

VIPR-VOC revisited anno 2023

Virtual International Puppetry Residency - East India Company - revisited

For the future of our planet, people, plants and animals

We have a shared history, we live on the same planet and are all responsible for the future of our world.

Summary

I want to research the possibilities of a VIPR-VOC revisited 2023 during my trip in the first half of 2023. When there is a green light I plan to start the VPR-VOC revisited effectively in the second half of 2023. In 2024 the participants of the first draft organize themselves virtual residencies in their own network. It will be a work in progress whereby we intend to present our results on the occasion of UNIMA XXIV World Congress and International Festival in Chuncheon, South Korea 2025 as an example of a sustainable project with low costs, inclusive, diverse, international, interdisciplinary, intergenerative, intercultural.

I would like to refer to the historical role of the Netherlands as a pre-imperialist country and the desire to play a connecting role right now.

The reason

During COVID times I developed my online skills via my work with Droomtheater Rotterdam. We participated among others in online residencies with South Korea, Canada and the United States with artists from all over the world, elderly in Montreal and (amateur) puppeteers in the Netherlands.

In the summer of 2022 I received an invitation to participate in an international puppetry festival in New Delhi, India for the 3rd week of February 2023. Not much later, the International Organisation of Puppetry (UNIMA) announced to have an important Councilors Meeting at Bali, in Indonesia the end of April 2023. <https://www.unima.org/en/council-2023-registrations-open/>

With so little time between these two manifestations, I thought flying back and forth in these times of energy crisis and climate change, a less responsible choice. Can I use the intervening time more effectively and usefully?

The idea

I would like to research the possibilities of a virtual international puppetry residency for teachers, caretakers and amateur applied puppeteers. The Dutch visited, explored, had trade with, and sometimes even occupied and exploited these countries from 1600 onwards via the Verenigde Oost Indische Company. <https://www.vocsite.nl>

Apart from the history of the VOC also the history of puppetry has very deep roots in these areas. The Dutch are aware of a long tradition of Wayang Kulit in Indonesia. But actually there are so many more techniques, stories, experiences with inclusive, open air, intergenerational, interdisciplinary, (puppet)theatre in these areas. <https://wepa.unima.org/en/>

I used my personal network within UNIMA to get contacts with more possible partners. In this first half year of 2023 I will research the possibilities to actually start this VIPR-VOC revisited-project the second half of 2023.

The participants are invited to produce during 4-5 weeks online mini applied puppetry performances and exchange these connecting stories from 1600 to these days and perspectives for the future. It will be

- inclusive, each one can participate from their own home, eg included disabled persons or the elderly
- international - India, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia, South Korea, Japan and South East Asia area,
- intergenerational, youngsters and elderly can participate
- interdisciplinary, from the disciplines art and culture and education and care

and sustainable without flying. We can research the costs of electricity using our laptops and social media

The stories with objects, where nature and culture are intertwined, will be shared globally by social media.

The urgency

In these days of climate- and energy-crisis, growing inequality, the global impact of Covid and other viruses, migration flows, the

influence of the war between Russia and Ukraine, the growing tendency to simple polarisation in this complex world, the need to be heard from minority groups or those who are not in power, the survival of our planet, it is very important we exchange stories about these subjects.

Together we know more and we need each other to find solutions for these challenges. We need to find new answers, reformulate our situation, we can't solve the problems of these days within the framework of the last centuries, we need new visions, thoughts, solutions and activities. To connect art and culture in the challenges of our times from the big world problems to a concrete small (puppet)theatre performance. From the rich treasure and origin of traditional (puppet)theatre to a concrete small theatre performance adapted to the need of these times and our future. Mini - applied (puppet) performances are a perfect medium to tackle these great global developments into small stories to audiences who are not going to the theatre
The arts can contribute to the challenges of the 21st century

Activities in the exploratory period in 2023

I would like to research the Cultural Participation and Cultural Education in 6 countries in comparison with the situation in the Netherlands. Are there similarities or big differences? What are the best practices?

Aside from collecting figures and facts I want to participate as a kind of participatory research by giving performances - of the Dutch traditional puppetry hero Jan Klaassen with a modern twist - and shadow theatre workshops in the Dreamsuitcase in theatres, schools, care homes, hospitals, etc. I want to discover what the cultural, organisational and financial conditions for cultural participation and cultural education are in these countries.

