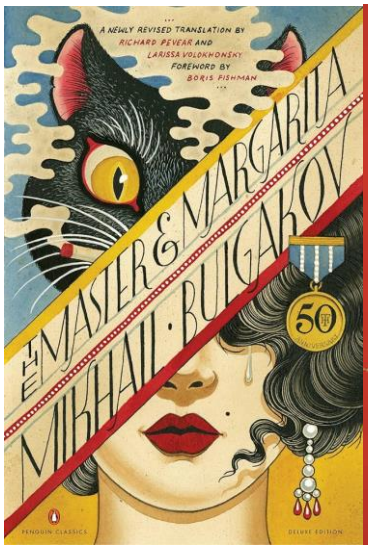
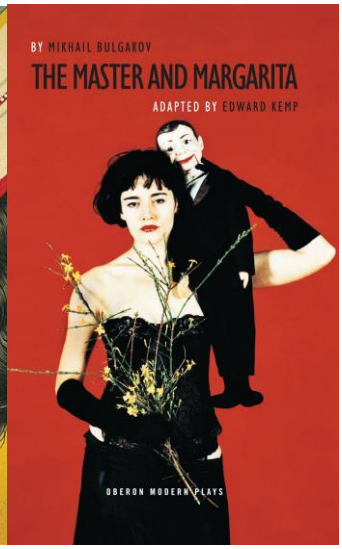
- Suzanne Massie’s retelling of the Firebird legend.

In the story of the Firebird, Maryushka a modest orphan girl lives in a small village. She was popular due to her embroidery and would commonly be asked to leave town, however her response would always be that while she will embroider for anyone that finds her work beautiful, she would not leave her birth village. The evil sorcerer Kashchei the immortal heard of her beautiful work and transformed into a beautiful young man, he paid her a visit and was enraged by how a mortal could make a work of engraving better than he could. He asked her to come with him and work for him in exchange for her becoming the queen, to which she once again refused with the same reasoning. To this final insult to his ego, he had turned her into a firebird and himself into a falcon and took her away. To leave a memory of herself in town she spread her feathers down it and eventually died in the falcon's grasp. To this day the feathers are rumoured to show themselves to those that truly love and help others.

I decided to research Slavic folklore regarding transformation moving forward and specifically focus on this one because I grew up with Slavic tales and the stories of Koshchei the immortal, and this specific story has many instances of magic and metamorphosis being used. It is a great starting point and a theme of magical birds and immortal beings kidnapping mortals, possibly something I would like to incorporate into my own project.

- Master and Margarita





I have read the master and margarita by Mikhail Bulgakov and it is one of my massive inspirations for this project. Everything from the narrative and symbolism down to the characters and wording of the story is so incredibly unique and bizarre. On one hand I was struck with sympathy for the characters that had to suffer from the actions of the main antagonist, however on the other hand I had to be reminded of the fact that these characters are not perfect and in some cases even deserve some of the misfortune that they are subjected to. It is a tale of mystery and impossibility, with each chapter a wild ride to be taken on. It has inspired me when it comes to my narrative for the project, with how an immortal being has descended and kidnaps a woman whilw causing a multitude of problems for everyone. I would like to bring this level of insanity to my own narrative and hope that it can leave an equally massive impression on the people looking at my final piece and process. This is a book that I heavily recommend for anyone interested in the bizarre and discussions of right and wrong.

- Quimper Hittys

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Quimper Hittys is a group of artists that make dolls to be sold and give recipes and tutorials on how to make your own dolls. The reason I have decided to investigate them is because of their style and how it somewhat resembles Slavic culture in some of the designs of the dolls which has been a form of inspiration when I looked at folklore. I think it would be cool to try and replicate a doll since it has a lot of flexibility when it comes to designs and is generally something I haven't done before, especially with this type of doll.

Thanksgiving Day with all the Quimper Hittys is a blog piece that sticks out due to the style, it is all the members and their dolls after the Thanksgiving Day. While it is not inspired by Slavic culture, the use of nature and the dresses really remind me of the culture which can be closely linked as inspiration to the story inspired so far.

- Christoph Niemann

Christoph Niemann is a German American photographer, illustrator and animator. He has won many awards and has achieved many accomplishments in his career. One of the things that really interested me about him is how in many of his photographs he mixes his illustrations and real-life objects such as fruits to add onto them and get creative with them.

Sunday Sketches is a collection of work by him that I think will really inspire me in the creation of my puppet. In his words, “When I work on my Sunday Sketches, it’s never about a sudden inspired spark. I pick a random object, and then I just stare at it. I look at it from different angles, play with the light (usually just by moving my desk lamp). And

I try to open my mind as wide as possible, to see if a peculiar angle reminds me of a familiar shape.

Often this yields… nothing.

And when it does, I doubt it's because I have a special gift at making these visual connections. It's because sometimes I have the stamina to keep on staring, when a saner person would do the reasonable thing and get on with their life instead.". His carefree and creative approach to handling objects and how they come together with his drawings is something that I could be very inspired by in my own work. Such as it could blend many materials in one and mix the form of reality and fiction, almost like a transformation in my puppet. I could use actual feathers to show the transformation into a bird and really experiment with my work in that way.