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VANTAGE POINT: THE REPRESENTATION OF PLACE
AND THE VISUAL EXPERIENCE

by
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PROFESSOR RANKAITIS
PROFESSOR MACKO
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Introduction

We, as human beings, are unique creatures that have a need to form places. This obsession with claiming spaces and turning them into places starts at a young age. Maybe it is the first time a child goes to the park and claims a corner of the sand pit, because they think the sand is better on the right side. Perhaps it is a specific seat in the bleachers a person sits in at every home football game. Or maybe it is much more significant, like the spot on the path by the curved tree, next to the bike shed where you said good-bye to your family the first day of your freshman year in college.

Spaces are everywhere around us; and help form the planet we live on. Very easily spaces can turn into places of importance for an individual or a group. Events and emotions become attached to the sites and are in this regard ‘claimed’. Little things such as color, texture, and lighting all contribute to, and affect, our ability to establish places of importance. Color is a unique element when speaking about vision and our human ability to perceive, especially when referring to our perception of places. Colors can influence moods, can bring about emotions or sentiments and can be one way in which a place of importance can become established. With lighting variations and light absorption by an object, the color can instantly change. When referring to places of significance, sunsets come to mind. Sunsets and the changing of the light and color due to the setting sun seem to always be remembered. The vibrant colors and various cloud structures help to set a mood and the event and space used for viewing this extraordinary event seem to automatically be engrained in one’s memory.

Places can be socially formed and altered over time. Individuals all have different values thus assigning importance to different things. My places, while they might be visible to everyone, such as a public place of recognizable monument, would not hold the same value for another person. Artists of all ages and backgrounds assign a sense of importance to spaces and create places themselves, and this can be represented in their works.

My work aims at recreating significant places. Through my personal experiences I have been able to grow and define myself as an individual. The places that I chose to represent have not only helped shape me but to this day continue to be important. My goal is for viewers to be intrigued by the construction of my cubes and the images they house. This will hopefully make them think about places that have meaning to them. There is a need to
form places out of spaces. With a sheet of clear Plexiglas, some glue, and transparencies I was able to make an ordinary structural space a place which houses meanings that I hope to share with others.
Color Vision

“Each flash or ray of light, each shade of color that light makes visible, and each time our eyes receive the messages to see them, we are reminded of a special relationship-- One that is often overlooked because we simply take seeing for granted. We miraculously experience a bright and vivid world because of the workings of our eyes, the wonders of light, and the brilliance of color.” (Light)

Color is a fundamental element that is present in our everyday lives. It can be enhanced, dimmed and even captured to some extent using technology such as cameras and motion pictures. While color seems like an easy concept, in fact it is much more complex. Color is a driving force in the field of art, but the absence of color, or what we think of as black and white, can also have a profound effect on the viewer and the ideas and messages the artist is trying to present.

Many young children in their early years of schooling are taught the saying ROY-G-BIV (Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet). This acronym acts as a simple reminder and a way to easily recall the sometimes mixed up color spectrum. It lists the colors in a constant order. The order is imperative to the electromagnetic spectrum. The electromagnetic spectrum is how light waves can be categorized. Within the electromagnetic spectrum each color has a signature wavelength. It was James Clerk Maxwell that “showed that light was a form of electromagnetic radiation. This radiation contains radio waves, visible light and x-rays.” (Teachers). The visible light region contains the color wavelengths the eye can respond to naturally. “Light rays are composed of photons whose energy specifies a color from red to violet.” This is represented using the acronym ROY-G-BIV.

In order to visibly detect color, an object reflects, absorbs or transmits the light waves present on the scale. (Light) “Objects can be thought of as absorbing all colors except the colors of their appearance which are reflected.” (Teachers) Our human abilities allow us to interpret light via different wavelengths that enable us to view objects in the color. Human eyes are like computers. Visual information is fed into the eyes and decoded. Information is received, processed and storied. Just like a computer screen, individual’s eyes are just one sense which helps to collect information and add to our collective knowledge. The retina, which can be found on the back, inner surface of the eye helps absorb visible light. The retina contains photosensitive cells that can be broken down into two categories: rods and
cones. The cones “...allow us to distinguish between different color. The rods are effective in
dim light and sense differences in light sensitivity.” (Teachers)

