

LUTSF - GRANT REPORT

Name: Genevieve Lou

Project: Attending ISPA mid-year congress in Singapore & Teaching a guest lecture at Korea National University of Arts

Date: 10th May 2026 - 23rd May 2026

Locations Visited: Seoul, South Korea & Singapore

Did you achieve what you set out to do with your project?

Yes, and in many ways the trip exceeded what I had originally planned. My primary goal was to attend the ISPA mid-year congress in Singapore to deepen international relationships, strengthen my ability to communicate the artistic vision of the makers I work with, and identify shared values that could lead to sustainable collaborations. All of that was achieved, but the trip grew into something richer and more wide-ranging than I had anticipated.



Before travelling to Singapore, I was invited to the Korea National University of Art in Seoul to deliver a guest lecture to students studying arts management. This was an opportunity I had not foreseen when I submitted my application, and it added an entirely new dimension to the trip. Standing in front of a room of emerging arts managers in a country I had never visited, talking about my practice and the realities of producing work internationally, felt significant. It pushed me to articulate things about my work that I do not always have to put into words, and that process of articulation was valuable in itself.

While in Seoul, I was intentional about making the most of being there. One of the artists I currently work with is developing a project at the intersection of performance and technology, and South Korea has a genuinely exciting ecology of organisations working in that space.

I reached out proactively and secured meetings with representatives from WESA Festival and Nmara, the New Media Art Research Association, both of which are doing compelling work that feels highly relevant to where this artist's practice is heading. I also had an exchange with a programmer at SIDance Festival. These conversations were not just exploratory, they were the beginning of building a real understanding of what the sector looks like in Korea and how we might find points of connection. Being physically present in Seoul, rather than trying to have these conversations remotely, made a tangible difference to how open and substantive they were.

The lecture itself was one of the most rewarding experiences of the trip. I was slightly nervous going in, conscious that I was speaking to students whose cultural context was different from my own, and wanting to make the content genuinely useful rather than abstract. The response in the room was warm and engaged, but it was what happened afterwards that really stayed with me. One student remained behind for almost an hour after the session to talk through challenges she was navigating

as a producer working independently outside of university. She was thoughtful and clearly wrestling with real and complex questions, and I felt honoured that she trusted me enough to share them. A second student emailed me afterwards to say that the lecture had stayed with him and to ask for advice on the next steps in his career. The fact that two students felt moved to reach out in that way told me that something in what I shared had genuinely resonated, and that is not something I take lightly.

ISPA Singapore was everything I had hoped for and considerably more. The congress brought together presenters, programmers, and cultural workers from across the world, with a particularly strong representation from the Asia Pacific region, which was exactly the part of the network I was most hoping to develop. I reconnected with fellows I had met at previous congresses in New York, and those relationships felt meaningfully deeper this time around. There is something that happens when you see the same people across multiple gatherings over time. The conversations move faster, the trust is already there, and you can get to the substance of things much more quickly. I also made a number of new connections with people whose work I admire and whose contexts felt genuinely complementary to the artists I represent.

Throughout the congress I had conversations with potential partners and presenters who expressed real interest in specific projects I am developing. Some of those conversations were early and exploratory, others felt more concrete. Whether or not they translate into confirmed collaborations, residencies, or co-productions, only time will tell, but that is precisely how this work operates. The seeds are planted through sustained presence and genuine relationship-building, and this trip allowed me to do both in a meaningful way.

Has your LUTSF-supported trip impacted you personally and professionally?

This trip has had a profound and lasting impact on me, both personally and professionally, and throughout the experience the two felt so deeply intertwined that it is difficult to speak about one without the other.

For the first time at a networking conference, I felt genuinely confident and at ease in my own skin. That might sound like a small thing, but for me it represented a real shift. In the past I had always carried a quiet sense of being an outsider at these kinds of events. I would feel unsure of how to approach people, uncertain of where to take a conversation once it had started, and genuinely uncomfortable if I found myself standing alone in a room. I sometimes felt socially clumsy, as though everyone else had been given a set of instructions I had never received. That discomfort had followed me to previous conferences and, while I always got something from them, I know it held me back.

