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www.cityofmadison.com/mac

BLINK Grant Application

Applicant Information

Name _____

Address (no P.O. boxes) _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Project Description

Project Title _____

Location(s) _____

Start date/time _____ End date/time _____

Project costs:

_____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

Additional project income (if any):

_____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

Amount requested from MAC

Estimated Total Costs / Income

Do you have the necessary insurance coverage?

Yes No

Do you have all necessary permits and permissions?

Yes No In progress

Deadlines

- Deadlines are: February 1, June 1, and October 1
- All application materials must be emailed to the Madison Arts Commission (madisonarts@cityofmadison.com) by 4:30 pm on the day of the deadline.



"The Beehive Project" by Chele Isaac, was an interactive public art project consisting of a large scale beehive, featuring a queen bee inside typing a story on an old typewriter. The public participated by helping to write the story.

Madison Arts Commission

The City of Madison (MAC) recognizes the unique value of the arts and the contribution they make to the quality of life within our community. Madison Arts Commission was created by ordinance in 1974, to advise the Mayor, Common Council and city agencies on matters which relate to the creation, presentation and funding of public art.



BLINK Grant Application (continued)

Conceptual Approach

Project Description (400 words or less)

BLINK Application - SEASON OF SHADOWS at Chocolaterian

Alaura Borealis

Context, Concept, and Site Specificity

Season of Shadows is a transdisciplinary social project exploring nonbinary gender identities. Over the last few months, I've had conversations with trans and nonbinary peers about their experiences with gender. Through these interviews, I have been working with participants to develop metaphors and imagery that would help describe our shared and unique experiences that can be difficult to explain otherwise. From this imagery, we are developing installations, events, writing, workshops, and performances to share within queer communities and the general public throughout the fall and winter. In spring 2018, we will have an exhibition at the Overture Center for the Arts displaying excerpts from interview transcripts, photographs of the fall and winter art happenings, artifacts from these installations, and other ephemera to help document the entire process of *Season of Shadows*. We will have new conversations, host more workshops, and make new art within our communities about the experiences of trans and nonbinary folx stemming from that Overture exhibition. *Season of Shadows* as a whole will be documented in a small book.

Many of the *Season of Shadows* interviews have happened at coffee shops, which forced me to wonder, *why do these spaces feel safe? What is a safe space for gender nonconforming people?* An interviewee pointed out that our *Season of Shadows* conversations aren't happening in steak houses and concert halls; there's something qualitatively important about where our conversations can happen. In spaces that are both privately owned and publically accessible, what makes a coffee shop different than other spaces in our community? How do they ride the line between a closed door and an extension of home? A relaxed environment and a place of business? A place for the wealthy and a place for the poor? A protected environment and an entirely public one?

I approached the owners of Chocolaterian about hosting a performance or installation in their space, after having already conducting multiple *Season of Shadows* interviews in their Atwood Ave location. Their reaction was wholly supportive, and we dove into the ways that they hope their coffee shops are safe spaces for their employees and guests who, "identify all over and off the gender spectrum." Because *Season of Shadows* conversations have taken place here, because the owners are actively seeking to create safe spaces for our community, and because the windows of a coffee shop are as public a place as any other, this piece will take place at Chocolaterian Cafe at 2004 Atwood Avenue.

BLINK Application - SEASON OF SHADOWS at Chocolaterian

Alaura Borealis

Project Description

Performances will take place on the raised platform window displays of Chocolaterian. A small group of individuals will be seated at a typical table and chairs that you might find inside the cafe, talking over drinks, perhaps nibbling at some chocolate or drinking the water they give away for free. We'll be having a conversation like any other in the *Season of Shadows* project, where we ask each other questions about our gender experiences, except that this one will have visual art components and be a public performance.

An overhead transparency projector will be set up to cast text and imagery onto the chatting people. From the outside, passersby would see a typical coffee shop conversation underway with the artful peculiarity of it taking place in a window display. Bright projections would fall on their faces, hands, clothes, casting silhouettes onto the panels behind them. From inside the cafe, guests might hear the performers' conversation if they stand close enough to the performance, although they may be unable to see the actual performers behind the enclosed window display. Instead, they might see the silhouettes cast by people interrupting projections. From either view--the street or inside the coffee shop--some part of the conversation will be protected from onlookers: either the faces/identities of the speakers or the voices. Guests might go between watching the performance outside or listening from the inside, but they will likely never get the whole "story" at once.

