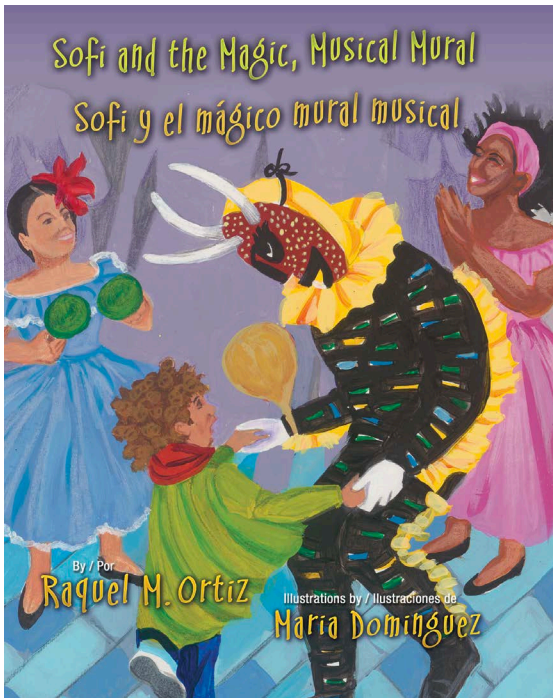


TEACHER'S GUIDE



Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural / Sofi y el mágico mural musical

written by **Raquel M. Ortiz**
illustrations by **Maria Domínguez**

ABOUT THE BOOK

Genre: Fiction

ISBN 978-1-55885-803-9

Hardcover

May 31, 2015

Piñata Books

Ages 4-8

THEMES

Music, Dance, Culture, Afro-Latino, Carnival, Instruments, Plena, Puerto Rico Fear, Imagination, Cultural Traditions, Caribbean Music, Latino/Hispanic Interest, Fiction

When Sofi walks through her barrio she always passes a huge mural with images from Puerto Rico: musicians, dancers, tropical flowers and—her least favorite—a *vejigante*, a character from carnival that wears a scary mask. One day, on her way home from the bodega, Sofi stops in front of the mural. Is one of the dancers inviting her to be his partner? “Okay, let’s dance,” Sofi giggles and suddenly she’s in Old San Juan. Surrounded by dancers and musicians she begins to dance and sing with her new friends. But, her pleasure turns to fear when the *vejigante* shows up and spins her around and around! What does he want from her? How can she get away?



VOCABULARY

Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural has a number of words that your students may not be familiar with. Before or after the reading review some or all of the words listed below.

Vocabulary:

vejigante, trickster, *vejiga*, *bodega*, *pleneros*, *amapola*, Viejo San Juan, island, Puerto Rico, *bongos*, *plena*, *güiro*, plaza, El Yunque, tropical

Academic:

mural, Caribbean Sea, inviting, sneaky, scream, shocked, avoid, eastward, rain forest, gurgling, chatter, vegetation, south, vibrant, sapphire, plunge

ELL / ESL Teaching Strategies

Encourage your Spanish-speaking students to translate the Spanish words in the English text for the class. Act out the following words found in text: danced around, giggle, inviting, scream, shocked, sneaky, chatter, gurgling, and plunge. Encourage your students to act out these words when they hear them during the reading.

BEFORE READING

(Pre-reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)*

Pre-reading Questions

1. What is magic? What are examples of magic? Do you believe in magic? What magical power would you like to have?
2. Do you like music? How do we make music? What do we use to make music? What do we have that we can make music with?
3. What things or places can be painted? What is a mural? Where are murals usually located? How big are murals usually? Why?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, Key Ideas and Details, Strand 1, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

1. Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask the students what they think the title, *Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural* / *Sofi y el mágico mural musical* means. Ask what they think this book might be about and whom the book might be about. Ask students to make a prediction on where this story may take place.
2. Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, introduction, English and Spanish text, illustration, glossary, information about the mural, dedications, author's note and illustrator's note.



3. Point out the instruments on the cover. Introduce the following instruments: *maracas*, *bongos*, *güiro* and *pandereta*.

Establishing a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3)

Have students read to find out:

- What happens when we're afraid of something?
- How can we overcome our fears?

