

A PROPOSAL TO THE OHIO UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COUNCIL

TITLE OF PROJECT: AN ACT

NAME OF APPLICANT: RAFAL SOKOLOWSKI

STATUS: Asst. Prof. Assoc. Prof. Prof. Administrator

DEPARTMENT: FILM DIVISION - SCHOOL OF DANCE, FILM, AND THEATRE

CAMPUS ADDRESS: 31 SOUTH COURT ST. ROOM 007 ATHENS, OH 45701

E-MAIL ADDRESS: sokolowr@ohio.edu

RE-SUBMISSION: YES (Original Submission Date _____)

NO

BUDGET: Total Request

8000. 00

(May not exceed \$8,000)

IRB AND IACUC APPROVAL:

To ensure that the University is in compliance with all federal regulations, complete the checklist below. Note: your proposal can be approved prior to IRB or IACUC approval, but funding will be withheld until notification of approval or exemption.

Yes	No	Office of Research Compliance	Policy #
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Human Subjects in Research (including surveys, interviews, educational interventions): Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval #: Expiration Date:	19.052
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Animal Species: Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC) Approval #: Expiration Date:	19.049

SIGNATURES:

Applicant's Signature		Chair/Director's Signature	
Signature	<u>Rafal Sokolowski</u>	Signature	<u>Maddie Scott</u>
Name	RAFAL SOKOLOWSKI	Name	STEVEN ROSS MADELEINE SCOTT
Dept/School	FILM DIVISION	Unit	FILM DIVISION SCHOOL OF DANCE, FILM, And Theater
Date	Jan 29, 2015	Date	Jan 29, 2015
Dean's Signature			
Name	<u>Jody Lamb</u>	Signature	<u>Jody Lamb</u>
College	College of Fine Arts	Date	1-29-15

Optional:

If selected for funding, I give permission to the Office of the Vice President for Research and Creative Activity to use my proposal as an example during training and workshop exercises.

Signature: Rafal Sokolowski Date: Jan 29, 2015

Ohio University Research Council Proposal Checklist

Applicants must complete and sign the checklist. The checklist should be included as the second page of the application (following the cover page).

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cover Page	use OURC form
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Checklist	use OURC form
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abstract*	1 double-spaced page
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduction (<i>for resubmissions only</i>)*	1 double-spaced page
<input type="checkbox"/> New Project Description (<i>for established applicants only</i>)†*	1 double-spaced page
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion	10 double-spaced pages
<input type="checkbox"/> Glossary/Definition of Terms* (<i>not required</i>)	2 double-spaced pages
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bibliography (<i>not required</i>)	3 pages
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biographical information (<i>applicant(s) and key personnel</i>)	3 pages per person
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Support (<i>applicant(s) and key personnel</i>)	1 page per person
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Budget and Justification	no limit specified
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appended Materials	10 pages; no more than 10 minutes of footage
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommended Reviewers	5 required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronic copy of proposal	Single Acrobat file, containing entire proposal and required signatures

* These sections should be written in language understandable by an informed layperson to assist the committee in its review. Established applicants (†) are faculty members who have tenure **and** have been at the university at least three years or administrators who have been at the university at least five years.

****Please note: The committee has the right to return without review any proposals that do not conform to these format requirements.****

Applicant signature: S. Woldow.



3. Abstract

An Act is a feature length narrative film exploring the aftermath of unsubstantiated accusations of sexual harassment that damaged a career of a young student actor. I intend to use the award for selected direct costs of the production. The fictionalized story is inspired by real life's events that tore apart an idealistic theatre community and broke the dreams and lives of those involved. The real persons in the incident will work with me closely to help capture the nuances and complexities of the issues surrounding it. I will be utilizing the neo-neo realist model in my writing and directing the film to deliver an authentic portrayal of the characters and events. Stylistically, the film will blend narrative fiction and documentary. I've already received the CoFA Creative Research Award (October 2014) for the purpose of conducting personal interviews with the main subjects as part of my screenwriting process. I have assembled a crew of talented and committed artists and professionals, with whom I have worked in the past making my previous films. I intend to utilize my past experience and all resources available to deliver this story to the screen with the impact it deserves. It is a vital social commentary and a key project in my career.

The world of professional acting engages in a constant pursuit of the thrilling illusion of reality in performance. The sexually explicit stories lure the actors to take great risks and often stretch the boundaries protecting their personal intimacy. There have been stories exploring false accusations of sexual misconduct arising from numerous fields of work, but never one set within the industry that invites its players to appear real while performing sexually explicit content. How do they prepare for this job and how do they work with each other to ensure personal safety? What is their line of defense if their apparently ‘real’ actions are mistaken for a foul play? This story does not judge moral standards of actors. It observes and comments on their work environment and its failure to protect them while at work. In doing so, it reveals a larger social problem within the system. It is most apparent in places where young professionals are most eager to be good and therefore willing to take greatest risks, and become most vulnerable. It is the more upsetting that in those places there seems to be a serious lack of clear policies that would ensure a safe environment for their acting exploration. As a result, those who dare to take risks pay the price.

This story aims to illuminate the murky and neglected subject matter of sexual misconduct. It is my hope to deflate the taboo that surrounds and suffocates the real issue and disallows for a constructive dialog to emerge. In making this film I continue my artistic mission to address socially imperative concerns that are often marginalized and deem difficult to depict. *An Act* is an attempt to capture and bring to the screen its dark heart. I am a new faculty at the College of Fine Arts and this project is my feature film debut. It is a milestone in my artistic and professional career as a filmmaker, and a key to my scholarly journey at the University.

