

## **Sofia Maldonado**

### **Biography**

Born in Puerto Rico in 1984 to Cuban and Puerto Rican parents, Maldonado grew up in the San Juan metropolitan area. In 2002, she traveled to New York City to study Sculpture and Installation Art at the School of Visual Arts. In 2006, she completed her undergraduate coursework at the Escuela de Artes Plásticas (EAP) in San Juan where she majored in Art and Design. Upon completing her studies at the EAP, she moved to New York where she continues to live and work. In 2008, she received her MFA in Painting from Pratt Institute in New York. A year later she was awarded a fellowship from the Cuban Artist Fund to participate in the Vermont Studio Residency Program. Most recently, Maldonado has developed public art projects in collaboration with Real Art Ways in Hartford, CT; Graphopoli, An Urban Art Biennial at Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico in San Juan; the Tenth Havana Biennial in Cuba; and the Time Square Alliance in New York City.

### **Artist Statement**

Sofia's paintings, drawings, murals, installations, and painted objects are informed by an urban sensibility that draws inspiration from aspects of street and youth culture, fashion and commercial design, public art, abstraction and pop art, identity politics, and post-feminist art practice. Maldonado's work first emerged onto the local art scene in Puerto Rico in the early 2000s with her imaginative and distinct pasquines and murals adorning the dilapidated walls of abandoned storefronts and buildings in Old San Juan. Her colorful liquidity pop abstractions are often populated by a highly stylized cast of ultra feminine super heroines with Rapunzel-like tresses that cascade like ribbons evincing the Caribbean's lush foliage, immediately setting her apart from other street artists. Themes exploring her Latina identity and Puerto Rican politics are more present in her public art murals. The vivid and rapid brush strokes, on her canvas works, express the deconstruction of the Caribbean landscape, mixing the ocean, tropical elements, and an abstraction of the third world country chaos.

Indeed Maldonado's brash girls and landscapes have become ubiquitous to her practice and as a street-artist-painter, effectively became her "tag" or calling card. And, while Maldonado's practice exudes the raw energy and urgency that exemplifies urban art, her practice more accurately reflects a hybrid interplay between traditional fine art, popular and vernacular art forms spanning such myriad sources as Latin Hip Hop, reggaeton, African tribal art, Japanese calligraphy, skateboard culture, punk music, global-based street and graffiti art, recent development in the history of painting, and the traditional genre of landscape painting. From her early tags and graffiti-inspired art to her transition to a more hybrid practice that collapses these various categories, Maldonado's current work—as is evident in her recent Times Square mural painting— increasingly pushes the boundaries between mainstream notions of public art and urban street practices. The work of Puerto Rican muralist Sofia Maldonado is a blend of fashion trends, the local "Boricua" female aesthetic, and various street culture elements such as skateboarding and graffiti tags.

### **CV**

#### **Education**

**2008** • MFA, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY

**2006** • BFA, Escuela de Artes Plasticas, Puerto Rico

**2002** • Sculpture and Installation Seminar, School of Visual Arts, NY

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2012** • Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD
- 2011** • University of Wisconsin, Madison
  - Cornell Fine Arts Museum Rollins College, Winterpark, FL
- 2010** • Magnan Metz Gallery, New York, NY
  - Witzhausen Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
  - Times Square Alliance Mural Project, Times Square, NY
  - CIRCA Puerto Rico, Magnan Metz
- 2009** • Taller Puertorriqueño, Philadelphia, PA
  - Skate My Patria, part of the Tenth Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba
  - CIRCA Puerto Rico, Magnan Projects
- 2008** • Pinta, Special Artist Project, New York, NY
- 2007** • The Tropical Storm, Magnan Gallery, New York, NY
- 2006** • Sofía... en la isla, Galería Candela, San Juan, Puerto Rico

