Abigail S. Baird

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Curriculum Vitae

25 Years of Experience in Arts Education, Arts Management, and Theater Production

Throughout my career, I have advanced in the performing arts, visual arts, arts management, and arts education simultaneously. I have worked as a circus arts curriculum developer, educator, theater producer, director, movement director, animator, acrobatic actor, and puppeteer. This diverse experience has given me a comprehensive understanding of both performing and visual arts, which I bring to every collaboration. I'm a natural leader—intentional, organized, and a creative problem-solver—committed to fostering a professional, compassionate, and productive environment within the ever-evolving field of arts education.

EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts (MFA): Puppet Arts from the Department of Dramatic Arts, The University of Connecticut	2024
Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA:) Technical Theater, Sculpture, and Puppetry, The College of Santa Fe, New Mexico	2003
Diploma in Circus Arts and Physical Theater: Circomedia in Bristol, England	2008
Intensive Private Coaching: Hand-to-Hand Partner Acrobatics with Master Lu Yi, Oakland, CA	2010-2014
New England Center for Circus Arts Professional Training Program, Brattleboro, VT	2006-2007
Acrobatics and Trapeze Teacher Training at the New England Center for Circus Arts, Brattleboro, VT	2005
Sandglass Theater's Summer Intensive Puppetry Training, Green Mountain College, VT	2002
Bread and Puppet Internship, Glover, VT	2002
CPR Certification: Youth, Adult, and Use of Defibrillator	2006, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2019

SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND WORKSHOPS

Finding the Keys: Antiracist Approaches to Radical Recruitment in the Arts with Sharifa Johka	2024
Puppeteers of America, Rufus and Margo Rose Endowment Fund, Emerging Artist Award	2024
The Margo Rose Award for Creative Excellence	2024
The University of Connecticut Cecil E. and Martha C. Hinke Fellowship	2023
The University of Connecticut Cecil E. and Martha C. Hinke Fellowship	2022
La France a un Incroyable Talent - Semi-Finalist	2018
America's Got Talent - Semi-Finalist	2014
The New York International Film and Video Festival - Best Experimental Short Film	2005
Co-Director and Choreographer	

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Leadership: Team Building · Conflict Resolution · Time Management · Valuing Individuality Within A Collective
Arts Education Management: Strategic Planning · Program & Curriculum Development · Event Planning · Budgeting · Recruiting & Hiring · Teacher Training & Oversight
Production: Theater Producer · Director · Movement Director · Stage Management · Costume, Lighting & Sound Design
Teaching in the Arts: Knowledge of Learning Styles · Skill Progression Systems · Assessment and Mentoring · Teaching All Ages and Abilities · Applying Movement Principles, Body Awareness, and Storytelling in Performing and Visual Arts
Circus Arts: Partner Acrobatics · Handbalancing · Tumbling · Aerial Acrobatics on All Apparatus · Stilt-Walking · Spotting
Animation: Stop-Motion · 2D Digital · Multi-Plane & Parallax · Pixilation · Cutout · Claymation
Puppetry Design, Construction, & Performance: · Shadow, Hand, Tabletop, Rod & TV Puppetry · Toy Theater
Physical Theater: Laban Movement · Mask · Mime · Improvisation · Life Size Wearable Puppetry · Big Head Puppetry
Visual Arts: Clay Sculpture · Casting and Molding · Wood Cutting · Cut Paper Collage · Wire Working · Sewing
Multi-Media Performances for the Stage and Screen: Producing Cause-and-Effect, Interactive Stories with Objects, Performers, and Animation · LED Screens · Projection Mapping · Live Que Software

SOFTWARE PROFICIENCY

Animation and Video Editing: Qlab · Final Cut · Dragon Frame · Glowforge Laser Cutter · Adobe Photoshop · Adobe After Effects · Adobe Illustrator · Adobe Premiere Pro
Administrative: Mac Based Computer Skills · Microsoft Office · Google Platforms

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PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

I bring 25 years of experience nurturing emerging artists across a wide range of ages, abilities, and identities. As a producer, director, manager, educator, and mentor, I emphasize storytelling through diverse artistic and performance practices. My teaching philosophy centers on experimentation, play, and risk-taking, encouraging students to view both success and failure as essential to growth. In the classroom, I foster inclusive environments that celebrate diverse perspectives and empower students to root their artistic voices in personal experience and social relevance.

