

**Fourth Year Arts Award:
Two Weeks to Create Colorado Landscapes**

Presented to: Faculty Advisory Board
Prepared by: Ruoyun Susan Xie, Miller Arts Scholar

February 26, 2016

Proposal

In my fourth year as a Miller Arts Scholar, I hope to further my studies in photography through two workshops in landscape photography and bookmaking at Anderson Ranch in Aspen, Colorado from Aug 8th to Aug 19th 2016. A \$4,240 Fourth Year Award would allow me to build on my Third Year Award, which introduced me to the art of photography.

In an attempt to condense the full history of photography into one year's time, I started shooting with a pinhole camera last summer in Italy, moved on to a 35 mm Pentax in the fall, and am now producing images on my i-phone for Intro to New Media. Of course, to thoroughly learn a centuries-old tradition in three semesters is impossibly ambitious. Yet, the project was as much about the limits to the reach of my exposure—as a student, with a strict budget, under a specific time frame—as the quality of my photographs. In retrospect, these limits have revealed three holes in my education: a means to capture large amounts of information, a means to present my work, and a means to receive valuable feedback.

I keep an entry in my i-phone notes app titled "Observations" to remind me of all the various images I could capture if only I had the right camera, with the right controls, under the right light, at the right time. Some entries envision the realization of everyday details, such as *All trees are chandeliers* and *Cloud wisps like Arabic script rowing through the sky*; other entries tell narratives where *The trees march north, slumped over, luggage and all, like the Japanese Internment and the Trail of Tears, on either side of route 91, CT. Lengthy, delicate models line the center isle, route 15*. I do not want to fall under the trap of bigger is better, but I do want to learn more tools to flesh out my visions, shape more details, and deliberate more colors in ways that my i-phone does not allow. This summer, I hope to produce high quality color images of the American West in Eliot Dudik's workshop, "Exploring Space: landscape in relation to place." To see Ansel Adams's grand landscapes is the dream; to capture unique images in an objectively beautiful region is the challenge. I hope for a chance to embrace this challenge in a week at the ranch where I can fully dedicate my time to waiting for the right lights and to experiment with the right controls on the right camera. If I could master more functions, I would follow through on more ideas, flesh out more observations, and create more images.

I hope to learn "The Art of Bookmaking" with Mr. Dudik the following week. After printing a number of images this past year, I have accumulated a box full of photography. However, as I build my portfolio, I will need to consider intentional modes of presentation. As bookmaking is one of the primary ways photographers communicate their work, I see a lesson in bookmaking as the necessary next step in my artistic development. It works out that the sequence of the two workshops allows me to use my landscapes from the first week to craft an artist's book in the second.

After two consecutive workshops with the same instructor, I hope to build a mentorship that will provide me a source of valuable feedback. Two weeks with one instructor will improve

not only my work this summer but also my growth as an artist. Between my time in Italy and Photo I at UVa, I have come to hugely appreciate my student-teacher relationship with Professor Bill Wylie. A professor who knows my works and sees my development has proven to be invaluable. Conversation with an established artist has allowed me to learn from years of experience and test new ideas. I have few such relationships and hope to build more. Since Mr. Dudik teaches nearby at William and Mary, it is highly possible for me to maintain long-term communications and gain another mentor.

At the end of the two weeks at Anderson Ranch, I hope to have a series of landscape photographs, an artist's book, and a new mentor. In my outcome report and presentation next April, I plan to explain what I learned and to show my physical works.

