

Fishing for Fresh ideas

SUMMARY

**of Fresh Ideas being presented at the
24th UNIMA World Congress – Unbordering Puppetry**

Chuncheon

May 28th 2025

Aina Ramolete (Philippines)

Pagkukubli (Concealment)

Good day everyone, I am Aina Ramolete, and I'm a puppeteer from Manila, Philippines. I am currently pursuing my Master's degree in Puppet Arts at the University of Connecticut. This piece originated as a final project for my directing class and has since evolved into a deeper exploration of form, history, and immersive storytelling. It is a movement-based performance that integrates an otome bunraku-style puppet, masks, and video mapping to create a layered visual and emotional narrative.

The work draws from a deeply personal and political source: the Martial Law era in the Philippines, which began in the 1970s and spanned fourteen years. This period was marked by widespread abductions, extrajudicial killings, suppression of free speech, and grave human rights violations—an oppressive legacy that continues to echo in contemporary Philippine society and beyond. The piece is, in part, a response to this dark chapter of our history and a commentary on the present, where the son of the former dictator now holds the highest office in the country. His election in 2022 was a stark reminder of the cyclical nature of power and a painful blow to those who fought—and continue to fight—for justice and democratic freedom.

At its core, this work also serves as an inquiry into the integration of traditional puppetry with emerging digital technologies. I have previously created works that experimented with video mapping, and this piece represents a continuation and deepening of that research. My goal is to develop an immersive theatrical environment where puppets, digital media, and live performers converge—inviting audiences not only to witness but to engage. I envision a space where viewers move beyond passive spectatorship to become active participants in the experience, forging a more intimate and dynamic connection with the performance.



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Ana Lorite (Spain/New Zealand)

“Wandering Strings”

Between 2017 and 2020, together with my life and artistic partner Sergio Aguilar, we developed with Naranjarte an independent educational and artistic project that led us through 14 countries across 4 continents. We performed in large cities and remote areas, collaborated with 21 schools, and interviewed 35 teachers and 55 puppeteers. Our aim was to explore puppetry's role in second language learning and its value as a tool for intercultural communication. What began as pedagogical research became a celebration of puppetry as a powerful means of human connection, beyond language or origin.

The project was self-managed and self-funded thanks to our life savings and street performances of our show, and it gave rise to a draft of an interactive book enriched with QR codes linking to documentary videos. We are currently seeking support to publish and share it widely.

In 2020, we settled in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Since then, I've worked as a teacher using puppets daily in the classroom, and with Naranjarte we created two new wordless shows blending puppetry and juggling. In 2024, we resumed international touring, offering performances and workshops, and sharing our vision of puppetry as a bridge between cultures.

This presentation shares our life experience travelling with a show in our backpack, the lessons learned, and reflections on the borders between art, education, and dream-chasing.



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Hélène Ducharme (Canada)

Creating puppet theater for children on the autism spectrum.

Motus puppet theatre company has been developing original creations for young audiences since 2001 and tours the world with its productions. Since 2017, we have been working on a research and creation component where we integrate puppetry, acting and live, specifically for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and/or intellectual disability.

TREE: a world in itself

In 2022, Motus created a first interactive sensory play for ASD youngsters. This piece, designed for 5 families, or 1 class group of up to 8, has been performed 200 times in Quebec and Canada, as well as at the Lincoln Center in New-York.

Adapting for babies

We developed a version for babies from 0 to 3 that is performed with the same touring team, in the same set. This has been a great help in getting presenters, used to programming baby shows, to take the risk of programming the ASD version. We now had two versions of the show, performed with the same touring team on the same set.

Workshop-shows for specialized classes

We also have developed workshop-shows for schools. 2 in-class workshops and 1 workshop that takes place in the school swimming pool with one or two classes at a time.

FAN (Festival of Arts for Neurodiversity)

Motus is putting together a brand-new festival, the only one of its kind in Canada: The Festival of Arts for Neurodiversity, which will offer national and international content specially created for neurodiverse children. FAN will be launched in April 2027.



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Ryoko Umemuro

Watage – “Arts for Me” for Everyone

Project Overview:

Many people—due to illness, disability, age, poverty, or caregiving—cannot access performing arts. *Watage* aims to create a society where everyone can enjoy arts and culture in ways tailored to their needs. Based on surveys and interviews, artists, researchers, and people with lived experience will co-create personalized puppet performances for each individual. We will develop flexible, accessible methods and share them freely to support a more inclusive society.

Objective:

To ensure that socially vulnerable individuals can access performing arts regardless of their physical, mental, or environmental conditions. We also aim to explore new potentials of the arts and inform cultural policy in Japan.

Background:

We have presented puppet theater to special-needs schools and welfare institutions and witnessed its positive impact. Yet many are still excluded due to health issues or mobility. Most performances offer standardized content and rural areas lack access to professional performers. Cultural engagement is a human right and promotes well-being for everyone.

Activities:

1. Research: Surveys/interviews to understand needs and effects of puppet theater.
2. Development: Create personalized works, inclusive methods, and sustainability.
3. Sharing: Publish results online and hold workshops and symposium.