Light has three primary colors: red, blue and green, and three secondary colors: yellow,
cyan and magenta. The more light beams mixed, the closer the overall color is to white.
(Light) The receptors in our eyes that help discern colors; do so by sensing the different
wavelengths present. The brighter the light, the more photons are passing through that given
area. As light dims, the eye perceives the color as a grey. This means that shadows are colors
as well but due to the lighting, they are perceived as shades of grey. The color black is
established when a given surface absorbs the wavelengths of light while at the same time no
light is reflected. (Light)

Sight is one of our most important senses. Without sight and the inclusion of color, our
perception of objects as well as visual experiences would be drastically different. “In our
current state of evolution, vision is the primary source for all our experiences. (Current
marketing research has reported that approximately 80% of what we assimilate through the
senses is visual.)” (Morton) It enables us to preserve a special time and thus create a memory.
There is a famous saying: “A picture is worth a thousand words”. This could not be more
exact. The pictures or images we capture, either captured from a camera or merely a vivid
memory are made up of little facts and figures. These images have hidden words and
knowledge embedded in that when put together, help establish a picture with a
conglomeration of knowledge not visible to the eye alone.

Photography is one way of capturing light and “living color.” “Physiologists have
documented that “living color” does more than appeal to the senses. It also boosts memory
for scenes in the natural world.” (Morton) Although the natural world combines a variety of
colors and textures, specific colors themselves such as the ones represented by ROY-G-BIV,
have different symbolisms and meanings. Red for example is related to a level of energy and
“has more personal associations then any other color.” (Smith) The color green occupies the
most space within the spectrum and is considered “the color of peace and ecology.” (Smith).
And white, the color of everything until light is added to create color “projects purity,
cleanliness and neutrality.”(Smith) Different cultures and places in society also associate
colors with a variety of meanings. For instance in Western Europe and the United States the
color blue stands for masculinity, calmness and authority. In China, it stands for strength,
power and immorality. In Japan it stands for villainy and in the Middle East blue means
protective. While there are many differences between cultures and color meaning, many still do share commonalities in meaning. Especially with the spread and influence of Western culture, colors just like a lot of things are becoming more globalized. Colors are beginning to cross cultural boundaries thus enabling them to be viewed the same, with the same meanings and significance across the world. (Color) While some specific colors have specific connotations attached, road signs or other public placards are a couple of examples at how colors can become more internationalized.

A culmination of specific colors, mixed with their symbolism, attract the viewer. Color helps emphasize or de-emphasize objects, events and even spaces. It is no wonder why many people remember vibrant sunsets, or even why stop signs are red. Both the event (sunset) and the physical object (stop sign) present the eye with a multiplicity of colors in which to decode and store. This storage can lead to the formation of memories and how one perceives light, time, and spaces in relation to memory. “Color and light are major factors in man-made environments; their impact influences man's psychological reactions and physiological well-being...It is no longer valid to assume that the only role of light and color is to provide adequate illumination and a pleasant visual environment...” (Vodvarka).
Place

“Time and space coalesce in a place. Places contain metaphoric or symbolic meanings that go deeper than the surface appearance of a particular landscape or architectural style.” (Robertson 69)

How can we define Place? Places are everywhere. They are spaces in which we live, work, study and play. Places are created, fashioned and formed and exist in variety of spaces. Without spaces, places could not be established. Just like certain pieces of art are site-specific, meaning that they have to be displayed in a given place or they would not have the same meaning associated with them, certain memories are automatically associated with a particular place. Places can be entered not only physically but emotionally as well.

The definition of place can be unclear, since places can be subjective. The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines a place as “Those things that add up to a feeling that a community is a special place, distinct from anywhere else.” (Stokes) These ‘things’ can be buildings, artifacts; anything that creates a sense of uniqueness in a community. Kent Ryden the author of *Mapping the Invisible Landscape* writes “A sense of place results gradually and unconsciously from inhabiting a landscape over time, becoming familiar with its physical properties, accruing history within its confines.” From a geographical standpoint J.B. Jackson writes, “It is a place, permanent position in both the social and topographical sense, that gives us our identity.” (James) All three of these definitions or concepts are valid and can be applied to any place, to help establish meaning and significance. Place can be formed through interaction with a physical place, but more importantly it is personal memories that help tie the theories together.

