

# COMMON WEAL COMMUNITY ARTS

# Artful Isolation Activities

## Week Eleven: Just Me and My Shadow with Sarah Bergbusch



**Sarah Bergbusch** is an independent theatre artist who loves to explore alternative ways of storytelling through puppetry, theatre, and improvisation. She has worked both internationally and throughout Saskatchewan.

**This activity is possible thanks to a partnership with the Heritage Community Association in Regina, Saskatchewan.**



**Tell a story and communicate with others using shadows.**

**What is Just Me and My Shadow?** Shadow puppetry is a form of puppetry that uses flat images, light, and shadow to create a two-dimensional world to tell a story. You can learn more about its history and explore other shadow puppeteers [here](#). In this activity, you will tell a story and create compelling images using shadow puppets. By using your body and different objects from inside your home, you can explore the mysterious world of light and shadow.

**Why Just Me and My Shadow?** Sarah is fascinated by shadow puppetry because its success is dependent on creating a contrast between light and dark, which is called chiaroscuro. This concept of chiaroscuro is in the foreground for her because of the “light” and “dark” that is prevalent in the world right now. She is inspired by the enabling constraints that the COVID-19 crisis has put on her artistic practice because they have challenged her to find ways to tell stories and communicate with others from a distance. Puppetry is a compelling medium for solo storytelling because an infinite number of characters are still accessible and possible.

**Suitable For:** All Ages (note that wee ones may need technical support and supervision).

**What You'll Need:** The main thing that you will need is a portable light source, such as a flashlight, phone flashlight, lantern, or lamp. Or, if you are feeling traditional, you can make your shadows by candlelight! Sarah wants to challenge you to make your shadow puppets out of objects that you find in your home (can a teapot become an elephant?) OR simply use different parts of your body. You may also want to use a white sheet or light piece of fabric or paper to create a screen for your images, but it is not necessary.

### Getting Ready:

- Right now in the world, we are primarily using platforms like Zoom or Facetime to communicate with friends, neighbours, and loved ones. Throughout history, people have found innovative ways to communicate from afar. Think about ways that you can communicate a message or story from afar using shadows.
- Think about the space that you want to use for your shadow puppetry. Is it a more traditional “stage” with a screen or a sheet? Is it the side of your house outside? Is it the sidewalk or the street? Is it a wall inside your house? Can you use your body as the screen to project things onto?
- Sarah used things like sign language, hoberglyphs, and Morse code as inspiration to communicate her message. You can learn more about these forms of non-verbal communication [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), and you can watch a video of her shadow puppet show [here](#)
- Gather your materials! Find different household objects, and explore how they can make new images with some shadow and DIY magic.



### Activity:

- Gather your materials and have them close at hand.
- Turn on your light source, it's time to play! If you want to communicate a message to someone with your shadow show, such as a neighbour, you may want to try projecting the shadows on the side of your house or on a sidewalk. Or you can invite loved ones to stop by and watch from afar. Note that an outdoor shadow show works best at twilight or at night, like a drive-in movie theatre.
- If you want to communicate with someone, challenge them to send you a message back. Can you and a neighbour have a conversation using symbols and shadows? You may need to decide on a code of symbols that you want to use.
- If the message or story you are telling is only for your household, you can use a wall of your house, a sheet, or paper as a screen.

### Reflection:

- Consider how it felt to tell a story or communicate with others from afar. Did you use pre-established forms of communication, such as Morse code? Did you create your own, new form of symbols and communication?
- What do you notice about performing using shadows? Did any unexpected moments come up? Was getting a message across challenging? Has it encouraged you to think of communicating in new ways?
- What was challenging about using household objects to create recognizable images or characters? Did it help you to view the objects around you that you use everyday in a new way?
- The focus of this project is finding alternative forms of storytelling and communication. What are some other ways that you can think of to connect with others without using technologies like Zoom?
- Share images of your shadow puppets with us via Facebook or Instagram, tagging [@skcommonweal](#) and using the hashtags [#cwshadow](#) and [#cwneighbours](#).

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SARAH BERGBUSCH

ACTIVITY SHEET CREATED BY COMMON WEAL COMMUNITY ARTS IN SASKATCHEWAN

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