

John Barnes

Miller Arts Scholars Minigrant Outcome Report

Let's Get Physical: Shooting on 16mm Film

Intro

I received funding to make a short noir film with black and white film 16mm stock. Additionally, I also received funding to experiment with shooting on color film stock. As stated in my proposal, Kevin Everson's Introduction to Cinematography course initially sparked my interest in shooting physical film.

Black and White Noir Film Results

I had originally intended on shooting a noir comedy titled *Mission: Admissions*. I ended up writing a 15-page script with heavy dialogue and revised it multiple times. However, before I ordered film stock, Professor Everson informed me that our course would not be covering sound until the Spring semester. Although I had experience with sound design in filmmaking, I had never made a project that was shot on physical film and required live audio recording for dialogue. For these reasons, I decided to pivot to making a silent noir film.

I was initially unsure of what I would make my silent film about. However, after viewing Calista Lyon's *Breaking Water* exhibit in Ruffin Hall which featured old CRT TVs, I was immediately inspired to make a film about camera surveillance. I also thought the circle of CRT TVs would provide an interesting visual. I decided on the title *surveillance* for this project.

Professor Everson also informed me that I could order one 400-foot roll instead of the 5 individual 100-foot rolls outlined in my budget. This 400-foot roll would save time since I would not need to switch out the film stock for every 100 feet shot during production. Since my silent film storyboard had fewer shots compared to my original script with dialogue, I did not need to order the full 500 feet of Black and White film initially outlined in my proposal. Additionally, I also had to order one 100-foot color film stock. I had planned on shooting visuals with colorful objects like balloons while outside in the sun. Professor Everson suggested I order the Kodak Vision3 500T color film roll since that film stock is meant to be shot primarily outdoors.

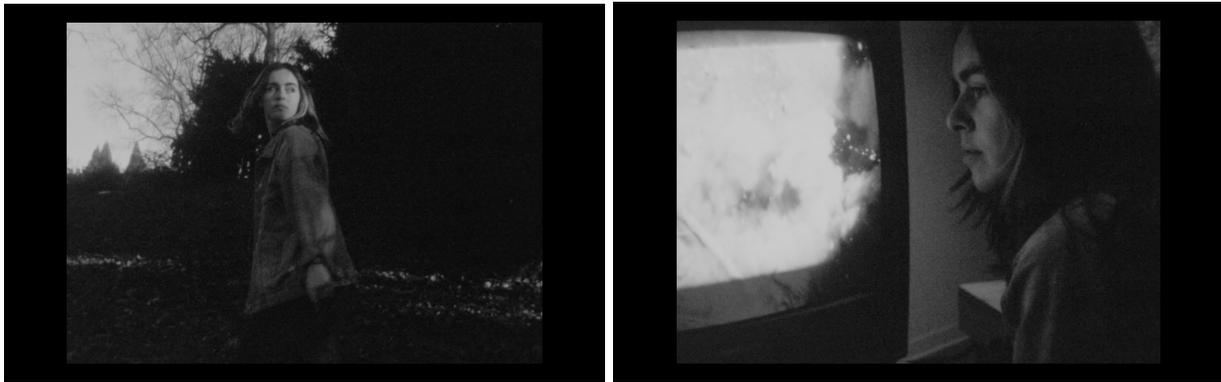
Production for the black-and-white noir film went smoother than my previous filmmaking endeavors, mostly because I did not have to worry about sound monitoring and I could fully focus on the visual aspect of filmmaking. In my past filmmaking experiences, I usually acted as a director and collaborated with a cinematographer to shoot my films. However, for this project, I worked mostly as a cinematographer and actor for the film visuals. Since I was occasionally on camera, I would have my fellow collaborator stand on a mark to represent me. Then, I would set up my framing of the shot in advance. After I set up my shot, we would switch positions. The shot always came out how I envisioned it in my head, except for the occasional lighting mistake.

My biggest takeaway from shooting *surveillance* is that shooting in slow motion will affect your aperture and cause the shot to appear darker. Therefore, you need to shoot in a bright

enough environment to account for this darkening. Fortunately, the space we were in for the CRT TV sequence had just enough light to capture the visuals I wanted.

I finished editing *surveillance* in December and felt like something was missing. I decided I wanted to enlist a fellow filmmaker/musician, Eden Prosser, to help with scoring my film. However, since I asked for assistance after finishing my editing, my post-production process has taken longer. Eden is finished recording the score by late February. Thus, another takeaway from this process is to contact potential collaborators with more advanced notice. Here is the [link](#) to the final edited film.

Stills from *surveillance*



Color Film Results

Despite planning for a sunny day, it was overcast when it came time to shoot my color film footage. Fortunately, the visuals came out great! I really enjoyed playing around with color and attempting to make each shot as visually interesting as possible. A big technical lesson I learned is that gray cards and light meters are still used to determine the best aperture when shooting with color, not just black-and-white film. (For context, gray cards feature a middle “gray #5 which is the ideal color for shooting on black and white film). Additionally, I learned how to color-correct 16mm film footage on premiere when editing. I think the shots came out great because of the gray card! Here is the [link](#) to my edited color film footage!

Color Film Stills



Final Thoughts/Future Plans

Overall, I feel like I’ve grown immensely as a cinematographer and I hope to use these new lighting and technical skills with my next big narrative project. In the future, I know it’s important to be more realistic about the potential films I want to shoot. Additionally, because of

the change in film roll purchases, I am able to submit my work to more film festivals. I plan on submitting *surveillance* to the festivals outlined in my expenditures below. All of these festivals have March deadlines so there should not be any issues with submitting the completed film. I hope to continue my work with physical film in Kevin Everson's class throughout the Spring Semester.

Expenditures/Purchases

Item	Quantity	Cost
Kodak Double-X Black-and-White Negative Film 7222 16mm (400 ft roll)	1	\$154.88
KODAK VISION3 500T Color Negative Film 16mm (100 ft roll)	1	\$44
Film Development from CINELAB	1	\$100 (<i>Black and White Roll</i>)
Film Development from COLORLAB	1	\$25 (<i>Color Roll</i>)
Cannes Indie Shorts Awards <i>Student Shorts Category</i> (FilmFreeway Festival Entry Fee)	1	\$40 (planned submission upon score completion for <i>surveillance</i>)
Austin Revolution Film Festival <i>University Shorts Category</i> (FilmFreeway Festival Entry Fee)	1	\$30 (planned submission upon score completion for <i>surveillance</i>)
Tribeca Film Festival <i>Shorts Category</i> (FilmFreeway Festival Entry Fee)	1	\$30 (Student Discount Price) (planned submission upon score completion for <i>surveillance</i>)
HollyShorts Film Festival <i>Student Category</i> (FilmFreeway Festival Entry Fee)	1	\$60 (planned submission upon score completion for <i>surveillance</i>)
Nashville Film Festival <i>NextGen Student Competition</i>	1	\$35 (planned submission upon score completion for <i>surveillance</i>)
TOTAL COST		\$518.88 (<u>\$18.88 out of pocket expenses</u>)