

La MaMa
Experimental Theatre Club

presents

La MaMa Puppet Slam

Curated and Hosted by
Jane Catherine Shaw



The Downstairs
66 East 4th Street, NYC, 10003
March 13-15, 2026

La MaMa Puppet Slam

Curated and Hosted by Jane Catherine Shaw

Stage Manager: Gloria Gomez

Light Design by Ben Demarest

In the Lobby Pre and Post Show

Brzezinski & Schap – *The Beekeeper: A Taste of Honey*

Mainstage

Tom Tuke – *Coracle Commute*

eugene the poogene – *yo that shit is wax!*

J Hann – *Practice Your Needlework!*

Drama of Works – *The Falcon King* (excerpt)

Lily Haje – *The Light Bearer* (excerpt)

Brief Interlude (not an intermission!)

Michelle Beshaw – *En Mer Avec Louise Bourgeois*

Mel Carter – *Some Slight Pressure*

Felicia Cooper – *It Has Its Ups and Downs*

William PK Carter – *Fos kai Taramá* (Light and Cured Fish Roe)

Maria Camia – *Introspective Hypnosis with a Live Audience*

Jacob Graham and The Cast from Heaven – *Cupid & Mars*

The Beekeeper: A Taste of Honey

Caitlin Brzezinski performs this lambe-lambe show in the lobby before and after the mainstage show. The show was developed and produced by Brzezinski & Schap, the creative partnership of Caitlin Brzezinski and Libby Schap. *Flying Lessons*, their premiere production, toured the northeast and New Orleans in 2019 and received the Jim Henson Foundation Workshop Grant (2018) and Production Grant (2019), as well as generous support from the Bob Jolly Charitable Trust, Puppet Showplace Theater, and the Ko Festival. Since the success of *Flying Lessons*, Brzezinski & Schap have created several shadow pieces including *The Changing Room*, a film series entitled *Body Stories*, and *Say Mama* performed by Libby Schap. Special thanks to Sebastián Lasaosa Rogers, Catherine O'Neill, and 20,000 some-odd bees.

Coracle Commute

Tom Tuke is an artist, educator and puppeteer from Aotearoa / New Zealand. He found puppetry as a classroom teacher in 2018. Soon he was making driftwood marionettes and touring a show throughout the country. Tuke applied to the University of Connecticut's Puppet Arts Program, and relocated to the US in 2022. Since arriving he has performed with Bread and Puppet, and with the Pulavar family of Kerala, as well as developing hand puppet, lantern and shadow shows for audiences around the North East. Tuke has developed a full length puppet show *The City That Slept* as a capstone project at UConn, and is touring it to venues around the North East in the first half of 2026.

yo that shit is wax!

eugene the poogene (writer/creator /performer) was an astronaut before he took up performing and was instrumental in the setting up of space station STS-111 (along with other members of Expedition Three), now famous for their work on the Biomass Production System. in his spare time, he likes to sit in the dark and repeat the word "larvae". eugene the poogene loves ellen stewart and the la mama family. he loves all of his beautiful friends, family, directors, and teachers so much it's nauseating. he's performed in around 60 productions in over 20 countries. proudly reppin' the great jones rep company since 2001. theeeenks so moocho to cathy and eryone at the slam for continually stoking the flames of creation.

Puppeteers: The Urinals- Frenchie Cavallo Phelps, Kiku Sakai, Jane Cathedine Shaw, Maya Tsou, Jason Trucco

Kiku Sakai, has been a puppeteer in training. Kiku has worked with several puppet masters including Cathy Shaw, Federico Restrepo, Tom Lee, Theodora Skipitares, and Vit Horejs. Special thanks to the Wax team and forever grateful for Poogene, Cathy, and Jason for this opportunity!

Frenchie Cavallo Phelps is a video artist, projectionist, and bubble blower based in NYC. She has served as director of photography on short narrative and dance films, and created projection design for stage productions.

Maya Tsou is an interdisciplinary artist based in New York. Her work blends music, theater, and visual storytelling, often weaving poetic narrative with experimental performance. She recently performed in the *Creatures Festival* with the Great Jones Repertory Company, and in *SHE* by Jane Catherine Shaw at Dixon Place. Maya is delighted to return to the puppetry stage and especially happy to be puppeteering alongside Jand Catherine Shaw in this year's *La MaMa Puppet Slam*.

