

Thank you for your interest in applying for a TED Fellowship. Please take the time to answer all the questions below. We review each application form in detail, and look forward to reading yours. Please [read our tips for applying](#) before you dive in.

Note: If you would like to nominate another individual (rather than apply), please email your nomination to fellows@ted.com. Include your and the nominee's contact information (phone, address and email). Please tell us why you'd like to nominate him or her. Also list any pertinent websites that might give us more information about the nominee.

Privacy note: We use these details for internal review and communication purposes only; we will never sell your information to a third party.

Select conference:

TEDGlobal 2009 (*Applications due April 3, 2009 at 6pm US/Eastern*)

TEDIndia 2009 (*Applications open April 20, 2009*)

If I do not receive a TED Fellowship, I would like to be considered for a [Reduced Price Conference Membership](#) reserved for those in the education and non-profit worlds.

If I do not receive a TEDGlobal Fellowship, I would like to be considered for a Fellowship at TEDIndia 2009.

Your basic details

** Asterisk indicates a required field*

First name *

Ina Centaur

Last name *

Yosun Chang

Gender *

Female

Date of Birth *

Day: 9

Month: Jun

Year: 1984

Job title/role *

Independent Artist / Novelist / Artistic Director

What category best describes your primary role? *

Artist / Musician / Performer

Company/organization *

sLiterary / vShakespeare

Type of organization *

NGO/Nonprofit

What category best describes your organization's focus? *

Education

Tell us about yourself

We take this portion of the application very seriously. Please take the time to answer the questions thoughtfully, with enough detail to help us understand who you are.

All responses are limited to 150 words except where noted.

If a friend were to describe your accomplishments in up to three sentences, what would he or she say? *

"Accomplishments—ugh, where to begin, I mean, Ina Centaur does everything, and she does everything crazy well—she can't be a single person. One person can't do all that—I invoke the authorship question on Ina Centaur! Except Ina Centaur is crazy—she'd seamlessly walk into a philosophy discussion on Thom Kuhn from correcting people with potty math at applying the Wigner-Eckard theorem, the night after she creates yet another nifty web service while multitasking debating the literary merits of Faulkner, writing a playscript, and doodling a sketch. (Breathe)." --Paraphrased from an actual quote someone gave of me back a few years ago in college

What other achievements would you like to share? *

I am capable of creating something from nothing, but I only realize this when I step back and look at it afterwards. For the few people who know of the real story behind the SL Shakespeare Company (SLSC), that was my secret attempt at starting a theatre company where I would be in high danger of being director, producer, graphics designer, limner, website designer, actress, technician, wardrobe/costume-designer, ghostwriter, publicist, programmer, and, now, scenic designer—basically everything. But, in the process of creating it, it was simply the dogged attitude I had in realizing what had to be done and stretching my waking hours that much more to get it done well, despite the lack of resources. Less than two years after I started it, despite being created from nothing, SLSC is formidable enough as an institution that we were invited to give a talk at the NAST Conference last March!

What are you passionate about? (work, creative output, issues, communities...) *

Work to create and churn out creative output means everything to me. I spend my conscious hours building cities and enterprises in virtual worlds or writing novels in my imaginary reality. When I am exhausted, I reap ideas from that well-earned teetering state in the twilight between sleep and wakefulness, and in the morning, I set out to make things happen. I am passionate about creation; I am always basking in the glow of the challenge of creating something new and tangible from an idea. Projects are my life: I pursue them with zeal, with or without a solid goal in mind, just relishing and living in the actual process of creation. I find that there is a sort of zen to be gained from obsessing over a single project, and in the end, projects that I spend enough time on, always become something.

How do you believe TED can help you accelerate your progress in your field of endeavor? (Limit 350 words) *

Everything I have done in virtual worlds thus far is through my own resources, my wealth of skill and tenacity. But, in real life, I have been living as a hermit for the past three years. Without connecting to those on the outside, my domain in this endeavor becomes fatally limited. There are hardware technologies that I'd like to collaborate with people in making, perhaps even with the implementation of new science theories. There are new forms of entertainment that may become possible through these potential collaborations, and new methods of design would be employed, and new fields created and developed. My interest in virtual worlds is not only in virtual theatre, but also in its potential to connect the world and its people in a way that would not be possible in the real world. Virtual worlds, by principle, eliminate the barrier of distance, but, they can also be used to get by prejudices against gender, age and race. In a world where one can choose one's appearance to be anything, the worth of one's mind and tasks becomes one's identity, and one escapes stereotypes that might be tied to them if their physical body in reality is too young or the wrong color or gender. I want to attend TED to walk out of virtual worlds to the real, to share and explore new ideas, make connections with like minds—to take what I've been doing to the next level, and make virtual worlds even better. (Since TED is in Oxford, I might mention...) I would also very much like to visit England, and see the many historic reconstructions relating to Shakespeare I have built—through books and second-hand eyes via photos—in the virtual world, in the real world.