Many times the definition of place is unclear because of the barriers we as human beings establish. These barriers help to establish a difference between an insider and an outsider. Places and the spaces they inhabit are defined not only by the culture of a particular location, but also by visitors who can experience the culture and place with a new eye. In this regard, places change depending on different circumstances. What I personally see may or may not be what you see. Interpretations of places are often unique because places are not purely defined by physical location or the markings on a map, but the interactions and experiences individuals can have within that place. This is what makes places so special. Places can hold different amounts of meaning and significance it just depends on the given person.
While space and place are a part of everyday vocabulary, the true meaning of both is seldom understood. Spaces and places are not just geographical coordinates on a map; rather they each have distinct characteristics and yet they are connected to one another. These distinct characteristics help categorize different spaces which in turn help attribute meaning to different places. It seems as though place might be everywhere, but in truth they are really spaces. Spaces are more abstract. “…places like strip malls have little sense of place because they more or less all look very similar, often have no name and no one who wants to spend any time there or write anything about them. Whereas places that exhibit a strong sense of place have an identity and character recognized immediately by a visitor and valued deeply by residents.” (Sense) Spaces are socially constructed and produced, while places tend to have more meaning especially on individual levels. Places are constructed spaces, which have been transformed through physical interactions but can also be shaped by chronicled historical events. So just like space, places are socially constructed and altered as well. Historically speaking, strip malls have probably never been recorded or chronicled as being special places. The National Trust for Historic Preservation emphasizes the importance of the physical properties and history in helping define a place.

Places are formed because people need them. Places act as escapes. They are produced based on past experiences such as exclusion. “A ‘sense of place’, of rootedness, can provide-in this form and on this interpretation- stability and a source of unproblematic identity.” (Cresswell 66) Depending on what side you are on, laws and policies are needed to help blur spatial lines. “The creation of place by necessity involves the definition of what lies outside.”(Cresswell 102) People fight with one another to gain power and space, to create places of importance, which in turn excludes others on both a personal and a national level. The United States for example, has to continue to build places with already existing boundaries established. “A set of social-geographical structures [was] thus created which had, the effect of both reproducing and reinforcing certain cultural norms, societal forms, and spatial realities.” (Mitchell 201) Boundaries divide public and private space but due to globalization, the boundaries are becoming blurred.

Spaces have to continuously be built due to the scarce commodity of land but the historical issues and presence in an already established place does not disappear. Historical context adds to the charm of a place. It seems to ground it and gives it a much deeper meaning. Historical places can evoke positive and negative memories. These memories of the
past can help people grow and develop new ideas. It can influence the creating of a unique place in which all citizens’ memories and experiences are accumulated and shaped into a new place with an even deeper meaning. This can facilitate nationalism because places can act as large melting pots of ideas. Many times people establish a trip itinerary around historical sites. Historical sites are a good place to learn. By seeing places of importance and experiencing sites first hand, individuals are allowed to expand their sense of place and space and to see where they fit into the already established places within society.

Nonetheless, place is a process. Actions and process occur in places that ultimately help shape them. Places in this instance are similar to people. Both activities and people help to influence others in sharing and shaping their identity. I believe it is the same for places. Because people are not confined and can move around, they are able to create much more unique places. “Our human landscape is our unwitting autobiography, reflecting our tastes, our values, our aspirations and even our fears, in tangible form.” (Mitchell 121) Multiple identities come together to create history, which in turn creates a place of importance for a variety of individuals each on an individual bases. “A set of social-geographical structures were thus created which had, the effect of both reproducing and reinforcing certain cultural norms, societal forms, and spatial realities.” (Mitchell 201) Homes for example are very important places that are constructed to create a sense of familiarity and calmness. When this is taken away a sense of self is also taken away. A home for example is a place where one can relax and escape outside tensions. Within a house each room has a different interior to better suit a different need and want. The walls are barriers to everyday activities and help separate places of importance to a person. An office is a boundary that seems to open up into the world. A computer and/or a television, usually located within that room connects people and relays new information instantaneously.

Places carry a multiplicity of meaning and no matter how they are represented, discussed or viewed; someone probably has a memory or some type of association with it that is of personal significance. Our need to claim space translates to our desire and want, to construct places. A place in which we can call our own, even if it is shared is unique because no one views it exactly the way you do.
Experiencing My Place(s)

“Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures.”

(Bleecher)

Over the past couple of months my project has developed and transformed extensively. What started out as an idea about memory and space, quickly transformed into the idea of place, and how we as individuals perceive place(s). My past experiences have not only shaped me as an individual but it is a driving force behind my art. This project focuses on significant places that have impacted my life in a positive way. I want to be able to share my images and special places with the viewers. I want them to be intrigued not only with the images presented but also the cube and how it was pieced together and constructed.

