FROM MARIONETTES TO MUPPETS:
THE PUPPET PHOTOGRAPHY
OF RICHARD TENVUNE

AN EXHIBITION FROM THE
CENTER FOR PUPPETRY ARTS
Resident Photographer for Sesame Street since 1985, Richard Termine has taken his camera beyond Jim Henson's Muppets. The photographs in this exhibit are a mere hint of Termine's passion for puppetry and photography — a passion he feels equally for each. In his own words, "the exhibit celebrates photography and the puppet artists represented in the photos."

Termine is himself a puppet artist. Certain of his interest since age 10 when he built his first puppet — long before that first photo — Termine studied with Frank Ballard at the University of Connecticut where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre and a Masters of Fine Arts in Puppetry. Among other accomplishments, he designed and built puppets for various Muppet productions, received an Emmy Award (and numerous Emmy nominations) for his design work on Sesame Street, and taught with Jim Henson at the Institut International de la Marionette in Charleville-Mézières, France. Since 1991 he has been the Artistic Director of the National Puppetry Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, Connecticut. Not quite so comfortable with the puppet on the camera — and this fact is his quest to "capture puppetry performance."

Uncomfortable with the puppet on the camera, Termine began taking photographs of moments on the sets of Muppet television shows (Each Henson production is documented.) Termine's helpful nature was piqued by the company and himself evolved from documentarian to puppetry photographer. With puppetry classes, he answered, "How do you take a object that only can sing and movement?" Photography is another outlet for Termine's puppetry, and each piece in this exhibit is a testament to his passion for both photography and puppetry.
Connecticut. Not quick to speak of his own successes, Termine is unquestionably familiar with the puppet on the front side of the camera – and this familiarity is essential in his quest to “capture the moment” of a puppetry performance through photography.

Uncomfortable with idle time, Termine began taking photographs during free moments on the sets of Henson productions. (Each Henson production is meticulously documented.) Termine’s willingness and helpful nature was put to good use – for the company and himself. His images have evolved from documentary photography of Muppet television shows and workshops to the broader work of a performance arts photographer. With little formal photography classes, he answered his own question: “How do you take a photo of an inanimate object that only comes to life through sound and movement?” Photography has become another outlet for Termine alongside his puppetry, and each photograph of this exhibit is a testament to his passion.

"The Araneidae Show and Other Pieces" by Basil Twist. Taken in New York in 1996 at the International Festival of Puppet Theater produced by the Jim Henson Foundation.


This exhibit is a joint venture between the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry (BIMP) and the Center for Puppetry Arts.

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PRESENTED BY THE CENTER FOR PUPPETRY ARTS
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