

Isabella Whitfield
Rising Fourth-Year Award Outcome Report

Paper Sculptures

In August 2019, I attended a workshop at Anderson Ranch Art Center in Snowmass, Colorado. The one-week class, entitled *Fiber to Form*, focused on making sculptural objects from handmade paper. During the first few days of the workshop, students cleaned, prepared, and beat the fibers that would subsequently be cast into paper. I also learned how to cast paper onto moulds, make watermarks, and integrate different materials and hand-sewing techniques. The latter part of the week was dedicated to individual student projects. Using the mould-casting technique, I created a set of paper measuring cups and kitchenware. After the workshop ended, I was able to install the piece, entitled *desperate measures*, in Ruffin.



Cleaning and preparing fiber for papermaking



Installation in Ruffin

While learning new artmaking techniques was extremely valuable, I also found my interaction with other artists to be just as enriching. I met artists from a wide range of backgrounds, all at different stages of life and artmaking. Getting to know these people gave me invaluable insight into how being an artist could look after graduation. My workshop, in particular, seemed to attract students from a whole host of backgrounds. There were students who were jewelers, textile artists, furniture-makers, and printmakers. We all approached the theme of paper sculptures from different angles, and it was interesting to see the many directions a single technique could travel.

After the workshop, I embarked on creating a response piece. The purpose of creating a response piece was to reflect upon my workshop experience and explore how I would incorporate this new technique into my artmaking practice. Using the mould-casting technique I learned at Anderson Ranch, I created eight paper bells. I also incorporated my previous knowledge of the lost-wax process to create eight bronze ringers to accompany each bell. Below are images of the installed work. This piece, entitled *Silent Bell Choir*, was a part of UVA's fall community sculpture show at McGuffey Art Center



Installation images of response piece

I would like to sincerely thank the J. Sanford Miller family and the University of Virginia for making this experience possible. Being part of the Miller Arts Scholars has allowed me to explore avenues of artmaking that would've otherwise been inaccessible. I am especially grateful for the UVA arts community I have become connected to through this program. Thank you also to Professor Bill Bennett, who served as my faculty sponsor for this project.