4. Discussion and Methodology

Aims and Production

I intend to shoot and produce the film in Toronto, on locations of the University of York where the real events unfolded. There are several advantages of filming at York. I will be able to access the authentic setting for the story and easily obtain the necessary permits to work on and around the York campus. The respective departments of Film and Theatre offer a film friendly environment, and provide abundance of young talent and access to equipment, and production resources. I intend to hire the additional crewmembers, actors, and extras, from the respective Film and Theatre departments. Toronto, being well accustomed to filming, offers easy and

relatively inexpensive access to absolutely all needs for any set, ranging from mega production to a low budget independent film such as this project. This will allow me to provide my set with the necessary film equipment, but also to organize a comfortable set supported by the necessary production vehicles, tents, chairs and tables for feeding the crew and talent, catering services, and most importantly ensuring the safety of all involved. Toronto is also my home base, where I have developed an extensive professional network. I will rely heavily on the help of my professional contacts to organize the production. The most important advantage of working in Toronto is that I will be able to assemble my original core crew, with whom I have collaborated numerous working on my films in the past. Their presence will speed up significantly the preparation process and create a familiar, professional, efficient, and confident set. Through our past experience of working together we've developed a mutual trust. I have full confidence in the quality and safety of their work, while they share the same trust towards my methods and my role as their leader and director. This well earned trust is instrumental for the overall execution of the film. It will inspire everyone on set, and allow me to take greater artistic risks. My goal is to utilize our existing professional bond to transform the story on page into a truly great cinematic experience.

I plan to film on RED ONE camera and complete the production in Winter of 2015. To achieve the ‘documentary feel’ of the picture I will employ various techniques through hand held camera operating, minimal to natural lighting, and vigorous or spontaneous camera motion achieved through fast shutter speeds. I will be using 35 mm format lenses to create a lower depth of field than is typically seen in modern documentaries to achieve the style of Cinéma vérité. In keeping with the documentary feeling I will be using a very minimal grip and lighting package. In the daytime scenes I will work with natural light. I will only manipulate this light through diffusion and bouncing. Shooting on RED offers another distinct advantage, a relatively quick workflow on set, favoring time for directing actors and perfecting the performance. I have previously shot three films on RED and intend to fully utilize my experience of working with this equipment to optimize the actual shooting time within the daily schedule. Please, refer to the Appended Materials 1: Examples of Previous Work to see my work with RED and the image quality that resulted.

The Story Outline

The story as it occurred in real life begins in Romania, where Costa, an ambitious young actor learns about an exciting opportunity to study acting abroad. It is just after a brutal change of regime – everyone still remembers the publicly televised execution of Nicolae Ceausescu. Costa decides to take a chance on the new life. He and his wife Ana, and their newly born son Maxim, leave Romania behind and travel to Toronto, where he is about to begin his Master's Degree at a renowned theatre program.

His talent is quickly recognized and he becomes a protégé at the school. For his final exam he is paired with a young actress, Natalie, they are to present an emotionally and physically challenging scene. The rehearsals are going well and both are hopeful to make a good impression. Their trust at work grows and so does their friendship. They become increasingly closer, but when things begin to affect the work, Costa decides to put an end to the intimate side of their relationship.

On the day of the exam Natalie is nowhere to be found, while Costa is called to the Director's office. He is informed that Natalie has laid formal accusations of sexual harassment against him. He is stunned. He tries to reach out to her, but his plea for a meeting is denied. Meanwhile the story leaks out and Costa becomes estranged by his colleagues and other professors. He reaches out for help at the school, but doors seem to be closing.

During the university's internal trial Costa faces a committee made of professors from physics, biochemistry, and political science. His own supervisor denies him the character reference. Costa is also denied legal representation and is left to his own defense. He argues: "the scene prescribed physical contact, which we've discussed and agreed upon prior the rehearsals". There are no witnesses and it comes down to Natalie's word against his. His genuine answer to the question "did you touch her?" tips the scale and Costa is suspended from the school till further notice. The Director of the Program discourages him to seek appeal: "...it would be best if you took the time off." Costa can't shake off the image of Natalie crying during the recounting of the events. "What did she think really happen in that rehearsal?"

Costa decides not to share the news at home, but it doesn't take Ana long to figure out that

something is wrong. He takes legal action against the university, but is ‘encouraged’ by the Director and other professors to drop the case. The emotional stress brings more confusion and Costa begins to doubt what really happened. His emotional swing confuses Ana even more: “Why does he feel guilty?” In the heat of the argument she leaves with Maxim.

Costa’s dream of his explosive career is put on hold. Left alone, he plunges into depression and begins to believe in his own guilt. He becomes obsessed to see Natalie. Ignoring the restraining order he breaks into her apartment. Natalie’s father protects her and calls the police. Costa is arrested.

Ana, who picks him up in the morning announces that she is going to stay with Maxim at her aunt indefinitely. Costa breaks down and confesses to Ana that he’s been having an affair with Natalie, but that they never slept together, and that he did not ‘abuse’ her. The following day Ana intercepts Natalie: “I need to know what happened.” Natalie tries to avoid the confrontation, but when provoked she recounts Costa’s violent attack. In that instant Ana knows she’s lying. Feeling caught, Natalie caves in and walks away.

