

Immersing in Contemporary Dance: A Journey to Copenhagen's Dance Scene

Summary

I am requesting \$3,000 from the Miller Arts Scholars Arts Award to support my study abroad experience in Copenhagen, Denmark, during the spring semester of 2026. The funding will help me deepen my dance practice by covering the costs of dance classes, performances, workshops, transportation, and equipment for a screendance project. Copenhagen's buzzing dance scene, with its incredible companies and creative energy, feels like the perfect place for me to truly grow as an artist. It's a city that's alive with inspiration, and I'm excited to dive into its vibrant community, challenge my technical abilities, and unlock new creative possibilities.

Why?

Dance has been my passion since I was five, and I've explored everything from ballet and hip-hop to contemporary, ballet, modern and jazz. My time at the dance conservatory in France was a turning point—it was there that I began to see dance not just as a sport, but as a true art form. I started learning about the history of dance, the work of choreographers, German Expressionism, and dance theater. It was no longer just about the steps—it was about the story, the emotion, and the artistry behind the movement.

At UVA, I've been challenged to move beyond my comfort zone, whether it was experimenting with new choreographic styles, learning to bring intention to every movement, or discovering how my body responds to different forms of expression. These experiences have made me dig deeper into what dance really means to me, and I'm constantly inspired to keep searching for new ways to grow as both a dancer and a creator.

Copenhagen, with its rich dance history and innovative companies like the Royal Danish Ballet and Danish Dance Theatre, is the perfect place to build on what I've learned at UVA. The chance to see groundbreaking performances like *The Leaning Tree*, which blends contemporary dance and visual art, excites me. I'm eager to immerse myself in this community, learn from the artists here, and continue growing as a dancer.

Dance Classes and Workshops

During my time in Copenhagen, I plan to study at several renowned dance studios, including Dance Maze, Happy Feet, and SCENEINDGANGEN. These institutions offer comprehensive programs with exceptional instructors and state-of-the-art facilities that will allow me to explore contemporary dance further and refine my skills.

-> [Dance Maze](#) offers a diverse selection of classes, which is an exciting opportunity for me to challenge myself across different styles. I am particularly excited to participate in their classes with live music, as I believe the dynamic energy of live accompaniment creates a unique experience for dancers. Additionally, I look forward to learning Flamenco, which will expose me to a new movement vocabulary and cultural style. The variety of classes offered at Dance Maze will allow me to further develop my technique and creativity, while the chance to study with different professors will broaden my artistic perspective and enhance my growth as a dancer and choreographer.

-> [SCENEINDGANGEN](#) offers an very diverse range of classes, including modern, lyrical jazz, ballet, and modern. I'm especially excited to study Graham-inspired modern, which emphasizes contraction and release, emotional intensity, and strong, angular movements. These different classes will allow me to explore different aspects of dance, broaden my skillset, and deepen my understanding of various styles.

-> [Happy Feet](#) will expose me to Lindy Hop and other social dance styles, offering an invaluable learning experience in partnering and collaborative work. These styles are essential for building communication, improvisation, and adaptability as a dancer.

Performances and Artistic Growth

Copenhagen offers an exciting array of performances, making it a global hub for dance. The [Danish Dance Theatre](#) is known for its avant-garde works, often blending contemporary dance with visual arts, making it a rich source of inspiration for my own choreography and creative work. I am eager to attend their performances and learn from some of the best contemporary choreographers and dancers in the world. The [Uppercut Dance Theater](#) blends breakdancing, acrobatics, and contemporary dance, providing a unique fusion of styles. The [Pantomimeteatret at Tivoli Gardens](#), known for its diverse programming that combines traditional pantomime, ballet, and contemporary dance, offers another exciting opportunity for artistic growth. [Dansehallerne](#), a prominent dance venue in Copenhagen, is a hub for both local and international dance artists, regularly hosting innovative performances that push the boundaries of contemporary dance. These performances will offer me invaluable insight into the diverse artistic trends and practices happening in the dance world today, and I am thrilled to learn from and be inspired by the incredible talent in Copenhagen's vibrant dance scene.

