

# PUPPETRY IN PRACTICE





# PIP PUPPETRY IN PRACTICE PIP

## Notes from 0712 James Hall...

It is a very busy time here at PIP. We will soon be creating Chinese folk arts with Junior High school students in Queens, recreating West African folktales in Brooklyn schools in a collaborative program with the School of Education of Brooklyn College, and continuing our stop-motion animation projects in the Bronx. We have new artists at PIP and through the help of the Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council for the Arts and The New York State Office of Technology, we are exploring world cultures through their folktales and folk arts.



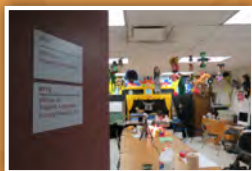
As we design curriculum materials to supplement our school residencies we are finding that the key features of the Common Core literacy standards really lend themselves to integrated teaching through the arts in which texts are explored on many levels. When texts are interpreted through writing, theater, puppetry, visual arts and animation, the thinking is multi-dimensional and the students can share talents and interests in many ways. The kind of learning that we see taking place with these methods is participatory and accessible to students with different language and cognitive abilities.

We hope to inspire students to question the world around them, interact positively with their peers and express their point of view through the arts.

*Tova Ackerman*

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# A CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION at the BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

PIP celebrated the Chinese Lunar New Year with an exciting festival at the Brooklyn Children's Museum. PIP's Monica Lerch and Alex Evans performed a traditional Chinese Folktale, *The Empty Pot*, as a spectacular shadow puppet performance. Following the performance, guests participated in our Dragon Walk workshop where our large Chinese dragon puppet, operated by 14 children, traveled through the entire museum. The children decorated small, red paper squares with their wishes for the world and fed the wishes to the dragon as it passed to ensure a good year to come. Children also created an oversized snake book with wishes and cheer for the New Year.







# EXPLORING THE LANDMARKS OF NYC

with Angelo DeCesare, Author/Illustrator of Flip's Fantastic Journal

## Stop-Motion Animation combines with 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Social Studies curriculum and Author Studies

For the past two years, PIP has had amazing success with an exceptional author studies/stop-motion animation program in schools throughout the NYC area. This unique residency combines computer technology, core curricula and the popular characters from author/illustrator Angelo DeCesare's "Flip's Fantastic Journal" series. Under DeCesare's guidance, students hone their computer skills and learn to create wonderful cut paper, stop-motion animations based on important topics such as anti-bullying and anger management.

Now, PIP has a brand-new animation program that enables teachers and students in Grade 2, to focus on any of the major landmarks from NYC's five boroughs. Focusing on the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, the Empire State Building, Coney Island, the Brooklyn Bridge and the Bronx Botanical Garden, students can study the landmarks that make NYC great like never before.





An important component of this program is that classes are divided into animation teams of 4-6 students. This means that students must learn to work together, compromise and make decisions that benefit the entire group, rather than the individual. Every member has the same goal: to make the best animation possible!

*The students were engaged in play and writing based on literature. This program helped them understand concepts easily.*

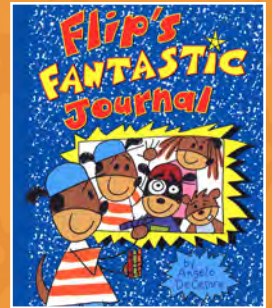
*-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher, PS 217*

The greatest benefit of the program may be the immense pride that each student feels when the landmark animation is completed. They take pride in their newfound knowledge about an important subject. They take pride in the fact that they have learned to work successfully within a group. But best of all is the pride that they feel when they tell friends and family, "I'm an animator!"



The residency is broken up into 5 easy steps. Each step brings something new, informative and exciting to a class.

**STEP ONE:** Students meet the fabulous "Flip" characters and learn about NYC landmarks through DeCesare's books.



**STEP TWO:** Students team up to create a storyboard about their landmark. A storyboard is the basic outline students will use to create their animations.



