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Miller Arts Scholars
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Fourth-Year Arts Award 2018: Outcome Report
Modern Art History, Pinhole Photography, and Italy Reflection

Last summer I studied Contemporary Art History (ARTH 2472) and Pinhole Photography (ARTS 2511) in Italy, staying in Castiglion Fiorentino while also visiting Rome, Florence, and Venice. I used my Arts Award grant money to cover my UVa study abroad tuition fees. These two courses allowed me to fulfill my studio art major's requirements before graduation and afforded me the incredible benefits of learning about modern and contemporary art first hand. Over the course of this month-long trip, my class visited numerous art institutions including: the National Gallery of Modern Art, Fattoria di Celle farm in Santomato di Pistoia, and the Venice Biennale. Studying historical art movements, while visiting work in person, all the while creating work of my own was an extremely rewarding and influential experience as an artist.

The National Gallery of Modern Art was an impactful experience in which we viewed works by artists including: Lucio Fontana, Gastone Novelli, Carla Accardi, Mimmo Rotella, even Andy Warhol. The Fattoria di Celle farm housed the Gori family's collection of site-specific sculptural work across over 70 acres of farmland. Finally, the Venice Biennale is a historic art fair that takes place every two years showcasing artwork from artists all over the world. Each country holds exhibitions in pavilions. Witnessing the extravagance and scale of this art fair first hand was an unbelievable experience; walking from pavilion to pavilion felt like moving from country to country at Epcot. In addition to these phenomenal field trips, Castiglion Fiorentino was celebrating Palio, an annual horse race in which the local neighborhoods compete. As a result of this, we were able to attend festivals, neighborhood soccer games, and other enriching activities alongside our classes.

At the onset of the trip, I was interested in exploring connections between art and education by becoming more aware of how I learn from and experience other cultures. Specifically, I was interested in exploring themes including: *space, barriers, reflection*, and

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translation. I planned to explore these topics through reflecting and documenting the trip with textural rubbings, personal and academic journaling, sketching, and photography. Due to time and practical constraints while traveling, I focused my reflection and documentation on academic journaling and photography. However, I still utilized a personal journal in the form of bulleted word document notes and one comprehensive journal entry reflecting on our visit to the National Gallery.

Paragraph from Italy journal entry for Thursday, May 25th: Walking up to the National Gallery of Modern Art from far away the steps read in huge lettering, TIME IS OUT OF JOINT, like the steps at UVA read with letters of various secret societies. Time, either discontinuous or concurrent (past, present, future at once), appears to be a theme of the trip. Just as I am writing this journal entry almost a week later, I am reminded of the metaphysical (classicizing spiritual or magical realism) painters such as Giorgio de Chirico who we discussed in class today (Wednesday, May 31st). For example, De Chirico would intentionally backdate his paintings to reference relativity and concurrent time (past, present, future).

This journal entry inspired a linoleum print reflecting on the trip when I returned to UVa and sparked the further exploration of *reflection* and *translation* as themes for my 4th year thesis show, which aims to abstractly depict information processing and the overwhelming and exciting feelings that occur during the learning process. Coincidentally, much of my work resembles my favorite painting we saw in Italy's National Gallery of Modern Art, *Poetry Reading Tour* by Gastone Novelli, illustrating further the salience of the experiences we garner over time particularly as an artist.



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To that effect, Contemporary Art in Italy was my first Art History class and I was blown away by the degree to which I resonated with multiple historical art movements. In many ways I felt I was learning about influences on my work I had only previously recognized subconsciously. Through the course I came to appreciate art within a broader historical context by learning how artists react to specific events and moments in time. Through my art history studies, traveling felt much more intentional and I felt a deeper connection to place than I have traveling in the past. Finally, I greatly enjoyed the spontaneity and risk involved in pinhole photography due to a relative lack of control in comparison to modern cameras. Below are two photographs from a larger body of work from the trip. The infinite image possibilities that could result from compositionally framing a view of the world in photography reminded me of the infinite possibilities that reside within or are carved from a block of wood in printmaking. Through this study abroad program with the Art Scholars program's help I gained valuable educational opportunities, artistic inspiration, a body of photographs, and knowledge of a new medium.