The cube, which enables the images to form a cohesive place, is a very welcoming, encompassing structure. The six-sided clear Plexiglas cube along with the three inserts form a cohesive unit that ultimately displays important places in my life that I want others to be able to share in their beauty. The transparency of the cubes allows the viewer to immediately and without hesitation view the contents inside. By having clear sidewalls this does not limit the viewer to just the frontal view, but gives them more power and ability to choose what they want to view and how exactly they want to view it. The viewers are able walk around the piece just like one would be able to walk around my special place(s).

I have chosen three significant places, each represented by a given cube. The cubes are constructed out of clear Plexiglas and measure 12 3/8 x 12 3/8 x 12 1/8 inches. Each cube also has three removable inserts that measure 12 X 12 inches square and are made out of clear Plexiglas as well. Little ‘cubes’ are adhered to the top and bottom of each box and act as sliders for the inserts. These cubes help to make sure the inserts stay in place, and that the inserts remain removable. Each cube also has a removable lid. The lid closes the cube structure so that my personal places, which become visible to the public, remains closed and safe from the outside world. This does not mean that the lid cannot come off and the inserts changed or rearranged. As soon as the lid is taken off, the inserts (places) can be moved around to create and form new places of importance. The images were printed on a transparent film, Pictorico, and then adhered to the inserts using static electricity. This system makes it is easy to change and rearrange imagery. In the hustle and bustle of everyday life
things are always changing. These cubes act as mini worlds because just like in everyday life, these places can continuously change and be transformed.

The places I have chosen to depict, while still accessible in real life, are presented as accessible places in cube-like forms. Boxes or cubes tend to hide or mask objects although the transparent nature of these constructed cubes allows the viewer to enter special private places of mine. They are invited in visually with their eyes tracking back and stacking the images on top of one another to create a full and complete image or view of a place. By no means do the images that are presented give a complete representation of each place. Instead the images I chose represent smaller places within each larger place. The segments help add relevance and meaning but by no means are the only significant places within the larger context.

Using a variety of fragmented places which all have personal significance to me, I hope to recreate a sense of importance of a singular place and the many spaces and places it can occupy. Looking through the front of the cube it will seem like one place, at one time. This idea of recreating a place of importance through a multitude of layers (subsequent important places within a larger place), is a vital part in understanding how we as humans construct places and assign emotions and activities to places and the spaces they occupy.

The three places represented I have not only lived in, but each place has helped shape me as an individual. In addition, the places I chose all have unique architectural and environmental divisions. For example Rome, the city where I studied abroad, is rich in ancient history and architecture. My home in Northern California is located in a small suburb in a valley with rolling hills surrounding. And Scripps is a culmination of both my home and Rome. It is not only a place I live, but also study and where I have grown exponentially. These places might seem very different but they all have overlapping qualities.

On the front of each cube is a laser etching. These simple etched forms are the starting point for each place—both literally and figuratively. Each etching on the cubes is symbolic snapshots of each place I am trying to recreate. When I think of the places I have chosen to depict, these are the first images that come to mind. They all have considerable meaning. For example the etches include where I said goodbye to my family after being dropped off at college, the famous oak tree in my small town that many events are centered around, and the first Roman monument I saw after getting off the plane to start my study abroad adventure. I wanted the first image to be different than the rest—hence the etching. These places are
literally burned in my memory, thus the laser is a significant tool since it was able to burn right into the Plexiglas.

No recognizable physical bodies or writing is present in the imagery presented in the 3 place boxes. I want the viewers to become engaged and think of a similar place of importance. What I present is a ‘jumping off point’ for viewers to think and recall important places to them. The physicality and construction of the cubes allow for viewers to look at the places from a multitude of sides and angles. At certain angles they will only be able to see two layers, but if they decide to look in the front, they will be able to see the completed place. This not only enables the viewer to engage in the piece and become more attached to it, both on a visual and personal level as they try and decode the individual places and try and recall a similar place of existence important to them, but also to think about how places can be constructed and fragmented as time passes. There are bodies present in my presentation of Rome but the individuals are not recognizable and since Rome is such a tourist city, and a Mecca for many Catholics, I thought it only right to present it in its true inhabited, crowded city-state.

