

Mary Hall
Faculty Mentor: Theresa M. Davis
Miller Arts Scholars Arts Award
20 March 2025

Exploring Black Womanhood Through the Dramatic Lens

Original Proposal

With the help of the Miller Arts Scholars Program, I am requesting \$3000 to aid in my research for my undergraduate thesis project: writing a one-act play surrounding Black womanhood and how aspects of it transcend time, then staging and producing it. The Distinguished Majors Program in the African American and African Studies Department is the primary sponsor for this project. Professor Theresa M. Davis has agreed to be my thesis advisor and faculty mentor for Miller Arts, having an extensive background in devising work and the overall field of Black Theatre. The plan is to write a 60 to 90-minute play surrounding two generations of Black women, a mother and daughter, and how they experience life as Black women independently and together. This will be accompanied by a dramaturgical packet: a packet detailing the research and methodology that went into writing the script. My script and dramaturgical packet will be informed by research in areas such as Black feminist theory, queer theory, and social science, in addition to autobiographical perspectives as I pull from lived experiences.

Project Outcome

With the help of the Miller Arts Scholars program, I have been able to cover production costs for my thesis play, *I Am My Mother's Daughter*, which is going to be performed in the Helms Theatre on April 18th, 2025 at 8pm and April 19th, 2025. I spent the entirety of the Fall 2024 semester writing the piece, and was able to submit it for consideration for the Virginia Players Spring 2025 Lab Series Production, which is what I was able to use my funding for.

Since my proposal, I've reallocated my budget slightly. I used a portion to fund my scriptwriting software, Final Draft 13, to best format the script to industry standards, as I also sent the script into MFA Playwriting programs this application cycle. Once I felt comfortable enough with a draft to share beyond Doug Grissom and Theresa M. Davis, I submitted it to Virginia Players and was informed in mid-December that I was able to move forward with production. I cast the show in early February and started rehearsals in mid-to-late February. A month into rehearsals we have completely blocked the show, so the broader movements are essentially locked in, and we begin stumbling through full runs next week.

Throughout the past few months I have been in contact with Virginia Players and the UVA Drama department in regards to reserving rehearsal spaces, renting set pieces and props, and requesting further resources to make this show a success such as ticketing on the Box Office website. I'm incredibly grateful to have such a dedicated artistic staff to support me behind the scenes, as well as the general support from all of my past and present professors in the Drama department to make sure that this production goes smoothly.

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While the budget is still being allocated at the time of writing this, I hope to send an updated outcome report once the production has finished with a finalized version of what is to come.

Expenditures

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Final Draft 13	\$99.99	Scriptwriting software used to write the play
Hand Props	\$251.34	As of March 20th, 2025
Furniture and Set Dressing	\$292.16	As of March 20th, 2025
Tech Needs	\$500	Vinyl Flooring, App, Lights, Sounds
Box Office Ticketing	\$300	
Costumes	\$200	As of March 20th, 2025
Programs	\$500	
Posters	\$200	
Additional Costs	\$700	