

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

I would like to create a 30-minute experimental narrative video that is based on actual and imagined dreams and nightmares that adults have had about being in high school. The cast of local actors includes one adult in her/his thirties or forties as the main character, a troupe of theater arts high school students as the main character's friends and peers, and a few other adults as teachers or other authority figures. Using the common "back to school" dream as the launching point this video will investigate issues of existential solitude, anxiety, desire, and heroism- themes that are palpable in a high school setting and that one grapples with quietly throughout one's life.

## **EXHIBITION**

The exhibition of the final video is an integral part of the project. It will be screened in the auditorium of the high school in which we shoot and which the students attend. The screening will resemble a high school drama production as much as possible, including student ticket takers, photocopied programs on brightly colored paper, and a final curtain call with the actors at the end of the screening. The event will be free and open to the public. It is my hope that presenting the video in this way will enhance the uncanny, familiar but strange, experience of being in a high school as an adult. I would like to use the 2009 Core Exhibition to promote the screening with photographs and other materials that act as both art objects and teasers or advertisements for the screening to be held at the end of the Core Exhibition. I will loosely model this installation on high school display cases that promote theater pieces complete with headshots, production stills, costume samples, and other bric-a-brac.

## **MOTIVATIONS/ CONCEPTS**

High school in the United States, for many, is an emotionally charged time full of clashing desires (sexual, social, material, mental), all of which are being reeled in and concealed while simultaneously raging out of control. It often marks the beginning of the individual's ongoing, philosophical, and heroic search for meaning and purpose in one's life. It also grants us the first glimpses of the absurdity and disillusionment that are bound to this quest. High school embodies the tension between institutional restraint and personal freedom and it is notorious for its associations with social anxiety, awkwardness, and deep-seated feelings of loneliness. In short, high school seems to be the perfect site to stage a mundane drama about the birth and continuation of all of these same struggles into adulthood. The common occurrence of back to school dreams is further evidence of the particular psychological emotional landscape associated with high school. I am especially interested in presenting a portrait of existential solitude and perpetual self-consciousness through the placement of the main character, an adult in a high school setting with peers half his or her age. This age gap and all the awkwardness associated with it will be an unspoken stand in for any number of ways one might feel different or alienated from others. I am also interested in how theater arts students embody so nicely the perpetual drama, performance, and experimentation with identity that are so integral to the high school experience. I admire (and am also horrified by) their courage to let these dramas play themselves out so publicly. Besides bringing their acting abilities and aspirations to the project these student actors bring who they are as actual teenagers and as symbolic teenagers as well.

## **IMPACT**

This project is firmly rooted in Houston in a number of ways. Besides shooting the video in Houston with local actors, I will also collect audio recordings of dreams and nightmares about high school from Houston natives who have had a variety of high school experiences (public, private, parochial, etc.). Additionally, this project will allow me to hire 24 local actors, mostly high school students. I am very interested in providing these actors with valuable exposure, professional experience with film acting, and a project to add to their resumes. Finally, the presentation of the video in the school in which it was shot will be a unique, one-time art experience for a Houston audience that can never be replicated. While the video can be duplicated and screened again, the project will be forever bound in time and place and will only be fully experienced at this screening.

## **TIMELINE/ LOCATION**

I would like to work at and with students from the High School for the Visual and Performing Arts, but if that is not possible I will look into working with other local private or public high schools with theater arts programs. I have just finished another project and have not had time to secure the high school, but I am confident that I will find the right group and school with which to work.

- December: Secure high school. Casting Audio recordings. Script development.
- January: Shoot four hours a week. Digitize footage as we go.
- February: Edit video. Create and install promotional/ art objects for Core Exhibition. Press release.
- March: Test screening. Fine tune editing. Promote and organize screening.
- Early April: Final screening in high school auditorium.

## **VISUAL SUPPORT MATERIALS**

- DVD
- DIGITAL IMAGES

## **DVD MENU- VIDEOS BY KARA HEARN**

### **5 MINUTES**

The first two excerpts are from the 24 min 44 sec experimental narrative *THE TEMPORARY AND HEROIC TRANSCENDENCE OF ONE'S FATE* (2008). This video, like most of my work is more of an ambiguous emotional narrative than a plot-driven story. The primary actor, Mario Cuellar, an alter ego of sorts was asked to play me, the artist, in situations imagined and real within the context of my daily life. The first scene is of an awkward encounter. The second scene is the most dramatic moment of the video.

The last excerpt is from the 27 min 41 sec experimental narrative *ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER* (2007). This scene is the climax of the video, which I shot completely alone, playing all the parts. It is set in the spaces I was inhabiting at the time- apartment, studio, car- with only the most basic alterations made to create sets and costumes. All props were fashioned from what was immediately on hand.

### **THE TEMPORARY AND HEROIC TRANSCENDENCE OF ONE'S FATE**

2008, video, in its entirety, trt: 24 min 44 sec

This video presents a man acting out scenes- imagined and real within the context of the artist's life. This disruption of gender and identity is commingled with an examination of the various techniques one uses to grapple with and transcend mortality in the midst of ordinary life.

