

**The Graduate School Research Committee Awards, FY 2006-2007  
Cover Page**

<b>1</b> Name: Rebecca Holderness	<b>8</b> Amount Requested: \$14,447.00
<b>2</b> Rank: Assistant Professor At Rank Since (Month/Year) August 2005	<b>9</b> Grant Period Start Date: _____ July 1 2006 _____ End Date: _ June 6 2007 _____
<b>3</b> Department: Theater	
<b>4</b> School: Peck School Of The Arts	
<b>5</b> Division: Arts and Humanities	
<b>6</b> Social Security Number:	
<b>7</b> Years at UWM: First Year	
<b>10</b> Project Title	A mixed Media Performance: "The Observation of Miss Julie"
<p><b>11</b> Project abstract: The project, "The Observation of Miss Julie," proposes the creation a short film and its integration into a one-act mixed media dramatic performance, both adapting August Strindberg's radical play, "Miss Julie." These would be presented at the gala opening of the Peck School of the Arts Kenilworth Building in the fall of 2007 as a celebration of mixed media performance and cross discipline creations. I hope to create a colloquium or conference on mixed-media performance and cross-discipline creation, to accompany this performance, which would join in discussion visiting critics and artists and UWM faculty and students.</p> <p>The work will try to explore a number of recurring questions: What is performance? How do film and live theater differ as frames for performance? How are they similar? If we present film and live performance together, how is what we perceive of the two media changed? Does a familiar medium become unfamiliar? These questions are in turn connected to the question how we tell stories in performance, something that rapidly-changing technology is making ever more complex. As the director and teacher Anne Bogart has said, if we are to have better answers as a culture we must tell better stories. In essence, this project, by focusing the work of dramatic production, filmmaking, and intellectual exchange around a single specific narrative, considers the question of what it might mean to tell a better story.</p>	
<b>12</b> Check if your project involves any of the following: ( NONE APPLY)	

<b>13</b> Previous Graduate School Research Committee Awards? ____ YES ___X_ NO If yes, you must complete and append the Post-Award evaluation form.	
Staff Use LEAVE BLANK	Applicant Group: ____ tP/nsP ____ sP/fP

NAME Rebecca Holderness

**Graduate School Research Committee Awards  
Budget: FY 2006-2007, July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007**

Category	Description	Sub Total	Total	
<u>Salaries:</u> Faculty salaries not to exceed 1/9 <sup>th</sup> academic year salary. In the case of a joint application, maximum remains 1/9 <sup>th</sup> of either salary.	Faculty			
	Academic Year 2005-2006 Salary	53,000		
	Requested Support (not to exceed 1/9th)	5,885.	5,885.	
	TOTAL Faculty Summer Salary:			
	*Graduate Assistant(s)			
	Project Assistant	Percent Appointment: Doctoral, Non-Doctoral: Period of Time:	Cost:	
	Research Assistant	Percent Appointment: Period of Time: 13 hours/week, for one month (%33)	Cost: 1262.	1262.
	TOTAL: Graduate Assistant Cost:			
	Student Hourly Help	Number of Students: Number of Hours each is Employed: Hourly Rate of Pay:		
	TOTAL: Student Hourly Cost:			
TOTAL ALL WAGES:			7147	
<u>Capital:</u> Unit cost \$5,000 or more and useful life of more than one year.				
TOTAL: Capital Cost:				
<u>Supplies and Expenses:</u> No TRAVEL expenses here. No page charges, no reprint costs.	Media Support such as rental of projectors Lighting equipment rental Costume Rental from Burning Coal Theater Sound Equipment Rental Honoraria: From the UWM staff or faculty:	1500.  250. 200  300.		

	Installation Design		
	Lighting design	500	
	Composer Fee	500	
	General Technician Fee	500	
		500	
	2 Professional Actors \$500. a piece		
	Video recording of event	1000.	
		200	
TOTAL: Supplies and Expenses Cost:			5450.
<u>Travel:</u> Funds are available after 7/1/2005. Only travel directly related to conduct of the research project.	Rebecca Holderness , round trip to Poughkeepsie	275.	
	I months housing in Poughkeepsie	800	
	Transportation for two actors to UWM (\$250 a piece)	500	
	Transportation for research assistant to Poughkeepsie	275	
TOTAL: Travel Cost:			1850.
GRAND TOTAL ALL PROJECT COSTS (NOT TO EXCEED \$15,000):			14447.

