

Hobey Ford's Golden Rod Puppets

Migration

Study guide

“Migration”

Description of “Migration”

Migration is the story of Beatriz, a young girl from Mexico who must find her home in the world as she immigrates with her Papa to the US leaving behind her beloved grandfather. Her grandfather gives her a book about the animals that must migrate to survive. The book not only gives her comfort in her struggles but also inspires her to help the monarch butterflies whose migration will take them on the same route as her own, and whose winter forest refuge is in danger from woodcutters back in her hometown. Beatriz also learns lessons from the stories of polar bears, a bird called the godwit and a sperm whale and her baby. Hobey Ford brings Beatriz to life through storytelling, bunraku style puppetry and animation performing within a projected video scrim proscenium creating a seamless and almost hypnotic dance between the puppeteer, puppets and original artistic scenery. Migration is a gorgeous production with a touching story of hope and change.

This performance is an excellent companion to the study of animals, migration, metamorphosis of the monarch butterfly, Mexico, immigration, environmental awareness and geography.

PUPPETRY STYLES USED IN MIGRATION

Migration utilizes several puppetry styles including Czech black theater, bunraku style puppetry and projected scrim proscenium. The puppets in migration are carved foam rubber figures which are painted and manipulated by rods. Hobey Ford is a pioneer in this innovative style of puppet he calls foamies.

SCRIM

A thin veil of material that when lit from the front appears to be opaque, yet when objects are lit behind the scrim, the scrim appears to become transparent. Scrimms have been used for hundreds of years in theater.

CZECH BLACK THEATER

This technique of puppetry requires the puppeteer to dress completely in black including a hood and gloves, while performing in front of a black backdrop. The theater is darkened and the puppeteer performs the puppet within a “curtain of light”. The puppet appears alive while the puppeteer disappears in the darkness behind the “curtain of light”.

PROJECTED SCRIM PROSCENEUM

This novel new technique utilizes Czech black theater with the addition of a thin scrim or screen in between the puppets and the audience. Images are projected onto this screen which can include slides, video and animation.

BUNRAKU STYLE PUPPETRY

This style of puppetry is adapted from traditional Japanese form of bunraku, borrowing the technique of working a puppet in close proximity through rods which control the head arms and legs of the figure. In bunraku style puppetry the puppeteer works in full view of the audience, usually dressed in black.

BIOGRAPHY

Winner of puppetry's highest honor, the UNIMA Citation of Excellence, and recipient of three Jim Henson Foundation grants, Hobey Ford is known for excellence in puppetry performance and craft.

Hobey's intricate shadow puppetry work and creation of the original rod puppets, the "Foamies", have earned him a place on stages across the world. Hobey's performances incorporate a variety of puppetry styles including Bunraku, rod, marionettes, "Foamies", and shadow puppetry. Hobey adapts folk tales from various cultures for many of his performances, always adding a special "Golden Rod" twist. He uses his own voice to create characters and sound effects, tell stories, and sing.

Hobey is considered both an innovator in puppetry craft and a master storyteller. He has created both the "Foamies" and the clever hand puppet known as "Peepers". The "Foamies" are large animal puppets carved from blocks of foam. After studying each animal's characteristic movements, Hobey designs various control mechanisms to make the puppets themselves move in a life-like manner. The "Foamies" are presented using both stage and house performance space.

Hobey Ford's Golden Rod Puppets maintain a busy schedule performing and teaching in schools, performing arts centers, museums, libraries, and festivals. Hobey presents shadow puppet workshops for students and teachers. His teacher workshops include "Telling Folktales with Shadow Puppetry" and "From Larvae to Butterfly: Metamorphosis Through Puppetry". He lives in the North Carolina mountains with his wife, musician Sue Ford and they have three daughters, all talented as well.

SHADOW PUPPET PROJECT

MATERIALS AND TOOLS

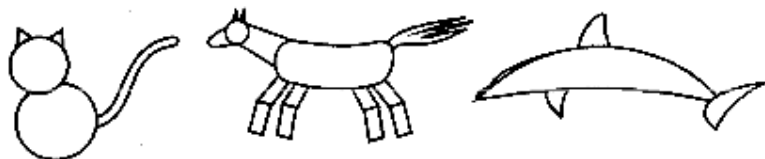
- Black (or blue, or green) poster board. One 7" X 11" or two 5-1/2" X 7" (poster board comes 22" X 28")
- Art tissue in assorted rainbow colors. One pack per 10 workshops
- Bamboo skewers. 12" length approx. one pack per 25 participants.
- 1/2" paper fasteners. 3/4" will work
- Masking tape. 1/2" width or 3/4" several rolls for convenience.
- Hole punch. 1/8" diameter is best, but regular 1/4" size is fine. Several for convenience
- Glue sticks, several for convenience.
- Pencil, one each
- Scissors, one each

PREPARATION

- Cut poster board into (8) – 11" X 7" or 5-1/2" pieces. Allow for one or two pieces per student.
- Trim sharp ends off skewers using wire cutters (on pair of needle nose pliers or piers), metal shears or garden pruners.

