The Cinematic Arts Personal Statement will be read by the Film & Television Production admissions committee as a **measure of creativity, self-awareness and vision**. We are looking for **a sense of you as a unique individual and how your distinctive experiences, characteristics, background, values and/or views of the world have shaped who you are and what you want to say as a creative filmmaker**. We want to know about **the kind of stories you want to tell**. Bear in mind that enthusiasm for watching films, descriptions of your favorite films and the involvement in the filmmaking process is common in most candidates. As a result, we encourage that you **focus on your individuality**. Note that there is no standard format or correct answer. **(1,000 words or less)**

**The Personal Statement must be uploaded in PDF format only.**

In layman’s terms, your personal statement should be an essay of no more than 1,000 words that **captures your individuality and your passion for film**. I think USC gives very helpful hints to what makes a great (or terrible) personal statement. All film school applicants enjoy watching movies and have their favorites (if you didn't, why would you want to go to film school?), so you don’t want your personal statement to be all about that (otherwise, you'll seem unoriginal).

Think about it: **what distinguishes you from all those other candidates?** Your individuality, who you are. What USC wants to see in your personal statement is that you're an interesting, talented person they should add to their class. USC film school doesn't want average; it wants an engaging storyteller with unique tales to share.

Does USC want you to *tell* them what a great storyteller you are? No. USC, as well as other film schools, want you to *show* them what a great storyteller you are. **To do this, you must tell a story.**

<https://blog.prepscholar.com/how-to-get-into-film-school-by-usc-alum>

<https://medium.com/@tiffanylin_12639/how-to-get-into-usc-film-school-without-really-trying-5a934882b467>

Saying “yes” to partaking dance classes in 3rd grade was probably the best decision I’ve made in my short 17-year old life. So far. At first, I was that one kid who just couldn’t look up from the floor, for fear that looking at the audience would cost mistakes. Whenever my parents offered constructive criticism, a go-to response of mine was “you don’t know what you’re talking about!” because I didn’t want to face the fact that I was a terrible performer. Of course I came around eventually, after comparing my performances with others’.

Slowly but surely, I pushed myself to leave the comfort zone in order to deliver the best performance I could, learning how to contort, steel, and melt my body to the rhythm of the music, and to channel concepts like rebellion and emancipation. I could be learning the fundamentals of waacking one day, and I could be asked to practice facial expressions 1-on-1 with a friend on another. The entire process of creating and sharing was truly magical; it felt like I unlocked a part of myself I didn’t know existed. Not only did dance become my main outlet for self-expression and creativity, but it became a source of solace. Stress and worry were left by the door every time I stepped foot into the studio, grins quickly replacing frowns as I met my beloved coaches and crewmates. That’s not all, though.

Being a dancer exposed me to something far more great, this being the significance of unity in diversity. It was on full display in the dance community - workshops and competitions united individuals of all backgrounds through a shared passion, where everyone is welcomed with warm hugs and cheers no matter differences in race, sexuality, upbringing, whatever. Growing up in a country that, in my opinion, holds this phrase as a motto, ironically, was truly a refreshing sight to behold; it felt like a second home. Each with distinct experiences and styles, we all had something new to bring to the table, and were all unquestionably accepted. In this, the idea of harmony through the embrace of each other’s identities was solidified, now held especially near and dear to my heart.

It did not take long for my dance collective to expand in number; from a mere 9 to almost 50 now, mutual friends came on board, and a Youtube channel was established as a means of expanding our horizons. With video productions occurring almost weekly, I took the liberty of coming to sets to offer my fellow team members moral support.

Having stood in front of the camera as a performer for the past 8 years, the opportunity to take a step back fostered a growing fascination for the nitty gritty aspects of the production process, supported by a budding affinity for films. Alongside cheering my friends on to help them through tiresome shoots, I brought along my camera to experiment with its multitude of features, documenting tidbits of the process. With some knowledge on editing, I strung these clips together and sent them to my coaches for fun. I was delighted to discover that they had posted it on the collective’s Instagram account to promote the Youtube video. From coming to set for fun, my presence there practically became expected.

One thing led to another, and I became a communications officer and production assistant for an all-girl photography service team. Originally only helping them find talent, I found myself getting more involved in the logistics- brainstorming concepts together over lunch breaks, spending hours on the internet scouting locations, reaching out to models for our shoots, tracking financial inputs and outputs, the works - and I loved every bit of it.

