections

Written by Toni Rumbau
156 pages | 15€ | Museu da Marioneta Edition
Published in portuguese and in english

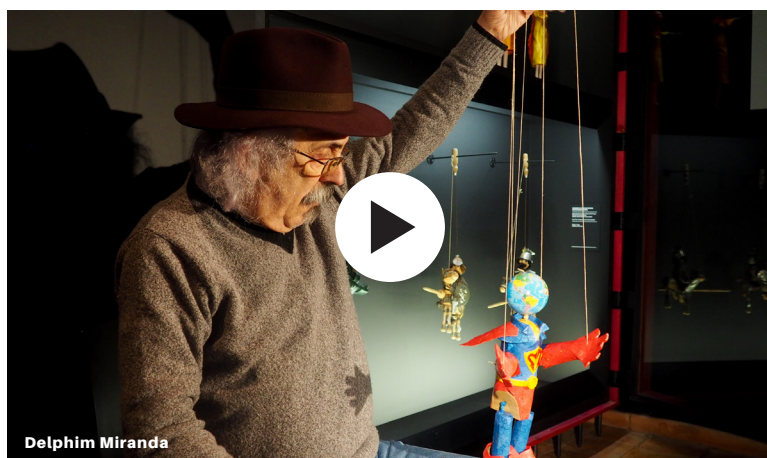
IN THE MUSEUM

The museum, in the relationship it has developed with the public over time, the changes, the interpretation that each period has of the collections, is a constantly revisited and reimagined project. In these times of the pandemic, paradoxically, the museum has also become a link against loneliness, and reached the homes of people who had never visited a museum. This was perhaps the Puppet Museum's most relevant experience during this period. Online workshop took place every week and weekends in which families, schools and different groups participated.



Virtual Hospital

Without leaving the Museum premises, we enter the Estefânia children's hospital (synchronous online sessions) and for one hour everybody becomes an artist, a puppeteer, creator of masks and thinker of imaginary worlds. VIRTUAL HOSPITAL is a monthly project in collaboration with the paediatric services of the hospitals, the purpose of which is to provide hospitalised children with moments of fun and life "outside the hospital" even though they are still in the hospital. With the topic, "Exploring creativity, discovering the world through puppets and tackling emotions", the Puppet Theatre Educational Department organised an ongoing programme for the School of the Dona Estefânia Hospital, where, by way of several online activities and synchronous actions, it promotes creative and learning activities, through which, in shared dynamics, art is the preferred mediator of joy, creativity and relaxation.



Delphim Miranda

Mãos por um fio - Delphim Miranda

And if confinement has taken us away from live audiences it has brought us closer to a time to think of other forms of communication. And that was how the project **Mãos por um fio** (Hands by a string) emerged, a series of two-minute videos giving puppeteers the opportunity to speak, allowing us to hear the stories of their lives and the solutions they found during the pandemic. The first film, shown on 21 March, World Puppetry Day, is about **Delphim Miranda**, graduated in Fine Arts, story-teller and puppeteer for over 40 years.

[See video here \(PT only\)](#)



Isabel Barros



Marcelo Lafontana

The coming films, under preparation, are about **Isabel Barros**, trained in classic and contemporary dance, choreographer, artist, programmer, trainer and artistic director of the Oporto Puppet Theatre and about **Marcelo Lafontana**, researcher, actor, puppeteer and director of the Lafontana Company - Formas Animadas.



THEMATIC VISIT EUROPEAN PUPPETS

29 May - 10h00

The Puppet theatre has puppets from several European countries on permanent display. They provide us with different stories about their existence outside the museum walls.

Information and bookings. PT only



THEMATIC VISIT FROM CONVENT TO MUSEUM

1st Saturday of the month - 10h00

From June we shall have guided tours on the history of the convent from the 17th century (date of its foundation) to the present.