A completed Budget Description is required; see section E of the APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS. Transfers between budget categories require approval by the Associate Dean for Research.

Budget Description:

This budget encompasses two specific areas of work: the shooting of the short digital film at Vassar College and the creation of the installation performance at the gala opening of the Kenilworth Building.

Funding from the grant will allow me to travel to Poughkeepsie and to be present for the shooting of the film (\$275.travel.) I propose to engage a research assistant from UWM familiar with both film and theater. I will bring that person to Vassar College to observe several days of the film shoot. (Transportation at \$275.) As housing is not provided at Vassar in the summer I have requested a housing allowance. (\$800.) Housing will be provided for the Research assistant.

At the period of the development of the performance period of the work I have requested funding for the collaborators that are essential to live performance. The Installation design is of paramount importance since mixed media in live performance presents many challenges to the designer and director.

Faculty:

Director and writer: Rebecca Holderness (\$5885.)

Research Assistant in film and theater will provide continuity between the film and play. (\$1262.)

Supplies and Expenses:

Media Support:

Theatrical projection of digital imagery requires special projectors. (\$1500.)

Specific Lighting equipment is necessary for a specialized performance. (\$250.)

Costume rental using the already designed costume is both cost and labor efficient. (\$200.)

Sound Equipment rental for the specialized balance between film and live performance. (\$300.)

Four artists will be recruited to complete the installation of this piece working in planning and execution at \$500.per (\$2000)

A general technician to work for the three days of rehearsal and installation into the space at (\$500.)

Two actors from the previous productions will be hired to reprise their roles in the play and other actors will be pulled from the BFA program at the University if necessary. These actors will be provided transportation to the University and a stipend. (\$275. per actor for travel and \$500. per actor for stipend.

I have provided for the recording of the event at \$200.

## **A Mixed Media Performance: The Observation of Miss Julie**

### **Description of the project:**

The project, “The Observation of Miss Julie,” proposes the creation a short film and its integration into a one-act mixed media dramatic performance, both film and performance adapting August Strindberg’s radical play, “Miss Julie.” These would be presented at the gala opening of the Peck School of the Arts Kenilworth Building in the fall of 2007 as a celebration of mixed media performance and cross discipline creations. I hope to create a colloquium or conference on mixed-media performance and cross-discipline creation to accompany this performance, which would join in discussion visiting critics and artists and UWM faculty and students.

### **Discussion of Significance of Research:**

The work will try to explore a number of recurring questions: What is performance? How do film and live theater differ as frames for performance? How are they similar? If we present film and live performance together, how is what we perceive of the two media changed? Does a familiar medium become unfamiliar? These questions are in turn connected to the question of how we tell stories in performance, something that rapidly-changing technology is making ever more complex. As the director and teacher Anne Bogart has said, if we are to have better answers as a culture we must tell better stories. In essence, this project, by focusing the work of dramatic production, filmmaking, and intellectual exchange around a single specific narrative, considers the question of what it might mean to tell a better story.

Strindberg’s “Miss Julie” concerns itself with issues of desire, authority, and personal will as shown through the fraught encounter between the highly-strung daughter of an aristocrat and that aristocrat’s crude yet seductive servant. It is tale about a battle of sexual and political wills that illustrates Strindberg’s conviction that we are compelled by our natural selves, our human desires, independent of the power of the social rules we obey or transgress. This is the story I want to focus on and put to the test. In creating a new adaptation of this play for production in spring of 2006 by Burning Coal Theater Company of Raleigh, North Carolina (an award winning regional theater) I commissioned two undergraduate writers I had worked with as a teacher at Vassar. In January of 2005 the three of us worked with Jim Steerman, Professor and Chair of the Film and Drama Department at Vassar on this adaptation. From that collaboration came a new play, “Miss Julie, Revolutions,” which re-imagines Strindberg’s story of desire and its consequences through the relationship between a college professor and his student, a relationship that evolves while they are themselves working on the story of Miss Julie.

