

MILISSA ORZOLEK

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CREATIVE EXPERIENCE

Puppet research assistant (2018 – present)

Duke University, Durham, NC

Puppeteer and builder for puppet artist Torry Bend and her current production, *Dreaming*. Also assistant director for work-in-progress showing at La MaMa. Teaching assistant for Puppetry spring semester at Duke. Manage puppet studio.

Puppeteer/Puppet Captain/Builder (2018)

CMAP, Detroit

Puppet captain and puppeteer for an outdoor production of *Wanda & Winky*. Assisted in finishing puppets for the production.

Catapult Artist (2017, 2019)

Chicago International Puppetry Festival

Selected to participate in this festival-intensive, professional development program for practicing artists.

Co-creator/Collaborator (2015)

Ti Fèt Maryonèt, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

For the 4th Ghetto Binnale, worked with young street artists and an all female troupe to create an original shadow puppet show using recycled materials.

Puppeteer/Builder (2015 - present)

Leroy's Place, New Orleans, LA

Puppeteered for both the film and the live performance of *Hot Air Balloon Animals*. Built puppets and props as well as puppeteered for *You Can't Play With Us* and *Leroy's Place* theme song.

Props/Puppet Assistant Builder (2015)

Cirque Du Soleil, Shreveport, LA

Hired by the creation team of *Toruk* to assist with the prototyping, modification and completion of puppets for this production based on the movie Avatar.

Builder/Puppeteer (2014)

UNScene, Shreveport, LA

Worked with artist Wayne White during his residency with the Shreveport Regional Arts Council. Constructed giant cardboard puppets and co-puppeteered a giant version of Bonnie Parker for White's giant puppet parade.

Puppeteer (2011 – 2015)

Mudlark Puppeteers, New Orleans, LA

Puppeteered for many puppet shows including: The Mysterious Axeman's Jazz (New Orleans Fringe Fest 2012), The Monkey King (Giant Puppet Festival 2013), and Hansel and Gretel (New Orleans Puppet Festival 2015).

AWARDS, GRANTS, & RESIDENCIES

- 2019 Milkhouse Residency, Red Hook, NY
- 2018 Alumni Grant for the National Puppetry Conference
- 2017 CT Guild of Puppetry Scholarship in Honor of Margo Rose for National Puppetry Conference
- 2016 Jim Henson Foundation Family Grant
- 2016 Alumni Travel Stipend for National Puppetry Conference
- 2015 Louisiana Division of the Arts Artist Career Advancement Grant
- 2015 The Emma Louise Warfield Memorial Fund Adult Scholarship for National Puppetry Festival
- 2015 Eric Englehardt Scholarship for National Puppetry Conference

AS ABANDONED SHIPS

Puppeteer/Builder/Creative Director (2013 – present)

New Orleans, LA & Durham, NC

Create, write, build, direct and produce puppet shows and shorts. To date, have created 20 shows/shorts, including collaborations with three different New Orleans bands. Highlights include:

- **trouble**, June 2018: An object theatre and hand puppetry piece about a piece of paper that got me into trouble as a kid. Created during Yael Rasooly's workshop at the National Puppetry Conference. Performed at slams in New York City, Baltimore, Chicago, and the 2019 National Slam in Minneapolis.
- **Our State**, April 2018: A series of collective nouns in reverse alphabetical order in shadow reflecting the current state of the US. Inspired by the poem *Collective Nouns for Humans in the Wild* by Kathy Fish. Performed for the New Orleans Giant Puppet Festival 2018.
- **He Waved**, April 2018: a rod puppet piece that examining miscommunication and openness to possibility through a repeated scene of strangers waving at each other. Performed for the New Orleans Giant Puppet Festival 2018.
- **Spoons**, November 2017: a solo puppet piece/monologue created during Ronnie Burkett's text creation and interpretation strand at the National Puppetry Conference using plastic bags as puppets. Performed during the New Orleans Infringe Festival 2017.
- **What's Next?**, April 2017: a toy-theatre style piece with rodded and stringed marionettes and paper puppets that deals with apathy, collective action and social responsibility. Performed at the William Hart Elementary, New Orleans Giant Puppet Festival, National Puppetry Festival Fringe in St. Paul, Detroit Puppet Slam, Price Hill Creative Community Festival and Wayne-O-Rama.
- **Tiny Rants**, May 2016: a series of short, one puppet monologues created in collaboration with Phoebe Vlassis for specially created one-person audience theater. Commissioned by Antenna Gallery for presentation during the I AM AN IMPORTANT GIANT exhibition.
- **What Keeps Us**, April 2016: a puppet show with audience interaction, giant puppets, abstract table top puppets and shadow puppets, first workshopped in Shreveport, LA in August 2014. This show has been supported by a Family Grant from the Henson Foundation.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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| -Pilobolus | (shadows) |
| -Emmanuelle Delpech | (ensemble directing) |
| -Yael Rasooly | (object/performance) |
| -Greg Ballora | (mechs) |
| -Lauren Wilson | (mask performance/poetic voice) |
| -James Peck | (play/mask performance) |
| -Laura Muñoz | (movement) |
| -Sayda Trujillo | (voice) |
| -Ronnie Burkett | (text creation & interpretation) |
| -Dody DiSanto | (clown/larval mask) |
| -Richard Bradshaw | (shadow puppetry) |
| -Adelka Polak | (mask) |
| -Margarita Blush | (object theatre) |
| -Jim Kroupa | (performance) |
| -Alice Therese Gottschalk | (object/material) |