Applied Puppetry in Healthcare and Disability

Abstract

We know that from traces discovered of early uses of the puppet in ancient civilisations, that it was used as a means to accompany the dead from the world of the living to their next world. Puppets in multiple contexts across the world have functioned as mediators between gods, outside forces and humans; the puppet is used in many healing rites throughout cultures. This talk discusses how the puppet can be considered and used as a healing object, accompanying and assisting people through difficult and dangerous terrain. The talk will focus on both traditional and contemporary contexts.

Bios

SPEAKERS: Cariad Astles, University of Exeter/Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and Dr Emma Fisher-Owen, Researcher, puppeteer, theatre artist and educator

Cariad Astles is a specialist in puppetry performance, directing, research and training. She is a Lecturer in puppetry at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and at the University of Exeter, where she also specialises in theatre and health. She is President of the UNIMA Research Commission and has led projects in many countries. She has research interests in puppetry, health and end of life. **Link to full profile**

Dr Emma Fisher-Owen is a researcher, puppeteer, theatre artist and educator. She completed her PhD in puppetry and disability in 2018. Emma's research explores unconventionally constructed puppets that reflect the disabled body. She founded Beyond the Bark, an inclusive puppet and installation theatre in 2007. **Link to full profile**

DESIGNATED ACADEMIC: Dr Susan Linn, Research Associate at Boston Children's Hospital and Lecturer on Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School

Psychologist Dr Susan Linn is Research Associate at Boston Children's Hospital, and Lecturer on Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. An award-winning ventriloquist, she is internationally known for her innovative work using puppets in child psychotherapy, and for creating videos designed to help children cope with difficult issues. **Link to full profile**