## Group Exhibitions

- 2011** • The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, FL
- 2010** • Eames Inspirations, Barney, New York, NY
  - Announcing Magnan Metz, Magnan Metz Gallery, New York, NY
  - Paper Dolls, M.I.S.S in association Fifty24 Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2009** • The Good, the Bad & the Ugly", Queens Museum of Art, New York
  - Graffiti Gone Global (during Art Basel Miami), Sushi Samba, Miami, FL1
  - Synesthesia, Painted Bride Art Center, Philadelphia, PA
  - Girl by Girls, Spacejunk Gallery, St. Maurice; Bayone; and Grenoble, France
  - Hybridity, SOMArts Cultural Center, San Francisco, CA
  - Real Arts Ways, Frog Hollow & Parkville Neighborhood, Hartford, CT
- 2008** • V Certamen de Pintura Diputación de Castellón, Spain
  - En Sus Marcas, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, Puerto Rico
  - Dia de Los Muertos, Magia Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
  - Younity: Heart & Soul, Alphabeta, Greenpoint, NY
  - Graphopoli, Urban Art Biennial, Museo de Puerto Rico
  - Graduate Show 08', Pratt Manhattan Gallery, NY
  - Girl by Girls, Spacejunk Gallery, St. Maurice; Bayone; and Grenoble, France
  - MFA Exchange, Virginia Commonwealth, Richmond, Virginia
- 2007** • M4 Design Project, Design District, Miami, FL
  - SFiles 2007-Biennial, El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY
  - Espacio Disponible, Museum of Caribbean University, Bayamon, Puerto Rico
  - Coca Cola Graffiti Series, Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, Santurce, Puerto Rico
  - Pratt MFA Students Exhibition, Brooklyn, NY

- Hoy, Black Box Art Foundation, San Juan, Puerto Rico
- 2006**
  - Sao Paulo - Sao Juan, (with Os Gemeos, Dzine & Cudy Hudson)  
Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, Puerto Rico
  - '06 Graduated Students Exhibition, Museo de las Americas, San Juan, Puerto Rico
  - Paint to Flash, Montana Gallery, Sevilla, Spain
  - Returned Mail, Galeria Carlos Irizarry, San Juan, Puerto Rico
- 2005**
  - Mural Painting, Galería Comercial, Santurce, Puerto Rico
  - Sofia, Café Seda, San Juan, Puerto Rico
  - Nothing, Tag Rom, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico
  - Annual Exhibition, Escuela de Artes Plásticas, San Juan, Puerto Rico
  - Juni, Bik, Sofia, Galeria Carlos Irizarry, Puerto Rico
  - Papa Jac Collectable Series, Don Pablo, Puerto Rico
- 2004**
  - Truck (at Luna St.), Sin Titulo Galería de Arte Contemporáneo, San Juan, Puerto Rico

#### Awards

- 2010**
  - Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Times Square Alliance, public project, NY
- 2009**
  - Cuban Artist Fund, studio program at Chashama, NY
  - Vermont Studio Center, Vermont

#### Selected Press

- 2010**
  - *Art Talk: Hoop Scoop*, Art News, Robin Cembalest
  - Vigoroso Letargo, El Nuevo Dia, Puerto Rico
  - *Why Can't These Women be Beautiful*, NYArtBeat, A. Scigaj
  - *Sofía desata controversia en Nueva York*, El Nuevo Dia, Gloribel Delgado
  - *Alexandre Arrechea and Sofia Maldonado in Times Square*, Arte Al Dia Internacional
  - *Street Wise Latina*, NY Daily News, Erasmo Guerra
  - *Looking Hard at Looking Good*, New York Times, J. DAVID GOODMAN
  - *CIRCA '10: Art in Puerto Rico*, Flavor Pill, Paul Laste
- 2009**
  - Reinhold, El Nuevo Dia, by Leyra Gonzalez
  - Innovators, *Americas Quarterly*, Danielle Renwick
  - Sofia Maldonado: Skate My Patria, CoolHunting, by Tamara Warren
  - *Anarcho-Muralist*, New York Magazine (May), by Alexandra Peers
  - *Skating a lo Cubano*, American Quarterly, by Danielle Renwick
- 2008**
  - *Los Muros pintados de futuro*, El Nuevo Dia, by Gloribel Delgado
  - *Sofia Maldonado, Tropical Storm*, Art In America, by Faye Hirsch
  - *Sofia Maldonado*, Art Nexus, by Graciela Kartoffe
  - Flavor: Skatebowl, Puerto Rico, Culture Serve, by Diana McClure
- 2007**
  - *Featured Artist: Sofia Maldonado*, by Diana McClure
  - *Expresion Urbana*, Imagen Magazine, by Male Noguerras
  - *Las nenas de Sofia*, El Nuevo Dia, newspaper, Puerto Rico