

SOCIAL CHANGE @SDA



OVERVIEW

The USC School of Dramatic Arts (SDA), recognized internationally as a leader in dramatic arts education, is committed to utilizing the transformative power of theatre to generate positive social change. Building on the School's long-standing minor in "Applied Theatre Arts," the School's Institute for Theatre & Social Change (ITSC) enables students to apply their artistic training to non-traditional theatrical settings in the service of the public good. The Institute seeks to meet the needs of our complex culture by rigorously exploring how the practice of community-based theatre, including all platforms of artistic expression, can interrupt dominant power structures to create challenging social and civic dialogues and support the conditions for liberation, healing, and enhanced understanding. Ongoing collaborations with other arts schools and disciplines devoted to social change will invite interdisciplinary and intersectional conversations on campus and beyond. With these goals in mind, the ITSC is focused on the following key areas:

HEALING AND WELLNESS

The School's growing Medical Clowning Program teaches the art of medical clowning and integrates the practice into healthcare and community

settings. Through research, the program seeks to create a modality that can be utilized to improve patient healing and wellness and support hospital efficiency. Currently, the School provides approximately 100 hospital visits annually to the program's partner hospitals which include the Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center, the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, and the Children's Hospital Los Angeles. In the coming years, the program's goal is to provide over 300 hospital and community center visits annually, bringing vitality, imagination, and laughter to thousands of patients, families, and community members in need. This expansion will allow the program to make a broader impact, using medical clowning techniques to help children with disabilities, adults suffering from dementia, and foster children.

The School is also working with LAC+USC to offer a program titled "ACT Together." Creating theatricalized case consultations with medical staff, this program seeks to improve employee engagement and enhance dialogue around issues in clinical practice. Using the distinct power and expression of theatre help builds greater self-awareness in the workplace and stronger communication. Early data supports the efficacy of this type of interactive theatre in the medical setting.



Select Giving Opportunities:

ANNUAL

Funds one clown's work in a hospital once a week for a semester \$2,500

Sponsors one social change workshop \$5,000

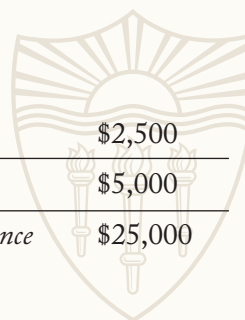
Lead sponsor for Institute for Theatre & Social Change Conference \$25,000

ENDOWMENT

Funds one social change workshop annually in perpetuity \$100,000

Names and fully endows the Medical Clowning program \$3 Million

Names and fully endows the Institute for Theatre & Social Change \$5 Million



ADDRESSING SOCIAL JUSTICE OBSTACLES IN OUR COMMUNITY

Theatre and civic life have a long history of working together to solve urgent and vital issues facing our cultures. For decades, the School has worked internationally to help with communities in need, whether to create theatre pieces around the horrific genocide in Rwanda or working locally to counter gang profiling.

Currently the School is working with powerful groups including Black Lives Matter Los Angeles (BLM LA) and Dignity and Power Now (DPN), on jail reform and civilian oversight of the incarceration and justice system in Los Angeles. We have built a collaborative class with the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy on the issue of Restorative Justice. Our MFA Dramatic Writing program, in conjunction with ITSC, is hosting playwrighting workshops with the Inside/Out Writer's Workshop in affiliation with the Actors' Gang Prison Project, allowing prisoners to work with playwrights to construct creative and cathartic dramatic narratives about their personal stories. We are also partnering with USC Roski School of Art & Design to produce an event on racism in America called *Black Men in America (A Question Bridge)*.

In partnership with the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles, the ITSC is also working with homelessness and immigrant organizations, to produce 20-minute interactive theatre pieces on the theme "Los Angeles: Coming Home." These pieces explore the powerful trials and tribulations of each

of these communities' history with Los Angeles as their "home." Once complete, these pieces will be shared at the museum with an interactive audience experience with a goal of developing pathways toward progress for the homeless community. In the future, we also be working with the museum to develop school tour "cultural identity theatre pieces" to support other communities struggling with Los Angeles as "home." Through these interactive youth theatre pieces, we seek to further explore avenues towards improvement and empowerment.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Each year the ITSC hosts a conference with international practitioners and scholars in the field. The conference supports the School's interest in generating ongoing critical cultural dialogue between artists, academics, healers, activists, and community organizers from a wide range of practices and perspectives to understand how theatre, as a tool for social change, can better attain this goal. Over 1,000 people participated in the inaugural ITSC conference which spurred important dialogue around issues of race, marginalization, power, and the oppressive nature of dominant false narratives. Through the conference events, attendees were able to grapple with issues of identity and to explore what changes are necessary to engage artists more directly in combating and confronting deceptive media, social media, and popular culture ideas about people of color in particular, and people at the margins of power in general. We expect the 2019 conference, "Mis/taken Identities" to attract an even larger group of participants.