

Miller Arts Scholar Arts Award- Project Overview

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Project title: Creatures of Solitude

Description of proposed project:

During my time at UVA, I have worked on a series of drawings called Midnight Creatures, which feature a cast of monsters, aliens, and other fantastic creatures going about everyday life. The creatures in my drawings talk on the phone, hang out with friends, and wonder about the world, playfully personifying daily emotions and dilemmas, particularly on the subject of aloneness.

My proposed project would be a series of three short films (each 2-5 minutes in length) which would expand upon this series of drawings. Using paint, costumes, and a variety of props, each film would seek to transform a human body into an other worldly, fantasy creature whose external form would embody the mental state of the character themselves, and would explore different aspects of spending time alone. In the three films, tentatively titled *The Painter*, *The Gardener*, and *The Shooter*, surrealist and fantasy elements would serve as a way to demonstrate internal emotions externally. Each film would center around a creature-like character doing an everyday task.

I would plan to shoot all three films in the late summer and fall of 2018 and would use cameras available to me through the UVA Art Department as a student in Kevin Everson's cinematography class. I would ask friends and other students to serve as my actors and would plan to shoot at a variety of locations around Virginia. The project would also involve a three day trip to Middleton Place in South Carolina, one of the oldest formal gardens in the United States, which would serve as a filming location for *The Gardener*.

My personal goals for this project are to experiment with representing internality on camera. As a writer, I know that writing is inherently more internal, and film inherently more external, but I see this project as an opportunity to explore different methods of conveying emotion through visual representation. Given that these films will be largely free of dialogue, they would depend on the calculated use of color and sound to get the thoughts and feelings of the character across. As someone who seeks to merge art and writing, I believe that putting this kind of pressure on the aesthetics of the film, rather than on the plot, would teach me a lot about representing abstract ideas in concrete visual ways.

I am also interested in the process of creating three interconnected films. Questions of color, sound, lighting, and editing will shape the ways in which the films relate to one another, and I am excited to work with color palettes and symbols that will span all three films. That being said, I hope that each film would be able to stand alone as its own distinct vision of what solitude can feel like.

I anticipate that the most difficult piece of this project will be the planning phase. While I have strong ideas about what I envision for each film, the decisions surrounding how to best represent internal feelings may prove a little tricky, and will likely end up being the kinds of things that I figure out as I go. As a relatively new filmmaker, I think it is also safe to say that technical issues will occur, such as camera mishaps, filming errors, and miscommunication. However, I believe these obstacles will provide me with an excellent opportunity to develop more technical skill and to get better at collaborating.

Because I find process to be an interesting subject matter in itself, I would plan to document the project throughout its various stages, both in writing and through images. This documentation would be useful when writing my outcome report, and would also help me to reflect on the success of the project when presenting my films at the end of the year.

Project Timeline

Summer: May 2018- July 2018

- Storyboard each film and acquire necessary materials (jewels, glue, paint, etc.)
- Order film, accounting for correct color stock (10+ rolls)
- Order or make any props (wings, goggles, clothing)

Summer: early August 2018, before school in the fall

- Shoot Film 1- Drive from Charlottesville to Middleton Place in South Carolina
- Materials needed: female actress, glue, camera, rhinestones, hats, flowers to plant, camera

Fall: September 2018- December 2018

- Shoot Films 2 and 3
- Materials needed: One female and two male actors, paint, brushes, goggles
- Begin composing original music for films
- Send out all film to be developed
- Scan film

Winter: January 2019- March 2019

- Organize and edit footage
- Finish composing music
- Rough edit done by February 28
- Consult with Kevin- Final edit done by March 20th
- Create web page for videos
- Write and finish report

Spring: April 2019

- Present final films

Budget: The proposed budget for this project is 1,500 dollars.

Film

To make 2-4 short films, I would plan to shoot around 10 rolls of film, and because film is expensive to buy and develop, this expense would use up a large portion of my budget. The breakdown of these costs is as follows.

\$30 price per roll to buy x 10 rolls of Kodak film = \$300

\$30 per roll to develop x 10 rolls = \$300

\$10 per roll for shipping x 10 rolls = \$100

Total cost of film: \$700

Travel

Travel for this project would be limited to a four day, three night trip to Middleton Place in South Carolina. Lodging near the estate is relatively inexpensive (less than 150 dollars a night) and entrance to the estate is free. I would only plan to bring 3 other people with me, so one hotel room would suffice.

\$150 x 3 nights at Middleton Place = \$450

Gas and food = \$100

Total cost of travel: \$550

Materials

The materials required to make these films would be fairly inexpensive and limited to craft items, which would likely be ordered online or hand-made. Because the emphasis will be on the human body, costumes would also be simple and inexpensive. I have also budgeted a small amount towards food for any crew-type people who help me film.

Craft materials = \$150

Costume/clothing = \$50

Food for crew = \$50

Total cost of materials: \$250

Summary of Costs

Film	\$700
Travel	\$550
Materials	\$250

Total: \$1,500

This budget is an estimation, and I am hopeful that the actual cost of travel and materials will actually be slightly less than the estimated cost. However, if for some reason the project exceeds the award amount, I would fundraise or use my own money to make up the difference. That being said, I am confident that the cost of the project would not exceed the award amount.