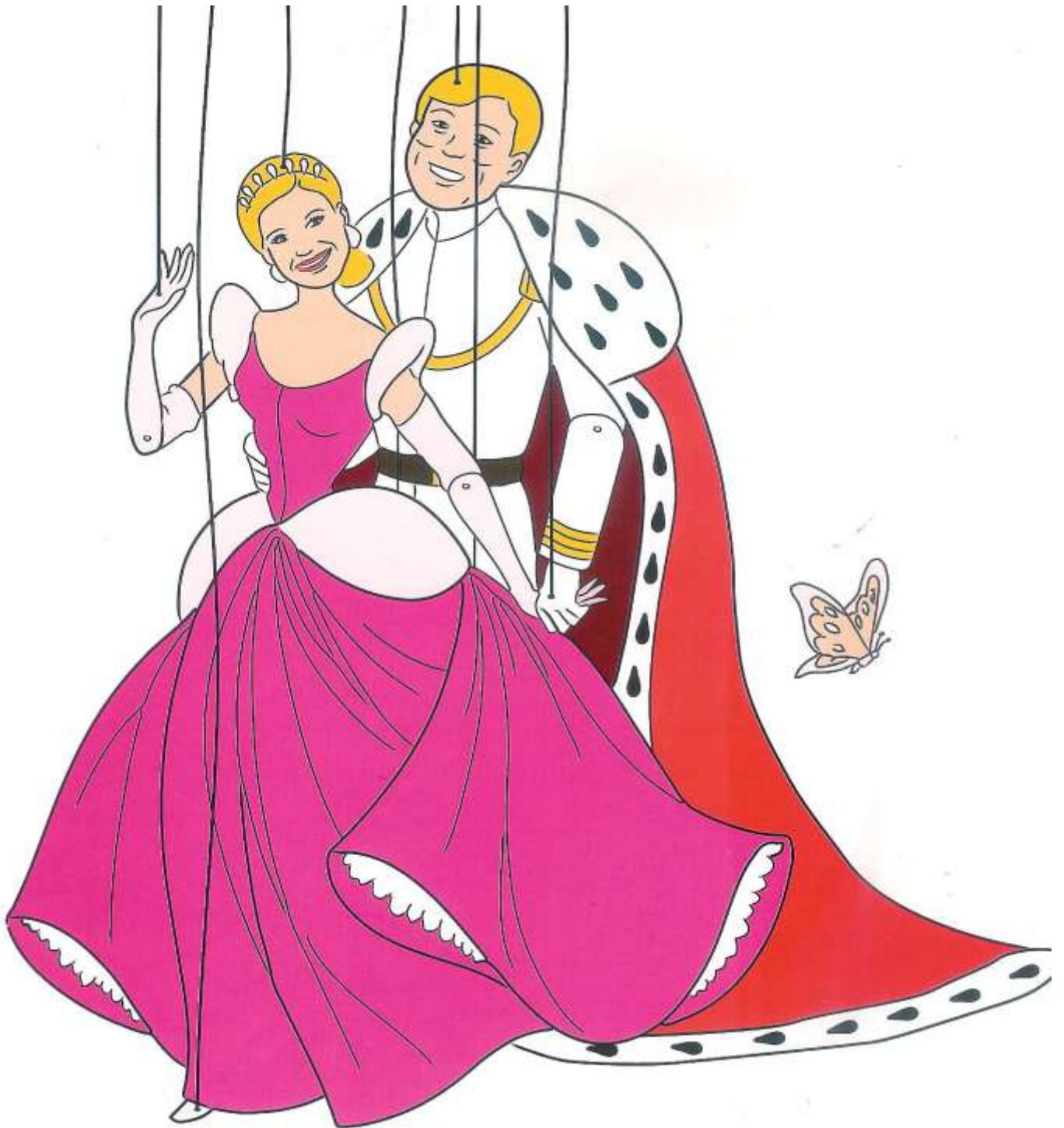


Puppetry in the Netherlands



Articles about puppetry in the Netherlands for WEPA

The World Encyclopedia of Puppetry Arts

WEPA: World Encyclopedia of Puppetry Arts

UNIMA: Union Internationale de la Marionnette

The organization's mission is to link puppeteers nationally and internationally, publish information on and for the field, offer support and technical assistance for professional puppeteers through seminars, conferences, and symposia; stimulate the general public's interest in the art of puppetry; and promote the visibility of puppeteers all over the world. Union Internationale de la Marionnette is an organization in which all those people in the world concerned with the Art of the Puppet Theatre associate voluntarily in order to serve through their art the idea of peace and of mutual understanding without distinction as to race, political ideas or religion.

UNIMA was formed in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1929 by an enthusiastic group of representatives from 14 countries. After a hiatus during and after World War II, UNIMA was re-activated and in 1957 a new constitution was drafted. UNIMA was adopted as a member of the International Theatre Institute in 1959, making it a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

With over 40 National Centers and representatives from more than 40 countries, the Council of UNIMA has, since 1972, been established with more than 60 members and an 18 member executive committee which meets every year. The Council meets every four years at each UNIMA World Congress.

See: <http://www.unima.org/>

Poppenspe(e)lmuseum/Puppetry Museum

The museum was formed in Vorchten, the Netherlands, in 1984 by puppeteer Otto van der Mieden (The Hague, 1945), director-curator of the Poppenspe(e)lmuseum.

The Puppetry Museum will keep showing a selection from its own collection. In doing so, it will present various genres next to and mixed with each other: puppets and figures, shadow puppet and paper theatre, masks and Jumping Jacks, contemporary photography, curious and unusual objects, films and prints, and stars from the international world of puppet theatre. The presentation as such is entirely in line with the way in which the museum has composed its collection over the years: there is no chronological storyline. The themed exhibitions represent a striking play of resemblance and contrast, tradition and innovation, provocation and tranquillity.

