

Michelle Miles  
3rd Year Arts Award  
May 2017 – April 2018

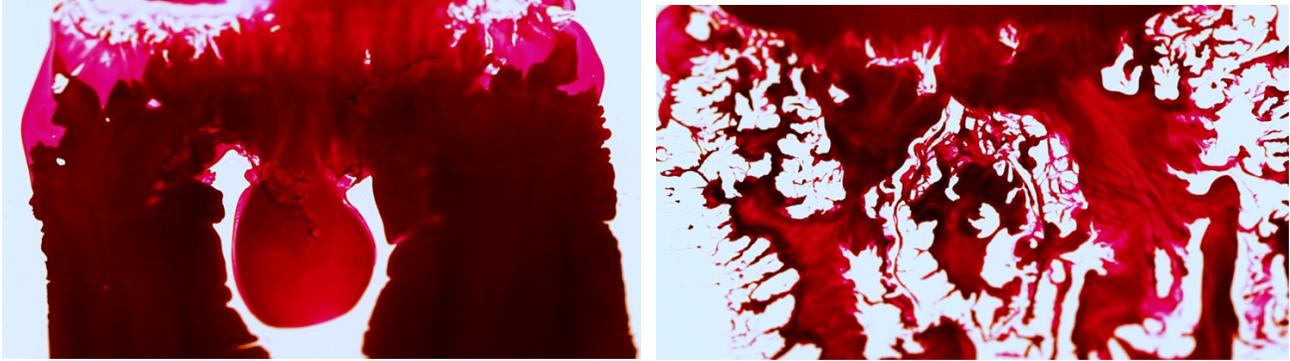
### Outcome Report: Enabling the Universe

What began as a number of experiments with various physical materials evolved into theoretical experiments, which, in my opinion, renders my project a success. With my grant money, I purchased a Canon 100mm f/2.8 lens, which allowed me to document and archive my experiments on a highly intimate level, and to later review and assemble the footage into short expressionist films. With these films, I was also able to explore the relationships between image and sound in a more open-ended way than my previous experiences with more Foley-style sound work.



Behind-the-scenes photos of the set-up with the materials I purchased.

For the piece *how did we get here?* I began experimenting with dish soap and red ink, documenting with my lens the entire drying process and how the shape of the ink changed throughout it. Though I ended up with hours of footage, even cutting it down to 5 minutes seemed unfair to ask a viewer to sit through—until I realized how drastic the difference between the beginning and ending frame was, and how incredibly slow the process is realized. It's almost hard to tell if anything has visually changed while watching, until you compare the beginning frame with the ending frame side by side (which can be seen below). The viewing experience then became a very interesting experiment in itself—will the changes be noticed? Will the viewer become bored? If they do, how will they feel once they see the side-by-side beginning and ending frames?



The first vs. the last frame of *how did we get here?*

This notion that this film provoked fascinated me, and I paired a very subtle sine wave as the audio to accompany the piece, which slowly grew in volume and then faded—almost undetectable. It became an exploration in the shortcomings of human attentiveness, and how microscopic changes often go unnoticed, but amass over time. This piece made me start thinking about how, even when subtle changes amass to become drastic, we sometimes fail to realize anything has happened at all.

As I had hoped, this project also allowed me to dip my toes further into my exploration of audio-visual relationships. In my next piece, *something aquatic*, I hoped to incorporate sound as an additional component to visual material as an interdisciplinary study of how the two can work together. With this piece, I explored how visual stimuli and sound have the potential to, together, create a much more immersive and lively environment than either could on their own.

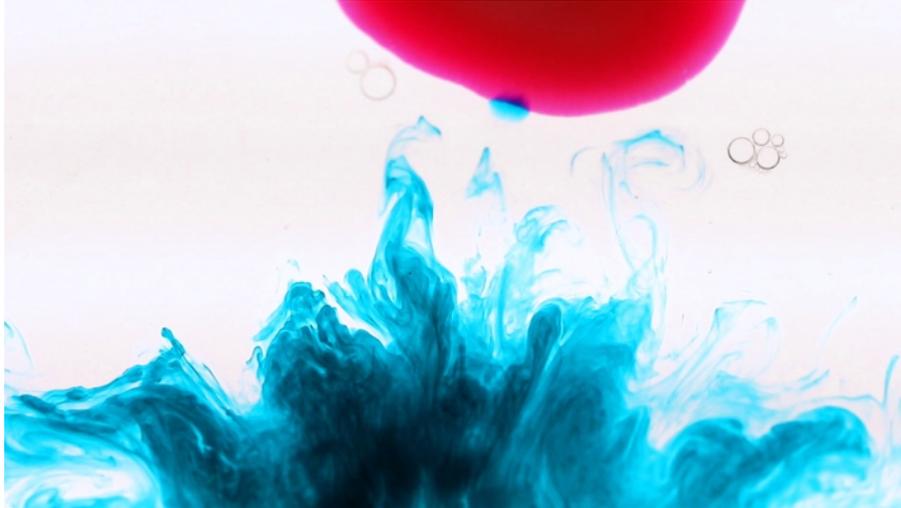




Stills from *something aquatic*.

Working on *something aquatic* became an opportunity for me to explore the collision of the ideas of sound as interdisciplinary or sound as inclusive. As I wrote in my grant proposal: while my hands aren't able to paint the way I'd like to with a paintbrush, and holding a camera while following an actor through the woods isn't something I can do, I've truly found that macro filmmaking that is concentrated on organic visual art (creating natural but abstract effects without the use of computer generated imagery) is a way in which I can study and capture movement in the universe, brought to life by sound, with far fewer limitations than I'm met with in the full-scale natural world.





Stills from *something aquatic*.

The realm of expressionist media I discovered with this project allowed me to explore the properties of image and sound, and the watching and listening experiences. A professor I shared this piece with, Noel Lobely, described it as "a distinctive and quietly predicative way to immerse in painting sound," which I find to be a quite accurate description of my experience in creating the piece—immersed in the sensory experience of the mediums I worked with, and intimately learning about image and sound.

I'd like to extend a special thank you to the all of the supporters of the Miller Arts Scholars program, with special thanks to Sandy and Vinie Miller and Evie and Stephen Colbert. I'd also like to thank Peter Bussigel, my mentor for the project, as well as Andrew Mausert-Mooney, Noel Lobely, and Kevin Everson for their insights as well. I am incredibly appreciative for the barrier-free opportunity this grant has provided for me to further my work.