This anthology of essays aims to explore the many types of relationships that exist between puppets, broadly speaking, and the immaterial world.

The allure of the puppet goes beyond its material presence as, historically and throughout the globe, many uses of puppets and related objects have expressed and capitalized on their posited connections to other realms or ability to serve as vessels or conduits for immaterial presence. The flip side of the puppet’s troubling uncanniness is precisely the possibilities it represents for connecting to discarnate realities. Where do we see such connections? How do we describe, analyze, and theorize these relationships? The first of two volumes, this book focuses on these questions in relation to long-established, traditional practices using puppets, devotional objects, and related items with sacred aspects to them or that perform ritual roles. Looking at performance traditions and artifacts from China, Indonesia, Korea, Mali, Brazil, Iran, Germany, and elsewhere, the essays from scholars and practitioners provide a range of useful models and critical vocabularies for addressing the ritual and spiritual aspects of puppet performance, further expanding the growing understanding and appreciation of puppetry generally.

This book, along with its companion volume, offers, for the first time, robust coverage of this subject from a diversity of voices, examples, and perspectives.

Claudia Orenstein is Professor of Theatre at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, CUNY. She has spent over a decade writing on contemporary and traditional puppetry in the US and Asia.

Tim Cusack is Adjunct Lecturer in Theatre at Hunter College. He was the co-founder and artistic director of Theatre Askew, an independent theatre company dedicated to the exploration of representations of queerness onstage. Puppetry has always been an aspect of his creative process.
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Puppet and Spirit: 
Ritual, Religion, and Performing Objects 
Volume I Sacred Roots: Material Entities, Consecrating Acts, Priestly Puppeteers 

Edited by 
Claudia Orenstein 
and Tim Cusack
For Rachel Kranz and Sara Lambert, who introduced Tim to object theatre, and Everett Quinton for always showing him the potential in every object. 

And 

For Gloria Orenstein, a passionate investigator of the spirit world, and for Nadine Orenstein, Stephen Orenstein, and Susan Fox, with more worldly interests. Together, always helping Claudia find her balance between heaven and earth.
## Contents

*List of figures* | xiii  
*List of editors and contributors* | xvii  
*Acknowledgments* | xxv  
*Foreword* | xxix  

**Introduction**  
CLAUDIA ORENSTEIN AND TIM CUSACK  

### SECTION I  
Shamanic Lineages  

1 *Puppets and Souls: Some Encounters in Korean Shaman Ritual*  
LAUREL KENDALL  

2 *Mamulengo and Spirituality: Are There Still Some Connections?*  
IZABELA BROCHADO  

3 *Sogo bò: The Puppet Remains the Soul of the People, an Interview with Yaya Coulibaly*  
HEATHER JEANNE DENYER  

4 *The Hula Kī‘i, the Dance of the Sacred Image, Hawaiian Puppetry: Nāpali Souza Interview with Auli‘i Mitchell*  
NĀPALI SOUZA AND AULI‘I MITCHELL
SECTION II
Communal Celebrations

5 Japanese Karakuri Ningyō and the Performance of Shinto
YASUKO SENDA AND WILLIAM CONDEE

6 Superhuman Superpowers: Puppets and Masks of Bhaona from the Assam Region of India
DEEPSIKHA CHATTERJEE

7 Wayang Ritual Drama of Cirebon: Continuance of a Kratophanic Tradition
MATTHEW ISAAC COHEN

8 “I Have Come to Do a Purification”: Interview with Masako Nakauchi and Kimiyo Minami
TOMOE KOBAYASHI AND SIMON MOERS

SECTION III
Powerful Players

9 Passing Down Through Shadows: Chinese Shadow Puppetry’s Ghostly Transmission
ANNIE KATSURA ROLLINS

10 The Matter That Matters: An Exploration of Power and Materiality in Thai Nang Yai
CLAUDIA ORENSTEIN

11 Consecrated Puppets: The Puppet Deities of Southern China and Taiwan
ROBIN RUIZENDAAL

12 Exploring Spirituality in Tholpavakoothu Shadow Puppetry of Kerala: A Conversation with Puppeteer Ramachandra Pulavar
SANGEETH SANKAR A. AND RAHUL KOONATHARA
SECTION IV
Doctrinal Dialogues 169

