

Quick and Dirty talk, May 16, 2017, Creative City Centre, Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina. Format is a timed slide presentation, 20 seconds per image, no pausing.

Gerald Saul: My puppet films

1. The Golem of Socks. 1994 from my days in grad school. I used a crude manipulation mode, not even puppeting but just playing, to adapt a story in one film course and then wrote a critical essay about it in an Jewish film course, comparing it to the 1920s film "Der Golem". The prof said I showedchutzpah.



2. Back in Regina, I put the final touches, primarily a puppet show, onto my second feature film Life is Like Lint, 1999. It featured a dog and a failed magician, both looking for a new home.



3. For years socks just sat on the shelf until I adapted the Golem of Socks characters into a serialized project for a group of students to work on. This became Sock-Vile, which we shot in 2011 as 15 chapters but still isn't finished.



4. On the second day of my 2012 sabbatical, having decided to make a film every day and also having just read about the first Frankenstein film being made by the Edison company in 1903, I made Thomas Edison and the Frankenstitch Monster.





5. Another of these daily films was Big Cock on Parliament Hill which combined a rooster hand puppet Margaret built with a walking sequence created in an animation workshop using Adrean Dean's legs.



6. Everything experiment I wanted to try was on the table in 2012 when I started detaching lenses and roughly mounting them backwards on cameras to shoot extreme close ups. Around with the Crowd was made with hole punch faces mounted on tooth picks.



7. Frog in the Optometrist Office, from last year was made while failing my attempt to create daily films during my preparation for my AGR exhibition, I made a few terrible things such as this one where I improvise a conversation with William's hand puppet.



8. In 2012 I took a puppet creation workshop from Chrystene Ells. I made this old gal and shot her waiting in a ramshackle prairie house until her good for nothing husband came home in a work I called It's About Time, 2013





9. Chrystene told me that marionettes were very difficult so I felt no shame in my poor performance with one in Stringing You Along, another daily film in 2012, this time really just testing my ability to stitch all the houses on our street together.





10. I recorded a very threatening telemarketer on my machine, and then William and his monkey puppet lip-synched to it in one of the 2015 "bad film series" called Telemonkeying.



11. As a creative screenwriting project in class one week I had fourth year students write, then shoot using puppets left over from SockVile, their script. They made the hilarious Ma's BFA Blues, 2015



12. Similarly, I had Chrystene come back to the university to talk to grad students one day and to help them make their own improvised puppet film. We'd been using the mermaid as a motif that term so I made a mermaid puppet and we used it that day to make In a Castle by the Sea, 2015



13. I designed a 2 D puppet of Canister the Robot and a monster and used photographic printing to shrink him very small and used a microscope camera to film him. Jeremy Lague and I moved them with science needles in the 2015 Star Bright, Meagre Might.

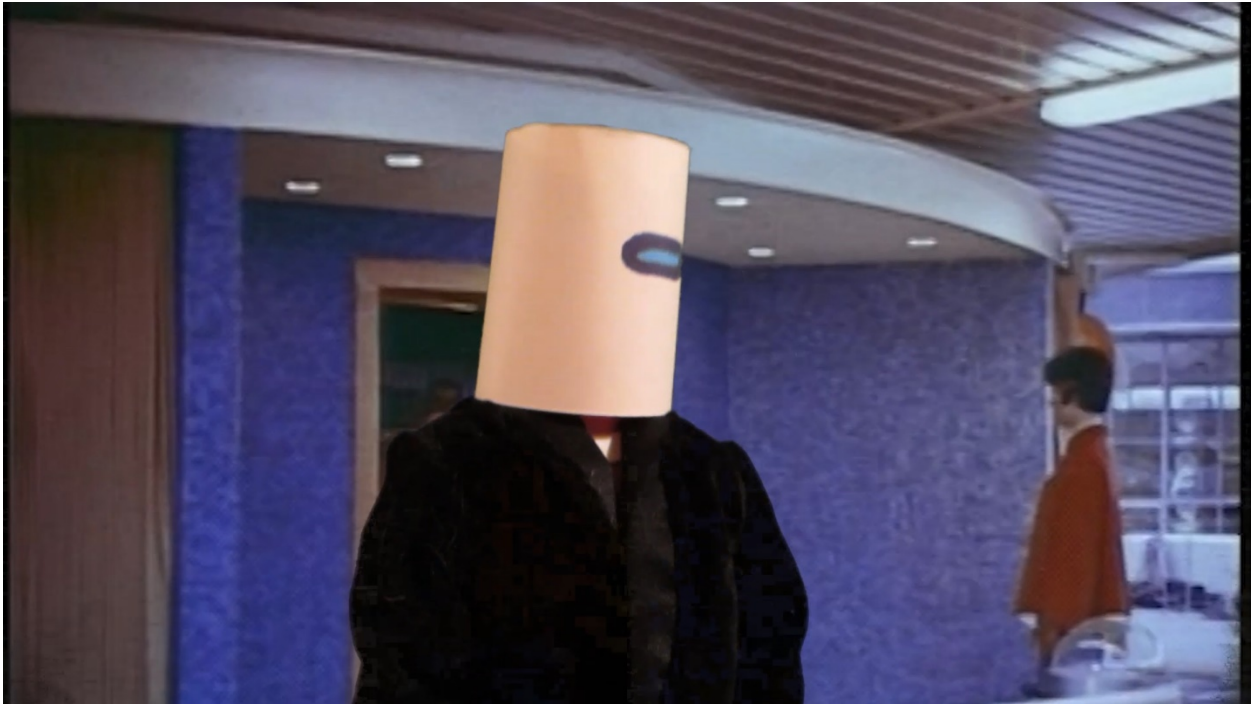




14. I'd actually used Canister as a puppet the year before but instead of him being a puppet, I used live action footage of him fighting Erik Sirke but the live action footage was attached to Sock-vile sock puppets who pretended to manipulate them in Rockem Sockem Canister, a super-8 film from 2014.



15. Yet another puppet version of Canister appears in 2015, this time a modified Ken doll is the robot's unfortunate role as he is subjected to some reality shifting science in Canister's Detour, the robot voiced for the first time by William.



16. Dinosaur Love Story, a lengthy hand processed film created in a summer course with a group of grad students in 2015, featured a number of puppeted toys. We were constantly looking for dinosaur-themed content and toys were quick and cheap.



17. Chrystene Ells worked with me to puppet a rat, a spider and a moth and the wings of one character in Eyes of Sorrow Moon, shot as part of the Caligari Project last year. Puppets were all stitched roughly together by me and either held off camera or moved by sticks or strings.





18. After four years of imagining increasingly complicated and impossible plot twists, in 2016 I made the sequel to Thomas Edison's Frankenstitch Monster and called it Testament of Frankenstitch. It was half animated and half puppeted. It won the Brooklyn Whoops Festival award for worst screenplay.



19. My love of sequels seems to never end. Earlier this year I was commissioned by the Toronto 8Fest and made the super-8 film Sockvile Mysteries, episode 13 which used smaller finger-puppet versions of four Sock-vile characters that Margaret Bessai made, alongside a similarly scaled Canister the Robot as co-stars in a tv show.



20. Dali and Warhol is my newest film. It features two more puppets made by Margaret, these ones from a puppet show that she and I tried to perform in 2000 at a Neutral Ground fundraiser but were gonged and never finished. The puppets have been on my shelf since that time. I made this film so that I could include them in this presentation.



... and those are 20 of the puppet films I have made. Thank you.