

CHRISTINE HOLM

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Madison Arts Commission
City of Madison
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Ste LL-100
Madison, WI 53701

January 29, 2015

Dear BLINK Committee,

I first learned about the Madison Arts Commission's BLINK projects by, simply, walking past one. Tyanna Buie's work has been influential on my writing since I first attended a lecture of hers at Arizona State University. While walking down State Street a few months ago, I saw her installation out of the corner of my eye and was so struck by the experience, intimate and quiet in the middle of one of Madison's busiest areas.

Primarily a poet and book artist, the work I am proposing for a BLINK grant attempts to bring a collaborative project which spans from working printmakers to students of all ages new to poetry. From their efforts, *Dear Madison* will be a project which brings an intimacy, not unlike Buie's work, directly to the streets in one of the most ephemeral of ways, through DIY flyers and common posting spaces.

What follows are a project description which includes timeline, a sketched map of proposed locations of artists, students and posting sites, a budget, and a resume with contact information for references. The disc included has several images of my printed work, with descriptions.

Many thanks for your time and consideration – and the important work you do making art more accessible in the community. Please let me know if I can provide any further information.

Best,



Christine Holm

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Last spring, I walked into my classroom at Florence State Corrections in Arizona with a packet of photocopied postcards – both the front image and the back blank side arranged on one sheet of paper – for the day's lesson in epistolary poetry. First, I asked my students to pick from one of the images, New York, Paris or London, and write a postcard how they normally would. For some of these men, incarcerated over ten years, the simple idea of a postcard was difficult – being on vacation, writing to someone at home. Their writing was brief, vague. Some didn't like the prompt because they felt it offended their lack of freedom. New York and Broadway are so far away from the dust and desert, too far for even some imaginations. Next, I asked them to write a letter to anyone, living or dead. We spent twenty minutes on this. The emphasis was movement of the pen, not necessarily content or figurative language or imagery. In talking about the difference, some said it was the space, both the freedom of not having an image on the flip side, and the freedom beyond a mere few square inches. They felt honest.

We spent the rest of class reading epistolary poems, discussing the difference between the structure, the poem versus the letter itself, and where the artwork overlapped. At the end of class, I handed out one last photocopied postcard, this one a hand-drawn image of the prison in which they lived. The assignment for the following week: Dear Florence.

Having returned to Madison after three years in Arizona earning my MFA in poetry, I feel in a new way a witness to the disparate communities in our city. Not only these communities that feel distinct, but a sense that their conversations are entirely one-way. Where there is a speaker expressing him or herself, the often lacks necessary engagement of someone else who equally has the open opportunity to listen as well as respond.

The work of a project like *Dear Madison* is meant to highlight the problem with these types of conversations, while also bringing to the forefront speakers, or in this case writers, who are often marginalized or unheard. It is also, like the work of poetry on buses and the other initiatives of the Arts Council to bring poetry into the community, a way of bringing what is seen as a 'high' art, an inaccessible art, into the hands of daily practitioners.

This is the kind of work I am after in my own poetry and book arts projects, heightening the everyday into something worth pausing to take notice of. My MFA thesis was a manuscript titled *Every House*, which dealt very much with the idea of destruction in places of expected safety. Having completed that work, I am now focusing on the flip side: in public where comfort for many is not a reliable expectation, is there a possibility of becoming more open, more vulnerable?

Dear Madison works in three distinct segments. First, four visual artists from the community will make

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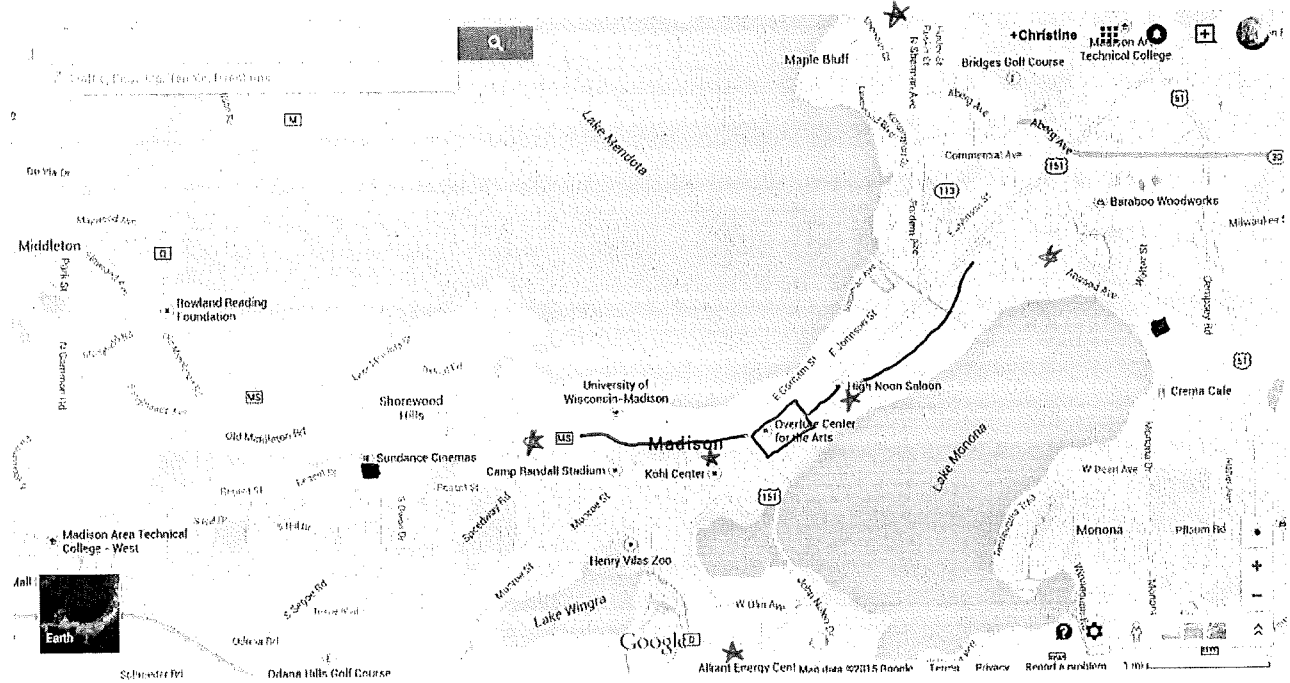
one postcard each representing the city of Madison. They are given the goals and scope of the project, but no other restrictions besides the 4x6 card and the demand of reproduction.