Academic & and Community-Based Puppet Arts Education 2024-2025

Lecturing · Performance Workshops · Student Advising · Movement Direction

Following the completion of my graduate degree, I have led workshops in both academic and professional theater settings, exploring the relationships between animation, puppetry, and physical theater as part of my ongoing research into interactive media performance.

Harvard University: Department of Theater, Dance, and Media
Workshop and Lecture: Multi-plane overhead projector puppetry focused on producing a parallax effect with life-size projection and human shadow interaction for TDM Puppet Theater with Prof. Brehm - Spring 2025
Puppet Fabrication: Life-size moose foam puppet for TDM Spring Production Studio Prof. Brehm - Spring 2025

American Conservatory Theater: Program in Acting
Semester Course: Partner Acrobatics and Tumbling for Acting - Spring 2013

Brimmer and May: K -12 Private School in Newton, MA
Workshop and Lecture: TV Puppetry performance workshop for high school students, *Puffs* by Mat Cox - Fall 2025
Workshop and Lecture: Wearable Lion Puppet performance workshop series for middle school production of the staged adaptation of *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis - Fall 2025

Adam Theater: Cambridge, MA
Audition and Workshop Host: Establishing a secondary cast of puppeteers to perform a wearable, three-person-manipulated, life-size lion puppet requiring acrobatics and puppetry skills. - Coming Fall 2025

Graduate Advising and Assistantship: *University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT* 2021-2024

Curriculum Development · Student Advising · Collaboration with Professors · Lecturing · Grading · Movement Direction

I earned an MFA in Puppet Arts at the University of Connecticut to deepen my artistic practice and position myself to teach in higher education across the disciplines of theater, film, puppetry, animation, and digital media. As a graduate student, I actively pursued opportunities to advise students as an educator and arts administrator.

Performance and Animation Collaboration
Imagined, developed, organized, and implemented a 14-week collaborative project between students from Prof. Anna Lindeman's Advanced Motion Media (DMD 4200) and Prof. Sandi Carroll's Acting VI (DRAM 4702) classes.

Concept Development: Imagined, developed, and presented the project concept to Prof. Lindeman and Carroll.
Curriculum Creation: Collaborated with Prof. Lindeman and Carroll to create a written curriculum, syllabus, deadlines, and grading criteria.
Workshops and Lectures: Facilitated and led workshops and lectures to support successful project collaborations.
Project Facilitation: Guided students in devising, producing, and filming interactive, cause-and-effect performances involving actors and original animations.
Student Feedback and Evaluation: Provided in-class feedback to students, participated in grading, and evaluated course effectiveness.

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Invited Lectures

Interactive Media Performance for the Screen: Delivered Lectures on Laban Movement to BFA Digital Media Students
Interactive Media Performance for the Screen: Focused on the 12 Principles of Animation for BFA Acting Students
Interactive Demonstration of How Mapped Projections Can Lead to Cause-and-Effect Media Performances: For Undergraduate Students Enrolled in an Elective Course on The Art of Marc Chagall
Multi-Plane Stop-Motion Animation Technique: Demonstration for Prof. Alison Paul's Stop-and-Go Animation Course

Movement Direction

Metamorphoses by Marry Zimmerman (Connecticut Repertory Theater's MFA Production): Movement Director, Aerial Teacher, and Choreographer
Replay by Genna-Beth Davidson (MFA Puppet Arts Project): Movement Director for Puppets and Actors