Next afternoon Ana shows up with Maxim at the apartment and tells Costa that she’s borrowed money from her aunt and wants to buy tickets for the three of them, and fly home. Costa agrees. They are currently living in Bucharest, where despite receiving several offers Costa is unable to return to acting.

Creative Aim and Process

In making this film I intend to push the boundaries of neo-neo realist film practice and hire the real Costa to play his fictional self in the film. My process aims to weave his real intimate experiences into the fictional plot, and by doing so to distill and focus the narrative chronicle, as well as to enhance the dramatic structure of the story. Costa is an excellent actor, and he is very eager to portray the fictional character based on his own life. He wants to work with me closely on writing the script and share his perspective. He shares my passion for telling this story.

Traditionally the writer-director has full autonomy shaping the fictional narrative, while the actor interprets his role already prescribed before hand. I want to challenge and reverse this hierarchy

and to work with Costa as the source for the writing. In trading my exclusive control of the process I gain an organic and powerful source of inspiration for the story. His real emotional memories will undoubtedly surpass any artificial rehearsal process and enrich Costa's performance. It will in turn influence my own work as the director and the writer. We both are aware of the emotional challenges of this process, and both are very excited to begin working.

Significance & Contribution

This project is very important to me on a personal level. I am passionate about the story, while the film is my feature debut and a gateway to a new level in my professional career. It contributes to a newly developing and exciting cinematic practice recently coined by the New York Times critic, A.O. Scott, as the Neo-Neo Realism. The neo-neo realist cinema is spreading wings fast and firm around the world. It finds home at many prominent festivals and impacts the international audiences and critics alike with its powerful stories. TIFF, Cannes, Venice, Berlin, and Sundance are slowly embracing these typically low budget films with a huge appetite for merciless social critique. I am eager to contribute my work to this growing culture and a new way of thinking about film. I do this by pointing my lens at a subject that is scarcely welcomed on the silver screen simply because it confronts the viewer with an unpleasant reality. *An Act* delivers a thought provoking and controversial narrative in place of cinematic gimmicks and 'feel good' story line. It may not offer the routine escape from reality. Instead, it offers the neo escape from escapism that seems to populate the theatres. I believe strongly in the transformative function of neo realist cinema. My choice of the discriminated subject matter, and my approach to making this film, strive to contribute to this exciting and fast growing field.

The film aims to deconstruct a malignant social taboo, which paralyzes our ability to reflect on cases of sexual misconduct effectively. I feel strongly that all cases of sexual harassment deserve attention, especially those that arise from the industry that encourages its players to challenge rules of intimacy at work. The inherent imbalance of power between actors and directors, and their executive producers tolerates professional standards that at times are highly questionable. It is clear that those who are abused in the process deserve to be protected. The question remains: are we equipped with effective tools and methods to allow us a fair and objective judgment of such cases? And, do those who may be innocent deserve to be punished simply because of the emotional pressures and taboos surrounding the act itself? This is particularly crucial in cases

arising from acting schools where relatively young and often inexperienced actors work on challenging material and have to negotiate the territory by themselves. There are huge pressures exerted on them to be good and take risks, but very little support to catch them when they fall in the process. At the heart of this story is a sad contradiction between what is encouraged and expected from the students and what is offered in terms of support by the system.

Previous Creative Activity

Since 2004, I have written, directed, and produced nine short films. They have been selected and screened as the official selection at many prominent festivals around the world. My work is supported by the National Film Board of Canada, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the BravoFACT; I am a recipient of several production grants and awards. I have been teaching screenwriting, directing, acting, and production to students in Canada and Europe for over a decade, and continue to closely link my professional career with my pedagogical journey.

In writing and directing my last film *Seventh Day* I began experimenting with the neo-neo realist storytelling. I worked with a screenwriter Tudor Voican, whose sensibility fits well with the Romanian New Wave, which is an outburst of neo-neo realist cinema in that part of the world. Tudor's neo-practice received international recognition and grabbed numerous awards including '*Un Certain Regard Award*' at the Festival De Cannes in 2007 for his film *California Dreaming*. Our collaboration produced a film that enjoyed great festival journey and won Best Short Film Award at Toronto's EKRAN in 2012. The work I undertake with *An Act* is strongly influenced by my close collaboration with Tudor. Stylistically it resembles a documentary filmmaking, but has a strong dramatic structure. Making this film I intend to develop the style much further.

All my films are firmly rooted in reality. I spend a lot of time in my process researching the respective worlds I portray on screen. I aim for their accurate representation. In preparing my film debut *Lightchasers* (2006) I have worked very closely with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind to develop a realistic representation of the character suffering from vision impairment. While writing *Three Mothers* (2011) I have worked extensively with Vince Rice at West Park Healthcare Centre, Steve Abdool - Centre for Clinical Ethics, St. Michael's Hospital & University of Toronto, Pamela Richardson – Humber Institute of Technology & Advanced

Learning, Dina McGovern – St. Michael’s Hospital, Pat Convery – Adoption Council of Ontario, Raquel Petinati-Forler - Mount Sinai Hospital, as well as Julie Saccone and Catherine Moravac from St. Michael's Hospital. I took great pride in the fact that these renowned experts came out from watching the film satisfied with my rendition of their respective worlds.

