**Of the Deep** Shadow Puppet Design

**WHAT IS OF THE DEEP?**

*Of the Deep*, a new puppetry play by Amanda Petefish-Schrag, explores how a community responds to a whale carcass washing up on the shore of their coastal town. It was originally set to perform in April 2020 with ISU Theatre, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project was adapted into a thirty-minute film, *Of the Deep: Meditations Upon the Death of a Blue Whale*, comprised of short shadow puppet films set to music, which premiered in October 2020.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Translate written text into dynamic shadow imagery and design shadow puppets from discarded materials that might make up marine debris
2. Study the role of creative adaptation and flexibility in producing the first full puppetry play at ISU Theatre as it is planned for a condensed rehearsal period and then reimagined for virtual audiences during the pandemic

**PROCESS**

- Researched shadow puppetry traditions and practices; the role of whales in art, literature, culture, and commerce; whale anatomy and movement; and environmental and human threats to whales
- Drafted storyboards for each scene and experimented with the durability, flexibility, opacity, and color of discarded plastic, cardboard, netting, and fabric
- Constructed shadow puppet prototypes with discarded materials and revised puppets to ensure ease of operation and effective visual communication
- Assisted in the reenvisioning and adaptation of the design, collaboration, story, and process techniques to a virtual format due to pandemic restrictions

**Storyboards, sketches, and shadow puppet prototypes from scenes in the original Of the Deep production**

**Process photos and stills from the Fall 2020 production Of the Deep: Meditations Upon the Death of a Blue Whale**

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