### **ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER**

2007, video, in its entirety, trt: 24 min 44 sec

This video takes a look at the way travesties large and small hang about; the way regret, grief, humiliation, and tension play themselves out after the fact, shifting in and out of consciousness, repeating endlessly, and being re-made along the way.

### **REINCARNATED SCENES**

2005-06, video

These reenactments are my effort to degrade and venerate the heroics of Hollywood movies. By utilizing the techniques of cinema in the simplest possible ways I hope to recreate narratives that are stripped of everything but the pathos inherent in the medium. I have included six of the thirty scenes I recreated.

*E. T.*, 1 minute 27 seconds, 2005

*Dog Day Afternoon*, 1 minute 27 seconds, 2006

*Fight Club*, 1 minute 45 seconds, 2006

*Grease 2*, 2 minutes 57 seconds, 2006

*Gladiator*, 2 minutes 14 seconds, 2005

*Star Wars episode III*, 2 minutes 30 seconds, 2005

**DIGITAL IMAGES**

All of these images are of my most recent exhibition/ installation at para/site gallery (at Project Row Houses)  
*HOW CAN THE LIGHT DENY THE DARK?*. The work was installed in two small rooms inside a row house.

“Hearn 1 title sheet”- Title sheet for the show as you walk in the door on the left.

AN INSTALLATION IN SEVEN PARTS:

1. photograph, framed
2. chimney hole, altered
3. audio recording of *The Invisible Man*, 16 hours
4. suitcase with rock on book
5. homemade tent, hanging, in which I read *The Invisible Man*
6. video, *The Temporary and Heroic Transcendence of One's Fate*, 25 min. 45 sec
7. tidal waves, tiny

“Hearn 2 photo”- 28” x 20” framed photograph of text written on wall “HOW CAN THE LIGHT DENY THE DARK?”

“Hearn 3 wall text”- Digital image of the same photograph.

“Hearn 4 chimney”- Black glitter alteration of chimney hole on site.

“Hearn 5 sofa”- Wide shot of sofa with briefcase. The 16-hour audio recording of me reading Ralph Ellison’s *The Invisible Man* is installed inside the couch so it is best heard when seated on the couch looking into the briefcase.

“Hearn 6 suitcase”- Detail of briefcase with a black glitter encrusted rock in a display case on a bed of black feathers, all resting on top of the book *The Invisible Man*.

“Hearn 7 tent”- The skin of the tent I made and in which I read and recorded myself reading *The Invisible Man*.

“Hearn 8 back tv”- The view of the monitor playing the video *The Temporary and Heroic Transcendence of One's Fate* as you enter the second room.

“Hearn 9 monitor”- The view of the same monitor from the front.

“Hearn 10 tidal”- Two 4” x 6” gouache painted digital prints of tidal waves from the movie *The Perfect Storm*.

**BUDGET**

For this production I would really like to pay the actors and a camera operator for their time. Although the rates below do not represent the industry standard I think they are fair for a production of this kind. I know it contributes to the participants' investment in the project to know that their time is of value and from the artist/director perspective it is easier to expect the most of people when they are being fairly and equally compensated for their time. Additionally, I am prepared to assume any expenses that I do not receive funding for.

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Artist Fees		
• 1 primary adult actor stipend	400.00	16 hours of production
• 5 primary youth actors stipends @ \$300 each	1,500.00	12 hours of production
• 15 youth extras @ \$100 each	1,500.00	10 hours of production
• 3 adults minor roles @ \$50 each	150.00	
• Camera operator stipend	400.00	16 hours of production
Equipment		
• Audio recorder		In-kind
• Camera, lights, shotgun mic and mount		In-kind
• Wireless microphone for main character	500.00	
• Boom pole and pistol grip	100.00	
• Still camera		Borrowed, in-kind
Promotional Materials/ Art objects		
• 7 digital prints of actor portraits	350.00	
• Frames	1,400.00	
• 3,000 postcards	250.00	
• Photocopied Flyers	15.00	
• Programs for Screening	40.00	
Miscellaneous		
• Screening technician	100.00	
• Digital video tapes (10)	50.00	
• Craft services	100.00	Snacks for cast/ crew
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,855.00</b>	

**BIOGRAPHY**

Kara Hearn is an interdisciplinary video artist. She makes quiet and absurd work about the way tragedies reside in the head; the way heroisms play out in the mind's eye, the inside place where stories get conjured, dreamed, remembered. Dithering between melodrama and deadpan, her videos end up degrading mainstream cinema by being too sincere, too simple, telling too many stories with very little stuff. Hearn's work has been screened and exhibited nationally and internationally at such venues as DiverseWorks, White Columns, The Luckman Gallery, Pacific Film Archive, New Langton Arts, Southern Exposure, the Walker Art Center, Dallas Video Festival, Women in the Directors Chair International Film and Video Festival, and the Festival Tous Courts International Festival of Cinema. She received an MFA from the University of California at Berkeley in 2007 and is currently in her second year as a Core Fellow at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. You can see her resume and more of her work at [karahearn.com](http://karahearn.com).

Kara Hearn  
1922 Hawthorne  
Houston, TX 77098

(510) 684-2671

[karahearn@earthlink.net](mailto:karahearn@earthlink.net)