On this trip, something changed. I found my flow. Conversations felt natural and energised rather than forced or anxious. I was more relaxed even in moments that did not go smoothly, and I was able to let those pass without spiralling. Knowing more people this time around made a real difference too. I had fellow Fellows who could introduce me to someone new, draw me into a conversation that was already happening, or simply be there as a familiar face in a crowded room. That sense of belonging gave me a foundation to work from, and from that foundation I could be more generous, more curious, and more genuinely present with the people I met. I believe that the quality of the conversations I had this year was meaningfully higher because of it.

Professionally, the trip reinforced my belief that this kind of sustained international engagement is essential to the work I am trying to do. Producing street dance and hybrid performance work on an international scale requires more than sending emails and filling in application forms. It requires relationships built over time, through shared meals and late evening conversations, through being in the room year after year until people know who you are and what you stand for. This trip moved me significantly further along that path.

Please tell us about any particular highlights from your travels.

There were many moments across the two weeks that I will carry with me for a long time.

In Seoul, the meeting with collaborators from Nmara was a genuine highlight. We shared a meal together, talked openly about our work, our different cultural contexts, and where we saw the edges of our practices meeting. There was a warmth and a generosity to that conversation that felt characteristic of the welcome I experienced throughout my time in South Korea. The meeting with WESA Festival was similarly rich, and I left both conversations with a much clearer sense of the landscape there and of how meaningful future collaborations might be possible.

The lecture at the Korea National University of Art was another standout moment, for the reasons I have described above. But beyond the formal sessions, I also deeply valued the quieter time I had in Seoul. I wandered around the city alone, with no agenda, taking in the architecture, the street life, the food, the pace of things. That kind of unstructured time is something I rarely allow myself, and it gave me space to reflect on my practice, on where I am heading, and on what this work means to me. Some of the most useful thinking I did on the entire trip happened on those slow walks through a city I did not know.



Singapore was a different kind of experience altogether, more intense, more exhilarating, and considerably more fast-paced. The conference ran from morning to late evening every day, with sessions followed by receptions and dinners, and the energy was consistently high. Within that intensity I developed what I believe are real and lasting friendships among the ISPA Fellows. Some of those connections had begun in New York and deepened here in ways that feel genuinely meaningful. The conversations were stimulating, the food was extraordinary, and the sense of being part of a global community of people who care deeply about the arts was something I found genuinely moving.

I also attended several productions as part of the Singapore International Festival of Arts, which was running concurrently with the congress. Seeing live work in that context, surrounded by international peers who were also processing what they had seen, sparked some of the most animated and exciting conversations of the whole trip. It was a powerful reminder of why all of this matters and what we are ultimately in service of.

How do you plan to share information about your project with others?

During the trip I documented my experience and reflections through a vlog series on Instagram, sharing observations and insights as they unfolded in real time across the two weeks. I wanted to bring people along with me rather than simply reporting back after the fact, and the response to those posts was encouraging.

Looking ahead, I intend to continue sharing updates as the relationships I built begin to translate into tangible outcomes. When bookings are confirmed, when collaborations take shape, when an artist I work with secures a residency or a co-production that has its roots in a conversation that happened at a conference dinner in Singapore, I want to make those connections visible. I think it is important to show people that this kind of investment, in relationships and in sustained international presence, produces real results, even if the timeline is a long one.

I am also keen to continue advocating for the artists I represent within the networks I have now deepened, sharing their work and their vision with the partners and presenters I have met, and finding ways to bring those conversations closer to becoming concrete opportunities.

Do you have any suggestions which could help future Awardees?

Travel has a way of opening both the mind and the heart, and this fund creates a rare and genuinely valuable opportunity to experience that in a context directly invested in your professional growth. My advice, above all else, is to use it to step outside your comfort zone. The return on that courage is often far greater than you can imagine before you take the leap.

Go somewhere that challenges you. Seek out conversations with people whose contexts are different from your own. Allow yourself to be in rooms where you do not yet know anyone and resist the urge to retreat to what is familiar. It is precisely in those moments of mild discomfort that the most significant growth tends to happen, both in terms of your practice and in terms of who you are becoming as a professional and as a person.

Be intentional about what you want to get out of the experience, but also stay open to what arrives unexpectedly. Some of the most valuable things that came from my trip were things I could not have planned for. A guest lecture that became a mentoring conversation. A meal in Seoul that opened a door I did not know existed. A friendship formed over late nights at a conference that may shape the direction of my work for years to come.

This fund is an investment in you. Honour it by being brave, being curious, and being fully present for whatever unfolds.