See: <http://www.poppenspelmuseum.nl/>,

<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/index.html>,

<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/Wayang.aspx>,

<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/wepa.pdf>,

<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/wayangdatabasepopmus.pdf> and

<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/PosterXVd.pdf> (Puppetry Museum 1984-2014: alive and kicking).

Digital publication on www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl: click on the green words for hyperlinks.



Poppenspe(e)lmuseum Puppetry Museum © (ANBI)

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This document ‘Articles about puppetry in the Netherlands for WEPA/UNIMA’ on the internet,
see: <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/Wepa.pdf>.
See also: ‘Directories of collections and museums in the Netherlands’/
<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/Pamphlet138d.pdf>.

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Concept: Otto van der Mieden (2013-2015).

PUPPETRY IN THE NETHERLANDS

The first traces of puppetry in the Netherlands can be found in a cashbook dated 1363, by a 'Count of Blois', then living in Dordrecht under the name of Jean de Châtillon. He mentions a *dockenspul* (puppet show) that he had attended.

By the 16th century, the Netherlands (i.e. the geopolitical entity designated by that name) consisted of seven Protestant northern provinces (Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelderland, Overijssel, Friesland and Groningen), which were unified in 1579 as the Union of Utrecht, and were distinct from the Catholic provinces still under allegiance to Spanish rule. A strict form of Calvinism was practised in the Union, and all forms of theatre were banned there during this period, except in Amsterdam, where traders would provide entertainment for their foreign partners, and in The Hague, where foreign embassies required entertaining distractions.

For several centuries puppeteers, both Dutch and foreign, were touring artists, performing in public places and fairs, especially in Amsterdam. There were no permanent theatres at the time, unlike further south in Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, and Liège.

Puppetry in the Netherlands in the 17th to the end of the 19th Centuries

In the 17th century there appeared the story of Jan Klaassen, a trumpeter in the army of Prince William II (1652) who became a puppeteer for a living. He gave his name to the character of Jan Klaassen (the Dutch Mr Punch), who emerged as a popular character in Dutch puppetry.

During the 17th century and the two centuries that followed, puppetry was played in the streets where showmen performed their puppet shows, similar in many ways to the British Punch and Judy, in which the protagonists were called Jan Klaassen and Katrijn. Occasionally, more 'refined' puppet shows would be performed 'on order' in the richer homes. Dutch puppeteers, like those of other nations, toured abroad: some followed the Stadtholder (the de facto hereditary head of state) William III of Orange when he became King of England in 1689, while others worked at the Leipzig Fair throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

As elsewhere in the 19th century, puppeteer dynasties were formed in the Netherlands, such as the Hofmans in Utrecht and the Remmerts in Rotterdam. In Amsterdam, Janus Cabalt, a puppeteer and descendant from the Italian Cabalzi, had his puppet booth in the town centre, on the Dam, in front of the royal palace; (his grandson, Daan Kersbergen, was an active puppeteer into the 20th century). At the fairs, a theatre of the Three Crowns, probably from Cologne, gave performances under its own tent. Touring puppeteers from abroad performed in the Netherlands, and many Dutch puppeteers played abroad.

Dutch Puppetry in the 20th Century

After World War I, the spread of the Art Deco style in the 1920s favoured the introduction of 'artistic' puppetry, first in Holland, then in the rest of the Netherlands. Paul Brann and his Münchner Künstler theatre, Max Jacob and his Hohnsteiner often visited Holland during this period. Dutch puppeteers went to Salzburg to attend the puppet operas at the Salzburger Marionettentheater (Salzburg Marionette Theatre) and to Vienna to see the Jugendstil puppet universe created by Richard Teschner.

Some of the Dutch puppeteers of this period, including Henry Nolles, Eric Kellenbach, Jacq Hazelaar, were teachers, and played for child audiences. They have, however, left little trace and, confused with street showmen, they were little appreciated at the time.

Beginning in the 1920s, permanent puppet theatres began to be established, with the majority of these theatres specializing in children's programmes. In 1923 Bert Brugman founded De Olijftack (The Olive Branch); his granddaughter Mariska Brugman still continues the tradition in the Nederlands Marionetten Theater in Amsterdam. Guido van Deth opened his theatre in 1936, which reopened in 1946 in The Hague. After his death in 1969, the theatre was led by Felicia van Deth until 2000. Cia van Boort, the first woman to practise the profession of puppeteer in the Netherlands (glove puppetry), began performing in 1938 in Voorschoten, later moving to Oisterwijk where she opened a theatre in 1951, and another theatre in 1954.

Other puppeteers marking this period include Harry van Tussenbroek, Frans ter Gast, and Pieter van Gelder and their shadow theatres, Jan Nelissen, virtuoso glove puppeteer, Herman Hoebe, Henk Zoutendijk, and Wim Meilink who wrote the history of Jan Klaassen, and whose name is given to the Wim Meilink Prize awarded to outstanding puppeteers.

After World War II

After the war the discipline flourished. Many theatres opened and many puppeteers worked together, such as Don and Ly Vermeire, Jan Nelissen, Feike Boschma, Guido and Felicia van Deth, Rico Bulthuis, and Frank Kooman. In 2010 Koomans Poppentheater celebrated 50 years in The Hague; his son, Arjan Kooman, currently (2013) continues the tradition.

