

SOPHIA MICHAHELLES
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Education

McGill University - Bachelor of Arts, 1st class honors in Art History, Montreal, Canada. 1994-1998

Università di Roma "La Sapienza" - One-year direct enrollment in the faculty of Art History through the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Rome, Italy. 1994-1995.

Pageant Puppetry Work

New York's Village Halloween Parade – Chief Puppet Designer for nation's largest night parade. As co-director of the artist ensemble Superior Concept Monsters, designed annual performance works to lead event, each involving hundreds of volunteers and an audience of nearly 2 million spectators. Past works include:

- **Jack!** (2006) – Dancing Jack-o-lantern puppets rekindle Halloween's earliest tradition of the Celtic communal fire.
- **New Orleans Reborn** (2005) – The phoenix rises above a jazz funeral marked by four giant lanterns of New Orleans buildings.
- **Cakewalk** (2004) – 25 giant cake-hats evoke the African-American legacy of the jazz burlesque.
- **Trickster** (2003) – Giant puppets conjure the trickster archetype from six different ethnic traditions.
- **Play** (2002) – A living chess board explores the idea of *Homo Ludens*, or how gaming defines culture.
- **Phoenix** (2001) – A newly arisen firebird carries the spirit of New York aloft, six weeks after 9/11
- **Baba Yaga** (2001) – The Russian witch, accompanied by her chicken-legged hut and enchanted trees, examines the crone.
- **Evolution** (2000) – In tribute to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, a pageant of Apemen and Starmen track human evolution.
- **Metamorphosis** (1999) – 20'-tall caterpillars become luna moths, unfolding their wings as they parade forward.

Morinesio's Midsummer Pageant – Developed and designed an annual community procession for a small village in the Piedmont region of Italy, bringing together international artists and students with local residents. The project used local oral histories and Occitan ethnic folk traditions as the basis for the construction of large-scale puppets, masks, and other visual elements. 2001 – present.

Festifools! – Led workshops for students at University of Michigan's School of Art & Design and College of Architecture & Urban Planning in creating giant puppets and masks for the 1st annual Feast of Fools. Ann Arbor, MI. 2007

Omega Institute – Faculty for summer arts curriculum. Led week-long workshop, "Building Community through Pageant Puppetry", culminating in a procession through campus. 2002 – 2006.

Rights of Passage – Designed puppets and costumes for world-renowned carnival celebration in Trinidad. Collaborated with local artists and residents on the building and performance of the contemporary interpretation of a traditional Dragon band. Port-of-Spain, Trinidad & Tobago. 2006.

Dancing through Africa – Worked with designers Laura Barbata and Ronald and Michael Guy-James to create costumes for performance of young stiltwalkers from the Keylemanjahro school in Trinidad carnival. Port-of-Spain, Trinidad & Tobago. 2006.

Binghamton First Night – Designed and created puppets for annual procession through a series of open community workdays. During a 2 month artists-in-residency program., worked with local population to develop processional elements based on their culturally diverse traditions of New Year celebrations. Binghamton, NY. 2006.

Coyote's Way – Designed and created a theatrical narrative performance in outdoor landscape. Worked with local community to build and perform elements based on Native American trickster Coyote tales. Hip Pocket Theater, Fort Worth, TX. 2006

River of Light – Designed and created floating a sculpture to be burned in effigy during an annual community celebration on the Hudson River. Tivoli, NY. 2006.

Ebune: Procession of the Ram – In collaboration with the Museum of African Culture in Portland, ME, developed and designed annual community procession to celebrate West African ritual traditions. Created masks, puppets and instruments according to Igbo tribal iconography with local school children and students at Maine College of Art. 2004 – 2005.

Mythic Creatures – Developed procession of giant puppets to pay tribute to the community artists participating in the 4th Annual Tivoli Street Painting Festival. Tivoli, NY. 2005.

Henson International Festival of Puppet Theatre – Commissioned by Henson Foundation for outdoor performance to open Festival. Joseph Papp Public Theatre, New York. 2000.

Related Puppetry Work

Hudson Art's Walk—Created scenic and illuminated sculptures for city-wide art event. Hudson, NY. 2006.

Marching Band Skeletons—Created four giant puppets for the Elizabeth H.S. Marching Band, N.J. State champions. 2005.

Puppetry Workshop for kids - Taught puppetry to elementary and middle school children. Portland, ME. 2002 - 2005.

Rokeby Live People Show - Created marionettes for a one-woman show to tour from Morocco to Ghana. 2000.

Sundiata, the Lion King of Mali - Created puppets for a New York production and touring show for children.. 1999.

Tooth and Nail - Created large-scale puppets for a theatrical performance. Moyses Hall. Montreal, Canada. 1997.

Performance and Visual Art Exhibitions

Basil Twist's Symphony Fantastique - Puppeteered the underwater show in San Francisco, Arlington VA, Montreal, London, Munich, Chicago, and New York. 1999-present.

Drawing from the Mas – Exhibited drawings that explored Trinidad Carnival. CCA7, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad & Tobago. 2006.

Frame of Reference – performed with giant puppets in a site-specific dance performance. Hudson, NY. 2006.

Emu Sumac –Performed original solo marionette show at Portland's Puppets & Performance Festival. Portland, ME. 2005.

Georgette's Debut – Performed original solo puppet show at the 4th Casco Bay Cabaret. Portland, ME. 2005.

WMPG's Fashion Extravaganza –Created three original ensembles for benefit fashion show. Space Gallery. Portland, ME. 2005.

Eroticart - Participated in annual group show. Tivoli Artist's Cooperative, Tivoli, NY. 1999 – 2004.

Artist Residencies

Roman J. Witt Visiting Professorship – 2-week residency at the University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI. 2007.

Southern Tier Celebrates! Puppetry Program – 2-month residency in Binghamton, NY. 2006-2007.

CCA7 Artist-in-Residency Programme – 6-month residency at Caribbean Contemporary Arts in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. 2006.

Press (selected)

The Trinidad Guardian (4/25/06) – “That Cultural Link” by Koyode James

The Trinidad Daily Express (2/21/06) – “Not Just a Puppet” by Koyode James

New York Times on the web (10/31/05) – (Photo)

Kingston Sunday Freeman (10/04) – “Masters of Puppets” by Blaise Schweitzer

Portland Press Herald (4/5/04) – “The Rite to Start Spring” (Photo)

La Guida (6/13/03) – “I Pupazzi Giganti di Morinesio” by Massimo Cavallo

Middletown Times Herald-Record (2/23/03) – “It takes a Community to Build a Puppet” By Deborah J. Botti

New York Times (11/01/01) – “On a Spooky Night, Little Fear” (Photo)

New York Post (28/10/01) – “Rise and Shine” by Kristina Feliciano