

# Local performer Rupert Appleyard trying to gather attention for upcoming children's TV show



By Doug Johnson  
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A shot from Rupert Appleyard (a.k.a. Phileas Flash's) video, Balloon Town. Photo supplied.

There's more than just hot air behind this project.

Local entertainer Rupert Appleyard, who has become a staple at Edmonton's International Street Performers Festival as Phileas Flash, wants to make a children's TV show using his talent: balloon art.

Appleyard has achieved a pretty substantial level of fame in his field for life-like (as far as balloon creations go) reproductions of characters from pop culture, such as *Kylo Ren*.

Recently, the entertainer teamed up with Open Sky Pictures to create *Balloon Town*, which follows the adventures of Appleyard's alter-ego as he travels through time to find historic balloons.

"Basically he (Phileas) lives in a world made of balloons, but he owns a balloon shop, so there's not that much demand for balloons, so he has to track down rare balloons from across time. The idea is we want to make an educational show that's fun for kids as well. So I'll meet different characters and be able to teach kids about history."

The show's set is made entirely of balloons, as are many of the characters and historic figures that appear in the plot.

Step one in this program potentially seeing the light of day is recognition. Appleyard and Open Sky produced a short pitch video for the Independent Production fund, which runs a yearly competition in Canada.

Winners receive funding for a web series.

The competition began on March 1, and since then Appleyard and Open Sky (which, oddly, mostly specializes in documentaries) have been promoting it, as the Independent Production fund tracks the number of views each of its submissions gets on social media.

"It's doing so incredibly well. I can't believe it," Appleyard said.

"For me, because I exist as a part of a larger balloon community, if you believe such a thing exists, all these balloon twisters and decorators from around the world have seen this and put their whole backing into it. It's been shown all over the world."

As of last week, the clip has had nearly 100,000 views.

Phase one of the contest ends on March 31. Those shortlisted will begin phase two May 2.

The pitch video produced for the contest was made over two days in January on NAIT's campus.

To make the set cost \$1,000, not including the dinosaur or *Mona Lisa* in the video, of balloons.

"That's why we need funding, because that came out of my pocket," he said.

"It's an expensive process."

For more information, visit [flashballoons.com](http://flashballoons.com)

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