

**COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND HUMAN SCIENCES
INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE SMALL GRANT COVER SHEET**

Proposal from: _____ Individual _____ Academic/administrative unit x Student group

Name of individual/unit/group: Zoologica Fantastica Working Group

If individual or student group, add unit affiliation: English Department, MFA Program

Event Title: Zoologica Fantastica in the Mist: Bringing Borges's Mythological World to Mixed Reality

Date of Event: October 29th, 2020

Primary Contact Information

Name: Dashiel Elhauge
Campus Address: Shanks Hall, 246
E-mail: delhauge@vt.edu
Phone: 617-595-6680

Budget for Event (itemize and provide details, e.g., airfare to and from where, number of night for lodging and for food)

	Amount
1. PA Sound System Rental (for sound in installation)	\$300
2. Material for Skrim (To hide the fog machine and other production materials)	\$75
3. Refreshments (for guests of the event)	\$50
4. Fog Juice (needed to keep fog machine running during event)	\$75
5. Other materials from ICAT (including projector, wood, etc..)	\$880
(Add lines as necessary)	Total: \$1380

Indicate below the amount you are requesting for this grant (IISG) as well as all other sources of support. There should be at least one other source identified. The total in the Amount Requested column below must equal the total Amount of the Budget for Event above.

Source of Support	Amount Requested	Request Submitted?	Amount Approved
International Initiative Small Grant	\$500	Yes	---
1. ICAT Student Grant	\$880	x Yes No	\$880
2.		Yes No	
3.		Yes No	
4.			

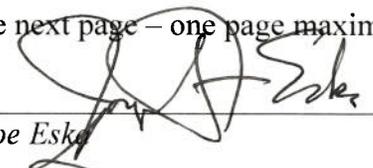
(Add lines as necessary) Total: \$1380

Event Description

Please provide a description of the event on the next page – one page maximum.

Department/Unit Chair/Head Signature

Department/Unit Chair/Head Name



Joe Esko

Application Submission

Total length of Cover Sheet and Activity Description should not exceed two pages. Submit to Associate Dean Debra Stoudt, dstoudt@vt.edu.

Event Description

Please address the following:

- How does this event enhance/enrich the overall cultural opportunities available across campus?
- Who is the intended audience? How many participants/attendees are there likely to be?
- What is the anticipated impact?

Statement of Need/Project Description

Our project, *Zoologia Fantastica in the Mist*, will adapt the book *Zoologia Fantastica* by [Jorge Luis Borges](#) into an immersive, interactive, mixed reality installation.

Zoologia Fantastica (or “The Book Of Imaginary Beings”) is a fable anthology in which each story describes a different mythological creature. This international collection includes stories from a diverse range of eminent authors, including Franz Kafka and Edgar Allan Poe.

We are in the process of creating a 3D interactive environment that will bring to life six of these creatures by projection mapping them onto a mystical fog (shown to the right). This is the first interactive mixed reality adaptation of Borges’s seminal work of Latin American literature.

The resulting installation will captivate the audience with a smokey, surrealist dreamworld and short audio narrations which describe the stories of each mythological character in their original language. In adapting this work, the project aims to challenge the ways in which we experience works of classic literature and welcome modern viewers to experience the work in contemporary mediums. Viewers will be encouraged to form connections with other generations, other cultures, and with each other.

Our project will break the boundaries between literature and technology, expanding our understanding of how typical narratives can be visualized. In doing so, we will blend the fields of creative writing, visual arts, technology, education, and humanities in new and exciting ways. In the preface to Borges’s *Zoologia Fantastica*, Borges notes “we should [allow] the reader to dip into these pages at random, just as one plays with the shifting patterns of a kaleidoscope.” We believe this project stays true to Borges’s vision by exploring how storytelling and interactive technological environments can meaningfully adapt nonlinear narratives.

This project will further CLAH’S goals of fostering transdisciplinarity research and community by integrating the usually disparate fields of literature and adaptive technology, using elements of 3D modeling, sound design, animation, AR, and HCI. We will break the boundaries of how literary narratives are typically visualized. Additionally, we believe this immersive environment will encourage diversity and embodied empathy in the viewer by allowing them to interact with an environment containing myths from around the world.

This work invites members of the Blacksburg and Virginia Tech communities of all ages to join together. We anticipate at least 50-100 passerbys at this outdoor event, which will take place at Blacksburg farmer’s market.

