

Artist Mini Grant Application  
Proposal to Fund Workshop  
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## **Narrative Illumination**

My name is Aspen Miller and I am a fourth drama major with a focus on film, directing, and video art. Currently, I am furthering my study of film lighting as well as establishing a new student film production company, LabShorts. We, as a group, are in desperate need of a professional lighting workshop so we can increase the production value of our work, but more importantly, learn the role of light in the narrative process.

### **Project Description**

Lighting is one of the most vital and challenging aspects of film storytelling. It can provide visual depth that conveys inner character conflict and transformation. It illuminates the message and the emotions of the subject. It is necessary to all film, but it is often the most ignored tool due to its complexity. Student filmmakers almost never learn to properly light before they begin winging it in the field. Although “winging it” is a crucial part to the learning process, it also increases on-set issues and delays. LabShorts had trouble with this last semester with our neo-noir (in which lighting plays a defining role) and we survived it. But I can say as the director-producer of the film, we could have used a stronger foundation in lighting before learning to how to “make it work” while the camera was rolling.

This year we would love to change that. Through my internship at Arvold. Casting this summer, I met Michael Duni (Turn, House of Cards) who is professional lighting technician. He has happily agreed to lead a workshop with the LabShorts community before we begin production this semester. Due to the fact that Duni is a busy filmmaker, he has asked for compensation for travel and time which he has rounded down to \$250 dollars (significantly discounted because of our relationship). The additional \$250 will go towards a lighting set for the workshop, but ultimately I will keep the set for my future projects (such as Riptide, my 4<sup>th</sup> year grant film). The workshop is planned for October 15<sup>th</sup> from 12pm-4pm. We will be accepting 10-12 participants.

This workshop is important for the long-term survival and quality of LabShorts as an organization, but it will also provide opportunities for individual UVA filmmakers to dive deeper into their craft. Duni (who was once a student filmmaker) spoke to me about the importance of learning these skills now because they can lead to secure jobs in our fields and a more profound understanding of film as a narrative art form. From my talks with other film professionals, I know this to be true and I feel it is my responsibility to do my best to bring this education to the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to email with any questions.