

The Mitten

A tender
winter's tale



trans
THEATRE forma
tions

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Summary

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1. What is the Mask?

Masks are not just beautiful objects to look at; they are exceptional tools. A mask can entertain, soothe, heal, protect, or conceal the wearer. It always has an impact on the public, who are never indifferent to it.

A mask is:

- Protection: a mask can hide or protect its wearer, allowing them to develop, explore and express questions and feelings more easily than they normally could.
- A resource: the mask contains all the information to allow the user to develop their personality and acts as a catalyst for the imagination
- A mirror: a mask can be a mirror of society, helping us understand the roles we play and those we could certainly play: leaders, followers, diplomats...
- A liberation: changing roles with a mask is quick and easy, and the contingency of sex is no longer a problem.

These few pages will provide you with some information (books, videos, addresses etc.) about the show and the masks.

Hoping this information meets your expectations, we assure you of our appreciation and wish you a very profitable learning period.

Tracey Boot – Art Director



Tracey Boot, Mask Postwoman



Half-masks for the workshops

2. A theatrical and musical tale

"It was on a cold winter day that a mitten was lost in the snow..."

Lost, but not for long, as shivering animals will take turns sharing this small refuge.

The animals talk about the difficulties they face, the harshness of winter, their snowy forest... One after another, by discovering the mitten, they experience sharing, tolerance and above all solidarity.

The artistic style

Théâtre Transformations makes its own masks... and from these masks come stories. These can be happy, sad, burlesque, or poetic stories.

This charming encounter with animals in winter is staged in a dynamic and poetic way. The half-masks, created by Tracey Boot, bring touches of color to a forest with clean, white, and contemporary sets, painted by the artist Geneviève Joannin.

The music and the actress's lovely voice add a touch of magic and highlight the character traits of each animal.

Duration: 45 minutes

Target audience: ages 3 to 8

Team: Hélène Lenoir and Murielle Dussolliet or Tracey Boot

Mask creation: Tracey Boot

Puppet creation: Murielle Dussolliet

Set design: Tracey Boot, Geneviève Joannin and Denis Faure



3. The Masked Characters of the Show



Mouse



Frog



Owl

the Mitten



Rabbit



Fox

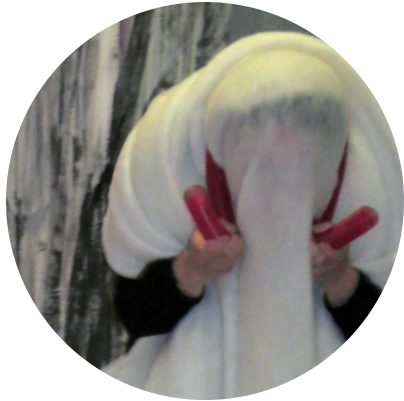


Bear



narrator/ young girl

4. Other characters



Wild bore



ant

5. Some questions

1. In which season does the story take place?
2. Who is the character mentioned at the beginning?
3. What is she forgetting?
4. Where does she lose her mitten?
5. Why does a stitch make a "crack" sound?
6. What does the owl say in English?
7. What are the animals like inside the mitten?
8. What happens when the ant jumps into the mitten?
9. Where do the animals land?



6. Some avenues for exploration related to The Mitten

Mastering the language:

Grouping area: PS/MS

Session 1: Introduce a mitten to the students. Read the story aloud without showing the illustrations, and insert pictures of the animals as they appear. Ask the students what they understood from the story. A picture dictionary can be helpful.

Session 2: Reading while showing the illustrations.

Session 3: The teacher shows the illustrations and the students tell the "path of the story".

Session 4: The students tell the story without the book as a guide. They can use the mitten and the animals for help.

Workshops:

LANGUAGE: Rereading. The students already know the story. Encourage them to describe what they see and what happens. Explain the expressions and vocabulary.

(PS) LANGUAGE: Winter vocabulary/clothing: sweater, scarf, hat... Find and glue the winter clothes. **(PS)**

LECTURE :

Discovering writing:

WRITING: Find the characters in the story and their names using the mini-dictionary.

(MS) WRITING: Write "mitten" and "snow" using movable letters. **(MS)**

WRITING: Word box: Write words in capital letters on a slate. **(MS)** **ART:** Decorate the mitten with graphic designs. **(PS)** **(MS)** **DICTIONARY TO AN ADULT:** New episode of the story. **(PS)** **(MS)**

Nursery rhymes/poems:

My fingers are cold, Anne Sylvestre.

Flocon Papillon by Anne Sylvestre.

Winter days. Long live the wind.

Structuring of time and space:

Sequential images to put in order. (4 or 5) (PS) Sequential images to put in order. (7) (MS) Creation of a strip and gluing of the animals in the order they appear (it will be attached to the mitten made in the art workshop). (PS) (MS) Cover puzzle (4 pieces) (PS) Cover puzzle (5 pieces). (MS)

Numbering:

Numbered correspondence from 1 to 3 (PS) (MS) and 1 to 7

Shapes and sizes:

Color the animals from the story. (PS) Sort the mittens by size (5 items) (MS)

Living things:

Match an image and a photo of each animal. (PS) Group poster of each animal: habitat/food. (PS) (MS) (group area or one poster per group).