In 1954 the puppeteers focused on De Kring van Nederlandse Poppenspelers. This was the predecessor of the Nederlandse Vereniging van Poppenspelers (Nederlandse vereniging voor het poppenspel, NVP – Netherlands Puppetry Association). As the NVP was not a union or a special interest group, in 1971 a number of professional puppeteers established an Association of Professional Puppeteers, renamed the Association of Professional Groups of Dutch Puppeteers (VGNB) in 1981. It ceased to exist in 1994. In 1980 the NVP became the centre of the Dutch branch of UNIMA (NVP-UNIMA). The Association published a magazine, initially called *Wij poppenspelers* (We, the Puppeteers), later *Poppenpodium* and, since 2003, *WP* (*Wereld van het poppenspel*, The World of Puppetry).

Professional growth continued during the post-World War II period. Between 1965 and 1975 the Kookurgroep, with Henk Boerwinkel (Figurentheater Triangel), Damiet van Dalsum, Otto van der Mieden (Poppentejater Otto van der Mieden), Jan de Noord and Camilla Koevoets, encouraged a break from tradition. Some puppeteers performed without a booth for direct communication with the public. The booth (*castelet*) itself became part of the whole scenographic design. These groundbreaking puppeteers performed in larger venues, with several players performing together. These are also the formative years of Studio Hinderik, founded in 1967 by Hinderik de Groot. His evocative scenery inspired other companies, such as Warner en Consorten, Speeltheater Holland, and Dogtroep.

From 1970 to 1980 there was significant collaboration between theatre, music and dance companies leading to larger scope for puppet theatre presentations, including solo performers such as Koos Wieman (1979) and Poppentheater Dibbes (Trudy Kuyper, 1977), Stuffed Puppet Theatre (Neville Tranter, 1978), Jozef van den Berg, Pieke Dassen, Otto van der Mieden (1970), Jan de Noord, Pantijn (Wim Kerkhove, 1976 – Dam Square Puppet Show/Amsterdam) and Studio Peer (Fred Delfgaauw, 1981). Important companies that performed during this period include: Speeltheater Holland (Onny Huisink and Saskia Janse, 1976), Theater Terra (1978), Lucas Goudzwaard and Aad-Jan Coumou (Cartouche, 2001) and TAMTAM objektentheater (Gerard Schiphorst and Marije van der Sande, 1979). Permanent puppetry-producing theatres were: Amsterdams Marionetten Theater (Hendrik Bonheur), Phoenix Papieren Theater (Ab Vissers), and Grimms Papieren Theater (Frits Grimmelikhuisen). There was also permanent street puppet theatre in Rotterdam, including Koos Wieman, Wim Noordergraaf, and John de Winter. Hans Schoen began his career in puppetry in 1968 with Popstudio Hinderik, and started his own performances in 1983.

The Dutch Puppetry Institute was founded in 1988, and in 1992 it was absorbed into the Theatre Institute Netherlands (TIN), the knowledge and information centre for professional theatre in the country. Eliane Attinger became an important leader in the field, especially in organizing training courses, historical and thematic dialogues, and the project, 'On the Road for Dutch Puppetry'.

New theatres that emerged during the late 1980s and 90s include Theater Gnaffel (Elout Hol, 1987), Firma Rieks Swarte (1992), 't Magisch theatertje (Charlotte Puijk, 1996), and Hotel Modern (Pauline Kalker, Herman Helle and Arlène Hoornweg, 1997).

Training

Since the 1980s, more formal training options in the Netherlands included the following. From 1989 to 1992 the Object Theatre provided professional training in puppetry and visual education at the Theatre School in Amsterdam. On occasion, special interest groups, festivals, and the TIN organized workshops for professionals. The International Puppet Festival in Dordrecht has traditionally organized master classes each year. In 1993 this encompassed the School of the Arts in Utrecht – Poppen- en maskerspel, and in 2011 a course in Puppet Animation. Teachers included Rieks Swarte, Onny Huisink, Neville Tranter, Elout Hol, Max Verstappen, and Bert Plagman.

From 1998 to 2009 training options included De Proeve, a training and meeting place for puppet and object theatre, led by Marla Kleine. The Proeve build bridges to other disciplines including theatre, music, mime, dance, tap dance, art and literature, with the older generation of puppet makers passing their knowledge on to younger creators, such as Duda Paiva, Ulrike Quade, Marlyn Coetsier and Meike van den Akker, Jogchem Jalink, Eveline Agema, and Jochen Lange.

The year 2009 saw the emergence of Feikes Huis, a production house under the artistic direction of Eliane Attinger, where young theatre and arts college graduates create object and puppet theatre performances. The NVP-UNIMA organizes a one-year course in basic puppetry and a one-year follow-up course, as well as occasional workshops and master classes under the artistic direction of Peter Vrijman and teachers Trudy Kuyper, Marlyn Coetsier, Servaes Nelissen, Max Verstappen, and Neville Tranter. Also in 2009 Wim Kerkhove founded the Jan Klaassen Academie. In 2012 his students started their Jan Klaassen shows on the Dam, in Amsterdam. Merel van Gaalen and Trudy Kuyper delivered puppet training for primary school teachers. For vocational training, however, Dutch puppeteers need to travel abroad. In 2015 started 'Het Haags Theaterhuis' (The Hague) the 'Opleiding Poppen- & Objecttheater' (professional training in puppetry and visual education).

Dutch Puppetry in the 21st Century and Newsletters (documentation)

Puppet theatre in the Netherlands in the new century continued to develop, enjoying a place of high regard in the Dutch theatre system, education, media and leisure industries. Much of the demand for youth theatre consists of puppet and object theatre.

