

About the Performance

Leland Faulkner's *World of Wonder* stimulates students' imaginations through shadow-theater, illusion, and characters from around the world. Coming from an international background, Leland has created a multi-cultural theatrical program that is both sophisticated and accessible. Marvel at the magic of movement and light as Leland creates a menagerie of silhouettes with only his hands. Then laugh at the classic humor of Nasruddin, the wise fool, as he encounters an invisible chicken. You will roar at the ridiculous pantomime of a fisherman who heads into the great outdoors, and you will witness near miracles of origami as you experience the wonder hidden in a sheet of paper. Physical theater, classical conjuring, and creative storytelling create a performance that has been hailed internationally and described as a theatrical feast.



About the Artist

Leland Faulkner is a celebrated mime, actor, filmmaker and theater director. He is the founder and former Artistic Director of the famous theater training center Celebration Barn Theater. In his early career, he studied with distinguished teachers including Tony Montanaro, Jacques Lecoq, Bari Rolfe, and Keith Johnstone. He continually searches for entertaining and meaningful theater. His work has gained awards and acclaim at home and abroad.

Program Learning Goals

1. To experience the art of storytelling with shadow-theater.
2. To explore the lessons of traditional folklore in modern society.
3. To explore how shadows are made and how they can portray characters and emotions.

Essential Questions

1. What can learning about other cultures teach us?
2. What are shadows?
3. How is hearing a story told out loud different from reading a book or watching a movie?

Vocabulary

- **Storytelling:** the art of telling a story about real or imagined events using gestures and words to bring the plot, themes, and characters to life in the minds of those listening.
- **Oral Tradition:** stories, memories, and knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation, person to person, by word of mouth. Stories passed down through oral tradition can be real or made up and can be an important way to learn about the past.
- **Folktales:** stories that are passed from generation to generation through song, dance and storytelling.
- **Shadow:** the dark shape made when something blocks light.

Key Facts and Context for Students

Acting and Storytelling

Art and stories are how we remembered who we were as people before writing, film, or television. Culture was passed orally and visually through song, story, and artistic works. Songs were one way of remembering long stories that would be hard to remember otherwise. Cave drawings were an early visual form for communicating events and experiences to others. Many of these cave pictures, or pictographs, tell a story about events that happened long ago.



Origins of the Art of Mime

Before humans spoke languages, gestures were used both to communicate and help develop vocal sounds. Ancient civilizations incorporated these gestures into the first forms of written language, as well as in dances and ceremonies. This expressive movement evolved into the art of mime, to be able to tell a story and depict different characters without words and only through body movements.



Hand Shadows and Shadow Theater

In shadow theater, a bright light shines onto a screen. An actor uses their hands, body, or puppets to make shadows that create different characters in their story. In this performance, Leland will use his hands to make different animal characters come to life on the screen.

Pre-Performance Discussion Questions

- What are shadows? Where do they come from? How are they useful?
- How can you make different shadow shapes with your hands or body?
- Who tells stories in your family? What are those stories about? Do you use different gestures or voices to make a story funny, or scary, or sad?

Pre-Performance Activities

Activity 1: Improvising a Story

Learning Goals:

- To experience creating and reacting to a story
- To empower students through storytelling



Note for the Teacher:

This activity encourages students to improvise and make up a story entirely in the moment. Don't preplan the outcome, it can be very surprising what comes up, and very fun and revealing as well!

Directions:

1. Set up students in a large circle. Imagine you are around a fire sitting at the mouth of a cave long ago.
2. Choose one student to start the story. Say, "Once there was a..." and encourage them to fill in the blank with a sentence or two, while using movements as they tell the tale to make it come to life.
3. Continue around the circle and have each student add another couple sentences. Encourage them to act it out. If anyone hesitates, use prompts such as "and then what happened?"
4. Prompt the last student in the circle to finish the story.
5. Discuss what happened in the story, how students felt making it up on the spot and acting it out. Was the experience fun, hard, scary, silly?

Extensions:

- Have students draw a picture of something from the story, and share with the group.
- Have each student write a story based on the one created by the class. Encourage them to pick a few details to keep and a few details to change. Share the stories with the class and discuss their similarities and differences.

Pre-Performance Activities, continued

Activity 2: Shadow Poems

Learning Goals:

- To experience hearing a poem told out loud
- To create an original poem

Materials:

“Shadow” poem by Blaise Cendrars (see *page 5*),
coloring/art supplies



Note for the Teacher:

This activity requires you to read a poem out loud. Consider reading it in a darkened room with a single light source off to one side of the page, so shadows are cast on the wall as it is read. This poem shows how shadows inspire the poet's words to evoke images, and brings both literature and theatre into one shared space.

Directions:

1. Discuss poems with students, and ask if they have experience listening to poetry being read out loud.
2. Set the mood for listening to “Shadows,” by having students take a few deep breaths and focus in on the words as you read. If possible, turn off the lights and use a single light source to read by.
3. Read “Shadows” by Blaise Cendrars. Make it mysterious, surprising, and exciting!
4. Turn the lights back on, and ask students what they saw in their imaginations as the poem was being read.
5. Ask students to create their own poems about shadows, and have them create silhouette art to illustrate their poem.