Practice Your Needlework

Created, performed, and directed by **J Hann** (they/them) is a puppeteer, fiber artist, and puppetry director based in Upper Manhattan. Their unique textural work draws inspiration from the past and is centered in the weird, wonderful, and whimsical. J's original work has received support from The Jim Henson Foundation, The New York State Council for the Arts, The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, Governors Island Trust, The Jerome Foundation, and The New York Botanical Gardens. J is a co-curator and organizer for PUPPETQUEERS NYC, a diy Queer-centric puppet slam. Their first full length puppet show, *Bequeathed*, will premiere in June 2026 at Dixon Place. www.jennyhann.com IG @jhannham

The Falcon King – Drama of Works

Gretchen Van Lente (lead text editor/director/co-designer) is the Artistic Director of Drama of Works (DOW) and a full-time Special Education public school theater teacher. She has been working in the field of puppetry and visual theater since 1995. Since this time, outside of the over a dozen award-winning shows she has created with DOW, she has been a freelance director, designer, and teaching artist. She was the youngest president of UNIMA-USA since Jim Henson when she served previously on the board and also served as an international councilor. She received her BFA in illustration from Parsons School of Design, her BA in theater from Eugene Lang College, an MFA in directing from Brooklyn College, and an MS in Special Education from Pace University.

Taylor Harrison (co-designer/costume designer) is a costumer with 16 years of experience in puppet building, wardrobe, and costume design. After receiving her BFA from NYU she began her career at Henson, where she won a 2008-09 Emmy for *Sesame Street*. In Austin, Texas she worked with Trouble Puppet, Glass Half-full, Teatro Vivo, and Zach Theater Company. Taylor joined DOW in 2018 designing costumes for *Rent Party*, premiering at the Tank and presented at the 66th National Puppetry Festival. She went on to receive critical acclaim for her costume design of The Grand Guignol Theater for Children. She's currently working on Broadway in the wardrobe department of *Stranger Things: The First Shadow*.

Amy Carrigan (music director/vocalist) is a founding member of Drama of Works. She is a teacher, vocalist and performer (puppetry, acting and movement). She has been in over ten DOW productions as a lead puppeteer and actor. She sings regularly with such artists as BALK, Aaron Dugan, Eléonore Weill and Ali Dineen, among others. Her movement and vocal improvisation has been seen at Carnegie Hall and with artists such as Meredith Monk. Her artistic administration acumen has been utilized by the KlezKamp Music Festival, David Byrne, and the Highline. She received her BA from Eugene Lang College and is a lead facilitator for Brooklyn Apple Academy.

Emmanuel Elpenord (lead puppeteer) is a Brooklyn-born, Haitian-American actor, puppeteer, and voice-over artist. Highlights from his distinguished body of work: puppeteer in *El Niño* (Met Opera); original cast of Disney's *Winnie the Pooh: A New Musical Adaptation* (Rockefeller Prod.); original cast of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show* (Rockefeller Prod.); puppeteer at Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater (9+ years). Recipient of Haiti Cultural Exchange's 2023 LakouNOU Artist Residency Grant, Puppet Showplace Theater's 2023 Creative Residency for Black Puppeteers Grant, and the Jim Henson Foundation's 2024 Family Grant. He's recently returned from OYL's 2025 International Performance Residency, studying ancient traditional theater forms in India, Japan, and Greece.

Sonya Sobieski (dramaturg) is a playwright and former off-Broadway literary manager turned pandemic puppeteer. Her short puppet films have been presented around the U.S. and in Canada. Live on stage in NYC: La Mama Puppet Slam, Drama of Works PUNCH Puppet Slam, We Wiggle Dolls, and The Idiot's Hour. Affiliated artist with Obie Award-winning theater company New Georges, for whom she also serves as New Play Advocate. She has taught playwriting and dramaturgy at Hunter College and the New York University School of Professional Studies. MFA Brooklyn College.

