

# MICHELLE MARIANO

## CONTACT

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## PROFILE

Creative content strategist with an extensive background in writing, communications, and project design and management. Blending theories of rhetoric with real-world experience, I approach all projects story first.

My expertise is in crafting persuasive narratives that connect organizations with their constituencies and help them to succeed in creating a better world.

## EDUCATION

### University of Houston

#### PhD, Literature and Creative Writing

Dissertation: "Girl at the Edge of the Frame" (novel);  
"The Sum of Its Parts: Building Unity through Fragmentation in the Novel-in-Stories" (criticism)

### New Mexico State University

#### MFA, Creative Writing

Thesis: "The Muted City" (poetry collection)

### Bryn Mawr College

#### AB, English with Creative Writing concentration

Minors in photography and Africana studies  
Year of coursework at Goldsmiths, Univ. of London

## EXPERIENCE

### Digital Born

2009 – Present

#### Principal, Editorial and Brand Strategy

Collaborate with nonprofit clients to create and unify brand story and communications. Enable meaningful interaction with audiences by focusing on information that is relevant to them, presented in ways they understand.

- For Marymount University (Arlington, VA), performed requirements analysis and built consensus between IT and communications departments to develop a customized community educational platform. Within six months of launch, Marymount Commons reached 2,001 active users (57% of students and faculty).
- For the National Organizations of Youth Safety (WDC), managed website redesign using an audience-based approach. New site reduced bounce rate to 42% (from 88%) and increased audience by 27%, with visitors spending 38% more time on the site.
- For the Inter-American Development Bank (WDC), converted complex economic research into a general-readership publication for the bank's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary retrospective.

### Houston Grand Opera

2013 – 2014

#### Development Communications Officer

Managed all departmental communications, including grant proposals and reports and content for the company magazine (circ. 25,000), the donor newsletter (circ. 3,000), and the website.

- Developed and implemented the donor communications plan for the final year of *Inspiring Performance—The Campaign for Houston Grand Opera*, the most ambitious fundraising effort in the history of Houston performing arts. The campaign exceeded its \$165 million goal, raising a total of \$172.9 million (69% from new donors).
- Wrote grant applications and proposals that generated more than \$6 million in institutional support for all company activities, including operations, main stage productions, and community and education initiatives.
- Improved team's efficiency by instituting the first-ever departmental knowledge repository, including proposal templates, program fact sheets, and a story bank of impactful anecdotes for use in donor relations.

**Global Alliance for Arts & Health**

2009 – 2013

● **Director of Communications & Strategic Partnerships**

Produced print and online communications for marketing, development, membership, and partnership programs. Led in the planning, budgeting, development, implementation, and evaluation of corporate-, foundation-, and government-sponsored programs, exhibitions, and educational initiatives.

- Devised and executed communications plan for organization's rebranding (including name and logo change and website redesign).
- Supervised the creation of an online artist registry with work-sample upload capability.
- Administered two signature regranteeing programs, managing an annual budget of \$400,000; grew number of applicants by 20% over three years by streamlining application process and refining program design and guidelines.
- Designed and secured funding for 1–2 new partnership-based programs each year (avg. program budget: \$50,000).
- Expanded professional-development webinar series from 8 to 12 sessions per year; increased enrollments by 20%.
- Developed Marketing Boot Camp, an NEA-sponsored full-day workshop focusing on effective marketing strategies for small to midsize arts nonprofits, which earned an average overall rating of 4.9/5.0 from 43 participants.

**Heldref Publications**

2008 – 2009

● **Director of Journals**

Supervised an editorial staff of 13 (deputy director, managing editors, proofreaders, and interns) to produce a portfolio of 18 scholarly, peer-reviewed journals in the humanities and social sciences.

- Promoted to director after 2.5 months as deputy director.
- Hired and trained four new employees (deputy director and three managing editors); implemented a quarterly schedule of professional development activities for all staff.
- Co-led a successful organization-wide initiative to bring 37 titles on track after several years of publishing behind schedule.
- Managed staff and publications after organization's acquisition to ensure smooth transition to new ownership.

**La Sociedad para las Artes**

2006 – 2008

● **Development and Events Manager**

Wrote and edited grant proposals, program materials, press releases, and marketing collateral for university-based arts organization. Managed special events from planning through execution.

- Coordinated 12 committees of 35 volunteers to produce the 2007 Writers' Harvest Hunger Benefit, which drew an audience of 300 (the largest in the event's 15-year history) and raised more than \$17,000 from community members for Casa de Peregrinos, the local food bank.
- Led publicity efforts for monthly visiting writer series to increase overall attendance by 25%.

**New Mexico State University**

2005 – 2008

● **Instructor, Department of English**

Taught undergraduate courses in introductory and advanced composition, contemporary fiction, film studies, and creative writing. Developed CMS templates, surveys, and discussion boards to supplement classroom study.

- Awarded 2006 Minority Teaching Fellowship for outstanding teaching across all departments of the university.
- Selected to teach upper-level rhetoric and creative writing seminars based on positive student evaluations in first-year courses.

**Random House, Inc.**

2002 – 2005

● **Editorial Production Manager**

Managed a rotating portfolio of 20 titles; proofread and edited projects from manuscript to bound book/ebook; reviewed jacket art and copy from mechanical to final proof.

- Maintained a high level of accuracy on multiple, simultaneous projects, resulting in promotion from associate to manager after one year.

## SERVICE

DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Grant Review Panelist, 2013.

*Puerto del Sol*, Assistant Editor, 2005–2008.

Writers in the Schools, Creative Writing Teacher, Vista Middle School, 2006–2007.

The Momentum Project, Meal Service and Delivery Volunteer, 2002–2005.

## PRESENTATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

"Asset Mapping and the Network Model: Building Capacity to Identify and Serve Un/Under-reached Populations" (panel), Society for the Arts in Healthcare International Conference, Detroit, MI, 2012.

*Guyana and the IDB: Partners for Progress* (reference publication). Washington: Inter-American Development Bank, 2010.

"The Shifting Weight of Water." Review of *Folding a River*, by Kawita Kandpal. *Puerto del Sol* 44.1 (Winter 2009).

"Form! Form! Form! Poetry as a Visual Art" (paper). Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference, New York, NY, 2008.

"Rethinking the Workshop" (paper). Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference, Austin, TX, 2005.

## COMPETENCIES

### Technology

Software/Apps: MS Office, Adobe CC (InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Document Cloud), Zoho, Basecamp, Scrivener

CMS/CRM: WordPress, Joomla, Drupal, Blackboard, Tessitura, Salesforce, Highrise

Communications/Marketing: MailChimp, Constant Contact, HootSuite, SurveyMonkey, Google Analytics, Google AdWords

Social: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, Tumblr, Snapchat, Google+

### Languages

Spanish (advanced)  
French, Swahili (basic)

### Style Guides

Chicago, MLA, AP, APA, GPO

## AWARDS

2014 Robert J. Sussman Prize in Fiction. Inprint Houston.

2012 Donald Barthelme Memorial Prize in Fiction. Inprint Houston.

2011 Presidential Fellowship. University of Houston.

2011 Glenn Cambor Fellowship. Inprint Houston.

2008 Peter Harris-Kunz Award, Best Poetry Manuscript. New Mexico State University.

2007 Frank Waters Fiction Prize, Honorable Mention. New Mexico State University.

2006 Ruth Scott Award. Academy of American Poets.

2006 Minority Teaching Fellowship. New Mexico State University.