What do we need to know about you that we didn't ask? (Limit 350 words) *

There is a part of me that continues to silently scream at me, "Why are you wasting your time on this application?" I am usually only just good in many fields, but not the top in it. I have far too many interests, and I love all of them. My GPA in college was not competitive enough for anything but a university distinction. Unlike other TED fellows just a few years older than me, I am not a Rhodes Scholar, and have not received academic awards on that caliber. But, my endeavors in virtual theatre via the SL Shakespeare Company has brought me to the limits of the field. Despite the minimal extent to which Google and the Internet, in general, can document what happens in Second Life, I believe that we've reached the top, in the nascent field of virtual theatre. While we can continue to create plays by thinking up creative ways to reuse existing technologies, I am already questioning whether there is a realistic future in this. Have I been stuck living in my cave for too long, and become at odds with what is actually feasible in reality? I am on the verge of a decision: should I continue to spend my talent and energy in virtual worlds, or should I move on. I don't know if TED will help me answer this question, but I'm hoping to meet people and discover new ideas at TED that may influence my decision. If I don't make TED, I guess in writing (and editing to word count) this application, I've had the chance to mull about some very pertinent questions in my own life.

As clarification, my academic records are under Yosun Chang, at UCSD (2002-2006). My family immigrated from Taiwan when I was 5 in 1990. My passport name is a variation of Yiu-Sen Yosun Chang. I am racially Taiwanese, but I somehow have a Jewish first name, "Yosun." I have been publicly using the non-racial "universal" name Ina Centaur since 2007. I am thus applying under Ina Centaur Yosun Chang.

Can you share a memorable anecdote from your life that will give us a further sense of what makes you tick?

When I was thirteen, like many teen girls, I went into a phase where I explored Wicca along with the urban witchcraft hype. While I've always found the mythos behind folklore interesting, at that point, I was more focused on rituals than traditions. I pursued Wicca out of a determined belief in magick; I studied witchcraft under the auspices of it becoming practical. I defied conventional skepticism by believing that if done right, magick would work, and that I would do it right! Yet, after a while, I found the rituals to seem both similar and arbitrary. In my Honors Science course, there was a brief segment about psychology and mental exercises, and I realized that the procedures of the rituals were merely to facilitate a form of concentration. The epiphany had made me cry: magick was just a mindtrick! I became disillusioned, and then agnostic. But, I still believe...

If you had help in completing this application, please explain the circumstances, who helped you, and to what degree.

I followed advice from a friend to let chance help me. I am not a very social person. (I'm good at doing things, but I often misjudge people. I'm fatally bad at sharing the work in teamwork; usually, when things work out, it's when I monopolize the team and do everything myself. Rarely, group work does work, but most of the time it doesn't, and becomes needlessly wasteful. Nowadays, I've placed myself in a position where I can remain productive and not have to worry much about that.) While I'd sped through my own portion of the TED application, I wasn't aware that the application required recommendations until five days ago. I followed an anonymous friend's advice to just randomize five names from a long list of people I've worked on projects with in the past year, and accept the first three who reply. Fate decides what might happen.

If you have ever been convicted of a crime, please explain the situation below

In my fourth year as an undergrad, due to matters not relating to my majors, I was asked to leave and forfeit my degree, units away from completion. It was actually a mutual decision, but I guess (to others) that's the closest one thing I've done that might be considered a crime.. But, the path less taken has made all the difference—I would not have had the chance to innovate in virtual worlds to the extent that I have had I stayed in school; it would take decades for academia to catch up to virtual worlds—and, by then, we might all live in a world where gender, race, and age—and *where* your physical body is—do not matter, and it becomes only your mind and energy that propels humanity forward.

List at least one web site that will help us understand you better (such as your blog, your Facebook profile, your company's website, links to your biography, C.V., writing, research, art, and/or photo(s) of or taken by you.)

Website Description *

The Ina Centaur Portfolio

URL *

<http://portfolio.InaCentaur.com>

Website Description

The SL Shakespeare Company Blog

URL

<http://blog.SLshakespeare.com>

Website Description

sLiterary, Inc. and Printings Museum on the Web

URL

<http://sLiterary.org> and <http://Printings.com>