

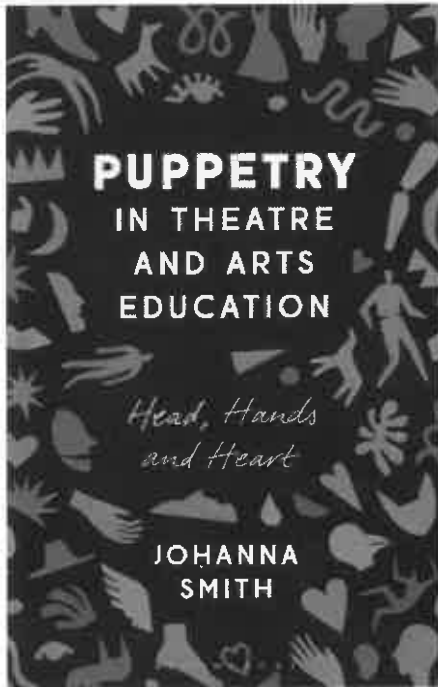
A Potpourri of Puppetry Books

Puppetry in Theatre and Arts Education: Head, Hands and Heart

By Johanna Smith

Reviewed by Cheryl Capezzuti

Johanna Smith has created a beautiful resource for teachers, artists and anyone else interested in exploring the art of puppetry with children. *Puppetry in Theatre and Arts Education: Head, Hands and Heart* is equal parts how-to and inspiration, with an emphasis on how puppetry allows us to be more connected as collaborators while activating learning through many disciplines.



While she specifically targets this book towards novices to the art of puppetry, I believe that even experienced puppeteers that work regularly with children will find inspiration in her work.

Throughout the book, Smith shares her own experiences and methods for success. She highlights how well-planned experiences will result in open-ended experimentation. It is important to note that this is not a book full of puppet templates, although she does

offer some copy-able specifics that make her work accessible. Rather, her emphasis is placed on how to create a well-planned framework that allows for open-ended creative activity in all areas

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of the art form. From writing and making to performing, she offers methods for teachers and artists on how to teach children in and with the art of puppetry. I was especially drawn to her critique format for puppetry: What worked? What surprised? What if? Her questions capture the spirit of the book: How do we challenge and support children in their learning through the art of puppetry while lifting them up as joyful makers and learners?

Throughout the book she also shares examples of how puppetry can meet academic standards in many disciplines and bring learning to life in an authentic and assessable way. It is clear that she embraces the joy that puppetry can bring to a classroom, even while underscoring the idea that if we want this art form to thrive in public education today it needs to meet the standards and expectations of many different decision-makers. I applaud her for making a case for fostering joy in learning and offering truly supportive advice on how someone new to the art form could successfully use it in their classroom. She makes a strong case for why puppetry could be an integral part of learning in any classroom.

If you are an educator or puppeteer that enjoys reflecting on the art of teaching, the experience of creative play, and how to bring the craft of our ancestors to life in a contemporary classroom or in your community, Johanna Smith's book should be in your collection.

Cheryl Capezzuti is an artist, educator and puppetmaker who has been working in schools and community settings in Pittsburgh for more than 20 years. She is a faculty member the University of Pittsburgh where she runs a middle school art studio at Falk Lab School and teaches Arts Integration to undergraduate students. Her Giant Puppet Dance Club is dedicated to connecting people through the joy of puppetry. Learn more at www.studiocapezzuti.com.

Women and Puppetry Edited by Alissa Mello, Claudia Orenstein, and Cariad Astles

Women and Puppetry is the first publication dedicated to the study of women in the field of puppetry arts. It includes critical articles and personal accounts. The 222 page volume published by Routledge is in three parts: "Critical Perspectives," "Local Contexts: changes and transformations," and "Women Practitioners Speak," with essays by women from Argentina, France, Indonesia, Kenya, South Africa, Taiwan, and USA. Available from Amazon \$38.49.

