



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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### **NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES AWARDS \$40,000 GRANT TO CENTER FOR PUPPETRY ARTS**

**ATLANTA, April 2006** – The Center for Puppetry Arts announces it has been awarded a prestigious \$40,000 planning grant for museums from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The funds will support planning for the Center’s new, long-term on-site exhibition, tentatively scheduled to open in Atlanta in 2010.

The NEH funds will underwrite a portion of the total planning costs for the new exhibition, with additional funds to be provided by individual donors, corporations, foundations, and local and state government funders.

The Center has put together a team\* of renowned curators and historians with extensive knowledge in anthropology, religion, literature, folklore and theater, and in world regions where the museum collection has particular depth (e.g. China, Indonesia, West Africa and Western Europe) to plan an interactive exhibition that brings to life puppetry’s global and ancient history. The exhibition’s prevailing theme will explore puppetry as a universal lens that brings cultures into focus, allowing for the exploration of both shared and unique features of the human experience across the globe and across history.

“The Center is one of only two organizations in the metro Atlanta area to receive such an honor, and one of only seven organizations in the state,” said Vince Anthony, the Barbara and Bill Wyly Executive Director. “We’re thrilled to be recognized by the National Endowment for the Humanities with this prestigious grant and consider it a validation of the Center’s goal to house the premier puppetry museum in the country.”

NEH grants are awarded on a competitive basis. Throughout the year, humanities experts outside of the Endowment and the members of the National Council on the Humanities consider all applications and advise the NEH on the quality and significance of each proposed project. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations which are expressed in any NEH funded projects do not necessarily represent those of the NEH.

“Reviewers admired the ways in which this application analyzes the various means that puppets are used throughout the world to preserve and transmit cultural values and to comment on social, political and economic conditions,” said the NEH. “They also complimented the strength of the CPA’s collections. The Endowment believes that this exhibition will use colorful and interactive displays to dispel a widely held public misconception that puppetry is nothing more than frivolous entertainment for children. Finally, we are persuaded that the well-

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qualified project team identified will be able to plan a layered interpretation that engages children while also presenting substantive humanities ideas to adults.”

### **\*MUSEUM TEAM**

The Museum Planning Committee is spear headed by project director **Kerry McCarthy**, principal of McCarthy Arts Consulting, whose clients include Cirque du Soleil North America, New York Foundation for the Arts, Queens Museum of Art and more. A former museum director at the Center, Ms. McCarthy has a master's in folk art studies from New York University and has curated exhibits for The New York Library for the Performing Arts and the Jim Henson Foundation, among others. **Bradford Clark**, chief curator, is an associate professor in the department of theater and film at Bowling Green State University. **Dr. Eileen Blumenthal**, essayist, is a recipient of several prestigious fellowships (Woodrow Wilson, Guggenheim and National Endowment for the Arts) and is a professor of theater arts at Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts.

The Curatorial Team also includes **Dr. Mary Jo Arnoldi**, curator for African ethnology and arts in the department of anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian; **Dr. John Bell**, assistant professor of performing arts at Emerson College in Boston; **Dr. Fan Pen Chen**, assistant professor of East Asian studies at SUNY-Albany; **Dr. Kathy Foley**, professor of theater at the University of California, Santa Cruz; **Dr. Jane Marie Law**, associate professor in Asian studies at Cornell University; and **Nancy Lohman Staub**, founder of the Center's museum.

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The Center for Puppetry Arts is a non-profit, 501(C3) organization and is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts; the Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly (the Council is a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts); and contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations. Major funding for the Center is provided by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners under the guidance of the Fulton County Arts Council. Major support is provided by the City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs. The Center is a member of Theatre Communications Group and the Atlanta Coalition of Performing Arts. The Center also serves as headquarters of UNIMA-USA.