



Travelling exhibition: Pulcinella in illustrations and puppets

Vorchten, on a good day to visit a museum

Dear Sir or Madam,

It is my pleasure to enclose information about the travelling exhibition entitled *Pulcinella in illustrations and puppets*: a fascinating impression of a centuries old tradition in folk puppet theatre. This exhibition has been created by the Dutch Poppenspe(e)lmuseum (Puppetry Museum) in Vorchten, and is suitable for young and old.

The Italian Pulcinella

Pulcinella is one of the main clown characters from the Italian Commedia dell'Arte. Pulcinella is the progenitor of the French Polichinelle, the English Mr Punch, the Dutch Jan Klaassen and many other characters. But while his descendants dress in colourful attire, Pulcinella himself always appears in a white costume with a tall hat. He also wears a black half-mask.

Pulcinella: both male and female

One of the most noticeable characteristics of the Neapolitan Pulcinella is that it is both male and female at the same time. Pulcinella is hermaphrodite. Some Pulcinella figurines, photos and prints show a carnivalesque male figure, sitting on the back of an old crone in such a way that they become one. His upper body is dressed as Pulcinella: a white body stocking and a white hat, with his face hidden by a black half-mask. The upper body of the woman is, in fact, a puppet. Pulcinella's dangling legs are nothing other than stuffed trouser legs with a pair of shoes attached to them. In 'The devil's egg' – a play for hand puppets – Pulcinella is seduced by a very nice hen. Poor animal: Pulcinella desires her, not with his heart but with his stomach. He kills the hen, roasts it and eats it up. His stomach swells up and he gets terrible cramp. This turns out to be labour pains, because shortly afterwards Pulcinella lays an egg. He incubates it. When the shell breaks, lots of little Pulcinellinos hatch out


Table-top theatres, puppets, figurines, trinkets, photographs, films, masks and books

The exhibition consists a video recording of a Neapolitan puppet theatre show, two cardboard table-top theatres, vintage and contemporary illustrations, a number of puppets and trinkets, figurines, posters, illustrations, masks, books, photographs and other illustrations from the Museum's international collection. Background information about the design and content of the exhibition is available in four languages: Dutch, German, French and English.

We cannot recommend this informative, educational, attractive and highly unusual exhibition highly enough. The enclosed documentation provides further background on the project.

If you would like to find out even more about our themed exhibitions and about (folk) puppet theatre, visit our four-language website at www.poppenspelmuseum.nl. You are, of course, more than welcome to visit our Museum in Vorchten. Please feel free to make an appointment. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

With kind regards, yours sincerely,


Otto J.E. van der Mieden
Director-Curator

Enclosures, documentation and pictures on Pulcinella: I, II, III, IV.

Poppenspe(e)lmuseum: the Puppetry Museum is open on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. Reservation is recommended. Other opening days and times can be arranged for group visits (min. 10 persons) on request.


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Exhibition: Pulcinella in illustrations and puppets I



Exhibition: Pulcinella in illustrations and puppets II



Exhibition: Pulcinella in illustrations and puppets III



Exhibition: Pulcinella in illustrations and puppets IV



Pictures, photos, illustrations, objects: Lello Esposito, Hetty Paërl, Ernest Pignon-Ernest, Elsje Zwart and Otto van der Mieden. All illustrations from the Puppetry Museum © Collection, The Netherlands. Concept/text: Otto van der Mieden © (2015). Poppenspe(e)lmuseum/Puppetry Museum logo, illustration/concept: Ad Swier ©, Elsje Zwart © and OvdM ©. Digital publication on www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl: click on the green words for hyperlinks. See also: <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/Informationpuppetrymuseum.pdf> and <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/Pulcinellapressrelease.pdf>.

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