

VALESKA MARIA POPULOH / CV

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SUMMARY:

Valeska Maria Populoh works as an artist, educator and cultural organizer in Baltimore, Maryland, unceded land of the Piscataway Nation and other Chesapeake First Families. Embracing a wide array of tactics, from puppetry to participatory performance, Valeska's work is motivated by an interest in healing and repair, in our relationships to each other and to the natural world. Through my work, I aim to hold space for community building, shared rituals and storytelling, guided by a commitment to anti-racist and anti-oppression practices. I believe in the vital importance of being a participant, in the active engagement and entanglement in collaborative projects and social movement work to build community power and resilience.

EDUCATION

2007	Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD, MAT Art Education
2006	Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD, BFA Fiber, <i>summa cum laude</i>
1997	American University, Washington, DC, BA International Affairs, <i>cum laude</i> , Phi Beta Kappa

CERTIFICATIONS + TRAININGS

2024	Headwaters Training for Facilitators, Aorta Collective, Philadelphia, PA
2022	Facilitation for Freedom Fundamentals, Aorta Collective, Philadelphia, PA
2018	Facilitator Training, Critical Response Process with Liz Lerman and Jon Borstel
2016	Anti-Racism Training for White People, Baltimore Racial Justice Action, Baltimore, MD
2000	Whistling Duck Farm, Farm Apprentice, Trail, OR
1999	Linnaea Farm Society, Cortes Island, British Columbia, Canada, Certificate in Ecological Gardening and Permaculture Design

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Higher Education

2011-present	Full-time Faculty, Fiber Department, Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), Baltimore, MD
2009-2011	Special Contract Full Time, Fiber Department and First Year Experience
2008-2009	Part-Time, Fiber Department

Courses taught: Masks and Headdresses, Puppetry and Performing Objects, Parade and Processions, Fashioning Culture: Readdressing Clothing, Introduction to Fiber, Multi-Media Event: Experimental Fashion, Introduction to ESJ (Ecosystems, Sustainability & Justice), ESJ Junior Studio: Community

Engaged Practice, Forum I & II (First Year Experience, formerly Elements of Visual Thinking I & II), Natural Dye as Intercultural Connector I, II and III, Senior Thesis I & II

Recent Workshops

2025 Lantern Parade and Procession, Haystack Mountain School of Craft, Deer Isle, ME
2024 Lantern Building, Town Hall, Bolivar, WV
 Protest Puppet and Prop Building, Artists Against Apartheid, Baltimore,
2023 Lantern Building, Town Hall, Bolivar, WV
2022 Advanced Lantern Building, Creative Alliance, Baltimore, MD
2017 Protest Puppet Workshop, with Becca Mark, Maryland Working Families and Black Cherry
 Puppet Theater, Baltimore, MD

SELECT PERFORMANCES

2025 *Riparia: Ecological Fortune Readings*, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD
 The Loon, with Holy River, Shockoe Sessions Live, Richmond, VA, Black Cherry Puppet
 Theater, Baltimore, MD and Rhizome, Washington, DC
 The Holey Land, Puppets Fight Back! Le Mondo, Baltimore, MD
 Groundswell Spell, with Erik Ruin, Elizabeth LaPrelle and SnowCaps, Studio 34,
 Philadelphia, PA, and with Mutual Obsession Circus, Black Cherry Puppet Theater,
 Baltimore, MD

2024 *Riparia: Ecological Fortunes*, Summer Solstice Show, Current Space, Baltimore, MD
 Groundswell Spell, with Becky Krill and Ben Nelson, Rhizome, Washington, DC, at
 Faunhaus, with Jake Bee at Current Space and at *Stop Cop City Benefit*, Baltimore Free
 Farm, Baltimore, MD

2023 *Groundswell Spell: Crosscurrence: Labor, Lapse and Error*, Current Space, Baltimore, MD
 Simple Truths and *Groundswell Spell*, Marian McLaughlin Record Release, Manor Mill,
 Monkton, MD

2022 *Crankie Festival*, Confluence Arts Center, Confluence, PA
 Simple Truths, Puppet Slam, Black Cherry Puppet Theater, Baltimore, MD

