

Artist Minigrant Outcome Report

Project Title: Navigation: A Study in Medium Format Film Photography

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I proposed an independent research on the subject of film photography, specifically through usage of a medium format film camera. I planned for this camera to be a Yashica-D 6x6 Twin Reflex lens model from the 1950s or 1960s. I aimed to explore the workings of an old school camera and the quality of photographs such machinery can produce. Photography has always served as an art of exploration for me, largely because I haven't taken a formal film photography class. I am intrigued by the role of increasingly archaic cameras in a society that is dominated by technology and immediate gratification in photo access and editing.

While I planned to purchase a Yashica-D camera, upon further research and weeks spent searching for a functioning model or a model that could be refurbished, my search proved futile. I took this change of plans as an opportunity to revisit my aims in requesting a grant to study photography. I considered what elements of increasingly dated film were most interesting to me. This reflection led me to consider instant film cameras. This film medium proved to be at an even greater risk of extinction than the undeniably still popular 35 mm format. Most instant cameras, whether they are Polaroid, Kodak, or otherwise, cannot be used today because their film is no longer produced.

Following research, I decided to search for a Polaroid 360 Land Camera and a Polaroid Impulse AF camera. Following purchase of the cameras, the Land Camera had to be refurbished in order for it to function fully. The Land Camera requires Fujifilm FP100c film, which is no longer made. This reality added another interesting layer to my research. The medium that proved to be instant, uncertain, and without guarantee of results, also had a very real expiration date. Once the film possessed by collectors expired or ran out, so did the function of the camera.

I found that instant film brought with it an element of the unexpected and, often times, uncontrollable. While I could select subject matter, perspective, and light, among other content and compositional elements, I couldn't consistently account for the behavior of the instant film. This resulted in light leaks, uneven coloration, and distortions in hue, all of which proved capable of being constructive and destructive to the final product.

I tinkered with, experimented with, and manipulated the two instant cameras throughout the summer so as to gain a familiarity with their strengths and limitations. In late September of this year, through funding by the Miller Art Scholars, I will be traveling with another scholar, Alexandra Chriscoe, to Denmark and Finland to attend the Graphica Creativa printmaking showcase and act as students at Helsinki's Academy of Fine Arts. I plan to use the two cameras to document this exploration through the printmaking, architecture, and culture of Denmark and Finland. These cameras will serve as appropriate methods of documentation due to their immediate production of the photographic product. As Alexandra and I create journals to present at our outcome presentation in April, these photographs will be crucial records of our experience and knowledge gained abroad alongside Dean Dass, Annu Vertanen, and the professional printmaking

community. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities provided by this minigrant. I look forward to increased exposure to photography and an acquisition of new techniques for narration, documentation, and manipulation of archaic film.

Sample of Summer Photographic Exploration in Anticipation of Travels



