

Arts Scholars Arts Award Application
Margaret Via

project: *nest*

Summary

nest will be a project with two simultaneous bodies of work. I plan to create a series of photographs while also making an Artist's Book. The Artist's Book will primarily consist of printmaking processes and mixed media, while the photographs will stand apart from the physical book. Together both book and photographs should be coherent thematically. The intent with using both mediums of Artist Book and Photography is to allow the mediums to inform and sustain one another. If done properly, I imagine the photographs and book as speaking a similar language, addressing the same problems but through different aesthetic and formal methodologies. I believe that working across mediums is necessary to this project because I am interested in putting emphasis on the processes involved in making artistic work, and see no better way to do that than to examine a poetical relationship between one form of expression to the next.

By next April, I plan to have a portfolio of images and an Artist's book with at least an edition of ten, depending upon costs.

Content

Photography seems to exist in a liminal space, in between what is real and what is imagined. The truth of the photograph often seems exaggerated or pulled beyond truth into a strange fiction where the viewer is left conjuring up their own reality of the image that the photographer might have intended to show, or not. In the project, *nest*, I will attempt to examine this liminal gap between the real space and imagined space of the experience of the photograph.

In an attempt to illustrate these concepts, I intend to take pictures in a more specific way than I might usually—dictating the contents of the photograph before taking the photograph. Although not every photograph will be limited to this methodology, I hope to experiment with this practice.

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Thematically, I hope to use Gaston Bachelard's work of architecture/philosophy *The Poetics of Space* as a foundational resource. Much of what interests me about Bachelard's work is his discourse on the imagination and psychic space and how those might relate to, and in turn represent external space. From a section of *The Poetics of Space*, entitled *nests*, there is an instance where Bachelard describes the physical processes of creating a bird's nest, the bird's breast pressing against the walls to create the circular form of the nest, and as such says, "the form of the nest is commanded by the inside". For Bachelard the nest is depicted as not only a metaphor between internal and external space and processes, but also a trope of security. After all, a nest is a home. So in this project I not only hope to explore notions of internal and external space but also to explore notions of place and security and how these may interact with one another.

Medium

The project *nest* belongs within the category of an Artist's Book because it is a project that expresses not one pronounced idea or thesis, but rather will ask sets of questions and attempt to synthesize them into solution. It will begin examining these broader issues and with time will unfold into a more coherent specificity. The format of the Artist's Book I also find conducive to a project of longer scope because it might prove helpful in its emphasis of process and evolution. *nest* is a multimedia project and will include written text, photographic imagery, as well as printing. The relationships between the different mediums will hopefully ultimately aid in illustrating the larger thematic scope of the project, of the tension and relationship between internal and external space, and simultaneously the metaphors that can be drawn from these relationships.

Methodology/time

Spring 2014: I intend to collect as much conceptually rich material during the remainder of the spring semester. This might include finding print imagery, and written works that will inform the project thematically.

Late Spring/Summer 2014: I will explore different methods of printmaking, and start experimenting with some of the

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found material. Beginning in the summer I will start to take at least two rolls of film per month in order to produce enough material for the final presentation. Most of the summer will be spent taking photographs and experimenting with different methods of both bookbinding and printmaking.

Fall 2014: I will continue to take film and compile photographs thematically. The photographs will be assembled into a separate portfolio and incorporated into the actual Artist's Book as necessary. I will begin to print the editions for the Artist's Book.

Winter 2015: I should be well prepared to start binding the editions and addressing any last minute issues/concerns in time before the April deadline. The photographic prints will be complete.

Costs

Costs will include the purchase of a medium format film camera, film + film processing, photographic paper/supplies, printmaking plates, printing paper, bookbinding supplies, as well as additional presentation materials. Below is a list of the price estimates, and might vary depending on artist's error (i.e. paper quantity).

estimate of costs

medium format film camera: 400
photography supplies/processes: 350
printmaking supplies: 240
paper: 200
book materials: 110

total: \$1300

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Arts Involvement

Courses

I have been enrolled in at least one studio art course per semester since my enrollment in the University. In my first year I took Drawing I, and Intro Photography I (black and white processes). In my second year, I have taken Photography II (color processes), Drawing II, Special Topics in Printmaking: The Artist's Book, and Intermediate Photography with a focus on the photo book. Besides my involvement in studio courses, I have taken a few art history courses, such as Feminist Aesthetics, and Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. I have also experimented with mediums outside of visual representation. In the Fall of 2013, I took a music course with Ted Coffey, Make Rock, where we were familiarized with Digital Audio Workstations and worked collaboratively as well as individually on creating our own expressions of sound through song. Since the course, I have still been making songs of an experimental nature. The processes of both listening to and making music has helped inform the artistic processes I work within in visual art, and in this project I hope to explore a sort of synesthetic relationship between different mediums.

I will declare a Studio Art major this April.

Seminar

I have been enrolled in the Arts Scholars seminar three of my four semesters, and was not enrolled in this past Spring semester because of a time conflict with another Studio Arts course. In the Fall I contributed photographic work to and was on the publicity/design committee of the Arts Scholars Lab Series Showcase event. I will continue to attend seminar both semesters in my third year, as it is a vital space for community and arts collaboration.

Else

I am also a radio DJ for the UVA's student-run radio station, WTJx, a sub-station of WTJU. I plan to hopefully make the leap to WTJU in the Fall of 2014.

Portfolio Image Guide

Image 1: *Untitled*, silver gelatin print, Spring 2013

Image 2: *mendieta 2*, silver gelatin print, Spring 2013

Image 3: *leg trees*, color archival pigment print, Fall 2013
Image 4: *snake and Cooper*, color archival pigment print,
Fall 2013
Image 5: *milk*, color archival pigment print, Winter 2014