2021 *Communities of Attachment*, Puppet Slam, Puppet Showplace Theater, Brookline, MA

2020 *Cut Scores*, with Peter Redgrave, The Trying Times, Philadelphia
 The Task, with Peter Redgrave, with Venus Twins, Period Bomb and Hynogogue, Parkway
 Theater, Baltimore, MD
 Communities of Attachment, International Toy Theater Festival, NYC/Cambridge, Virtual
 Puppet Slam, Black Cherry Puppet Theater, Baltimore, MD; National Capital Puppetry
 Guild Festival

2019 *The Holey Land*, Baybrook Elementary/Middle School and Greater Baybrook Community
 Land Trust, Baltimore, MD

Herring Run, 2019 Crankie Festival, Baltimore, MD; and Friends of Herring Run Community Celebration, Function, Baltimore, MD

- 2018 *Resilience Street, Festival for Change: Climate, Jobs and Justice*, with Jennifer Strunge, Dirk Joseph and Michael Lamason, Baltimore Peoples Climate Movement
- Riparia / Ecological Fortunes*, The Grotto of the Never Never Never-Ending Land, parade performance by Laure Drogoul, Neighborhood Lights, Baltimore, MD; The Illuminated Fountain of Extinction, Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival, Reston, VA; Nights on the Fringe, Theater Project, Baltimore, MD
- 2017 *Riparia / Ecological Fortunes*, Argo, an installation by Jann Rosen-Queralt at Light City, and in The Sweetness of Doing Nothing, curated by Laura Drogoul, Neighborhood Lights, Baltimore, MD
- The Holey Land*, Crankie Fest, Pittsburgh, PA; Crankie Fest, Confluence Creative Arts Center, Confluence, PA; Queens and Dreams: a Great Small Works Spaghetti Dinner, Flushing Town Hall, Flushing, NY
- 2016 *The Holey Land*, Puppet Showplace Theater, Brookline, MA and Crankie Fest at Sandglass Theater, Putney, VT
- 2015 *The Garment Workers' Tale*, Charm City Nights on the Fringe, Baltimore, MD
- Holey Land*, Crankie Festival, Creative Alliance, Baltimore, MD; Puppeteers of America Festival Fringe, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT; Fair Development Concert, Curtis Bay, Baltimore, MD

SELECT PARTICIPATORY PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY-BASED ART EVENTS

- 2025 *Vital Matters, Crossways Project Community Gatherings*, Herring Run Park and Lower Gwynns Park, Baltimore, MD
- MICA All Stars*, Great Baltimore Lantern Parade, project lead, MICA Puppetry & Performing Objects, Creative Alliance and Patterson Park, Baltimore, MD
- Uplift!*, Art Builds and Community Parade, Black Cherry Puppet Theater, and Sowebo Arts Festival, Baltimore, MD
- 2024 *Horseshoe Crabs, Vaudevillains New Years Brigade*, Mummer's Parade, Philadelphia, PA
- MICA All Stars*, Great Baltimore Lantern Parade, project lead, MICA Puppetry & Performing Objects, Creative Alliance and Patterson Park, Baltimore, MD
- Many Feathers Flock Together*, Art Builds and Community Parade, Black Cherry Puppet Theater, and Sowebo Arts Festival, Baltimore, MD
- 2023 *Crocodiles, Vaudevillains New Years Brigade*, Mummer's Parade, Philadelphia, PA
- MICA All Stars*, Great Baltimore Lantern Parade, project lead, MICA Puppetry & Performing Objects, Creative Alliance and Patterson Park, Baltimore, MD

Our Roots Are Entangled, Art Builds and Community Parade, Black Cherry Puppet Theater, and Sowebo Arts Festival, Baltimore, MD

2022 *Under Our Feet*, Art Builds and Community Parade, Black Cherry Puppet Theater, and Sowebo Arts Festival, Baltimore, MD

2021 *MICA All Stars*, Great Baltimore Lantern Parade, project lead, MICA Puppetry & Performing Objects, Creative Alliance and Patterson Park, Baltimore, MD

