

## Mere Phantoms Interactive Shadow Workshops

Mere Phantoms creates workshops as a tool of interaction. These workshops can be created from our existing work or often we are commissioned by an institution or festival to create a site-specific installation. The goal of the workshops is to engage the participants with a hands-on and participatory experience.

We have presented workshops at outdoor street festivals, in storefront windows, in educational settings and in gallery spaces and museums. These installations are engaging to participants of all ages – including adults, youth, children and families. During these workshops, we guide public audiences through a process of making two and three-dimensional paper cut-outs. Using Mere Phantoms' hand-held mobile light units, participants cast animated shadows onto a projection area by illuminating the work they have created. These workshops are suitable for all ages.

Some examples of themes we have worked with include history and the city, the body and architecture. The immediacy of the medium and the ease with which audiences can participate allows for rich and complex imagery to emerge, often revealing the depth of the human imagination. As the cut-outs transform from object to shadow the layered imagery created is always unexpected. This play on light, shadow, and scale makes for an experience akin to cloud gazing. We have found audiences ready to use their hands and imaginations wherever we have been



Mere Phantoms offers two types of workshops: Structured and drop-in workshops.

Structured workshops (limited number of participants)

Duration: 45 - 90 minutes

Intended Age Range: 6 years and up

Number of Participants: 25-65 depending on space

Workshop structure

Mere Phantoms artists involve participants in creating a magical world composed of paper, light and shadow. The workshop starts with a short (5 minute) shadow performance. The artists then demonstrate one or more of the paper-cutting techniques they use in their work, and guide participants through design and creation process. The pieces made by the group are combined with examples made by Mere Phantoms to create a small-scale paper installation. In the second segment of the workshop participants use Mere Phantoms hand-held light wands to explore how their pieces translate in light and shadow. This workshop is hands-on and experiential. It plays on scale, light and shadow, and the creative use of negative and positive space. It leaves participants with a memorable experience as well as tangible learning outcomes.

Spatial requirements

Low platform for setting paper cut-outs onto. 2.5mt long x 60cm wide x 45cm high.

Completely darkened space with clean wall surface, ideally white.

Screen: A wall space can be used as a screen or a screen that is at least about 2.5mt wide by 3mt high. Tables and chairs with sufficient workspace for each person.

1 additional table and chair for distribution of workshop materials.

Material Requirements:

Paper (we will specify the size, type and weight of paper needed) Exacto Knives

Rulers

Cutting Mats

Pencils

Erasers

- Mere Phantoms provides specialized lights for creating the shadows.
- Please not that workshop materials can be provided by Mere Phantoms if needed

Workshop Language:

Workshops can be facilitated in English, French, Turkish and depending on our collaborators we can also work with a volunteer or staff member who speaks English or French to help with the workshops in a local language.

Volunteers:

We will require one volunteer for set up and strike and a minimum of two volunteers for the festival days while the workshops are running. Volunteers need to be good with their hands and capable of assembling/disassembling intricate paper pieces and cutting paper using an exacto knife. They should be outgoing and comfortable interacting with the public.



### Drop-in workshops

These workshops work great during festivals and larger events. A large volume of people can participate in the workshop on a drop-in basis. We have hosted up to 2 000 participants at such workshops during events where museums are open all night to visitors.

We work with a larger number of volunteers that we meet with and train before the event. Tables are setup with workshop materials and volunteers or staff welcome people as they arrive and provide them with the workshop tools. They circulate amongst participants giving tips and helping as needed. We have found that because of the very visual nature of the work, little instruction is necessary for people to participate and make cutouts. As participants make work it is inserted onto the installation and they are guided to light up their work and witness it come alive in shadow.

Spatial requirements, number of staff or volunteers, language of the workshops will be negotiated depending on venue.

Mere Phantoms has facilitated workshops in many schools across Quebec under the *culture in the schools* program. In addition to these workshops, large public workshops were held in conjunction to many of our exhibitions.

### Contact Information:

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