Screendance Project and Documentation

One of my main goals during my time in Copenhagen is to develop a screendance project that explores the powerful relationship between movement and visual media. Having previously completed the **Screendance course** with Professor Kim Brooks Mata at UVA, I gained invaluable experience in integrating dance with cinematography. This project would be an amazing opportunity to build upon the skills I developed in that class, particularly in how to capture dance with intention and creativity.

After researching several options, I am considering purchasing the [Canon Vixia HF G70 UHD 4K Camcorder \(Black\)](#), a camera that offers exceptional video quality and versatility, perfect for capturing dance in both dynamic and controlled environments. Along with the camcorder, I will purchase a tripod, memory cards, and necessary accessories to ensure I can document my creative process with the highest quality.

This investment in professional-grade equipment will not only enhance my technical filmmaking skills but also provide me with the tools necessary to produce high-quality work for my portfolio. The equipment funded by the grant will serve as a long-term resource, supporting future screendance projects and offering the opportunity to experiment with new ways of capturing movement through film.

Contingency Plan for Study Abroad

In the event that my study abroad application for Copenhagen does not go through, I will explore alternative options for studying dance internationally. My faculty mentor, Kim Brooks Mata, is supportive and willing to collaborate with me to adjust my plan, whether that involves taking dance classes at other institutions or planning to work on my screendance project in a different location. I will also work closely with the Study Abroad Office to explore other opportunities for spring study abroad, ensuring that my goals for the experience remain unaffected.

Timeline

- **Summer (Pre-departure):**

-> Purchase equipment: Buy the camera (Canon Vixia HF G70 UHD 4K Camcorder), tripod, memory cards, and necessary accessories for the screendance project. Familiarize myself with the equipment and practice using it.

- **Fall Semester (While at UVA):**

-> Research and contact dance studios: Research Dance Maze, Happy Feet, and SCENEINDGANGEN to understand the types of classes and workshops they will offer next semester.

-> Research performance venues: Look into the performance schedules for local and international events in Copenhagen for the spring semester.

- **Winter : (Before leaving)**

-> Finalize class schedule: Confirm class schedule for dance studios and workshops in Copenhagen.

-> Finalize performance schedule: Confirm which performances attend during semester abroad.

- **Spring Semester (While Abroad in Copenhagen):**

-> Take dance classes and attend workshops.

-> Working on the screendance project, filming segments and documenting the creative process.

-> Attend performances by local and international artists.

-> Share clips or excerpts from the screendance project, or provide a brief video discussing the experiences thus far, to be shared at the Miller Arts Scholars Outcome Presentation in April 2026.

- **Summer and Early Fall Semester (Post-abroad):**

-> Complete filming for the screendance project and finalize the film.

-> Submit the screendance film for UVA's dance concert.

-> Present the screendance work at the Miller Arts Scholars Outcome Presentation in Spring 2027

Evidence of Participation in the Arts

Dance has been at the heart of my life since I was five, and my time at the University of Virginia has only deepened my passion for it.

My journey began with Dance Improvisation in my first year, which inspired me to pursue a dance minor. This class helped me embrace spontaneity and improvisation, teaching me how to use movement as a tool for personal expression. It encouraged me to push boundaries, take risks, and connect more deeply with my body and others, showing me how dance can be a personal and creative practice.

Dance Composition allowed me to further explore choreography and structure. I learned to translate improvisation into intentional, choreographed movements and discovered how to use dance to convey emotion and tell a story. In Screendance, I learned how to merge dance and film, experimenting with angles, lighting, and editing to capture dance in a new way. This opened up new possibilities for me as a choreographer and expanded how I think about movement and its impact.

This semester, Somatic Practices and Research has deepened my connection to my body, teaching me to move more mindfully and with greater intention. This course has helped me express more emotionally and connect with my movements in a more personal way.

Through the Miller Arts Scholars Program, particularly in CASS 1010, I've connected with artists from various disciplines, broadening my understanding of how dance fits within the wider artistic world. These discussions have helped me refine my practice and think about dance in a more holistic, cross-disciplinary way.

