

Experiencing Experimental Theater In New York City Outcome Statement

Last summer, I lived in New York and interned with New York City Players, a small experimental theater company. I served as production assistant and costume master for the company's latest (and last) play, *Police and Thieves*. When I arrived at the company in early June, rehearsals were just starting and the script was still in progress. I was present at three rehearsals a week and ran lines with several of the actors outside of rehearsal. At rehearsals, I was on book and would often have to fill in for an actor if they weren't present. I was able to watch the director and playwright (Richard Maxwell) write and rewrite the script to best fit the actors in his ensemble, which was a process I've never seen before. I learned a lot about Maxwell's process and methodology, which opposes the "as if" method of building character and puts greater emphasis on written words rather than the actor's inflection. I also gained insight about effective leadership, building ensemble connections, mediating disagreements between actors and directing staff, and made connections with several established experimental performers in the downtown scene.

Outside of my internship, I attended several shows at La Mama, the Fresh Fruit Festival, and the New Ohio Theater. Many focused on queer themes. I also attended a drag show at The Rosemont in Bushwick every Wednesday night. These experiences added so much to my experience and my development as a queer artist. Seeing the vast array of queer performers in the city really expanded my understanding of what it looks like to be queer and specifically, a queer creator/performer. My behind the scenes role at New York City Players made me realize how much more at home I feel in designing/directing roles rather than performing roles. I also saw how helpful having a portfolio of digital/video art can be when trying to establish yourself as a performer/creator in an urban queer art scene. Because of this, I chose to take Intro Cinematography in the Studio Art department rather than continue with my Directing/acting coursework. This has been one of the best decisions I've made at UVA, and I'm now a Studio Art major with a focus in film. I'm so grateful to the J. Sanford Miller Family Arts Scholars program for funding my stay in New York last summer which prompted me to find my true place in the UVA arts community.

In the past year, I've made three short films and served as director of photography for my classmate Lizz Bangura's Overcranked film. I've also written dozens of poems and short stories about my stay in New York for my Creative Writing classes, some of which I've recently submitted to V Magazine, Scratch Magazine, and the Spring 2020 English Department prizes. Below is a link to one of my short films from last semester, which I feel was most inspired by the queer performance I witnessed over the summer. Apologies for the quality of the video--it's a recording of my film being projected during class. I was planning on digitizing the film this past week, but because of University closures I was unable to.

Expenditures:

I spent roughly \$3,000 dollars on housing and meals, \$300 dollars on transportation, and \$100 on theater tickets. So \$3,400 in total. I used my Miller Arts Award to cover half of my

housing/meal costs, and covered the other \$1,900 with money I made as a nanny in New York over the summer as well as money I had saved from the spring 2019 semester.

Short Film:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dEudGaLppVIaVxZiPCojwVFnlXqNeITa/view?usp=sharing>

Photos:

The weekly drag show
I attended →



Me at the Queer Liberation
March ↓

Me in front of my apartment ↓

