



MANUAL CINEMA FACT SHEET

BIO + HISTORY:

MANUAL CINEMA combines handmade shadow puppetry, cinematic motifs, and live sound manipulation to create immersive theatrical stories. Using overhead projectors, multiple screens, paper puppets, actors, live feed cameras, and a live band, Manual Cinema transforms the experience of attending the cinema and imbues it with liveness, ingenuity, and theatricality. They aim to combine the lightness of film with the heaviness of theater. Manual Cinema translates cinematic language into analogue shadow puppetry, emulating montage, camera movement, and depth of field using handmade visual effects. Inspired by early cinema, stories are conveyed without dialogue, relying instead on rich, multi-channel sound design and live music.

Manual Cinema was founded in 2010 by five Chicago artists with diverse backgrounds in theatre, visual arts, music, and sound art. They have created two feature length live cinematic shadow puppet shows; site-specific installations; music videos for Sony Masterworks, Gabriel Kahane, and eighth blackbird; cinematic trailers; a collection of shorts in collaboration with poet Zachary Schomburg and string quartet Chicago Q Ensemble; and live cinematic puppet adaptations of StoryCorps stories.

PAST PROJECTS:

Manual Cinema's work has been presented at The Tehran International Puppet Festival, X Fest at SIUE, Handmade Worlds Puppet Festival, The Screenwriters' Colony in Nantucket, The Detroit Institute of Art, The Future of Storytelling Conference NYC, the NYC Fringe Festival, The Poetry Foundation, The University of Chicago, Hideout Chicago, the Chicago International Music and Movies Festival, the Puppeteers of America: Puppet Festival (R)evolution, and elsewhere.

Manual Cinema was ensemble-in-residence at the University of Chicago in the Theater and Performance Studies program in the fall of 2012, where they taught as adjunct faculty. In 2013 Manual Cinema has held residencies and taught workshops at the School of the Art Institute, Chicago, The Future of Storytelling Conference, NYC, RCAH at Michigan State University, and Puppeteers of

America: Puppet Festival (R)evolution in Swarthmore, PA, Southern Illinois University, and the Chicago Park District.

They most recently created Mementos Mori, a multi-character live feature performed with three screens, which premiered at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in January 2015 to four sold out audiences..

FUTURE PROJECTS:

Currently, they are creating two short films (one based on a Virginia Woolf short story, and one based on ecological/meteorological research), working with Opera Erratica (London) to create a video/sound installation based on *La Celestina* designed for the windows in the Velez Blanco patio at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in March 2015, working with Hubbard Street dance on a feature length piece for children and families to premiere in October 2015 at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, and an installation based on the poetry of Lorca which will premiere at the O, Miami poetry festival in Miami, FL in April 2015.

WEBSITE:

manualcinema.com

SELECTED PRESS:

“A work of art of such complexity and insight, such whimsy and profundity, that it gives a whole new meaning to the art of “puppet theater.”

– **Hedy Weiss, Chicago Sun-Times, 2015**

“...one of the most engaging things I had seen in ages.”

– **Christopher Borrelli, Chicago Tribune. May 2014**

“The most creative thing you’ve seen all year”

– **Jaime Robinson, Fast Company. February 2013**

“Ingenious multimedia performance”

– **David Cote, Future of Storytelling. 2013**

American artists practice a little shadow puppet diplomacy in Iran (<http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-09-23/american-artists-practice-little-shadow-puppet-diplomacy-iran>)

– **David Leveille, PRI’s The World**