Background and Project Description:

My goal with this FUSE grant is to conduct scholarly research which I will use to write and publish an article on Futurism. Futurism - an Italian cultural movement that began in 1909 and lasted until World War II – is my area of focus as an Art History major. The movement was headed by the poet, F.T. Marinetti, who published the first Futurist Manifesto in 1909. In it, he called for a destruction of Italy’s past in order to embrace its future. This manifesto was penned at a time in which Italy was in a state of economic distress and technology was rapidly advancing (electricity, flight, automobiles). A group of young artists and writers heard Marinetti’s call and joined his Futurist movement. Drawing upon Henri Bergson’s ideas of time and space and misinterpretations of Nietzsche’s Superman, the Futurists developed a new vision of what Italy should be. Italian Futurists were fervent nationalists who completely revolutionized what art could be. They sought to bring their ideas of a dynamic and mechanized future to life in their art. Their contributions to the future of modern art were seminal.

I have been invited to contribute and edit content for italianfuturism.org – the premier site for the distribution of scholarly information regarding Futurism. Not only is this a great opportunity for me, but a contribution to this site will be a noteworthy and unique credential for an undergraduate student looking towards graduate school. If awarded a FUSE grant, I would use it to conduct extensive research in New York City. The Solomon R Guggenheim Museum is currently showing an exhibition called Italian Futurism 1909 - 1944: Reconstructing the Universe, which brings together over 300 Futurist pieces spanning all forms of art in which they worked. This is the largest such exhibition ever and includes works that have never been publicly exhibited. Art history begins with the direct observation of art. It is an experience that cannot be replicated in digital or printed images. This show provides a unique opportunity for a first-hand comparative study of the most comprehensive and diverse display Futurist works of art to ever be assembled. For an aspiring Futurist scholar, going to this exhibition truly is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

In addition to visiting the Guggenheim for Reconstructing the Universe, I also plan on visiting the Center of Italian Modern Art. CIMA is a new foundation to promote the study of Italian modern and contemporary art. Their first exhibition highlights the career of Forunato Depero - a Futurist artist and designer - to correlate with Reconstructing the Universe. I have been promised full access to the Futurist Research Center in the city. While the bulk of my research will take place at the Futurist Research Center, I will also utilize the libraries at the Museum of Modern Art, the Frick Collection and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Also during my stay I hope to meet with other established scholars of Italian Modernism, on faculty of NYU and the City University of New York. Meetings with these scholars will provide an opportunity to develop an innovative article topic on Futurism. Currently, I am interested in exploring the ways in which the objects created by the Futurists manifest their understanding of contemporary philosophy. This is just one potential direction and I expect it to evolve or change entirely after viewing their bodies of work and doing more extensive research.

As this will be my first publication, it is crucial that I absorb as much information on the subject as possible. Traveling to New York is integral to the success of my project, as it is the epicenter of American studies of Italian Futurism. The level of direct exposure to Futurist art I will have at
the Guggenheim and Center for Italian Modern Art cannot be matched. Additionally, I will be in a unique position to seek out valuable materials in non-circulating libraries. At the Futurist Research Center, I will have access to a highly specialized collection of research material that cannot be found elsewhere. The resources available in New York provide an effective and efficient research opportunity. It is only in New York that these materials will be available to me.

**Project Timeline:**

| Summer 2014 | June 20 – 24: In New York.  
| | • Visit *Reconstructing the Universe*.  
| | • Conduct research at the Futurist Research Center and the MoMA, Frick and Met libraries.  
| | • Meet with Jessica Palmieri. Others TBD  
| | June 24 – July 26: In Rome.  
| | • Enrolled in a two-course summer study abroad program through AIFS.  
| | • Seek out additional materials.  
| | • Study research material obtained in New York.  
| | August  
| | • Prepare and organize notes.  
| | • Develop my thesis.  
| | • Begin drafting an outline.  
| | • Identify main sources.  
| | September  
| | • Write first draft of the article.  
| | • Submit first draft to my mentor for editing.  
| | • Make necessary corrections and polish the structure of the article.  
| | October  
| | • Submit polished draft to my mentor.  
| | • Make any final improvements.  
| | • Submit content to Jessica Palmieri for approval and publication on her site.  
| | • Search for additional venues for presentation/publication.  

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Student and Mentor Roles:

My role as the student will be to utilize the resources available to me in New York to conduct extensive research on the subject of Italian Futurism. From there, I must use said research to contribute and edit content for italianfuturism.org. My mentor, Dr. Adrian Duran, is an Art History professor whose area of expertise is Italian Modernism. Dr. Duran’s role will be to oversee the development of my article, suggest improvements, correct any inaccuracies and attempt to put me in touch with his colleagues in New York.

Citations:


Additional research to be done at:
Frick Library
Futurist Research Center
Metropolitan Museum of Art Library
Museum of Modern Art Library

Budget Justification:

Plane ticket to New York - $318.50
Four nights in a hotel - $1,000
Entry to the Guggenheim, twice - $40
Transportation - $50
Food - $200
Student stipend: $10 per hour, 85 hours - $850

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3 http://www.priceline.com/hotel/searchResults.do?jsk=354a050a334a050a20140201193032b6e010318143&key=hrS9zum2&howDP=y
4 http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/visit/plan-your-visit
30 January 2014

To the Committee:

I write with great excitement in support of Natasha Bishop’s FUSE grant application, through which she seeks to do scholarly research and writing on Italian Futurism. The timing of this opportunity is ideal—the Guggenheim museum in New York is hosting the most comprehensive exhibition of Futurist work ever assembled, with many works that have never left Italy and will not circulate again in our lifetimes.\(^5\) This is a unique opportunity for Natasha to engage these objects on a first-hand basis, the foundation of all art historical research. Additionally, she will be able to research in some of the premier art historical libraries in the US: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Frick Art Reference Library, and the Center for Italian Modern Art.

Moreover, I have put Natasha in touch with a colleague who runs both italianfuturism.org and the Futurism Research Center, two essential scholarly resources.\(^6\) We have arranged that Natasha will submit and edit content for the site, later to be developed into a paper that we will submit for presentation at undergraduate student conferences and for publication.

This is a singular, prestigious opportunity for Natasha to study objects and do research at the professional level, work directly with leading scholars, develop skills that will propel her towards graduate work and into a promising career in art history, and explore the rapidly-developing landscape of the digital humanities. She is a student of proven ability, profound dedication and excitement, and has before her exactly the kind of opportunity best enabled by the FUSE grant.

If I may be of any further assistance in clarifying this proposal, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best,

Adrian R. Duran
Assistant Professor, Department of Art & Art History
arduran@unomaha.edu/901.383.3198/WFAB325

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\(^6\) [http://www.italianfuturism.org](http://www.italianfuturism.org)