



American Puppetry: Collections, History and Performance

Phyllis T. Dircks

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Puppetry has become a significant force in contemporary theatre and thousands of puppets from various cultures and time periods have been collected by scholars, enthusiasts, and curators, who wisely realized that these material images can teach us much about the societies for which they were created. This book consists of essays by the curators of the most significant puppet collections in the United States and by leading scholars in the field. In addition to the descriptive and analytical essays on the collections, the book includes an overview of American puppetry today, a history of puppetry in the United States, and essays on the theater of Julie Taymor, the Jim Henson Company, Howdy Doody's custody case, puppet conservation, and the development of virtual performance space. The fourteen collections discussed include those of the Smithsonian Institution, the Harvard University Theatre Collection, the Brander Matthews Collection at Columbia University, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta. Appendices provide a listing of additional puppetry collections and a filmography of puppetry at the New York Public Library Donnell Media Center. The work concludes with a bibliography and index and is illustrated with many beautiful photographs of puppeteers and puppets on display and in performance.

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