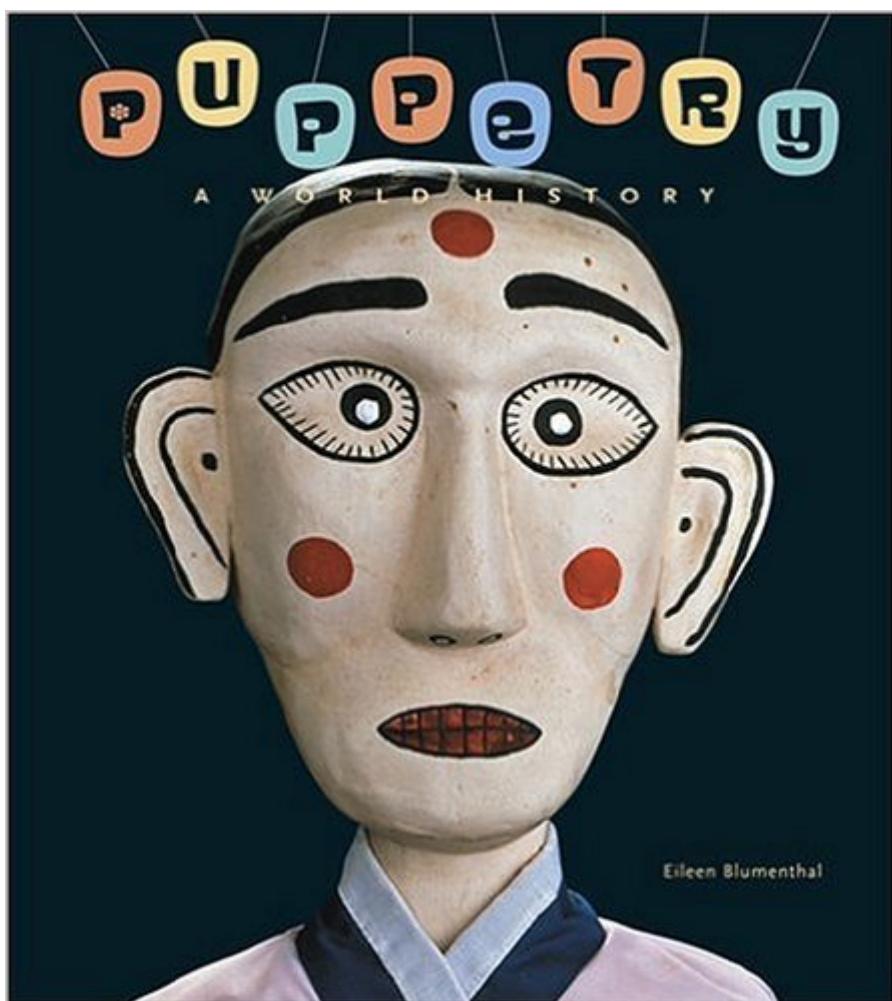


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# Puppetry: A World History



## 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

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.

Ms. Blumenthal says she has done a world history, and a story beginning 30,000 (or so) years ago and going through 2004's best musical on Broadway, 'Avenue Q.' She covers virtually every culture in almost every time with an amazing selection of photographs. She combines this with interviews, stories and descriptions of puppeteers. She describes all of the wide variety of puppet shows brought about by the advent of television, some of which are still on the air. Part of her discussion is on the way that puppets can be used to show/discuss things that wouldn't be allowed in other ways. Politics, for instance is different when a puppet is making the remarks about your leader. And of course sex has long been a staple of puppet shows. She has a picture of the romantically challenged Miss Piggy delivering an illustrated lecture on ideal frog physique. If puppets are your thing, you'll find nothing better than this book.

I have been a professional puppeteer for over 50 years and now concentrate on the History of Puppetst throughout the World from the Mists of Time to the present day. It is one of the best books I have read on the subject, profusely illustrated and well researched in the main, concentrating on the USA, Europe, the Orient and the Eastern bloc. My only criticism is that the coverage of puppetry, apart from Punch, is very slight when mentioning the United Kingdom notably Harry Whanslaw who wrote many books on the subject and was a founder of the British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild, The Lanchester Marionettes, The Field Marionettes who invented the lip synch for the t.v. series 'The Telegoons'. Many other puppets included Sooty still going strong to-day after many years, Muffin the Mule, Gerry Anderson's films- 'Thunderbird', 'Stingray' etc. I should like to see a Part 2. of this book.

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.

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.

This book is a coffee table book---fine construction and photos but a bit unwieldy to read . As the title implies this book is an overview not an in depth study-- a good beginning.

"Puppetry is one of the most beautiful books in print, filled with vivid color photographs on heavy glossy paper that bring to life hundreds of puppets of all types. Blumenthal is a terrifically witty writer and provides volumes of information that is clearly written and very well organized. While this book is a good addition to one's coffee table, it is also good food for the mind.

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.

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