This project will play with how much information nonbinary folks have to protect and hold as sacred for themselves and how much information they share with the world. We'll explore how we're seen, what it's like to be looked at, and how we are worthy of being cherished. We'll think about what it means to feel safe in a space. We might consider the differences between public spaces and domestic spaces, the differences between queer relationships and any other. We'll contemplate what it means to perform for ourselves and for each other, and invite the public to consider these questions with us.

As a social artist, it can be difficult to articulate the ways that conversations and relationships are *the substance of my art*. Through this project, I can demonstrate a version of what social practice looks like, almost literally, while contributing to our *Season of Shadows* research on gender experience, identity, and performance.

This performance will take place on a night or two consecutive nights in mid November.

Budget

Organizing Artist Stipend - Alaura Borealis : 300.00
Performing Artists Stipends (300 per artist x 3 artists) : 900.00
Photographer : 300.00
Venue and Materials: *already secured in kind*
Total requested from MAC: 1500.00

BLINK Application - SEASON OF SHADOWS at Chocolaterian

Alaura Borealis

Résumé for Alaura Borealis

EDUCATION

2014 **M.S. Educational Leadership and Policy**, Portland State University, Portland, OR □
2014 **Certificate: Community-Based Learning**, Portland State University, Portland, OR □
2012 **B.S. Art**, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI □
2012 **Certificate: Gender and Women's Studies**, UW-Madison, Madison, WI

RECENT PROFESSIONAL AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2014-Present **Executive Director**, ArtWrite Collective, Madison, WI
2015-Present **Art Teacher**, Monroe Street Arts Center, Madison, WI
Spring 2016 **Lecturer**, *Art and Social Justice*, Art Dept, University of Wisconsin-Madison
AY 2015-16 **Lecturer**, *Service-Learning in Art*, Art Dept, University of Wisconsin-Madison
AY 2013-14 **Outreach Specialist for Arts Initiatives**, Art Dept, UW-Madison
AY 2011-12 **Teaching Assistant** (undergraduate), *Service-Learning in Art*, Art Dept, UW-Madison
2010-2012 **Gallery Attendant**, James Watrous Gallery in Overture Center, Madison, WI
2010 **Art Therapy Intern**, ArtSpeak program of Community Partnerships, Madison

ARTIST RESIDENCIES

November-December 2017 Meadowridge Library, Madison, WI (forthcoming)
April 2016-May 2016 Bubbler Program of Madison Central Library, Madison, WI
March 2016-April 2016 Arts + Literature Laboratory, Madison, WI
Feb 2016-March 2016 Georgia O'Keeffe Middle School, Madison, WI
Nov 2015-Jan 2016 Lussier Community Education Center, Madison, WI

SAMPLE OF LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS

September 2017, workshop, *Leveraging Local Opportunities*, Arts+Lit Laboratory, Madison, WI
September 2017, workshop, *Creative Advocacy for Mental Health*, UW-Whitewater
February 2017, guest lecture, *Intro to Art Therapy*, Edgewood College, Madison, WI
November 2016, guest lecture and workshop, *Trans Visibility Week*, UW-Stevens Point
May 2016, guest lecture and workshop, *Women's Center Reflections*, UW-Stevens Point
April 2016, workshop, *Ethics of Curriculum Development for Teaching Artists*, ArtWrite
Feb 15-19, 2016 five workshops, *Activist Screen Printing*, Shabazz High School, Madison, WI

BLINK Application - SEASON OF SHADOWS at Chocolaterian

Alaura Borealis

SAMPLE OF PROJECTS AND EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 *Season of Shadows*, social project documented at Overture Center for the Arts
- 2017 *You Are Beautiful* mural created with queer and trans teens in Madison, WI
- 2017 *World of Eyes*, group exhibition, @1403 University Ave, Madison, WI
- 2017 *Queer Pressure*, group pop-up exhibition, Black Locust Café, Madison, WI
- 2017 *Queer and Now*, Quarter Gallery, Minneapolis, Minnesota (scheduled)
- 2016 *Municipal*, group pop-up exhibition, empty city building, Madison, WI
- 2016 *Toast*, a queer little self-published book, 65 pages
- 2016 *Toast*, socially engaged solo exhibition, Arts + Literature Laboratory, Madison, WI
- 2016 *Queer Pressure*, group pop-up exhibition, Bright Red Studios, Madison, WI
- 2015 *Mirror Portraits* BLINK temporary public art at Madison Public Libraries, Madison, WI
- 2015 *Mirror Portraits* group exhibition, Bright Red Studios, Madison, WI
- 2015 *Body of Work* group exhibition, Shamrock, Madison, WI
- 2015 *Drink It In* group exhibition, Cafe Zoma, Madison, WI
- 2015 *Read the Room* group exhibition, Monona Public Library, Monona, WI
- 2015 *Shifting Landscapes*, group exhibition, Cafe Zoma, Madison, WI

