

MILISSA ORZOLEK
shipsabandoned@gmail.com

CREATIVE WORK (AS COLLABORATIVE/SUPPORTING ARTIST)

Puppet research assistant/Puppeteer (2018 – 2019, 2021)

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 2019 at Duke. Managed puppet studio.

Puppeteer/Puppet Captain/Builder (2018, 2020, 2021)

Detroit Puppet Company, MI

Puppeteered for an outdoor production fo *Wanda & Winkey*, a show about the last two elephants at the Detroit Zoo. Puppeteer and builder for production of *The Weight of Air* and the film *The Importance of Trees*.

Co-creator/co-curator (2020 - 2021)

Infinite Futures, Los Angeles, CA & New Orleans, LA

With collaborator Grayson Morris, co-created, co-curated, co-produced and also participated in The Tiny Paper Theater Festival online using Streamyard. 2020 edition “What's next?” and 2021 edition “What we carry”.

Co-creator/co-director (2020)

Girl, New Orleans, LA

With collaborator Stefanie Loeb, designed and built a shadow puppet crankie for the song “Girl” to celebrate the re-issue of Leyla McCalla's *Vari-Colored Songs: A Tribute to Langston Hughes*.

Props/Puppet Assistant Builder (2015, 2020)

Cirque Du Soleil, Shreveport, LA & Orlando, FL

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. Hired by creation team of *Drawn to Life* to work in the props department.

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.

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.

Co-Founder/Co-Publisher,/Co-Author/Co-Editor/Co-Designer, (2012 – present)

She Was Solitary, New Orleans, LA & Portland, OR

Partner in publishing company. Together with co-author, wrote and illustrated a graphic novel titled *Medusa*, published in October 2012. Edited and designed layout and cover for *Medusa*. Created a three-night, experiential book release at the Sidearm Gallery in New Orleans which included interactive installations, shadow puppetry and live, original music. Published *Trash Island* in 2018 and *rabbits & bees I* in 2019. Participated in Portland Zine Symposium 2018, 2019 and Zine Machine Fest 2019.

CREATIVE EXPERIENCE (AS LEAD ARTIST)

Puppeteer/Builder/Creative Director/Teaching Artist (2013 – present) abandoned ships, New Orleans, LA

Create, write, build, direct and produce puppet shows and shorts. Also teach performance and building workshops. Workshops taught include Object Theatre and Flashlights and Shadows. Show highlights include:

- **how to read a storm** (work-in-progress), 2022: A table top and shadow puppetry piece exploring how I learned to be afraid – and what I learned to be afraid of – as a kid. First workshoped at the National Puppetry Conference. Performed in New Orleans and the Detroit Puppet Slam 2022.
- **puddles**, 2021: A table top and toy theater piece examining how one's relationship with puddles changes as one ages. Created for The La MaMa Puppet Slam and also performed at Nasty, Brutish, and Short during the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival 2022.
- **trouble**, 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.
- **What Keeps Us**, 2016: a puppet show with audience interaction, giant puppets, abstract table top puppets and shadow puppets, first workshoped in Shreveport, LA in August 2014. This show has been supported by a Family Grant from the Henson Foundation.

AWARDS, GRANTS, & RESIDENCIES

- 2021 Moab Arts Re-Use Residency
- 2020 Lizé Puppet Art Colony Residency (cancelled/COVID-19)
- 2019 Milkhouse Residency, Red Hook, NY
- 2016 Jim Henson Foundation Family Grant
- 2015 Louisiana Division of Arts Artist Career Advancement Grant

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Claire Titleman (writing)
- Tom Lee (ensemble puppetry)
- Linda Wingerter (shadow puppet mechanisms)
- Jon Davison (history & analysis of clowning)
- Norman Taylor (physical theatre)
- Bernd Ogrodnik (carving wooden puppets)
- Judith Hope (suitcase theatre/table top puppets)
- 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)