

Report by Claudia Lamantea



- FESTIVAL DATES : 15 - 26 January 2025
- over 100 events across dozens of venues in Chicago, USA
- I was offered to participate to the **CATAPULT INTENSIVE ARTIST PROGRAM** from Friday 24 to Sunday 26.
 - with a Cohort of 27 artists from different disciplines
 - Escorted by a professional leader
 - Discussions
 - Access to performances
 - Symposium
 - Local transportation
 - Accomodation
 - Some meals provided.

● 1pm : **Greet & Meet**

with group participants & leader
at The Fine Arts Building

● 3pm: meal provided

● 5pm: Performance of “**Birdheart**”

● 7.30pm: Performance of “**Edith & Me**”

● Following: Social time at Surprise
Location

b



Day 1
Friday
24



View of Lake Michigan from
The Fine Arts Building, our
headquarter.

Some Puppets heads
watching over us.





Birdheart by Julian Crouch &
Saskia Lane
Venue: Istituto Cervantes of
Chicago
*“Dreaming of Live music and
brown paper shapes.”*



Edith & Me by Yael Rasooly
Venue: The Biograph's Začek
McVay Theater
*“Through trauma and towards
healing.”*

Add a little bit of body text

After the show "Edith & me", the performer Yael Rasooly hosted an open session with the audience to start a conversation on sexual abuse and share her personal story, which had inspired the performance.

The audience was invited to ask questions, and Yael was both brave and incredibly generous in sharing such delicate and intimate events to raise awareness about consent and violence.

Audience members were also invited backstage to meet the puppets and the star of the show Edith Piaf.



Beautiful string Puppets by
local Resident Artist.



Puppet exhibitions and
installations at The Fine Arts
Building, our headquarter.

- 10am : Symposium 3
- 12:15pm: meal provided
- 1pm :Performance of Kayfabe
- 4pm :Performance of Organismo
- 6pm :Catapult Alumni Party
- 7.30pm: Performance of J.M Coetzee's life & times of Michael K
- 10.30pm: Performance of Nasty, Brutish & short- late night puppet cabaret

Day 2

Saturday

25



Symposium 3: Puppet Doing and Being
Notes on sounds and words
Venue: Studebaker Theatre - Fine Arts Building

The Ellen Van Volkenburg Puppetry Symposium featured a series of roundtable discussions in which artists and scholars participating in the festival explored ideas, inspirations, and the intersection of puppetry with other artistic disciplines. This particular session focused on the significance of sound, language, and music in enhancing the puppet as a visual medium. Each artist shared insights into their creative processes and how they integrated sound into the puppet's identity, performance style, and overall atmosphere.



Organismo by Marana
 Venue: Dance center- Columbia college Chicago
“A psychedelic vision of moving parts”



Kayfabe by Josh Rice
 Venue: Chopin Theatre, mainstage
“Bunraku meets wrestling entertainment.”



J.M. Coetzee's Life & Times of Michael K. by Baxter theatre & Handstring Puppet Co.
“An ancestral journey through humanity.”

- 10am : Symposium 4
- 12.15pm: meal provided
- 2pm: Performance of
“The Scarecrow”
- 4pm: Performance of
“Skeleton Canoe”

Day 3

Sunday

26



***Symposium 4: Puppet Doing and Being
The Image Aspect of the Puppet
Venue: Studebaker Theatre - Fine Arts Building***

This symposium centered on the puppet as both a visual and kinetic object, examining how aesthetics and styles influence its functionality and manipulation. As a designer and visual artist, I found this seminar particularly engaging. The speakers were incredibly inspiring, and I appreciated gaining insight into their creative journeys with puppetry, which showcased a remarkable diversity of approaches. It was refreshing to hear established artists emphasize that the true essence of puppetry lies in exploration and that there are countless ways to bring ideas to life.



The Scarecrow by Anthony Michael Stokes
Venue: The Dusable Black History Museum and Education Center
“Oz in the community”

Skeleton Canoe by All my relations Collective
Venue: The Biograph’s Richard Christiansen Theater
“Wisdom under water”



I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Chicago Puppet Festival. It was an incredible experience, that truly enriched my artistic practice. The festival program featured a diverse array of curated shows and inspiring symposium sessions that deepened my understanding of contemporary puppetry. The social aspect of the Catapult program allowed me to connect with artists from across the USA, as well as a few international colleagues who share my passion for puppetry. I made new friends and engaged with the American puppetry scene, exploring audience reactions while reconnecting with dear friends from UNIMA USA. Additionally, I had the chance to discover a bit of the vibrant city of Chicago.

THANK YOU!

Reflections

