

PAMELA DANIELS '59 FELLOWS AND THEIR FELLOWSHIP PROJECTS

Kathleen Scoggin, Class of 2003

Double major in Medieval/Renaissance Studies and Psychology

“A Mirror in a Wardrobe: Late Sixteenth-Century Fashion and How It Reflects the Culture of Its Time”

Illustrating her honors-thesis argument that “fashion reflects the cultural, religious, technological, social, political and economic actuality of its era,” Kat designed and re-created from scratch and authentic materials an Elizabethan garment – a “complete costume, from the corset and farthingale [made not from whalebone but from willow reeds gathered near the banks of the Rio Grande in her home town of Las Cruces, NM] up to the hat and gloves ... using authentic methods of construction and authentic materials, trims, and embroidery patterns.” Her Fellowship funds, together with the limitless resources of the worldwide web, made this authenticity possible. A seamstress and costume designer in Wellesley’s Shakespeare Society, Kat described her Fellowship project as creative way of “gaining intimacy with an older version of my craft.”

Today, Kat is a graduate student in clinical psychology preparing for a career in marriage and family counseling. She is also a professional corset maker.
[2007]

Katherine Alcauskas, Class of 2004

Double major in Classical Civilizations and Art History

“*De Suo*: The Mosaics of the Piazzale delle Corporazioni and their Implications About Ostian Society”

Combining her two majors and incorporating her love of photography, Katie’s Fellowship project was an art-historical and socio-economic interpretation of this ancient second-century site through an analysis of its mosaics. In the Roman seaport town of Ostia, the Piazzale delle Corporazione was home to the offices of foreign traders across the empire. The mosaics were ancient signage: Created in the ground in front of every office, each mosaic served to proclaim the occupation, trade or service of its owner. In addition to her scholarly research into inscriptions, primary documents and secondary sources of archaeological history, Katie used her Fellowship funds to travel to Ostia during the winter term of her senior year to photograph the mosaics. The resulting portfolio was both an illuminating documentation of her honors thesis and a vivid personal expression of her love of beauty. In her words, the Fellowship “gave me the opportunity to turn a simple thesis into a culmination of the things I am passionate about.”

After graduation in 2004, Katie interned at Wellesley’s Davis Museum and then worked for two years at the Corcoran Museum in Washington DC. She is currently studying for a Master’s degree in art history at Williams College.
[2007]

Erin Aileen Flannery, Class of 2005

English major

“Writings Before the Mast: Literary Production from Sea Journal to Sea Narrative”

“Exultation is the going of an inland soul to sea,” wrote Emily Dickinson. In her junior year, Erin spent two weeks at sea aboard a tall ship on the Williams-Mystic Maritime Studies

Program – her first time sailing, her first time out of sight of land for more than a day, an “exulting” experience that she documented in her own sea journal. Inspired by the reflective and transformative process of keeping that journal while offshore in the Atlantic Ocean, Erin spent her senior year reading sea journals – from Herman Melville’s accounts of his whaling voyages in the South Pacific in the 1830’s to Linda Greenlaw’s diary while captain of a sword-fishing boat in the 1990’s – and writing an honors thesis exploring the influence of gender and class identity on sea journals and, in turn, the influence of sea journals on maritime literature. Fellowship funds allowed her to conduct extensive archival research in New England, to expand her maritime library, and, over spring break, to finish her thesis off-campus in a friend’s house by the ocean.

Erin describes her Fellowship project as “an intellectual investment in my love for the sea,” which “will not sit on a shelf.” The year after graduation, she was the Coordinator of Education and Public Programs at the Nantucket Historical Association. She is currently in her first year of law school at Pace, where she is focusing on environmental law. Her ultimate goal is to “figure out how policy can promote sustainable marine environments and maritime communities.”