13 Islam, Animism, and Animation of Objects:
Growth and Restrictions of Puppetry Under
the Shadow of Religion 171
SALMA MOHSENI ARDEHALI AND MIR MOHAMMADREZA HEYDARI

14 Saintly Puppet Masters and Sacred Clowning:
Antinomian Religion and Patterns in Islamic
Puppetry of Java 184
KATHY FOLEY

15 Performing Death: A Medieval Puppet of Christ 197
MICHELLE K. OING

SECTION V
Holding Heritage 209

16 The Enchanted Kaavad: Hierophany in Motion 211
NINA SABNANI

17 Forging a Material Connection to the Divine:
The Life Cycle Rituals of the Sefer Torah 223
JOSEPH MAYBLOOM

Index 237
1.1 The afflicted woman embraces the straw doll scapegoat while a mansk pelts her with salt, 1977. Photo: Laurel Kendall

1.2 Shaman and client anticipate the descent of the House Lord, 1977. Photo: Laurel Kendall

2.1 Xangozeiro puppet made by Bibiu. Photo: Izabela Brochado

2.2 Caboclingos de Orubá puppets made by Zé Lopes. Photo: Izabela Brochado

3.1 Photograph of the sogo, antelope puppet, performed by Birama Coulibaly in Segovia, Spain, May 2013. Photo: Facinet Cheikhou Coulibaly


4.1 Auli’i Mitchell and his haumana (student) and interviewer, Nāpali Souza. Photos: Donavan Kealoha and Dr. Manulani Meyer

4.2 Kī‘i figure of Lono-i-ka-nane, the Hawaiian riddler god. He is associated with the appearance of the Pleiades in the evening sky during the month of November, which coincides with the Hawaiian New Year, a time when sports, games, and hula are enjoyed. Photo: Auli’i Mitchell

5.1 Kamezaki Ebb Tide Festival showing community volunteers moving a yama (float) to line up with the others on the large area in front of Kamisaki Shrine Place, 2004. Photo: Izo Mase

5.2 At the 2004 Takayama autumn festival karakuri ningyō acrobats land on the shoulders of Hotei-osho, a Chinese god of good fortune. Photo: Toshiaki Kato

6.1 Modes of physical enlargement: Here is the character of Bakasur, the egret demon (asura) from the Mahabharata. This demon bird required large amounts of food to be delivered until its demands became too difficult to handle by the local king and the community. They enlisted the help of Bhima, the second and the strongest of the Pandava
brothers, to subdue it. In this mask puppet, a lightweight bamboo structure and paper feathers render the egret’s unique features, including wings, beak, and the red crest. Photo: Deepiskha Chatterjee

6.2 Mask puppets in *bhaona* are all based on the *Bhagavata Purana* and the human relationship to the cosmic gods. In this image, one can see the mask puppet of Narasimha, the human-lion god who appeared to quell the excesses of the demon Hiranyakasipu. This Narasimha also serves as a ritual image, residing in the workshop-gallery of the artists who made it, where they work and pray, and to whom devotee-visitors come to pay respects. Photo: Deepiskha Chatterjee

7.1 Surrounded by demon kings Jaka Larang (right) and Naga Percona (left), Begawan Jojojan (center) recites a series of incantations with his arms folded. Puppets posed by the author from the Dr. Walter Angst and Sir Henry Angest Collection of Indonesian Puppets at Yale University Art Gallery. Photo: Anthony DeCamillo, courtesy Yale University Art Gallery

7.2 Setting the stage for a 2018 performance of *Mapag Sri* in the upland village hall of Kondangsari, Kecamatan Beber, Kabupaten Cirebon, as a horse-drawn cart from the procession passes by. This was reportedly the first time a parade had been included in this village’s annual *Mapag Sri* celebration. As for many of Cirebon’s ritual dramas, *Mapag Sri* takes place in the daytime and does not use a screen, which allows for intimate communication between the puppeteer and children in the audience, who tend to crowd around the stage in close proximity to the puppets. Photo: Matthew Isaac Cohen

