

Maille-Rose Smith
Fourth Year Arts Award

Four Weeks of Film Acting: Summer at the New York Film Academy

Proposal

For my last Miller Arts Scholars mini grant, I purchased a Masterclass subscription to learn more about film acting as well as the domain name maille-rosesmith.com to build my website and promote my acting career. Using these resources has led me to a better understanding of film acting, as well as an increase in interest from casting directors. I now want to make the leap from virtual and experiential film acting to formal training in person with professionals. With a Rising Fourth Year Arts Award, I would like to attend the New York Film Academy's four-week Acting for Film workshop, a full-time, immersive training program focusing on Stanislavski's System, monologues, and scene studies; I have experience in these valuable tools through the lens of theatre, but I have not been trained with them in a film setting. Unfortunately, the University does not offer film acting courses; this intensive course would give me a strong understanding of the fundamentals of on-screen acting in a rigorous, challenging, and rewarding environment - at one of the top film schools in the country. I can then apply my New York Film Academy training to future film projects at UVA and in the professional acting world. Alum of the Miller Arts Scholars program Elena Anderson notes in her [project outcome report](#) that her time at the New York Film Academy was "enjoyable, challenging, and incredibly rewarding," and that "the program packed an extraordinary amount of information" into a short period of time. Further, she notes that in just one week, she "was introduced to several new techniques and was given the opportunity to synthesize those in a filmed scene." With a whole month, I would have the opportunity to act in multiple scenes and play a variety of different characters, further solidifying my understanding of how a film set works, how film acting differs from stage acting, and how I as an actor can best perform and adapt on a set where, as the New York Film Academy puts it, "dozens of crewmembers whirl about, twelve kilowatt lights bore into the eyes, focus tape is pulled to the actor's cheek, and the actor is still expected to give a believable and moving performance."

Until I came to UVA, my only experience in film acting was playing few roles in various student video projects for classes, such as the infamous "Calculus Queen," the Great Gatsby, and a random screaming student for a short horror film. I had absolutely no idea what eyelines or establishing shots were. Acting at UVA, I first became involved in student theatre groups and the New Works Festival, and from there I learned about film opportunities on Grounds. Soon, I was fortunate to be cast as the lead in Yuchen Xie's "Rausch," a LabShorts film which was funded by her own Miller Arts Scholars Rising Fourth Year award ("[The Interpretation of Dream](#)")! I then acted in Shaelea Carroll's "Just Desserts" (LabShorts). The summer after my first year, I acted as a lead in a local commercial and in a semi-professional short film. I have also acted in WUVA films, in other student projects, and as an extra on a professional shoot. Last year, I played the

lead in Asher Caplan's "The Art of Fugue" for the Drama Department's Overcranked film project; the film recently won a Poe Film Festival award. As I have fallen more and more in love with film acting, my desire to gain a strong grasp of the fundamentals of this form of storytelling has deepened.

Ultimately, the New York Film Academy's four-week acting for film course would provide me a formal, technical base from which I could develop, expand, and improve my own screen acting, deepening my understanding of how a film set works and allowing me to better perform in a high-stress, action-packed environment. The course would give me a unique, high-caliber opportunity to explore and strengthen my acting skills to launch into stage and film productions at UVA and in the professional world. If chosen, I look forward to sharing how my performance technique has grown and transformed through the New York Film Academy's intensive training at the Annual Arts Awards Outcome presentation.

NYFA's Acting for Film webpage: <https://www.nyfa.edu/acting-school/4-week-workshop.php>

Timeline

Spring 2020

April: Apply to the New York Film Academy's four-week Acting for Film workshop

May 8: Final day of exams for the spring semester

Summer 2020

August 3-29: Acting for Film workshop

Fall 2020

Compile journals, images, videos, playbills, etc. to create a coherent and creative performance piece, with the guidance of Professor Doug Grissom.

Spring 2020

April: Present a selection of monologues, scenes, or short videos at the Center for Undergraduate Excellence

Budget

Resource	Amount	Details
NYFA's Acting for Film Four-Week Workshop	\$4,200	Tuition
Housing	\$350	Paying rent while staying with a friend
Transportation	\$150	Based on Amtrak round trip prices
Food	\$400	\$100 per week for four weeks
GRAND TOTAL	\$5,100	

Income	Amount	Details
Miller Arts Fourth Year Arts Award	\$3,000	
*		
GRAND TOTAL	\$3,000	

* I plan to apply for supplemental scholarships as there is currently a \$2,100 difference between the maximum amount allotted for the fourth-year award and the total cost of the project.

