

Title of Project: *iuS*

Country of project implementation: Worldwide

Sponsoring College:

Designated Project Leader: Aleth Berenice Heger-Hedløy, Norway & Germany

www.iusui.org

The idea for the project was a direct reaction to the fear that COVID-19 was spreading, and the immense amounts of hope that inexplicably came intertwined with said fear. Struck by the human actions of solidarity and unity despite the physical distance that was forced between us, I felt I was witnessing a moment where we became one; working towards keeping the devastating effects of COVID-19 to a minimum. At the same time there was (and there still are) great divides as to how to handle COVID-19, which in turn was/is affecting our quotidian lives, and arguably our freedom. The effects of COVID-19 highlighted the immense differences between more economically developed nations and less economically developed nations. As well as, on the one hand, triggering an upsurge of social stigma and discriminatory actions (seen, for example, through xenophobic violence connected to the spread of COVID-19) and, on the other hand, humanitarian egalitarian actions (seen, for example, in the outpour of arts related events free to be experienced online; various newspapers and journals offering free news coverage during the pandemic; nations aiding each other with medical staff, and supplies etc). This made me reflect on my values, and in turn the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Reaching the conclusion that if we are too (at the very least) maintain these values, we must actively uphold them on an everyday basis.

Despite the more devastating, and disheartening aspects of humanity I was reflecting on and indirectly experiencing, I was reminded of and decided to focus on the positive; the beautiful act of being human.

I was fortunate enough to spend the summer months by a large lake in Sweden surrounded by nature, and my family. Captivated by the juxtaposition between the supreme power of nature, the vulnerability of life, and the act of being human *iuSui* slowly took its shape. During this process I experienced a feeling of infinite peace. I sought a way to encapsulate this feeling to be able to share it and to serve as a reminder of the unity, strength, solidarity, individual power and beauty of life and the immense beauty of the world; what we have gone through in the past; how far we have come; and how much there is yet to do.

The purpose of this film is to create little moments of peace, and a chance to reflect on the world that we share. The final production team consisted of 19 members, including Dr. Maria Salgado (Director), Christina Karliczek Skoglund (Underwater Director of photography), and Gabriel Manz (Aerial Director of Photography)¹. It became clear that, although very generous, the Davis Projects for Peace grant would not cover all the costs of the project, thus I took up extra work and decided to self-finance the parts of the project that could not be covered by the grant.

The Universal Declaration of Human rights was an integral part of my creative process, I used the words within the declaration, the circumstances of its creation, and the sound of Eleanor Roosevelt's voice as a foundational layer for the movement material. Initially I planned to use Max Richter's "*All Human Beings*" from the album *Voices* for the musical accompaniment as this was one of the pieces of music which had inspired me to create this work. However, in May 2021 as I commenced creating the movement material and discussing details of concept with Dr. Salgado, we both felt it did not quite fit. Therefore we began searching for a composer who would create something especially for this.

¹ David Schlange (Ronin-S operator), Daniel Ausweger (Drone Pilot), Amelie Mattisson Chue (1st Assistant Underwater Camera) Jocke Fors (Water Safety), Daniel Ågren (Water Safety), Mikkel Andersson (safety diver), Robert Venema (safety diver), Luisa Fanciullacci (Underwater Gaffer), Kasper Bøhnke (underwater Lighting assistant), Carl Erskine (Bestboy), Michael Peterse (Spark), Atle Hedløy (boat operator, costume assistant), Violette Heger-Hedløy (costume and body paint, logistics), Eloïse Heger-Hedløy (1st assistant), Alvaro Aramburu (assistant), Wanjor Ekman

Another major change was the title, initially the title of the work was *Ius*, meaning rights in latin. However, upon reflection I felt this did not fully encapsulate the work and thus searched for a new title.

I ended up with a self-made word: *iuSui*. It comprises two words, *ius* and *Sui*, *meanwhile* phonetically making a reference to the self, as *iuSui* sounds similar to “yo soy” in Spanish, meaning *I am*. As I deepened into the creative process, and had to share my ideas and the impetus for the work with my team it became clear to me that I had to communicate in a manner that was open, clear, and trusting. This was vital, not only to ensure we were all working towards the same goal, but also to allow my team members to engage creatively with the task. In particular I had to ensure my communication with the Director, Dr. Salgado, was uninhibited. She would be the one to design most of the shots, and make executive decisions during shooting, as I would be dancing and therefore unable to do this effectively. This process was challenging, but also enriching: I have not had to communicate my creative ideas during the process of creation in this way before. During the course of the summer I realised my creative process is not necessarily linear, and thus explaining this in action was sometimes challenging requiring active reflection on both my creative vision, and my communication skills.

