

**REVIEWED**

*By City Clerk's Office at 11:18 am, Jun 10, 2021*

## Arts Commission Applicant

**Michael J. Masucci**

**Application Date:** 06/09/21

**Reside in Santa Monica:** no

**If yes, number of years:**

**Work in Santa Monica:** yes

**If yes, number of years:** 21 years

### INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCE

**Current or prior service on city boards/commissions:**

During my tenure on the Arts Commission, in addition to my current role as Chair:

- 1) I served as Chair of the Arts Commission's Public Art Committee.
  
- 2) I served as Vice-Chair of the Arts Commission
  
- 3) I founded the Arts Commission's Ad Hoc Media Arts Subcommittee, in which in addition to current Arts Commissioners, I have enlisted a Blue Ribbon group of community members, including Oscar and Emmy Award winners and major academic and entrepreneurial thinkers and patented inventors. As this Ad Hoc was initiated just prior to the COVID crisis, its functionality has been limited, although it has met online throughout the pandemic. It is ready to propose innovative projects for the Arts Commission to consider, once regular meetings resume.
  
- 4) I served on, and now Chair the Arts Commission's Bergamot Station Ad Hoc Subcommittee.
  
- 5) I served on the Arts Commission's Ad Hoc Subcommittee tasked with the investigation and explanation to the AC on the City's mandate regarding the role and functioning of the Public Art Committee
  
- 6) I served on and Chaired the Arts Commission's Ad Hoc Nomination Committee.

In addition to my work specifically on the Arts Commission, I have also served the City in multiple ways related to the Arts:

- 1) I currently serve on the City's Art of Recovery Subcommittee.
- 2) I wrote and delivered to City Council the first annual Arts Proclamation for Santa Monica.
- 3) I served on the judging committee for ROAM, an exhibition collaboration with Santa Monica's Cultural Affairs Division and DTLA.
- 4) I served twice as a judge for Santa Monica's city-wide High School Arts Competition & Exhibition.
- 5) My digital video projection artwork was included in the first installment of GLOW.

**Community activities:**

For the last 8 years, the focus of my volunteer community service has been to the City of Santa Monica's Arts Commission and its related community projects.

Prior to this I have a lifetime of pro bono service to the community.

- 1) I was a founding member of Rock Against Racism-USA, which staged free concerts in New York's Central Park fostering racial equality and diversity.
- 2) During the AIDS pandemic, I was a routine volunteer offering services and skills to several AIDS-related organizations, including Aids Project Los Angeles, Project Angel Food, and Louise Hays's Being Alive.
- 3) I have volunteered my skills and services in fighting food scarcity for Oxfam.
- 4) I have volunteered for the Emmy-Award winning environmental activist group Earth Alert!

Over the decades I have served on the Board of Directors and Advisory Boards for several institutions, ranging from the LA Free Clinic to Highways Performance Space. From working with physically and

mentally challenged children to bringing cross-cultural awareness and respect for diverse cultures, I have sat on Boards focused on such important community issues.

**Qualifications, experience, education, and technical or professional requirements:**

I am an award-winning, museum-exhibited digital media and performance artist. I am currently creating video programming for the Getty Museum and am in pre-production for an 8 part fictional series for television.

During my 21 years of operating a full-time studio in Santa Monica, our commissions over the years have ranged from major museums, county and LA city agencies, major universities to Hollywood's top studios.

Some projects for which I have been a principal collaborator have premiered at Lincoln Center, and the Museum of Modern Art in NYC, the Pompidou Museum in Paris, the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, and on PBS.

Locally in Santa Monica, my work has been presented at the Miles Playhouse, Tongva Park, Bergamot Station, the Airport Art Galleries, the Eli & Edy Broad Stage at SMC, Santa Monica College's Synapse Dance Festival, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Auditorium at the Santa Monica Library, the Annenberg Beach House, 18th Street Arts Center and Highways Performance Space.

I was honored to have been included in the Getty's massive exhibition initiative Pacific Standard Time, highlighting Southern California's most historically significant artists and artistic movements, as well as in being presented in the first iteration of Santa Monica's Glow.

I have been invited to guest lecture, both locally as well as internationally, including venues such as Disneyland, Paris, CalTec, UCLA, the American Film Institute, USC, the School of Visual Arts (NYC), Santa Monica College, the University of Helsinki, the Long Beach Museum of Art, Claremont College, and Changchun Film Studio, China.

Committed to life-long learning, I am currently working towards a master's degree in Museum Studies from Harvard University. Although I do not practice law, I possess a law degree as well as a graduate certificate in Mediation & Conflict Resolution, Additionally I have earned credentials in film, graphic art and computer programming.

**Areas of demonstrated expertise:**

I have advanced experience in budget and project management, having successfully produced projects throughout the United States, as well as China, Thailand, Mexico, Canada, France, and the U.K.

A lifelong learner, I am currently working towards a Master's Degree in Museum Studies at Harvard. I have certifications in film, music, and graphic art, as well as in a law degree, and graduate certification in conflict resolution.

I have raised money for numerous film and video projects as well as fundraised for non-profit boards.