There are currently (2013) around 250 puppet groups in the country, of which approximately ten percent are professional. The NVP-UNIMA has over 300 members. The association's goals are professional development and exchange of information; it publishes a bimonthly magazine, *WP – De Wereld van het Poppenspel* (The World of Puppetry) and is developing an all-round informative website and a monthly Newsletter. The UNIMA 2010 Councillors' Meeting/Extraordinary Congress was held in Dordrecht.

Through the Puppetry Museum Newsletters (in Dutch and English) with tips and topical information about the collection, presentations, exhibitions, publications and activities and the so-called Puppetry Museum Pamphlets (*Poppenspe(e)lmuseumpamfletten*), the Poppenspe(e)lmuseum (Puppetry Museum) announce matters of interest relating to folk and mainstream puppet theatre. Moreover, these pamphlets sometimes also inform visitors about themed exhibitions and activities in the museum. Some of the Dutch pamphlets are also published in French, German and English and are available in PDF format. *Doepak* (Dupák) is the Dutch-language Puppetry Museum Newsletter (*Poppenspe(e)lmuseumkruimelkrant*), an educational, multicoloured leaflet full of interesting facts, things to do, and illustrations of puppet theatre. The Puppetry Museum Scribblings (*Kruimelkrantkrabbels*) are an added extra, which often invite readers to explore the 'Try it yourself?' activity. Some of the Dutch *Kruimelkrantkrabbels* are also published in French, German and English and are also available in PDF format. It is also possible to subscribe to *Doepak*-by-post.

The *Popellum* magazine for traditional folk puppet theatre continues to appear, although irregularly.

Eight puppet companies currently work with structural government subsidies, together giving over 600 performances that reach around 180,000 spectators. There are companies that receive project grants, and venues that receive performance grants, as well as schools that devote a portion of their art and culture budget to puppetry. By 2013, many puppeteers own their own businesses.

Kunstfactor and Cultuurnetwerk Nederland, the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Education and the Amateur Arts (LKCA), support the amateur circuit. There are currently four international puppetry festivals: in Amsterdam, Meppel, Maastricht, and Harderwijk (paper toy theatre); as well as many other national festivals. In 2009 the Theatre Institute Netherlands recorded 85 premieres of professional puppetry; in 2010 it opened a website about the old master, Feike Boschma.

Many puppeteers create productions especially for children (and adults), such as Jeroen Boerwinkel (Theater van de Droom) – son of Henk and Ans Boerwinkel, Damiet van Dalsum, Camilla Koevoets (Poppentheater Toermalijn), Frank Kooman (Kooman's Poppentheater), Trudy Kuyper (Poppentheater Dibbes), Otto van der Mieden and Hans Schoen. Their shows are performed in about 150 venues around the country, including more than thirty permanent puppet theatres, many schools and street and other festivals. There is a youth theatre specializing in puppetry in Amstelveen, founded in 1966 by Jan Nelissen. Some puppeteers and companies cater for adult audiences and may also play abroad, such as Ulrike Quade, Duda Paiva, 't Magisch Theatertje (Charlotte en Ananda Puyk), Stuffed Puppet Theatre (Neville Tranter), Electric Circus, Hotel Modern, Speeltheater Holland, Caspar Rapak (Peter Zegveld), TAMTAM objektentheater, Theater Terra, Theater Espace (Judith Nab), Theatergroep Winterberg and Lejo.

Prizes

Dutch puppeteers have acquired a significant reputation beyond the Netherlands, such as Feike Boschma, Henk Boerwinkel and Neville Tranter, Dutch puppetry is internationally respected. Its strong visual nature makes it an ideal export item.

The vitality of the discipline is demonstrated by a number of prestigious prizes. The Hans Snoek Prize for Best Youth Theatre Production was awarded to Camilla Koevoets (1978), Jozef van den Berg (1980), Lucas Goudzwaard (1984), Studio Peer (1986), Theo Terra (1988). Eric Steegstra twice won a Gouden Kalf (the award of the Netherlands Film Festival) for his puppet films *Metro* and *Rif*. In 2011 *Hotel Modern* won the VSCD Mime Prize.

The performance *Adiós* by Speeltheater Holland and Het Houten Huis won the Gouden Krekel prize for the Best Youth Theatre Production, and Servaes Nelissen won the prize for the most impressive Stage Youth Theatre Performance.

Museums

By 2013, the collections of puppetry and visual theatre had spread across several locations: the Amsterdam Museum, the Rotterdam Museum (closed at the end of 2012) – collection at the Stichting Poppenspelcollecties Dordrecht, the Poppenspe(e)lmuseum of Otto van der Mieden at Vorchten, the Netherlands Theatre Institute (closed at the end of 2012), the Tropenmuseum (Tropical Museum) in Amsterdam, the Ethnographic Museums in the Netherlands, and various theatrical collections of umbrella organizations, colleges and theatre studies in Amsterdam, Utrecht and Leiden.

Interest in the art is also reflected in public puppet collections. The main collections include that of the Netherlands Theatre Institute in Amsterdam – the vast collection of the TIN has been transferred to the University of Amsterdam (UvA). This means that a collection of immense cultural and historic value for the Netherlands has been salvaged and will be preserved for the future. Other collections are found in the Historical Museum of Rotterdam, notably the Dutch tradition and the collection of the Poppenspe(e)lmuseum located in the village of Vorchten between Deventer and Zwolle, specializing in areas such as shadow puppets, paper [toy] theatres, wayang figures, hand and glove puppets, rod marionettes, rod puppets, literature, documentation, graphics and contemporary pieces of puppetry art. The collection has been open to the public since 1984. Besides its own ever-changing temporary exhibitions, the Museum also organizes travelling themed exhibitions at home and abroad.

The Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam holds important collections of African and Indonesian puppets (*wayang kulit* and *wayang klitik*). In 1995, the museum presented an exhibition entitled ‘De verre vrienden van Jan Klaassen’ (The Foreign Friends of Jan Klaassen): Karagöz from Turkey, Krishna from India, Teu from Vietnam, Semar from Indonesia, and Sigi from Africa. Traditional performances show these ‘friends’ in action, as the institute has its own theatre.

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- The Dutch-language and abundantly illustrated ABC of Puppetry gives explanations for expressions, words, puppetry techniques, characteristic theatre and puppet theatre figures, and persons.
- The bilingual www.geheugenvannederland.nl/?/nl/collecties/komt_dat_zien_poppentheater_in_beeld provides a wealth of information about the varied puppet theatre collection.
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Poppenspe(e)ltechnieken en -figuren. Puppetry techniques and characters, a Dutch-language educational series that highlights folk and mainstream puppet theatre. See also: <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/pamflet118d.pdf>. Author: Elsje Zwart and Otto van der Mieden.
- <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/Pastiche.html>
Poppenspe(e)lpastiche/Puppenspielpastiche. 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 museum's collection. Essay. Author: Hetty Paërl and Otto van der Mieden.
- <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/Pamflet.aspx>
Through our so-called *Puppetry Museum Pamphlets (Poppenspe(e)lmuseum pamfletten)* we announce matters of interest relating to folk and mainstream puppet theatre. Moreover, these pamphlets sometimes also inform visitors about theme exhibitions and activities in the Puppetry Museum. Some of the Dutch pamphlets are also published in French, German and English and are available in pdf format. Essay. Author: Otto van der Mieden and Hetty Paërl.
- <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/Doepak.aspx>
Doepak (Dupák) is the Dutch-language Puppetry Museum Newsletter (*Poppenspe(e)lmuseumkruimelkrant*), an educational multicoloured leaflet full of interesting facts, things to do, and illustrations of puppet theatre. The Puppetry Museum Scribblings (*Kruimelkrantkrabbels*) are an added extra, which often invite you to explore the Try it yourself? activity. Some of the Dutch *Kruimelkrantkrabbels* are also published in French, German and English and are available in pdf format. Essay.

Film

- <http://vimeo.com/27862356> (running time: 65 minutes).

Audiovisual presentation: *Poppenspe(e)lkwartet*. (Puppetry Happy Families game).

In 1990, Hetty Paërl created *Heb jij voor mij de baby van Katrijn?* (Have you got Judy's baby?) in cooperation with Otto van der Mieden. In 1994, we produced an audiovisual information system based on this *Poppenspe(e)lkwartet* (Puppetry Happy Families game). An adapted recording is shown under the Dutch title *Traditionele volkspoppentheater technieken, -figuren en -attributen* (Traditional folk puppet theatre techniques, characters and objects). Animations, music, sound effects, illustrations, and Dutch commentary are presented to the viewer in a highly innovative way.



Poppentejater Otto van der Mieden/puppets/performance/scene: 'Wonderbaarlijke waargebeurde ontsnapping van de Heer P'.



Popstudio Hinderik/Hinderik de Groot/performance/scene: 'Aai, moedertje, aai'.



Lucas Goudzwaard/Cartouche/puppets/performance/scene: 'Sonate II'.



Tg Winterberg/performance 'Op een klein stationnetje'



Jan Nelissen/Het Kleine Wereldtoneel/puppets: Bel Janet and Pietje Grijpgraag



Trudy Kuyper/Dibbes/puppet/performance/scene: 'Diederik Varken'.



Elout Hol/Gnaffel/puppets/performance/scene: 'Witte en het wilde paard'.

BOERWINKEL, Henk

(Alkmaar, the Netherlands, 1937)

Dutch puppeteer. Henk Boerwinkel studied graphic arts and illustration at the College of Arts in Amsterdam. At the age of eighteen he built his first string puppets. After experimenting with different animation techniques, in 1963 he created Figurentheater Triangel with the assistance of his wife Ans (1934-2013). At the end of 1971, they became professional puppeteers in Meppel in a farmer house. Until September 1991 they played their show under the title *Twenty Short Acts*, and then continuing up to 1995 under the title *Metamorphoses*. Henk and Ans Boerwinkel have successfully played in numerous international puppet and theatre festivals, where they received many prizes and awards. Performances were given in all capital cities and in hundreds of cities across Europe, Asia, the Americas, and Australia.

In an era of popularity of visible manipulation of puppets, Henk Boerwinkel made the artistic choice to preserve the old style of classical puppet theatre, in which the puppets kept their apparent autonomy. He used various kinds of puppets and masks, representing the human existential condition in the most surreal situations. His characters are coloured grey to represent a world of depressed or bewildered individuals detached from the world. Speaking about his art, he stated, 'I cannot conceive of the puppet as an illustration of a text or music. With my puppets I try to communicate a certain atmosphere, mood or a sensation to the spectator just by means of rest and motion: long forgotten dreams, visions from the subconscious full of magic and poetry, always connected with life and death.'

Henk Boerwinkel made three more shows: the mask trilogy, *The Son of Mother Earth* in 1977, which was performed in combination with *Trees of Life* from 1983 to 1991, and the miniature show-box performance, *Trio for Pierrot*, performed in 1987.

In 1991 his wife Ans stopped performing. Henk made the decision to combine his favourite numbers into one programme, the *Metamorphoses*, which he performed with the assistance of Charlotte Puyk-Joolen.

Henk Boerwinkel stopped touring in 1995 after 2,700 performances. In 1996 he created the *Magisch Theatertje* (Little Magic Theatre) in Maastricht with Charlotte Puijk-Joolen (Artistic Director Magisch Theatertje). Since that time he only performs in the Magisch Theatertje, with time to create new puppets and masks. Since 1998, his son, Jeroen Boerwinkel, continues the tradition with his own theatre of movement, *Theater van de Droom* (Meppel).

