

Outcome report: spring/summer 2016 mini grant  
Project: *Healing*, retitled: *Living Just Around the Corner*  
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To the director of the Miller Arts Scholars, Professor Michael Rasbury,

Thanks to the financial support of the Miller Arts Scholars and its sponsors, my vision of a peel-apart photo essay that investigates and documents the emotional healing process is now a real, physical body of work. The expenses of the project included FP-100C color pack film, a replacement camera battery, and a modestly framed photograph as gesture of gratitude for the family member that provided me with the camera itself.

This project that specifically addressed traumatic experiences in my hometown gave me the tools to empower myself and take ownership over locations in my neighborhood that I have associated with extremely negative memories for years. I had originally envisioned the photographs of the project as abstract expressions of emotional fluctuations, but instead, as the summer wore on, the images became site-specific and highly figurative. Surely the color distortion due to the old film and the metaphor of the photographic medium itself (as described in my mini grant proposal) continued to enrich the meaning latent in the image-production process, however I had not originally planned on using myself as a model.

Using the assistance of my younger brother, I began to frame photos of myself as I began to recreate intrusive memories that have bogged me down for years. I assumed the role of perpetrator, scene designer, calculator, omniscient observer, fighter, but not that of victim. I entered the physical space my assailant once had, and I occupied it with my own body and mind, taking ownership of it. I created new memories in those spaces and in the posing of my body. By the end of the summer, I did not think twice about jogging past a house that had consistently invoked fear and anxiety in me for years.

That is how this project came to be titled *Living Just Around the Corner*; not only was it fixated on the healing experience, but I could not have remotely anticipated how it would become a tool in my recovery.

I now have a 30-image series whose creation has helped my family members better understand and participate in my experience, and that will stand as a monument of my life as a young adult for the rest of my life. I have found love and appreciation for a new form of film photography, and as I grew more comfortable with the Polaroid land camera, I grew more comfortable with my past.

I would like to sincerely thank the J. Sanford Miller and Colbert families for their support of the Miller Arts Scholars via the 2015-2016 academic year mini grants. I hope to receive their support once again as I seek funds to frame and preserve my summer work.

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