

Project Overview Narrative
Miller Arts 4th Year Award Proposal
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Documentation and Distortion Through Film

Subject:

During my time at UVA, I have pursued film as a mostly creative endeavor, as a medium that allows me to invent very distinct worlds, stories, and characters, that exist mostly outside of any one established reality. The ability to do this is something that makes film, and art in general, so wonderful. However, the more I make, the more I realize how fascinating and beautiful the unmanufactured moments can be. With my 4th year award, I would like to explore film as a form of documentation.

Using a mix of film and digital cameras, I would like to conduct a series of environment-oriented film studies. This would involve travel to a variety of both rural and urban places. I am particularly interested in the ways that nature and technology come together, so would seek out spaces in which industrial and natural forces meet head on. The final products of this project would be two or three observational films, between six and ten minutes each.

I am also interested in the process by which something is documented. The mere act of putting a camera in front of something inherently diminishes the realness of the subject because it is being mediated through a lens. By minimizing or maximizing the presence of the thing doing the documenting I will also draw attention to the process of documentation itself and the ways in which film can enhance, transform, or distort the thing that is being observed.

In my own work, I find that my focus falls too heavily on action, rather than on observation. The camera is all too often focused on the character, rather than the environment. But I believe good films are a balance of both, and I think that a project like this will help me to exercise patience in my art. I have a tendency to rush, in both my writing and in my films, and in doing so I know I lose important moments. Learning to slow down and make space within the film for observation and reflection is just as important as any plot point or technical skill.

This project is so open ended that there are few ways in which it could go wrong. I think it is likely that this method of filmmaking will feel too slow for me, and is therefore not enjoyable in the same way that making my other films has been. If this turns out to be the case, I think it will be an excellent learning experience.

I believe that this project will help me to grow as a filmmaker, not only by broadening my range of subject matter, but also by expanding my understanding of the kinds of films it is possible to make. Working on projects that are less staged and more natural feels outside my comfort zone, but that seems both exciting and challenging.

Objectives: Film and edit 2-3 observational videos that examine a wide range of spaces. Learn to make environment-oriented, rather than subject-oriented, films that move at a slower pace.

Timeline:

- **June 2019:** Purchase Go-Pro.
- **June 2019- October 2019:** Travel and filming. Much of the filming will be done over the summer. I will be working in the Northeast so will be able to travel by car to a wide range of areas, including upstate New York, Philadelphia, and Connecticut. Possible filming locations also include small towns in Michigan, where much of my extended family lives, and Monhegan, Maine. As my schedule allows, I would film over the summer and review the footage/complete any last filming in the fall once I return to UVA for my fourth year.
- **November 2019- January 2020:** Editing and sound. This period would be for review and assemblage of all collected footage. I would then compose original sound, and the project would be complete by the end of January.
- **February 2020:** Outcome report. In February, I would reflect on the process and complete my outcome report.

Budget:

The budget for this project would be dedicated mostly to materials and travel. I would plan to purchase a GoPro, because of the ease with which it can be attached to a moving object. This ties back into the “minimize/maximize the presence of the thing that is documenting” part of the project. A GoPro would allow the camera to actually become part of the environment, which would allow for an enormous amount of freedom. I would also plan to film some footage using 16mm film, using the Ari-S cameras available through the film department. These cameras require 400ft magazines which cost about \$120 per roll. The cost of developing these rolls is similarly expensive, at about \$80 per roll. I would plan to shoot five magazines.

Any place I go to film would be within the United States, and therefore accessible by car.

Materials:

- Go Pro Fusion: \$500
- DSLR Camera: 0\$ (already own)
- Film: \$1000 (cost of film and development per roll: \$200 x 5 magazines)
- Ari S Camera: \$0 (borrowed from film dept.)

Expenses:

- Travel
 - Gas: \$500
 - Room and Board: \$1000 (although much of the housing will be free, possible trips to Philadelphia and Connecticut would require lodging, which averages about \$100/night)

Total Proposed Budget: \$3,000

Evidence of Participation:

At UVA I am involved in a number of arts related groups and organizations. Academically, I am a Studio Art and Creative Writing double major. I have spent countless hours working on group and personal film projects for Kevin Everson's film classes and volunteered as a camera assistant on his most recent film. My two years as a member of Kevin's classes have been some of the most time intensive but fulfilling creative experiences of my life, and have taught me more about artistic collaboration than I could have imagined before coming to college. As a member of the Area Program in Literary Prose, I have also participated in a wide range of readings, workshops, and literary competitions that have allowed me to contribute to UVA's writing community

Outside of school, I have been deeply involved with V Magazine, UVA's student-run arts, fashion, and culture publication. I began as a writer, and now serve as Features Editor, overseeing all written content published by the magazine, as well as assisting with photoshoots, styling, layout design, and the production of video content. In my fourth year, I will serve as the magazine's Editor-in-Chief. I have also been involved with WXTJ Student Radio, and am a Virginia Museum of Fine Art 2019-2020 Undergraduate Fellow. I document my personal art, mostly drawings, illustrations, and digital art, on an Instagram account called @midnightcreaturz which I started during my first year at UVA.

I joined the Miller Arts Scholar program in the spring of my second year, and was awarded a third-year grant that same semester. I have used my award to create three short films, which will be presented at the outcome presentation in April. I was also awarded a Fall 2018 Minigrant to complete a project in painting. I participated in the Fall Miller Arts one-credit seminar class and will complete the second part of the seminar in the spring of my fourth year, as I am currently studying abroad in Amsterdam so was unable to participate this spring. I am currently working on a design for the 2019 t-shirt! The Miller Arts community has been a consistent source of inspiration and encouragement during my time at UVA. Thank you for your time in reviewing my proposal. I am very grateful to be a member of such a talented, thoughtful, and driven community of artists.