To perceive, to feel, to imagine, to create:

The mitten: Decorate your mitten with paint. Make evenly spaced holes all around and thread a piece of yarn through them or glue on some cotton. (PS) (MS)

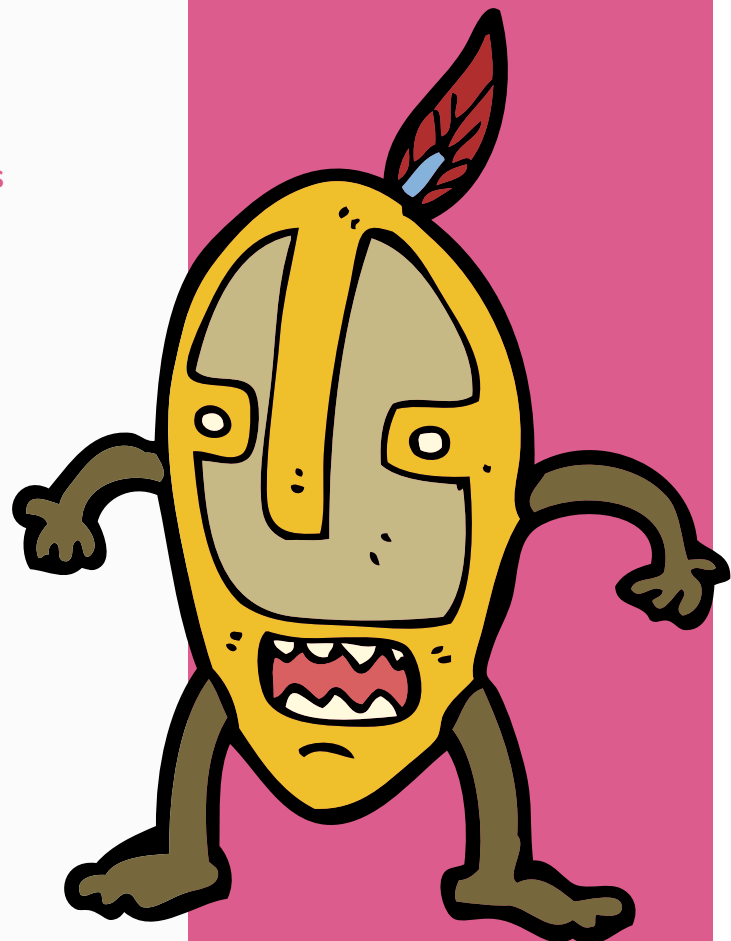
Winter Tree: Create a winter tree using a stencil (PS) and without a stencil (MS). Make a frame around it with squares of shiny paper (2-color algorithm) (PS) and (3-color algorithm) (MS).

7. A History of the Mask

Functions of masks in different civilizations

For millennia, all civilizations have used ritual masks for various festivals and ceremonies, religious or secular, intended to ward off spirits, mark the different stages of the year, for dances, or for protection. Evil forces, power, and love have always been symbolized by masks. In the East, the symbolism of the mask varies according to its use. Its main types are the theatrical mask, the carnival mask, and the funerary mask, notably used by the Egyptians.

The theatrical mask—which is also used in sacred dances—is a mode of manifestation of the universal Self. The wearer's personality is generally not altered; this means that the Self is immutable, unaffected by its contingent manifestations. The mask sometimes externalizes demonic tendencies, as is the case in carnival masks, where the lower, satanic aspect is exclusively manifested, with a view to its expulsion; it is liberating; it was also liberating during the Chinese Noh festivals, corresponding to the renewal of the year. It then operates as a catharsis. The mask does not conceal, but on the contrary reveals, lower tendencies, which must be driven away.



The funerary mask is the immutable archetype into which the deceased is believed to be reintegrated. It also tends to retain within the mummy the breath of the bones, a subtle, lower modality of human existence. The mask, intended to fix the wandering soul, was used in China before the use of the funerary tablet.

In the dualistic thought of the Iroquois, all masked dances are associated with the second Creator Twin, the Bad Brother, who reigns over the Darkness. The function of the masks is primarily medicinal. In the rituals performed, masked men, in the spring and fall, drive diseases from the villages. These masked dances are believed to have originated from hunting rituals. They evolved into healing dances due to the belief that animals would send diseases to take revenge on hunters.

In Africa, the institution of masks is associated with agrarian and initiatory rites. Masked processional dances, performed at the end of seasonal work (plowing, sowing, harvesting), evoke the events of origins and the organization of the world and society. These are truly cathartic spectacles, during which individuals become aware of their place in the universe, seeing their life and death inscribed in a collective drama that gives them meaning.

