

Lyla Ward

29 March 2019

Rising Third-Year Award Application

### **Experiencing Experimental Theater In New York City**

This summer (2019) I will be interning with Richard Maxwell's experimental theater company New York City Players in Brooklyn, New York. I will be organizing their archives, creating content for the website, and helping assist in production for a series of summer workshops with their Incoming Theater Division. The Incoming Theater Division is a program that supports immigrant playwrights in putting their work onstage. I will be working sixteen to twenty hours a week at New York City Players and an additional sixteen hours as a barista.

This will be my first opportunity working in both professional and experimental theater. I will gain valuable understanding of both the administrative and production sides of a small theater company. I will also be able to get my first taste of creating experimental theater. I've been heavily involved with student theater at UVA, as a performer, a designer, and a member of a directorial/artistic staff, but every show I've worked on has been a traditional play or musical. I've realized in my my Modern American Drama and Directing I classes that my interests lie in more experimental/expressive theater, but I haven't yet had the chance to work on something less traditional outside of in class exercises. By assisting in the Incoming Theater Division workshops, I will be able to observe the entire process of theater making, from writing through design and directing to performance. New York City Players is a member of Alliance of Resident Theaters, so I will have the opportunity to make useful professional connections in a broader community of small theater companies.

Being in New York, I will also have the opportunity to see more experimental theater. I'm especially excited about La Mama's production of Messiah, running in June. I will also be able to watch and take part in some of the best drag entertainment in the country. In my free time over the summer, I plan to design and construct my own drag looks and perform at amateur drag nights. My ultimate goal is to create and refine a piece of drag performance that I could develop into a short film next year. There's not much of a queer performance scene in Charlottesville, and queerness is something I focus on a lot in my creative work, so I think this summer will be a great time to gain inspiration, further connect to my identity, and meet possible creative partners in the queer community. I also plan to use my free time to write and revise pieces of fiction for submission to literary publications, which is something I haven't been able to find the time to do at UVA. My goal is to write and submit six poems and three pieces of short fiction.

My internship will give me an understanding of professional theater making that will allow me to more broadly contextualize my drama classwork, as well as make me a more knowledgeable, confident, and efficient leader in the student theater community. Hopefully it will also give me a sense of what elements of theater I want to focus on (design, directing, performance) during my undergraduate studies and after. Just being in New York, surrounded by theater and queer art will give expose me to new styles and perspectives that will energize and inform my fine art, my writing, and my dramatic work.

**Timeline:**

Before the summer:

- Secure housing
- Secure barista job

Late May

- Move in
- Begin working at NYC Players
- Begin working barista job
- Begin attending drag shows on the weekend

June

- Write for three hours every Sunday morning
- Conceptualize and begin constructing a drag look
- Attend two theatrical productions (one being La Mama's *Messiah*)
- Continuing working and attending drag shows

July

- Finish drag look, develop and rehearse performance
- Begin revisions of work written in June
- Attend two theatrical productions
- Continue working and attending drag shows

August

- Perform my drag at three amateur nights
- Submit written work to publications
- Attend one theatrical production
- Finish working on or around August 20th

Fall:

- Find a crew and film my drag performance
- Take Directing II
- Interview for assistant director position with First Year Players

**Budget:**

Housing : \$3,000

Meals: \$700

Transportation: \$500

Costume materials: \$150

Theater tickets: \$200

Total: \$4,550

Unconfirmed income from Arts Award: \$1,500

I know that the maximum third year award will merely pay for a quarter of my expenses this summer, but I plan to make up the difference by working roughly sixteen hours a week outside of my internship as a barista. I've also been working around twenty hours a week all semester and have a little under \$2,000 saved. I plan to apply to other external grants to supplement the arts award, and will alert the committee if I receive any outside money.

**Arts involvement:**

When I arrived at UVA, I jumped immediately into the arts community. I took Acting I and Intro Poetry Writing my first semester, as well as taking on the role of props master in First Year Players (FYP)'s fall production of *Pippin*. I also applied and was accepted into Arts Grounds Guides. Second semester of first year, I took Costume Tech with Marcy Linton and Intro Fiction Writing. I performed as an Angel in FYP's production of *Anything Goes*, also serving the role of dance captain and costumes assistant. Throughout the semester, I also gave tours of the drama building and the creative writing department as an Arts Grounds Guide.

First semester of this year, I served as costume designer for FYP's *Into the Woods* and took my first intermediate fiction workshop with Micheline Marcom. This semester, I'm taking another intermediate fiction class with Professor Marcom as well as Directing I with David Dalton. I've also been working as head choreographer for Spectrum Theater's *Spring Awakening*.

Next year I look forward to possibly assistant directing for First Year Players and proposing a show to direct through Spectrum Theater.

Talent Portfolio:

Costumes for FYP's *Into the Woods*:



Choreography for "Mirror Blue Night," *Spring Awakening*:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1K8oSwjBcf1sYxKWWh55SalQDcdjCimyz>