[2007]

Katy Silverstein, Class of 2005

Chemistry major

“Finding the Next Gore-Tex: The study of the waterproof properties of the plant *Macleaya Cordata* by analytic and synthetic methods”

Katy was given a mulberry Gore-Tex jacket for her fifteenth birthday -- a “magical hydrophobic jacket.” Within a year, however, the Gore-Tex coating wore off, she got soaked when it rained, and she has been on a quest for waterproof perfection ever since. The summer before entering Wellesley, Katy noticed a “very odd, overgrown and invasive plant” in a neighbor’s garden, which repelled the water collecting on its leaves in much the same way her jacket had: the *Macleaya Cordata*, or Plumed Poppy. “Why not figure out how the leaves do that, recreate it and make fabric out of it and sew it into a jacket?” she asked herself, and the idea stayed with her. Katy’s honors thesis and Fellowship project involved collecting and freezing leaf samples across the seasons, analyzing the samples, differentiating and analyzing their chemical components, and planning and carrying out organic synthesis experiments to try to discover and decipher the secret of the plumed poppy. Katy used her Fellowship funds to buy materials and lab supplies, including expensive chemical compounds germane to the study.

After graduating from Wellesley, Katy was “thrown into” her first job as a chemistry teacher at her former high school. Until she returns to the classroom in the fall of 2007 she is tutoring math and chemistry, playing her guitar at open-mike nights and writing short fiction.

[2007]

Eleanor Blume, Class of 2006

Sociology major

“Together, We Are One: Progressive Philanthropy and the Funding of Social Change at the Boston Women’s Fund”

Ellie is an activist – as committed to social change as to academic inquiry. Citing W.B. Yeats “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire,” she defined her Wellesley education through her multiple service internships as well as her coursework, and she found the “fire” of meaning in the interplay between the two. Interested in the history of social movements, passionate about class and gender equality, about empowering women and bettering their lives

and those of their children, Ellie decided to devote her senior year to a “deeply personal question”: How do we make change happen? Realizing that there is tremendous power in women’s philanthropy and civic engagement, for her Fellowship project she undertook a study of women’s philanthropy and of the intersection of philanthropy and social change, through the lens of the Boston Women’s Fund. She interviewed staff, donors, board members and grantees of this small, progressive, mission-based organization that engages women in social change through philanthropy. Her honors thesis was both a case history of the Boston Women’s Fund and a theoretical examination of movement-based philanthropy.

Today Ellie is an intern at the Mississippi Center for Justice where she is working on several projects, including education and housing equity campaigns in the post-Katrina delta. Committed to a lifework implementing her ideals of social justice, she begins law school at the University of California, Berkeley, in September.
[2007]

Jennifer Cawley, Class of 2007
Art History major

“in the middle, somewhat elevated: Rachel bas-Cohain, 1937-1982”

Jennifer’s Fellowship project was a study of the life and work of the neglected American artist, Rachel bas-Cohain, some of whose pieces are owned by Wellesley’s Davis Museum. Drawing entirely upon primary materials, interviews with bas-Cohain’s family, friends and fellow artists, and contemplation of the “beautiful, tactile, sensuous and witty” works themselves, Jennifer’s honors thesis became, in effect, a monograph on this extraordinary artist and her “subversive, socially engaged feminist production.” Jennifer writes that the Fellowship afforded her a “vital space” in which to “pursue my subject with greater freedom and intensity”—a space in which she conducted hours of interviews, traveled to view bas-Cohain’s works and personal archive, wrote the thesis, did a “bit of curatorial work” (she mounted a small show of bas-Cohain’s works in the Davis Museum), and “became more conscious of the idea of the ‘maverick,’ the ‘autonomous thinker.’”

As she begins to write about bas-Cohain for publication, Jennifer has contributed a biographical entry to the *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon*, a German dictionary of artists. A Davis Scholar, she receives her Wellesley degree this spring, after which she will continue to shape a lifework in art – as a historian, curator, photographer, or all of the above.
[2007]

Mimosa Burr, Class of 2007
Chemistry major

“Marine Anti-Fouling Surfaces: *N*-Isopropylacrylamide-based polymers on metal to prevent *mytilus edulis* foot protein absorption”

Marine fouling, the adhesion of marine organisms to seagoing vessels, is a serious environmental and economic issue. Fouling adds friction, which slows down boats, which in turn increases fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The long-term objective of Mimosa’s research is to contribute to the development of an environmentally safe marine anti-foulant, a product that will prevent marine organisms from adhering to boat surfaces. Blending her advisor’s expertise in polymer chemistry with her interest in environmental conservation, the aim of her Fellowship project is to explore and gain an understanding of material and biological

adhesive behavior. Specifically, her honors thesis research investigates the fundamental properties of nanoscale polymer thin films and their anti-fouling capacity.