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [Seeking New Questions: Alaura Seidl reflects on using art as a means to seek answers—or better yet, start new conversations—around everything from gender to sexuality to chronic pain and memory](#) (May/June 2017)
- [Dismantling patriarchy, one edit at a time](#) (3/30/17)
- [Life as a 20-something in Madison: These emerging adults veer from the norm](#) (1/19/2017)
- [Drawing attention: As Trump's inauguration looms, Madison artists respond and organize](#) (1/18/2017)
- [The art of acceptance: A new mural will celebrate LGBTQ youth](#) (11/23/2016)
- [Alaura Megan Seidl is Making Art and Making Change](#) (4/30/2015)
- [Incubating artists and writers: Arts + Literature Laboratory has found its niche as a creative hub](#) (7/7/2016)
- [Social Change Through The Arts](#) (5/14/2015)
- [Community Empowerment With The ArtWrite Collective](#) (5/8/2015)

BLINK Application - SEASON OF SHADOWS at Chocolaterian
Alaura Borealis

Work Samples



***Index* (in progress)**

Book of interviews represented in instant film and type
2011-present

Index is a collection of conversational encounters documented incompletely through instant film and a few words; this project is curious about how we might measure intimacy, leveraging the fragility of memory to understand how time, environment, and willful decision-making impacts emotion, human connection, and sense of self. This project is closely linked to *Season of Shadows* as a conversational piece.

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Alaura Borealis



Toast: an exhibition by Alaura and you (details, Vimeo link provided in application)

Multi-channel video installation, performance, and participatory project
2016

Toast, a socially engaged “not so solo” exhibition on view at the Arts + Literature Laboratory from April 1 through April 23, 2016, was an installation and video-based work reconciling the tension between private confrontations and public spectacles, contemplating both what people do spontaneously and what people perform consciously. The exhibition, screened in its final form, was born of a lifetime of intimate encounters and one night of filming with community members. Along with peers and strangers, I was negotiating with memories while investigating accountability for social dilemmas, celebrating queer identity and cleansing the palate. I sat in the gallery throughout the exhibition as a stealth performance, discussing topics like pronouns, sexuality, religion, class, militarism, and coffee with guest-participants.



This project is in family with *Season of Shadows* as a project that cares about gender, performance, public vs private, silhouettes, and sociality.

BLINK Application - SEASON OF SHADOWS at Chocolaterian

Aura Borealis

honey, you're in the wrong bathroom



i can't have you here, flaunting your sexuality



i mean, i have children, it's a safety thing

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narrow confines or lofty expectations of such proclamations, I'll pull bits and pieces of theory or critique to inform the practice, even at the risk of botching it all, respectfully. As my body repels gendered labels, shuffling through them at will in order to make sense of my experience, so, too, does this body shed titles like *scholar* (what could a queer first generation college graduate *without* an MFA really tell *you*?), or *writer*, or *performer*, or *teacher*, or *socially engaged artist* as sole labels for my practice. Can you believe I'm a writer if I say I am? Or an artist while I teach, a performer in an empty room? Shannon Jackson writes for *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011* that, "Once we develop a tolerance for different ways of mixing artistic Forms, however, we can get to the inspiring work of seeing how they each address the problems and possibilities of Living"—an idea I'm only just beginning to internalize.

Nato Thompson (*Living as Form*), too, frames the "living form" as structural and productive, "For, as art enters life, the question that will motivate people far more than What is art? Is the much more metaphysically relevant and pressing What is life?"



ob, i'm fine with it, one of my bosses is a lesbian

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*you should take off that hat
and let your hair down*

Alaura: Could you help me walk through the incident with that innkeeper?

Chayse: We were talking with him about trying to get a hitch or something. We were making signs and—

A: We were making signs?

C: Mnhmm. We were writing *To Marion* or *To Atkins* or something like that.

A: Oh yeah, that's right.

C: Yeah. And you had your beanie on, that yellow wool beanie. Wait, did you have that on trail?

A: Yeah, I did.

