



**Museum of the City of New York presents *Puppets of New York*,  
an exhibition examining puppetry's impact on New York City**

***Exhibition opening August 13 features 100+ puppets from beloved productions including *Lamb Chop, Sesame Street, Avenue Q, Lion King, Bread and Puppets, Lunar New Year, and more****

***Press Preview: August 10, 2021, 10am-noon***

***Puppet Celebrity Red Carpet: August 12, 6pm***

New York, NY – **Museum of the City of New York** announces the opening of the exhibition ***Puppets of New York***, examining how puppetry has impacted New York City and scanning the tremendous influence the city has had on this artform all over the world. Opening on August 13, 2021, the exhibition features more than 100 puppets spanning New York City history, from theater, television, and street life, including ***Lamb Chop, Sesame Street, Avenue Q*** and ***Lion King on Broadway***, avantgarde theater, parades, and more. ***Puppets of New York*** is also part of the partner programming for the **International Puppet Fringe Festival** (August 11-16, 2021), and is complemented by a companion exhibition downtown at **The Clemente Soto Véllez Cultural and Educational Center**.

“New York City is a global capital of puppetry, where diverse communities and traditions intersect and collaborate, and where new innovations to the art form are born,” said **Whitney Donhauser**, Ronay Menschel Director and President of the Museum of the City of New York. “Our exhibition showcases the long history of puppetry in New York City and the influence of the city on this whimsical and adventurous art form.”

***Puppets of New York*** covers three themes that emphasize the ubiquity of puppets in urban space—**The Stage, The Set**, and **The Street**—and shows the power of puppetry to reveal culture, politics, and art. The history of puppetry in New York is a powerful lens not only into rich cultural traditions and creative stagecraft, but into the dynamics of the multiple communities that have made New York New York.

- **The Stage** examines how puppets became ingrained in the city's theater industry, from the Modicut Yiddish Theater of the 1920s, to the masterworks of Tony Sarg and Bill Baird, and Broadway productions such as *Avenue Q* and *The Lion King*.
- **The Set** surveys the role puppets have played within New York City's media industry and the role of New York television in broadcasting the art of puppetry to a global audience. Featured puppeteers include Shari Lewis and Jim Henson.
- **The Street** deals with puppets in the city's street and community life. Examples include Chinatown's Lunar New Year celebrations, puppets from Halloween Day Parade, and the political work of Bread and Puppet Theater.

“Puppets are not just child’s play. They often reflect the cultural changes, diverse communities, and political events that impact urban life,” said **Monxo López**, the exhibition’s curator and a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the Museum. “Immigrants from around the globe turned New York into a mosaic of puppetry traditions that both mirror their places of origin and blend with one another.”

**Highlighted puppets on display include:**

- Lamb Chop puppet, shown for the first time ever in a museum
- Duke Ellington puppet
- Howdy Doody
- Lion King on Broadway
- Being John Malkovich
- Albert Einstein puppet
- Oscar the Grouch
- *Avenue Q* puppets

**RELATED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**

An exciting roster of puppet shows, performances, film screenings, and programs will accompany the exhibition. The Museum will also offer hands-on activities for children, teachers, and families bringing New York's dynamic puppetry traditions to life.

**[Opening Celebration](#)**

Thursday, August 12, 2021, 6:00pm

Free! Registration required

Live puppet performances as part of The International Puppet Fringe Festival NYC.

Puppet Celebrity Red Carpet - hosted by Mallory Lewis & Lamb Chop

Los Grises/The Gray Ones by Teatro SEA

**[Behind-the-Scenes at the Museum: Puppets and Activism in New York City](#)**

Virtual via Zoom; Wednesday, August 18, 2021, 10:00am

Free! Pre-registration required. Recommended for ages 7 and up.

Get creative and make your own puppet out of recycled materials as you discover how puppets have been used by activist movements in NYC. Participants in this virtual intergenerational program will enjoy a behind-the-scenes experience with the Museum’s curators Monxo López and Sarah Seidman, who will share examples from the Puppets of New York and Activist New York exhibitions. This intergenerational program welcomes families to participate together.

**[Puppets of New York Performance Series](#)**

The Museum will host a special series of live, outdoor performances featuring local puppeteers, educators, and performance groups. All of the performances and workshops will be held in-person on the Museum’s beautiful, outdoor terrace. Families can enjoy the performances and then visit the *Puppets of New York* exhibition to explore the extraordinary creative and diverse stories of puppets in NYC. Family Programs are geared to families with children ages 7-12 years old and are intergenerational

for adults to attend with their children. Masks must be worn at all times by all participants older than 2 years old. Advanced registration required for socially distanced seating.