I intend to subject *An Act* to the same level of scrutiny, and research its foundations scrupulously. I intend to visit York University and speak directly with people who were involved with this case, as well as with people who wrote the policies guiding cases of sexual harassment at the university. I want to understand the underlying principles and assumptions that surround them and get a solid sense of the methods and protocols in dealing with them. This film is my way to contribute to the already existing discourse.

My direct methods of working with actors stem from my own work as an actor and theatre director. I've acquired my craft and hands-on experience from over a decade of working with actors. It is of great value for my filmmaking. You may see examples of my work with actors in the Appended Materials.

Dissemination

My up to date work has been successfully received around the world and I followed the films on their respective journeys through the festival circuit. I met with my audiences and the inviting artistic directors, and programmers. I participated in the festivals' social networking events, workshops, pitches, industry panels, markets, and screenings, and in doing so I created a great network of industry professional friends. They all support and anticipate the release of *An Act*.

As soon as the film is completed, I will begin the submission process, starting with Toronto International Film Festival. I consider TIFF my ‘home’ festival, where I have developed a good report with the festival’s programmers, who all know my work well. In Toronto I am also able to work with a professional publicist to generate significant press buzz and a word of mouth to help promote the World Premiere of the film. It is also one of the biggest festivals in the world attended by many international programmers and distributors. As such, it is a strong launching platform for the film’s future festival course. Following the premiere at TIFF, I anticipate other venues to follow the suit and invite *An Act* into their programs. At the end of the first year of

high profile submissions, I will follow with submissions to smaller festivals, intending to reach the large local audiences and broadening the community of fans before the commercial release.

After the film's successful festival run, I intend to use the potential press and critical recognition to engage with the distributors. I will be seeking a favorable distribution deal that would place the film in the theatres in major North American cities, giving it a chance to run longer and build its audiences. As part of the distribution deal I will seek exhibition through the main channels including iTunes, Netflix, and Amazon, as well as future international distribution to markets in Europe and Asia to follow the North American run.

An Act is a continuation of my artistic practice that strives for excellence. I expect the film will surpass the success of my past work. I am excited and absolutely determined to complete the project and deliver it to broad audiences around the world. It is a key to my professional and artistic growth.

8. Bibliography

Texts:

A.O. Scott, “Neo Neo Realism”, *The New York Sunday Times Magazine*, 3-22-9

Amnon Buchbinder, “The Way of the Screenwriter”. Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc., 2005

Robert Joseph Lyons, Michelangelo Antonioni's Neo-Realism: A World View (New York : Arno Press, 1976)

David Forgacs, Sarah Lutton, and Geoffrey Nowell, eds., Roberto Rossellini: Magician of the Real (London: British Film Institute, 2000)

Millicent Marcus, Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism (Princeton: Princeton Univ Press, 1987)

Caroline Bainbridge, The Cinema of Lars von Trier : Authenticity and Artifice (London -New York: Wallflower Press, 2007)

Stig Bjorkman (Author), Neil Smith (Translator), *Trier on von Trier* (London: Berghahnbooks, 2009)

Amy Raphael & Mike Leigh, *Leigh on Mike Leigh*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2008)

André Bazin, edited by Bert Cardullo, André Bazin and Italian Neorealism (New York: Continuum Publishing Corporation, 2011)

Catherine Wheatley, Michael Haneke's Cinema: The Ethic of the Image, (London: Berghahnbooks, 2009)

Dardenne, Jean-Pierre and Luc, Committed cinema : the films of Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne : essays and interviews (New York : Berghahn Books, 2009)

Judith Mayne, Claire Denis, (English Published: Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005)

Bert Cardullo, Loach and Leigh: the Cinema of Social Conscience, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2010)

Jean-Pierre Rehm, Olivier Joyard, Daniele Rivière, Tsai Ming-liang (London: Hardcastle, 2001)

Relevant Films (Subject Matter/Content):

Vinterberg, Thomas (Director). (2012) The Hunt (original title: Jugten), Denmark: Det Danske Filminstitut, Euroimages, and Zentropa International.

Haneke, Michael (Director) (2005) Hidden (original title: Cache), France:

Relevant Films (Style/Methods):

Coppola, S. (Director). (2010). Somewhere. United States.

Mungiu, Cristian (Director) (2007) 4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days. Romania.

Dardennes, J.L., P. (Directors). (2011) The Kid with the Bike, Belgium.

Dardennes, J.L., P. (Directors) (2008) Lorna's Silence, Belgium.

Dardennes, J.L., P. (Directors) (2005) L'enfant, Belgium.

Dardennes, J.L., P. (Directors) (2002) The Son, Belgium.

Hammer, L. (Director) (2008) Ballast, USA.

Liang, Tsai-Ming (Director) (2006) I Don't Want to Sleep Alone, Taiwan.

Bahrani, Ramin (Director) (2009) Goodbye Solo, United States.

Akerman, Chantal (Director) (1976) Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles, Belgium.

Baumbach, Noah (Director) (2005) The Squid and the Whale, USA.

Haneke, Michael (Director) (2000) Code Unknown, France.

