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## Dancing On The Web, Dancing Over The Ocean

Nora Raggio

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## SOCIAL NETWORKS 2

**Dancing On The Web, Dancing Over The Ocean**

Nora Raggio on May 15 2001

issue 16

**DANCING ON THE WEB, DANCING OVER THE OCEAN** is a multicultural performance that will take place between youth groups in CA, USA and SENEGAL, this summer and will culminate in a live performance at the The Tech Museum in San Jose on Labor Day weekend, 2001. Leading this project is Amy Critchett, Executive Director, Networks and Programs, at GroundZero. The summer intensive will include dance and technology workshops for youth in Senegal and California. The youth from Senegal will join the participants in California for the week before Labor Day and they will both perform live at The Tech Museum--a performance that will be webcast. The purpose of the project is to foster the intersection between cultures and between the arts and technology.

Nora Raggio: Tell us briefly about yourself...how you became interested in working for GroundZero and particularly in this project.

Amy Critchett: My background is in media production and I had the honor of working closely with Jane Metcalfe when she was launching WIRED magazine back in '93 and stayed very close with them throughout the years and Jane Metcalfe...and Jane Metcalfe happens to be on the board of GroundZero. So, my career progressed...after I left WIRED I became an independent producer and produced all sorts of live events on the web and live experiences that included technology throughout the Bay Area and actually around the world and continued to become excited and involved about combining different types of media and experiences which led me to the cable industry. I worked very hard launching two cable networks that were both going to be leveraging the convergence of cable and the web and programming as well as their outreach to their overall community and audience base through the internet. So I worked at ZDTV and then Oxygen for about two years, two years each. When I left Oxygen I decided to come back to California, I was in touch with Jane, she told me about this project and asked if I would consider leveraging my experience and my passion around media and convergence for GroundZero...

NR: Specifically about the project, what's the project name, its vision, its goals?

AC: Well, one step back...GroundZero has three main mandates as an organization. One of them is to incubate art projects and facilitate artists that are working in the space of the intersection of art and technology... Our second mandate is to build and foster our community so that we are creating opportunities for them to have a new form of arts, participate, as well help in some way, shape, or form... The third is to continually foster opportunities and education space for kids with art and technology. So our first project in the education space is Dancing On the Web, Dancing Over the Ocean: Young Partners in Senegal and Silicon Valley. What we're doing is creating a performance opportunity for a group of youth in Silicon Valley to co-collaborate with a group of youth in Senegal...to actually have a live, multicultural, dance performance.

NR: Who is sponsoring this project beyond GroundZero?

AC: Well, we have a variety of partners and partnering organizations that we're working with. First and foremost we are partnering with the Joko Club, which is an organization that is launching in Senegal this summer and one of our board members, Lisa Goldman, is starting this company with Yousou Ndour, in Senegal, which is a series of digital clubhouses that are going to be popping up all over West Africa...so

they're one of our partners. We're also working with Kristin Kusanovich who is a dance instructor and professor at Santa Clara University. We're also partnering with a youth organization in East Palo Alto called OpenVoice, who we were working with in the early phases of the project on developing a web destination that will ultimately facilitate the communication of the teams between Silicon Valley and Senegal throughout the summer, prior to the teams from Senegal coming to California the last week of August. The Wild Palms Hotel in Mountain View has actually graciously offered to host the eight days of activities for the fifteen folks that are coming from Senegal.

NR: What were the factors in choosing Senegal and California?

AC: First and foremost it's really celebrating the relationship between cultures...and GroundZero really supports the Joko Club initiative.

NR: Who are the participants in this program and what do they hope to achieve from this experience?

AC: We're working with outreach organizations in Silicon Valley. We're hoping to create opportunities for about a hundred kids to come to a series of workshops in July and August. As they go through the workshops, there will be a combination of both dance and technology and media training. And for the kids that are interested, they'll have opportunities to come back and work with us on crafting their own performances that they could contribute to the three days of live performance that we will be doing at the San Jose Tech Museum. The performances are over Labor Day, and these are two other partners that you should mention: Tapestry 2001 Festival is being held in San Jose over Labor Day. The San Jose Tech Museum is participating in that and has offered us a stage within their New Venture Hall, which is where we will be holding the dance performances as well as what we're calling a bit of a variety show. Depending on which teams are interested in creating performances this summer, we're going to schedule that into the stage as well.

NR: What specific interactions will the youth from Senegal have with the youth in California, throughout the project?

AC: July and August we're going to be doing a lot of outreach online...through OpenVoice we're going to be doing chats and message boards. Santa Clara University is going to help us by hosting some video streaming, so on either side, we're going to be posting video clips of different sorts of dance techniques and kinda "get to know you" sort of content, so that we'll be doing outreach and creating relationships via the web prior to the group from Senegal actually coming to California and being with the California kids for the entire week before Labor Day. So initially it's going to be digital relationships...with momentum growing towards the actual interaction that we'll have together as a group.

NR: What interactions will take place once the Senegal group is here in California?

AC: There will be collaborative performances so that they will be performing together as a large group... as well as having opportunities to do, in the variety show piece of it, to do either poetry or rap or animation or video or whatever, if they want to collaborate together in smaller groups performing skits or their own smaller dance pieces. For sure there's going to be three big performances going on Saturday, Sunday and Monday with the entire group.

NR: How is the program structured and what are the key events or deliverables in this project?

AC: We're really looking at this project in four big chunks. There's the initial web destination and web site as a tool to communicate throughout the summer and do the outreach. There's the actual workshops where we're going to be inviting different youth organizations from Silicon Valley to participate during July and August and then... there's the actual week when the teams are here from Africa and the performance itself. Then the fourth part, which is the least defined at this point, is how we're going to document the entire project. I'm currently interested in taking on interns that are interested in taking this on as a documentary project. Our overall goal is to create opportunities, so that the teams are able to learn and enjoy each other's company both online and then in the collaborative spirit of this live performance. We want youth to create their own form of artistry with technology as a basis.

NR: What percentage of the GroundZero budget has been allocated to funding this project?

AC: An appropriate amount...

NR: Any concluding comments on the program or your involvement?

AC: Well, it's really exciting for us to embark into the evolution of our organization with a project like this because it's got international components, it's got the ability to really build opportunities and leverage off of the really important work that these organizations are already in the process of doing here in Silicon Valley and really celebrate the hard work that's going on in Senegal.



## ::CrossReference

**last 5 articles posted by Raggio**

**:: Cracking the Human Genome: A Look into How Competitive**

**Forces Create and Reshape Collaborations - Feb 11 2002**

**:: Lifelike - May 15 2001**

**:: Dancing On The Web, Dancing Over The Ocean - May 15 2001**

**:: The Art of Networking and Fundraising for the Arts: An  
interview with Beau Takahara, CEO, GroundZero - Jan 1 2000**

**:: GroundZero+Digital St. John+Seventh Heaven: A Brief  
Interview with Bill Viola @ .artfrontiers - Jan 1 2000**

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