

Erynn Rebol's Statement

I hope to participate in the LARC program again this summer in order to once again be an instrument in research. I will be working in collaboration with Associate Professor Andries Fourie (Art) and Associate Professor David P. Craig (Biology), and two art students, Monique Rodriquez and Jake Waldner. Previously, in 2011, I worked alongside Professor David P. Craig on a LARC grant that examined the complexities of the relationships between Caspian Terns, humans, and salmon in the Columbia River Estuary. This research combined scientific knowledge with art in an effort to explore the advantages of different kinds of expression.

Combining art and science has long been a personal goal. They are two different disciplines that do not overlap at all, and yet they complement and balance each other. As a biology major and an art minor, the biggest challenge is therefore discovering ways to enhance both of them. The LARC grant for this summer of 2013 is another opportunity for me to develop both of these areas of interest. I will act alongside Professor Craig as a source of biological information for Professor Fourie and his students as they explore the ecosystem of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. This will also be an opportunity for Professor Craig and I to pursue information on the life history and behavior of the Caspian Tern.

My research in Behavioral Ecology this semester has implied that Caspian Terns as a cosmopolitan species merit further inquiry into their distribution around the globe, including Africa. They are a species that shows immense potential as indicators for environmental health. This trip would provide a set amount of time for us to gather preliminary data on Caspian Terns in Africa as well as establish a network of resources and people there. Any future attempts of collaboration among fellow seabird researchers are dependent on establishing a connection first hand.

In Fall of 2012 I spent a semester abroad at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, and took classes in ecology and art there. This experience helped me to understand the complexities of the South African society and history and will be extremely valuable to have as we travel across South Africa. My previous research on Caspian Terns will allow me to use our time abroad efficiently and effectively while my art background will provide a different viewpoint to look from, and advice for the other art collaborators. It is my dream that this trip will provide me a starting point for future applications for a Fulbright Scholarships and research grants.

The result of our work abroad will be manifested in an exhibition at the Salem Art Association's Project Space program in the end of summer 2013. It is there that I hope to show the products of our labor in the form of field notebooks, sketches, and contextual information alongside the sculptures and paintings of our fellow art collaborators. This specific project has the potential to create amazing products because it is a culmination of two disciplines, not just the expansion of one, and in that way, it is a project that can resonate on multiple levels, with a wide variety of people.