

Jakob H. Cansler  
Artists Minigrant Outcome - Spring 2019  
“Directing a Staged Reading”

Over the past semester, I set out to gain more experience in directing in two parts. Firstly, I intended to expose myself to more plays by ordering eighteen scripts for plays I had not already read. I also set out to direct a staged reading of the play *Collected Stories* by Donald Marguiles. After having completed both of those things, I definitely feel that I have increased my experience in directing and have grown as an artist.

### **Project Findings**

The first part of this project was to order eighteen scripts for plays I have not read but could potentially be interested in directing one day. I successfully ordered all of these scripts in mid-October, and since then worked my way through half of them. A few stood out to me as plays that I would be interested in directing one day. *Democracy* by Michael Frayn tells an extremely interesting true story about a German politician who grew to extreme fame and then made a series of choices that ended his career. I found it interesting because it is not a story that many English-speaking people would know and yet it feels very familiar. I was also intrigued by how much creative flexibility would be left to the director. I was also very intrigued by *A Doll's House, Part 2* by Lucas Hnath, which is an intriguing modern response to *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. I found it especially interesting as a director because it is a continuation of the original play, but it feels much more modern and relatable to audiences today. As I continue to read more of these scripts over the next few months, I hope to find even more scripts that intrigue me as these have.

The second portion of this project involved directing a staged reading of *Collected Stories* by Donald Marguiles, featuring fellow Arts Scholars Maille-Rose Smith and Veronica Seguin. In October and early November, I ordered copies of the script for this production and worked with the student group Spectrum Theatre to reserve Newcomb Theater to perform in. Then, in mid-November, we rehearsed the show every evening for about a week and a half. We specifically worked on creating three-dimensional characters and having fully-realized blocking, even though it was a staged reading. I found that the low stakes nature actually helped me make bolder choices and experiment more with blocking and directing techniques, which was really helpful as a learning experience. Then, on Friday, November 22, Veronica and Maille-Rose performed the show before a small but enthusiastic group of friends in Newcomb Theater. It was an experience overall that definitely helped me gain experience directing for a different style of theatre than I am used to, as well as experience gaining a working relationship with two very talented actors over a rehearsal process. As I work on more fully-realized productions in the future, I can definitely look back on this as a great learning experience.

## Expenditures

Item	Price
Theatrical Scripts	\$195
Licensing for <i>Collected Stories</i>	\$200
<i>Collected Stories</i> Scripts	\$40
Costumes and Props for Staged Reading	~\$42
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$477</b>

## Pictures in Rehearsal



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