Arnolds, Andrea (Director) (2009) Fish Tank, UK: BBC Films, UK Film Council

Arnolds, Andrea (Director) (2003) Wasp, UK: BBC Films, UK Film Council

9. Biographical Information

Rafal Sokolowski, MFA

Assistant Professor of Film (August, 2014 – Present)

Ohio University, College of Fine Arts,

Film Division - the School of Dance, Film, and Theater

History of Public Screenings - Official Selections only:

27th WARSAW INTERNATIONAL F.F / CFC WORLDWIDE SHORT FILM FESTIVAL / REELWORLD FILM FESTIVAL / 48th KRAKOW FILM FESTIVAL / 11th INTERNATIONAL LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL / 36th MONTREAL FESTIVAL DU NOUVEAU CINEMA / MANLLEU FILM FESTIVAL – BARCELONA / INTERNATIONAL VILNIUS FILM FESTIVAL / WINNIPEG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL / CINEFIESTA – SAN JUAN INTERNATIONAL / 28th ATLANTIC FILM FESTIVAL / OURENSE FILM FESTIVAL / SEDICICORTO – FORLI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL / MICRO CINE – TORONTO / SILVER WAVE INTERNATIONAL / VICTORIA FILM FESTIVAL / SOPOT FILM FESTIVAL / EKRAN – TORONTO POLISH F.F. / BOLZANO SHORT F.F

Education:

Master of Fine Arts: Film Production, York University (2011)

Masters Thesis nominated for the York University Prize: “Seventh Day”

Certificate of Graduation: Acting Program - The National Theatre School of Canada (2000);

Program Director: Perry Schneiderman.

Apprentice at the National Theatre Academy of Krakow - Faculty of Play Directing (2001);

Supervisor: Prof. Krystian Lupa, Theatre Stary, Krakow.

Other Academic Positions:

Adjunct Professor of Film, York University, BFA Film and Video Production Program (2010 – 2014)

Adjunct Professor of Theatre, University of Ryerson Theatre School (2006 – 2014)

Visiting Instructor of Film, The National Theatre School of Canada (2006 – 2012

Filmography:

2011 SEVENTH DAY (RED/24min) Blind Dog Films/ACTRA

Winner: Best Short Film, EKRAN, Toronto 2012

Credit: Writer/Director

Marian and Vasile are strangers who share a common dream to bring their loved ones to Canada. To beat prohibitive rents they work their taxicab 24/7 – when one is driving the other sleeps in the trunk. Time turns them into brothers, but the sudden disappearance of their savings challenges the very heart of their ‘brotherhood’.

2011 SHIFTERS (RED/6min) BravoFACT!/NFB/BDF

Credit: Writer/Director

A tragic - comedic meditation on displacement that provides a hilarious perspective on process of immigration, and the idea of changing one life for another.

2010 THREE MOTHERS (RED/16min) NFB/Ontario Arts Council/ACTRA/BDF

Credit: Writer Director

A dramatic triptych: Three very different women caught in three unique situations grapple with life altering decisions. They are each driven to extreme neither would think possible.

2009 BENEATH US (HD/7min) York University/ACTRA/BDF

Credit: Writer/Director

The film is a meditation on a fictional war in Toronto’s subway system. A schoolgirl begging for food approaches a military checkpoint and befriends a young soldier – neither can anticipate the outcome of their meeting once they find themselves behind the enemy’s line.

2007 LIGHTCHASERS (35mm/15min) Canada/Ontario Council for the Arts/ACTRA/BDF

Credit: Writer/Director

Three strangers are about to converge in an accident at an empty crossroad that will change their destinies forever. This is a visually breathtaking journey towards their awakening in life.

2008/10 MONTREAL STORIES (Video/Part 1, 2, 3) National Theatre School of Canada/BDF
Credit: Co-writer/Co-director/Mentor

A series of original vignettes commenting on the life in Montreal as experienced by the English speaking Canadian students experiencing the city for the first time.

2008 IRAQI WOMEN (HD/22 min) Wexford Collegiate

Credit: Director/Director of Photography

Enactment of a moving testimony from the survivors of Saddam Hussein's former Royal Palace that housed torture chambers; based on excerpts from a docudrama play by Judith Thompson.

2005 ANEYE (Video Installation/7min) Blind Dog Films

Credit: Writer/Director/Director of Photography

An existential fable about life reduced to a serial number inside a cubic cell.

2004 PRIMA APRILUS (Experimental/5min) Blind Dog Films

Credit: Writer/Director

A random meeting brings together two people who are equally lost in life.

10. Other Support

A – Previous University Funding: CoFA Creative Research Award (October 2014).

B – External Funding: This is my first time applying for the OURC Award. I have successfully funded several film productions in the past receiving numerous creation, production, and completion grants and awards. Below is the history of my external proposals.

Sponsor	Project	Date	Amount	Outcome
National Film Board of Canada	<i>Seventh Day</i> - Production	Sept. 2010	4,000.00	Production and Completion of the film; Official Selection at several prominent international film festivals around the world; Winner of the Best Short Film Award at EKRA 2012.
Bravo!FACT	<i>Seventh Day</i> - Production	Oct. 2010	10,000.00	
William F. White's Grant	<i>Seventh Day</i> - Equipment	Oct. 2010	5,000.00	

York's Fieldwork Cost Award	<i>Seventh Day</i>	Sept. 2010	3,000.00	I have travelled to Prague where I collaborated with the orchestra to develop and record the music score for the film.
Ontario Arts Council	<i>Three Mothers - Production</i>	Apr. 2008	30,000.00	Production and Completion of the film; Official Selection at several prominent international film festivals around the world.
National Film Board of Canada	<i>Three Mothers - Completion</i>	May 2008	4000.00	
Canada Council for the Arts	<i>Three Mothers – Travel Award</i>	Oct. 2011	1500.00	I have traveled to Warsaw to attend the 27 th International Film Festival – film's world premiere.
Canada Council for the Arts	<i>Lightchasers - Production</i>	Oct. 2006	16,000.00	Production and completion, and exhibition of the film – Several International Film Festivals; I have attended 16 of them.
Ontario Arts Council	<i>Lightchasers - Production</i>	Oct. 2006	34,000.00	
Ontario Arts Council	<i>Lightchasers - Completion</i>	Oct. 2006	16,500.00	

11. Budget and Justification

The total production costs required to produce this feature film exceed the maximum amount allocated for the Ohio University Research Council Award. For the purpose of this proposal I present the committee with two columns: Total Production Costs (Column B) and the OURC Budget (Column C) that outlines the selected production expenses that will be covered specifically by this award.