Participation in the Arts

I came to UVA planning to leave theatre behind and take the “logical path” to a stable, nine-to-five career. I would study environmental science and economics, take a few arts classes to keep me sane, and then leave UVA, applying to office jobs to do something scientific or budgetary. That was my plan. Then I auditioned for Shakespeare on the Lawn’s (SotL) *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, expecting nothing to come of it, and I spiraled into the glorious world of drama at UVA. I felt excited and engaged and whole. The sense of accomplishment and academic satisfaction I felt when I mastered a new supply and demand concept could not begin to match the exhilaration of an Acting 1 class or a *Julius Caesar* rehearsal or a New Works Festival performance. The passionate, supportive community of UVA drama drew me toward the possibility of becoming a drama major. Surrounded by hardworking students and dedicated professors, immersed in stimulating classes that combined lecture, discussion, and analysis of plays on the UVA stage, a future in theatre felt realistic. Now, as a drama major, I have taken an eclectic mix of courses through the drama department: How Theatre Works, Making Theatre Histories, Acting 1, Script Analysis, Playwriting 1, Production Management, Lighting Technology and lab, and Set Design, and I am in the process of taking Advanced Playwriting and Scene Painting lab, and stage managing the dance concert. I have taken CASS 1010 and will be completing CASS 1011 in the 2021 spring semester.

Outside of these fulfilling classes, I have been fortunate to act in SotL, Spectrum, and UVA Drama productions, as well as in LabShorts and Overcranked films. Since playing Sylvia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* in the first semester of my first year, I have acted as Portia in *Julius Caesar*, Titania in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*. Last semester, I assistant directed *As You Like It*. On the more administrative side, I served as SotL’s Fundraising Chair for the 2018-2019 school year, and am currently Vice President of the organization. As Fundraising Chair, I worked to coordinate and encourage participation in Sonnetgrams, our annual main fundraiser; organize a successful bake sale on the Corner, which has been repeated this year; and arrange concessions for our two mainstage shows. As Vice President, I have successfully managed the “backstage” elements of the organization: writing and sending emails, keeping track of voting membership, organizing meeting minutes and schedules, booking rooms and setting dates, and communicating important information to our general membership and executive board. I am very grateful for SotL’s continued presence in my life at UVA; it has proven a creative, collaborative environment filled with artistically passionate people.

Beyond SotL, I have had the honor of serving as the Community Chair of Virginia Players last year, and currently serve as President of the organization. As Community Chair, I organized pre-show social events and dinners to encourage students to attend departmental shows, a BroadwayHD showing in the Caplin, a gratitude week for drama professors, and other events. As President, I have worked to increase engagement with Virginia Players through “cookies and cocoa” socials in the drama lobby, workshops, a now-virtual lab series, and online creative prompts in our quarantined state. I have worked to encourage dialogue between executive board members and the Outreach Committee, and facilitate the fantastic ideas proposed by Virginia Players. I am also the current Outreach Chair for the Miller Arts Scholars, and have planned and executed information sessions, advertised the application deadline, and coordinated our presence at the activities fair and Arts Grounds Day.

Update/Alternative Plan

The Stella Adler Studio will be reopening for late summer conservatory classes. I was accepted to the Stella Adler conservatory but had decided on RADA; I changed from RADA to the New York Film Academy when international travel was no longer possible. Now, with Stella Adler reopening, I would attend their [summer conservatory](#). Tuition is \$3,300, so I am requesting Miller Arts funding for the \$3,000, and then will self-fund the additional \$300 (as well as the \$1,200 needed for housing, transportation, and food). The conservatory runs for six weeks, 32 hours per week, July 6-August 14. It is a rigorous program, it comes highly recommended, and it is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre. It offers a multitude of technique-building classes: Acting Technique, Scene Study, Movement, Voice and Speech, Improvisation, Shakespeare, Ensemble Building, and Acting for Film and Television. This program would help me build a variety of skills, both for acting onstage and onscreen. Further, this program would offer me formal training in areas of acting in which I have practical experience, but have never taken classes, such as Shakespeare Acting.

Stella Adler Budget

Resource	Amount	Details
Stella Adler summer conservatory	\$3,300	Tuition
Housing	\$450	Paying rent while staying with a friend
Transportation	\$150	Based on Amtrak round trip prices
Food	\$600	\$100 per week for six weeks
GRAND TOTAL	\$4,500*	

* I will self-fund the additional \$1,500.

If COVID disrupts these plans (i.e. if there is a spike in New York that prevents Stella Adler from reopening), my proposal for the New York Film Academy can still work. The academy offers classes on a rolling basis, so if, for example, the August session is cancelled, there are also four-week sessions in January and March (they offer them each month but these would work best with UVA's schedule), or if need be I could change the four-week session to a [one-week intensive Acting for Film](#) session January 11-16.

Resource	Amount	Details
New York Film Academy one-week intensive	\$1,214	Tuition
Housing	\$100	Paying rent while staying

		with a friend
Transportation	\$150	Based on Amtrak round trip prices
Food	\$100	\$100 for one week
Headshot session (during this week in New York), to be uploaded to maille-rosesmith.com	\$600	Including blowout, professional makeup, hard copy headshots, and the session itself.
GRAND TOTAL	\$2,164	