Curriculum Development for Puppet Arts On-Line Certificate Program

To expand the University of Connecticut's Online Certificate Program offerings, I organized existing content and developed new material to create a structured guide for instructors. This guide ensures that courses meet the university's standards and guidelines.
Content Organization: Divided the course offerings into three categories: Theory and History, Fabrication, and Performance.
Standardization: Established standards and provided guidance for instructors to align their courses with the program's requirements.
Syllabus and Materials: Produced written syllabi, supporting course materials, and references.
Instructional Videos: Created detailed instructions for producing effective instructional videos.

Creative Director of Educational Programming *Kinetic Arts Center in Oakland, CA* *2010-2021*
Curriculum Development · Scheduling · Teacher and Administrative Hiring · Movement Directing · Teacher Training · Youth Program Artistic Directing · Theatrical Directing and Choreography · Event Coordination · Teaching

At Kinetic Arts Center, I progressed from a recreational circus coach to Creative Director of Educational Programming, becoming a key member of the leadership team and significantly contributing to the school's mission and growth.

Curriculum Development and Program Management

Developed Structured Programs Catering to Various Age and Skill Groups: Youth General Circus, Summer Camp Programming, Elementary and Middle School Performance Troupes, Pre-Professional High School Youth Troupe, Adult Circus Teacher Training, and Youth Circus Assistant Teacher Training

Artistic Direction

Founded, Directed, and Taught the Elementary and Middle School Performance Troupe, *Circus Gilly*: Creating a Clear Path for Recreational Youth Students to Advance to the Pre-Professional High School Performance Troupe, *Circus Spire.*
Develop Course Curriculum: Weekly Programming and Semester Term Planning
Devised and Directed Annual Theatrical Productions: Aimed at showcasing *Circus Gilly*
Oversight of a Team of Coaches: Ensuring well-rounded training and skill development for student advancement

Teacher Recruitment and Training

Recruit, Hire, Train, and Manage Coaches: Implemented interview standards, hired coaches for all circus disciplines, and established clear communication pathways between coaches, management, parents, and students.
Streamline and Level Course Offerings: Create Continuity for Students and Coaches
Encourage a Culture of Trust and Safety in the Circus Arts Community: Through Comprehensive Training
Provided a Two-Session Teacher Training Program: Developed a teacher training program to educate circus coaches on class structures, accommodating different learning styles, professional aerial rigging standards, and safe communication systems for physically spotting students with a focus on building trust in a sport requiring extensive physical contact.

Rigging Safety and Protocols: Conducted bi-annual rigging safety checks, trained staff to use the school's aerial rigging systems, implemented systems to ensure students, and established clear communication pathways for addressing rigging safety questions, emphasizing that all questions are welcome.

Circus Arts Teaching

Taught Recreational Youth Classes: Ranging from 10-20 Hours Per Week to Students Aged 18 Months to 80 Years
Subjects: Hand-to-Hand Partner Acrobatics, Hand Balancing, Tumbling, Aerial Trapeze, Tissue, Sling, Lyra, Physical Theater, Clown, Contact Improvisation, Parkour, Stilt Walking, Juggling, Strength Training, and Flexibility
Taught Movement for Actors: at American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T) in San Francisco

Showcase and Production Direction

Directed Showcases and Pre-Professional Productions: Focusing on Theatrical Storytelling and Performance, Integrating Musicality, Choreography, Collaboration, and Physical Expression of Emotion with Skill and Technique Training

Rigging Support

Assisted the Company Rigger in Bi-Annual Rigging Checks: Organized and Documented All Rigging Equipment, Ordered New Equipment, and Set Up Rigging Points

Teaching At Circus Schools in the Surrounding Bay Area of California 2011 - 2017

While working at Kinetic Arts Center, I continued coaching throughout the Bay Area and supported the regional circus community through ongoing engagement and contribution.

