



## A BIT OF BACKGROUND

MANUAL CINEMA is a performance collective, design studio, and film/ video production company founded in 2010 by Drew Dir, Sarah Fornace, Ben Kauffman, Julia Miller, and Kyle Vegter. Manual Cinema combines handmade shadow puppetry, cinematic techniques, and innovative sound and music to create immersive visual stories for stage and screen. Using vintage overhead projectors, multiple screens, puppets, actors, live feed cameras, multi-channel sound design, and a live music ensemble, Manual Cinema transforms the experience of attending the cinema and imbues it with liveness, ingenuity, and theatricality.

Ada|Ava is a story of grief. Bereaved of her twin sister Ava, septuagenarian Ada solitarily marks time in the patterns of a life built for two. However, a traveling carnival and a trip to a mirror maze plunges her into a journey across the thresholds of life and death. Set in a landscape of the New England gothic, Ada/Ava uses a story of the fantastic and super natural to explore mourning and melancholy, self and other.

*Ada/Ava* premiered in 2013.

“Manual Cinema’s work crosses into many disciplines: theater, puppetry, music, movies and — if you regard one of its puppets purely as an object — visual art.” -NYTimes

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What kind of emotions did you have when you were watching the show? What kind of emotions did you see being expressed?
- What did the performance make you think about? (Did it spark any new thoughts or give you any new understanding?)
- How did you connect ideas in the performance to ideas or realities in your own life? In the rest of the world?
- Can you remember something about the performance that you particularly liked or disliked? If so, what was it and why did it stand out to you?
- Did you have a favorite moment in the performance? Tell me about it.
- What innovative things did you see happen to create the story and visuals? How did the company work together to achieve this?

## A REMINDER FOR STUDENTS ABOUT THEATER ETIQUETTE

- LISTEN, EXPERIENCE, IMAGINE, DISCOVER, LEARN!
- GIVE YOUR ENERGY AND ATTENTION TO THE PERFORMERS.
- PLEASE DO NOT EAT OR DRINK IN THE THEATER.
- TALK ONLY BEFORE AND AFTER THE PERFORMANCE.
- TURN OFF WIRELESS DEVICES.
- NO PHOTOS, VIDEOS, TEXTING, OR LISTENING TO MUSIC.

\*These are guidelines... We understand that some students may need to experience the performance in their own way, and we are here to support all students and their unique needs.

## THE LANGUAGE OF DEATH

“I know that in this country we tend to look on death as just a medical event. But it’s much more than that, isn’t it? It’s about our relationships to ourselves and each other and to whatever image of ultimate kindness we hold.” -Frank Ostaseski

- What are some initial responses to this quote? What is the speaker saying about death?
- How do we talk about death in our culture?
- What are some of the euphemisms we use to talk about death? Do these words and phrases have different meanings, feelings?

## A POETIC REFLECTION ON GRIEF

- What does grief look like?
- What does grief smell like?
- What does grief sound like?
- What does it taste like?
- What does it feel like?

Share and discuss these questions. Grief is both shared and solitary, communal and personal. What does grief mean to you? If it feels okay, share moments when you’ve experienced grief. Does grief always come from death or can grief come from a more general loss?