We made a first attempt at filming in June 2021, I did not anticipate, however, all the challenges which come with working in nature; particularly on water, and in water. The location is an integral part of the creation. The length of the lake, the stillness of the water, and the colours of the sky at sunrise and sunset were all elements which brought the vision of *'iuSui'* to life. In June we were unlucky with the weather, and had overcast and rain for the full week of shooting. Despite this we attempted to make it work and filmed as planned. Upon reviewing the footage the grey overcast weather sent a gloomier, darker, more dramatic message than intended. Thus, I decided it was necessary to film for a second time and hope for better weather, we scheduled the second iteration for August. This incurred a significant extra cost, but I felt it was necessary in order to bring the true idea to life.

We took advantage of this 'second chance' to make improvements to the logistics, the type of drone, choice of cameras, the costume, the scheduling, the health and safety aspects during filming on and under water, and hiring two different teams for filming the over and underwater sequences. All these changes allowed for the filming process both to be more streamline, and also allowed us to explore some ideas which had not been possible in the first attempt in June. For example changing the type of drone to one where the camera had more range of motion, and is operated by two people (one for the camera and one for the flying) allowed for smoother and more exact flight patterns and thus smoother and more interesting shots. The improvements made to the costume allowed for more time in between changing skirts, as well as further enhancing the illusion of dancing on water. Filming the underwater sequences in a swimming pool allowed for a greater exploration of both the movement material and the use of the skirt.

Moving and creating material for both the underwater and the over water sections was both a physically and mentally demanding endeavour. For the underwater section some elements that contributed to this included swimming pools being closed due to COVID-19 and therefore being unable to train in advance; a problem with the heating system of the swimming pool we were shooting in meant the temperature of the water during shooting was very cold, and forced me to take more breaks and submerge myself in a bucket of hot water in order to physically warm up. This also meant we had to extend shooting time from one day to two days as the amount of time required to shoot was longer, and at one point my body was no longer warming up as usual and I was advised to stop. Moving to the “over water” section: Choreographing on the platform on the water was also tougher than anticipated, for starters the physical space available to move in was limited to a 3m diameter disk meaning there was no possibility to ‘travel’ as one usually would on the floor.

Thus, forcing the choreography to be relatively static. In order to address this Dr. Salgado designed shots which would

give a feeling of moving in the physical space, even though I was actually remaining in one spot. Furthermore, the weight and size of the skirt meant my legs were very much inhibited, and therefore I had to choreograph mostly with my upper body and find ways to use the skirt to sculpt the lower body. Overall, despite the challenges, I do believe we will create a film which will emanate the ideas, feelings, and concept I wish to portray.

I have learnt, however, that clear, open, trusting communication and preparing “buffer time” in case something unexpected happens is vital in this type of endeavour. We have now entered the post-production phase, and are in the process of making a final decision for the music, editing, and colour grading of the footage. The goal is to finish the film before the new year.

I aim for this work to encourage the audience to reflect, on themselves, and on their place in the world as a whole. Further, I hope it will be a work which emanates hope and inspires people to enjoy and embrace the all the different forms of humanity and beauty that the world has to offer.

Due to limitations of time, and budget I was only able to work with one dancer (myself), if possible I would like to continue to work on this project with dancers from different backgrounds than my own. It would be interesting to explore how the work would look and feel through someone else’s body, experiences and ideas. However, before embarking on that phase of the project, I must first complete this section.

This project has allowed me to reflect on the world, and how we operate within it. It allowed me to reflect on and question whether my actions (I speak of everyday actions, and choices) reflect my values and my principles. I am grateful to have had such an incredible opportunity to explore, experience, and attempt to encapsulate this feeling of infinite peace that I encountered through this process of questioning, reflection, and creation. I cannot define peace, at present I believe it has todo with opposites coming together, embracing the differences and operating with kindness, respect, and understanding above all else.

Section II: Photographs



Shooting session August 2021.
Dancer: Aleth Berenice
Photo: Violette Heger-Hedløy



Keeping warm during underwater shots.
Jocke Fors (Left)
Aleth Berenice (Right) Photo:
Eloïse Heger-Hedløy



Christina Karliczek Soglund (Left), Dr.
Maria Salgado (Right)
Photo: Eloïse Heger-Hedløy



Keeping Warm in-between
over water shots. Photo:
Violette Heger-Hedløy