

IT'S A

Celebrating and advocating for the 50th Anniversary of Title IX

NEW

with Wall of Song's "Feeling Good" Project

DAWN,

Mel Day in collaboration with Dr. Akilah Carter-Francique,

IT'S A

The Institute for the Study of Sport, Society & Social Change

NEW

August 30, 2022 - September 30th, 2022

DAY

WALL OF SONG PROJECT



SJSU Institute for the Study of
Sport, Society and Social Change

SJSU Natalie and James Thompson Gallery and affinity partners

TITLE IX FINDS ITS SONG

“It’s a New Dawn / It’s a New Day” sits at a busy intersection of performance, sports, and art. Mel Day’s exhibition is the center of a larger project dedicated to celebrating Title IX’s fiftieth anniversary, undertaken in collaboration with Dr. Akilah Carter-Francique, the Dean of the School of Education, Health & Human Services at Benedict College and the former Executive Director of San José State’s pioneering Institute for the Study of Sport, Society and Social Change.

The exhibition features **Wall of Song’s** latest project, short video clips of hundreds of different singers singing Nina Simone’s optimistic anthem, “Feelin’ Good.” Foregrounding the important role of women—particularly the role of Black women—in both the history of sport and the history of song, the exhibition amplifies both remarkable athletic achievements and the sadder legacy of mistreatment and neglect that continues to hinder full equality for women and non-binary athletes.

Since its enactment in 1972, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act has increased participation in women’s sports to an incredible degree. Currently, 3,000,000 girls play high school sports and 220,000 playing in the National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA]. These numbers represent an increase of 990% at the high school level and 545% at the college level. Unfortunately, Title IX has had little effect on the routine racism and misogyny that infect women’s lives more broadly. At most colleges and universities in the United States, criminal cases of sexual assault, rape, and racist violence sit alongside large differences in athletic budgets for men and women’s teams. The contested political and biological definitions of non-binary and trans athletes also complicate a simple triumphant summary of Title IX’s effects. “Feelin’ Good’s” repeating lyric, “You know how I feel,” acknowledges all that is still unspoken and calls out that there is still much left to accomplish.

Operating within the conceptual category of ‘social sculpture’ first articulated by Joseph Beuys, and then extended in the United States by feminist artists such as Suzanne Lacy and anti-racist artists such as Rick Lowe, the exhibition proceeds from the belief that art can change the world. Inviting viewers to add their voice to the Wall of Song, Day’s multichannel installation orchestrates diverse voices into a compelling group chorus whose force is larger than each individual contribution. As viewers move from the position of observer to participant, they are likely to be reminded of some of the optimistic ideals of democracy itself — every voice matters, E Pluribus Unum — ideals that are also carried in the language of Title IX: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

By reminding us of the democratic ideals of Title IX, “the exhibition offers us an opportunity to reflect on both the remarkable progress of women and non-binary athletes and the significant obstacles that continue to hinder full and equal participation for all students in educational institutions. Until incidents of routine racism and sexism, and crimes of sexual assault and racial violence are eliminated, the full equality of opportunity promise of Title IX remains unfulfilled.

Players in the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) are working with leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement to call attention to the intersecting forces of racism and sexism that contribute to an uneven playing field. Adding the power of collective art to these important interventions, “It’s a New Dawn / It’s a New Day,” reminds us that we have much to celebrate and much work still to do. Without a doubt, Title IX has advanced great opportunities for women and non-binary athletes. But that does not mean that we have fully realized the enticing promise of freedom that compelled Nina Simone to sing of a new day when “freedom’s mine and I know how I feel.” This exhibition urges us to keep adding to the Wall of Song until everyone can sing “we’re feeling good.”

Peggy Phelan

The Ann O'Day Maples Chair of the Arts,
and Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies,
and English, Stanford University



Wyomia Tyus, pictured at the medal ceremony for the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, was the first athlete—male or female—to win back-to-back Olympic gold medals in the 100 meters (it would take 20 years for someone to tie her record and 50 more years for someone to break it). Long overlooked, Tyus was a trailblazing athlete activist who dedicated her gold medal to the 1968 Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR) and wore black shorts instead of the team-issued white shorts (before Tommie Smith and John Carlos took to the podium with their iconic protest). She was also a founding member of the Women’s Sports Foundation.

By Rolls Press / Popperfoto

BIOS



Dr. Akilah R. Carter-Francique (Ph.D., University of Georgia) joins Benedict College in the fall of 2022 as the Dean for the School of Education, Health and Human Services. With 20 years of experience in higher education, an extensive research background and a strong vision for leadership in the field of education, Carter-Francique has served sporting spaces and centered experiences of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).

