

BASIC MODULE DESCRIPTION

Hand and Rod Puppets

ECTS / Duration	5 days / 40 semester hours plus presentation
Faculty	Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and Sveuciliste Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku
Study Programmes	Fine Arts · Scenography · Pedagogy in the Arts · Architecture · Critical Studies · PhD
Teaching Method	Hands-on workshop, studio practice, group critique, lecture, invited guest (puppeteer)
Language	English
Puppet Technology	Open (nails, hammers, drills, dremel kit, sewing equipment, glue, clay, colours, wood, paper mache etc.)
Target Audience	Open

Content & Description

As the Academy of Fine Arts has no puppeteering and merely an image (2D animation laboratory) and as students have been waiting to start working on object animation, this first basic module at a Viennese arts university was concentrating on simple and easy methods for basic and fundamental puppet forms - such as hand and rod puppets. Even though string puppets were introduced briefly within the project to grant a general overview.

Pedagogical Rationale

This Basic Module was held by our project partners from Sveuciliste Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku. Students which were addressed and participated came from various departments within the university: Fine Arts, Scenography, PhD in Practice and Arts and Pedagogy. Students received a general input on animation, puppet building and stage presence/puppeteering along with tackling the overall content of the project. As foundation and key to this module they were asked to introduce their own artistic practice to connect and understand puppeteering.

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of the module students were able to:

- Understand and apply puppet technologies such as hand and rod puppets
- Create puppets and animate them
- Discuss and contextualise the art form of puppetry through other artistic practices and relate each of them
- Navigate a puppet/animated performance and understand object/subject relation within performance



Tasks — Teaching Staff

- Day 1: Visual and material aspect of puppets / Students will be able to perceive a puppet from a point of view of animation, analyse different aspects of puppet visuality and materiality: shape, materials the puppet is made of, colour, size - all of which provide an insight into the character of a puppet. Basic animation techniques / glove puppet, mouth puppet, rod puppet, table-top puppet, rod marionette, marionette on strings / Students will be able to find the basic impulse of movement and to work further to develop and spread that basic impulse to the specific way a puppet walks, talks, reacts and acts.
- Day 2: Action and reaction: The basic language of puppet performance on stage / Students will learn about the logic of performing with puppets on stage with the focus on turning verbalisation into action and learning how the attention of the audience transfers during a puppet play.
- Day 3: Animation of a puppet in pairs and puppet animation involving several puppeteers / Students will master the basic techniques of puppet animation that require more than one puppeteer. They will learn how to work together (using materials such as sheets and blankets, jackets, coats and puppets).
- Day 4: Puppeteer's focus / A puppeteer (puppet animator) must learn to diminish his or her facial and physical expression in a way that a puppet becomes and remains the focus of the audience.
- Day 5: Relation between the puppet (but also an object, a material, a part of the body, or a technological object) and the puppeteer (puppet animator)

Assessment & Project Presentation

Students presented their puppets in short non-public staged settings and performed within the module setting (even though some took their puppets further and into public settings, such as the Manchester Biennial, Bigakko Tokyo, Oberhausenseminar 2026 and a play at LILARUM). Assessment was based on active participation throughout the five-day module. The module was documented on the iPmau Youtube channel.

Implementing Institution

Institution	Academy of Fine Arts Vienna & University of Fine Arts Budapest
Faculty / Dept.	Fine Arts / Art and Image I Context
Contact Person	Ruby Sircar (Vienna) / Patrícia Pajor (Budapest)
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Semester / Year	[Fall / 2025]

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