Encourage students to consider why the author, Raquel M. Ortiz, wants to share this story with young people. Have students consider why the text is presented in both English and Spanish.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

Use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and facilitate a deeper appreciation of the story. Encourage students to refer to the text and illustrations to support their responses. To build close reading skills of a text, students should cite evidence to support their answers.

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1 and 3)

1. What is Sofi doing at the beginning of the story?
2. What does Mami want from the bodega?
3. What is the name of the mural that Sofi looks at? What is the mural about?
4. Why is Sofi afraid of the mural? Why doesn't she like the *vejigante*?
5. What does Sofi say to the *plenero*?
6. Where does Sofi find herself? What is she surrounded by?

7. What happens after the musicians play a carnival song? Who appears?

8. How is the *vejigante* dressed?

9. What happens after the *vejigante* spins-spins-spins Sofi?

10. Where does Sofi as a *vejigante* fly to? What does she hear? What does she see? What does she smell?

11. Why doesn't Sofi plunge into the foamy white waves of the Caribbean Sea?

12. Who helped to paint the mural?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft and Structure, Strand 6)

1. What are some reasons Sofi may have been afraid of the *vejigante*?

2. How did Sofi end up inside the mural?

3. What does it mean that Sofi is "too shocked to do anything else, began to dance"?

4. Why do you think the musicians began to play a carnival song?

5. What song did the musicians sing to Sofi? Why?

6. Why do you think everyone cheered for Sofi as she went soaring through the air?

7. Why do you think Sofi as a *vejigante* flies to El Yunque?

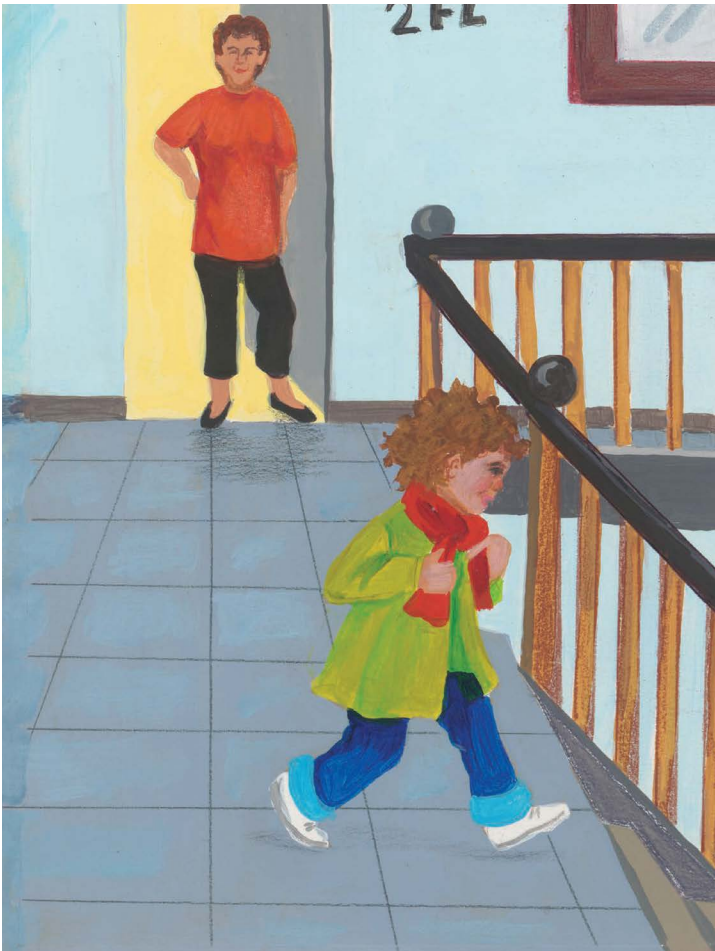
8. What does it mean that "the salty water called out to her"?

9. Sofi's sister, Esmeralda Pagán, was one of a long list of students who helped to paint the mural. Why is this important?

