

Use:

For CoFA/APDI Committee

Received: _____

Action: _____

Amount: _____

**COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS
TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Arts Programming & Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Initiative
Programming Grants**

Applicant Name: Suki John, PhD

Position: Associate Professor

Department/School: SCCDance

Other Participants: Roma Flowers, Keith Saunders, Candace Matelic

Position: Associate & Assistant Professors of Professional Practice; Lecturer

Department/School: College of Fine Arts SCCDance, Theater and ARLE

Project Title: The Sh'ma Project for Holocaust and Human Rights Art & Education

Project Abstract: (less than 150 words)

The Sh'ma Project fosters diversity, equity and inclusion, using performance and interactive education to spur kinesthetic empathy. The project re-sets Sh'ma, a ballet in which Suki John tells the story of her family during the Holocaust. Through workshops and performances, the Project brings artists, students and educators from Texas Christian University together with Texas high school and college students, including those at TCU. Participants move beyond their role as audience through pre and post-performance workshops, building a cohort to creatively address DEI through personal experiences of "Othering." We go beyond historicizing cataclysmic events, creating an open space for young people to converse, explore, identify and ultimately reject hate speech and behaviors that lead to atrocities. The Sh'ma Project is seeking seed money to help attract external donors and pay for initial rehearsals and designs for the project.

Amount Requested: \$ 7,500

Project Date(s)*: Nov 2019-May 2020 (phase 1)

***Funding is awarded on a fiscal year basis.**

Authorizations:

School Director/ Department Chair:



List previous College of Fine Arts, Arts Programming & Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Initiative Programming Grants received within the past three (3) years:

Dates 2017-2018	Title On Display
Dates 2018-2019	Title TCU On Display
Dates	Title

2. Have final reports of previous grants been submitted?

Yes No Project still in progress

3. If you have or expect funding from additional sources for this project, indicate the following:

Source TCU Invests in Scholarship	
Amount \$ TBA	Notes We are working with the Office for Sponsored Research to develop this grant proposal

Source External Private Foundations - Puffin, Rubin, Surdna	
Amount \$ TBA	Notes We are working with the Office for Sponsored Research to identify potential funders and develop successful proposals

Source Private donors	
Amount \$ TBA	Notes A wide network of private donors are being contacted through the extensive Jewish community in the Metroplex

The Sh'ma Project for Holocaust and Human Rights Art and Education

Mission Statement:

Through collaboration, education, and the arts, The Sh'ma Project seeks to foster empathy, creating Upstanders to recognize and resist hate in all its forms.

Why Sh'ma?

Sh'ma means "Hear!!" and it comes from the fundamental prayer of the Jewish liturgy.

Overview: Moving Against Hate

The Sh'ma Project moves against hate. Through the power of kinesthetic empathy¹, the Sh'ma Project fosters diversity, equity and inclusion, using performance and interactive education in an effort to resist future genocides. The project gets its name from the ballet *Sh'ma*, created by Suki John to tell the story of her family in the Holocaust. The Sh'ma Project brings artists and educators from Texas Christian University together with students across Texas through workshops and performances. Students move beyond their role as audience through pre and post-performance workshops, building a cohort to creatively address the issue of "Othering." The Sh'ma Project is more than an artistic educational project, it's a movement against hate.

This DEI CoFA grant is being requested at a level of \$7500. This will fund the rehearsal pay of 15 dancers for half the rehearsal period. With this group of dancers we can begin to build the work in preparation for performance, adding in other performers later in the process. We anticipate that this seed grant will help us attract other funding to complete the Project.

Ballet

Through the language of emotion, *Sh'ma* tells the story of one family's experience in the Holocaust. Based on her mother's harrowing journey from yellow star to deportation, concentration camp to refugee camp, stateless teen to American citizen, Suki John originally choreographed *Sh'ma* in the former Yugoslavia. Not long afterwards, the horrific tragedy of the Bosnian war impelled Suki to tell her mother's story again in New York, as new "Never Again" reverberated across the

¹ "A key interdisciplinary concept in our understanding of social interaction across creative and cultural practices, **kinesthetic empathy** describes the ability to experience empathy merely by observing the movements of another human being."

Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices, Editors Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012. Introduction.

globe. The ballet is being reimagined for the present moment, with an emphasis on reaching out to young viewers, honoring the many other peoples who have been displaced, detained, and deported since the 1940s. Special in-performance projections will help the audience understand personal stories, historic context, and the action onstage.

Education

The Sh'ma Project will engage in a model of participatory art, directly engaging TCU student dancers in the creative process. Faculty from TCU's College of Fine Arts, CRES, and School of Interdisciplinary Studies will build interactive workshops designed for high schools and universities throughout Texas. Select groups of students will be chosen by their teachers to participate in workshops before and after seeing the performance. Through workshops combining movement, theater, writing, reading, watching, and listening, students will share personal and historical accounts of survival, and consider current conflicts and crises around the world. Through this project we hope to go beyond historicizing cataclysmic events, creating an open space for young people to converse, explore, identify and ultimately reject hate speech and the behaviors that lead to atrocity.

The ballet and educational elements of the program will support the DEI goals of both TCU and the College of Fine Arts by engaging young people on the question of Othering. This question will be approached through the multiple channels mentioned, enlisting teachers and students in an ongoing conversation about the many small steps of segregation, dehumanization, propaganda and race laws that ultimately led to the Holocaust. Through this incremental yet impactful process, we will look at parallels to the Holocaust evident in the Native American, Rwandan and Bosnian genocides. Students will be encouraged to explore their own experience and that of their extended families and neighbors.

