

Joan Schirle

References during keynote, *The Mask of the Universe*:

Unmasking the Universe: The James Webb Space Telescope (sometimes called JWST or Webb) is an orbiting [infrared observatory](#) that [will complement and extend the discoveries of the Hubble Space Telescope](#), with longer wavelength coverage and greatly improved sensitivity. The longer wavelengths enable Webb to look much closer to the [beginning of time](#) and to hunt for the unobserved formation of [the first galaxies](#), as well as to look inside dust clouds where [stars](#) and [planetary systems](#) are forming today.

<https://www.jwst.nasa.gov/>

<https://archive.storycorps.org/interviews/i-like-to-say-that-being-an-astronomer-involves-a-lot-of-things-that-my-mommy-never-told-me-an-interview-with-marcia-rieke/>

MARIT BENTHE NORHEIM: Life-Boats

In 2016 I started a collaboration with a Norwegian sculptor who lives in Denmark. Her project, the Life-Boats, was a trio of mask-like concrete boats in the shape of women at three different stages of life—adolescence, pregnancy, and old age. She created these over 8 years with enormous amounts of work and fundraising. The masks on the third, or “Memories” boat, were portrait masks of actual women who had been forced to migrate to Denmark, due to marriage, war, political asylum, etc ...and represented Arab, Palestinian, German, French, Mongolian women and several races and ethnicities. Why are the boats white? “White is the color of peace, and the easiest to be seen from a distance at sea.” Our collaboration had several stages, including my bringing her to the US to present her ideas about public, mobile art at a festival in Arcata, CA, but part of our collaboration involved masks. I commissioned masks to represent the 18 figures on the Memories boat. I wanted a woman to carve them but there are no women carvers in Bali, so I had my friend Nyoman Setiawan carve 18 masks. Benthe will now take her hand to them and they will look more like her sculptures.--JS

<https://www.norheim.dk/da>

<https://life-boats.wixsite.com/life-boats-english>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnpj9JkrahE>--why she changed the figures on the “Memories” boat

Her rolling installation of 5 masked caravans, “Camping Women”:

<https://www.norheim.dk/campingkvinder1>

BOOKS:

A Shipload of Women’s Memories: Narratives Across Borders. Anne Christensen & Marit Benthe Norheim. Aalborg University Press, 2017

Women & Mask Conference, Sept. 24, 2021 Schirle keynote

Life-Boats: From Dream to Dream. Ed. Marie Kirkegaard; the Support Organization for Life-Boats, 2018

Note on: Rolling Angels in Dresden, Germany 2020 on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the destruction of Dresden during the war in February 1945.

Two of the guardian angels from the flock of 17 concrete sculptures, “**The Carrier**” and “**The Caretaker**,” were created for and will remain in Dresden. In their arms and on their wings they carry the memory of the dead of the Shoah, the Second World War in Europe, and the still prevailing violence of war against people all over the world.

The flock of 17 Rolling angels were released into the public space in the center of Dresden in front of the Culture Palace on the 5th of February. Then they moved around Dresden until the Memorial on February 13, set in the program as a Performance of 17 angels. A day when thousands of people held hands in a ring around the city to show that they are united for peace. The Angel Flock continued its journey in Dresden until May 8, 2020, the day of capitulation. They want to use Rolling Angels as messengers of hope, comfort and peace. The rolling angels are modeled in concrete, over dustbin armatures and have inlaid sound installations, created by the composer Geir Johnson.

BALI:

Since 1996 I made a study trip to Bali, Indonesia, every two years, and from 2006 until 2020, annually. The focus of these trips was the traditional performing arts of Bali, in mask carving, mask performance, and shadow puppetry. Their acceptance of mystery I found to be invigorating---masks were made to reveal the cosmic drama as rendered in the history of the Mahajapit empire, whose Hindu ancestors finally crossed from Java into Bali as escape from Muslim attackers. The most commonly seen dance, the *topeng*, represents the stories of this era, told by kings, queens, ministers, servants and clowns, male and female, but always danced by men, with a few exceptions. There were US, British and Italian women who went to Bali to study in the 2nd half of the 20th century, some actually danced topeng in ceremonies. One was influential in preserving some dance traditions: Christina (Wistari) Formaggia led a group in preserving the ancient dance form of *Gambuh*. Kathy Foley, Margaret Coldiron, others. In dances based on the Ramayana, unmasked women play both female characters like Sita and male characters like Rama and Laksmana, due to women being thought to have nobler nature more consistent with the idea of ruler. But in the masked form of the Ramayana, the *wayang wong*, usually only male dancers perform as female characters, including Sita. --JS

Honoring women mask makers, performers, authors, collectors, researchers, etc:

Judy Slattum, author: *Masks of Bali, Spirits of an Ancient Drama*, Chronicle Books 1992 (re-published by Periplus Press)

<https://www.baliadvertiser.biz/judy/>

<https://www.maskmuseum.org/judy-slattum/>

Related;

This article charts the increasing involvement of women performers in Balinese topeng (mask dance) and emerged from discussions and emails among the authors. Following an overview explaining women's traditional absence from this form and noting the pioneering women who have been at the forefront of change, the authors discuss how, as non-Balinese female performers and researchers, they discovered that they shared many similar stories, curiosities, and challenges relating to their training and...

