

Karen Zipor

Miller Arts Scholars

Third Year Award Results

March 19, 2021

A Summer of Industry Experience & Learning (From Home)

Proposal Outcome:

I'd like to thank the Miller Arts Scholars, as, without their funding, I would not have been able to strengthen my skills as an actor and filmmaker over the past year. I'd also like to thank my faculty mentor, Dave Dalton, who is the Drama Department's Assistant Professor on acting and directing. His mentorship on many projects, such as *Love & Information*, especially helped me expand my directorial and filmmaking skills.

At first, I received funding to hone my craft as an actor or get real-world experience in the film industry. I wanted to either go to NYC to attend the Stella Adler Summer Conservatory Program, or go to LA to intern at a film studio. Unfortunately, when I wrote my original proposal in mid-March 2020, I greatly underestimated the severity and long-term nature of this pandemic. I was hopeful things would return to normal by the summer, but alas, things did not work out that way. I deferred my admission in Stella Adler to the Summer of 2021 and would reapply to the film internship for the following year.

However, the standstill nature of the world did not stop me in my pursuit to learn more filmmaking and editing skills. So, knowing I'd be spending a lot more time in front of the computer, I instead used the funding to purchase a strong computer with a NVIDIA graphics card and a high-resolution monitor that could handle the intensity of film graphics and rendering times of animation. In addition, I bought an Adobe Creative Suite subscription, which is needed to gain access to essential programs like Premiere Pro, Photoshop, and After Effect. All of which, I'm proud to say, I've gotten exceptionally good at using. I used this computer setup for countless projects over this year: creating my 360 short film, the animated graphics for a web series, editing for *Love & Information*, and animation on Maya. Without a computer of this strength or this software, I wouldn't have been able to achieve a higher caliber of work and so immensely expand my portfolio. Below are some stills from multiple projects throughout the year. You can also view a film and animation reel that highlights my work at [this link](#).



Stills from short films I made in the animation class with Maya. Rendered using V-Ray.

In addition, I bought the software, Final Draft 11 Edu, which is a one-time purchase to write plays and screenplays formatted to the industry standard. With this software, I could write from home and improve my storytelling skills — even finishing a One-Act play that will premiere at the Drama Department’s 2021 New Works Festival! Below is the title and summary.

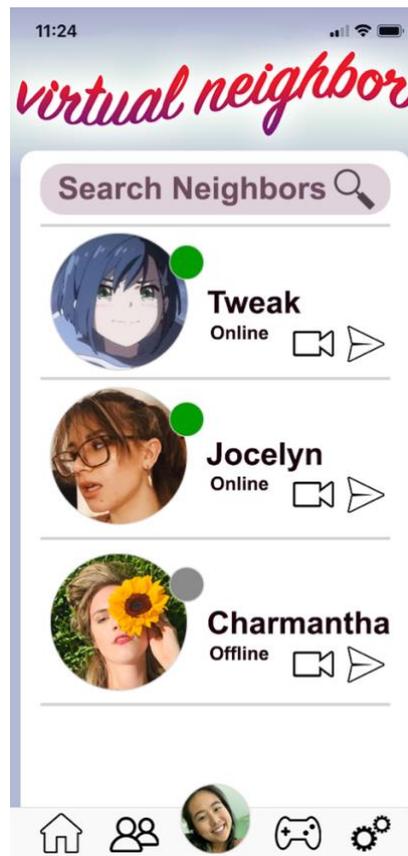
A Half-Hour Ride North

A One-Act Audio Play by Karen Zipor

SUMMARY:

Claire urgently needs to drive David, her troubled childhood friend, to Canada. During the last 30 minutes of their ride, they discuss their old adventures and personal trauma — all while Claire grapples with if she's still a righteous person after committing a murder.

Finally, although I was home over the summer, exciting project opportunities arose. UVA Alum, Marcha Kia, reached out to me to create the graphics for her web-series, *Quaranteens*. The task detailed making a fictional app, called Virtual Neighbor, that the characters could interact on, and drama would ensue. Using my graphic design and app development knowledge, I designed a user interface for this fictional social media app (and even hard-coded it!). You can see a walkthrough demo of my fully implemented app [here](#) or watch the comedy web-series it was created for [here](#).



Still of the fictional app I designed and coded for the web-series, Quaranteens.



Still from Love and Information. Illustrations drawn using the Apple pen. Editing done using the high-performance Windows PC, monitor, and access to Adobe Creative Suite.

Summary:

Surprisingly, today I am back in the same place I was last year when I wrote this original proposal. I've applied to the same internship in LA and am a finalist again. In addition, I was accepted to the Stella Adler Summer Conservatory once again. What I've learned most from this past year is that the future is unpredictable — especially the life of an artist. It is hard to predict when a once-in-a-lifetime project will arise and when an opportunity will fall through the cracks. But regardless, the most important thing to do as an artist is to continue to make art. I can definitely say that my technique as a writer, filmmaker, and actress profoundly grew this past year. And in the end, there is no better way to hone your craft than to hit the ground running and by simply creating.

Budget Outcome:

Expense	Description	Total (Estimates)
Windows PC	Contains a NVIDIA card that has fast graphic-processing capabilities.	\$1122.54
Monitor	Large monitor with high-resolution and vibrant, accurate colors.	\$317.99
Apple Pen	Connects to the iPad like a drawing tablet. Allows me to draw digital artwork.	\$104.94
Ring Light + Stand	Necessary for acting gigs at home and filming self-tapes.	\$69.99
Mic + Adapter	A high-range mic that can plug into the iPhone and be placed on the ring light.	\$39.95 + \$7.99
Singing Straw	A warm-up tool for singers that is quiet, but effective. Great for not disturbing roommates.	\$36.58
Final Draft 11 Edu	The industry standard for writing screenplays & plays. A one-time purchase.	\$99.99
Apple Laptop	A needed upgrade for handling processer-heavy Computer Science software & balancing online school.	\$1143.74
Total Cost:		\$2,943.71