San Francisco Circus Center
Trapeze Arts in Oakland, CA
Athletic Playground in Emeryville, CA

Camp Program Director and Circus Arts Coach *Wise Fool New Mexico* 2008-2011

Camp Program Director

Organized Multiple Summer Camps: Running Two to Six Weeks
Students Six to 15 Years of Age
Hired Teachers
Managed Daily Schedules and Overall Time Management for the Programming
Facilitated Parent and Coach Communications: Ensuring Clear and Effective Interaction
Organized End-of-Camp Performances: Showcasing Students' Skills and Achievements
Performed Rigging Checks
Coordinated a Diverse Range of Subjects: Including Aerial Tissue, Trapeze, Lyra, Clown, Mask, Physical Theater, Tumbling, Partner Acrobatics, Stilt Walking, Paper Mache Puppets, and Shadow Puppetry

Workshop Facilitation

Coordinated and Taught Workshops: Building Community, Promoting Social Justice, and Cultivating Social Well-Being, Provide Accessibility, Build Confidence, Encourage Creativity, Address Social Isolation, Trauma Impact, Violence in Communities, and Lack of Access to Sports, Arts, and Cultural Activities
Facilitated Workshops for Specific Demographics: Including Women, LGBTQIA+ Individuals, and Children in Under-Served and Under-Resourced Communities

Circus Arts Teaching

Taught Weekly Classes: In Subjects Including Hand-to-Hand Partner Acrobatics and Counterbalancing, Tumbling, Aerial Tissue, Trapeze, Sling and Lyra, Strength Training, Flexibility, Clown, Physical Theater, Shadow Puppetry, Big Head Puppetry, Large-Scale Paper Mache Puppet Fabrication.

Circus Arts Teacher and Puppet Fabricator *Moving People Dance Theater,* Santa Fe, NM 2008-2009

Circus Arts Teacher

Taught Aerial Trapeze and Tissue: to Underserved and Under-Resourced Youth in the Espanola, NM School District and Surrounding Indigenous Communities. Conducted Classes in Crowded, Loud, and Stressful Conditions, Often With Limited Running Water. Witnessed the Powerful and Invigorating Effects of Achieving Aerial Skills on the Daily Happiness and Well-Being of the Students.

Puppet Design and Fabrication

Built Wearable Puppet Costumes: for Youth Performances

Circus Arts and Physical Theater Teaching & Lighting Technician New England Center for Circus Arts 2005-2007

Circus Arts and Physical Theater Teacher

Taught students: aged six to 40 Aerial Tissue, Trapeze, Partner Acrobatics, Tumbling, Clown, and Physical Theater

Choreographed Performances: for School Recitals

Lighting Designer And Technician

Created Lighting Designs and Operated the Light Board: School Recitals and Local Touring Professional Performances.

PROFESSIONAL FILM, THEATER, AND CIRCUS

AERIAL ANIMATION Concept, Production Company, Series of Performance Vignettes 2008-2025

Igniting Positive Transformation Through Visually Inspiring Narratives

Aerial Animation is a performance concept and company that originated from a series of vignettes also known as *Aerial Animation*. Established in 2008, the company creates cause-and-effect interactive performances incorporating aerial acrobatics, puppetry, animation, and physical theater for both stage and screen. As the sole proprietor, I have pioneered a unique methodology for devising these theatrical performances. By leveraging my extensive background in movement, animation, puppetry, and theater, I merge established storytelling techniques from each medium to originate multi-modal performances. Theater is inherently a collaborative art form. While the concept and artistic direction of each performance originate from me, I incorporate the expertise of animators, performers, and creatives. As an interdisciplinary storyteller, I strive to ignite positive transformation through visually inspiring narratives in every iteration of *Aerial Animation*.