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Ans and Henk Boerwinkel with puppets.

BOSCHMA, Feike

(Friesland, the Netherlands, 1922-2014)

Dutch puppeteer. Born in the province of Friesland, Feike Boschma began his career as a puppeteer in the western part of the Netherlands with *The Stork and the Fox*. In 2004, he was still performing, and seeking new forms of performing.

Early in his career, Boschma collaborated with young puppeteers who were intent on abandoning the traditional puppet for new methods of manipulation. However, once these working relationships become institutionalized, Boschma, an individualist, left these partnerships resuming his independence. His relationship with artists (painters, mimes, visual artists) from other disciplines proved more conducive and productive. He felt very much at home in cabaret, review, variety, dance and poetry. It was in the small theatres of Paris, where puppets, songs and cabaret mingled, that he encountered kindred spirits. The combination of these various theatrical disciplines was clearly apparent in his successful collaboration with Rob Van Houten in *Fun House*, a show that mixed bizarre mime acts, cabaret, music, dance and puppetry.

In contrast to many other puppeteers at that time, Feike Boschma developed a theory about movement, the use of colours, and the meaning of shapes. 'Movement is drama, shape and colour belong to the visual arts' and 'it's all about movement'. These became the principles of his art of manipulation. This credo has not changed throughout his life. Boschma's collaboration with Cilly Wang, a Viennese comic dancer, was another important influence on his work.

Boschma creates in his work a maximum of movement through the use of fragile materials, transparent and light fabrics. His characters are never realistic. They do not possess heads, arms or legs, only the suggestion of these.

Feike Boschma's performances are visual poems, and poetry has always fascinated him. When he was over eighty years old, Boschma researched the possibilities of combining non-realistic images with the poetry of Heinrich Heine and the music of Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann.

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Feike Boschma with puppets.

DALSUM, Damiet van

(The Netherlands, 1943)

Dutch puppeteer. Based in Dordrecht, Damiet Van Dalsum creates puppets from objects and fabrics, imbuing them with a 'poetic', fantastic style.

After studying drama in Maastricht, Damiet Van Dalsum began using glove and rod puppets in the late 1960s. After her production, *Lord Wanhoop* (1983), she began working with string puppets, as well as shadows (*Kleine Frederick* [Little Frederick], 1992) and paper figures (*Bubbelbabbelbos*, 2003). She played herself among the puppets and manipulated objects, as in *Dagdromen* (Daydreaming, 1985). *Club Medea* (2005), directed by Frank Soehnle, with singer Françoise Vanhecke, is a show also interpreted with the puppeteer visible to the audience

Damiet Van Dalsum has an evident sensitivity for children, for whom she intends the majority of her productions, juxtaposing their values with the hyper-rationality of the adult world. Her work has affinities with Surrealism, evident in her first show for adults, *Op het oog* (In the Eye, 1983), in which she directed live actors.

For 25 years, from 1985-2010, Damiet Van Dalsum was the director of the International Puppet Festival of Dordrecht.



Damiet van Dalsum with puppets.



DETH, Guido van

(Brussels, 1913 – The Hague, the Netherlands, 1969)

Dutch puppeteer. At the time Guido Van Deth began performing with his glove puppets, this style of puppetry was denigrated as an inferior form. He had to fight strong prejudice in defending his repertoire, his puppets, his technique and his artistic aspirations. In retrospect, Van Deth, along with Cia Van Boort, was one of the greatest glove puppeteers of his time. In 1946, after having been a member of De Haagse School (the Hague School of puppetry), he succeeded in founding his own permanent and travelling puppet theatre based in The Hague. He was also a co-founder, along with several fellow puppeteers, of another theatre, Het theater van de Verenigde Poppenspelers (The Theatre of the United Puppeteers]. They performed all over the Netherlands, sharing their artistic experiences. Their professional approach stimulated the development of puppetry, but financial reasons ended the project a few years later.

Van Deth performed mainly for adults and later also for children. An author, he wrote his own scripts. The glove puppets, for the most part nonrealistic or unconventional in design, were commissioned from visual artists or were made by Van Deth and his wife. Felicia Beck became his assistant in 1950, and as a married couple they became a well-known name in puppetry. Their repertoire include 40 works for adults and children, including *Suuske en zijn Ezeltje* (Suuuske and his Donkey), *De Verdwenen Prinses* (The Lost Princess), *Singo en de Sneeuwfant* (Singo and the Snowphant), and *De Uizers* (The Uizers), the latter the last piece that Guido and Felicia Van Deth created together. Their works reflect their humanistic ideas and faith in human capacities and friendship. For the Van Deths, puppetry is not an end in itself. It is a means of reflecting on society.

After the death of Guido Van Deth, Felicia continued his work. The theatre closed its doors in 2000. With the founding of his theatre in The Hague in 1946, Guido Van Deth also opened the Museum voor het poppenspel (Museum of Puppetry). He had gathered puppets from many countries, studied their origins, restoring them when needed. His collection of puppets, prints and posters from around the world grew to thousands of pieces, including Indonesian *wayang* puppets and a library of over 1,200 specialist titles. After his death the collection became an official museum in 1971, and later a department of the Theatre Institute of the Netherlands in 1980. The Museum closed in 1996.

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Guido and Felicia van Deth/'Poppentheater Guido van Deth'.

