

Jakob H. Cansler
Artists Minigrant Outcome - Spring 2019
“Hans Garbo and an Introduction into Film Directing”

Over the course of March - May of 2019, I directed my first short film, *Garbo: The Unbelievable True Story of Hollywood’s Worst, Most Eccentric Director*. This experience turned out to be immensely helpful in giving me an understanding of filmmaking and working both the creative and administrative side of the film process. As stated in my original proposal, my main goal in this project was to gain both knowledge and experience in film directing, and after having finished this project, I feel much more confident in my abilities as a film director.

Project Findings

In March, I had my first meeting with the screenwriter, Jess Miller, in which we discussed the plotline of the film and set some deadlines for the script. As the script was being written, I worked on finding actors and crew members to help out in making the film. I ended up with a smaller crew than was probably necessary, which meant that I had to take on many different roles in the film. Although it was stressful, I did get a deeper understanding of the different roles on a film crew, both creative and administrative. Also in March, I used Miller Arts Scholar funding to purchase a subscription to MasterClass and took two filmmaking classes online, which greatly helped me as I moved forward on this project. Once the script was done at the beginning of April, I was ready to move into production.

Filming lasted from mid-April to mid-May. Filming lasted longer than initially anticipated, mainly because the script was longer than we originally planned. Nevertheless, the main issues I ran into during the filming process revolved around more administrative issues, such as finding spaces to film, scheduling actors, and making sure all equipment was working properly. However, I also found as filming went on that I was able to handle these things much more efficiently, and things began to come naturally. I started to also get a better handle of setting up dynamic and interesting shots and imagining how each shot would look as part of the larger film. This unfortunately meant that shots that were filmed later in the process looked better than shots filmed earlier on, but nevertheless I still learned a great deal from this experience of filming. I also learned that working with actors on film is very different from working with actors on stage. When filming, I had to simultaneously watch the actor and the footage to make sure it looked good while also imagining how that section would fit into the larger film. When directing for theatre I never had to balance all those things at once because it was all right in front of me. It was definitely a challenge, but I started to get the hang of it as filming went on.

Finally, from mid-May to the beginning of June, I worked on editing the film together. This also took longer than anticipated as a result of the lengthened script. I realized very quickly that the film was going to be much longer than expected, and that I would need to find things to cut without ruining the plot. Originally, when discussing the script, I had known that parts would need to be cut, but I figured that I could cut in post-production. With hindsight I realize that cutting only during post-production makes some cuts look very awkward and makes the entire process take longer than it should. Now I know that a majority of cutting should be done in pre-production to avoid these problems. Other than that issue, I learned a lot about the

importance of editing in making a film come together into a final product. So much of what makes the film look good happened during the post-production process.

Now that the film is completed, I have submitted it to the student portion of the Virginia Film Festival and will wait until I find out if it has been accepted before releasing it. My intention is to eventually upload the film to YouTube.

Overall, I made a lot of mistakes when I was making this film. I knew I would, though, since it was the first film I'd ever made. However, I learned a lot from those mistakes, and now, moving forward, I feel like I have a much better grasp of the filmmaking process. I also feel more well-rounded as a director and an artist having worked on this project. I intend to use what I've learned on all of my future directing projects, both for theatre and film.

Expenditures

Item	Price
Masterclass 1-year subscription	\$180
Neweer 2-pack LED and Stand Lighting Kit	\$135.99
32 GB SD Card	\$13.57
2 TB Hard Drive	\$63.99
Costumes and Props	~\$100
TOTAL	\$493.55

I am extremely appreciative of the Miller Arts Scholar program for funding this project and for making this project possible.