

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 Sux*: 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 winterterm 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 – 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 now 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]