Second, during April, which is National Poetry Month, I will hold six 2-hour poetry workshops for up to 15 students per session in community settings. These tentatively will be held at Dry Hootch, the VA, Porchlight, the Boys and Girls Club, Kennedy Heights, and the Goodman Community Center's Adult programming. The sessions will focus on epistolary poetry with the opportunity to discuss published poems and our practice of writing. At the end of each session, students will get a pack of four pre-stamped postcards with the assignment to send at least one back to me within one week of our class and having written an epistolary poem to the city, their community, a particular person within Madison, and signed or left anonymous. The other three cards are intended for friends or family, to whom these students will teach in their own way what we have just completed in class.

Third, returned postcards will be photocopied, enlarged, printed and pasted on public flier boards in community centers and restaurants, on city-sanctioned sidewalk posts alongside concert announcements and other city-wide events where a larger pedestrian community can read these letters to Madison. It is an opportunity to hear these voices, learn about their Madison, and start small conversations as we compare our own experiences and understandings of the city we are not visitors in. These are the final art outputs, pieces highly revolved around collaboration and interconnectedness from the working printmaker to the student-poet, while also as ephemeral as postcards, as DIY posters – they rely on time, visibility, and then are lost as both those elements shift and change.

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WORKSHOP SITES/POSTING LOCATIONS _____



* location of workshop sessions
[] location of posting installation

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BUDGET

Stipend for commission of postcards	150 per printmaker x 4 artists = 600 total	
Session reading packets for students (printing)		120
Postage		125
Paper and printing for enlarged images		200
Artist stipend		400
Total request -----		1445

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RESUME

EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts. Creative Writing, with emphasis in poetry. May 2014. Arizona State University. Tempe, AZ. Additional coursework in creative nonfiction, bookmaking, fine printing.

Bachelor of Arts. English; Psychology. Honors in the College of Letters and Sciences. May 2006. University of Wisconsin. Madison, WI.

PUBLICATIONS

Poems

Waxwing: "Nightshift," "What Gets Through to Morning." (Forthcoming Summer 2015)

North American Review: "Cold Rock (MKE Remix)," James Hearst Poetry Prize Finalist. (Forthcoming Spring 2015)

Narrative Magazine: "Mock Disaster," "The S-Curve of Return." (Winter 2015)

Burnside Review: "First the Heat, Then the Letting Go." (Volume 10, Number 1: Winter 2014)

Hinchas de Poesia: "Makeshift Lightness," "Of Copper Extracted," "Within Winter." (Issue 10)

Reviews

The Volta Blog: Zoe Tuck's *Terror Matrix* (November 8 2014)

Lisa Jarnot's *a presto magic princess spell* (September 4 2014)

Ben Fama's *Aquarius Rising* (June 10 2014).

Jenifer Militello's *The Body Thesaurus*. (January 10 2014).

Artist Book *making a poem (i)* Juror's Choice Fall 2014 ABBA Member Show, Tempe, AZ.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Graduate Teaching Assistant. Department of English, Arizona State University. Aug. 2011-May 2014.

Taught First Year Composition and Introduction to Poetry. Independently designed curriculum to build writing skills with multi-modal projects.

Florence State Correctional Facility internship. Florence, AZ. Jan.-May 2013; Jan.-May 2014. Advisor: Joe Lockard. Co-taught academic-based introductory creative writing course.

Poesia del Sol internship. Mayo Hospital. Phoenix, AZ. Sept. 2013-February 2014. Advisor: Alberto Rios. Redeveloped session protocol with faculty and hospital staff for Humanities in Medicine project based on research of healing through the arts.

Hayden's Ferry Review. Arizona State University. Tempe, AZ. International editor. Jan. 2013-Dec. 2013. Poetry editor. Jan. 2012-Dec. 2013. Solicited work, submissions to curate biannual issues.

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REFERENCES

Sally Ball, Thesis Committee Chair and Director of Creative Writing, ASU

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Joe Lockard, Prison English Advisor, ASU

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John Risseeuw, Professor of Fine Printing and Book Arts, ASU

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