Extension:

Compile students' poems and illustrations into a book, to make a visual and written archive of what you have just created.



Shadow

By Blaise Cendrars

The eye has no shadow.

All the children of the Moon and of the Sun, the Earth, the Water, the Air, the Fire own no shadow.

Shadow itself has no shadow.

Shadow lives in the forest.

It goes forth at night to prowl around the fires. It even likes to mingle with the dancers. Thus it is both prowler and dancer.

Shadow is mute. It never speaks. It listens. It comes sliding right up behind the storyteller. Then when the last fire is out it goes back to the forest.

Shadow does not sleep. It is always watching. If you open your eyes in your sleep, Shadow is there. It has already stolen back like a thief, and now it is spying on you.

The eye has no shadow, but it sees Shadow stirring the embers until the log on the hearth crumbles without a sound and falls to ash. Ash has no shadow either. That's why Shadow is blind, for its eyes are two small heaps of ash. And so, when all the fires are out, Shadow is blind. It does not see a thing. It staggers about arms stretched out, trying to grab, to hang on. Body dragging, it runs, it starts to fall. Bent in two like a beggar it reaches for a perch, a prop. But it does not cry out, and calls no one. It has no voice.

On its nightly path it often gets bumped, gets torn, trips again and again, and each time sprawls its full length on the ground. But it does not cry out, it has no voice. Shadow falls.

They say also that it is the mother of all that crawls, of all that squirms. For as soon as the sun comes up, here are the shadow people, breaking loose, unwinding, stretching, stirring, branching out, teeming, like snakes, scorpions and worms. That's why a person keeps an eye on his shadow when he wakes up, and takes care not to step on it when he gets up. It could sting or bite him! But Shadow says nothing. It has no voice.

Shadow is frightening, but there is no need to fear. It is not death. That's clear because it is there every morning and never says a thing, while death when it comes cries out. Besides, Shadow never asks for a thing. It has no hunger. Even so, watch out! For though Shadow has no voice, like the echo, it casts a spell over you, for good or bad, it is a Trickster and it laughs behind your back. It mocks you and makes a fool of you. Here it is in a mask.

In the daytime Shadow is full of life. It waves with the grasses, curls up at the foot of trees, races with the animals at their swiftest, nestles behind the elephant's ear, perches on a stone, swims along with the fish. It follows man everywhere, even to war.

Shadow is always Shadow. It needs no ornament, no tattoo. The zebra's shadow has no stripes. Shadow is magic. You had better not look at it too closely. For is it to the left, or the right, before or behind, above or below? At noon, Shadow is everywhere. In the evening, Shadow spreads out; not a hole that it does not fill, not a hump, not a mound that it does not double! It even sticks to your footprints. It lies down on the footpaths. It chokes all the roads. No one can pass, for no one can push it aside, it is so heavy. Yes, Shadow is heavy when night falls. Neither the eagle nor the vulture can raise it. In vain they try to soar into the air. Their shadow flops this way and that, like a clumsy bat, and crashes so heavily to the ground, that they, the mighty birds of the heavens, fall after it, worn out. No one can fight Shadow.

Go home, build a fire. Behold once more, Shadow! What is Shadow? In the crackling coals, is it the spark? Light up! The spark has no shadow. The eye has no shadow, but Shadow is in the eye. It is the pupil! Every breath stirs it to life. It is a game. A dance.

Post-Performance Discussion Questions

- What was your favorite story from the performance? What did it teach you?
- What did you learn about shadow theater?
- What questions do you have after viewing the performance? What are you wondering about?

Post-Performance Activities

Activity 1: Hand Shadows

Learning Goals:

- To create hand shadows and shadow theater
- To explore how shadows are made and how they can portray characters and emotions



Materials:

White bed sheet or large piece of paper, strong light source (flashlight, droplight, lamp), familiar objects with an interesting shape

Directions:

1. Discuss Leland's performance and how he used his hands to create many different shadow puppets.
2. Hang a sheet or large piece of paper in front of a strong light source.
3. Have students take turns experimenting with shadows. They can create a shape by using their hands, bodies, or classroom objects. Have the class guess how they are creating the shadow.
4. Discuss how the shadow is similar or different to the object(s) used to make it. How can you change the size of your shadow? the shape? the position?
5. Have students try to make this animal with their hands:



Post-Performance Activities, continued

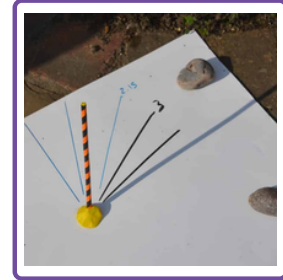
Activity 2: Tracking Sun Shadows

Learning Goals:

