

# Pop Up Pittsburgh Proposal

## **Narrative: The Society for the Advancement of Miniature Curiosa**

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Have you seen that place with the monkey? No! Not a real monkey, the plastic monkey. Oh come on, you know the one I'm talking about. The one with the bicycle wheels that pull on him and make him clap his hands? See, I knew you knew it, but what *is* it?

The Society for the Advancement of Miniature Curiosa is a multifunctional space that houses a museum, a performance space, and an eye-catching window display that proposes to transform a Downtown Pittsburgh storefront for twelve months.

The Society for the Advancement of Miniature Curiosa seeks to replicate the concept of Victorian Cabinets of Curiosity. These Cabinets of Curiosity embodied spectacle and a thirst for knowledge; Victorians attended these museums and saw objects they had never encountered. The Victorians encountered an explosion of information in the form of printed books, similar to our own internet-induced information overload. The museum going experience in the Victorian age provided a different way to experience information and to make discoveries about the world. The Society for the Advancement of Miniature Curiosa aims to re-capture the wonder, curiosity, and spectacle present in the Victorian museum and in earlier cabinets of curiosities.

The Society is home to dozens of never before seen miniature spectacles. These works of toy theater and mechanized sculpture are imaginatively fashioned out of found objects and not only serve as works of art, but also act as pieces of a larger narrative. Each object is accompanied by a wholly fictional story, creating a re-imagined past, present, and future that incites curiosity as it defamiliarizes the familiar.

At night the space is transformed into a performance venue. Six nights a week entirely unique and one-of-a-kind miniature spectacles will take place. Due to the economical accessibility of toy theater materials and small production values, a full season of small dramatic works will be developed. Using the frame of academia, performance artists will also act as experts on curiosity and give lectures.

The development of this museum will be furthered through the aid of project partners. The Society will leave room in its budget for a scene designer to help in the development of the museum's aesthetic. The Pittsburgh Children's Museum and the Brewhouse will provide shop and studio space for creating the Curious Artifacts. In addition to these partners, there are many playwrights and puppetry artists who support this project and will assist in the museum's overall development, such as playwright Rob Handel and puppeteer Dan Hurlin, both Obie award-winning theatre artists.