Beyond my academic coursework, my involvement in the University Dance Club (UDC) has been a significant part of my UVA experience. As a Choreographer and Executive Board Member, I have the opportunity to blend my passion for dance with leadership and organizational skills. I choreograph pieces for the club's showcases, often working with groups of 12-15 dancers, and I lead weekly rehearsals to ensure the pieces are well-rehearsed and polished for performance. This role has allowed me to push my creative boundaries, experimenting with new choreographic styles and guiding dancers through the process of bringing those ideas to life.

In addition to my choreographic work, I serve as the Publicity Chair for UDC, overseeing all communications, social media, and event promotion. I manage the club's presence on various platforms, including designing promotional materials for showcases, auditions, and workshops. Through this role, I've gained valuable experience in digital marketing, event planning, and team leadership. It has also strengthened my ability to engage with the wider dance community at UVA, helping to raise awareness of our work and connect with other artists on campus.

My time at UDC has been an essential part of my journey at UVA, allowing me to grow as both a dancer and a leader. It's taught me how to manage multiple responsibilities, collaborate with a diverse group of dancers, and balance creative vision with practical execution. This experience has reinforced my love for dance and inspired me to continue sharing my passion with others, both on and off the stage.

Dance Portfolio

Screendance Final Project – Escape
Filmed and Edited by Alicia Kesting-Kim
Dancer : Naomi Diener
Music : Jonny Cody

<https://youtu.be/5DhfQHuPg38?si=AzowiEDopN0QB1dT>

University Dance Club Fall Showcase 2024
Choreographed by Alicia Kesting-Kim – Layers of Motion

<https://youtu.be/HH-KcmBNnUM?si=j0WTpOcJC9Ah7eUT>



Miller Arts Scholars Budget Template

attending dance classes and workshops

	item description	Unit cost (DKK)	Quantity	Total cost (DKK)	Total cost (USD)	link to prices and membership
Dance Maze Membership	10 classes per month	895	3	2685	388	https://www.dancemaze.dk
Happy Feet Lindy Hop	8-week course for Lindy Hop at Happy Feet	890	2	1780	267	https://happyfeetstudio.dk/registration-and-prices/
Scherehdengen Dance Classes	10 pass classes	950	1	950	137	https://www.scherehdengen.dk/prices
<i>Total</i>					792	

attending performances by local and international artists

	item description	Unit cost (DKK)	Quantity	Total cost (DKK)	Total cost (USD)	link to performances
Performance Tickets	Average cost of performances	350	3-6 (depends on number of performances)	1050-2100	152-300	https://kejtcenter.dk/en/shows
<i>Total</i>					152-300	https://www.bhhphotovideo.com/city/koebenhavn-hovedstadssommet-1694/musical-og-kejtcenter-142/dance-1655/

transportation for attending dance classes and performances

	item description	Unit cost (USD)	Quantity	Total cost	Total cost (USD)	link to metro
Metro	weekly metro fare for transportation	150	12	1800	270	https://m.dk/en/
<i>Total</i>					270	
Screensdance	item description	Unit Cost (USD)	Quantity	Total Cost (USD)		https://www.bhhphotovideo.com/c/product/1725870-REG/canon_57346002_vixia_hf_g70_4hd.html
Canon Vixia HF G70 UHD 4K Camcorder (Black)	Camera for screensdance	1099	1	1099		
Magnus TR-13 Travel Tripod with Dual-Action Ball Head (62.5")	Tripod for screensdance	75	1	75		https://www.bhhphotovideo.com/c/product/1692696-REG/sandisk_sdsdx128e_ancin_128gb_extreme_pro_ufs_i.html
Sandisk 128GB Extreme PRO UHS-I SDXC Memory Card	Memory card	19.99	2	39.98		https://www.bhhphotovideo.com/c/product/1559836-REG/samsung_mn_pex100_16gb_17_portable_ssd.html
Samsung TTB T7 Portable SSD (Titan Gray)	Hard Drive	99	1	99		
<i>Total</i>					1312.98	

Total between \$2526 and \$2675