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Rising 4th Year Grant Proposal

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*Italian Immersion: Study-Abroad, Photography, and Farming*

I. Overview

I realized recently that classes as early as when I was in middle school have been pushing me towards Italy, although I have never visited this heartland of my study. The push started with learning Latin in seventh grade (which fueled my first love for ancient Roman culture) and skyrocketed once I got to UVA. In college, I pushed forward linguistically in time and started learning Italian, and I plan on continuing to take Italian classes at UVA as long as my schedule allows. Last semester, my Italian class was structured around 20th century Italian film, which introduced me to some now-favorite movies such as *Roma città aperta*, *Ladri di biciclette*, and *L'avventura*. These films not only move me, but also influence how I create my cinematography projects.

Other classes in which I've learned about Italy include those in Art History (such as Age of Caravaggio, History of Architecture, and Art Since 1945,) as well as a classics course titled *Roman Civilization* that I easily consider one of my favorite classes I've taken at UVA. In this class, I learned about Ancient Rome's tumultuous history while reading a wide array of primary sources, including graffiti preserved in Pompeii, the only extant poetry by a female author, and a philosophical poem that struck me deeply - Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*. Throughout all of these classes, I have been generating quite a long list of Italian paintings, palazzi, churches, sculptures, cities, and ruins that I have to pay tribute to once I'm in Italy.

As a Studio Art / Photography and Art History double major who is learning Italian, it seemed especially propitious to me that there is a UVA photography and art history study-abroad trip that occurs in Italy. Led by Bill Wylie, who has agreed to be my mentor should I receive this grant, the study-abroad trip travels to Rome, Florence, and Venice while students learn about contemporary Italian art, photograph, and experience one of the most significant contemporary art exhibitions: the Venice Biennale. I think this study abroad trip will be incredibly fruitful not as a capstone, but a very significant milestone, for the studies in Italian art, language, culture, and architecture that have been brewing in me for almost a decade now. I also believe this program will be very catalytic for my photography, since what I am learning in art history courses tends to deeply affect my studio work philosophically and visually. In this program, I hope to take photos that, although occurring in Italy, are not overtly touristic. I am very interested in how being in a foreign country transforms the way I photograph. Up until the moment I step off the plane in Italy, this foreign country will have only existed as a collage in my mind from various sources such as photographs (art and otherwise,) classes, and media, meaning that my current perception of Italy is a world built up through diffused experiences of others and the byproducts of their creativity as opposed to first-hand experience.

This ties in beautifully with a concept that I think about frequently in art: all representation is an abstraction in that it distorts the reality it draws from. My understanding of Italy as a real place is hazy; like a film or a book of photos, the Italy in my mind is fragmentary, arbitrarily sectioned off and pushed

through a filter based on the information passed down to me. However, my mental perception of Italy *is* something I can compare with a real, physical experience of being there. Going to Italy will be a fascinating conceptual analogy for being able to enter the world of a film or photo book; a world that is referenced by images but inaccessible in real life. By traveling to Italy it is possible for me to step through that flat skewer of a photograph, to experience the San Carlino church, Caravaggio's paintings, Bernini's sculptures in St. Peter's, and the general milieu of the various regions - through first-person, experiential perception.

My art has grown more conceptual during my time at UVA, and I hope to use the study-abroad program this summer as time and space to continue that growth. Susan Sontag has claimed that the dissociative nature of photography turns every photographer into a tourist, even in their own homes, and while she meant this negatively, I plan on using my literal and conceptual role of tourist to further isolate the act of photography and consider it from a different perspective.

However, the study-abroad trip is not exclusively what I am requesting the Miller Art Scholar rising 4th-year grant for; after a month of guided learning and photography in Bill Wylie's program, I am planning on remaining in Italy for another month for an even more immersive experience. I have already purchased a membership to an organization called *WWOOF Italia*, which connects travellers with owners of small, organic, and family-owned farms who are interested in fostering a unique friendship while trading labor for room and board. The listings that intrigue me most on the *WWOOF Italia* website discuss a desire for symbiotic growth, learning about one another's cultures, teaching each other to cook culture-specific recipes, and mutually improving our language skills. I have already begun the process of contacting these hosts, and I have no doubt that this experience will vastly improve my language-speaking abilities as well as my understanding and appreciation of Italian culture, history, and art. Also, I am extremely excited about WWOOFing in terms of what that means for my grant project: since WWOOFing will allow me to remain in Italy relatively inexpensively, past the plane ticket and regional transportation I will be able to use the grant money exclusively for costs related to art.

The project that would evolve out of my time in Italy is a body of medium format film photographs from both my time during the study abroad program and my time WWOOFing; in the former I will challenge myself to be more conceptual in mainly black and white film I develop by hand, and in the latter I will aim to document this unique experience in color negative film that I will ship to New York to be developed at the end of my time in Italy.

From this semester constructing a handmade book for presenting my rising 3rd-year grant photos, I have realized how much I enjoy having a physical, bound version of my projects instead of loose collections of prints. Books are easy to share and present, and they are a very nice way of chronologically organizing my path as an artist. For the rising 4th-year grant, I am proposing creating another book following my experiences in Italy, with photographs, journal entries, and sketches, etc. For my outcome presentation in April 2020, I will have a handmade book to display as well as prints to install. I am not requesting the money to cover my tuition, but I would greatly appreciate the grant for covering other expenses such as my plane ticket, regional travel costs, film and development, and materials for constructing my book. Thank you for your time and consideration!

## II. Timeline

Spring 2019	Summer 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020
Purchase plane ticket Choose & contact WWOOF hosts Purchase supplies	Study-abroad WWOOF Photograph & develop	Scan film and select photos to print Construct book, make & insert prints, writing, and drawings	Complete book Present at the April 2020 Miller Art Scholar Outcome Presentation & Showcase event

## III. Budget

Item	Cost
Membership for WWOOF Italia	\$40
Average cost of a round-trip plane ticket from Nashville to Rome	\$1,680
Film (50 rolls of medium format Portra 400 and Kodak Tri-X)	\$329
Home-developing supplies in Italy for black and white film (chemicals, trays, tanks, reels, changing bag, etc)	\$270
Miscellaneous travel expenses in Italy (train tickets; museum passes)	\$300
Book-making supplies	\$150
Developing expenses for 25 rolls of medium format at LTI	\$200
Shipping (color film) to LTI from Italy	\$100
Printer paper	\$100

Total: \$3,169

This total surpasses the maximum \$3,000 allocated for the rising 4th-year Miller Arts Scholars grant, but I am planning on covering anything past the grant allotment with personal funds.

#### IV. Participation in the arts / Miller Art Scholars

I joined the Miller Arts Scholar program in the Spring of 2018, and I have since taken CASS 1010, received a rising 3rd-year grant, a Fall Minigrant, and am currently enrolled in CASS 1011 where we are discussing collaborative projects for the April 2019 Outcome Presentation and Showcase. Additionally, I am planning on running for Studio Art representative on the Miller Arts Scholar Exec team for next year!

I have been involved with the arts at UVA since my first semester here, when I took Drawing I before I was even considering majoring in Studio Art. Since then, I have decided to double major in Studio Art (concentrating in photography) and Art History, and I have taken classes in photography, cinematography, and drawing in Studio Art. In Art History, I have taken classes in modern, Italian Baroque, Buddhist, and photographic art history. Outside of classes, I have danced with UDC, I am a student DJ with WXTJ, and I am also taking a private violin lesson this semester. I recently joined the photography team with VMag and was also just hired by the UVA music department as a photographer for events put on by the music department.