Mimosa receives her Wellesley B.A. this spring, after which she will begin graduate work toward a Ph.D. in chemistry. Reflecting her desire to connect lab and environment, research and policy, she hopes also to earn a degree in environmental policy and eventually to fashion a career that promotes scientifically sound, environmentally friendly public policy.
[2007]

Vanessa Wiegel, Class of 2007
Cinema and Media Studies major

“Walks with My Mother”

Vanessa is an accomplished photographer and an aspiring filmmaker. Her Fellowship project and senior honors thesis is a short narrative film that depicts the tumultuous relationship between a mother and a teenage daughter as it manifests itself in the ritual of the walks they take together over a period of months, across the seasons. Inspired by Vanessa’s own experience and loosely based on conversations with her own mother, “Walks with My Mother” explores not only the meaning and impact of the words we speak – dialogue – but also the power of silence and gesture – the unspoken ways we communicate with others. The goal of her project is to provide an “introspective look into companionship, its purpose and importance in our ultimately solitary lives.” Fellowship funds went to myriad production costs (auditions and location scouting, film and equipment, props and costumes). Vanessa means to defy the statistic that there are more women senators in Washington than there are women directors in Hollywood. “All it takes,” she says, “is a show of faith in one project, one film, one student...”

Vanessa graduates from Wellesley this spring, after which she hopes to attend film school and, ultimately, to direct her own feature films.
[2007]

Carmella Britt, Class of 2008
Africana Studies major

“Defying the Odds: Contemporary Black Women in Science, Medicine, and Public Health”

Inspired by Ntozake Shange’s lines, “somebody/anybody sing a black girl’s song...bring her out...sing the song of her possibilities,” and informed by her own commitment to the study and practice of medicine, Carmella’s Fellowship project, part of an independent study in Women’s Studies, was a twenty-minute documentary film in which she interviewed eleven Black women pursuing successful careers in science, medicine and public health in the Boston area. Serving simultaneously as interviewer and cinematographer, Carmella asked her subjects to reflect critically on their experiences as students and interns and as practitioners, to discuss rough patches and obstacles as well as achievements, triumphs and sources of support. She wanted not only to record their stories – to add a new chapter to the oral history of successful Black women in science and medicine – but also to celebrate their personal and professional accomplishment in overcoming racial and gender barriers to their substantial achievement. A vivid proxy for her own generation of African-American women aspiring to careers in science and medicine, Carmella encouraged the women in her film to ponder their legacy, to voice regrets, to offer advice.

Carmella is currently pursuing a Master’s degree in public health at the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University, after which she plans to go to medical school.
[2008]

Francisca Guzman, Class of 2008

Political Science major

“Pain: Memories of My Childhood”

“Writing is simply not easy,” Francisca told the fellowship committee. “It is a challenge every time I sit down to write. For me, writing is a way of turning a nightmare into a dream. It redirects the anger inside of me into a productive outlet. It provides a home to the ghosts of my past.” Francisca’s Fellowship project, undertaken in the context of an independent study in Wellesley’s English Department, was a memoir that explored critical traumatic events of her childhood. Her goals in this project were personal, intellectual and social: to create a healing arc from her past to her future, to become a clear and eloquent writer, and to participate in and further a dialogue among women about “taboo subjects in society today.” The work itself proved to be an intense and intensive experience of writing, criticism, discussion and revision, in which she produced several chapters of what became a formidable manuscript – a document both intimate and public, which she shared with the community at large in the spring of her senior year.

Francisca is working on completing her memoir for publication. An ardent soccer fan, she is contemplating a ‘day job’ as a sports writer.

[2008]

Beth Romano, Class of 2008

Double major in English and Mathematics

“Rewriting History: Editing the Past in Modern and Contemporary Irish Drama”

“There’s a great gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed,” says a character in J. M. Synge’s *Playboy of the Western World*. Beth’s Fellowship project was her honors thesis on Irish drama. A writer herself, wanting to understand the process of revision that turns deed into story, she focused on characters who tell and retell their tales until the end product barely resembles the original action. A passionate student of Irish history, Beth wanted also to fathom why Ireland’s great playwrights present moments in their country’s history in ways that revise textbooks. She looked closely at the historical periods in which their plays were written – just before the Irish War of Independence, during the Northern Troubles, and in the growth years of the Celtic Tiger economy – and concluded that storytelling, and particularly the imaginative rewriting of personal or national history, is a way of forming an identity during times of cultural change. Fellowship funds enabled Beth to travel to Dublin twice – once to see an updated version of Synge’s *Playboy*, in which the main character is not a boy from the west of Ireland but a refugee from Nigeria, and again to interview contemporary playwrights. These experiences and conversations in Ireland not only contextualized her understanding of Irish plays as works of art but also deepened her love of the great and vivid culture from which they spring.