University Partners will include faculty and staff from Honors, CRES, History, International Services, and School for Interdisciplinary Studies. It is our intention to engage these colleagues in the process of discovering best practices for our ultimate goal: to create "Upstanders."

Community Partners include the Texas Jewish Arts Association (Dr. John is the Director of Dance for that non-profit); the Tarrant County Jewish Federation; and the Dallas Holocaust Museum. While these partners are not contributing financially, they will provide in-kind support with marketing, publicity, 501c3 status when necessary, and various kinds of outreach. Additional partners we are seeking include host high schools and universities where the workshops and performances will take place, for example, UNT, UTD, UT, Arlington Heights High School, Booker T High School, and more.

Additionally, Dr. John is working with Dr. Michael Polgar from the University of Pennsylvania to create a research model that has been suggested by the TCU Office of Sponsored Research:

Evaluation Research Design: Workshop and Performance for DEI impact (Draft)

At the suggestion of the TCU Office of Sponsored Research, The Sh'ma Project includes a research component to help evaluate – and improve - the effectiveness of the program. Designed with sociologist Dr. Michael Polgar from the University of Pennsylvania, we will test the theory that kinesthetic empathy increases support for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) among participant-respondents who attend workshops that contextualize DEI-focused live performances.

First, we will evaluate the singular effects of University workshops and performances designed to help educate about, inspire, and promote DEI among students (and others). Second, we will evaluate the combined effects of workshops and performances. To complete this evaluation, we will use a brief survey both prior to and immediately after each workshop and performance. Research will involve statistical comparisons of pre- and post-test indicators, as well as comparisons of respondents who did and did not experience both workshops and live performances. Feedback from this evaluation will help us to more effectively use kinesthetic empathy to improve the DEI impact of our workshops and performances. Drs. John and Polgar will complete an IRB for this project if approved.

Time Frame and Next Steps

The Sh'ma Project has already been awarded a generous period of five weeks of rehearsal space from the TCU SCCDance, beginning in May 2020 (Phase 1). The plan is to preview the ballet for a TCU audience in the intimate Erma Lowe Studio Theater in the fall of 2020, and then bring it to several Texas high schools and universities (Dallas, Denton, Austin, and/or Houston) in the academic year 2020-2021 (Phase 2). Educators will be encouraged to prepare and follow up with their classes with free materials from a host of resources including the Dallas Holocaust Museum, TOLI, The Museum of Jewish Heritage, World Without Genocide, etc. Teachers will be invited to choose classes or groups to participate in pre- and post-performance workshops. These groups will be given surveys designed to deepen their experience and the effectiveness of the project. The entire process -- discourse, workshops, rehearsals, and performances -- will be documented on video.

“Art cannot change events,” said Leonard Bernstein, “but it can change people. Young people face challenges that require not only knowledge, but the courage to act, to liberate themselves from inherited hate. The Sh'ma Project is one way of dancing, teaching, and insisting “Never Again.”

Suki John, PhD 10/8/2019

Sh'ma dance project

EXPENSES

Artist fees:

Director/choreo Suki John

Rehearsal/performance \$800 rehearsal + 400 perf (can be covered as in-kind) \$1200

Designer Roma Flowers light/projection creation \$3500

Travel perf pay 100x 4 = \$ 400

Costume design and construction \$1000

Travel perf pay 100x 4 = \$ 400

Costume construction for 20 dancers x 100 = \$2000

Ballet Master Keith Saunders Rehearsal pay \$1000

Rehearsal pay: 25 days (5 days/wk x 5 weeks) x 4 hours = 100 hours = per dancer \$1000,
20 dancers x \$1000 = \$20000

Dancer Performance pay:

Hours (not including travel) 3 hrs pre-performance, 1.5 performance, clean up =

5 hours \$100 per performance for 20 dancers ----- Each performance = \$2000

Dancer pay for 4 performances (\$2000x 4) = \$8000

Crew Pay \$100 per performance per person x 4 people x 4 performances = \$1600

Gas/Travel (in kind TCU vehicles) just gas = Austin/Houston one trip or two? \$400
7 Days x 2 vans

Accommodations

Hospitality – hotels, per diem, dancers share room, faculty single rooms

= 10 rooms dancers, 3 for faculty/tech, 2 for crew, 15 rooms \$100/

\$1500/night x 4 nights (Dallas, Austin, 2 Houston) \$6000

per diem (\$50 lunch/dinner only - room includes bkfst) x 27 = \$1,100 per day

2 days Dallas, 2 Days Austin, 3 Days Houston = 7 days x \$1150 = \$9450

Marketing \$ 500

Workshop materials, snacks, copying, 100 x wkshop \$ 400

Project Administration 5% \$2617

(Includes Candace Matelic, TCU Arts Leadership Program, \$1000)

TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENSES \$59468

INCOME

Universities pay fees for performances/workshops: \$3600 each x 3 = **\$10,800**

Break down:

Performance pay = \$2000

Accommodations = 1300

Workshop and marketing = \$300

TCU faculty use of of Vans = 7 days x 2 vans

TCU SCCDance faculty use of 5 weeks studio rehearsal space

PROJECTED INCOME from school performances **\$10,800**

Need to raise: \$59,468 – \$10,800 = **\$48,668**