Carter-Francique examines issues of race, gender, social class and their intersections with sport, education, and society. She has presented at regional, national, and international conferences and written several articles and book chapters across academic disciplines to include being the co-editor of *Athletic Experience at Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Past, Present, and Persistence* and *Critical Race Theory: Black Athletic Experiences in the United States*.

Prior to her appointment to Benedict College, she served as the Executive Director for the Institute for the Study of Sport, Society, and Social Change (ISSSSC) at San Jose State University that birthed her co-organization with the Wall of Song Project. Carter-Francique also serves as a research council member with Laureus “Sport for Good”; an academic advisory council member for Athlete Voices; an editorial board member for the *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*; and, in 2018-2019 she served as the President of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS). Carter-Francique is the co-founder and CEO of Francique Sport and Education Consulting.



Mel Day is a San Francisco Bay Area-based Canadian interdisciplinary artist, educator, and co-founder of The Wall of Song Project. Launched on Inauguration Day, 2017 in Washington D.C. and at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, Wall of Song’s latest ongoing participatory project, ‘Feeling Good’, explores the combined power and expressive possibilities of art and the rituals of collective singing for women’s sport, mental and physical well-being, and a more equitable, racially just community with Dr. Akilah Carter-Francique, The Institute for the Study of Sport, Society and Social Change and affinity partners. Day has shared her collaborative work at venues including Provident Credit Union Event Center, San José Institute of Contemporary Art (San José), Grace Cathedral, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (San Francisco) and Berkeley Art Museum. Residencies include Stanford University’s Experimental Media Arts Lab, Headlands Center for the Arts Alumni New Works Award/UC Berkeley MFA Fellowship, and Oberpfälzer Künstlerhaus (Schwandorf, Germany).



Soprano **Danielle Marie** is located in the South Bay area of Northern California. Nothing is more fulfilling to Danielle than singing oratorio, spirituals, and sacred works. Danielle received her Master’s Degree in Voice Performance at San José State University, studying under Professor Layna Chianakas and her Bachelors Degree in in Music Education with an emphasis in choral conducting from California State University Fullerton. Danielle is often engaged as a soloist to sing African American spiritual repertoire, including the most recent addition of *The Journey of Harriet Tubman*, with different choirs around Northern California. When not performing as a soloist, Danielle is the Executive Director of Class Act Music Academy and the President and Founding Board Member of local music education non-profit, C.S.P.A.A.



Peggy Phelan is the Ann O’Day Maples Chair in the Arts Professor of Theater & Performance Studies and English, Stanford University. Her influential work covers an extensive range of subjects including feminism, photography, dance, film, music, and poetry. Publishing widely in both book and essay form, Phelan is the author of *Unmarked: the politics of performance* (Routledge, 1993); *Mourning Sex: performing public memories* (Routledge, 1997; honorable mention Callaway Prize for dramatic criticism 1997-1999); the survey essay for *Art and Feminism*, ed. by Helena Reckitt (Phaidon, 2001, winner of “The top 25 best books in art and architecture” award, amazon.com, 2001); the survey essay for *Pipilotti Rist* (Phaidon, 2001); and the catalog essay for *Intus: Helena Almeida* (Lisbon, 2004). She most recently edited, contributed to, and co-curated with Richard Meyer *Contact Warhol: Photography Without End* (MIT Press and Cantor Art Center, 2018). Phelan has been President of Performance Studies International, a fellow of the Getty Research Institute, and a Guggenheim Fellow.

Collaborators & Affinity Partners



SPONSORS

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PROJECT ADVISORS

Dr. Akilah Carter-Francique, Dean, Benedict College, South Carolina (formerly Executive Director of the ISSSSC & Associate Professor Department of African American Studies, SJSU); 2018-2019 President for the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport; Former collegiate athlete in track and field at the University of Houston
Bonnie Sugiyama, SJSU Director of the PRIDE Center & Gender Equity Center
Dr. Craig McKenzie, Music Arrangement and Band Direction, Assistant Professor of Music, Assistant Director of Bands, Director of Athletic Bands, School of Music & Dance, SJSU

SOLOISTS, CHORAL DIRECTION & MUSICAL ARRANGEMENT

Soprano Soloist - **Danielle Marie**, Executive Director of Class Act Music Academy
Musical Arrangement, Band Direction - **Dr. Craig McKenzie**, Assistant Professor of Music, Assistant Director of Bands, Director of Athletic Bands, School of Music & Dance, SJSU
Choral Direction - **Dr. Corie Brown**, Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education, School of Music & Dance, SJSU
SJSU Choir Soloists - **Evalina Maas-Espinosa, Jasmine Reyes, Amy Young**

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