10. Why do you think Sofi and Mami climb up the two flights of stairs to their apartment in silence?

11. Why might Sofi think that the *vejigante* winks at her? What could the wink mean?

12. Sofi says to herself, "Maybe this really is a singing and dancing town." What do you think this means?



13. At the end of the story Sofi hums and dances a *plena* with her arms outstretched to her friends across the street. What changed for her? How does she feel about the mural now? About the *vejigante*?

14. Why do you think learning about customs and traditions is important? Should schools teach about customs and traditions from all around the world? Why or why not?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types and Purpose, Strands 1-3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3, Craft & Structure, Strand 4, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9)

1. Which parts of the book do you connect to the most? Why? Describe a time when you were afraid of something.
2. Throughout the book there are illustrations of the mural, El Pueblo Cantor. Describe the mural. Describe why the mural may be important to the students that created it and / or the mural that it was painted.

3. Do you have a mural in your neighborhood? What does it look like? Who designed it? Who painted it? If not, what design would you like for a mural in your neighborhood?
4. After her adventure Sofi had a new group of friends. Pretend that you are Sofi and write a letter to your new friend, the *vejigante*. Thank the *vejigante* for giving you the power to fly. Share with the *vejigante* where you plan to fly to next on the island of Puerto Rico.
5. This story is about a magical mural that transports Sofi to Puerto Rico. What magical things can you do on the island of Puerto Rico? Write a list of different magical adventures that you can go on while visiting the island of Puerto Rico.
6. Sofi lands in San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico then flies east to El Yunque, a tropical rainforest and south to the Caribbean Sea. Have you ever wanted to fly? Where would you fly to? Describe where you would go and how you would go to these places.

ELL/ESL Teaching Strategies:

*(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4-6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4-7)*

Below please find strategies that may be helpful to use with English Language Learner students.

1. Review all of the vocabulary. Have students make predictions about word meaning. Have students create and share an action for each word. Invite students to write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture, or create a list synonyms and antonyms
2. Assign ELL students to partner-read the book with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader. Students who speak Spanish can help with pronunciation of the Spanish or read the Spanish alongside a student reading the English text.
3. Have each student write three to five questions about the text. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
4. After the reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on

each page, first orally, then in writing.

- Working in pairs have students retell either the plot of the book or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary or opinion about what they have read.

5. Create a presentation on how carnival is celebrated in Puerto Rico. Remember to describe the music, dance, costumes and masks used during carnival to their classmates. Bring photos, instruments, masks and/or recorded music for your presentation.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

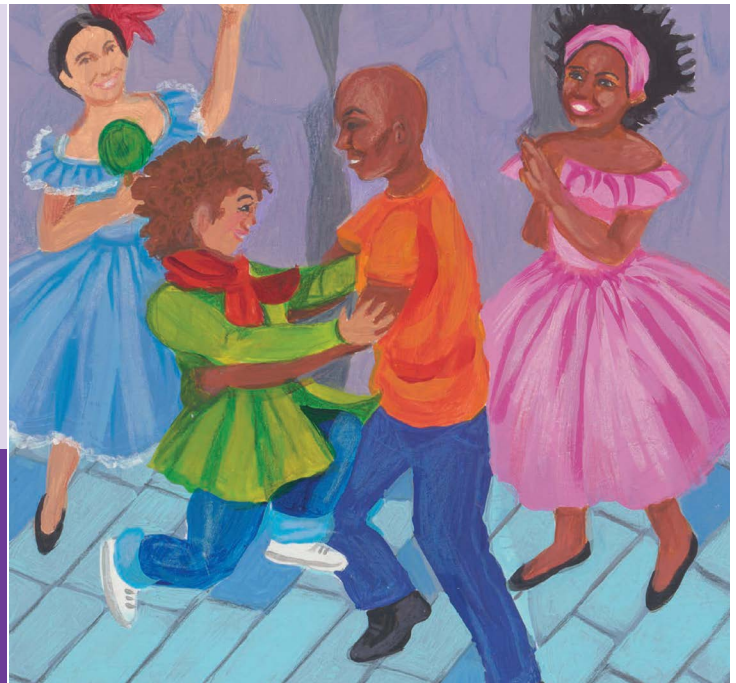
(Introduction to the Standards: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use activities below to help students integrate what they have read with other curriculum areas. These activities may also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for creating a home-school connection.

