

Kate Bollinger
Miller Arts Outcome Report

Outcome:

Thanks to the Miller Arts Scholars program, I was given the funding to take my first trip to Europe, study and live in Lyon, France for six weeks, explore the French language, and write music and lyrics in an entirely new setting. Growing up in Charlottesville and subsequently deciding to stay in the same town for college has been interesting. I don't regret my decision, but I've come to realize that I haven't been challenged in the same way that one would be going to school in a new place. My stay in Lyon was a chance to put myself out of context and explore being uncomfortable in a new place and in a new language. As an artist, it is always important to explore personal limits and I feel that the trip and the abundance of different experiences that it gave me led to different approaches in my songwriting. During and since the trip, I have written a handful of songs in French and English and released four singles, "Softer," "do u go out together?," and "Tests."

Originally, I proposed that I would make an artist book to document my travels and my lyrics/poems. In the back of the book would be an EP of my new songs written during and in the months following my stay in Lyon. As it went, I found it difficult to write songs during the program. It was the longest period of time I had ever been away from home and given the curriculum and length of the program, we were expected to learn all of the material in an abbreviated timespan. I wrote some songs during my stay, but mostly kept a journal documenting my thoughts, illustrations, ideas, and most importantly, dreams, which ended up being one of the focuses of my songs and art. My roommate and I made a number of friends during our time abroad. I got to play music with a girl named Alice and continue to keep up with and share music with another friend from Lyon over the internet.

Since my return home, my recent releases to Spotify have gained some traction. My song tests has half a million streams on Spotify alone and was featured on a number of Spotify's editorial playlists, including "Fresh Finds," "All New Indie," "Indie All Stars," and more. Attention from these placements landed me on *Atwood Magazine's* "Artists to Watch in 2019" list, as well as in *The New York Times* article "12 Pop, Rock and Jazz Concerts to Check Out in N.Y.C. This Weekend." Given this new, budding bit of success paired with advice from a manager friend, I decided not to release the songs I had written for the EP, but rather have decided to release a few of them as singles, before making a lengthier project available to the public.

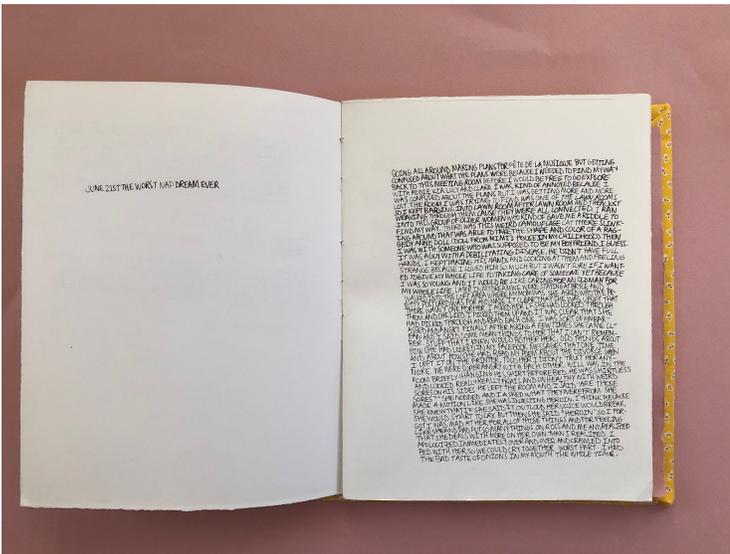
In addition to the songs that I have recorded for the project, I have nine hours of studio time scheduled for March 31st to record a number of songs written during and after my stay in Lyon. In the following months, I plan to release two of them, "Candy," and "Untitled" as singles, each after a four week campaign of submitting the songs to friends and contacts. Since my time

in Lyon, I have formed a band with four other musicians, who will play on the record on the 31st.