The production is schedule to film in Toronto over 20 consecutive days. The costs of renting the equipment, production vehicles, securing the permits and locations, as well as the compensation for the crew and talent, reflects the payment for the total number of days working on the production, and in some cases includes the preparation and preproduction time.

The rates presented in this budget reflect an independent production model, where some services will be donated, or performed based on reduced rates. It is due to my established relationship with the crew and talent, and with the rental places, I am able to secure the resources based on those reduced rates.

A flat fee payment is allocated for the key personnel (Producer, Production Manager, Director of Photography, and 1stAD), whose work will include the production period, but will be based on the overall completion of their task and may begin as early as six months prior to the production, and end four months after completion of the principle photography.

Currently, one year before the beginning of the production, I have raised \$ 10,000.00 from my Start Up Funding and \$ 4,000 from the CoFA Creative Research Project Award. I have secured \$12,000 in private funding and \$1000 received as a cash prize for winning the Best Short Film Award. The OURC award is a crucial contribution to the total production budget and a key to making the film.

As you can see from the Projected Revenues (Column B), I intend to apply to several external sources to help me finance the production. Over the years of making films in Canada I have developed a long relationship with the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council. Both Councils know my work well, and have supported all of my films in the past. I have received from them several production and completion grants and always was able to complete the film and provide a detail fiscal report. For that reason, I anticipate the Councils will continue their support and contribute financially to making *An Act*.

The Ohio University Research Council, the Canadian Arts Councils, and the National Film Board of Canada are the main supporters of the work I propose. I am very proud to be combining international resources in making this film.

Justification: OURC Budget (Column C)

Filming in Toronto is both an artistic choice and a financial solution. The costs of my travel and living expenses there will be absorbed by the savings coming from: free locations at the university, friendly rates for the crew and talent, access to some university equipment and

production resources, and voluntary crew and talent. The over all production time saved by working with my own crew, producers, and designers, is the most significant contributor to the savings.

As you can see from the column C, the OURC Award is intended to strategically cover portions of the selected production costs. Being able to cover parts of these expenses will allow me to secure the key production personnel. It will allow me to get a head start with the schedule.

The selected expenses include the partial costs of the Director of Photography and his 1st Assistant to the Camera. Both of these roles are highly on demand, especially during the summer. Having partial resources allows me to schedule them both and commit them to the production dates. This also ensures that their immediate team of camera assistants, grips, and gaffers will also be committed to the production dates solving my crewing problem in the summer. Similar advantages fall out from hiring in advance the Sound Recordist and the Production Designer. The initial funding for my 1stAD will allow me to begin working with him planning and scheduling the production well in advance offering obvious advantages. I have been very practical in prioritizing the rental and equipment resources for this budget. The absolutely instrumental hard costs without which the production can not begin are the renting of the equipment (the partial money will allow me to place a booking and to negotiate a potential reduced equipment list), the rental of the production track to carry and store the equipment, and the location support and the food to accommodate and feed everybody working on set over the course of 20 days. In addition I've prioritized the costs for costumes, props, and hair and make up, which if needs to will become the basic production design, absolutely necessary for filming. In doing so, I ensure that I will be able to initiate the production and have an option of scaling it down to absolute minimum and thus allowing me to preserve its course at all cost.

Please, find the Budget Summery on the next page.

AN ACT - Feature Film

BUDGET SUMMARY OF TOTAL PRODUCTION COSTS

EXPENSES

PRODUCTION

Cast and Background Performers

Leads (1 Actor: work on script and acting)

Principle Actors (2 Actors)

Supporting Actors (4 Actors)

Extras

CFTPA fees

Toronto ACTRA fees

Rehearsal space

Production Crew

Writer/Director (Rafal Sokolowski - work donated)

Producer (flat fee for the contracted period of 6 months)

Production Manager

DOP (Cabot McNenly - confirmed)

1st AC

2ndAC

1st AD

Sound Recordist

DOT

Art Direction

Key Grip

Key Gaffer

PA's (2 persons)

Costume Designer

Hair and Make Up

Production Equipment and Materials

Camera Rental (Package + Lenses - Donated by OU Film

Motorhome rental (2-4 days)

William F. Whites (Lighting and Grip Equipment)

Production Services

Absolute Location Support

Location Fees

Craft and Catering

Travel

Rental of the equipment truck incl. insurance

Gas (total production vehicles)

Production materials

Props and set (including rental and materials)