8.1 Arrival at a home during the *kadozuke*. Photo: Simon Moers

8.2 Prayer for a safe year. Photo: Simon Moers

9.1 Huaxian shadow-puppet master Wei Jinquan rehearses behind the shadow-puppet screen, 2008. Photo: Annie Katsura Rollins

9.2 A view from the *Luanxian xuanhuan wenhua zhongxin*, or Luanxian Cultural Dissemination Center, shadow-puppet display hall, 2016. Photo: Annie Katsura Rollins

10.1 Young puppeteers performing at Wat Khanon. Photo: Claudia Orenstein

10.2 Puppets used for the *wai khruu* ceremony at Wat Sawang-arom in the Mueang Sing Buri District, two hours from Bangkok. Photo: Claudia Orenstein
11.1 Chief Marshal Tian behind the stage before the performance in Quanzhou, 1993. Photo: Robin Ruizendaal

11.2 Lin Jinlian performing at the opening of a new theatre in Taipei in 2000, with the altar for the deity in the background. Photo: Robin Ruizendaal

12.1 Puppeteer Ramachandra Pulavar conducting puja inside the drama house. Photo: Rahul Koonathara

12.2 Leather puppet of Rama. Photo: Rahul Koonathara

13.1 A person dressed as a lion (on the day of Ashura in 2017 in Qom city) is moving toward the place of performing ta’ziyeh. The lion is a symbol that refers to an event in the battle of Karbala. Photo: Mostafa Meraji

13.2 Alamats carried by people in an Ashura procession in Tehran. Photo: Reza Moattarian

14.1 Sunan Kalijaga poster image. Photo: Kathy Foley

14.2 The punakawan (clown servants) (l. to r. Bagong, Gareng, Semar, and Petruk) in a scene from a wayang kulit purwa story where Petruk becomes a king. Dr. Walter Angst and Sir Henry Angst Collection, Yale University Art Gallery. Photo: Kathy Foley

15.1 Jointed Christ, c. 1510 (photograph from 1955). Wood, leather, canvas, real (animal) hair. 190 × 182 × 37.5 cm. Stadtkirche St. Nicolai, Döbeln, Germany. Photo: Bildarchiv Foto Marburg

15.2 Detail of the Döbeln Christ, torso and head. Photo: Michelle K. Oing

16.1 Storyteller Narsinh Rav with his patron. Photo Nina Sabnani

16.2 The kaavad fully open. Photo Nina Sabnani

17.1 Torah scroll and staves: eighteenth to nineteenth centuries; silver and ink on parchment; accession number: F 1933a–d. Photo: John Parnell. Courtesy of the Jewish Museum (New York, NY)

17.2 A woman stands on the bimah in front of the aron ha’kodesh reading from the Torah scroll. In her hand is a yad, or Torah pointer, used to help her follow the text as she reads while also avoiding touching the parchment. Photo: Courtesy of the Jewish Theological Seminary (New York, NY)
Editors and contributors

Editors

Claudia Orenstein, Professor of Theatre at Hunter College and the Graduate Center, CUNY, has spent nearly two decades writing on contemporary and traditional puppetry in the US and Asia. She is co-editor of Women and Puppetry: Critical and Historical Investigations and The Routledge Companion to Puppetry and Material Performance. She is a Board Member of UNIMA-USA and Associate Editor of Asian Theatre Journal. She received a 2021–2022 Fulbright Research Fellowship for research on ritual puppetry in Japan.

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Contributors

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Joseph Maybloom is Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Student Success and Senior Director of Enrollment at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He holds an MA in Theatre from Hunter College and a BA in Theatre Performance and Theatre History from Marymount Manhattan College. His research explores the role of objects in Jewish ritual and how performance and materiality cultivate notions of Jewishness.

