

## **Benenson Awards in the Arts: 2012 Awardees**

The Edward H. Benenson Awards in the Arts are given annually to undergraduate students to broaden their educational and professional perspectives in the arts. The awards are made on a competitive basis for the most outstanding project proposals and are determined by a committee of distinguished faculty representing all areas of the visual and performing arts. There are 16 award winners this year.

### **Jennifer Blocker (T'2012, Public Policy and Theater Studies)**

#### **The Michael Howard Studios Summer Conservatory**

Jennifer will attend the Michael Howard Studios Summer Conservatory, a rigorous curriculum for serious actors that is geared towards university students looking for an opportunity to work on their craft full-time. It emphasizes classes that develop the actor's instrument, leading actors toward a deeper understanding of both their craft and their self.

### **Ashley Brasier (T'2011, Visual and Media Studies)**

#### **Career Discovery at the Harvard Graduate School of Design**

Ashley will participate in the Harvard Graduate School of Design's "Career Discovery" program, which opens its studios to students and professionals with a budding interest in the design and planning professions. Over the course of six weeks, the "Career Discovery" program combines intensive studio work with panel discussions, office visits, and workshops. The Urban Planning concentration offered within the Career Discovery program exposes students to the social, economic, legal and cultural factors that drive the development of our built environment. Through a combination of lectures with local design professionals and correlated studio sessions, the program enables students to understand how these factors interact in a practical context. From small-scale assignments to regional planning projects, the Urban Planning concentration provides a comprehensive survey of the profession and its challenges.

### **Martin Connor (T'2012, Music)**

#### **Requiem for Victims of the 2010 Earthquake in Haiti**

Martin is enrolled in an independent study with Dr. Anthony Kelley in Music 191. For the past 2 years he's been working on a 35-minute, 9-movement requiem for brass quintet, choir, percussion, and the carillon in the Duke chapel in memory of victims of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. He has set those words and interspersed throughout them 15 authentic folk ritual songs in Haitian Creole from Haiti's indigenous religion, Vodun. By having the requiem performed almost 2 years after its impetus, Martin intends to try to again bring awareness and publicity back to an island where they are still dealing with the metaphorical aftershocks of the earthquake, as well as to raise some money for the relief efforts in any way possible.

### **Nathaniel Hill (T'2012, Theater Studies)**

#### **Commercial Theater Institute 16-week Intensive course**

Nathaniel will participate in the 2013 Commercial Theater Institute intensive course in producing commercial theater. The course begins in January 2013 and runs for 16 weeks. CTI is the gold standard in the preparation and training of emerging producers for work in the New York theater industry. CTI states that its programs –represent the theatre industry's commitment to insuring that a pool of qualified and committed producers are ready for the future. Coursework includes commercial theater finance, entertainment law, technical training, and guest lectures with distinguished theater professionals.

**Monica Hogan (T'2012, Dance, Biology)**

**The Classic, Contemporary, and Creative: Expanding Dance Choreography and Performance**

Monica is an aspiring choreographer and is planning to spend 8 weeks attending a self-tailored schedule of dance master classes in New York City. Artists offering master classes in New York this summer include: Camille A. Brown, Desmond Richardson, Monica Bill Barnes, David Dorfman, Stephen Petronio, Donald Byrd, Drew Jacoby, Becky Brown (Limon Institute), Igal Perry, and many more. While in New York, Monica will be writing a personal journal about the different approaches of these various artists. Meeting professionals in the field and learning about their approaches to movement inventiveness will be instrumental to her progress as a young choreographer.

**Wanda Jin (T'2012, English, Minor in Theater Studies & Dance)**

**RADA and Odin: Summer Studies in Theater**

Wanda will continue her training as a performer through immersive summer workshops in the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) in London and the Odin Teatret in Holstebro, Denmark.

The program in RADA is a two week course on various modern texts. A major part of the program is to choose and develop a monologue over the two weeks. She will also work on scenes with other students and talk to playwrights and professional actors and, by the end of the program, she will have prepared and polished a monologue.

**Nusaibah Kofar-Naisa (T'2012, Political Science)**

**A Portal into Kano, Nigeria**

Nusaibah has spent the past year conducting research centered on a case study of the Kofar Na Isa gate in Kano, Nigeria, from which her family derives its name. Nusaibah has spent time speaking with the people in this area and interviewing them about the gate and its recent demolition. Using her Benenson award, she will preserve these stories and use photographs to retain an image of the city before coming years completely remove all traces of historic Kano monuments. She intends to submit copies of her pieces and original photographs to the Gidan Makama Kano Museum and to have all material viewable on a blog to share with people internationally.

