

The *Gunungan* As 538 Research and restoration of a Javanese Wayang Kulit puppet

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The *Gunungan* is a specific puppet of the Indonesian shadow theatre, the *Wayang Kulit*, from the Island of Java. It's a skin artifact, perforated and painted on both sides. A central wooden stick works both as a stand and as a handle.

This puppet presented accentuated and extensive deformations on the skin support, and a large presence of gaps, cracks and flakes micro-diffuse adhesion imperfections affecting the pictorial film. A targeted campaign of non-invasive and micro-invasive analytical investigations showed two pictorial phases of the work: the first one more consistent with the traditional technique, the second one less traditional with the use of alkyd colors. This led to the assumption that the second phase served to restore the totality of the pictorial decoration, without it the object would have probably lost its purpose as a theatrical asset and as a representation of a symbolic meaning. The conservation was done with the goal of maintaining and consolidating both pictorial phases and also was designed and built a custom made box for the safety storage of the puppet.

Keywords: Skin puppet, wayang kulit, Gunungan