- To track the Sun's movement through the sky with shadows
- To observe changes in the Sun's position

Materials:

Compass, flat sheet of cardboard or heavy paper (at least 2' x 3') for recording shadows, yardstick, large coffee can of soil or stones (to hold yardstick upright), marker, small stone or popsicle sticks (for marking student predictions)



Notes for the Teacher:

- Remind students that looking at the Sun can cause permanent eye damage. Never look directly at the Sun!
- This activity can be done either as one large group, or in small groups if every group has their own set of materials. Observation periods can range from minutes, to hours, to many days throughout the school year.
- If this activity is done around the equinox, the shadows from the yardsticks will all lie on a straight line. The autumnal equinox occurs around September 21, and the spring equinox around March 21 (check for specific date each year).
- Due to daylight savings time, the sun may not reach its highest point in the sky until nearly 1:30pm depending on the time of year and your location within your time zone.

Directions:

1. Discuss the Sun and its path through the sky with students. Sample questions:
 - What are some differences between day and night?
 - Where does the Sun rise? Where does it set?
 - Where is the Sun at noon? At midday?
2. Find some open outdoor space in the school yard. Choose a spot that is unobstructed by trees or tall buildings, which could shade this area early or late in the day.
3. Begin early on a sunny day and plan to make periodic measurements throughout the day.
4. Use a compass to determine North, East, South, and West. Place the recording sheet of cardboard or heavy paper on level ground so the edges are aligned with the compass directions. Place the yardstick upright in the large coffee can filled with soil or stones and put this at the center of the southern edge of the recording sheet and outline with marker.

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Post-Performance Activities, continued

Directions, continued:

5. Mark the direction of magnetic North on the recording sheet with the marker. If permitted, outline the recording sheet, or its corners, with spray paint so that observations can be repeated from day to day and week to week.
6. Mark the line and length of the shadow cast by the yardstick with the marker and record the time of the observation.
7. Ask students to predict where the shadow will fall after a certain time interval, such as 15 minutes or an hour. Each student can mark the place they predict with a small stone or popsicle stick.
8. After the chosen interval has passed, mark the new shadow position with a marker. Compare students' predictions against the actual position.
9. Continue steps 7 and 8 throughout the day. Observe the change in the shadows and markings.
10. After a day of recording, connect the shadow ends with a line to see the Sun's path.
11. Discuss the activity and class observations. Sample questions:
 - How do shadow lengths change during the day? Why do they change?
 - Is there a pattern to where the shadows fall and their lengths? Why?
 - Is the Sun directly overhead at any time?
 - Why is the shortest shadow around noon?
 - Why does the shortest shadow point North? Does it point in the same direction as the magnetic compass? Why or why not?

Extensions:

- Make a graph of the shadow's time (x-axis) compared to length (y-axis). This can be done by hand on graph paper, or by entering each shadow's time and length into a spreadsheet or graphing program on the computer.
- Discuss the difference between True North and Magnetic North. A compass is simply attracted by the magnetic force. Demonstrate how a nearby magnet can easily fool the compass. Try making it point south by placing a magnet to its south!



Further Resources

- [Leland Faulkner Website](#)
- [How To Make Hand Shadow Puppets \(from Drama 4 Kids\)](#)
- [SunCalc Sun Tracker Website](#)
- *The Sky God's Dance*, A Shadow Film by Leland Faulkner, request a copy by emailing leland@lelandfaulkner.com
- Almozino, Albert: *The Art of Hand Shadows*, Dover Publications (2002)
- Collins, Sophie: *Shadow Magic: Create 75 Creatures*, Ivy Press (2021)



Curricular Connections

Arts Standards: Theatre and Visual Arts

Creating

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. (T.Cr.01, V.Cr.01)
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. (T.Cr.02, V.Cr.02)

Responding

- Perceive and analyze artistic work. (T.R.07, V.P.07)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. (T.R.08, V.P.08)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. (T.R.09, V.R.09)

Connecting

- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. (T.Co.10, V.Co.10)
- Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding. (T.Co.11, V.Co.11)

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Curricular Connections, continued

English Language Arts and Literacy Anchor Standards

Speaking and Listening

- Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (SL.PK-12.2)
- Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric. (SL.PK-12.3)

Science and Technology/Engineering

Earth and Space Sciences

- Earth's Systems (K.ESS.2, 1.ESS.1, 3.ESS.2, 7.ESS.2, HS.ESS.2)
- Earth and Human Activity (K.ESS.3, 4.ESS.3)
- Earth's Place in the Universe (5.ESS.1, 6.ESS.1, 8.ESS.1, HS.ESS.1)

Physical Science

- Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions (K.PS.2)
- Energy (K.PS.3, 4.PS.3, 7.PS.3)
- Waves and Their Applications in Technologies for Information Transfer (1.PS.4, 4.PS.4, 6.PS.4)

Technology/Engineering

- Engineering Design (1.ETS.1, 2.ETS.1, 3.ETS.1, 4.ETS.1)