**STEP THREE:** Each team creates colorful, collaged background sets and movable puppet characters for their animations.



**STEP FOUR:** Students learn the SAM animation software, and then it's time to animate! Teams use laptop computers and webcams to bring their storyboards to life.



**STEP FIVE:** When animations are completed, students add titles and credits and finally, sound. Students narrate the animation by recording their own voices and sound effects.





# TEACHING with ANIMATION

Integrating new media technologies to re-create Fables and Folktales





## Common Core Standards for English Language Arts in Literacy. College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening.

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.



For several years PIP has brought its **Puppet Animation Laboratory** workshops to classrooms throughout the NYC area. Ranging from claymation workshops to cut-paper, stop motion animation, students in all grades have been able to integrate technology and new media into their studies of almost any story or subject.

Over the past 3 years, teaching artist Jason Leinwand, aided by Alexandra Evans and Monica Lerch, has focused on PIP's animation residencies with a goal of emphasizing the collaborative nature of the project to align with College and Career Readiness goals set in the Common Core Standards.

Through funding from the New York State Council on the Arts, 3rd graders in PS 315 in Brooklyn are working together to re-create the *Anansi Does the Impossible* story, while 3rd graders in PS 46 (Bronx) and Our Lady of Refuge created their own versions of Arnold Lobel's *Fables* through a Learning through Technology Grant. In both cases, the success of the project depends greatly on the students' ability to plan their work, communicate

their ideas to one another and form positive working habits around those conversations.

PIP believes that classroom teachers can learn how to effectively integrate animation lessons into their teaching practice to address a lot of the initiatives laid out in the Common Core Standards. These techniques encourage conversation and listening; critiquing, responding and reacting; and a constant evaluation of the group work with the purpose of changing and improving working habits.

One of the most exciting aspects of the programs is seeing dozens of students successfully learning from each other. Throughout the process, each student has the ability to lend their particular strengths to the group. In many instances, these strengths are so varied, that each student is able to take charge and lead the group at some point.

Ultimately, an animation can focus on any area of content and be successful. What makes the process successful is the combination of play and improvisation that comes with animating and the rigor and desire to watch the work, discuss how to make it better and actually achieve that goal.







# CHINESE FLOUR DOUGH SCULPTURE WITH MASTER XUN YE





Flour dough modeling is a traditional Chinese handicraft that has continued to develop for over 700 years. During the Sung Dynasty, ornamental dough patterns decorated feast dishes. Dough sculptures would also be used as offerings for holidays and ceremonies. Animal shapes were common even then and children often used these as toys.

PIP's Art Director, Xun Ye, is a master craftsman in the ancient Chinese folk art of flour dough sculpture. His ability to sculpt meticulously detailed miniature sculptures from homemade dough made of cooking flour continuously delights students, teachers and parents. In this extremely unique residency, students learn basic sculpture techniques and come away with their own playful sculptures of animals and flowers.

This is an excellent program for students studying the art, culture and history of China. In the past, 3<sup>rd</sup> graders studying the Chinese Zodiac have created delightful sculptures of the 12 animals to go along with their research. Additionally, flour dough sculpture can be combined with shadow puppetry or cut-paper workshops or Chinese New Year festivals for a more comprehensive study of Chinese folk arts and culture.







CELEBRATING THE YEAR  
OF THE HORSE WITH  
CHINESE FOLK ARTS AT  
P.S. 94







After nearly 30 years apart, PIP is thrilled to have reconnected with PS 94 in Brooklyn.

In 1980, PS 94 was the very first school we worked in. Under Title 7 funding, PIP was contracted to teach ESL through theater in both english and spanish. All these years later, after presenting a talk at the Brooklyn Reading Council, PS 94 and PIP are back working together to bring Chinese Folk Arts and Folktales to life with a series of residencies, events, and spectacular displays throughout the school.

PIP's Artistic Director Xun Ye highlights the program with a 20-day residency for students in Grades K-5. Students study a wide variety of Chinese Folk Arts to create colorful paper-cuts, lanterns, paper plate horses and large cardboard dragon puppets.