Information and bookings. PT only

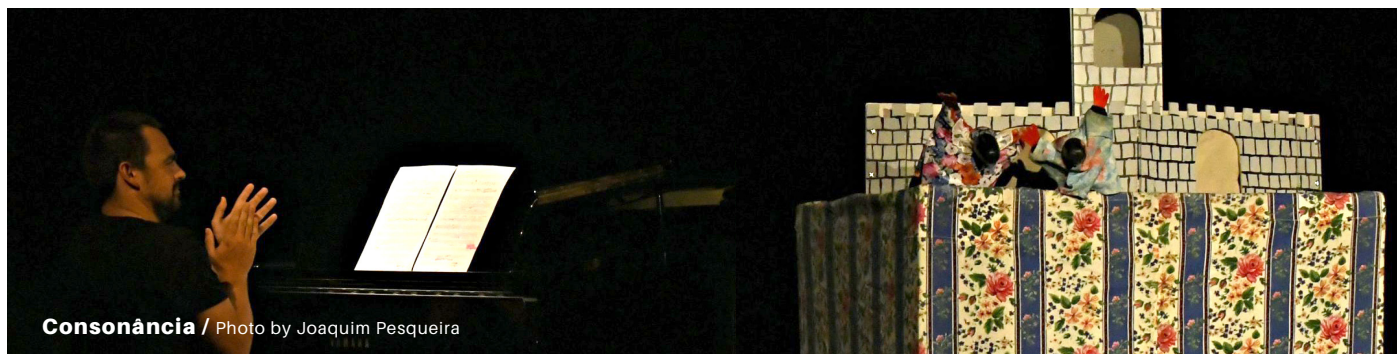
VÍDEO FROM CONVENT TO MUSEUM

On the day of Monuments and Sites we showed the video "The history of the Convento das Bernardas". It is the surprising story of a space in constant metamorphosis, that was a cloistered convent, college, cinema and theatre and home to families of fishermen who fished on the River Tagus. Since 2001, it has housed the Puppet Theatre where you can discover one of the best collections of masks and puppets in Europe.

See video here (PT only)



Convent cloister in the 90s, before rehabilitation works. The space was inhabited by 90 families.



Consonância / Photo by Joaquim Pesqueira

Museum International Day

May 15th to 18th

18 May celebrates the **Museum International Day**, date commemorated since 1977, on the proposal of ICOM (International Council of Museums).

In 2020, during the pandemic, the Puppet Theatre commemorated at the windows, with the help of the *Associação Remédios do Riso (RiR à Janela)*, which took art and laughter to the windows of the neighbourhood of Madragoa.

In 2021, with the topic Recovering and Reimagining Museums, the Puppet Museum will have on the weekend of 15 and 16 and on 18 May, a number of live activities.

The actors from the association **Associação Remédios do Riso**, will once again be present, with interaction with the audience where music, performances, improvised stories (or not) will interact.

The **SA Marionetas** will perform **Consonância** - which is a Dom Roberto play accompanied live by the pianist **Daniel Bernardes**. On stage there will be two arts combined that would not normally meet and that have improvisation and harmony with free movement.

Younger audiences, families and schools are awaited with the greatly sought after peddy papers and forever creative and surprising workshops.

Between the 15th and 18th May, the museum is celebrating!

Consult the programme here

IN THE WORLD OF PUPPETS



DOM ROBERTO THEATRE IN THE NATIONAL LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

In 2015, the Puppet Theatre began the process of including the Dom Roberto Theatre in the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The announcement for public consultation for the purposes of registering Dom Roberto Theatre in the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage has now been published. This is the culmination of a process which began with the creation of the museum and was one of the great projects of the former director, Maria José Machado Santos, in conjunction with the team from the museum and with Portuguese puppeteers. It was a long arduous task, with much research and this point is a particularly significant step for the recognition of the art of puppetry and for the objective of classifying Dom Roberto Theatre. We now await the conclusion of this process with the recognition it deserves.



