

Marionette, La boîte à joujoux: Tambour, 1918
Entwurf/Bemalung: Otto Morach
Ausführung: Carl Fischer
Material/Technik: Holz, geschnitzt, gefasst
35 × 22 × 21 cm
Eigentum: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK



As a teacher at the Kunstgewerbeschule Zürich, the painter Otto Morach (1887–1973) created a set of impressive marionettes in 1918 for a Swiss Werkbund exhibition. Painted in faceted Cubist manner, the puppets were designed for one of nine puppet shows produced on behalf of the school's director, Alfred Altherr.

As a teacher of decorative illustration, Otto Morach designed twenty-eight puppets to accompany the musical composition *La boîte à joujoux* by Claude Debussy. His teaching colleague for the subjects of sculpting and wood carving, Carl Fischer (1888–1887), then transformed Morach's brightly colored gouache drawings into three dimensions with his artful carving. Morach in turn executed the faceted paint job, emphasizing the sculptural expression of the figures by shading individual surfaces. He had assimilated this Cubist style during lengthy stays at the studio of the artist colony La Ruche in Paris. Morach deliberately revealed the construction of the marionettes by foregoing any textile clothing. He also left out the usual ballast of lead soles, opening himself up to the accusation that he had designed unplayable puppets. And he conceived some of the

figures in fixed dancing poses, which likewise hindered the traditional performance. However, the effect served to enhance the elegance of the figures as they recount André Hellé's childishly simple human tales from the toy box against the backdrop of late-night Paris. Unfortunately, Morach's production could not be performed in 1918 due to the outbreak of the Spanish Flu. Nevertheless, his enthusiasm for puppet theater remained, and by 1931 he had designed in collaboration with Carl Fischer the figures and/or the set design for various other plays on behalf of the Swiss Marionette Theater. (Sabine Flaschberger)

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