



□ **Puppetry Pastiche, an imitation**

Under the name “Puppetry Pastiche”, we are exhibiting a series of *cardboard table-top theatres* with scenes which are a pastiche – i.e. an imitation of the style of an artist or a period – of illustrations and photographs from the *Dutch Puppetry Museum’s collection*. In addition to the themes which are highlighted in the pastiche theatres, the exhibition also includes illustrations and photographs.

The idea of the Puppetry Pastiche was born when Museum Director *Otto van der Mieden* was able to lay his hands on a consignment of undecorated cardboard cut-out theatres. They were scaled-down versions of a low puppet theatre booth. Otto wondered what he might be able to do with them.

One possibility was to have them all printed in the same design and then sell them in the museum’s gift shop. There had been one printed version included in the package, perhaps that would do as a model? But it was a run-of-the-mill design, and the stagefront had the form of a ridiculous crown, which looked too heavy and was far too ostentatious. The design was not up to the standard of quality which Otto wanted. So he started to play around with the little theatre, to see if he could perhaps use it as a curiosity for the museum. He put a disproportionately large glove puppet – a *clown figure* dating from the early twentieth century – diagonally across the stage front and made the top of the mini puppet theatre even more absurd by having a modern *Jan Klaassen puppet* (the principal figure of Dutch folk puppet theatre) sticking out.

□ **Unreal**

The fact that it was so unreal, surreal almost – this combination of such a plain, primitively printed theatre with a fragile puppet from the twentieth century in juxtaposition to a twenty-first century plastic *Jan Klaassen* (Mr Punch) – had an electrifying effect. He would use this unreality as the basis on which to use the mini theatres. He would totally ignore the basic form of the puppet theatres and have them all decorated in a different way. At the back of his mind he already knew which themes he would want to illustrate with his little gem theatres. Various puppetry traditions would be illustrated, among them *Chinese shadow puppets*, *masquerade puppets* from *Mali*, and *Neapolitan puppet theatre* featuring *Pulcinella*. This is exactly right for the Museum, as it is always looking for interesting ways to demonstrate to its visitors the richness and variety of folk and mainstream puppet theatre and the associated arts. Vintage and contemporary illustrations, puppets, artefacts and photographs from the collection could all serve as the basis for the design of one of the pastiche theatres.

□ **It’s all an illusion**

And so the idea of the Puppetry Pastiche was born. Discussions were then held with *Hetty Paërl*, who would design and create many of the examples. Otto van der Mieden also became inspired, and he set to work as well. The trick would be to imitate a two-dimensional illustration in a three-dimensional theatre. It was decided that the decoration would run through the various walls and panels, the frieze (the upper part of the mini theatre), and the scenery and wings. The reproduction of the illustrations would even go so far as to incorporate any figures of people who were visible in the original picture – be they audience or puppeteers – into the walls or the scenery of the pastiche theatre as well. This was a true challenge to the inventiveness of the designers. After a little while, the designers felt the need to make more use of the space on the stages of the mini theatres, for instance by having expressive figures emanating from the walls as well. This gives the illusion that these figures are stepping into reality; theatre performance of all kinds relies on the indistinct boundary between illusion and reality.

□ **Thirty table-top theatres**

Description of the themes covered in and by the painted and lined cardboard Puppetry Pastiche Theatres.