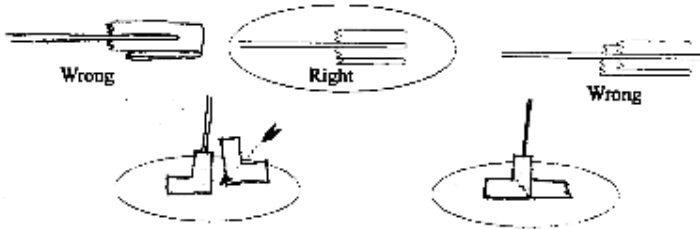
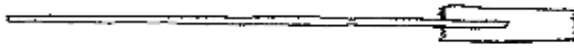
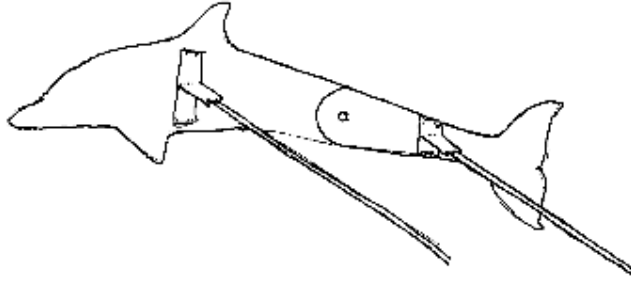
MAKING SHADOW PUPPETS

Have students draw the outline of a person or animal on their piece of 11" X 7" poster board, making the drawing as large as possible. Drawings smaller than their flat hand are difficult to work with.



Cut out drawings with scissors. For students above 2nd grade consider having moving parts on the shadow puppet. Moving parts can be attached using a hole punch and a paper fastener. Bend fasteners over the tip of a scissor to create a loose and freely swinging joint.

Tape on rods to make parts move. Try to limit students to two rods, unless three rods are necessary to control the puppet. Often it is sufficient to let the legs of a puppets dangle and swing without any rod.



SHADOW PUPPET THEATER

MATERIALS AND TOOLS

- Card board project display board. Available at office supply.
- Shower curtain liner or white bulletin board paper.
- Sturdy yard stick.
- Lamp extension cord, a power strip will allow you to turn it on and off easily, or you can install a switch or dimmer in the cord.
- Plug in light socket (see illustration 1.)
- Duct tape, to tape the screen onto the theater.
- Rubber bands, 2-3" diameter 1/4" width approx. 2 or 3 will do.
- Aluminum foil, 3 feet of it.
- Utility knife, a nice new sharp disposable one for cutting out proscenium
- Two pencils

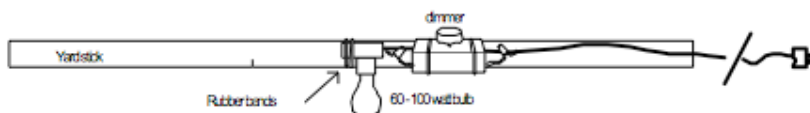
I. PROSCENIUM

Make a compass for drawing a 24" circle. You can use a couple of pencils and rubber bands to fasten the pencils a foot apart on a yard stick as in the illustrations of the shadow puppet theater construction. After scribing the circle onto the display board, use a utility or razor knife to score the circle and then cut deeper until the circle is removable.

Decorate the façade of the theater at this time if you wish.

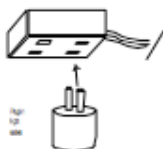
II. SCREEN

Lay a piece of either paper or shower curtain liner over the proscenium opening and mark and cut out the screen material in a square so that it overlaps the edges of the circle by an 1-1/2". Tape the corners with duct tape, stretching the screen as you tape. Next stretch and tape the middle points of the top, bottom and side edges. Now lay duct tape along the whole perimeter of the screen as shown in the illustration.



III. LIGHT BAR

Cut notches on the top edge of each wing of the display board, 1-1/4" deep and 1/4" wide, 8" from intersection with the center panel. These notches will hold a sturdy yard stick which will carry the light fixture.



Plug the light socket into the extension cord into the outlet slots closest to the end which the wire comes out of, on the side of the extension cord which has two spaces for plug ins. Refer to the illustration. Attach the socket/ extension cord to the center of the yard stick, using a rubber band, as shown in illustration.

Install a 60 to 100 watt light bulb into socket. Make a lamp reflector out of a piece of aluminum foil 3 ft. long, folded into a rectangle approximately 6" X 8". Attach the visor to the light socket with a rubber band.

IV. DIMMER SWITCH

Adding a dimmer switch to the extension cord on your light bar adds versatility to your theater. If you want to skip this detail, you can either unplug the cord to turn off light or plug the cord into a power strip which will give you an easy on off switch.

Locate the spot on the extension cord where you want to install the dimmer switch. With the cord UNPLUGGED cut the center crease between the wires several inches, referring to the illustration. Cut one of wires and strip the ends around 1/2". To each stripped end, twist together one of the wires coming off the dimmer switch. Twist on wire nuts, which usually come with the dimmer switch.

Shadow Puppet Stage

