

Class of 1960 Fellowship Summer Report - Jillian Kravatz

When I arrived in New York in the middle of May for my internship with The Poetry Society of New York, they informed me that The Typewriter Project would not be starting until the very end of my internship. This changed the nature of what I thought I would be doing while in New York. Instead of manning a poetry booth everyday, they had a different project for me – one that proved to be even more interesting, I think. I still was involved in preparing the society to put up The Typewriter Project installation. I worked on writing the press release, contacting members of the media or other arts publications in the city and trying to connect them with the project. Many of these connections worked out and resulted in lovely pieces about the project.

What I wasn't expecting to be a part of was the production of a play, *Two Genius Husbands* by the poet Carina Finn. The play was only rehearsed for around three weeks, and in that time I served as a production assistant, a job I'd never done before. This task mostly included working to gather costume pieces and props for the show, which sent me off into various arts warehouses and thrift stores all throughout the city – from Queens to Brooklyn, to the Lower East Side. I found myself caught in thinking about the stuff of our lives – the clothing we wear, the things we gather in our homes. The clutter of our lives is as much a part of who we are as is the flesh and blood that makes up our physical bodies. Analyzing the script, talking with the playwright everyday in rehearsal (such a privilege), and getting to watch the actors (almost all Yale MFAs!) work to give the story breath and realness, I was forced to think about what sort of clutter these characters would create for themselves. This exploration led to a number of poems about objects as a way of defining a life. I mentioned in my proposal for the fellowship that I was much more moved by concrete, everyday experience than by abstractions. This summer that became even more evident to me. I was obsessed with place and things even more than my interactions with other people. From the subway to the parks and the sidewalks, I was trying to capture what it feels like to live in a world of things.

Since getting back to campus, I've already been able to publish a poem that was edited over the summer in *The New Journal*, an on campus publication. As I continue to work on editing and writing poems from the summer, I hope to find other platforms to share my work as the year continues. Thank you for the opportunity to grow as a poet by helping me to fund my time in New York this summer. My work has changed and improved from this experience, and my love of poetry is only strengthened by having focused so much on it.