2019 *MICA All Stars*, Great Halloween Lantern Parade, project lead, MICA Puppetry & Performing Objects, Creative Alliance and Patterson Park, Baltimore, MD
Sowebo Festival Parade and Workshop, Black Cherry Puppet Theater, Baltimore, MD

2018 Lantern Sisters: Shadow Crankies, a project by Katherine Fahey, puppeteer, *Myths and Moonbeams*, Puppet Slamwich, Black Cherry Puppet Theater; Crankie Fest, Creative Alliance, Baltimore; Charm City Fringe, Baltimore, MD

Witches Brew, project lead, Great Halloween Lantern Parade, MICA Puppetry & Performing Objects, Creative Alliance and Patterson Park, Baltimore, MD

2017 Lantern Sisters: *Shadow Crankies*, *Round the Mountain*, Creative Alliance, Baltimore, MD; Crankie Fest, Pittsburgh, PA; Puppeteers of America Festival, St. Paul, MN; Arabber Preservation Society Benefit; Light City, Baltimore, MD; Crankie Fest, Confluence Creative Arts Center, Confluence, PA

Under the Sea, project lead, Great Halloween Lantern Parade, MICA Puppetry & Performing Objects, Creative Alliance at Patterson Park, Baltimore, MD

2016 Lantern Sisters: *Shadow Crankies*, a project by Katherine Fahey, puppeteer, Crankies at Puppet Showplace Theater, Brookline, MA; Crankie Fest, Sandglass Theater, Putney, VT
Last House Standing: A Play About the Highway to Nowhere, design and fabrication of props and puppets, play directed by Sheila Gaskins, Arena Players, Baltimore, MD
Our Domestic Resurrection Circus, Bread and Puppet Theater, performer, Glover, VT

SELECT EXHIBITIONS

2023 *Community Build*, three artist show and programs, Richmond Visual Arts Center, Richmond, VA

2019 *No Walls, No Bans, No Borders*, group exhibition, Peale Museum, Baltimore, MD

CURATORIAL WORK AND CULTURAL ORGANIZING

2024 *Gathering at the Intersections of Justice and Ecology*, with eli nixon, Toshima Cook, Michele Minnick, Joseph Orzal and Sarah D'Adamo, NoMüNoMü, Baltimore, MD

2023 Disability Justice Learning Circle, Baltimore, MD

- 2019 *Fashion Revolution* with Victoria Pass, panel and workshop, MICA and Baltimore Design School, Baltimore, MD
- Living Color: Touching the Past, Present and Future through the Art of Natural Dyes*, Living Classrooms Foundation, Baltimore, MD
- 2018 *Social Fabric: Textiles, Collective Action and Social Movement Work*, MICA Fiber Department, roundtable discussion, artist talk and community workshop
- Festival for Change: Climate, Jobs & Justice*, Baltimore, MD
- Baltimore Peoples Climate Movement: Community Art Builds, workshop series with Taylor Smith-Hams, Baltimore, MD
- Myths and Moonbeams*, Black Cherry Puppet Theater, Baltimore, MD
- 2017 Baltimore Peoples Climate Movement: Art Guide + Community Art Builds, Baltimore, MD
- 2016 *CAMP PAIN HEADQUARTERS, CAKEWALK: 2016 Transmodern Performance Festival*, The Peale Museum, Baltimore, MD
- RISING: An Arts Equity Zine*, collaborator and organizer with United Diverse Artists, Baltimore, MD
- 2010-2016 Puppet Slamwich at Black Cherry Puppet Theater, Baltimore, MD, co-founder, curator and organizer of puppet series funded in part by the National Puppet Slam Network, grantwriter, promoter and host, poster and print media designer
- 2015 *Art-Part'heid: Bridging the Gap of Disparities in the Baltimore Arts Scene: A Panel Discussion and Community Dialogue on Race, Power, Privilege, Exclusion and Shared Wealth*, with United Diverse Artists, Inc., 2640 Space/St. John's Church, Baltimore, MD
- Baltimore Activists United for Truth, Love and Justice Art Build and March*, with Malaika Clements, Tabolt Johnson, Rachael Shannon, and including The Breedz, Aaron Smith, Baltimore, MD