AERIAL ANIMATION, a series of performance vignettes and my most renowned work to date, combines digital animation with aerial acrobatics to create immersive multimedia experiences reminiscent of Buster Keaton's style. A modern twist on silent films, Aerial Animation competed through the semifinals on America's Got Talent and La France a un Incroyable Talent with six internationally broadcast performances. Suspended mid-air, I become puppet-like, performing aerial acrobatics in front of a giant animated story in which I resiliently face adversity. I synchronize my movements with virtuosity and precision to balance illusion with reality, building cause-and-effect relationships with my animated world. Leveraging my televised performances, I developed a seven-minute aerial acrobatic act, which I toured globally for corporate audiences, fostering significant artistic and professional growth.

NOTHING REALLY MATTERS is an original, self-produced, nonverbal, aerial acrobatic, and physical theater production featuring shadow puppetry, object performance, toy theater puppetry, stop motion animation, and digital animation. This one-woman show explores the alchemy of these various modalities using live-cue software and projection mapping. Aiming to influence the rising field of media theater toward human relatability, this one-hour performance shares an engaging story about a woman who embraces the complexities of her inner reality to overcome her self-shaming quest for external validation. Intentionally designed for touring, the show is built around a free-standing aerial rig and a twenty-foot projection screen. As a nonverbal storyteller, I can perform this show on stage in any country and connect with viewers across cultures, races, genders, classes, and abilities.

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AERIAL ANIMATION PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Televised Performance

America's Got Talent - Semi-Finalist
Radio City Music Hall, New York City

La France a un Incroyable Talent - Semi-Finalist
Paris, France

Tonight at the Palladium ITV
Palladium Theater, London

Staged Performances

Cartoon Network
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Coca-Cola
Casablanca, Morocco

Intel - Out Do
Las Vegas, Nevada

Cirque Du Chevron
Houston, Texas

DEVISED, DIRECTED, AND CHOREOGRAPHED STAGED PRODUCTIONS

Connecticut Repertory Theatre

Nothing Really Matters, Conceptor, Producer, Director 2023

The Metamorphoses, Movement Director 2022
Written by Mary Zimmerman and directed by Kristine Wold

Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry

We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy, Co-Conceptor, Co-Director 2022, 2023
Based on the book by Maurice Sendak

University of Connecticut

Nimbus Conceptor, Producer, Director 2021, 2022
Collaboratively Devised by Abigail Baird and Morgan Lee

Replay Movement Director 2022
Devised by Genna-Beth Davidson

Kinetic Arts Center

Solo Act Creation for Film of 16 Youth Aerial Performers	Director, Outside Eye Choreographer Videographer, Video Editor	2021
Filmed Performances of 15 Youth Trapeze Acts Directed and Choreographed by Kate Hutchenson	Videographer, Video Editor	2021
Curated A Not So Still Life Circus	Conceptor, Director	2020
Circus Panopticon	Assistant Director, Co-Choreographer	2019
Beyond the Ring	Assistant Director, Co-Choreographer	2018
Circus Asturias	Co-Choreographer	2018
Circus Veritas	Co-Choreographer	2017
Circus Odious	Co-Choreographer	2017
Inversion: Circus Disobedience	Co-Choreographer	2016
Salvage	Assistant Director, Co-Divisor	2015
Inversion: A Disobedient Circus	Co-Choreographer	2014
A Great Minibeast Menagerie	Conceptor, Director	2014
A Silent Circus	Conceptor, Director	2013

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DESIGNER, ANIMATOR AND FABRICATOR

Brimmer and May School, Cambridge, MA

The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe — Puppet Movement Director, Giant Lion Puppet Fabricator — 2024
Screenplay by Mark Johnson

Puffs — Puppet Movement Director, 4 TV Puppets and Giant Snake Puppet Fabricator — 2024
by Matt Cox

Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry, Storrs, CT

We Are All In the Dumps with Jack and Guy — Digital Animator, Media Designer, Puppet Fabricator, Set Designer — 2022-2023
Devised based on the book by Maurice Sendak

