Research Grant – Fall 2009

Title or Proposal: Tango Intervention
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Unit: School of Art and Art History

Abstract:

_Tango Intervention (TI)_ is a series of public art intervention/performances, recontextualized by extensive websites. This project has been underway for 2.5 years. Performances have been completed in 19 international cities. COTA funding supported some of these events, leading to more substantial outside funding. With the next production/performance phase of this project, _Tango Panopticon 2.0_, already funded, I am seeking support for essential related professional expenses: production of a _TI_ 9-channel video installation at Salisbury University Gallery; documentation of past and upcoming actions; major revisions of project website; and production of a series of archival digital prints for exhibition.

Proposal:

_Tango Intervention (TI)_ clearly supports the goals of the college in many ways. _TI_ is interdisciplinary, innovative, and gaining visibility in a growing international arena. In the last 2 years _TI_ was featured at International Festivals, in Vienna, Austria and twice in New York City. _Tango Panopticon 1.0_ last May involved actions in 15 international cities including New York; Utrecht, NL; Krakow, Poland; and Johannesburg, South Africa. Work supported by initial funding from COTA has lead to outside funding of over $20,000.

_TI_ is a complex project with many facets. Each intervention manifests in public as Argentine Tango danced where dance is not expected. The Website recontextualizes these interventions as site-specific examinations of social issues. _TI_ is an example of emerging art addressing ideas of Psychogeography, rethinking Situationist strategies of the 50’s. _TI_ is uniquely positioned to garner considerable visibility and significant international opportunities in this growing artistic field.

The next intervention action _Tango Panopticon 2.0_, is already fully funded. It will entail hundreds of people “Tango Intervening” on May Day 2010, before public surveillance cameras in cities around the world, while streaming their own live video from smart phones running software developed with Dr Adriana Iamnitchi in the College of Engineering. These videos will be viewed live on a large screen display in Tampa and other cities, and will also be visible live to anyone via the Internet.

Response to _TI_ has been broadly enthusiastic, generating support from a wide range of organizations, in and beyond the Arts. This began with the involvement of the Chicago Parks District and continued with the involvement of History Link in Seattle, the NYC Tenement Museum, and St John’s University. The New York international festival, Conflux included _TI_ in 2007 and 2008. _TI_ was in the 5th International Mobile Music Workshops, at the University of Vienna, Austria. Documentation of _TI_ was curated into the gallery exhibition of the annual conference of the International Digital Media and Arts Association in Philadelphia.

I was invited by Salisbury University to produce _TI_ for Washington DC, and I will also mount a 9-monitor video installation there in spring of 2009 using footage shot during the DC action. I produced _TI_ in Phnom Penh, Cambodia during a residency at Meta House. The organizers of
Meta House are based in Berlin and I am planning actions for TI in Berlin. I am also working in Berlin with Mirjam Struppek, of Urban Media Research, and director of the Urban Screens Festival and Conference.

The project is becoming self-funding through external grants and organizational sponsorship. I have received many times more funding from outside COTA than the amount that I am now seeking with this grant. However an international project on this scale is very expensive. Although production costs for the next intervention, Tango Panopticon 2.0 are met, it is essential that I have support to complete the documentation, gallery prints, video installation that will allow me to capitalize on the visibility of the event on May Day 2010. Funding is particularly critical as I expand the project into gallery contexts, because this will add more critical attention to the work that will lead to significant further exhibitions and increased outside funding. COTA support combined with secured and growing outside support for TI will certainly raise my professional profile and the visibility of the arts at USF in significant international venues.