

## MR PUNCH PRESENTS

### a short tour through the Museum PuppentheaterKultur

#### Entrance area:

On behalf of the Union Internationale de la Marionnette (UNIMA), the oldest theatre association in the world, Kasper and his European relatives: Punch (GB), Guignol (F), Pulcinella (I), Kašpárek (Czech Republic), Petrushka (Russia) and last, but not least Kasperl Larifari from Munich, would like to welcome you.

#### Upper and lower foyer:

##### Puppetry worldwide

Traditions vary considerably in different parts of Asia. Whilst in China puppetry has been a form of pure entertainment from early times, in Indonesia it has always been practiced in a cultic context. The puppeteer takes on the role of a priest during the play and seeks blessings for the audience. The battle between good and evil is at the heart of various heroic tales and the evil characters feature red faces or red eyes. From the Indonesian Wayang, to the sophisticated Japanese Bunraku (from the 17th century) to the shadow puppets from Cambodia, the PuK houses puppets that are considered to be world cultural heritage. Another masterpiece of world heritage, recognised by UNESCO, is the Sicilian 'Opera dei Pupi'.

The subject matter of the 'Opera dei Pupi' originates from the romantic era. In these puppet plays, which are still performed today, Christian knights battle against the Moors and always emerge victorious. Such a knight puppet from Italy weighs between 5 and 6 kg and is operated by rods instead of strings. The same technique (a wire rod in the puppet head) is also quite common with artists and amateur puppeteers in the Czech Republic, which is considered to be the country of puppetry par excellence.

#### Exhibition Hall:

##### Puppetry in Germany

The Rother Collection of Rhineland-Palatinate and other exhibits of the museum document the development of the German puppet theatre: originally a form of public entertainment, it grew into an independent artform and form of theatre of the 20th century. At the entrance to the hall, showcases display the five classical playing techniques in Germany (glove puppet, marionette, rod puppet, stick puppet and shadows).

The section »Theatre out of a suitcase« documents the era of the travelling puppeteers, who carried the world to the local people in their suitcases. Puppeteers set up small stages at local fairs. With their large glove puppets, they performed scenes passed down in oral tradition: the scenes always realistic and depicting daily life.

Marionettists, in contrast, performed in halls of taverns. They enacted their shows from hand-written books and also ensured regular school attendance for their children.

One of the oldest puppet figures in the PuK Museum, the »lady yodel«, is more than 100 years old (dating from 1905). It originated from the Saxon family of marionette players Apel. Its eyes and mouth can be moved. Surely, it was a great attraction for the public during the days of the German Empire.

The first permanent theatre building for puppetry was erected in Munich in 1900. The very same year saw the completion of the building which now houses our museum. Munich's Blumenstraße became Kasperl Larifari's permanent home, and he amused himself in the plays written by Count Pocci.

Walter Buettner, Max Jacob, Carl and Henriette Schroeder were masters among the widely travelling puppet players. Their life and work also reflect the development of puppetry into an artistic form.

##### Within a frame

Up to the late 1950s the small framed stage was typical for all types of puppet theatre performances. A particularly beautiful example of a framed stage are the printed proscenias for the paper theatre. The corresponding printed paper figures originate from the period of Biedermeier.

##### Puppet player's heaven

Puppetry also has its roots in religious mysteries and nativity plays. These performances visualised how the gates of hell would wait for those who went astray, as in the play of Doctor Faust, and how one would find the Kingdom of Heaven by following a path agreeable to God. 'Himmelreicher' was a typical term for puppeteers, especially in the South.

##### From wooden blocks to wooden heads

In this original workshop of Till de Kock's carved or shaped countless puppet heads from lime wood for almost all the renowned German puppet theatres. 76 wooden figures in our exhibition are proof of his versatility.

##### Marionettes and leaden weights

Following the advice of Heinrich von Kleist's script 'On the Marionette Theatre', Fritz Herbert Bross changed the centre of gravity of the marionette by placing a leaden weight within the figure's pelvis, thus creating a fully controllable yet elegant movement of the puppet. A skilled marionette player, such as Professor Albrecht Roser, a student of Bross, was able to charm his audience with a sophisticated stork puppet (18 strings) as well as with a simple cloth marionette with 4 strings. Both puppets are exhibited here.

##### New forms of puppetry

During the 1960s male and female players discovered new puppetry subject matters, and developed a new form, the so-called 'overt puppetry'. The puppeteer no longer stayed behind the scenes, but appeared in front of the audience, took part in the performance, and entered into dialogue with his puppet, thus creating a very vivid illusion. Table top puppets which are exhibited here for 'Die Schlacht' ('The Battle') or 'Das Leben des Tomanis' ('The Life of Tomanis') are very well suited for this new form of puppetry.

**Information corner puppetry in Rhineland-Palatinate:** Further information on puppet theatre in our region can be found here.



##### Puppets in motion – film and movies

The pioneer of the television puppet shows was Friedrich Arndt. He belonged to the puppeteer group 'Hohnsteiner' ('Kasper and René'). Later on, puppet shows were created specifically for television. The best known are 'Die Augsburger Puppenkiste' and 'Robbi, Tobbi und das Fliewatüüt', featuring puppets by Albrecht Roser. Part of this collection are 'Nessie' (4,05 m), the largest puppet in the museum as well as 'Polly MacMouse' (6,5 cm), the smallest of our puppets.

##### The workshop close to the auditorium:

You may wander inside Hans Jürgen Fettig's own workshop and see how something as basic as a milk bottle can be transformed into a puppet, e.g. the one-of-a-kind Miss Marple. Here you can also find inspiration for your own creativity in assembling eyes, noses etc. to faces.

##### Auditorium:

When no performance is scheduled, visitors can use the space for their own impromptu puppet plays. However, on 'theatre Sundays' and during festivals this hall belongs to the professionals.

##### Store room:

The store room houses approximately 1,600 further puppets from the Rother collection as well as more exhibits from the growing collection of the PuK Museum. The library houses the scientific collection of specialist literature and media.



##### ATTENTION:

The pointy cap symbols highlight the 25 exhibits where visitors are encouraged **TO GET HANDS-ON**: for instance, old friends from childhood times appear in a new light by pressing a button, a staircase invites you to look behind the scenes or **you are invited to pull the strings**. You can also have a souvenir photo taken with one of the earlier TV stars. The symbol of Kasper's cap shows you the way...

**BY THE WAY:** Please be careful not to touch exhibits that do not feature this symbol. Thank you very much.