Although the three boxes have the same physical construction, the inserts make each cube different and unique in their own regard. I decided to first display the places using their true colors. I then have played around with the idea of ‘un-natural’ color and the visual impact it can have. When bright and vibrant colors are mixed with natural colors it will make the viewer think twice about what s/he is viewing and in what context. Although color is not directly referenced in my piece, I did in fact decide to incorporate color imagery on the inserts instead of black and white because I thought it helped add depth to the piece and make it more visually appealing.
Experience Revitalized—Second Semester

My project this Spring has been revised. The idea of perception of place remained my focal point although the idea of memory and time were still present in the piece. After much feedback about the first half of my project what I continued hearing was that the places I was representing were, in fact, too personal. Why should an outsider care? Will they hold meaning to them? Over the last few months I have been concentrating on how I can successfully show the importance of my special places, and relay an overarching idea that while some places look perfect, in fact no one place can be so.

In order to combat this notion of perfection I tried to present the idea of loss. Loss occurs in all types of places. It can sneak up in the form of physical loss or even an emotional state. Within each of my three places (Scripps, Rome, Home), I have experienced loss. Loss is a state everyone has to face at one point or another. It is part of life. Just as though places of importance can be established, loss can be experienced within these places and futures can be built around them. Many times loss helps create stronger bonds to places of importance.

By creating another Plexiglas box, similar in nature to the prior three places represented, this allowed me to provide context for the idea that not all places are perfect even if they seem that way. I chose a quote by Oscar Wilde-“Memory is the diary that we all carry about with us” to be etched on the side. Interactions along the journey of life are filled with memories. These formed memories influence the way we as humans view the outside world and subsequently how we perceive other activities, spaces and places. Places carry a multiplicity of meaning and no matter how they are represented, viewed or discussed; carry with them a diary of ones personal history. A place that we can call our own, even if it is in a public setting is unique. No one views each place exactly the same way. While at one glance places can seem perfect in nature, it is individual personal experiences that help shape places and add meaning to them. Loss, whether physical or emotional, can change and shape a place, thus establishing a memory and bond.

The finished sculpture consists of 4 boxes 12 inches tall, and 3 smaller boxes or inserts that are 3 inches tall and that are filled with colored glass. The colored glass is separated in the individual boxes and act as foundations for each individual place. On the floor the color glass spills out, mixing together and forming one base. The overall height of the piece is
more than 6 feet tall. The three places represented in the sculpture include Scripps College, my home in Northern California and Rome Italy where I studied abroad. The box on the floor is a combination of these three places. They represent the loss within each place. The materials help create a pristine environment that makes them seem perfect, however tragedy and loss has at one point or another crept into these almost serene places of importance and familiarity. Tragedy and loss are a part of life. They not only shape individuals but the spaces and places they inhabit. Loss is yet another diary entry that helps shape who we are, and what we remember when thinking of memory and places of importance.

To complete the project I felt as though I needed to “complete” or add to my life’s diary. For this I created one last box to top the sculpture. This last box, again similar in physical form included images of family, friends, items of importance and places. All of the included imagery helps to define who I am. I gridded the pictures in one inch squares, 12 rows of 12. Overall there are 432, although not all of the squares are filled in. I decided to leave some of them blank. Life is a journey and there is always a future. I am not done defining my future, establishing places of importance and experiencing a multitude of different types of loss. The top box ties the piece together. My completed piece is not only about places and the memory but most importantly it is the perception of place and that places cannot be perfect no matter what. The places I chose to represent are special to me, yet I hope others are reminded of their own special, unique places. The quote by Oscar Wilde and the images representing loss ground the piece and convey as sense of life. And the top box, or future box, ties all aspect of place, interaction and experience together forming the perfect topping to a very meaningful and hopefully thought-provoking piece.
Influential Artists

“When I say artist I mean the man who is building things - creating molding the earth - whether it be the plains of the west - or the iron ore of Penn. It's all a big game of construction - some with a brush - some with a shovel - some choose a pen.” (Pollock)

There are many artists who struggle with the idea of time, place, the space(s) it occupies, color and the overall aesthetic appearance in their work. Their works may directly reflect the ideas they are trying to express or they can be much more abstract in nature. The following artists all have a variety of different artistic backgrounds. Some are painters, others are photographers and one is a sculptor, but all share in the quest to create a piece that not only speaks to them personally, but to the outside community in which they depict and draw direct influence. Daniel Mundy, Timothy Horn, Lucie Debekova, Jerry Uelsmann and Larry Bell’s works, along with their artistic ideas have helped me form my own ideas of what it means to be an artist, how to engage the viewer and create a piece that is not only aesthetically pleasing but has a deeper meaning and significance behind it. Four of the five artists work in Northern California and one internationally-specifically in Rome. This allows me to juxtapose their works directly to my own work and experiences.