Following from the performance of “Miss Julie, Revolutions,” in Spring 2006, I propose to write (in collaboration) and direct a short film using this story of teacher and student, shot in digital media. The film will be cast and scored with a combination of

professionals and student actors and crew, and have as the Assistant Director, Tony Adler. Mr. Adler is a leading member of the Directors Guild of America and won the top award for excellence as assistant director of the film, “American Beauty.” Vassar College’s well-established summer film program has offered to host and fund the creation of this film in its entirety. Mr. Adler will join me in Poughkeepsie in the summer of 2007 and will shoot the film there. (Details to follow.) This film in turn will become part of a mixed-media performance, using the dramatic script together with a projection of the film, which I want to present at UWM. The fields of film and mixed media performance are a new frontier for me, and offer an opportunity to extend my long-term, in-depth investigation of new theatrical forms. The Graduate Research Grant would help me pursue these goals and also, through creating a platform for an accompanying colloquium, help to create new dialogues on the problems of theater, performance, and story-telling among students and faculty at UWM.

### **Methodology and System of Inquiry:**

In a context such as this, the writing and producing of film and play are at once the means or method of conducting research and the aim of research as well. Both the film and the play are themselves about the process of understanding the story of Miss Julie and the ways of showing that story to an audience. Being able to present both film and a mixed media version of the play-text at UWM, and organizing a public discussion around this work, will further help us probe the questions I have been asking about the nature of performance.

### **Projected outcomes:**

The projected outcome of this research is, first, the presentation of a striking new adaptation of an important play in the classical canon to a UWM audience. The integration of a new film into a live theatrical performance will, we hope, especially challenge viewers. The project will also allow a rare opportunity for both local and national theater and film professionals, critics and students to learn together in the creation of “The Observation of Miss Julie” – which is itself conceived as a story about artistic collaboration. I hope to organize a conference or colloquium following the presentation of this work, which will in turn draw writers from all over the country to UWM, expanding the conversation. On a more personal level, it will help me extend my work and practice in a new medium – something I have defined more fully below.

### **Schedule:**

**Spring 2006:** Creation of the film script, “The Observation of Miss Julie,” together with the casting of the film and production planning for the summer 2006 shoot. **July- August 2006:** Residency with the Vassar Summer Film program to shoot and begin post production of the film. **September- November 2007:** Completion of the post- production of the film, largely via the Internet, with Tony Adler in Los Angeles, Jim Steerman at Vassar College, and with a Graduate Assistant in film from UWM. In addition, the recasting and production at UWM of the Miss Julie Production from Burning Coal in

North Carolina, using two professional actors – one from Holderness Theater Company in New York, one from Burning Coal in North Carolina – and a student actor from the PSOA theater department.

***TBD by the Opening Schedule of the Kenilworth Building: projected date January 2007:*** We will need one week of rehearsal and installation of final project into the new space, including three 8-hour days of rehearsal at UWM, and two days of installation at Kenilworth, followed by one day of technical rehearsal or problem-solving with technical staff and the performers and one 8-hour day of final rehearsal and preparation. (This in an average schedule where time and resources may be limited by the public nature of the performance venue.) The performance itself will run for three days.

**Relevance to my overall research agenda:**

My undergraduate work at Vassar was as choreographer/director, driven by a deep need to explore and expand what we think to be theater. My early career involved scholarship the Alvin Alley American Dance Company and the creation of my own work. As my work progressed, it moved from the realm of dance to that theater, always exploring forms, using movement, non-theatrical texts, and visual art. My graduate study at Columbia University and subsequent university teaching have allowed me to study and collaborate closely with internationally known originators of experimental work, as well as working also with boundary-breaking Broadway producer of “The Lion King,” Don Frantz.

In 1998 I founded my own company in New York, Holderness Theater. As we defined it then, our aim was to bring together master teachers, experienced professionals, and young student-artists into an ensemble company. We wanted, through a combination of exploratory workshops and live performances, to develop more fully a theater aesthetic based around muscular, articulate, and pleasure-filled performance. We wanted the words of the dramatist and the bodies of the actors to work together more powerfully. Over the years, this lead both to fresh explorations of classic plays, especially the works of Shakespeare, and to such innovative productions as “Einstein’s Dreams,” by Kipp Cheng, a free dramatic adaptation of Alan Lightman’s book of the same title. Of this latter production the *New York Times* critic Dennis Overbye said, “At moments like these, theater returns to its mythic roots as a place where the actual and symbolic, the sacred and the profane, pity and awe, meet.”

