

Margaret Via
Miller Arts Scholars
Mini-grant
Spring 2016

Text as Image, Type as Thought
Penland School of Crafts

Background

After graduation this May I plan to attend Penland School of Crafts for a two-week course in their Printmaking and Letterpress studio. Penland is a nationally-renowned craft school located about fifty miles from Asheville, North - Carolina that has been established for almost ninety years. The school offers a variety of workshops in books and paper, clay, glass, metals, photography, printmaking and letterpress, textiles, wood, and other media. The school offers artist residencies and prides itself on being a community center for professional and aspiring artists to pursue retreat where they can devote a focused period to refining and articulating their respective craft. Penland is a total immersion program and offers students a rich learning opportunity to interact with professional teachers and artists from around the country in a residential environment. Penland not only offers a rich history but also is located in the inspiring terrain of the rural Blue Ridge Mountains.

As I graduate from the University this upcoming Spring, I seek to further engage with artists' communities in order to refine my own practice as an artist. Having been engaged primarily in printmaking media throughout my undergraduate career, I am especially aware of how critical access to a working studio space can be. It is difficult to engage with print without access to a printshop equipped with printing presses and adequate ventilation etc. Not only would the studio space be critical at Penland but also the guidance I would receive would be integral to furthering a future career in the arts.

Course

The course I am interested in taking is relevant to my art practice as it expands upon problems that I have been negotiating with in the development of my distinguished majors thesis this past year. The course, "Text as Image, Type as Thought", taught by Marianne Dages, will expound upon the role of language in visual art, engaging with traditional letterpress in an experimental manner. Having

an ongoing and deep interest in artist's books and zines, which frequently combine language and image; this seems like a particularly well fit course for my practice. Having an interest in poetry, this seems like a particularly pertinent course to engage in as well.

Funding

Penland School of Crafts is a non-profit organization and therefore runs off of generous donations from donors. Because they are so well-endowed they are able to offer nearly fifty percent of its students with some sort of financial aid. These scholarships vary in amount and requirements. I have applied for and received a General Work-Study Scholarship, which is given to about 175 students each year. It requires students to devote 20-25 hours a week to help with the running of the school, often including manual labor; and an additional 8 hours the day before and after the start of their session. The General Work-Study Scholarship offsets the expenses that would have to be paid toward dormitory housing, however there is still an outstanding \$558.00 fee for attending a two-week course.

I am very grateful that I have the opportunity to ask to offset this outstanding fee through the Millers Arts Scholars program mini-grant and am therefore asking for a total of \$500.00 to assist me in attending Penland this summer.

Engagement

I have been active in the Arts Scholars' program since the beginning in the Fall of 2012 when I was a first year student. In my second year I applied for and received an Arts Award entitled "nest" in the amount of \$1,200 to further explore an ongoing artist's book project. Then the following year in my third year of school, I applied for and received a \$3,000 Arts Award entitled "Print and the Relational Aesthetic" to work on my distinguished majors thesis this past year. Art making often requires unanticipated material costs, and I am very thankful to the program and generous donors such as Sandy and Vinie Miller and Evie and Stephen Colbert, that have made these Arts Awards and mini-grants possible. It has offered me to be more daring and allowed me to explore further in mediums I otherwise would not have been able to engage in because of a more limited budget.

In my second and third years as an Art Scholar I helped and participated in the development of our annual showcase

event. In my third year as an Art Scholar, I was nominated to be in charge of updating and maintaining our blog. This past year I have not been able to be nearly as active as I would have liked because of needing to fulfill graduation requirements for my major, and therefore unable to attend seminar. However I have been enrolled in seminar whenever it has been possible and that has been for the majority of my time here. I have been enrolled in the Arts Scholars seminar for five of the total eight semesters I have been at the University.

Final Words

I hope to eventually make steps toward a career in the arts, and attending Penland this summer seems to offer a good transition from art in a more academic setting to a more professional one, where there will be artists making their living from their craft. I hope to expand my artistic practice and hopefully share my own knowledge and experience I have culminated here at the University for the past four years, to Penland. I think it would be worthwhile for my art practice and would allow me to expand upon concepts I have just begun to explore here at school. Not only this, but I am looking forward to meeting and connecting with artists from around the country. Receiving a mini-grant would allow me to offset enough costs that this would be a much more comfortable endeavor, where I wouldn't have to worry about tuition, travel *and* material costs.

Because of the immersive structure of Penland, I will be making lots of work and will be able to share this work from Penland when the session ends in June. Furthermore I plan to update a blog while I am there, so as to make my experience accessible to those who wish to be updated.

The course will run from May 29th-June 10th, 2016.
Thank you.