SELECT PANELS, LECTURES, PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS

- 2025 "Making Spaces" symposium on Third Spaces, Baltimore Jewelry Center, Baltimore, MD
- "The Loon" board book, collaboration with Holy River, published by Shokoe Records
- 2023 "Building Community by Using Opening and Closing Circles" was published as part of *Cultivating Critical Conversations in Art Education: Honoring Student Voice, Identity and Agency* by Columbia Teachers College Press.
- "Community Lantern Parade: Approaches to Building Paper and Reed Lanterns and Making a Community Lantern Celebration," self-published zine with 300 copies distributed across three countries
- 2021 *Past and Future: Roundtable Intervention and Q&A Session*, co-presented with Kibibi Ajanku and Omolara Williams McCallister at Natural Dyes in Northeast America:

Challenges, Opportunities and Future Directions

"Reflections on the Baltimore Natural Dye Initiative and Cultivating Communities of Care," *Journal of Textile Design Research & Practice*, with Omolara Williams McCallister

- 2020 *Reflections on the Baltimore Natural Dye Initiative and Cultivating Communities of Care*, with Rosa Chang, Kibibi Ajanku, Kenya Miles and Omolara Williams McCallister, Hidden Stories, Hidden Lives Symposium, Textile Society of America
- 2019 *Representations and Appropriations of Blackness*, presenter, *Living Objects: African American Puppetry* symposium, Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry (BIMP), University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT
- "Embracing Complexity in Representing the Other: Reflections on White Folks Performing Black Puppets," *Living Objects*, BIMP, UConn, CT
- 2018 Critical Response Process, facilitator, MICA Seminar, and Gina Perlioni Exhibition, Creative Alliance, Baltimore, MD
- Talkback: Muntergang and Other Cheerful Downfalls, Moderator, Great Small Works, Theater Project, Baltimore, MD
- 2017 *Critical Exchange: Performing Others, Seeing Ourselves*, with Paulette Richards, Chamindika Wanduragala, Junauda Petrus, Harry Waters, Jr., Steve Abrams, Annie Rollins, Paulette Richards, Puppeteers of America Festival, St. Paul, MN
- Inhabit: Reflections on an Arts Practice in Response to Community and Place*, Keynote Address with Olivia Robinson, Maryland Art Education Association, MICA, Baltimore, MD
- 2016 Artists Retreat, Contemporary Museum, consultant and visiting critic
- 2015 *Transformative Actions: Inquiries into Changing States*, *LabBodies: Boundaries, Borders, Barricades*, Gallery CA, Baltimore, MD

SELECT AWARDS + GRANTS

- 2025 Baltimore Community Engagement Grant, MICA
- 2024 Teaching Grant, Ratcliffe Center for Creative Entrepreneurship, MICA
ENTER/IN, Ratcliffe Center for Creative Entrepreneurship, MICA
- 2023 Anti-Racist Pedagogy Teaching Fellowship, MICA
- 2022 Marcella Brenner Faculty Development Grant to work on processional puppet collaboration with Mama Sallah Jenkins and Mama Rashida Forman-Bey
- 2021-25 Great Halloween Lantern Parade, Creative Alliance, Grantee
- 2018-2019 Great Halloween Lantern Parade, Creative Alliance, Grantee

- 2017 Lucas Grants for Faculty Teaching & Curriculum Development to undertake research to develop *Puppetry and Performing Objects*, new course for Fiber Department AY18
- 2016 Marcella Brenner Faculty Development Grant to attend Neutral Mask workshop with Dody DiSanto, Center for Movement, Washington, DC
- Community Engagement Grant for Arthpartheid: Bridging the Disparities in Baltimore's Arts Scene, collaboration with other organizers
- Rubys Grant awarded to Ellen Cherry to support the music composition for and filming of *The Holey Land*
- Marcella Brenner Faculty Development Grant to further support design and fabrication of costumes and props for Last House Standing, directed by Sheila Gaskins, and to tour *The Holey Land* through the Northeast United States
- 2015 Marcella Brenner Faculty Development Grant to design and fabricate costumes and props for Last House Standing, directed by Sheila Gaskins

This CV is limited to 2015-2025. Prior details available upon request