Daniel Mundy holds a degree in Commercial Art and a BFA in Fine Art Studio Design. Growing up he lived in Alaska and the Northwest until moving to California in 1970. Here, the beauty of the California landscape became a great influence to him and his works. His oil paintings “has [have] a clarity of color and light that often gives the viewer the feeling that one could almost walk into his paintings.”(Robert) His vivid use of color, sometimes broken color, low lighting conditions and shadows add depth to the overall feeling of his pieces. (Daniel) He uses different glazes to layer his paintings and bring “richness and depth to them…It’s the illusion of detail that fascinates him. He believes that what is completed in the eye of the viewer can be more powerful than near photographic depiction.” (Daniel) This very idea of having the eye ‘fill-in’, if you will, the information and complete the image was influential for my piece. My places are represented as freestanding cubes that house inserts with imagery adhered. Some of the pictures presented seem more ordinary than others, but that is part of the point. I want the viewer to have the ability to fill in the gaps, and have the imagery speak to them. By this I mean my images are a starting point for my viewers to have an internal dialogue with themselves. The clear Plexiglas boxes represent special places to
me, but the construction is very inviting and I want the viewer to become enthralled in the places and how, at different points around the cube the imagery looks completely different. This very idea of visually representing my places, will allow the viewer to think of places or spaces that are similar in nature. These new thought-about places may not necessarily be as important to the viewer as my own chosen cubes, but it takes their mind away from the gallery setting and into the real world as they try and remember and search for a space/place similar in nature. Mundy creates works on location in the “plein air,” performing only minor touch-ups inside the studio. I did not build the cubes outside, but the imagery within was shot outside as I walked around and immersed myself in my special places. The places represented are all open to the public so others have the ability to find uniqueness in the spaces it occupies. He was a great inspiration when it came to my home-cube since I am from Northern California. The last inserted image on my home-cube very closely resembles the hills present in his piece entitled Golden Hills Near the Coast. Although Mundy continues to live in Northern California his childhood and past experiences continue to be a driving influence behind his work. (Daniel) “It’s always been a private struggle for me…to paint my heart, chase the light, and put as much emotion into the work as possible.” (Robert) This quote in essence is what I struggle to do in all my pieces, especially my cube project. (Refer to Images Figure- I,II,III)

Timothy Horn is another oil painter who graduated in 1984 from Copper Union School of Art with a focus in graphic design. Although his focus was graphic design he continued to be involved in other art mediums and “forms” such as clock making, large format portraiture and furniture making and design. He too “captures on his canvases a lovely clarity of air, light and mood in the often humble scenes he paints.” (Timothy) Just like Daniel Mundy, Horn works on location. His experiences living in a variety of places have helped shape his art and perspective when approaching a piece. Horn states, “I feel that these two periods [living in a city and the suburbs] of my life and the related experiences formed the foundation of my artistic sensibilities and visual aesthetics.” (Tim) I believe, especially given my experience and age, that what I have been able to both do and see, has helped shape me as an artist. I tend to create works on what I know and feel and at this point in my life deals with my home, family, school and a wonderful abroad experience. These three ideas have been incorporated in my cubes as individual places-home, school and abroad. Individuals create art to share part of themselves. While this might not be the driving force behind many
individuals’ attempts, many artists create works based on what they know. What one knows is much easier to depict then what one does not. Timothy Horn creates stunning landscape paintings of Northern California. Since I grew up there, seeing his pieces automatically takes me home. His use of real color, simple brush strokes and attention to detail is magnificent. Horn not only recreates landscapes but also paints subjects. The subjects are just as beautiful as the rolling hills of Northern California, due to the rendering of such brilliant light and accurate features. (*Refer to Images- Figure IV, V, VI*)

Lucie Debevoka is an international photographer who specializes in travel photography. She was born in Prague and confesses that while growing up she did not take advantage of the beauty her city had to offer. Lucie now travels to discover, view and experience different cultures and lives. Lucie states that “Landscape and Travel photography is challenging, fascinating and absorbing, it challenges constantly with the light, places, season and weather.” (About) Because things always change, timing is very important and can alter ones viewing of the event. Lucie has created a two-step program in order to take better photographs.

