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.

Saying “yes” to partaking in 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 couldn’t look up from the floor when performing for fear that looking at the audience would cost mistakes. Whenever my parents offered constructive criticism, my response was always “you don’t know what you’re talking about!” because I didn’t want to face the fact that I was a terrible performer. I came around eventually, after viewing my seniors’ performances — I wanted to be as good as they were, and resolved to work hard to improve.

Slowly but surely, I pushed myself to leave my comfort zone to deliver the best possible performance, fully throwing myself into learning how to properly control my body, and to channel concepts like emancipation through facial expressions. I watched countless tutorials and performances, and spent extra hours training myself at home. It quickly became my main outlet for self-expression and creativity.

After 5 years of dancing, I established a dance collective together with my friends and coaches called Kindo Project. It didn’t take long for it to expand in number; from 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 teammates 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 fascination for the nitty gritty of the production process, supported by a budding affinity for the moving picture. Alongside cheering on my friends, I brought my camera to experiment with its features, documenting tidbits of the process. With some knowledge on editing, I strung some clips from a shoot together and sent the video 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 LunARTography, an all-girl photography service team. Originally only assisting them find talent, I found myself getting more involved in the logistics – brainstorming concepts together, spending hours on the internet scouting locations, tracking finances, the works – and I loved every bit of it. The interest in production led to the interest in *managing* one; I wanted to know how a complex system of people worked together to bring to life a concept that only existed inside the mind. I wanted to grasp the mechanics, from securing funds and team members to overseeing the project and eventually distributing the final piece.

Producing made me realize what I didn’t have as a performer – creative liberty. I hadn’t really gotten the chance to fully contribute my ideas to projects and had mostly been following the directions of my coaches and video directors. Performing will always be my first love, but managerial roles opened me up to a whole new realm. They gave me the freedom to let my creativity run wild in ways I had never done before.

From experimenting with flowers for a beauty photoshoot to visualizing a 90’s themed concept in the old towns of Jakarta together with LunARTography, my contributions in the producer position felt far more impactful than as a performer. I could see my ideas in those photos – like the placement of flowers on the model’s face, or the poses the models took. This process of creating and sharing was magical and became the one thing that I wanted to pursue endlessly. However, I didn’t want to stop there.

As a producer, I want to create an environment that breeds the values that dance taught me to the audience and fellow collaborators – acceptance and unity in diversity. It was on full display in the dance community; workshops and competitions united individuals through a shared passion, where everyone is welcomed no matter differences in race, sexuality, upbringing, whatever. It was refreshing, having grown up in a country that, I believe, still condones many forms of discrimination. 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 close to my heart.

I realized that each project I have a hand in is an opportunity to represent people and situations that are too often overlooked and spark a progressive conversation, and more importantly, encourage empathy and compassion in a world overrun by narrow perspectives to champion love over hate. If my strong exposure to diversity in dance made me more open-minded and accepting of others, then I, as an aspiring producer, can provide that outlet for others.

With this in mind, I intend to collaborate with people whose perspectives have been overlooked – on and off screen – to bring to life underrepresented stories, like LGBT voices in Asian communities. I want to articulate human emotion in such a way that would enable individuals of whose perspectives we’re shedding light to resonate with the work, but also soften hearts and help people feel for others more. One recent way in which these notions have manifested in my life is through Gen Rise Media, a publication digesting culture, politics, & identity from youth on the left. As a member of their video production team, this has allowed me to actively participate in the discourse in a creative and multicultural environment, helping educate others in the process.

I’m not entirely sure what my style is right now, having only begun my journey as a filmmaker a few months ago, but my exposure to diversity through dance has allowed me to truly discover the philosophy behind what I want to pursue in the world of film. I know that I possess the power to create and coordinate projects that intend to help people understand and feel for one another – hopefully make them reflect, even, about their own attitudes towards others. Chasing this may be my next best decision.