

My name is Kristin Putchinski and I am an MFA candidate in the IMDA program at UMBC. *Piano: Release* is a controlled action where I will position an upright piano at the top of a set of concrete steps and release it, causing it to fall or tumble and potentially break apart. I propose this action to take place in the amphitheater space adjacent to the CADVC as a necessary part of my artistic practice and an expression of creative speech. The action will be recorded through sound and still photographs or video.

Safety and Liability

Safety is a priority in this action. My thesis committee and some audience members will be invited to view the action from inside the Fine Arts building. There will be only a few team members (myself, videographer, 2 photographers, 2 piano movers) near the site during the action. Team members will provide documentation to release UMBC from liability for injury. Matt Bolling will be on site to supervise the use of the space. Doors entering the building from the stage area of the amphitheater will be locked and secured.

I will purchase and provide a COI of event liability insurance per the totals and requirements per Lenn Caron and UMBC to repair any damages to the physical property of the space. I cannot purchase this insurance until the action has been approved and the date confirmed. At that point, I can provide the COI.

This action is intended to be impermanent and the remains of the piano and any other materials will be removed from the space after the action is completed.

I will provide and place two heavy fabric barriers that are stuffed full. One will be placed inside the “gutter” of the amphitheater to block any materials from entering it. The other, approximately 1” high, will be placed between the two planters (see images below) creating a long and large soft barrier, in the event that the piano reaches the stage area during its movement to prevent further travel towards the building. I will also use fabric to cover the two planter bases that are closest to the steps.

The following dates have already been reserved via my program director, Sarah Sharp, in 25Live.

Timeline

April 28, 2024: Rehearsal

The purpose of this rehearsal will be for UMBC staff, team members and myself to understand the best way to position the piano so that it can be released. We can also use this time to place cameras, do a test run and ask/answer questions. I will construct a box that is the dimensions of the piano. Made of either heavy cardboard, plywood or other composite material, this is intended for viewing and not to mimic the weight or true dimensions of the piano. This box is for placement only and will not be released.

May 11, 2024: Release

- Load in at 10AM (KP, videographer)
- Piano delivery at 11AM
- Install microphone and place piano 11AM-12:30PM
- Photographer arrive at 11:30AM
- Lunch Break 12:30-1PM
- RELEASE approximately 1:15PM
- 15 MINUTE BREAK
- Break apart large pieces/begin piano removal 1:30-3PM

- Crew dismiss 3:30PM
- May 12, 2024 reserved as "rain/weather" date

Proposal for Site Specific Controlled Action:



Concept

Pianos are rich in symbolic meaning and this work is inspired by my desire to challenge my own traditional approach to this specific instrument and my experience of physical, psychological, and spiritual healing from violent trauma. *Piano: Release* is part of a series of actions, performances and sculptures that utilize an upright grand piano as a primary object through which I explore concepts of tension, transformation and release. This action will be my second artistic experiment using the medium of performance art and this specific large object.

Alignment with University Mission and Values

I have researched university policies that support this controlled action and its relevance to the site specific location of the Fine Arts building at my home campus, UMBC. I believe the following words from the university system, UMBC and my graduate program, IMDA, will prove insightful as this action is considered for approval.

On the University of Maryland website, under “University Policies, [Section IV: Research](#) Policy Number: IV-3.20(A),” it states: “The primary mission of universities is to advance, preserve, and disseminate knowledge.....and to create an environment that encourages and recognizes the creative efforts of faculty, students and personnel.” In the [Statement on Free Speech Values](#), it states: “The primary purpose of a university is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, and service. To fulfill these functions, a free exchange of ideas is necessary not only within its walls but with the world beyond.....Every member of the campus community has an obligation to support the right of free expression at the university, and to refrain from actions that reduce intellectual discussion. No member shall prevent such expression, which is protected under the constitutions of the United States and the State of Maryland.”

On the UMBC [Department of Visual Arts Mission and Values](#) website, it states: “...faculty are committed to guiding future artists and design professionals to think independently, work imaginatively, and implement creative solutions to real world problems. By providing an environment of collaborative research and interdisciplinary learning, we enable experimentation across media.....Our visual arts and design curriculum strengthens and deepens students’ core foundational skills and techniques so they may acquire the necessary discipline for their creative practice. *We encourage inventive thinking and develop students’ abilities to imaginatively implement their creative ideas using print, time-based, electronic and digital media, and installation.*”

On the [IMDA website](#), it states: “The Intermedia and Digital Art [IMDA] graduate program is committed to investigating transformations of emerging artistic practices, especially those that give rise to new processes that pose unique conceptual and social challenges..... IMDA continued to embrace emerging technologies while incorporating shifts toward socially engaged art...”

The most powerful support I find for this action is in these words from the IMDA website: “*The most notable outcome of the IMDA M.F.A. program is that graduates are prepared for a lifetime of creative productivity, having acquired the skills, focus, and commitment that will consistently propel their adventurous and personal artistic practices to new levels.*”