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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 5, 2010

**FIRSTWORKS PRESENTS  
HEATHER HENSON'S NEWLY RELEASED COLLECTION OF  
CUTTING-EDGE PUPPET FILMS**

**PROVIDENCE, R.I.** – FirstWorks announced their annual screening of cutting-edge puppet film shorts today. The free screening of the newly unveiled “Handmade Puppet Dreams Volume IV”, curated and introduced by Heather Henson, daughter of beloved puppetry pioneer Jim Henson, and Sam Koji Hale’s “Yamasong” takes place at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) on Monday, April 19 at 7 p.m. at the Michael P. Metcalf Auditorium, Chace Center/RISD Museum. Visit [www.first-works.org](http://www.first-works.org) or call 401-421-4278 for reservations.

Henson’s series of independently produced film shorts showcases the rising stars of puppetry as they explore unique approaches to animation through a spectrum of puppetry styles. Henson’s selections for Volume IV continue to push the storyline envelope, and feature a variety of off-beat themes such as: the “spaghetti-salsa” western, strange addictions, matricide and music video. The screening event will include artists’ talks and is recommended for ages 13 and up, proving that the world of puppetry is not only for kids.

“Handmade Puppet Dreams Volume IV” selections include work by puppet artists and animators Frankie Cordero, Carl Knickerbocker, Rob Saunders, Martin P. Robinson, Anney Fresh, Jerrold Ripenor, Richard Mansfield, Christy Kane, Leat Klingman and Jeanne Stern.

“As a leader in the contemporary puppet scene, Heather Henson is a favorite FirstWorks guest artist, and we are thrilled to welcome her for year three of her highly anticipated annual

presentation at RISD,” said FirstWorks’ Executive Artistic Director Kathleen Pletcher. “This year, Heather introduces a fresh crop of artists and film shorts and the event promises to be another first in the arts for Providence.”

Joining Henson for a special screening of his short film, “Yamasong” will be guest artist Sam Koji Hale, a rising creative force in the field of puppet films. Winner of the 2005 Kennedy Center Award in puppet design for “Inland Emperor’s New Clothes,” Hale founded his animation and puppetry company Mighty Pug Studio in 2009. Commissioned by Henson’s film company IBEX Inc., “Yamasong” was created for L.A. based percussion band On Ensemble as a music video from their latest album “Ume in the Middle”. Set to the evocative sounds of On Ensemble’s taiko drumming and harmonic throat singing, “Yamasong” features American Bunraku puppets combined with computer graphics and stop-motion animation to tell the story of a fantastic journey undertaken by Nani, the patchwork girl and Shojun, the tortoise warrior in pursuit of a fallen star.

This FirstWorks screening event takes place on Monday, April 19, 2010 at 7 p.m. at the Michael P. Metcalf Auditorium, Chace Center/RISD Museum, located at 20 North Main Street, Providence. This event is FREE and open to the public. Due to limited seating, advance reservations are recommended. For reservations, contact Annette Robinson at [annette@first-works.org](mailto:annette@first-works.org) or call 401-421-4278.

Heather Henson’s “*Handmade Puppet Dreams, Volume IV*” with special guest Sam Koji Hale is presented by FirstWorks in collaboration with the Rhode Island School of Design’s Office of Student Life.

### **About FirstWorks**

FirstWorks connects art with audiences year-round through the exceptional vitality of artists’ first appearances, children’s first experiences with performance and the premiering of new works. Beginning with an unprecedented collaboration with Providence’s Department of Art, Culture + Tourism, FirstWorks was launched in 2004 as a vehicle to build community, reach underserved audiences, and present extraordinary arts programs that elevate Providence’s national profile. In the six years since, FirstWorks has produced ten groundbreaking arts festivals, attracted over 70,000 participants, and engaged more than 100 nonprofit community organizations and schools. Visit [www.first-works.org](http://www.first-works.org) to learn more.

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