**Alison Kibbe (T'2012, Interdepartmental: Cultural Anthropology and Public Policy)**

**Movement, Justice, and Community: An Artist Activist's Journey**

Alison will attend the American Dance Festival this summer and will then participate in an Internship Performance Training in Washington, DC this fall. These opportunities will allow Alison to develop as an artist and arts advocate, integrating her interests in policy, arts, performance and social justice through a number of programs and experiences.

**Jonathan Lee (T'2012, Biology and English)**

**Aesthetics of the Environmental Iconography of Singapore**

Jonathan will create a book that contains drawings of the environmental icons, flora, and fauna of Singapore, as well as creative writing that reflects on how people respond to, navigate about, and interact with these icons. The book will be similar in form to a naturalist's journal, with fairly realistic drawings and descriptive text to be juxtaposed against the creative writing.

**Katherine Noel (T' 2012, Visual Arts, English, Photography Minor)**

**High Caliber Craftsmen Course with Follow Up Sculpture Series**

Katherine will attend a class this summer in hot glass and flamework at a School of Crafts or Art Center, either Penland, Haystack, or Pilchuck. This is a follow up to her work from this year in sculpture, and she plans to produce a series of abstract sculptures following this summer experience. This class will broaden and enhance both her skills as a craftsman and her portfolio.

**Richard Paez (T'2013, Theater Studies)**

**The Theatermakers Summer Intensive at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center**

Richard will participate in Theatermakers, a six-week program designed for students who are self-driven and want to sharpen their theater skills and heighten performance-readiness. It involves an intensive daily regimen of contemporary scene-study, workshops in movement, improvisation, and auditioning, ensemble classes and workshops with professional artists. He will collaborate with student writers and directors to train in ensemble-building, new play development, and the collaborative relationship between actor, director and playwright. In addition, he will observe and assist on one of the National Playwrights or National Music Theater Conference projects.

**Braxton Shelley (T'2012, Music)**

**Songs Of A Survivor: A Gospel Recording Project**

Braxton's project will consist of a recording done with a local choir and a group of musicians from near and far. The music for this project was written as a part of his advanced composition study during his final semester as an undergraduate. By recording this CD, Braxton hopes to disseminate some of the music he's written here at Duke, while also demonstrating the ways in which his background in Gospel music and his study at Duke have a mutually beneficial relationship.

**Connor Southard (T'2012, English)**

**Service and Profit After the War: Stories of Building and Rebuilding in Sierra Leone**

Connor will visit rural Sierra Leone in order to create profiles of local people and document venture capital fund WAVA's work in social entrepreneurship in a developing country. He will be hosted in Kenema, Sierra Leone for ten weeks by Michael Bernert (Pratt '12) and his business partners in the venture capital fund WAVA. Connor also plans to create at least six detailed profiles of individual Sierra Leoneans, so as to particularize and home in on narratives of personal entanglement with social forces and movements of global history that are total abstractions to many Americans. Connor's overarching goal is to produce a collection of essays that will, in total, be roughly the length of a novella and that will include both profiles of individual Sierra Leoneans and observations/assessments of the broader WAVA project.

**Eddie Wu (T'2012, Philosophy)**

**American Impressions: 2012**

Eddie plans to complete a photographic road trip of the Midwest, Great Plains, and the West Coast. He plans to capture what he calls –"American impressions," framed instants situated within the personal and national backgrounds of the year 2012. He intends to engage with, and react to the core symbols, metaphors, and mythologies of America, starting from the romanticized visions of the very road he will

be traveling on. This project extends the work that he has done as part of the Documentary Studies Certificate at Duke.

**Ali Yalgin (T'2012, Political Science and Theater Studies)**

**Prague Film School-Summer Workshop in Filmmaking**

Ali will attend the Prague Film School for a summer workshop, aiming to teach participants the basics of filmmaking in four weeks. The students are expected to have an idea for a story, which they turn into a short film at the end of the workshop. The classes taught are Screenwriting, Directing, Editing, and Cinematography. There is also a workshop on sound design. By providing the participants both with intensive training and with time to shoot their own stories, this workshop will be beneficial to Martin, who hopes to become a director.

**Cameron Zohoori (T'2012, Neuroscience)**

**Underwater Photography Internship in South Africa**

Cameron will participate in the Fiona Ayerst Underwater Photography internship, a selective photography training program with professional media producers based at the Oceans Research Institute in Mossel Bay, South Africa. The Underwater Photography internship gives aspiring photographers –opportunities within various wildlife and underwater platforms to produce photographic portfolios for selected clients, specialist training in underwater and wildlife photography techniques, instruction in photographic and video post-production, and career guidance.