Outcomes:

Improved access, well-being, creative innovation, and input for inclusive cultural policy.

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Jenny Ellis (Australia)

Turn Off The Dark

Turn Off the Dark is a new puppetry performance about positive mental health, being made with and for primary school children. The title was inspired by the words of a child who wanted a light to be turned on, but instead asked for the darkness to be turned off. It captures the way in which children perceive the world differently to adults and how they make sense of their own experiences. Our creative approach celebrates their unique perspective and sees them as equal creative partners.

The story is about a boy who finds himself alone in a black-out. As the noises of the night intrude, his worries distort his perception of the world. The puppeteer plays the role of his inner voice - his unhelpful inner voice. It explores the kind of conversations we all have with ourselves inside our own heads - that often only make things worse. His fears create a monster, where there really is only a possum....

The show is about darker emotions, like anxiety, about how to process those feelings to allow the light back in. Around 13.6% of Australian children are experiencing a mental health disorder. Despite recent investments in mental health in Australia, early intervention in childhood has been largely overlooked. Children whose mental health challenges are identified early see immediate and long-term benefits across their lifespan. We aren't ever going to eliminate these feelings, but this show aims to give children tools to help work through them when they arise, rather than getting stuck.



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Louis Sergejev (France)

***Entièrement peuplée* (Entirely Populated)**

With *Entièrement Peuplée*, the collective is writing a modern mythology based in a given territory and inspired by its inhabitants. This creative project is developed and reinvented with each new partner, according to the realities and challenges of its territory, and for a defined period of time. By going out to meet local residents, the collective seeks to reveal situations that are both familiar, rooted in the everyday life, and beyond, amplified to the point of taking on a truly mythical dimension. The people we meet become the protagonists, heroes or anti-heroes, of our works.

We create puppets in the likeness of local people: they become the puppets, and give them their own faces, voices, and personality. By using photography and 3D printing, the puppets can be sheath or human-sized puppet.

An *Entièrement Peuplée* creation leads to a theatrical presentation in the public space and/or an exhibition. Our stagings can include puppetry, podcasts and audio montages, music or photography, depending on the artists involved.

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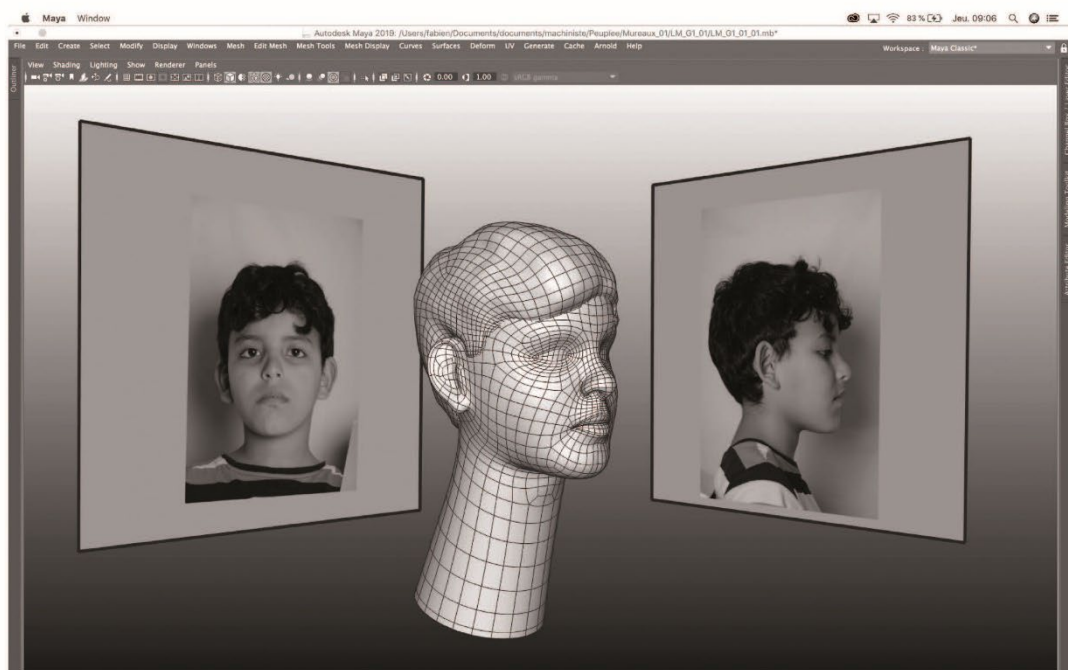
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On the following pages Le Printemps du Machiniste is presenting some pictures because they unfortunately could not present on-site.



1. Photographie et modélisation des portraits des habitant-e-s pour les imprimer en 3D.



2. Les photos sont apposées sur les sculptures vierges grâce au principe d'hydrographie.



3. Marionnettes à gaines à l'effigie des habitant·e·s de Clamart.



4. Ginette rencontre la marionnette à son effigie à l'issue d'une représentation qui mettait en scène sa parole et son histoire.