

Shadow Play

Anne Kresge's

THE 1998 LIBRARY FELLOWS AWARD WINNER

Anne Kresge, an internationally renowned book artist and printmaker from High Falls, New York, is the 1998 NMWA Library Fellows award-winner. Her artist's book, *Shadow Play*, was inspired by Indonesian shadow puppet theater. This imaginative and unusual artist's book incorporates a "stage," and a set of six paper puppets who personify goddesses and strong female archetypes. *Shadow Play* invites the reader to participate in the creation of her/his own story and to assume the role of a Javanese "Dalang," the puppeteer, who brings the characters to life by telling tales through movement and verse.

An accordion booklet introduces the characters from Indian mythology and provides "directions" on how to assemble the theater/book. Through the lush, impressionistic poems and "story starters" of poet Melinda Kennedy, who collaborated with Kresge on this book, *Shadow Play* suggests stories such as creation myths, wisdom tales, stories of tricksters, tales of good versus evil, and myths of cosmic destruction and renewal. As in a Javanese shadow play, the puppets can be set in motion in front of or behind the "book-stage." Each represents a different color and is provided with special attributes. All have movable parts which allow them to be transformed into



different personas. A source of light placed behind them projects their shadows onto the translucent pages of the book, which are printed with patterns, text, and images that portray the earth, the sea, the sky, and the cosmos. The pages create pathways into the book's unfolding landscape. The reader's imagination is the only limit for the various encounters and situations the puppets can enact.

Shadow Play is housed in a handmade, three-paneled folio which folds into a box. The book will last for centuries—it was created with various archival and handmade papers that will not deteriorate with time. A

variety of printing techniques such as etching, relief, and chine collé were employed in its production.

Shadow Play has been published in a limited edition of 125 copies, each numbered and signed by the artist. To purchase the book, priced at \$400, contact the NMWA Museum Shop at 800/222-7270 or the NMWA Library and Research Center at 202/783-7364.

—Krystyna Wasserman
Director of the Library and Research Center

