

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF PERFORMING ARTS

Crossing the Discipline: A Technologist's Survival Kit

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(Showing video of Project INT)

The Project INT is a unique collaboration between School of Theatre and Entertainment Arts (TEA) and the local band Graphicker.

Technical design is not just about creating the wow factor in a show. It can be creatively used as a tool to embrace the audience, including the impaired ones. It is amazing to see the audiences enjoyed the show with very different dimensions, seeing, listening, tactile, smell, and of course the choreographed sign language staged with the band.

Accessibility design is no longer assistive but artistically immersive in the whole performance.

(Showing video of the School of Theatre and Entertainment Arts)

Hi, I am Wa, Acting Dean of the School of Theatre and Entertainment Arts (TEA).

Example of technology applied in performing arts

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Impact of technology on arts

Technology is driving the performing arts development across a wide spectrum. Artists of different art forms have acquired many latest technologies to innovate their creative process.

Technology is no longer a set of tools. It has brought us many new means of storytelling.

The School of Theatre and Entertainment Arts provides a professional training for artists to learn and experience the contemporary production in the performing arts.

We have 3 departments in the School, covering different areas or specialisations in the world of technical arts. They work together and form an educational platform for young artists to excel - with new skills, new aesthetics - and most importantly - new ways of thinking.

Crossing the disciplines with technology

Technologies is also about dissolving the boundaries of disciplines. It enhances collaborations; it should embrace the creative ideas. Our school holds this core value very strongly.

We have a new specialization called “Media Scenography,” for instance, which is part of our new curriculum to advocate the integration of scenographic design skills with latest tools and digital technologies, across various disciplines and driven by a new mindset.

Crossing the disciplines will be the key to all artists in the future - from painting a massive scenic backdrop to animatronics driven by robotic arm programming; from creating a light painting to a musical soundscape; from designing a costume of intricate embellishment to generative motion graphics projected on a theatre scenery.

With a whole array of new technologies, they will all fuse together and become an arsenal of artistic generation. Every young artist is going to build their own palettes – their creative tool kit.

Creating the modern-day Wagners

This is not the first time technologists can initiate artistic creation. There was a long history of craftsmen turning into a master of art.

You know, one classic legend of multi-disciplinary artist is Wagner. He understood the workings of acoustics; he designed his own theatre architecture; he wrote his epic opera; and he staged them in a proscenium stage specifically built with highly sophisticated stage machinery in his time; in order to fulfil his artistic endeavour.

Today, new technologies have unfolded further. It is much more accessible; it takes you to a higher level of achievement much quicker; It gives you even more power to express.

Digital revolution has brought us amazing tools like 3D scanning, 3D printing which are now ubiquitous tools in our lives. Visualisation (or pre-visualisation) is now the indispensable visual design tool. They helped us in conceptualizing designs and developing our models to actually fabricating our stage pieces.

Further on, we are getting into virtual production and extended reality. It means you may design your own art and performance with audience interaction in the same platform.

We have seen cutting-edge entertainment by Ariana Grande and Travis Scott who created the gaming environment of “Fortnite,” for example. The Wagner in the modern days could be the young artist in his bedroom.

Everybody is talking about the Metaverse, although we are not anywhere close to producing and attending a theatrical play entirely in the virtual world today. But you know, it will come tomorrow.

Preparing students for the impact of technology

For Theatre artists & technologists in the future, crossing the disciplines not only means areas within the world of technical arts. You may also leap over to science, psychology, social science; and as far-reaching as to game theory, social media marketing, and many more.

In order to do this, an artist-technologist needs to hone these skills, within your own discipline, and then across to others. You need to look at the creation holistically.

The School's mission is to build a conducive environment where technologists and artists meet, and this is a platform they can go beyond their comfort zone.

We have developed new laboratories to support the curriculum development. There is the new \$16M-dollar VR/AR/MR Lab. We have recently expanded the props making workshop, and renovated the costume workshop, computer lab, and spatial audio lab. We also have our own Integrated Media Studio where we can deliver multimedia performances.

The scenic paint shop and carpentry of international standard, directly accessible from all 3 major theatres in the Academy, are our major facilities to contribute to our professional production standards, supporting our collaboration with School of Drama, Dance, Music and Cantonese Opera in live productions.

Crossing the disciplines – no matter you are in a classical theatre or in any futuristic domain.

Thank you.