The initial interest in production led to the interest in *managing* one; I want to know how a complex system of people worked together to successfully bring to life a concept that only existed inside the mind. I want to grasp the mechanics, from securing funds and team members to overseeing the project and eventually distributing the final piece. I want to understand what one can do to preserve artistic integrity in a project where external pressures play a major role from all aspects.

I realized that as a manager or producer, I would have the capability to create a safe and inclusive environment that champions the exact values and philosophy I hold without sacrificing talent or expertise. Each production and each project I had a hand in is an opportunity to spark a progressive conversation and represent people and situations that are too often overlooked.

Representation has never been an issue for me, but I’ve constantly been exposed to Western culture not just through dance but also through the media. Tweets by people from marginalized groups calling out the lack of representation on-screen prompted me to read their struggles, whilst any wins for the community brought about obligatory celebration. I want to bring the distinctive experience I’ve had growing up here in Indonesia and the principle of unity in diversity to every new setting with determination.

I’ve come to realize that in art, it is crucial to not only preserve integrity but also to break “conventions”. Such is so in my group performances, where new and original choreographies are merged to elevate the art of performing. Such is so when I witness dancers swim against the social flow to express themselves unapologetically. It can be seen in disruptive production studios like A24 and NEON, who champion honest narratives that strike audiences in a raw manner. It can be seen in trailblazers like Storm Reid, Jordan Peele, and Barry Jenkins, who view every new project as a chance to spark discussion and represent minority voices. Through film, I intend to breathe new life into beloved concepts, shedding light to perspectives that we have not seen enough of.

Hence, I am interested in collaborating with people whose perspectives have been overlooked - on and off screen - to bring to life underrepresented stories, hoping that not only will individuals of whose perspectives we’re shedding light to resonate with the work, but also articulate human emotion in such a way that could soften the hearts of others and help them empathize more. After all, at the core of film is human emotion; when imbued at all levels of production, we would achieve a sense of authenticity critical for every film.

I’m not entirely sure what my style or “signature” is right now having only begun my journey as a filmmaker a few months ago, but my roots in dance have allowed me to truly discover the philosophy behind what I want to pursue in the wonderful world of film. I’m not sure what the future will hold, but I do know that I possess the power to create and coordinate projects that intend to help people understand and feel for each other - make them reflect, even, about their own convictions and attitudes towards others.

Hi! Great story to talk about, especially the link from dancing to filming to producing to managing producing, very interesting. One thing I’d like to note down is that the “story” ends and become a monologue in the last four paragraphs, it might be great to include more about your ‘current story’ and what you’re doing to delve into your passion. Keep your interest ongoing, you’re determined and not stagnant, so show that in the ending part of your response as well.

One of the things I wished I could see is more details in credibility. I have no doubts that you managed to do these things but adding brands or company names or the name of the dance collective would do well to show how thorough you are. The admission officers most likely don’t have the time to look these up, but you want to make sure they’re convinced and trust you from the get-go. Mentioning “I interned in a big fashion company vs. I was chosen to serve as the assistant editor of the september issue of Vogue China” has a different impact.

I’m sincerely hoping that you were not fully inspired by the essays in the links you placed, because the “integrity in art” that you mentioned in the 10th paragraph is a bit risky. Yes, there are hundred thousand of applications that SCA goes through but collecting “ideas” from previous acceptances (especially the same university you’re applying to) may not be a good idea. I’ll cross my fingers hoping that the officer reading Tiffany Lin’s story isn’t the same as yours. I understand, it feels a bit safer when we create essays in the format of an essay that succeeded, but based on your writing style, I don’t know how much of your personality is emphasized in this essay. Namely, I see your interest in diversity, but **why are you passionate about diversity?** Considering how this is the premise of your essay, I don’t know if feeling indignant over tweets you see from other countries is passion enough to become a reason for your motivation in promoting diversity.

I noticed you’re above the word limit, so try to cut down any descriptive or “informative” statements. E.g. “My inconsolable tears ran down upon the stinging realization that my proudest work had not conveyed enough depth and desire to achieve acknowledgement in the competition” Certainly, keep your vocab strong, but don’t feel the need to make the sentence wordy. Too much pretty sentences in an essay loses the strength of the words used. In fact, some might say writing specific statement phrases would be better in maintaining the admission board’s attention.