University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

Nothing Really Matters — Stop-Motion Animator, Digital Animator, Puppet Fabricator Media Designer, Sound Designer, Set Design, Costume Designer — 2024
Self-Devised and Produced

Nimbus — Digital Animator, Media Designer, Multi-Dimensional Projection Surface Designer — 2021-2022
Co-created with Pianist Morgan Lee

Etsy, Hudson, NY

Halloween with Edward Gorey — Shadow Puppetry, Digital Animator, Stop-Motion Animator, Video Editing — 2015

PERFORMER HIGHLIGHTS

American Repertory Theater, Loeb Drama Center, Boston, MA — Shadow Puppeteer, Actor — 2025
The Odyssey, Written by Kate Hamill
Adapted from the epic by Homer, Directed by Shana Cooper

Calderwood Pavilion, Boston, MA

Library Lion, Written by Eli Bijaoui — Life-Size Lion Puppeteer — 2025
Based on the book by Michelle Knudsen, Directed by Ran Bechor

Boston Public Library, Boston, MA

Library Lion, Written by Eli Bijaoui — Life-Size Lion Puppeteer — 2024
Based on the book by Michelle Knudsen, Directed by Ran Bechor

Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry, Storrs, CT

We Are All In the Dumps with Jack and Guy — Toy Theater Puppeteer — 2022, 2023
Devised based on the book by Maurice Sendak

Connecticut Repertory Theater, Storrs, CT

The Metamorphoses — Midases Daugher, Hunger, Pomona Aerial Sling and Tissue — 2022
Written by Mary Zimmerman, Directed by Kristine Wold

She Kills Monsters — Life-Size Monster Puppeteer — 2021
Written by Qui Nguyen, Directed by Beth Gardiner

University of Connecticut, Storrs CT

Nothing Really Matters — Solo Performer, Puppeteer, Clown Aerial Acrobat, Physical Theater — 2024
Self-Devised and Produced

Nimbus	Live-Cue, Animation Performer	2021, 2022
Directed by Abigail Baird and Morgan Lee		

Kinetic Arts Production, Oakland CA

Beyond the Ring	Ring Leader, Hand-to-Hand Acrobatics	2022
Directed by Jaron Hollander	Clown, Aerial Acrobatics	
Salvage	Toilet Girl, Hand-to-Hand Acrobatics	2015
Directed by Jaron Hollander	Clown, Physical Theater	

Cirque de Boheme, Sonoma, CA

Freedom	Hand-to-Hand Acrobatics	2017
Directed by Michel Michelis	*Aerial Animation*	
Somewhere	Hand-to-Hand Acrobatics,	2015
Directed by Michel Michelis	*Aerial Animation*, Physical Theater	

Contemporary Circus Arts Festival, Chicago, IL

Aerial Animation	*Aerial Animation*	2015
Hold On, Let Go	Hand-to-Hand Partner Acrobatics	2014
Devised, Directed, and Choreographed		

The Supper Club Residency, San Francisco, CA 2012- 2013

Hold On, Let Go	Hand-to-Hand Partner Acrobatics
Honest Love	Aerial Lyra
Caterpillar	Physical Theater, Puppetry, and Trapeze
Devised, Directed, and Choreographed	

Vau de Vire Society, San Francisco, CA

At the Armory	Hand-to-Hand Acrobatics	2013
Lucas Film Party	Hand-to-Hand Acrobatics	2013

Sweet Can Productions, San Francisco, CA

Mittens and Mistletoe	Hand-to-Hand Acrobatics	2013

Wise Fool New Mexico, Santa Fe, NM

Circus Luminous	*Aerial Animation,* Clown	2012, 2011,
	Hand-to-Hand Acrobatics	2010, 2008
	Lyra, Big Head Puppetry	
Coup de Circ	Nova, Clown, Aerial Tissue, Puppetry	2009