This aesthetic – with its focus on crossing different worlds and realms of expression, combining an emphasis on teaching and performance – is something that I want to continue to develop in my work at UMW as both teacher and director. And in turn, I want to open this work up to a new intellectual and artistic community here. The opportunity to take this highly physical, body-based approach to performance into the world of film and mixed media performance is especially exciting to me. Film interests me in particular as a mode in which the story is not so much written *with* the body as written *on* the body with light and shadow.

**Rebecca Holderness**  
**Assistant Professor of Acting**  
**University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee**  
**Peck School of the Arts**  
**Theater**

Director/Choreographer  
917-865-1725

***EDUCATION:***

Columbia University, MFA Directing. Andre Serban, Anne Bogart

Vassar College, BA Theater.

***TRAINING:***

Fitzmaurice Voice Technique, Certified Instructor

Alvin Alley Dance Theater, Choreography, Modern Dance

Shakespeare & Company, Intensive in Shakespeare and Teacher Training

***AWARDS:***

Best Director 2004 Season, The Raleigh News and Observer

Matthew Brander Directing Award, Columbia

Drama League Director.

Lincoln Center Lab Director

American Dance Center Scholarship

***ACADEMIC:***

Vassar College Voice and Speech. 2004

New York University, Experimental Theater Wing: Composition (Viewpoints). Dialect and Performance 1992-2005

New York University, Undergraduate Drama Program: Adjunct teaching Directing 2002-2005

New York University Cap 21 Broadway Training Program: Three years Adjunct teaching Voice/Speech/Acting

New School for Social Research Undergraduate Program: 2001-2003 Adjunct teaching Directing Shakespeare.

University of Kentucky, Shakespeare Workshop at the invitation of the Undergraduate Program. 2002,2004

Perseverance Theater, Juneau Alaska  
Text Analysis Workshop 2004

***PRODUCING:***

Artistic Associate developing new Broadway musicals with Producer Don Frantz (Beauty and the Beast, Lion King, A Class Act) for Town Square Productions, NYC.

***FOUNDER:***

Holderness Theater Company with Master Teachers Kevin Khulke (NYU), Steve Wanh (NYU), Walton Wilson (Yale), Bob Airhart (BARD), and Andrea Haring (CIRCLE, YALE), Kenneth Gross (UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER). Holderness Theater Company (named after Marvin Holderness) is dedicated to offering master teachers and artists an artistic home to integrate movement, voice, and text in productions and workshops.

***Selected DIRECTING PROJECTS:***

The Dead/Joyce, Nelson  
Burning Coal Theater, Raleigh, NC, Current

The life of Spider/Stewart  
Holderness Theater at, The Culture Project NYC 2004

Travesties/Stoppard  
Spoleto USA Festival, SC. Summer 2003.

Einstein's Dreams/Chang from Lightman.  
Culture Project, NYC. 2003

Travesties/Stoppard  
Burning Coal Theater Company, Raleigh, NC. 2003.

Valley of Decision/Krausnick from Wharton  
Shakespeare & Company, MA. 2002

Twelfth Night/Shakespeare  
Holderness Theater at the Clark Theater, Lincoln Center, NY. 2001

A Doll's House/Ibsen/Rand  
Burning Coal Theater Company, Raleigh, NC. 2001

Much Ado About Nothing/Shakespeare  
Holderness Theater at the Clark Theater, Lincoln Center, NY. 2001

The Lion, Witch, and the Wardrobe/Le Clanche du Rande  
Lincoln Center Institute, NY. 2001

The Changeling/Middleton Rowley  
Holderness Company, Salon Theater, NY. 1999

Glimpses of the Moon/Ragland from Wharton  
Shakespeare & Company, Lenox, MA. 1999

The Cherry Orchard/Chekov  
Yale University, New Haven, CT, Yale Dramat 1998

The Riddles of Bamboo/K.E. Cheng  
Lincoln Center Theater, NY. 1997

Poor Folks/Len Jenkins. Choreographer  
Workhouse Theater, NY. 1996

Feral Music/Brian Silberman. In American Sign and English  
Tiny Mythic Theater Company. 1996

1 Million Butterflies/Stephen Belber.  
Juilliard Theater, NY. 1995

Picnic/William Inge. In American Sign with an original score by Jessica Murrow.  
/National Theater Institute For The Deaf. 1996

***DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WORK:***

Three new plays for the Spring Production for Holderness Theater. St. Joan and The Dancing Sickness by Julie Hebert, The Life of Spiders by Kelly Stewart, and DeliriumPalace by Gordon Dahlquist. 2003.