Hair and Make up

Costumes

TOTAL PRODUCTION COSTS	COSTS TO BE COVERED BY OURC AWARD
\$ 5,000.00	
\$ 4,000.00	
\$ 4,000.00	
\$ 3,000.00	
\$ 600.00	
\$ 1,200.00	
\$ 500.00	
-	
\$ 7,500.00	
\$ 3,800.00	
\$ 8,000.00	\$1,000.00
\$ 4,000.00	\$500.00
\$ 3,000.00	
\$ 5,000.00	\$500.00
\$ 4,000.00	\$500.00
\$ 3,000.00	
\$ 4,000.00	\$500.00
\$ 4,000.00	
\$ 4,000.00	
\$ 3,000.00	
\$ 2,500.00	\$350.00
\$ 2,500.00	\$350.00
-	
\$ 1,200.00	
\$ 7,000.00	\$1,500.00
\$ 3,500.00	\$500.00
\$ 2,900.00	
\$ 7,400.00	\$700.00
\$ 4,800.00	\$600.00
\$ 2,500.00	\$500.00
\$ 4,000.00	\$500.00
\$ 600.00	
\$ 1,200.00	
\$ 111,700.00	\$8,000.00

POST PRODUCTION

Post Production Personnel

Editor (Jordan Krug - confirmed)

Offline Fine Cut

Online Final Cut

Sound Edit (Andrew Minett - confirmed)

Composer and Music Recording (Ivo Paunov - confirmed)

\$ 5,000.00	
\$ 2,000.00	
\$ 4,500.00	
\$ 3,800.00	

Notch (Collor Correction and Transfer - confirmed)
 Sound Mix (Urban Post - confirmed)
 Packaging and Prints (Urban Post - confirmed)

Post-Production subtotal

Promotional Materials
 Promotional Design
 DVD and Tape stock
 Publicist
 Festival Submission Fees and Delivery costs

Promotion Total

Contingency 6% of Total Projected Expenses

TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENSES

\$ 3,700.00	
\$ 3,900.00	
\$ 2,200.00	
\$ 25,100.00	
\$ 1,400.00	
\$ 1,200.00	
\$ 900.00	
\$ 1,500.00	
\$ 2,100.00	
\$ 7,100.00	
\$ 9,000.00	
152,900.00	\$8,000.00

PROJECTED REVENUES

Canada Council for the Arts - pending
 Ontario Arts Council - pending
 National Film Board of Canada - pending
 Toronto Arts Council - pending
 OURC Award - pending
 OU CoFA Start Up Funding - confirmed
 Best Short Film Award - confirmed
 Fundraiser - in process
 Private Donation: Elmar Busch - confirmed
 Private Donation: Teresa Sokolowski - confirmed

TOTAL PROJECTED REVENUES

\$ 46,000.00	
\$ 34,000.00	
\$ 25,000.00	
\$ 10,000.00	
\$ 8,000.00	\$8,000.00
\$ 10,000.00	
\$ 1,000.00	
\$ 5,000.00	
\$ 8,000.00	
\$ 6,000.00	
153,000.00	\$8,000.00

12. Appended Materials

This section includes:

1. Examples of the applicant's previous work.
 2. CoFA Creative Research Award – confirmation letter
1. Examples of applicant's previous work:

Title: *Seventh Day*
Applicant's Credit: Writer/Director/Producer
Year of Production: 2011
Medium: Digital (RED Camera)
Running Time: 24 min
Link: <https://vimeo.com/m/77793269>
(Password: 1101)

Seventh Day is a tragic - comedic meditation on displacement. The film zooms in on the brink of new lives for two immigrants freshly arrived from Eastern Europe pursuing a better life. It is a hilarious taxi ride that puts perspective on emigration and the idea of changing one life for another.

* As per the guidelines, the first 10 minutes of the film will serve as the example of my previous work.

My intent for showcasing this work is to:

1. To demonstrate my ability to write and direct a narrative fiction, and to successfully complete the production.
2. To present the relevant neo-neo realist narrative and formal style of storytelling.
3. To exhibit my ability to achieve high production values within the context of an independent low budget project.
4. To showcase the quality of cinematography and give examples of my visual language, as well as to demonstrate my ability to work with RED camera to achieve the desired aesthetic.
5. My ability to cast and direct actors.



OHIO
UNIVERSITY

College of Fine Arts

Interoffice Communication

DATE: October 21, 2014

TO: Rafal Sokolowski, Assistant Professor, Film Division
School of Dance, Film and Theater

FROM: Margaret Kennedy-Dygas, Dean, College of Fine Arts

SUBJECT: COFA Creative Research Award

Margaret Kennedy-Dygas

Congratulations! Based upon the recommendation by the College of Fine Arts Research & Advisory Committee, I am approving your College of Fine Arts Creative Research Project, "*An Act*" in the amount of \$4,000. These awards are given on a competitive basis, which further reflects on the merit of your project.

There are a few things to remember when using this funding. As stated in the guidelines, funding for this grant will begin immediately and must be spent (all transactions completed) by June 17, 2015. All capital equipment purchased with the grant funds will become the property of the College of Fine Arts upon completion of the project. Funding is not to be used to attend professional meetings or to present papers. Faculty are eligible to receive just one Creative Research Award per academic year.