SPECIAL THANKS To the Henson Foundation, The World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, ID, the Science History Institute Museum of Philadelphia and the ornithology department of Princeton University.

Drama of Works (DOW) "New York's tightly organized satirists" (In Pittsburgh), are known for their innovative works "high on fantastic production value" (Village Voice) that cross the line between actors and puppeteers. Led by Artistic Director Gretchen Van Lente (former president of UNIMA-USA), they have taken their unique brand of theater to venues as diverse as New York's P.S. 122, the International Festival of Children's Theatre in Subotica, Serbia, and to the stages of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island - gaining members, fans and supporters along the way. In July 2024 they celebrated their 25th anniversary. Their mission is to be a performing arts organization that furthers the art of theater incorporating puppets. Their main purpose is to create unique, premiere theater experiences that push the boundaries of theatrical norms and conventions. To that end, DOW offers a wide variety of public performances, both classic and original adaptations, throughout New York City and representing NYC elsewhere, for all ages. They curate and host PUNCH puppet slam, dedicated to empowering and bringing together diverse puppet artists. They offer workshops to share their knowledge with fellow artists in their Brooklyn studio. They also host and organize Puppet Club - a social club for people on the Autism Spectrum who enjoy puppetry - a place where they can come together to talk about all things puppet. Drama of Works prides itself on including members from a variety of backgrounds, including puppetry, experimental theater, clowning, classical theater, folk dance and comedy. They are the recipients of nine Henson Foundation grants, three ART/NY grants, a Brooklyn Arts Council grant, a grant from the Puffin Foundation, two grants from the Rhode Island Foundation, a grant from the Fund for US Artists at International Festivals, a Chashama/NEA Performance Development Award and an Ensemble Studio Theatre/Sloan Project Commission, among others.

Drama of Works has performed abroad at eight international festivals to date, crossing the globe from Canada to Indonesia. In 2004 their piece *WARRIOR* received a special award for Best Original Adaptation and was nominated for Best Original Creation and Best Actor (Amy Carrigan) at the World Festival in Prague. At the same festival in 2005 DOW took home the prize for Best Original Performance for their piece *WARHOL™*. In 2013 *Sleepy Hollow* was awarded the prize for Best Original Adaptation at the World Festival in Jakarta. *"One of the companies at the center of [the new puppetry renaissance] is Drama of Works... While many contemporary companies inspire 'oohs' and 'ahhs' from their audience, the focus is sometimes so exclusively on craft that the end result feels a little shallow. I have often left productions impressed by technique but wishing technique had been applied to something with more narrative and thematic depth. Drama of Works, however, consistently produces work that functions and satisfies on multiple levels."*

– Frank Episale, Performing Arts Journal

The Light Bearer

Lily Haje (lead artist and performer) is a New York-based theater artist and scholar interested in research-based, devised performance and puppetry. She holds an MFA in Dramaturgy & Dramatic Criticism from Yale, where she is now writing a dissertation about the use of puppetry in apocalyptic performance. She also works as a freelance dramaturg and is currently teaching at Queens College. Recent creative projects as a lead artist include translating, adapting and performing *Sponsus*, a puppet performance based on the medieval music drama of the same name, built into an opening altarpiece (Object Movement Puppetry Festival); translating and directing Maurice Bouchor's 1889 Symbolist puppet play *Tobie*; co-curating *Love Songs*, a multi-part digital project based on a poem by Mina Loy (Yale Cabaret), and prior to grad school, devising and directing *Telegraph Bois*, *The Silo* (Ars Nova), and *Fire + Bone* (Wesleyan University).

Isabelle Kenet (performer) is a puppeteer and multimedia artist. She is also the founder of Pincushion Puppet Club, an organization that facilitates workshops and puppet slams in NYC. @pincushionpuppetclub

Alison Kozol (performer) is a data analyst for an arts nonprofit as well as a DJ and musician. She is new to puppetry and is excited to join the craft she has admired.