English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9) (Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3) (Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Have students listen to the sound of the *pandereta* and the *güiro*. Together create a list of words that describe the instruments and the sounds that they make. Then, have students write a description of one of the instruments and an Acrostic or Haiku poem about the instrument. Here's a link on how to write Haiku poems with children: <https://youtu.be/hkiTLxIQhdw>
2. Have students create movements for the following words found in the story: danced around, giggle, inviting, shocked, sneaky, chatter, gurgling, and plunge. Then invite the students to write a story about themselves, Sofi and the *vejigante* in Viejo San Juan.
3. Create paperbag or stick puppets. Then, divide students in groups of 7 to read the Reader's Theater version of *Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural*. Find a link for the Reader's



Theater here: https://artepublicopress.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/TG-Sofi-and-the-Magic-Musical-Mural_Play.pdf

Social Studies

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9) (Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Look at a map of Puerto Rico and locate the river, Río Grande, that the poet and *Mami* remembered. Then, draw and color a picture that celebrates the island of Puerto Rico or Puerto Rican culture that somehow includes a river in the design.
2. Have students study the geography of Puerto Rico. Locate the three places on the island that Sofi visited. Map Sofi's voyage and, as a class, make a list of all of the municipalities that Sofi flew over during her adventure.
3. Have a discussion about how Puerto Rican people have Taíno, African and Spanish and cultural roots. Then show the students a world map with arrows to illustrate how different populations moved to and from the island of Puerto Rico. Find the link to the map here: <https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/education/heritage-poster-series/diasporas-history-puerto-rican-people-cartography-part-i-ta%C3%ADno>

Art, Media and Music

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9) (Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3) (Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Have students watch Watch *Plena with Doctor Drum* a 7-minute video by teaching musician José Rivera AKA Doctor Drum. Then, have students use their desk as a *pandereta* to play the *plena* beat and try to keep time to the song. bit.ly/34A5hDV
2. Watch *The Art and the Artist, María Domínguez* to share the creative process behind illustrating the *Sofi* picture book and the community mural El Pueblo Cantor (Bronx, 1996). Then, invite your students to create a design for a mural that celebrates Puerto Rican culture and traditions. bit.ly/34EXPrb
3. Explain that the *vejigante* is a trickster from Carnival. Then, have students draw a picture of themselves singing and dancing with or as a *vejigante* and write a description of their drawing. bit.ly/36PjoGW

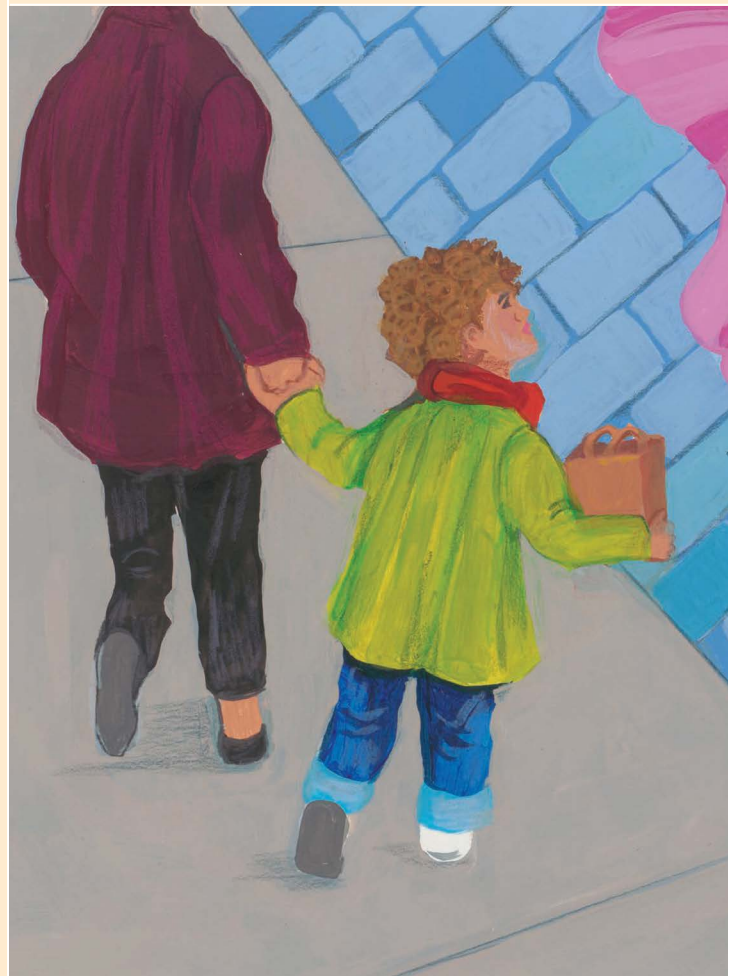
Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9) (Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7 and 8)