Jacques Félix
General Secretary
(1980-2000)

Photo UNIMA

UNIMA INTERNATIONAL PUPPETRY ASSOCIATION

Founded in Prague in May 1929, UNIMA managed in a short period of time to become a globally acknowledged and respected international organisation. UNIMA's area of intervention currently covers several areas linked to the art of puppetry, between tradition and contemporaneity. Puppets can be found in several forms of arts and communication (in the theatre, cinema, celebrations, rituals, education and in therapy), constituting a means of union between people and the fight against intolerance and violence.

Karen Smith, with a unique background in the world of puppetry, since April of this year she has become the new president of UNIMA. She studied Javanese Wayang Kulit, has been the commissioner of several exhibitions and participated in UNESCO's Memory of the World Registry on Indonesian Wayang. She collaborated with the Puppet Museum in the edition of the catalogue on Southeast Asian Puppets.



UNIMA Portugal

The Portuguese delegation of UNIMA, created in 1989, also has a new president, elected in January 2021. Ildeberto Gama, one of the founders of UNIMA Portugal, founded the Lisbon Cultural Puppets Association, for which he created puppets, sets and performances. He is represented in the permanent collection of the Puppet Museum with the puppets of «As Guerras de Alecrim e Manjerona», where the actors acted with puppets. Having premiered in the Modern Art Centre of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in 2000, the play was later performed in the National Theatre D. Maria II in 2006.

WEEK OF ARTISTIC EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN THE MUSEUM

The International Week of Artistic Education will take place from 24 to 30 May and will celebrate the power of art and artistic education all over the world, promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. Proclaimed by UNESCO in 2011, the International Week of Artistic Education seeks to raise awareness of the importance of artistic education as a vector of dialogue, inclusion and tolerance in our societies.

To commemorate this event, the museum is promoting a week with several activities (PT only):

26 May - 10h00

Visit to Discover Puppetry

27 May - 14h30

Workshop on building rod puppets

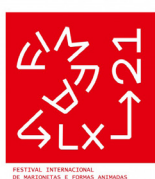
30 May - 10h30

Creative morning - Workshop on rod puppets

[Consult the programme here](#)



FESTIVALS



FIMFA LX21 - International Puppet and Animated Forms Festival

The International Puppet and Animated Forms Festival takes place until 23 May. Companies from several countries present their creations on different stages in the city of Lisbon. At the same time, there are conferences, exhibitions and workshops related to the topic.

[Consult the programme](#)



MANOBRAS Festival

The International Festival of Puppets and Animated Forms, promoted by Artemrede, celebrates its 4th edition. The event promotes artistic projects in unconventional places, disseminating proposals that mobilise the populations of 13 cities in the country and shall carry on until 13 June.

[Consult the programme](#)

BIENAL INTERNACIONAL NACIONAL
DE MARIONETAS DE ÉVORA



BIME - Évora's International Biennial Puppet Festival

15th edition of Évora's International Biennial Puppet Festival will take place between 1 and 6 June only with the participation of national companies due to the Covid-19 pandemic. On the dates of the Biennial, 10 shop windows in Évora's historic centre will present a display of approximately 40 puppets from the Portuguese Collection of the Lisbon Puppet Museum.

[Consult the programme](#)



International Encounter of Puppets - Montemor-o-Novo

It celebrates its 13th edition between 26 May and 6 June. With a busy schedule, it includes theatrical performances with puppets and workshops, exhibitions and concerts, and the presence of major artistic companies from France, Germany, Spain and Portugal.

[Consult the programme](#)



MÓ Festival

Between 1 and 6 June, the MÓ festival will present a number of puppet performances by national and international companies. It will also include training actions for the public in general and will attribute two awards: Public's Award (performance elected by the public) and Dom Roberto Award (performance elected by an international Jury), the latter paying tribute to the Portuguese tradition of Dom Roberto theatre. All performances and training actions are free of charge, held in a public space.

[Consult the programme](#)



FIT - Feria Internacional del Titere de Sevilla

FIT was the first festival organised in Spain on the art of puppetry. Every year the festival takes place in Seville with artists and professionals from all over the world presenting different techniques of the puppet theatre.

[Consult the programme](#)