Madeline Pages (dramaturg) is a dramaturg, writer, and digital content developer whose creative work bridges the fields of performing arts, historiography, and media theory. She is part of an international and interdisciplinary team developing a new opera about artificial intelligence, *I AM ALAN TURING*. In a prior life, she held staff positions at Theatre for a New Audience, Signature Theatre, La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, and Shakespeare Theatre Company. Now, she is the Head of Content & Partnerships for Amuse Technologies, a startup for digital engagement in arts and culture. She holds an MFA in Dramaturgy & Dramatic Criticism from the Yale School of Drama.

Bryn Scharenberg (sound designer) is recent graduate of the Yale School of Drama with a degree in sound design. She grew up in Seattle, where the murmur of rain is near-constant. The vividness of the natural world is a core theme in her designs, as well as an earnest love for the melodramatic. Their professional credits include a mix of designing, assistant designing, and engineering for New York Theater Workshop, 2nd Stage Theatricals, the International Festival of Arts and Ideas, Yale Repertory Theatre, and the Public Theatre among others. brynscharenberg.org

Mikayla Stanley (producer for *The Light Bearer* company) recently graduated from the David Geffen School of Drama at Yale with an MFA in Theater Management, where she was honored with the George C. Wolfe Award for Excellence in Theater Management. While at DGSD, she served as the Associate Managing Director of Yale Repertory Theatre, Executive Artistic Director of People + Culture at the Yale Summer Cabaret, a Yale President's Public Service Fellow, and Associate Development Director of YRT. Before Yale, Mikayla founded Hit The Lights!, an award-winning

multi-media theater company based in New York City. With HTLI, she collaborated with organizations such as Ars Nova (company-in-residence), the New Ohio Theatre, the New York Botanical Garden, Gimlet Media, and the New Victory Theater. Their work has even been featured on the cover of Vogue magazine. Mikayla is also a dedicated arts educator, having taught at Yale, CCM, NYU, and Williams College. She spent a decade in retail leadership with lululemon, where she served as a training specialist, new store opening manager, and led the global flagship location in New York City. She earned her BFA in Dramatic Performance, magna cum laude, from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where she also received the 2022 Julie Winter Cohen Career Excellence Award.

En Mer Avec Louise Bourgeois

Michelle Beshaw is a Brooklyn theatre artist, designer, writer, performer and storyteller who has played at La MaMa, Mabou Mines, St. Ann's Warehouse and the Actor's Studio, numerous city parks, community centers, on street corners, in stairwells, a monument and a broom closet. Favorite projects include: CAMT's *Foul Play*, as Angry Bird, *The Life and Times of Lee Harvey Oswald* as Oswald's wife and mother; *Twelfth Night* as Viola, Sebastian, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and Curio; *The Very Sad Story of Ethel & Julius* as Roy Cohn and costume designer, for which she won the first of 2 Independent Theatre Awards for costume design. Highlights from her own original works: *The Napier Project*, developed as a resident artist in Mabou Mines Suite; *Sheep Musing in the Valley of Sleeping Dogs* in 2011's Labapalooza at St. Ann's Warehouse and *En Mer Avec Louise Bourgeois* in the 2016 Philadelphia Fringe Festival and *Wave: An Incantation* in La Mama's 2019 Puppet Slam.

Deborah Beshaw-Farrell (performer) Is an actress and puppeteer who, for the last 30 years, has worked with Drama of Works, Puppeteers Cooperative and the Czechoslovak-American Marionette Theatre. In her work with CAMT, she's played Hoopoe in the December 2025 production of *Foul Play* at LaMaMa ETC; Mrs Müller (and, of course, Švejk) in *The Good Soldier Švejk*; Mefistofl in *Johannes Dokchtor Faust: A Petrifying Puppet Comedy*; Horatio, Ophelia, Gertrude and all of Fortinbras' army in *Hamlet* (in Prague, Buson, South Korea and parks all over Manhattan); 28 different individuals in *Once There Was a Village* at LaMaMa, and many others. She participated in La MaMa's Puppet Slam 2019 as an ensemble member in Michelle Beshaw's *WAVE: An Incantation* and is delighted to be back with this scene from *En Mer Avec Louise Bourgeois*. She is also an enthusiastic amateur photographer.