**“Back to School” Puppet Workshop with NYC Kids Project**

**Two performances: Thursday, September 9 at 10:30 am and 1:00 pm ET**

*(Rain Date: Sunday, September 12 at the same times)*

*FREE. Registration Required.*

*Venue: IN-PERSON event at the Museum of the City of New York*

Join this interactive, outdoor performance led by **NYC Kids Project** at the Museum of the City of New York to explore feelings about going back to school and reconnecting with classmates. NYC Kids Project will use large-scale puppet characters of all abilities, sign-language, and storytelling to teach inclusion and respect for all. Participants will get to know the characters through their storytelling and ask questions and interact with the puppets.

**“HAO BANG-AH!” Hand Puppet Program with Chinese Theatre Works**

**Two performances: Sunday, September 19 at 11 am and 1:30 pm ET**

*(Rain Date: Saturday, September 25 at the same times)*

*FREE. Registration Required.*

*Venue: IN-PERSON event at the Museum of the City of New York*

Experience the art of hand puppetry and live music in this special performance by **Chinese Theatre Works** at the Museum of the City of New York. For over a decade, CTW has been creating new productions in the style of traditional Budaixi, adapted for American audiences. Their series of original “Hao Bang-ah, Zodiac!” New Year performances are the fruit of this labor, featuring a cross-cultural take of this ancient tradition.

This performance is supported by a Presenter’s Grant from The Jim Henson Foundation.

**“The Colors of Frida | Los colores de Frida” Performance for Families with Teatro SEA**

**Two performances: Saturday, October 2 at 11 am and 1:30 pm ET**

*(Rain Date: Sunday, October 3 at the same times)*

*FREE. Registration Required.*

*Venue: IN-PERSON event at the Museum of the City of New York*

Experience this special bilingual performance about Frida Kahlo by Teatro SEA at the Museum of the City of New York. “The Colors of Frida | Los colores de Frida” is a bilingual, one-woman show about the great Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, which combines storytelling, music, visual arts, puppets and audience participation.

Recommended for Pre-K to 4th Grade.

This performance is supported by a Presenter’s Grant from The Jim Henson Foundation.

**“Native New Yorkers are still here!” with the Children’s Cultural Center of Native America**

**Two performances: Sunday, October 10 (times will be announced soon) ET**

*(Rain Date: Monday, October 11 at the same times)*

*FREE. Registration Required.*

*Venue: IN-PERSON event at the Museum of the City of New York*

Honor and celebrate Indigenous Peoples’ Day at the Museum of the City of New York with the **Children’s Cultural Center of Native America (CCCONA)** to learn about the contemporary and historical presence of Indigenous New Yorkers. The workshop will focus on the Lenape legacy of traditional storytelling and Lenape language using puppets. CCCONA will use storytelling bags and share “How it Came to Be” – creation accounts from Indigenous America.

## **SUPPORT**

**Puppets of New York** is made possible in part by Mrs. William T. Comfort, Cheryl Henson, Caroline A. Wamsler and DeWayne Phillips, the Lemberg Foundation, Inc., and Eve Klein and Robert O. Owens.

This project is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.



The Museum gratefully acknowledges The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's support for exhibition curator Dr. Monxo López's fellowship. ***Puppets of New York*** is his capstone project.

*Behind-the-Scenes at the Museum: Puppets and Activism in New York City* is part of the Museum Association of New York's "Building Capacity, Creating Sustainability, Growing Accessibility" project. This project is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services [CAGML-246991-OMLS-20].

The ***Puppets of New York*** performance series is part of the Arts Al Fresco Series made possible by Con Edison.



The Frederick A.O. Schwarz Education Center is endowed by grants from The Thompson Family Foundation Fund, the F.A.O. Schwarz Family Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Endowment, and other generous donors.

### **About the Museum of the City of New York**

The Museum of the City of New York fosters understanding of the distinctive nature of urban life in the world's most influential metropolis. It engages visitors by celebrating, documenting, and interpreting the city's past, present, and future. To connect with the Museum on social media, follow us on Instagram and Twitter at @MuseumofCityNY and visit our Facebook page at Facebook.com/MuseumofCityNY. For more information, please visit [www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org).

Media contacts:

Robin Carol, [rcarol@mcny.org](mailto:rcarol@mcny.org), (541) 510-2357

Meryl Cooper, [mwcooper@mcny.org](mailto:mwcooper@mcny.org), (917) 974-0022