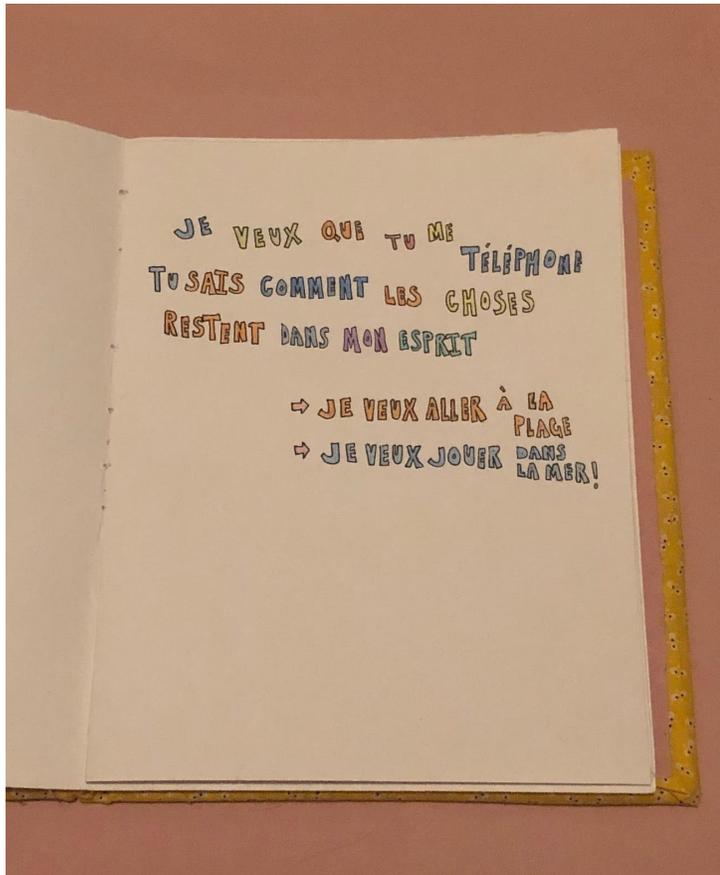
Below are some images of some of my favorite pages in the chapbook:



Above is the front cover of the book, which is covered in a yellow, floral fabric.



Above is one of my favorite pages, which features block text of a dream that I had during my stay in Lyon. For the past three years I have been recording my dreams regularly and it has become a big part of my art and music. There was one day in Lyon in particular that I remember eating raw onions for some reason because it was all that I had in my mini fridge at the time and I took a nap right after and had the most horrible dream. It really disturbed and moved me and I knew that it, as well as my dreams in general, needed to be a big part of my project. I started recording other dreams in block text like this.



I like this page because it showcases a less serious side of my writing. I love getting the chance to write more simply, and having to write in another language gives the perfect opportunity to step into a very simple, straight forward, childlike mode of writing. This was a little song that I wrote, which didn't end up being recorded, but was inspired by the song, "A la Plage" by Juniore, which uses very simple language in French about "un lundi a la plage" ("a Monday at the beach").



Some pages in my book feature photos I took during the trip with my film camera.

Songs included in the outcome:

“do u go out together?” - I loved making this song. I made it collaboratively with two producer friends, John Trainum and John Wehmeyer, after my return to the U.S. It really sparked a new kind of writing for me. When I was in Lyon, especially in transit, (while I was waiting in the airport, sitting on the train, etc.) I would often make beats on my laptop because I didn’t have my guitar around and it was as easy as that: I could plug in my earbuds and make a song! I gained an appreciation for writing to beats and took to it even more when I got home and began collaborating with friends. <https://katebollinger.bandcamp.com/track/do-u-go-out-together>

“Tests” - This was also written collaboratively to a beat upon my return to the U.S. It is available on streaming platforms. <https://katebollinger.bandcamp.com/track/tests>

Lyon kitchen song - This has not been released. I wrote and recorded it on my laptop in my hotel room’s kitchenette in Lyon. It’s not done in any sense of the word, but I think it’s important because it shows my different processes and exploration of a different kind of songwriting.

“Dit Moi Doucement” - This has not been released, but shows one example of my song writing in French.

“Tuesday Noon” - Another unreleased song that I finished writing after my trip.

Timeline

June 2 - July 14: Lyon program - Completed 6 credits of French, wrote, explored, journaled

July 15: Returned to Charlottesville

July 15 - Present: Wrote, recorded, made art, constructed chapbook, collaborated with artists, showcased songs and work multiple times throughout the fall and spring semesters

March 22: Opened for Kendall Street Company at the Jefferson, showcasing many of my songs written during the Lyon program

Plans for continuation...

March 31: Nine hour recording session at White Star Sound with my band

April 17: Playing a show at the Southern

April 19: Opening for We Are Star Children

Budget Breakdown

I used the generous grant of \$1,500 to pay for part of the study abroad fee.

Thank you so much to the Miller Arts Scholars program. Getting the opportunity to travel and live in France for six weeks was transformative for my approach to music and myself.