HILVERDING FAMILY

Itinerant puppeteers family of Dutch origin active in the 17th and 18th centuries. Johann Peter Hilverding, artist and itinerant vendor of alcohol, was a 'Pulcinella player'. It is not known if the name referred generically to glove puppeteers – thus so named because of the success received in Europe by the character of Pulcinella since the middle of the 17th century – or more precisely to those showmen featuring the character itself.

Johann Peter also had a cousin Joris, known in the Jewish quarter of Vienna as a puppeteer, but it is his son Johann Baptist (Salzburg, c.1670 or 1677 – Vienna, 1721) for whom definite traces have been found. In fact, Johann Baptist turned up in Prague and Gdansk in 1698, in Stockholm in 1700, in Lübeck, Lüneburg and Basel the following two years, and eventually in Salzburg in 1711.

Johann Baptist Hilverding presented elaborate shows in a technically complex and expensive *castelet* (booth), involving frequent changes of stage settings. His string puppets, which he called 'statues', measured more than one metre ('*une aune de Brabant et demi*', more than one metre) and their number was large enough for him to be able to present 'about fifty comedies and operas' ('*cinquantaine de comédies et d'opéras*'). The puppets were mechanized, with the actors providing the voices and the singing. His repertoire included mythological pieces (*Hercules and Alcestis, Jason and Medea, Perseus and Andromeda, Aurora and Cephalus*) derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a taste acquired perhaps from close acquaintance with a master of Italian origin. We also know that he teamed up with Joseph Anton Stranitzky (1676-1726), the principal interpreter of the character Hanswurst of his day.

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Joseph Anton Stranitzky as Hanswurst (ca. 1720).

JAN KLAASSEN

Character of popular Dutch puppet theatre in the Netherlands, related to the Italian Pulcinella. The name of Jan Klaassen is derived from that of a trumpet player, Jan Klaaszoon, who served in the guard of *stadhouder* (*stadtholder*) Willem II, Prince of Orange. After Willem's death in 1652, power was taken over by the 'Grand Pensionary', Jan de Witt, representative of the bourgeois oligarchy. Anyone who was an Orangist was discharged, including the trumpeter Klaaszoon, who moved to Amsterdam. There, he earned his living in the streets performing his puppet theatre. Through the words and actions of his puppet characters, the new government was ridiculed. He became so popular with his shows that the protagonist, hitherto named Hanswurst or Polichinel, took the name, slightly altered, of its author: Jan Klaassen. Later, the puppeteer's own marital problems furnished the material for his shows.

The old Jan Klaassen is a hunchback with a red hooked nose and a wide smiling mouth. His classic costume is that of a trumpeter's uniform: a military-looking red jacket with golden trim, yellow trousers and wooden clogs (in contrast to the other puppets, Jan Klaassen has legs). He wears a conical cap bent forward and adorned with a bell or tassel. Jan is an Amsterdam type, good natured with a robust sense of humour. He is poor, but light-hearted and often drunk. He fears only one person: his wife Katrijn. She is as ugly as he is. Their arguments always end with reconciliation. The puppet booth decor typically depicts a canal spanned by a bridge. If there are side wings, then the *Het Zwaantje* (The Little Swan) tavern is on the left and the house of Jan Klaassen and Katrijn is on the right.

The Jan Klaassen shows are usually performed with glove puppets. The scripts are variations on the international repertoire of characters and confrontations: Jan as father, Jan as soldier, Jan in confrontations with the Policeman, the Landlord, the Doctor, the Baker, the Crocodile, the Hangman, the Devil. A character peculiar to the Dutch tradition is the Death of Pierlala. Death is a rod puppet, a skull and a sheet attached to a long pole; it is connected to Pierlala, a version of Pierrot dating back to the 17th century.

Jan Klaassen faces all the dangers that come his way. He ridicules his adversaries; and if his tongue doesn't chase them away, he gets rid of them with his stick. The old Dutch Jan Klaassen booth was called *ronzebons*, a term referring to the sound of the beatings. According to authors of the 19th century, the puppeteers of the time used a swazzle for Jan's voice.

The Jan Klaassen show was entertainment from and for the poor. The 18th and 19th century puppeteers had, besides their street puppet booth, a small theatre suitable for the homes of the rich. They performed Jan Klaassen plays, but also variety and trick acts. If the customer wanted a show with less vulgar language an additional fee was charged.

There have been several 'dynasties' of Jan Klaassen players, such as the Hofman family in Utrecht, the Remmert family in Rotterdam, and the Cabalzi family in Amsterdam. The Cabalzi were an Italian family of fair showmen who came to the Netherlands (Holland) in 1830. The most famous member of this family was Janus Cabalt (1869-1935) who earned in 1883 the right to give his performances in a permanent location at the Dam, a square in the centre of Amsterdam.

In the 1960s and 70s, the tradition of Jan Klaassen declined, probably due to the popularity of film and television. The last puppeteer of the Cabalzi family, Daan Kersbergen, stopped performing his shows at the Dam in 1981. Wim Kerkhove (b.1953), from Pantijn puppet theatre, succeeded Kersbergen, injecting new life into the tradition. Just like the legendary trumpeter of the 17th century, Kerkhove brought contemporary political events into his performances: Jan Klaassen battles against a general with a neutron bomb; Jan's son, a punk who illegally takes up residence in an unoccupied house, collides with the landlord. To reflect the multicultural society of the Netherlands, Kerkhove created characters representing the newcomers, not to ridicule them (as was often the case in the past), but in their roles of good neighbours and friends of Jan and his wife Katrijn. Also, in Kerkhove's shows the role of Katrijn took on more importance than in the past.

