

David J. Motak

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ARTIST OVERVIEW

Dave Motak's journey as a szopka artist has lead him to translate this idiosyncratic traditional art to reflect a more contemporary, international perspective. Dave is currently expanding his artistic range by incorporating new design elements, styles and architectural interpretations that reflect more of a contemporary and thematically broad approach to his chosen medium. Dave is also an accomplished graphic designer, art educator, writer and editor and coordinator, creator and host of numerous cultural programs and tours.

EXHIBITIONS

- November 2012 - January, 2013 Graphic exhibition at the Polish Sejm (Parliament), Warsaw, Poland.
- December 2011 - January, 2012 Exhibition of Personal Szopka works, Landmark North Center, Hong Kong.
16 pieces exhibited including a specially commissioned "Hong Kong" szopka.
The exhibition has received critical reviews and has been extensively covered by Hong Kong print and electronic media.
- December 2010 - March 2011 Exhibition of awarded szopka piece at the Krzysztof Gallery (City of Cracow History Museum) Cracow, Poland.
- November 2010 - February 2011
(now yearly installation) Frederik Meijer Gallery/ Frederik Meijer Gardens, Grand Rapids, MI
Commissioned piece for annual Christmas Around the World Exhibition installation.
- April 2010 - Present Heritage Collection Museum Exhibition (permanent installation)
Design and installation of organizational artifacts and ethnic memorabilia at the Polish Falcons of America National Headquarters, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007,
2008, 2009 Annual Exhibition of individual work and student works.
One day exhibit held each December at the University of Pittsburgh (600+ attendees annually)
- Sept. 2008 – Present "Poles in Pittsburgh: Yesterday Today and Tomorrow" traveling exhibit currently shown at various venues in Western Pennsylvania (commissioned work for Polish Cultural Council.)
- March 2008 Gagosian Gallery, New York, NY. (21st Street Gallery)
Commissioned piece for "Czerwono-Biala" Exhibition
- Nov. 2006 – Feb. 2007 John Paul II Cultural Center, Washington, D. C. ;
Exhibition of individual work and selected student works, sponsored by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland
- 2005 – present George Westinghouse Museum, Wilmerding, PA
Installation on the szopka tradition, Polish customs and Polish history.
- 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 Exhibition at the Pittsburgh Folk Festival, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007,
2008, 2009 Exhibition at the annual *PolishFest*, University of Pittsburgh

MAJOR GRANTS

- 2009 Fellowship in Traditional Arts, from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
- 2008 Apprenticeship in Traditional Arts, from the Institute for Cultural Partnerships to study in Cracow, Poland with prominent szopka master, Maciej Moszew
- 2008 Artist Opportunity Grant from the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council
- 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009: PA Partners in the Arts Grant for production of annual student exhibition.

PRESENTED WORKSHOPS

- 2008, 2010, 2011 Washington, D. C. – Workshops for inner city school children sponsored by the Washington Embassy Adoption Program and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland.
- 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 Annual Szopka Workshops at the Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, NY.
- 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 Pittsburgh, PA: A total of 11 szopka workshops in various locations in Western PA.
- 2009 Elementary and Middle School Educators' Workshop at the Rivers of Steel / Allegheny Intermediate Unit, Homestead, PA
- 2008 ; 2009 Pittsburgh Children's Museum - Four workshops for parent/children teams
- 2005 Pittsburgh Children's Museum – Szopka building demonstrations.
- 2007 The Polish American Cultural Center of Berks County, Reading, PA
- 2005 Bottleworks Ethnic Arts Center in Johnstown, PA "Mini" Szopka Workshop
- 2005 The Polish American Cultural Center in Philadelphia "Mini" Szopka Workshop

Also: Numerous presentations and lectures for community groups.

MAJOR AWARDS / HONORS

- 2013 - present Appointed to prestigious "Być Polakiem" Committee, ("To Be a Pole") an initiative of the Polish Parliament to encourage Polish youth around the world to express their Polish heritage through the arts; served as award presenter at 2013 award ceremony at Royal Castle, Warsaw.
- 2014 Recipient of Master Artist and Tradition Bearer Award, Rivers of Steel National Heritage and listed in the Rivers of Steel Western Pennsylvania Folk Life Directory
- 2013 Selected as recipient of the Skalny Civic Achievement Award by the Polish American Historical Association.
- 2012 Presented as Western Pennsylvanian "Polonian of the Year" Award for 2012 by the Polish Cultural Council, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 2011 Honored with a Proclamation by the City Council, City of Pittsburgh for cultural achievements, representing Pittsburgh at the 2010 Cracow Szopka Competition and for promotion of the arts and culture in Pittsburgh. As part of this honor, November 10, 2011 was proclaimed "David Motak Day" in the City of Pittsburgh.
- 2011 National Cultural Achievement Award, presented by the American Council on Polish Culture, recognizing Dave's significant contributions to Polish Culture in the United States.
- 2010 Special Award for Artistic Merit, 2010 Szopka Competition, Cracow, Poland (Presented by the City of Cracow History Museum)
- 2009 "Work of Art Award" from the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council presented for achievements as individual artist.
- 2006 "Polonian of the Year" from the Polish American Congress

CULTURAL PROGRAMS

2004 – 2011 To date, have conceived, coordinated and hosted seven Cultural Tours to Poland to attend the annual Szopka Competition in Cracow. Attendees have included individuals from throughout the United States.

EDUCATION - Alliance College, Cambridge Springs, PA (B.A.) - Jagiellonian University, Cracow,
- Fluent Polish language skills

EMPLOYMENT

Employment has included serving as Director of Communications/graphic artist, Polish Falcons of America;
Director of Alumni Relations Point Park University;
Executive Director Sweetwater Center for the Arts.

And also serving in an administrative capacity at the University of Pittsburgh for sixteen years as adjunct to the Chancellor's Office through the Office of Special Events (University Commencement Coordinator) and as Director of Alumni Relations, Publications, and annual fund, School of Engineering.