

Artist Minigrant Application  
Proposal to Support Production of Instant Photography Photo Essay  
Project: *Healing*  
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To the director of the Miller Arts Scholars, Professor Michael Rasbury,

I am third-year Miller Arts Scholar requesting to be funded \$500 in the form of a Miller Arts Scholars Artist Minigrant to support the cost of producing an analytical photo essay in an unconventional medium that is typically treated as “toy photography”, or an antiquated household documentary sort of photography: instant Polaroid photography. I hope to challenge the artistic stigmatization of instant photography by creating a body of fine art instant photos that are conceptually cohesive.

Over the past two years at the University of Virginia, I have been dealing with emotional healing. The process has been entirely non-linear, chaotic, and now finally calm. I have come very far, and I feel the need to document my journey in retrospect. This project would be just that. I am proposing to use my grandfather’s Polaroid 100 Land Camera to make prints that communicate various stages of trauma healing, culminating in the relief of said trauma. This work will be much less literal than most of my other work (re: *Decadence in Havana, Cuba*), but no less documentary. This is an opportunity for me to grow as an artist as I move to the abstract in representing significant places, people and feelings that relate to my personal healing process, but it is also one for me to officially interpret and reflect on a hugely influential chapter in my life.

The Polaroid 100 Land camera was an iteration of the instant camera that was manufactured starting in the 1950s. After doing some research on photo blogs, camera websites, and Youtube, it has become very apparent to me that the images produced by the Polaroid 100 are the most rich, crisp, and detailed instant photos that I have ever seen. The Polaroid 100 uses peel-apart instant film that produces both a positive image, and a negative image (when bleached). Thus unlike a more typical instant photograph produced by the Polaroid 600, or the Fuji Instax, the images that the Polaroid 100 makes are both instant and available for reproduction in the darkroom. The images are also medium-format, making them the largest and best-quality instant photos I will ever deal with. The quality, size, and reproduction potential are three reasons why I would be unsatisfied with using any other form of instant photography for this proposed project.

The use of Fuji peel-apart film and the land camera also metaphorically represent the concept of the project in a significant way. As the camera I will be using is very old (hence the “camera repair” accounted for in my budget), and the film is no longer manufactured (hence the high cost of finding acceptable film online that isn’t years expired), there will be many uncontrollable factors influencing the prints. I

will not be completely able to control the outcomes of the images I take; this randomness and happenstance is really exciting to me. I love happy surprises in photography, but the little autonomy I will have over the images is symbolic of the range of emotional control that those healing from trauma often experience. I will not even be able to control much for exposure or shutter; unlike with my usual film camera that has very specific exposure controls, my options will be something along the lines of “sun”, “cloud”, “house.” I hope that by being forced to work with expired (although not unusable) film with highly restrictive manual settings, the prints will come out less figurative, and more expressive in a slightly abstract, but emotionally informative way. The instant-print nature of the project also reflects how momentaneous, surprising, urgent and undeniable feelings associated with trauma can be.

The full funding of this project would enable me to seriously concentrate on my development as an artist and a human. Part of the Arts Scholars identity is “artist as researcher” and “artist of practice”; I deeply respect the expectation that we Arts Scholars actively pursue our art in a serious, and critical manner. The Arts Scholars have thus far allowed me to grow so much as a student artist, and I would be very grateful to continue my personal development with this project this summer, a pursuit that will only be possible in the scale and intensity I imagine it with financial assistance from the Miller Arts Scholars endowment. I am grateful for the Arts Scholars’ support of the production stage of this project; I anticipate applying for another mini grant next fall to cover the preservation costs associated with the essay.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kylie L. Grow  
Class of 2017