All the projects will be put on display in the school's auditorium to create a magical venue for the students to celebrate Chinese New Year and Chinese culture.

In addition to the study of Chinese Folk Arts, 3rd grade students will participate in an 11-week residency with PIP's Jason Leinwand to explore classic Chinese Folktales through stop-motion animation. Through funding from the New York State Council on the Arts, students will re-create and re-tell classic tales such as *The Empty Pot* and *The Magic Brush*. Through their studies of the stories, students will also learn about China's geography, culture and customs in order to make more content driven movies.





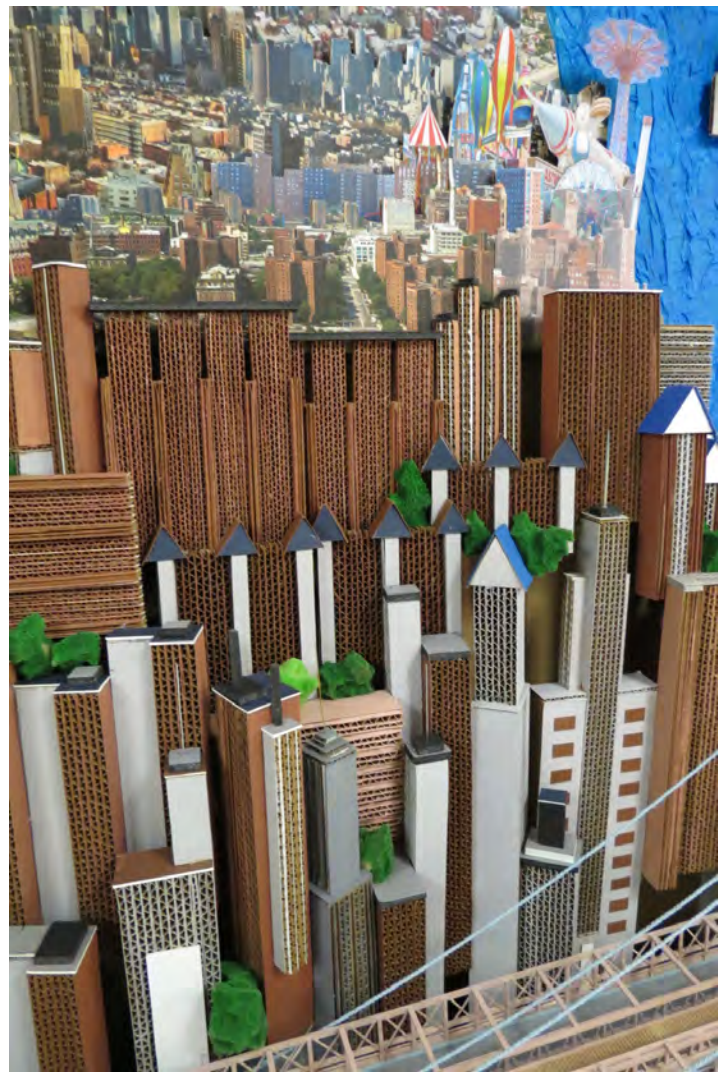


# BRIDGING BROOKLYN DISPLAY

To celebrate the completion of *Bridging Brooklyn*, our most recent project, Xun Ye created this spectacular display replica of the Brooklyn Bridge. Xun spent the better part of a year constructing this detailed masterpiece out of wood, cardboard, paper mache and more. The display is on view at our Resource Center in Brooklyn College. Visitors are encouraged to come see this incredible work and learn more about this exciting program.









# PIP's NEW EDUCATION INTERSECTION: Puppetry and Theatre Meet in the Classroom

Puppetry in Practice is expanding its comprehensive classroom reach by joining forces with a new, Brooklyn College-supported theatre program at PS 159 called **CLASSact**. Reflecting an acronym, **CLASSact** combines the elements of Collaboration, Literacy and Social Studies in a performing arts program.

We are thrilled to be engaging in this new partnership, which has many facets that deepen the impact of classroom learning.