After a summer internship at a literary magazine, Beth is living, working, and writing in Paris, where she is learning to appreciate another culture and literature. She has been accepted into the Master’s program in Anglo-Irish literature at Trinity College Dublin for the fall of 2009.

[2008]

Susan Muensterman, Class of 2009

English major

“Did You Forget Your Name?”

“I have known since I could hold a pencil that I wanted to be a writer,” Susan wrote in her Fellowship application. And, indeed, by the beginning of her senior year, she had demonstrated her remarkable gifts as a short story writer. For her Fellowship project – a creative-writing honors thesis – she proposed to complete a short story collection and four chapters of a first novel. She accomplished even more: Supported by Fellowship funds and driven by a fierce work ethic, she worked single-mindedly over winter break, “made a rush to the finish” in the spring, and completed a first draft of the entire novel (twenty chapters), eventually entitled Did You Forget Your Name? Like the heroine of her novel, Susan has stuttered since she was a child. Her novel is a darkly comical, ultimately uplifting account of a young girl who is unable to speak when she most needs to. Susan says that the benefits of her project were threefold: cathartic, creative, and intellectual. First, writing the novel was a way to put into words her lifelong struggle with speech, and even to come to terms with it. Second, she was able to make the formal transition from short story to the sustained story-telling and plot and character development that a novel requires. Finally, she realized her novel as a way to educate her readers about the daunting effects of stuttering on a person’s identity and life.

Susan is currently a Jacob Javits Fellow in the MFA Program in Creative Writing at the University of Mississippi. She is doing a final revision of her novel, which she hopes to publish in the near future.

[2012]

Catlin Powers, Class of 2009

Double major in Chemistry and Environmental Studies

“SolSource 3-in-1 Solar Cooker for Tibet: Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbons from Yak Dung Combustion”

Imagine a clean cooking, heating and electricity solution for 2.5 billion of the world’s poorest people – at a price they can afford. This is the promise of the “SolSource 3-in-1,” a portable solar cooker that Catlin and fellow students at MIT imagined, built and field-tested in Tibet. And this is the premise of her senior honors thesis and Fellowship project. The rural peoples of the Himalayan region rely heavily on yak dung for cooking and heating – a fuel that causes indoor air pollution, contributes to climate change, and perpetuates gender inequality because girls spend long hours collecting dung while boys attend school. But a solar cooker taps the energy of the sun. Putting her chemistry major to work, Catlin decided to create an “energy source data base” that would compare the emissions of various fuels in order to generate energy abatement statistics. Existing (western) emissions data did not include polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), the pollutant emitted in the burning of yak dung. So Catlin decided to analyze PAHs in yak dung both to make the case for the solar cooker in places such as Tibet, and to launch the energy data base for use in innovating and monitoring renewable energy projects around the world.

A PhD candidate in Environmental Health at the Harvard School of Public Health, Catlin is currently doing field work in China. She is also the co-founder of One Earth Designs, a non-profit start-up organization that designs and develops technical innovations and environmental solutions for low-income communities around the world.

[2012]

Claire Davis, Class of 2010

English major

“Singing for My Supper: An Album of Original Songs”

“The most immediate and intimate way to handle a text is to place it humming in the throat,” writes singer-songwriter Claire Davis. Claire came into her senior year having performed in numerous choirs, taught and created music curricula for elementary school children in Washington D.C., studied at Oxford, and “sung out somewhere or another four nights a week on the streets of New York City.” She had studied texts and melodies across the ages, from Hildegard of Bingen to Bach and Bartok, from John Donne and Robert Burns to Bob Dylan and Al Green. She had explored chant and gospel, chorale, ballad and blues. She had mastered the guitar. It was time to ignite for herself what she calls the “combustible spark between words and music.” Claire’s Fellowship project was the production, performance and public release of an album of original songs. In the context of her creative-writing honors thesis in English, which “explored contemporary American lyric at the crossroads of honky-tonk, gospel and Sappho,” Claire wrote the lyrics and composed the music and arrangements for a dozen new songs, recorded them in the studio and in live performance (solo and with other musicians), and produced an album of the collection entitled “Thrift and Industry.”