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Women-in-Balinese-Topeng%3A-Voices%2C-Reflections%2C-and-Coldiron-Palermo/217fed90288f1a1652177ff0477951c16e268954>

Cristina Formaggia: (27 August 1945 in Milan – 19 July 2008 in Milan) was an Italian actress, performer and artist who came to be a key participant in the preservation and dissemination of [Balinese dance](#) – particularly the [Topeng](#) and [Gambuh](#) traditions; she was also a student of the Indian [Kathakali](#) school of sacred performance art. She was heavily involved in contemporary trans-cultural theatre being both an active participant in the [ISTA](#) in collaboration with [Eugenio Barba](#) and the [Odin Teatret](#) (serving as its link to Bali) and with the [Magdalena Project](#).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cristina_Wistari_Formaggia

<https://www.fortdecafe.org/topeng-cristina-formaggia/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtdU40Gc37E>

Sita Sings the Blues (film): https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sita-sings-the-blues-brin_b_907914

Ruth Lechuga

A film visit to Ruth's collection. 13 min <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPPWNv-f3ng>

Austrian refugee to Mexico in the 1930's. Collected and photographed over 10,000 articles of folkloric origin. Masks particularly interested her – she collected over 1200- and she developed relationships with the mask-makers and documented the dances in which they were worn. She emphasized the importance of identifying the creator of each piece she collected. From her perspective, many artisans were in fact outstanding artists, hence a collector should take the trouble to research the individual's name. To ignore it would be to belittle the artisan's role for she was convinced that "folk art is not anonymous". She was also very keen to record the techniques of production and always enjoyed meeting the artisans. She felt great concern for the future of folk art and the welfare of its creators.

BOOKS:

Mask Arts of Mexico, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1994 Ruth D. Lechuga and Chloe Sayer. 1994, Thames and Hudson, (135 photos of masks by David Lavender and Ruth Lechuga.)Masks from the collection of Ruth Lechuga in Mexico City, with descriptions of the types, dances, etc

"*Arte Popular – Museo Ruth D. Lechuga*", Artes de Mexico, no.42

"*Ruth D. Lechuga –Una Memoria Mexico*", Jose Antonio Rodriguez, Artes de Mexico/Museo Franz Mayer, 2002

Women & Mask Conference, Sept. 24, 2021 Schirle keynote

“*El Cuarto Rosa de Ruth D. Lechuga*”, Margarita de Orellana, Marta Turok, Ariana Landin Lopez, Gabriela Olmoro, Ruth D. Lechuga, 2014, Artes de Mexico

Alicia Martinez Alvarez, mask maker, director, teacher

<https://contigoenladistancia.cultura.gob.mx/detalle/laboratorio-de-la-mascara-alicia-martinez-alvarez>

<https://sites.bu.edu/womenandmasks/alicia-martinez-alvarez/>

Didi Hopkins

Didi Hopkins (www.commediaworks.com) is a leading British commedia practitioner. She was instrumental in bringing commedia to the NT hit, *One Man Two Guvnors*.

Didi Hopkins: <http://www.the3rdimagazine.co.uk/2012/01/influential-women-didi-hopkins/>

Didi Hopkins: National Theatre series on Commedia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqlfTG40RUI>

Anna Deavere Smith, playwright, actor

<https://www.annadeaveresmith.org/>

Melody Anderson, maskmaker:

<https://sites.bu.edu/womenandmasks/melody-anderson/>

Alyssa Ravenwood, maskmaker

<https://www.deviantart.com/alyssa-ravenwood/gallery/24909533/theater-masks>

<https://ravenwoodmasks.mysupadupa.com/home>

Tara Carias, maskmaker, teacher

<http://www.waxingmoonmasks.com/masks>

Minna Matilda, mask maker

<https://www.nakupelle.com/masks/masks-main.html>

Kate Braidwood, mask maker, founder of Wonderheads

<https://www.wonderheads.com/>

Vermeer unmasked: Recent restoration of Vermeer’s Girl Reading Letter revealed not a blank wall behind her, but Cupid, trampling on a mask, a symbol of deception, to show that love conquers deceit and dishonesty. Credit...Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/09/arts/design/vermeer-cupid-restoration.html?action=click&module=card&pageType=theWeekenderLink>

Mask Museums

Online mask museum: <https://www.maskmuseum.org/>

in Bali: <http://www.maskandpuppets.com/>