Kimiyo Minami was born in 1965 in Nakacho, Tokushima, Japan. She has been a member of the Awadeko Hakomawashi Preservation Society since its creation in 1995 and has been involved there in research, transmission, and documentation. Since 2001 she has also accompanied her master and Ms. Nakauchi on numerous kadozuke of Sanbasô mawashi. In 2004, she became vice president of the Awadeko Hakomawashi Preservation Society. From 2022, she has been a representative of the Awadeko cultural archive in Ningyô Mura (Doll Village).

Auli‘i Mitchell was born in 1961 on the island of O‘ahu. He was raised in the traditions of hula ‘ōlapa under the tutelage of his mother Kumu Hula Harriet Aana Cash and his grandfather Charles Kahiwahiwa Cash. Kumu Auli‘i pursued his bachelor’s degree at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo in Anthropology, followed by a master’s degree in Applied Indigenous Knowledge in Tāmaki Makarau, Auckland, Aotearoa, New Zealand, and the only person in the US to have this accreditation. He is a distinguished
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Simon Moers is a puppeteer who was trained in dramatic interpretation at INSAS, Brussels, then continued his studies at ESNAM in Charleville-Mézières. At the end of his courses, he cofounded the puppeteers’ collective PROJET D, based in France. In 2016, he created the Belgian company MINIGOLF Show Club in partnership with artist-sculptor Coline Rosoux. Simon works in parallel with the artist Simon Delattre and his company Rodeo Theatre. In 2019, he was a laureate at the Villa Kujoyama in Kyoto. Since then, he has developed several Franco-Japanese projects around the arts of puppetry in collaboration with the costume artist Tomoe Kobayashi.

Masako Nakauchi was born in 1967 in Ichiu, Tsurugi-cho, Tokushima, Japan, and began her research activities in 1995 under Tsujimoto Kazuhide (founder and current advisor of the Awadeko Hakomawashi Preservation Society). From 1999 to 2001, she accompanied the kadozuke of her master, a Sanbasō mawashi puppeteer, in Higashimiyoshi-cho and later became his successor. In 2004, she was appointed as the second-generation president of the Awadeko Hakomawashi Preservation Society. Since 2022, she has been a representative of Awadeko Hakomawashi at the Tradition Museum Ningyō Mura (Doll Village). She received the Awa Culture Creation Award from Tokushima Prefecture in 2009 and the Tokushima Arts and Culture Award in 2020.

Michelle K. Oing is a scholar of late medieval art, focusing on the intersection of sculpture and performance in Europe. She received her PhD in the History of Art and Architecture from Yale University, and is currently a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center. Her current book project examines the role of movable sculpture in Northern Europe through the conceptual framework of puppetry, paying particular attention to notions of play. Bringing together insights from art history and performance studies, her work seeks to highlight the dynamic interaction of humans and objects in the creation of meaning.

Ramachandra Pulavar was born on May 25, 1960 to the late Guru Shri K.L. Krishnan Kutty Pulavar and Gomathy Ammal. He was born into a traditional Tamil family that migrated to Kerala generations ago, intending to propagate the art form tholpavakoothu. He started training in ritual shadow puppetry under his guru (and father) at the age of six. He belongs to the eleventh generation of puppeteers who followed the guru Shingi Pulavar, who is considered to be the scholar who composed and directed the first tholpavakoothu performance in the form of the epic Ramayana. Apart from practicing the ritual performance on temple premises, Ramachandra is also engaged in creating contemporary shadow puppet shows to promote
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Annie Katsura Rollins is a researcher, community arts worker, theatre artist, and educator, with an artistic practice based in traditional Chinese shadow puppetry. In 2019, she was named Concordia’s Fine Arts valedictorian for her PhD dissertation on the precariousness of safeguarding traditional puppet forms. Annie teaches at the University of Connecticut and harnesses the transformational power of community arts to help settle newcomers to Canada at MABELLEArts in Toronto. Portfolio at www.anniekatsurarollins.com. Chinese shadow puppetry information at www.chineseshadowpuppetry.com.

