

Process as Transformation

The 2021-22 **Graduate Team Fellows** consists of eight students pursuing MFA or PhD degrees from disciplines across the arts and humanities. Faculty mentors Danielle Fosler-Lussier and Ila Nagar collaborated on the following responses about the transformative value of process as an impact of the arts and humanities.

How has your experience as GTF mentors shifted how you think about the impact of arts and humanities research and creative practices?

In a cross-disciplinary conversation, talking about the “how” of our research — methods and practices — is invaluable. The fellows have come to understand intersecting methods and shared struggles, and in so doing have developed new ways to make their work legible for a wider audience. These conversations have also enabled the fellows to identify who they want to be as publicly-engaged scholars and artists.

How can the process of cross-disciplinary work be understood as integral to the outcomes?

A large artistic project and a dissertation may have a similar scope of work, but the process can be very different — or it can seem different on the surface, with techniques of organizing and sharing knowledge underneath that might be in common. For instance, When Kortney Morrow shared her approach to the micro-work of building a poem and the macro-work of deciding how several poems fit together, she discussed how each poem feels like a different

shape or color and how it took time to figure out the book’s rhythm. This tactile understanding helped those writing dissertations — because acknowledging that part-whole relationship is helpful in a large project and because thinking about the work in tangible ways makes the process of organizing knowledge less abstract.

How might we understand humanistic methods and practices as drivers of social change?

By demystifying disciplinary assumptions — by translating methods and practices across disciplinary lines — students have come to a deeper understanding of methods as pivotal to shaping the impact and outcomes of their work. The Graduate Team Fellows have come to see their methods as a form of action in the world that have ethical consequences. They are conscious that they are generating knowledge with and for the communities with whom they are in conversation. Working together has cultivated a belief that processes of sense-making are best done in community, and that these processes are central to how the arts and humanities foster social change.