The Magic of Jim Henson and the Art of Puppetry

OLLI South, Spring, 2019; Tuesday, 1:00-3:00
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Jim Henson was a creative genius and a dreamer who was called “The New Walt Disney.” In this 4-week class, we will watch clips that show his vivid imagination and his many contributions to the performance art of puppetry that brought so much enjoyment to so many, both children and adults. We will also learn about the long history of puppetry from around the world and discuss the question, “What is creativity?”

**Week #1 (April 2)**
Biography of Jim Henson; early influences; his overall body of work from experimental films to TV shows like Sesame Street and The Muppet Show to movies like The Dark Crystal and Labyrinth; TED talk on creativity given by Kermit the Frog

**Week #2 (April 9)**
History of the Muppets; engineering of the Muppets; the puppeteers who helped create this new form of puppetry; the “celebrity” puppets: Kermit, Miss Piggy, Big Bird, the Swedish Chef, and others; award winning songs from the Muppets

**Week #3 (April 16)**
The 4,000 year history of puppetry from around the world: Vietnamese water puppets, Indian shadow puppets, Chinese stick puppets marionettes and more; modern puppetry, including complex engineering feats used to create puppets in such shows as Lion King and War Horse.

**Week #4 (April 23)**
Jim Henson’s legacy and his contributions to the art of puppetry, to education, and more; the conservation of puppets; the future of American puppetry

“He left the world a little better.”
Encyclopedia Britannica