I want to formulate the minimal conditions to participate in the VIPR-VOC-revisited, including the possibilities of internet, digitalisation and the challenge for people who are not familiar with these new media or do not have connection with the world wide web. There has to be reciprocity and the focus will be at puppetry in the broader sense, more applied puppetry, more international

cooperation, interdisciplinary, combined with the other art forms as music, dance, literature, poetry, design, animation, stop motion etc.

Participants from all the participating countries can be teachers, care takers and (amateur) puppeteers who want to work in these areas. They will develop in 4 to 5 weekly online sessions of 1 - 1 1/2 hours mini-puppet performances of about 5 minutes. See for example <https://didadiv.cz/?locale=en> the Czech Didadiv-box. Or the VPR project from Pittsburgh <https://www.facebook.com/VPRpuppets>

During the sessions participants tell about their process and stimulate each other. In the last week, we plan end November/ begin December 2023, they will show the live or recorded mini-(applied) puppet-performances to each other and in their network relations.

Detour about my career as puppeteer

I started my career as puppeteer during my study of sociology in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. I did not only want to research our society scientifically, I wanted to participate actively as volunteer in poor neighbourhoods as well. While working with kids I discovered the possibilities of puppetry and my puppet career started. After a few years I played together with another puppeteer who needs a third and fourth hand.

After I finished my study sociology of social welfare in 1982 and I became a teacher of social studies at secondary vocational education in social and health care in Den Bosch for a period of 10 years. During this time I worked as an amateur puppeteer as well. In 1989 I got the chance to apply at the Theatre School in Amsterdam for the object theatre department and after 3 years I became assistant for 5 years of one of the great masters of puppetry: Feike Boschma in Amsterdam. Through this master-apprentice relationship I discovered the rich world of professional puppetry.

Afterwards I tried to develop my own puppetry career meanwhile working in a service center for a basic income.

In the year 2008 I choose for puppetry fulltime, besides my performances and workshops I became active in the Dutch association for puppetry - the NVP-UNIMA-Netherlands. www.nvp-

unima.nl I became councillor, an intermediary between Dutch and foreign artists. I started as co-editor of the quarterly puppetry magazine The world of puppetry.

I worked together with Droomtheater, Rotterdam for social projects (www.droomtheater.com) and with Kooman's poppentheater in The Hague. (www.koomanspoppentheater.nl)

In 2016 I became more active in the international organisation of puppetry, in the UNIMA, the Union Internationale des Arts de la Marionnette, a non-governmental organisation for the development of puppetry with more than 7000 members spread out over about 100 countries and all the continents. I participated in the Commission Publication and Contemporary Writing and especially in the sub-commission Puppetry Publications Online (the puppetry magazines worldwide) www.unima.org

Broader implementation VPR in 2024

After participating in the first VIPR-VOC revisited in the second half of 2023, the participants themselves should organise a VPR, in their own country in 2024 with a group of at least 10 participants consisting of teachers, care takers and (amateur) puppeteers and other artists to spread their experiences and the idea of the VPR. We will organise online intervision-sessions to support, exchange and stimulate continuation between the coordinators of these (national) VPR's

We have to research the financial, organisational and artistic challenges to bring these participants together.

World wide web presentation in 2025

On the occasion of the XXIV UNIMA International Congress and International Festival in Chuncheon, South Korea 2025. <https://www.unima.org/en/unima/unima-news/> we want to present the results to all lovers of puppetry, art and culture live and online all over the world.

Tentative itinerary exploratory research period

depending on subsidy, funds, etc.

11 - 19 February 2023 19th Ishara International Puppet Theatre Festival in New Delhi, India

20 -27 Februari 2023 Karm Marg, orphan house near New Delhi

6 - 22 March 2023 Steparc, Hyderabad, India

22 March - 1 April 2023 Art Solute and UNIMA Singapore

1 - 17 april 2023 Paper Moon Theatre Djogyakarta, Indonesia

24 - 30 april 2023 UNIMA Councillors Meeting Bali, Indonesia

1 - 7 May 2023 Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, Perth, Fremantle, West Australia