1. Be at the right place at the right time by chance.
2. Be at the right place at the right time intentionally. (About)

Both pieces of advice are key to capturing a feeling or event. I was able to successfully practice Lucie’s two-step program for photography and documenting events while studying abroad in Rome. As I became more and more familiar with the city I learned when I should go to certain areas to get the best lighting effect, and when the natives would be out and about as opposed to tourists. I grew exponentially as I walked around the small alleys and the ancient ruins. Getting lost with a camera is like getting lost with a good friend. You are always able to refer back the photos taken and remember the good times. I have tried to display my places (cubes) in a matter of fact, documentary style-like setting. While there are no recognizable people, the lighting in the photos helps tie the individual spaces together. The images I chose for my Rome cube were all taken when I was studying there last year. Trying to pick apart images and reassemble my social places brought about a lot of memories and feelings and made me think about the smaller, less significant places which effected my time abroad, but were not incorporated in the cubes themselves. (*Refer to Images- Figure VII, VIII, IX*)
Jerry Uelsmann is another influential artist dealing with photography and the layering of images. He studied at Rochester Institute of Technology and Indiana University. Uelsmann combines different sections of photographs using negatives and enlargers in a dark room to create his works. At times he uses up to seven enlargers. (Kay) His seamless combination of images is magnificent. “Photographs, Uelsmann argued, could do more than merely describe literal objects and scenes; they could evoke elusive states of feeling and thinking triggered by irrational and imaginative juxtapositions of disparate images.” (Kay) I took Uelsmann’s very idea of the photograph focused on the feelings of juxtaposed images and applied them to my work. Each image that I chose for my piece is charged with some type of emotion. Whether it is the place itself or and event that happened at that place, all of the photographs when combined have an exponential amount of hidden meaning that is not visible to the eye. Uelsmann even coined the term “in-process discovery.” In-process discovery is “more than a harmonious relationship between medium and cognition. It is in essence a gestalt position, in which creativity is viewed in terms of one’s ability to associate dissimilar elements in meaningful ways and to restructure the entire stimulus field.” (Jerry) His process of building images is not planned. He instead photographs and then creates numbered test prints. From here he decides which images seem to fit together and create a strong narrative. Uelsmann shoots using film, while I shot my photos using a digital camera and then printed them out digitally onto transparencies. Instead of layering negatives in a dark room like Uelsmann, I used digital photographs and experimented with different layers on Photoshop. My process was much more planned, except for my Rome-cube in which I had to comb through my digital archive of photos and pick the ‘right ones.’ It is his very idea of combining and re-creating what has already been shot that was of great interest to me. His layering effect and seamless combination of numerous images drove me to play with my own photographs and combine them to create my very own narratives. (Refer to Images- Figure X,XI,XII)

Lastly, Larry Bell, a prominent sculptor. Bell attended the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles California from 1957-59. He first started out making geometric shaped canvases but then later switched to sculpture. His primary material consists of coated glass and plastics. (Larry) Bell was first inspired when he worked in a frame shop. He grew partial to glass art, which would later become his material of choice. (ULAN) In 1964 he switched from building with mirrors to building more with glass. He would create cubes and then coat the glass with a variety of metals to create “fields of elusive, evanescent colour.” His sculptures
would later become known as glass “Cubes”. “The optical ambiguities created by the reflections of the viewers image and the ambient space became the hallmark of Bell’s work.” (Artnet) The transparency of the cubes along with the coated glass created an optical experience for the viewers. They were able to not only see through the structures but also see inside. Due to the reflectivity of the metal coats applied to the glass, viewers were able to see themselves. In a way they themselves were part of the piece when viewing it in person. Larry Bell was very influential when it came to my project. When I first decided to build cubes I was unsure of my dimensions. By exploring Bell’s work it became clear that I did not want a huge overpowering cube, but something big enough that viewers would not just glance at it across the room, so that the viewers would become intrigued and want to approach it for further inspection. I wanted a material similar to glass that had a transparent quality, that was sturdy and that multiple colors and layers could be read through the sides of the structure. Clear Plexiglas was the best option. While Bell used metal coats on top of his glass to add color and texture, I chose etching and photography. My work contains important clear Plexiglas inserts that house images that I believe help paint a picture of my significant places. Bell’s work focuses more on the empty space that the cube as a whole takes up in the gallery setting and less on the inside materials. My work does incorporate ‘empty space’ elements for instance the spaces between the individual inserts or the entire space the cube takes up, but my main focus is on the materials that are present. Larry Bell is an extremely influential artist whose minimalist’s cubes intrigued me and pushed me to experimenting with similar materials. The transparent features of both glass and Plexiglas boxes allow for further development in lighting. This could be something that I could explore and develop in more depth.