**CLASSact** is currently housed at PS 159, under the direction of a Theatre teacher dedicated to the entire elementary school, Mr. Robert Randazzo. Through theatre, Mr. Randazzo explores age-appropriate themes of various curriculum-based social studies and literature requirements. Mr. Randazzo and his students are knee-deep in developing a history-based, live-performance musical romp titled "The Somewhat True Tale of the Boston Tea Party," with a multi-faculty creative team including Ed Stankewick, Melissa Cacace-Vila, Robert Drennan and Dahlia Oliver. PS 159's principal, Dr. Monica Duncan, and retired assistant principal Naomi Spielvogel lend the enthusiastic support.

Partnering with PS 159 and the **CLASSact** team at Brooklyn College is a way of deepening this year's exploration of West African and Bengali folk tales. PS 159 will be building a comprehensive program with PIP.

With the growing incorporation of puppetry into theatre productions, theatre is a natural extension for PIP. In fact, PIP is now widening its educational reach by incorporating live performance into select programs,

and by bringing theatre director Michael Perreca, an adjunct professor at Brooklyn College, on board.

PIP started with storytelling and puppetry, and now encompasses animation. The next step is to enlarge its theatre-based presence.

To immediately engage teachers of tomorrow into this comprehensive approach to learning, **CLASSact** and Puppetry in Practice are also working with Childhood, Bilingual and Special Education students at Brooklyn College who connect to the program as part of their field work.

At PS 159, student teachers are able to work with Randazzo, who is also an adjunct professor at Brooklyn College. Randazzo and Perreca discovered that many students enrolled in their class entitled "Performing Arts Techniques for the Classroom Teacher" left invigorated, excited and wanting a continued connection to the performing arts. This new initiative provides immediate, in-classroom access to an

exciting, kinesthetic learning process for many students and teachers.

Brooklyn College faculty supporting **CLASSact** also includes Profs. Wayne Reed, Meral Kaya, Laura Ascenzi-Moreno and Herman Jiesamfoek, bringing their expertise to the comprehensive program.

PS 159 is part of a five-school PIP program, **Bridges to Culture**, funded by both NYC's Dept. of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts. These projects enhance literacy and explore the world through folktales.

At PS 315, for instance, the students are developing stop-motion animation projects with Jason Leinwand and Alexandra Evans based on West African folktales about Anansi the spider. At the suggestion of The School of Education Dean, Deborah Shanley, PIP has linked these schools to a previous project in Freetown, Sierra Leone that also focused on an exchange of folklore.





# PIP's NEWEST ARTISTS!



## Alex Evans

Hailing from the strange and wonderful land of Florida, Alex holds an MFA in Painting from the New York Academy of Art and a BFA from the Ringling College of Art and Design. She is currently working with PIP on a Chinese Folk Art/Papercrafts residency at IS 85 in Flushing, Queens and assisting in the creation of another "Flip's Fantastic Journal" animation program in PS 217 in Brooklyn. Alex joined PIP exactly one year ago and during her time here she has created props and costumes as well as backstage direction for our circus production of "Building of the Brooklyn Bridge" at P.S 46 in Brooklyn. Alex also has assisted in several exciting stop motion animation programs alongside other resident PIP artists. In her spare time she enjoys hobbies such as hiking, fishing, knitting, crocheting and exploring imaginary worlds.



## Monica Lerch

Monica Lerch is a performer, puppeteer and teaching artist from Chicago, now living in Brooklyn. She is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College where she studied physical theater, dance, puppetry and Spanish, and taught theatre arts to 3rd and 4th graders through the Theatre Outreach program at School 30 in Yonkers. Since then she has worked as a teaching artist in Chicago for the youth circus organization, CircEsteem, and in NYC for the Bindlestiff Family Cirkus, the New York Kids Club, and now PIP. Monica is in the process of co-developing a curriculum in African Folklore and Shadow Puppetry for the PIP residency with PS190 in Brooklyn. She hopes to continue working with PIP as a performer and resident artist, and will be developing a shadow puppet production based on the Wisdom of King Solomon in Jewish folklore.