I have been an active member of the Santa Monica Arts Community as a resident artist at 18th Street Arts Center, as well as my various roles on the Arts Commission.

I am deeply involved in the historication of under-represented cultural communities. My media arts group [www.eztvmuseum.com](http://www.eztvmuseum.com), with roots dating back to 1979 has been honored by the American Film Institute, UCLA and USC, which has many of our early works and archives as part of their permanent collection. In 2019, the Kandinsky Library at the Centre Pompidou held 4 events on our history. Three scholars who produced these events will travel to Los Angeles in September for an entire month, to study our history in greater depth.

**Goals:**

I know that the Arts Commission can be an effective advisor to the City Council in bringing to their attention and possibly for their consideration, new and innovative methods in the arts-based practices.

In addition to continuing my service through my personal knowledge of the art world, I have a specific synergistic project for the Commission. I initiated the Media Art Subcommittee (voted for unanimously by the Arts Commission), to explore proactive and synergistic ways of bringing together the enormous talent pool of Silicon Beach and make recommendation to the Arts Commission and hopefully ultimately the Council. There has been a stated desire by staff and Santa Monica community leaders in the arts, to bring together leading thinker/practitioners in both the arts and technology. The Arts Commission's Media Arts Ad Hoc Subcommittee is uniquely positioned to develop a dialogue between these two critically important sectors of Santa Monica. By granting my request for a third term, I can further develop these relationships so that when I do step down, they can and will continue when I step down.

**Vision:**

The Arts Commission is a vital part of the cultural fabric which defines Santa Monica. Working closely with the Cultural Affairs Department, the Arts Commission's advisory role to the City Council exemplifies the best practices that volunteer service can be: namely to bring the real-world professional expertise of skilled professionals, into the dialogue which the City Council uses in the considerations of its tasks and mission. Through a collaborative relationship between Commission members, City staff and the community, the Arts Commission can continue to be a positive tool for the city.

I would like to continue upon the good work done by the Commission as an advocate for the arts, a judging body for grants initiated by the City, approval of Public Art projects throughout the City, as well as to initiate new and innovative programming. I would also like to see more acquisition of art by both local and international talent, in furtherance of the City's goal of building a major collections of original art works. Finally, as we venture together through the 21st Century, and new recognition of both the local indigenous arts, both traditional as well as contemporary is critical to a wider understanding of the history of our community. Together with the exploration of new innovations of the electronic and networks arts, Santa Monica can become a blueprint of the diversity and cultural enrichment to all, that the arts offer.

Santa Monica should be a place which cherishes its local and traditional artists, along with embracing and advocating for those arts which could not have been possible, even a few short years ago. Together, this comprehensive embracement of all the arts, is the opportunity and should be the goal for the Arts Commission going forward. Helping to advise the Council on many ways to greater expand our perspectives, and mutual understanding of all that the arts in their diverse and complex panorama, offer this amazing City of Santa Monica.

**Personal Qualities:**

I have operated a working studio for over 40 years ( 21 years in Santa Monica). I have therefore developed both the managerial and collaborative skills necessary for working as a team, both as a leader, as well as team member. I have been involved in projects requiring 7 figure budgets and therefore am versed in the flow of production from conceptualization through production, implementation and delivery. I respect the skills and expertise of others and seek ways to learn from each other. I recognize the immense contributions made through a diverse group of participants and seek ways to improve the opportunities for all individuals seeking to work within the arts sector.

Having served on 7 non-profit boards, as well as 3 advisory boards and numerous Ad Hoc and temporary cultural and community committees, I understand the 'give and take' which is required for both leadership as well as membership. I welcome constructive criticism and try in earnest to understand the positions of individuals and perspectives for which I disagree. I believe it is vital to listen more effectively and to try to find common ground, even when initially there seems to be none. For this I will continue to strive, to make progress where possible, and prevent deterioration as necessary.

**Working with fellow commissioners:**

I have an established record of working well with staff as well as fellow Commissioners. I was elected unanimously to the Chair of the Arts Commission. Because of the COVID pandemic, I have been limited in my ability to implement improvements and initiate new projects, due to the understandable and necessary curtailment of regular monthly meetings during the entire tenure of my service as Chair. However, I have scheduled and met with the Ad Hoc subcommittees still allowed to meet virtually during the pandemic, so as to have a sense of continuity. As a voting member of the Art of Recovery Subcommittee of the Cultural Affairs Division, I have regularly worked with staff and their consultants in the commissioning of new works for the City during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, I and the Vice-Chair of the Arts Commission and Chair of the Public Arts Committee, have met regularly online, and with the Cultural Affairs manager. This commitment to continuity even during the height of crisis, will allow for a smoother transition back into regular monthly Commission meetings once the Council approves such action. This also maintained a direct and current line of communication between staff and Commission leadership.

**Will you be able to commit the necessary time to perform your duties if appointed to the board?**

yes

**How did you learn about the vacancy in this board or commission? (select all that apply)**

Other

**BUSINESS INFORMATION**

Occupation: Digital Video Artist

Business name: EZTV Museum

Business address: 1629 18th Street, Ste. 6

Santa Monica, CA 90404

Business phone: 323-547-6240