Greek traditions, as well as the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations, included ritual masks for ceremonies and sacred dances, funerary masks, votive masks, disguise masks, and theatrical masks. These theatrical masks, generally stereotypical (as in Japanese theater), emphasize the characteristic features of a character: king, old man, woman, servant, etc.

Masks sometimes reflect a magical power: they protect those who wear them from evildoers and sorcerers; conversely, they are also used by members of secret societies to impose their will by frightening.

Carnivals:

In many countries, the blending of Christianity and older customs gave rise to carnival masks. Carnival comes from the Latin word *carnavale*, meaning "farewell" (*vale*) and "to meat" (*carne*). Eating meat was forbidden during Lent, and the week preceding its arrival was a time for celebration.

The Venetian carnival features the *Commedia dell'arte*, a theatrical style dating back to the 16th century. Each character wears a half-mask that allows the spectator to see the expressions on the lower part of the face.

Carnivals preceding Lent are also important in New Orleans, Trinidad and Tobago, and Brazil – particularly in Rio. In Great Britain, the carnival of the Caribbean community in the Notting Hill area of West London lasts for three days at the end of August.

Other "masks"

Any concealment of the face, even partial, alters a person's appearance; it is, in a way, a mask: makeup, moustache, beard, glasses, wig...



8 Some avenues for exploration based on masks

Oral/written expression

Observation of masks from different civilizations

(photos of ritual, theatrical or carnival masks) => description: what are they made of? what do they inspire?

Observations of faces (photos): different physiognomies, different emotions => imagine biographies, stories, and possible relationships between these different "masks"

Discovery of caricatures

(Daumier – Comics – TV “Les Guignols” etc.) => What flaw or quality is highlighted?

Manual work

Drawing faces: happy, sad, angry, shy...

Mask making: these are true works of art.

You can make simple masks out of paper or cardboard, or more elaborate masks out of papier-mâché. (You could also use: makeup, a mustache, a beard, glasses, a wig...)

Dramatic Play

Choosing a mask => observation: which mask do the children spontaneously gravitate towards?

Wearing a mask means finding a set of gestures that suit it, it means inventing a character.

9. Books on masks

Marche avec un masque neutre par Georges Bonnaud Broché

Masques pour théâtres & légendes par Francis Debeyre

Masques de fête par Ann Rocard Broché

Théâtre de marionnettes en papier par Véra Brody Broché

Fête et croyances populaires en Europe : Au fil des saisons par Yvonne de Sike

Les Masques - rites et symboles en Europe par Yvonne de Sike

Le Livre des Masques par Michel Revelard

Le Masque : du rite au théâtre par Odette Aslan Broché

Les masques par Lommel Andréas

Fêtes des fous et carnivals par Jacques Heers Broché

Le carnaval par Michel Feuille

Carnaval ou La Fête à l'envers par Fabre Daniel Poche

Sacré Carnaval par Bernard Coussée

El Carnaval / The Carnaval: Analisis Historico-cultural par Julio Ca Baroja Broché

Canavals et Mascarades (Ancienne Edition) par Ayola

Le Masque par Genevieve Allard Poche

Masques : Chefs-d'oeuvre du musée du quai Branly par Yves Le Fur

Making masks (for children):

Masques en fête, BRODY (Vera), DOLARD (Marie), éd. Le Temps Apprivoisé, Pierre Zech, 1994

Masques de fête, ROCARD (Ann), éd. Dessain et Tolra, 1986

Les masques, fabrication et jeux, Clement (Line) Broché – 26 mai 1999

Other :Le Corps Poétique , Jacques Lecoq

10. Videos about masks

Shows by the Theatre Transformation company:

The Mitten

<https://vimeo.com/270341411>

The Inseparables

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhm_aYA5DI4

Juliette and her Romeo

<https://vimeo.com/297036787>

Other videos:

Mummenschanz Mask

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAa_GvLnQik

Etienne Decroux presents: The Factory, 1961

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=preoY7QDouk>

The Tribal Eye: Behind The Mask (wood carving excerpt)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6wshtbq9WA>

Basel Mask Performance by Year 7 Drama Class

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMoNJmehQyE>

Jacques Lecoq

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koExYifqFRo>

11. Other references

Transformations Theatre

<https://www.theatretransformations.com/nos-masques.html>

Mask - wikipedia

<https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masque>

International Museum of Carnival and Masks

<http://www.museedumasque.be>

Quai Branly Museum

<http://www.quaibrantly.fr/fr/expositions-evenements/au-musee/expositions/>

International Museum of the Amleto and Donato Sartori Mask of Abano Terme

<https://www.visitabanomontegrotto.com/fr/territoire/musees-expositions/musee-international-du-masque-amleto-donato-sartori-abano-terme/>

Mask Collective

www.lescreateursdemasques.fr/wp/

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Performing arts

Other Shows



Granny Smith



The Enchanted Island

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THEATRE formations