2015 CLA Innovation Grant Wrap Up
Matthew Allar, Nov. 10

Often referred to as “the World’s Fair meets the Olympics of theatrical design,” the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design (PQ) and Space is the largest scenography event in the world that explores a wide range of scenographic practices – from stage design and costume design to lighting design, sound design and new scenographic practices such as site-specific, applied scenography, urban performance, costume as performance, and much more. The most recent incarnation (13th edition) of the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space was held from June 18-28, 2015. The funding requested via my proposal helped to offset costs relating to travel to Prague, Czech Republic. The PQ investigates the World’s contemporary definition of what it means to be a storyteller in three dimensions. The work exhibited, and the workshops offered draw from aesthetics and traditions of storytelling from across the globe including, but not limited to; sculpture, illustration, architecture, literature, performance and of course, theatrical design.

Attending the PQ offered an invaluable opportunity for primary investigation into several crucial topics – many of which folded back into a new COLL 100 course titled “The Storyteller’s Journey” during the Fall 2015 semester. A brief overview from the course syllabus is as follows:

This course explores the tradition and craft of storytelling through the investigation of a variety of media, objectives, and intentions. Just as no two individuals are alike, neither are their stories – richly shaped from a blend of life experiences and popular trends. Over the course of this term, we will try to identify what it means to share a story, and why this is critical to human interaction. From the origins of mankind, to the cyber sphere of the 21st century, men and women have relied on a variety of tools to passionately share ideas and exploits using a wide array of tools available to them, and their peers. Where does this impulse come from and why does it continue on today?

Major course / experience intersections:

• The blend of verbal and visual storytelling
• The investigation of definition versus ambiguity
• Tolerance of the unknown and uncomfortable
• The Exploration of “foreign” (new to you) methodology
• The Flexibility to reimagine a comfortable idea, relationship, process