Lastly, I hope my specific interests in the two workshops as well as the mentorship benefit from taking both have made a compelling case for spending two weeks in Colorado and \$1,240 in excess of the maximum award. Anderson Ranch offers the two workshops as a package, giving a twenty percent discount on the bookmaking workshop for students who attend both. I look forward to finally spending time out west, and considering the long distance to Anderson Ranch, it makes sense to stay for two weeks. I will also gain the weekend in between to further explore and create more images. Additionally, my personal goals for taking photography in Colorado relate to my fascination with mountainous landscapes. This fascination stems back to a childhood where I failed to grow bored from watching my Chinese grandfather paint hundreds of ink wash peaks. Despite the cliché, going from watching my grandfather paint to producing my own full color images of the great Rockies seems to me an artistic fulfillment of the American Dream. Though not explicit, my heritage adds depth to my artist's book, which I eventually hope to gift to my grandfather. I ask for the full \$4,240 to attend both workshops. If I receive at least \$3,000, I will attend one workshop and lose the synergies from taking both.

Timeline

Arrive in Colorado 8/7/2016

Workshop 1: Exploring Space 8/8-8/12/2016

Workshop 2: The Art of Bookmaking 8/15-8/19/2016

Return to Charlottesville 8/20

Outcome Report and Presentation 04/2016

Budget

Activity		Cost
Workshop 8/8-8/12: "Exploring Space: landscape in relation to place"	Tuition	\$1,145.00
	Studio Fee	\$100.00
	Registration	\$45.00
	Lodging (Meals Included)	\$706.20
	Total	\$1,996.20
Workshop 8/15-8/19: "The Art of Bookmaking"	20% off \$1145 tuition	\$916.00
	Lodging (Meals Included)	\$525.72
	Total	\$1,441.72
Transportation	Round trip flight*	\$800.00
Total		\$4,237.92

*Estimate for airfare from Charlottesville, Virginia to Aspen, Colorado is based on current American Airlines and Delta flights, which range from \$650 to \$1,300.

Amendments to my Fourth Year Arts Award Proposal

Presented to: Faculty Advisory Board

Prepared by: Ruoyun Susan Xie, Miller Arts Scholar

Date: April 17, 2016

Title: Portraits

Proposal:

After speaking with Professor Bill Wylie, we decided that Amy Arbus's "The Personal Narrative" workshop (8/15-8/19) at Anderson Ranch will be most rewarding. Amy Arbus's work is published internationally and collected by the Museum of Modern Art among many other notable institutions. Her "introspective workshop," as described on the website, teaches students how to use visual symbols to uncover personal truths through digital photography and digital printmaking. The workshop will push me to pursue new subject matter with new techniques. I will not enroll in any other workshop.

Instead of taking a workshop at Anderson Ranch that first week (8/8-8/12), I will spend the summer working on independent projects with a digital camera. The workshop requires that students bring their own digital cameras and a portfolio of 20-30 images. I do not own a digital camera, so I plan on investing in a Canon EOS 70D. Like learning bookmaking, I believe investing in a digital camera is also a "next step in my artistic development," as written in my original proposal. I will be using this tool to produce work for many years. With this camera, I hope to produce high quality color images prior to the workshop to supplement my portfolio of black and white film pictures. I am currently brainstorming project ideas. I may shoot portraits of my extended family from China who will be visiting this summer. As the child of immigrant parents, my extended family in China and I have complex relationships that I may attempt to explore through photography (we are close through blood ties but emotionally distant). My goal for this independent summer project is to explore the subject matter and medium prior to the workshop as to have more informed questions and comments during my week in Colorado. After the workshop, I will reevaluate and perhaps rework my original portraits. My best images from the summer and from the workshop will contribute to my portfolio. My long-term goal, not necessarily related to this grant, is to have a photography show during my fourth year.

Timeline:

I will make images from late May to early August and attend "The Personal Narrative" workshop from August 15-19, 2016.

Budget:

Activity		Cost
Anderson Ranch Workshop 8/15- 8/19: "The Personal Narrative"	Tuition	\$1,145.00
	Studio Fee	\$100.00
	Registration	\$45.00
	Lodging (Meals Included)*	\$1,315.32
	Total	\$2,605.32
Digital Photography	Canon EOS 70D DSLR Camera with 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 STM Lens	\$1,299.00
Transportation	Round trip flight	\$800.00
Total		\$4,704.32

*The price for lodging and meals rose from when I first contacted Anderson Ranch