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of *Karakuri Ningyo: Picture and Illustrated Book* (2005, Japanese), and *Karakuri Ningyo Japanese Automata* (2012, English). Ms Senda toured the US with the Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission, sponsored by the Japanese government, and graduated from Aichi Women’s College, majoring in English Literature. She taught English to children and was lecturer at Aichi Shukutoku University. She founded Minerva Nagoya, a volunteer group dedicated to international understanding and cultural exchange. She has been a member of UNIMA for 36 years.

**Nāpali Souza** is lead student (apprentice) of Hālau ʻo Kahiwahiwa. He is the grandson of the famed composer and musician Imgard Farden Aluli, who wrote more than two hundred songs. Nāpali is the co-creative director of the Hawaiian-influenced menswear brand, Salvage Public. He is a graduate of the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa and the William S. Richardson School of Law. His passion for the practice of hula is embedded in his DNA, and Nāpali leads with the spirit of that passion.
Acknowledgments

A book project on the scope of this one, which collects the work of more than forty scholars and artists in two volumes, could not come to fruition without the support and efforts of so many. First, we owe an enormous debt to all our contributors, who have generously shared their knowledge, scholarship, artistry, and personal reflections in these pages. We are grateful for their hard work and patience throughout the editing process, as well as for the trust they placed in us to create publications worthy of their efforts. Some have brought to our project a lifetime’s dedication to their subject, while others have used these books as an opportunity to delve more fully into the themes at hand, welcoming these as invitations to explore fresh materials or see familiar fare from new angles. All seemed to connect instinctively and enthusiastically to the goals we originally proposed. We could not be more humbled and honored in having had the chance to work with each and every one of them.

We are very grateful to everyone at Routledge who has supported the project and helped bring these books to publication. We originally brought our ideas to Ben Piggott, who, during his time as Commissioning Editor at Routledge, had been a strong advocate for publications dedicated to puppetry, helping to expand scholarly offerings in this field. We are thankful for his years of support for the art. Although Ben has moved on to other career pursuits, he put us in the very capable hands of Laura Hussey and Swati Hindwan, who have helped us move forward at every step. We are grateful for all their help and their continued faith in this project. We also thank our anonymous reviewers who read through our initial proposals and first chapters. Their comments allowed us to strengthen the work and their positive responses gave us the confidence to move forward with this major endeavor. Additionally, we thank our copyeditor and indexer at Routledge for their contributions.

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in the application and final processing procedures for the grant. We also want to acknowledge our students in the Theatre program at Hunter College who continually inspire us with their resiliency, curiosity, and talent. It is particularly gratifying when we encounter them at puppetry performances around town. The future of our art form is in immensely capable hands.

Claudia Orenstein’s 2021–2022 Fulbright Foundation Research Fellowship has also helped support this project. She will be forever grateful for this invaluable opportunity that allowed her to explore ritual puppetry and Japanese culture more thoroughly, a true blessing if ever there was one. She is indebted to everyone at Fulbright who made her trip possible and to all the puppeteers, scholars, and others she met in Japan who shared their expertise and arts with her. As this project was well underway before her trip to Japan, the full fruits of her time there will appear in future publications. She also thanks her Hunter colleagues for their support of her puppetry work and for the leave time to complete this and other projects.

Our ability to reach out to those who ended up as contributors to these volumes is the product of our connections to important professional organizations that facilitate the development of new scholarship and other endeavors related to puppetry. We are very grateful to L’Union Internationale de la Marionnette (UNIMA), whose international network of researchers and artists devoted to puppetry arts serves as a continued resource in the field. Members of UNIMA throughout the globe—puppeteers and puppet lovers—generously promote our mutually beloved art in numerous ways and have always offered us helpful responses and contacts when needed. We are particularly grateful to our own center, UNIMA-USA, and to UNIMA’s Research Commission, which has long helped puppetry scholars develop their work and provided venues for presenting and discussing it. Volumes like ours are only possible because of those who have come before us and their years of dedication in cultivating this area of research.

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