In closing, you will need to provide me, in writing, a report on this research award upon the completion of your project, but no later than June 30, 2015. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

MKD/sb

cc: Steve Ross, Film Division Head, School of Dance, Film and Theater
DeAnna Russell, Finance Manager

13. List of Recommended Reviewers

1) John Greyson is a filmmaker, video artist, writer, activist, and educator whose productions have won accolades at festivals throughout the world. Feature films include: *Urinal* (1988 - Best Feature Teddy, Berlin Film Festival); *Zero Patience* (1993 - Best Canadian Film, Sudbury Film Festival); *Lilies* (1996 - Best Film Genie, Best Film at festivals in Montreal, Johannesburg, Los Angeles, San Francisco); *Uncut* (1997, Honourable Mention, Berlin Film Festival); *The Law of Enclosures* (2000, Best Actor Genie); *Proteus*, co-created with Jack Lewis (2003); and *Fig Trees* (2008 - Teddy Award for Best Documentary, Berlin Film Festival). Film/video shorts include: *The Kipling Trilogy* (1984-5), *The AIDS Epidemic* (1987), *The Making of Monsters* (1991 - Best Canadian Short, Toronto Film Festival; Best Short Film Teddy - Berlin Film Festival), *Herr*(1998) and *Packin'* (2001). As a director for television, his credits include episodes for such series as *Queer as Folk*, *Made In Canada* (Best Director Gemini, 2002), *Drop the Beat* and *Welcome to Paradox*. His expertise includes writing and directing, production, media research, and a great knowledge of the new digital storytelling. His work addresses issues of equality and pushes the formal boundary of cinematic narrative, both very relevant to the work I propose. John is familiar with my film practice. He too is an avid practitioner of the neo-neo realist cinema, utilizing the real stories and bringing to the screen the marginalized subject matters.

York University, Film Program

4700 Keele Street

Toronto, Ontario, M3J 1P3

Tel: (647) 272-0386

Email: greyzone@yorku.ca

2) Juan Baquero is a film director, story consultant, and producer. His work has been shown in film festivals all over the world and broadcasted by major channels including Discovery Channel, RCN and TVO. He created and produced original programming for television and worked as a journalist. His documentary film *Listen to This* was nominated for a Gemini Award. Juan is a member of Hot Docs international programming team. He is currently spear heading the Doc Story Studio - a documentary incubator with a mandate to develop original documentary content and to train young documentarians in filmmaking techniques. His expertise from

developing and producing documentary and journalistic film is of particular value for reviewing my film, which blurs the boundary between the document and fiction.

DOC STORY STUDIO

215 Spadina Ave. Toronto, Ontario

Tel: (416) 619-1257

Cell: (647) 203-2254

Email: juan@docstorystudio.com

Website: www.docstorystudio.com

3) Tereza Barta has extensive experience as a director, writer, researcher and editor, having worked on more than 25 documentaries, numerous feature films and television productions. She is a former writer and director at the Romanian National Film Board in Bucharest, stints at the Austrian Film Board, and CBC Radio Canada in Montreal. Her films have been screened at prestigious international festivals such as Bilbao (Spain), Leipzig and Oberhausen (Germany), Bucharest, Chicago and Montreal, and she has been honoured with many international and national awards, including a Gemini in 1994 for her documentary *Chez nous, c'est nous ici*. Currently she is producing a feature-length film titled *And now, where?*, a Franco-Canadian-Romanian co-production. Professor Barta held teaching appointments at a number of post-secondary institutions including the National Theatre School and Concordia University in Montreal, and the Academy of Film, Theatre and Television at the University of Bucharest. Professor Barta specializes in the new narratives particularly emerging from the Eastern Europe – this makes her particularly relevant as the critic of my work. Her expertise includes dramaturgy, conceptual design of the neo-neo narrative, as well as great knowledge of the contemporary international cinema. Tereza knows my practice very well and has been following closely the progress of my latest film, *Seventh Day*.

York University, Film Program

4700 Keele Street

Toronto, Ontario, M3J 1P3

Email: tereza@yorku.ca

Tel: (416) 986-0653

4) Marta Pozniakowski – is the Artistic Director and Programmer at EKRAN – Toronto Polish Film Festival. She is a film producer herself and also works very closely with the National Film Institute of Poland, screening the feature length and short films that come out from Poland every year. She has an extensive experience as the programmer and frequently attends international film festivals. Her expertise in the contemporary film scene and her experience as the film and festival producer are of great relevance for my proposal. She knows my work well as my films have screened at EKRAN several times. The latest, *Seventh Day*, has won there the Best Short Film Award.

EKRAN – Toronto Polish Film Festival

2765 Lake Shore Blvd. #207

M8V 1H2 Toronto, ON

Telephone: (416) 255-7266

Email: marta@ekran.ca

5) Daniel Bekerman is a film producer whose company, Scythia Films, has played a major role in the development, production and conception of films that have received awards and critical success. Daniel produced the meta-detective story *You Are Here*, which won the Toronto Film Critics Association Jay Scott Award. He recently completed filming *Baby How'd We Ever Get This Way*, directed by Bruce McDonald and starring Max McCab-Lokos and August Diehl. Projects in development include *Bang Bang Baby*, a surreal musical directed by Jeffrey St Jules, *Beyond Apollo*, starring Bill Pullman and Ali Larter, and *Non Fiction*, a dramatic thriller written by Ante Kovac. His line producing and production managing credits include *Red Lights*, starring Robert De Niro, *Foxfire* directed by Oscar nominee and Palme d'Or winner Laurent Cantet, *The Whistleblower*, starring Rachel Weisz and *Defendor*, starring Woody Harrelson. With over 25 feature film credits and a broad base of experience including creative development, financing and service production his critical voice is greatly important for my proposal.

E: danielb@scythiafilms.com

T: +1 (416) 897-5211