Some Slight Pressure

Mel Carter began her professional career in DC where she was a resident artist with the 4615 Theatre Company. While there, she performed with Imagination Stage, Spooky Action Theatre, and Pointless Theatre Co, among others. She was simultaneously creating visual art and has had her work featured in the Washington Post and published in Cuntry Living. Mel has been awarded the Arts and Humanities Fellowship and the Color the Curb grant by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. Since discovering puppetry, she has built and/or performed puppets with the Pilobolus Dance Theater, Bread and Puppet Theater, Mosaic Theatre, Paloma Puppet Theatre, and the OddFellows Playhouse, among others. Mel is currently a graduate student at the University of Connecticut where she is on track to receive her MFA in Puppet Arts.

It Has Its Ups and Downs

Felicia Cooper is a Minneapolis-based artist working in puppetry and performance across the United States. Her work has been seen at Dixon Place, the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival, Full Moon Puppet Show, In the Heart of the Beast Theater, and more. Her artistic endeavors have been supported by The National Humanities Center, the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Connecticut Sea Grant, the Heinz Foundation, the Pennsylvania State Arts Board, and others. She makes work embedded in community and creates platforms for others to create experimental work, including her work with the Puppet Union, UNIMAS-USA, Puppeteers of America, and Minnesota Fringe Festival, where she serves as the Director of Audience and Volunteer Engagement. She holds an MFA in Puppetry from the University of Connecticut. Go Huskies.

Special thanks to the original Chicago based PUPPETQUEERS for premiering this piece in their November 2025 slam.

Fos kai Taramá (Light and Cured Fish Roe)

William PK Carter is a puppet artist and quilter based in Central Valley, New York, who bridges the puppet and fine art worlds by fabricating wondrous creatures that exist at the intersection of queerness and blackness. She received her Bachelor of Science in Studio Art from Skidmore College in 2023, and her work has been exhibited and performed in theaters, galleries, and museums across the country. Carter is the recipient of Skidmore College's President's Racial Justice Award, the Van Dewater Memorial Award, and the John P. Heins Award: Outstanding Senior Thesis Exhibition. She has just completed her time as part of the 2025 cohorts of Puppet Showplace's Creative Residency for Black Puppeteers and Ann Street Gallery's Emerging Artist Fellowship, and is currently developing a full-length puppet piece, entitled *Beautiful Without Consequence*, that recently received a Workshop Grant from The Jim Henson Foundation. WilliamPKCarter.com

Joseph Lymous is a New Orleans born performer and producer. Recently, Dixon Place commissioned his solo show, *Turning Tigers into Pancakes*. Joseph is an alum of the Netflix *Joke Festival* (2024) and the CBS Showcase (2023). In 2021 he was named a Just For Laughs New Face of Comedy, was the recipient of a grant from The Jim Henson Foundation and trained with The Jim Henson Company. Joseph plays George on *The Chair Company* (HBO). Also catch him in *The Other Two* (HBO) and *Awkwafina is Nora from Queens* (Comedy Central). His puppetry work spans from stage to screen including The Metropolitan Opera House, the Bushwick Starr where he played Danily in Keelay Gipson's "demons." as well as "Dying for Sex" (FX) and "Hello Tomorrow!" (AppleTV). Mostly... Joseph just wants to be remembered for that time Beyoncé shared a clip of him shakin @\$ in her Instagram story.

Introspective Hypnosis with a Live Audience

Maria Camia (@themaricama) (she/her) is a Brooklyn-based, Filipino-American Spiritual/Sci-Fi Introspective Hypnosis Visual/Theater Artist whose artistic practice has dedicated 13 ongoing years to the world-building of Aricama, the land of practice play and healing in pursuit to make imagination useful in a traumatized society. She has performed original work for JACK, HEREarts, La MaMa Experimental Club, Kino Saito, Chicago International Puppet Festival, Dixon Place, and others. Maria received the Puppet Guild for the Greater New York's BIPOC Scholarship for outstanding dedication to puppetry and ongoing contributions to the puppetry community and the Jim Henson Workshop and Production Grants for her full length shows *NEW MONY!* and *The Healing Shipment*. She gave Artist Talks for Rhode Island School of Design, Seoul Institute of the Arts, Sarah Lawrence College, and NYC Neo-Futurists. Maria is also an Introspective Hypnosis Practitioner where she guides clients one-on-one through the subconscious to bring more empowerment into the body. www.maricama.com

Cupid & Mars

Jacob Graham and the Cast from Heaven

Jacob Graham is a queer Brooklyn based puppeteer and multidisciplinary artist. He recently collaborated with the artist Marina Abramović on a live optical, symphonic performance called *Emerald Sea*. He uses antiquated tools and obsolete technologies to achieve his signature mid-century gothic style.