After graduation, Claire moved on out into the wider world to sing for her supper under the name Cal Folger Day.

[2012]

Janine Hegarty, Class of 2010

Double major in French and Neuroscience

George Sand’s “Mauprat: A New Adaptation for a New Era”

George Sand’s 1837 novel Mauprat is the story of the transformation of a savage child, Bernard de Mauprat, into a civilized human being through teaching and the love of his fair cousin, Edmee. George Sand’s own stage adaptation of her very long novel was unsuccessful. For her Fellowship project and senior honors thesis in French, Janine, an accomplished actor and theatre maven “ferociously devoted” to Sand, set out to accomplish what the French novelist had not. Her senior honors thesis and Fellowship project would be a ‘trifecta’ of adaptation, translation and performance. In order to understand the lukewarm reception that greeted Sand’s theatrical version of Mauprat, Janine immersed herself in nineteenth-century theatre criticism, popular reviews, and Sand’s correspondence of the period. From there, she proceeded to write a new adaptation of the original novel, in French, and then translated her adaptation into English for performance. In the spring, with a cast drawn from fellow thespians in Shakespeare Society and Dead Serious, she produced and directed “her” Mauprat. Performed as a late eighteenth-century courtroom drama (in Wellesley’s Academic Council chamber), Janine’s adaptation wryly conveyed the convention-defying novelist’s socialist and feminist messages – “but with a modern twist.” And she realized her lifelong dream of directing a full-length play, which received a rousing reception from the Wellesley community.

Janine is currently a Master’s degree candidate in Performance Studies at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

[2012]

Alexandra Olivier, Class of 2011

Double major in Computer Science and French

“Social Synapses: An Art Installation in the Science Center”

An offshoot of Alex’s senior thesis project in computer science (an electronic toolkit to enable others to create interactive spaces), “Social Synapses” was (and is) an installation “designed to provoke contemplation about the interconnectivity of our community.” Here’s how it works: Sensors placed under tables in the focus area of the Science Center monitor traffic and

activity there, causing artificial neurons along the walkways and windows overhead to light up and twinkle – literally and metaphorically illuminating the power of student interaction and communication. Alex’s engagement with her Fellowship project is threefold: She sees it as a serious challenge to herself to design and execute an artistic vision electronically, as a way of showcasing the importance of collaboration within Wellesley’s academic community, and as a “magical, playful and really cool” experiment. Work on the project took Alex into the summer – building, testing, installing and programming the neuron ‘sculptures.’ She describes the process as “unlike anything I’d ever experienced in class. I felt like a Ninja in the Science Center; I would stay up late and just WORK – no assignment, just the passion. Hanging the neurons made me feel like I was adjusting sails on a ship, trying to get the synapses just right.” The installation is intended to be permanent. Come see for yourselves.

This fall, Alex will be starting a Master’s program at NYU-ITP (Interactive Telecommunications Program), where she hopes to keep on constructing compelling and beautiful objects.

[2011]

Amanda Wyatt, Class of 2011

Peace and Justice Studies major

“Hope in Action: Providing a Holistic Educational Experience through Community Partnerships”

“Reflection drives the action, and the action makes you reflect.” Amanda cites Paolo Freire when she describes her Fellowship project, part of an independent study in Education, as an “action proposal” and a necessary counterpoint to the “abstract ideas of my wonderful liberal arts education.” With the passionate commitment of a born community organizer, Amanda devised and implemented a working partnership between a predominantly low-income school in Boston’s South End, a community organization across the street in an Episcopal church, and Wellesley students. Under the banner “Stronger Communities, Stronger Schools,” she recruited a cohort of ten volunteers who made the weekly trip into Boston to provide supplemental one-on-one tutorial and emotional support to struggling students in the classroom as well as recreation, instruction in the martial art of Wushu, and playful friendship after school. Determined to make this kind of collaboration permanent, Amanda created a new service organization on campus, “Sed Ministrare,” for which she wrote a Handbook to inspire and guide Wellesley’s next class of inner-city volunteers, and the next...

Amanda’s future plans are to study law and pursue a lifework addressing and redressing educational inequity.

[2011]