C: Okay. Well, I don't know his exact words, but he essentially said, "Take that beanie off for a better chance of getting picked up." I don't remember exactly what he said.

A: I remember what he said.

C: What'd he say?

A: "Take off that hat and let your hair down." Do you remember anything after he said that? Like what I did or what he did?

C: You were like, "Why's that? You want me to take my hat off why?" And then he tried to backpedal. He started to give us something like, "Statistically, it's easier for women to hitchhike than men," or something like that. Then you took off your beanie and didn't have any hair. That's about all I remember.

*i knew you wouldn't mind, i mean, it's the workplace
and everything*

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did you change your pronouns?



that's not something they need to know



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*don't expect me to change
basic rules of grammar for you*

Since coming out as nonbinary, I've told some of the people who interact

what we deem acceptable based on such antiquated institutions? I'd confided in my housemates that *I use they and it really makes me feel at ease when people refer to me that way*. The conversation was long and winding and, quite frankly, painful. I take the time to clumsily relay all of these interactions because something

Toast (screenshot of excerpt in spreads)

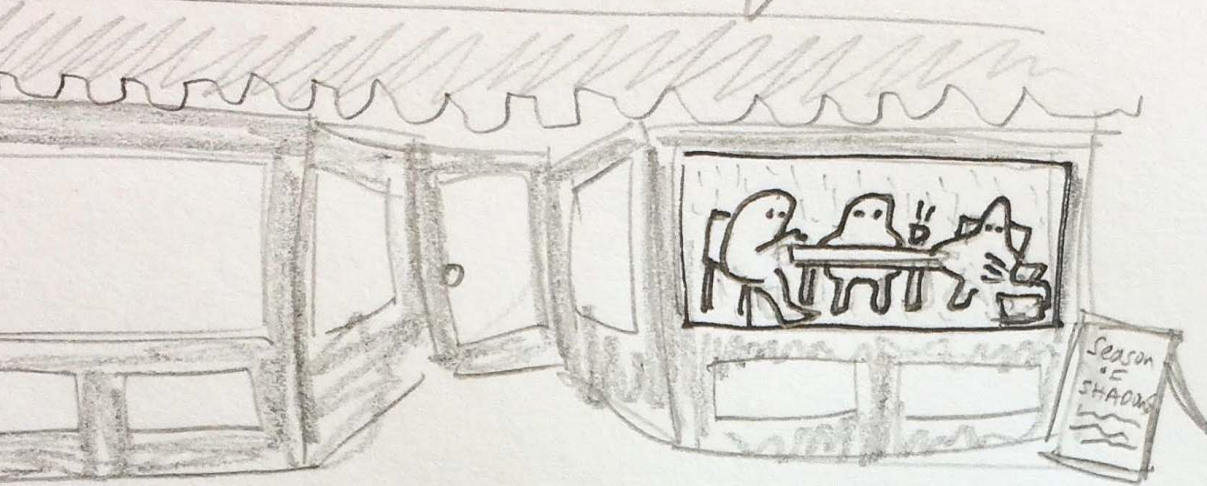
Book

65 pages

2016

Toast the book contained a collection of interviews, essays, short stories, poetry, and photos documenting *and* building on *Toast* the exhibition. There will be a similar book for *Season of Shadows*.

Chocolarium Cafe

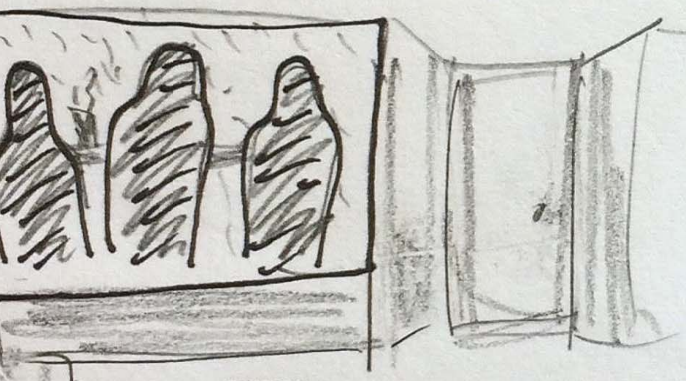


- see faces
- can't hear

SIDE VIEW / EXPERIENCE



I can't hear what they're saying, but it looks important



INSIDE VIEW / EXPERIENCE

- see silhouette panel
- can hear



I had no idea...

yeah, me too...

How long do I have to stand here & listen