Sasha Panyuta is a native New Yorker with an MFA from the Glasgow School of Art, her art practice includes sculpture, painting, installation, and puppetry.

Michael Gardner is a Brooklyn based animator, performer and puppeteer. He is a current resident at the object movement puppetry festival.

Jono Currier is an artist with a serious passion for drawing, textiles and music

Puppeteer and theatre artist **Jane Catherine Shaw** is a passionate creator, director, designer, writer, curator and educator. Ms. Shaw was co-founder and co-curator of the VOICE 4 VISION PUPPET FESTIVAL, a festival that was devoted to presenting New York artists making work for puppetry. She is a member of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, has an MFA in Directing from Brooklyn College and is a 2023 recipient of Mabou Mines' Ruthie Award. She has been working as a puppetry artist for over 30 years and is curator of the annual *La MaMa Puppet Slam*.

Ben Demarest Lighting Designer (he/him) BA SUNY New Paltz. Ben is a New York based Lighting Designer, Production Manager, Educator and theater maker whose work primarily centers around contemporary dance and performance art. Recent lighting design projects include: John Jasperse *TIDES*, Julie Mayo's *Bluefire Sleepwalker*, David Appel & John Morton's *Backchannel* and Jade Manns + Glenn Potter-Takata's shared evening at Danspace Project. His work has been featured at New York Live Arts, Lincoln Center, Baryshnikov Art Center, Roulette, Danspace Project, Center For Performance Research, and venues throughout the country. In 2021 his design for Julie Mayo's *NERVE SHOW* was a NYT Critics Pick.

Special Thanks

La MaMa Staff for continued support, and all the artists who bring their work to the Puppet Slam.

La MaMa Puppet Slam is supported by Puppet Slam Network/ H.B. Henson Fund.



A full program with information on this production can be found on the La MaMa website page of *La MaMa Puppet Slam 2026*

In addition you can scan the QR code Poster located in the theatre lobby for access to detailed information on this program.

LA MAMA



RESTORE A BUILDING REMAKE A WORLD



Rendering: 74 East 4th St.

La MaMa's historic, landmark building at 74 East 4th Street underwent an urgently needed complete renovation and restoration to preserve the historic façade, create building-wide ADA accessibility, and provide much needed performance, exhibition and community space for decades to come.

La MaMa, founded by Ellen Stewart in 1961, has been on east 4th Street since 1967. La MaMa embraces every person in its community and is legendary as the place where new artists of all nations, cultures, races, and identities are given opportunities. It is the place where art begins.

To learn more about the renovation, or to make a donation please visit www.lamama.org/remakeaworld

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We thank our supporters who are indispensable to La MaMa as we continue to expand and strengthen our artistic community. You help make space for artists to create and share new stories, present diverse perspectives, and keep us all connected in our 64th Season!

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NOW PLAYING

Footnotes

Feb 27-March 15, 2026
Ellen Stewart Theatre

La MaMa Puppet Slam

March 13-15, 2026
The Downstairs

Jane Comfort and Company

March 19-22, 2026
Ellen Stewart Theatre

Antigone in Analysis

March 20-April 5, 2026
The Downstairs

Spider Rabbit

March 26-April 12, 2026
The Club

COMING SOON

Uncle Vanya,

scenes from country life
March 28-April 12, 2026
Ellen Stewart Theatre

La MaMa Kids:

Elementary

March 28-29, 2026
Community Arts Space

The Iguana Becomes Marco

April 1-5, 2026
Community Arts Space

La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival

April 9-May 10, 2026
All 4 Venues

The Door Slams, A Glass Trembles

April 24-May 10, 2026
The Downstairs