1. † A ridiculous theatre: a glove puppet in the puppet booth.
2. ✧ Paper theatre: miniature theatre in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
3. ✧ Chinese shadow puppets: the “ombres chinoises”.
4. ✧ Javanese Wayang puppets: shadow and rod puppets.
 5. ✧ Don Quixote and Master Pedro: the knight and the puppeteer.
 6. ✧ Pulcinella’s house: “La casa di Pulcinella”.
 7. ✧ Vietnamese water marionettes: floating puppets.
 8. ✧ Pinocchio: the puppet that turned into a boy.
 9. ✧ Puppet theatre from Mali: Sigi, the buffalo.
10. † Puppets on the shelf: the “marionnettes à la planchette” or paddle puppets.
11. † Couch potatoes: show’s over, folks.
12. † All the best, wish you were here: postage stamps around the world.
13. † Traditional Dutch puppetry theatre scenes: slapstick with puppets, props and a slide show.
14. † A voluptuous Katrijn (Judy): eroticism in the puppet booth.
15. ✧ Typical rod marionettes from Antwerp: the “Poesjenellen”.
16. † Just pull my strings: Jumping Jacks down through the years.
17. † Pierrot and the death march: the “Marche Funèbre”.
18. ✧ The life of Jan Klaassen: the birth of an old-Dutch puppetry character.
19. † An open book: international literature on the subject of folk and mainstream puppet theatre.
20. † Yummy treats in the puppet booth: farcical figures who enjoy a drink and a tasty snack.
21. † Illusions in and around a table-top theatre: an explanatory overview of the thirty theatres.
22. † Try it out for yourself: we offer our visitors the chance to become acquainted with the various puppetry techniques with the aid of playthings.
23. ✧ Guignol and his dearest Madelon: folk puppet theatre from the French city of Lyon.
24. † Bunraku puppet on a Kakemono: Japanese puppetry.
25. † King Ubu and his thugs: a satire by Alfred Jarry.
26. † Firework Theatre: amusement for a winter’s evening.
27. ✧ Karaghiozis: Greek shadow puppets.
28. † Kasperl, club, crocodile: click on www.poppenspelmuseum.nl.
29. ✧ Hänneschen: Cologne’s typical marionette theatre, yesterday and today.
30. † Keeping the puppets on their toes: a musical soirée.
31. ✧ Pavakathakali: traditional puppet theatre from the Indian federal state of Kerala.
32. † Dupák and Doepak: a Slovakian trick puppet and a Dutch educational publication about folk and mainstream puppet theatre.
33. ✧ Clown with Large Ears (Paul Klee).
34. † Show (PowerPoint presentation).

† Design: Otto van der Mieden. ✧ Design: Hetty Paërl.

□ **Designs**

In creating their designs, Hetty Paërl and Otto van der Mieden have applied quite different techniques. In each of her theatres, Hetty has reproduced an illustration, or a combination of illustrations, using acrylics. She has made the expressive figures from papier-mâché or cardboard. Otto, on the other hand, has used digital technology to enlarge prints to the required size, then printed them and used the prints to create a collage in the theatres.

□ Visitor information

Each of the Pastiche Theatres is accompanied by a short explanatory text and illustrations on a similar theme. The various themes are also described in our *Puppetry Museum Pamphlets*. The information is available in Dutch and in German. In addition a selection of postcards, posters, Puppetry board games is available, along with additional printed matter created especially for this exhibition.

A few sound clips and a slide show with pictures of traditional puppetry theatre scenes help to bring to exhibition to life. The exhibition is aimed at both children and adults.



Present and past

The Pastiche Theatres in the exhibition – along with the other illustrations – give an impression of the enormous diversity of the centuries old art of puppetry. A number of the theatres are based on the work of visual artists, some of them contemporary, who allude to traditional puppet booths and theatre in their own creations.

The Pastiche Theatres incorporate twentieth and twenty-first century illustrations which are in some way connected with puppet theatre. The wide variety of theatres and artefacts turns the exhibition into a succession of novel and interesting experiences.

Not only will it provide insight into the varied nature of traditional folk puppet theatre, but it will also provide a bridging link between those stereotypical forms of expression and their counterparts in the art and theatre of today. You could say that the objects in the exhibition range between various extremes.

□ Illustration

The illustration used in the Puppetry Museum Pamphlet is taken from the *Jan Klaassen* (Punch and Judy) happy families card game which was first produced in the beginning of the twentieth century. Just as we were inspired by other artists when designing our Puppetry Pastiche theatres, the unknown artist who illustrated the card game was also clearly inspired by another, borrowing ideas from woodcuts made by *Carl Reinhardt* (1818-1877).

□ Poppenspe(e)lmuseum gift shop

Would you like to find out more about folk puppet theatre? Then browse through the seven thousand or so books in the *Puppetry Museum Library*, or take a look at the Dutch language *Puppet Theatre ABC* on our website, www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl.

The *Museum's gift shop* has documentation and a range of postcards and posters on puppetry and associated subjects.

- *Illustration*: card number 14 from the 'Jan Klaassen' happy families game (spelled with one 's' here). Dutch card game (1912-1920). Supplement I, II, III and IV: overview Puppetry Pastiche Theatres.

Poppenspe(e)lmuseum®

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