1. Encourage students to research a *plena* group. Have students answer the following questions: Where does the group come from? How did they learn to play *plena* music? Which is their most famous *plena* song? Then, have students share a *plena* song with the class.
2. Share that the *vejigante* mask in the illustrations are created in the style used in Loíza Aldea, Puerto Rico. Invite students to research the Puerto Rican *vejigante* masks from Loíza Aldea and Ponce. Then, have them and their families design and make a mask as fantastic as they like. Find a link to make a *vejigante* mask here: http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/puerto/carnival_mask.pdf
3. Have students plan a family trip to the island of Puerto Rico and identify three to five places

to visit. Have students answer the following questions: Where would we go? What would we do? Remind the students to refer to a map or globe to plan their route.

4. Invite students to write their own story about going on an adventure with Sofi. Have them look at a globe, map, or atlas to find some place in the world that they would like to visit. Then, have them research the county and identify some fun, extraordinary things that they can do with Sofi once they are there to write about in their story.
5. As a class, plan a carnival celebration. Make masks in the style used in Loíza Aldea, Puerto Rico. Learn *plena* songs and dance moves. Watch *Sofi Songs* to learn the three songs found in the *Sofi* picture book: <https://vimeo.com/282885180/c087eb782d->
6. Students can find information about carnival celebration here: <http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/puerto/>



CENTRO TEACHING RESOURCES

Puerto Rican Heritage Cultural Ambassadors Program

This free, self-paced, multimedia online course on Puerto Rican history, culture, and traditions engages youth and educational institutions in promoting the teaching and learning of our heritage.

<https://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/education/puerto-rican-heritage-cultural-ambassadors-program>

Watch *Plena with Doctor Drum* a 7 minute video by teaching musician José Ortiz AKA Dr. Drum who explains plena and teaches the songs in the story. bit.ly/34A5hDV

Watch *Vejigante Talk*, a 2 minute video by educator Humberto Soto that gives an overview of *Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural* and explains what a vejigante is. bit.ly/36PjoGW

Watch *Sofi Songs* a 2 minute video with author Raquel M. Ortiz, teaching musician Dr. Drum, and second graders from Public School 250 and Public School 257 singing the three songs found in the Sofi picture book. bit.ly/2sEzmET

Watch *The Art and the Artist, María Domínguez* a 2 minute video by Artist María Domínguez who explains the creative process behind illustrating the Sofi picture book. bit.ly/34EXPrb

Watch *Teaching Sofi to Teachers, Educators, and Parents* a 13 minute video with author and educator Raquel M. Ortiz and teaching artist Dr. Drum sharing pre and post reading activities for Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural. bit.ly/36SHf8n

Watch a 10 minute documentary about María Domínguez, her work, and her mural creation process with 8th graders in El Barrio. bit.ly/2M8q1fs

Puerto Rican Voices

Watch a six minute segment from Centro's t.v. program on the Sofi book, showing a reading and interviews with the author and the illustrator. bit.ly/2sDHQfu

Documentary, Memories on the Wall: Education and Enrichment through Community Murals, Directed by Raquel M. Ortiz Rodriguez, 2013. Watch a 10 minute documentary about María Domínguez, her work, and her mural creation process with 8th graders in El Barrio. bit.ly/2M8q1fs

Timeline of Puerto Rican History Booklet bit.ly/2r1Zlpg

The Puerto Rican Heritage Poster Series

- History: A Cartography, Part II, Puerto Rican Migrations to the United States and the Caribbean, 1898 - 2012
- Maps: V. Educational Struggles and Institution Building and New Traditions (1960s - 2010s) bit.ly/2Z6fS8f

