

MARIANNE'S ONION

by Alex and Olmsted



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SYNOPSIS: “Marianne’s Onion” (2020) is a true story told through shadow puppetry based on an interview with Marianne Ross. Eighty-six year old Marianne hikes through the valley behind her house one day when she is in need of an onion and miraculously finds one in the woods. The film follows her journey from first discovery, to the reactions of her community, to her hilarious and poignant musings on the meaning of unexpectedly receiving a seemingly mundane gift.

This film was produced by Heather Henson's Handmade Puppet Dreams.

“Marianne's Onion” was filmed entirely during quarantine in 2020 and followed all COVID-19 safety precautions.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Heather Henson

PRODUCERS: Sam Koji Hale, Alex U. Griffin, Jessica Simon

DIRECTORS: Alex Vernon, Sarah Olmsted Thomas

WRITERS: Alex Vernon, Sarah Olmsted Thomas

KEY CAST: Featuring the voice of Marianne Ross.

PUPPET DESIGN & FABRICATION: Alex Vernon

SET DESIGN & FABRICATION: Sarah Olmsted Thomas

PUPPETEERS: Alex Vernon, Sarah Olmsted Thomas

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DURATION: 7min 28sec.

GENRES: Shorts, Puppetry, Documentary, Experimental, Comedy

THEMES: Miracles, Philosophy, Nature, Self-Reflection

AGE RANGE: All ages.

TRAILER: <https://youtu.be/2IM0QukPSi4>

SCREENING HISTORY:

UPCOMING USA: Puppets in the Green Mountains (2022)

USA: Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival (2022)

USA: Maryland Film Festival (2022)

USA: Washington West International Film Festival (2021)

USA: International Puppet Fringe NYC (2021)

USA: Virtual Ixex Puppetry Screening (2021)

FRANCE: Paris Film Art Festival (2021)

CANADA: Montréal International Animation Festival - ANIMAZE (2021)

CANADA: Lunenburg Doc Fest (2021)

SPAIN: Madrid International Film Festival (2021)*

CANADA: Festival of Animated Objects Screening (2021)

AWARD: Best Animation or Animated Sequence* Madrid International Film Festival (2021)



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ABOUT ALEX AND OLMSTED:

SHORT BIO: Alex and Olmsted, winner of 2 Jim Henson Foundation grants, is an internationally acclaimed puppet theater and film production company based in Maryland, USA. www.AlexAndOlmsted.com

LONG BIO: Alex and Olmsted (Alex Vernon and Sarah Olmsted Thomas) is an internationally acclaimed puppet theater and film production company based in Maryland, USA. In recent years, they have toured abroad at the Festival of Wonder in Denmark, the Puppet Festival Chuncheon in South Korea, the Festival de Casteliers in Montréal, and the Festival of Animated Objects in Calgary. In the United States, they have played Symphony Space in New York City, The Detroit Institute of Arts in Michigan, the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta, and Black Cherry Puppet Theater in Baltimore, among others. Alex and Olmsted was awarded the 2020 State Independent Artist Award for Performing Arts from the Maryland State Arts Council, the highest honor for performing artists in the State of Maryland and an award that is only given once in the lifetime of an artist or group. Their puppet show, *Milo the Magnificent*, was awarded a 2017 Jim Henson Foundation Grant, a Greenbelt Community Foundation Grant, and received an excellent mention in the New York Times. A & O was awarded a second Jim Henson Foundation grant to further develop their outer space show, *MAROONED! A Space Comedy*. Alex and Olmsted's short puppet film *Marianne's Onion*, produced by Heather Henson's *Handmade Puppet Dreams*, was an official selection of the Maryland Film Festival, the Washington West International Film Festival, and the Paris Art Film Festival, among others. Alex and Olmsted is a resident company at Baltimore Theatre Project. Vernon and Thomas are also proud company members of Happenstance Theater with whom they have created 10 productions since 2012. www.AlexAndOlmsted.com

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: For 10 years, we have run a puppet theater company that specializes in making live theater. When the pandemic hit all of our performances were canceled and, like many artists, we were at a loss as to what to do but knew that we had to continue to create. We invested in better equipment and taught ourselves how to increase our production value. We were lucky enough to receive a grant from Heather Henson's Handmade Puppet Dreams to create a film which gave us the additional support we needed to realize this project.

The story we decided to tell, "Marianne's Onion," is especially personal to us. Not only does it celebrate our friend Marianne Ross, but it also deals with finding small miracles in this unique time which has otherwise been especially bleak.

This film was made in quarantine following all COVID-19 precautions. All of the puppets in this film were handmade and all effects were done practically.

Alex Vernon and Sarah Olmsted Thomas
Co-Artistic Directors of Alex and Olmsted