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Miller Arts Scholars  
3<sup>rd</sup> Year Arts Award:  
Project Outcome

### **Creatures of Solitude**

In the Spring of 2018, I proposed a series of films centering around solitude in different forms. Three short films, called, *Lucy*, *A Red Window in a Dark House*, and *The Gardener* are the products of this project. Based on a previous long term drawing project called *Midnight Creatures*, *Creatures of Solitude* has allowed me to expand my exploration of the fantastic into the realm of film. To portray internal emotions in a visible, external way, I used paint, costumes, and a variety of editing techniques, as well as a mixture of film and digital cameras. Though connected conceptually, each film is meant to stand stylistically alone.



16mm film still from *Lucy*

The filming process for this series was much slower than I expected, spanning nearly nine months when I thought it would take four. This was partly due to the fact that I began editing each film almost immediately. Taking time to work with each one individually, and correct any errors before moving on to the next, proved extremely useful and allowed me to view each film as a unique entity. Each one stands alone as its own vision of solitude, sometimes ecstatic, sometimes obsessive, sometimes transformative.

Given that these films are mostly free of dialogue, they depend instead on the calculated use of color and sound to get the thoughts and feelings of the character across. Putting this kind of

pressure on the aesthetics of the film, rather than on the plot, allowed me to push my cinematography skills into new places.

I was also able to experiment with space, particularly in II, where the environment is extremely claustrophobic, and the coloring is aggressively red. In making this film, I feel that I learned so much about how to develop a meaningful environment that reflects or symbolizes what is at the heart of a work.



digital still from *A Red Window in a Dark House*

The most difficult part of this project was translating emotion into plot. Films I and III are more plot oriented while II is more experimental. I learned that for me, color is the most important thing when it comes to emotion. Amping it way up, or turning it way down, allows the world of the film to become separate from the real world, and therefore transports the viewer into a totally constructed space.

I think the biggest success of this project was the use of fantasy and surrealist elements. I have long been interested in incorporating more strangeness into my work, but this project proved to me that fantasy and emotion are deeply intertwined in film. Connecting things that wouldn't ordinarily be connected, or using physical objects to symbolize other internal conditions, felt like a natural way to demonstrate what was going on with a character. I will continue to use these techniques in my future films.

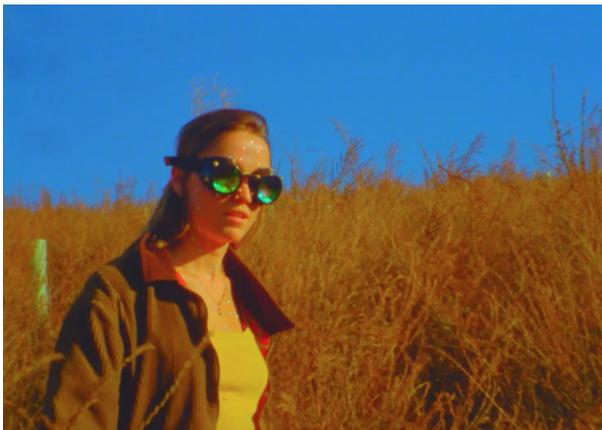
I deeply enjoyed working on these films, and feel that I learned a lot about my own editing process. This project pushed me on the audio engineering front, by again, forcing me to be intentional with the sounds I used. Building the sound environments for these films felt very new and scary at times, but I ended up loving the stuff that didn't feel totally comfortable. Doing

films without dialogue is difficult and I think that after this project I'd like to try making some more narrative, dialogue-based work.



16mm film still from *Lucy*

I feel incredibly grateful to the Miller Arts Community for making this project possible. I was able to make some beautiful things and hone my craft in many meaningful ways. All three parts of *Creatures of Solitude* can be found on my Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/kiaw>



16mm film stills from *Lucy*