

Artist Minigrant Outcome Report Summer 2016  
Project Title: Summer Preparation for Dance Improvisation and Composition  
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To the Director of Miller Arts Scholars, Michael Rasbury,

I would like to thank Miller Arts Scholars for the funding I received this summer. I learned valuable things about myself and my body in regards to movement. This summer I requested funding for technique classes in Charlottesville in order to give myself all the tools necessary for my coursework in Dance Improvisation and Dance Composition. As I have started Dance Improvisation this fall with Kim Brooks Mata I am already seeing how beneficial the training I had this Summer was.

This year in place of ballet or modern dance technique classes, I began my choreographic journey. I am enrolled in Dance Improvisation this fall and will take Dance Composition in the spring. While I have worked on my craft for years, I have never spent time strictly on the creative process. In order to focus solely on this process I was unable to enroll in ballet technique classes. I spent the summer fine-tuning my technique through ballet classes and yoga classes so that I would be in a comfortable place mentally and physically for creating movement.

In order to keep up with my ballet training I took classes at the Ballet School at Charlottesville Center for the Arts. I attended classes usually twice a week. I have continued these classes with the help of my minigrant. For yoga, I tried different studios: Hot Yoga, Opal Yoga, and Fly Dog Yoga and benefitted from all of them in different ways. After my first class I was shocked at how attentive I was to my visceral area. I ended the class feeling so connected through my mind and body in a way that I cannot describe adequately in words. I also gained better understanding of body alignment and increased my flexibility. As I still practice yoga, I have found a deep connection with my body and mind and have gained a lot from the practice. In improvisation it is critical to practice living in the movement and focusing on the tasks at hand. Yoga has taught me ways to calm my thoughts and be able to move without judgment and see what comes in the moment.

As I continue yoga and ballet I can already see how helpful these practices are in creating my own movement. I know the limits of my body and have accepted my abilities as they are now. I would like to say again how grateful I am of the Miller and Colbert families for their support of the arts at the University of Virginia through their dedication to the Miller Arts Scholars. It is because of them that I have explored new levels of myself and movement.

Thank you,  
Gabby Struckell  
Class of 2018  
Dance Scholar