## Tracy Viergela Pierre

Tracy Viergela Pierre is an internationally published poet, writer, dancer and all around performer. Ms. Pierre "Performs for Progress" and she punctuates each performance with relatable information that can be absorbed by a range of audiences. Ms. Pierre embraces her rich Haitian roots through One-Woman shows and rhythmic poetry in Kreyol and English. Tracy is the mother of Harmony Divine. Her daughter is harmonic in both song-writing and composing poetry. Tracy is currently enrolled as student at Brooklyn College for the 2013 fall semester. Tracy Viergela Pierre, truly believes that Artists Can Create a Revolution!!!



# TOILET PAPER ROLL PUPPETS

## — with Judy Schwartz —

That ubiquitous crafter's staple, the toilet paper roll, may be in danger of extinction. Already there is a manufacturer who is advertising toilet paper that does not contain a cardboard core. For Judy Schwartz; artist, teacher and member of PIP's Board of Directors, this means finding a new source of inspiration for her puppets. She transforms these seemingly useless items into unique, charming puppet characters that adorn her home, the PIP Folklore Museum, and Center at Brooklyn College.

For years, Judy has been designing puppets that repurpose recycled materials such as plastic water bottles, egg cartons and plastic silverware. Recently, Judy has focused on using the leftover, cardboard toilet paper rolls to create her wonderful puppets.

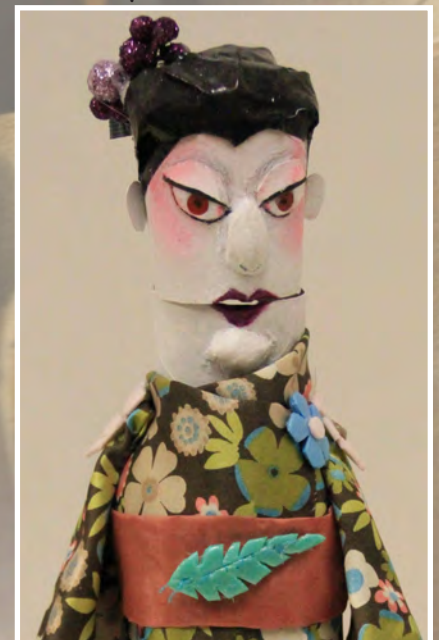
"The rolls are widely available (for now, anyway), easily cut, of uniform size and shape, and a color akin to multiple skin tones," Schwartz says. "With pistachio nut or cherry pit noses, styrofoam eyes and teeth, plastic bottle bodies, pipe cleaner moustaches and beards and various other recycled materials, the toilet paper roll puppets come to life."



They are really fun to make. The only limit is your imagination. They can be as realistic or as goofy as you like.

Judy encourages artists and teachers to look around to see what can be used. The aluminum lids from yogurt and cashew nuts became the armor for a knight. Little rolls of white paper made the wig for the Marie Antoinette puppet. Recycled "scrunchies" made the turban and tube top of the calypso lady.

"If you can't or don't want to sew the costumes, there is a fabric glue available at craft stores that works wonderfully well at adhering fabric to plastic bottles and other fabric as well as to metal. Try it! Have fun!"



More of Judy's puppets can be viewed online at:  
[www.puppetsgogreen.com](http://www.puppetsgogreen.com)







# THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER AT BROOKLYN COLLEGE

## ECC







During the Fall, the Early Childhood Center at Brooklyn College sailed away on their magic sailboat to a fantastical jungle world of their own creation, to seek adventure and wonder.

Following Max from *Where the Wild Things Are* and various tales of Anansi the Spider, our youngest of students explored these stories and lands through hands-on activities with clay, painting and puppetry as well as dramatic play in their classrooms.

Working alongside PIP's Jason Leinwand and Monica Lerch, students and teachers from the ECC collaborated once again to provide these early learners with fun and challenging ways to unlock the stories they love.





# PIP'S PROGRAMS



Flip's Fantastic Journal Series



Stop Motion Animation



Chinese Folk Arts



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