All of the artists have varying educational, personal and artistic backgrounds. Their use of materials and the ideas behind their work and the gorgeous lighting effects captured in many of their pieces intrigued me. Their styles helped me form my own, and aided in the creation of Boxed In. (Refer to Images- Figure XIII,XIV,XV)
Conclusion

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” (Twain-About)

The places in which we grow up, or spend an extended amount of time, become significant places. They become places in where we grow, fail and succeed, thus providing a significant aspect. We need to claim spaces and establish them as places because we as humans have a need to define borders. The places we define can be affected by light whether they are indoors or out. The lighting can manipulate and affect the way our eyes perceive different colors. Places, light and color interact to create my senior project. I was influenced by a variety of artists and their varying specialties as well as the science behind color and what it means to define a place. When all things are combined, the ideas and imagery, together they help form Vantage Point: The Representation of Place and the Visual Experience.

What started out as an everyday thought I had about space and how we as human occupy it and claim it, quickly grew into my senior thesis. By creating these places of importance I have not only literally built different spaces, but claimed them socially and now have attached meaning to them. My project encompasses all that I have researched both in the artistic sense and the academic research sense. Vantage Point was an artistic endeavor that pushed me to think about what was important both visually and socially, since I was presenting my special places in a public space. The loss aspect of the piece forces individuals to recognize that no matter how perfect a place may seem or one may want it to be, it is in fact impossible to be perfect. Loss can be physical or emotional and it affects everyone and their own places of importance. By representing my future in another box I feel as though the individual elements of the piece come together to form a clearer understanding of life. Perception of place and the experiences within these places are unique and special to each and every person. An outsider can view places yet the emotional impact is not the same.

Places can be public yet hold different meanings to each and every individual. Light, weather, time, space are all things that effect places, although it is the way you imagine and recreate a place via memory that you hold onto for a life time.
Images
(Figures)

Fig. I. Daniel Mundy, *Golden Hills Near the Coast*, 30”x40”, Oil on Canvas. (Daniel)

Fig. II. Daniel Mundy, *Tomales Bay Eucalyptus*, 18”x24”, Oil on Linen. (Daniel)

Fig. III. Daniel Mundy, *Warm Light Through the Grove*-Glading Road Series, 22”x28”, Oil on Linen. (Daniel)
Fig. IV. Timothy Horn. *Not a Through Street*. 12”x24”, Oil. (Robert)

Fig. V. Timothy Horn. *Bend in the Road*. 11”x14”, Oil. (Tim)

Fig. VI. Timothy Horn. *Field of Dreams*. 12”x24”, Oil. (Tim)
Fig. VII. Lucie Debelkova. Czech Republic-Gold Rain Over Prague Castle at Sunset Time. (About)

Fig. VIII. Lucie Debelkova. Italy-St. Peters from Via Della Concilazione. (About)

Fig. IX. Lucie Debelkova. Nepal-Sunset at Pokhara’s Lakepewa. (About)
Fig. X. Jerry Uelsmann, 2004, *Dream Theater*, 14-1/4” x 19-1/2”, Silver Gelatin Print. (Andrew)

Fig. XI. Jerry Uelsmann, 2002, *For All the Dogs that have Blessed My Life*, 15”x19”, Silver Gelatin Print (Andrew)

Fig. XII. Jerry Uelsmann, 2003, *Untitled-Hands Holding Water*, 14-7/8”x19-1/4”, Silver Gelatin Print. (Andrew)
Fig. XIII. Larry Bell, 1992, *Made for Arolsen*, 6 panels 10mm tempered glass, 8 panels: 72"x96" blue azure; 8 panels: 72"x48" pink rosa, Installation. (The Larry)

Fig. XIV. Larry Bell, 1993, *8-1-93 CUBE*, 8"x8"x8", 1/4" glass coated with inconel and silicon monoxide (The Larry)

Fig. XV. Larry Bell, 1996, *6x6x4-C,D*, four 12mm glass panels coated with nickel-chrome, Installation. (The Larry)