Public interest in the Jan Klaassen subsequently grew. For a time around 1997 there was a theatre building in Pieterspoortsteeg for winter performances of Jan Klaassen, while Dam Square remained the permanent location for the Jan Klaassen booth for summer performances. In 2011 the Pieterspoortsteeg theatre closed. Misha Klufth took over from Wim Kerkhove for summer performances at the Dam for several years. In 2009 Wim Kerkhove established the Jan Klaassen Academy, to continue the tradition and to resume Jan Klaassen at the Dam in Amsterdam. In the same year, Wim Kerkhove performed his then most recent show, *Jan Klaassen – de man met de poppenkast* (Jan Klaassen – the Man with the booth) to Internationaal Volkspoppentheaterfestival Banská Bystrica (Slowake), and in 2011 at the festival Global Clowns in Turkey. In 2011, there were around ten professional puppeteers who performed Jan Klaassen, suggesting a new future for the Netherland's old hunchback.

See also: Doepak No. 30d 'The life story of Jan Klaassen: a history in pictures', <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/Pdf/Doepak30d.pdf>; No. 202d 'Jan Klaassen and Plato: reflection', <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/Doepak202d.pdf>; Pamphlet No. 48d and 48e 'Traditional Dutch puppet theatre scenes', <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/pamflet48d.pdf>, <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/Pamflet48e.pdf> and <http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/Pamflet48ebijlage.pdf>.

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Wim Kerkhove/Pantijn/puppets: Jan Klaassen, Katrijn with the Baby, Devil, the Death and the Crocodile. Illustration: Hetty Paërl.



Daan Kersbergen/Teatro Cabalzi/Dam Square Puppet Show/Amsterdam.



Jan Klaassen, Katrijn and the Baby. Puppetry Happy Families game: 'Have you got Judy's baby?' Illustration: Hetty Paërl. Collection: Poppenspe(e)lmuseum.

TRANTER, Neville

(Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia, 1955)

Australian puppeteer, working in the Netherlands. Neville Tranter studied theatre while also working with Billbar Puppet Theatre (founded by Barbara and Bill Turnbull in Toowoomba, Queensland that performed traditional puppetry) where he learnt to manipulate and create his own puppets. Having completed his training with the American director Robert Gist in Queensland in 1976, Tranter established his own company, Stuffed Puppet Theatre. In 1978 he was invited to participate in the Amsterdam Festival of Fools, after which he moved permanently to the Netherlands.

This was the beginning of his career as a solo puppeteer performing for adult audiences. Tranter performs almost always with life-size puppets. He is visible as manipulator, mostly as an opponent to his puppets. Essential in his work is the relationship between himself and the characters he manipulates. He brings them to life in such a way that he is hardly able to control them. The relationship between puppeteer and puppet is ambivalent; he animates his puppets with humour, tenderness, almost love, but at the same time he confronts them with cruel games. This ambivalent relationship is one of the most obvious characteristics that runs through Tranter's work.

If his own past was his source of inspiration at the beginning of his career, from 1990 on Tranter presented himself more and more as an actor: actor, manipulator and puppet became equal. He creates a magical world in which man and puppet possess the same degree of reality. Tranter is drawn to texts and themes from classical theatre including *Macbeth*, *Kaspar Hauser*, *Salome*, *Molière*, and in 1999, *Frankenstein*. In 2003, he produced *Schicklgruber alias Hitler*, a corrosive play that focuses on a set of characters from Hitler's regime.

In 2009, Neville Tranter returned to a more 'traditional' approach to puppet theatre with *Punch & Judy in Afghanistan*, wherein none other than Osama Bin Laden plays the principal role. In conjunction with Music Theatre, Hollands Diep Dordrecht, and Opera Die Freitagsacademie Bern, Tranter created three operas. In 2012 the children's opera, *The House that Sings*, is planned in Paris.

Thanks to his astonishing figures, sophisticated lighting, music, and advanced technology, Neville Tranter has built an audience for adult puppet theatre. His relationship to the viewer and the puppet has steadily increased over the years. Next to his importance as puppeteer, his role as coach for young puppeteers in a master/pupil relationship is steadily growing, which is very important in a country that does not yet possess a puppetry training school.

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Neville Tranter with puppet.

TUSSENBROEK, Harry van

(Leiden, the Netherlands 1879-1963 The Hague)

Dutch puppeteer and puppet creator. Originally a painter, Harry van Tussenbroek later began making masks, designing theatre and ballet sets and costumes. His first puppets dated from 1920, and were initially inspired by the shows that the Swiss artist Paul Brann gave in the Netherlands. According to his brother Otto, Harry was a born aesthete, who appreciated all things beautiful, and an inveterate collector.

For his puppets, and later his marionettes, Harry Van Tussenbroek used minimal means for maximum effect. Each character, before being manufactured, was thought out in great detail and received a name. He found inspiration in poetry and literature, in found objects – shells, animal skeletons, feathers – and especially from his own imagination, combined with great ingenuity.

His work occupies a very special place in Dutch puppetry arts. In his performances without words, his puppets reflect oriental influences in the structure of the puppets' faces and the richness of their costumes. In a sense, he is the godfather of contemporary puppeteers, including Feike Boschma and Damiet Van Dalsum. It is remarkable that Van Tussenbroek's puppets, as objects of art, received a Grand Prix at the Paris Exposition Internationale (World Exhibition) of 1937.

In his will Harry Van Tussenbroek, who never sold any of his works, ordered that his puppets be destroyed after his death, an action that was carried out. The only trace that remains of this extraordinary artist is a short film, *Tussenspel bij kaarslicht* (Intermezzo by Candlelight), directed by Charles Huguenot van der Linden, which was screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 1959, and a small book which he authored, *Poppen en marionetten* (Glove and String Puppets, 1950).

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Puppet: 'Shéhérazade'. Harry van Tussenbroek.



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