CONNECT WITH THE INTERNET

National Geographic

- <http://voices.nationalgeographic.com/2014/07/25/genographic-project-dna-results-reveal-details-of-puerto-rican-history/>
- MapMaker 1-Page Maps: <http://www.nationalgeographic.org/education/mapping/outline-map/>
- MapMaker Interactive: <http://mapmaker.nationalgeographic.org/?ls=000000000000>

Smithsonian

- OurStory: American History Stories and Activities You Can Do Together!
- A Puerto Rican Carnival: <http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/puerto/>
- Make Your Own Carnival Mask: http://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/puerto/carnival_mask.pdf
- Lesson Plan: Plena, the People's Newspaper: Puerto Rican Music for the Classroom: <https://folkways.si.edu/plena-peoples-newspaper-puerto-rican-classroom/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian>
- Artist Spotlight: Tito Matos Puerto Rican plena drummer: <https://folkways.si.edu/tito-matos-puerto-rican-plena-drummer/latin-world/music/article/smithsonian>

- Artist Spotlight: Los Pleneros de la 21: Afro-Puerto Rican traditions: <https://folkways.si.edu/los-pleneros-de-la-21-afro-puerto-rican-traditions/latin/music/article/smithsonian>



ADDITIONAL ONLINE LITERACY RESOURCES

Colorín Colorado!

<http://www.colorincolorado.org>

National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL)

<https://www.familieslearning.org>

Reading Is Fundamental

<https://www.rif.org>

Puerto Rican Heritage Cultural Ambassadors Program for the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College. For more information please visit <https://colorespublishing.wordpress.com/about/>

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



MARIA DOMINGUEZ moved from Cataño, Puerto Rico to New York City when she was five years old. She began her artistic career as a muralist with Cityarts in 1982; that first experience with public art showed her that people can create art together for their community. Over the past twenty-five years, Maria has created over twenty public art murals and worked with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority of New York City, Artmakers, Inc. and Brooklyn Connect. The recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts, she has also headed El Museo del Barrio's Education Department.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



RAQUEL M. ORTIZ was born and raised in Lorain, Ohio. Her parents are from the island of Puerto Rico. She has been making art, singing songs, and telling stories ever since she was a little girl. She is the author of the bilingual picture books *Planting Flags on Division Street / Plantando banderas en la calle Division* (Colores Editorial House, 2015), *Sofi Paints her Dreams / Sofi pinta sus sueños* (Arte Público Press, 2019), *When Julia Danced Bomba / Cuando Julia bailaba bomba* (Arte Público Press, 2019), *A Summer of Change! / ¡Un verano de cambio!* (Red Sugar Cane Press, 2020) and other educational materials for children. She loves all kinds of art and has worked at The Brooklyn Museum, the Allen Memorial Art Museum, and El Museo del Barrio. Currently, she creates educational material for the

Learn more about *Sofi and the Magic, Musical Mural / Sofi y el mágico mural musical* at:

<https://artepublicopress.com/product/sofi-and-the-magic-musical-mural-sofi-y-el-magico-mural-musical/>

The Center for Puerto Rican Studies (Centro) is the nation's leading university-based institution devoted to the interdisciplinary study of the Puerto Rican experience in the United States. Centro is dedicated to understanding, preserving and sharing the Puerto Rican experience in the United States. Centro invites Centro Voices contributors to make use of the extensive archival, bibliographic and research material preserved in its Library and Archives.

The Centro Library and Archives is devoted to collecting, preserving and providing access to resources documenting the history and culture of Puerto Ricans. The Centro Library and Archives was established in 1973 as a component of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies. The collections include books, current and historic newspapers and periodicals, audio, film & video, manuscripts, photographs, art prints, and recorded music. The Library and Archives provides services and programs to the scholarly community as well as the general public. Constituents are diverse and come from the United States and abroad. The Library and Archives facilitates access to information on its holdings through the City University's online public catalog or CUNY+. It also provides research and information assistance via phone and email.

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