Baumann’s marionnettes

Gustave Baumann was an artist of many talents, including painting, printmaking and furniture-making. He also created hand-carved, decorated wooden marionettes, bringing them to life in puppet shows. Some of his puppet characters were tall and skinny, others short and stout; some were animals and some were human—all with personalities and stories of their own.

Over a twenty-year period Baumann created at least 65 marionettes, as well as a travelling marionette theater complete with scripts, costumes, props, backdrops, scenery and a stage. Baumann, not himself a puppeteer, left the actual performances to his wife, Jane, and their Teatro Duende marionette troupe.

The first Baumann Marionette Christmas Show took place in 1932 at the museum, and would become a cherished community tradition.

The last public performance during Baumann’s lifetime happened in 1959 at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe. At that time, the well-worn marionettes, having become fragile from use, were retired and put into storage.

The puppet theater tradition now continues, thanks to the artistry of Cristina Masoliver, Artistic Director of Puppet Theatre los Titiriteros, of Taos, who has created replicas of many of Baumann’s beloved marionettes. See the replica marionettes in action at the museum’s website.
Create your own paper puppet!

**AT-HOME ACTIVITY**

1. Choose a puppet pattern and decorate it. Think about how Baumann exaggerated certain features of his own characters.

2. Buy some brads at an office supply or art supply store to assemble at home or use twist ties or cut up pipe cleaners.

3. When your paper puppets are decorated with facial features and clothes, cut out the shapes.

4. Poke holes on black dots and insert either a twist tie, pipe cleaner or punch the brads through and match letters to assemble all the parts of your puppet. Now you can put on a puppet show of your own!

5. Post pictures of your paper puppets on social media and tag the museum #newmexicomuseumofart
Figure 2
Hats and hair
A horse, of course!