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The Aleph

a journal of global perspectives





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Stories in *The Aleph* are set in Gentium, designed by Victor Gaultney and adopted by SIL International, an organization working to document thousands of dying ethnic languages, many of which are written in modified Latin scripts. Most digital fonts do not include these extended alphabets and therefore millions of people are shut out of the publishing community. Gentium is an attempt to meet this challenge. The name is Latin for *belonging to the nations*.

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Union College Partnership for Global Education

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Front Cover: Bellevue Beach, Copenhagen, Denmark [Bea Barber]

The Bread of Life, Hanoi, Vietnam [Cecilia Carsky-Bush]

Back Cover: Monkey Temple in Jaipur, India [Tyler DeWaltoff]

About *The Aleph*

The Aleph: a journal of global perspectives, first published in 2002, is a joint project of the Hobart and William Smith Colleges and Union College Partnership for Global Education. The journal, intended to reflect the wealth of international experience among students at our respective institutions, takes its name from the 1945 short story “The Aleph” by Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. In the story, the narrator (a writer) comes upon “a small iridescent sphere of almost unbearable brilliance” in which “without admixture or confusion, all the places of the world, seen from every angle, coexist.” Through this encounter with the Aleph, he is able to see all things from all perspectives—yet he despairs of the daunting task of trying to understand and convey his experience to his readers.

Our students face much the same challenge when they return from abroad: after crossing borders and cultures, navigating societies different from their own in which they are exposed to new values and perspectives, how can they make sense of it all? How can they adequately convey the significance of the experience to those who did not share it?

The Aleph: a journal of global perspectives was created to address this dilemma. It provides a space for reflection, analysis, and dialogue that benefits contributors and readers alike. The pieces, both written and visual, offer insight into what captivates, challenges, and inspires our students—and through these words and images we learn about the people and places they encounter, we see how they change along the way, and we are exposed to “all the places of the world, seen from every angle.”

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Celebrating a Soccer Win in Dresden, Germany [Stephen Enos]

Trains

There is something freeing about hopping on a train and letting it take me anywhere. I don't have to focus on where I am going. I don't need to worry about directions and traffic. I get on a train, close my eyes and before I know it I am someplace I've only dreamed about.

During my semester abroad in the Netherlands, I rode trains as often as possible. It is a system of transportation that is sadly underdeveloped and underused in the United States. There was something about trains that just screamed Europe to me. Train travel also presented an opportunity. I could hop off and explore a place I had never heard of. When flying, you skip over some of the most beautiful landscapes and interesting cities. I knew that by choosing to travel by train, I would truly see everything. Being in the Netherlands provided me with the perfect opportunity to take a train to anywhere, and Europe became my back yard. Trains took me to major cities like Brussels and Berlin. I went to Luxembourg City and Paris. Every city I traveled to was unique and special in its own right, but what I found most spectacular was the blur of small towns and cities as the trains rushed through them.

There is a smooth hum. A quiet chatter. There is no urgency to get anywhere. The essence of train travel is all of these things, and so much more. With the blur of an unknown land passing by, you cannot help but think about where you have been, but also where you are going and who you are going to be. You float through a landscape, with no control over where you are going, just continuously moving forward. It is almost as if time is suspended, allowing you to reflect, but also to dream. In the most clichéd sense, trains were a place for me to become the true me. Somewhere along the way between Hannover and Berlin, I realized that I could be anyone and who I wanted to be was wholly me. I realized that there wasn't anything or anyone to keep me from being just that. I

don't know exactly what it is about trains that stimulates such thoughts. Perhaps it is the strange faces, welcoming smiles, and knowing that you will never see those people again. Or maybe it is the notion that, like time, the train is moving forward, there is no turning back, and you must move with it. It was during my first train trip from the airport to Maastricht, filled with nerves and excitement, that I realized what the next four months could mean. My journey didn't calm my nerves. However, it did inspire my excitement.

This type of reflection wasn't a product of riding the railways of Europe. Rather, trains presented me with a space where I had nothing to worry about other than me. A space to accept every 'weird' habit and stray freckle on my face. My hope is that everyone can find this space while they study abroad. It may be on a train in Europe or on a bus in Argentina. Whatever and wherever it is, it's what studying abroad is about. Growing, learning, adapting, and discovering.

—*Karly Wagner*

A view of Connemara, Ireland from the Train [Kathryn Yochim]



The Long-Forbidden Island

A few weeks ago I came back from my college's first-ever mini-term to Cuba. Cuba: the long-forbidden island that many Americans still associate with socialist repression, dictatorship, and appalling human rights abuses. My time on the island showed me a different perspective, one devoid of political prejudice. It allowed me to experience the atmosphere in Old Havana, Santiago de Cuba, and Camaguey, and connect with the people of Cuba on a personal level. There is no better way to share with you how eye-opening this trip has been than to tell you the story of Miguel.

I met Miguel on a bench in the main square of Santiago de Cuba. In his late 60s, Miguel looked beaten by the hardships of life, and yet he was cheerful and somehow content with his situation. For five minutes he hesitantly circled the space around our bench, until eventually he gained the courage to sit down next to us and introduce himself. He sat close to me, and I instinctively put my hand on my purse. I realized how mistrustful I've become of strangers.

Miguel spoke in Spanish and tried to translate every word he possibly could with its English equivalent, even though my friend and I both understood Spanish. Miguel asked little about our background and spent most of the time talking about himself. He was holding an old, shabby leather bag in which he carried pictures of his children, his identification card and a certificate of his Ph.D. in Geography. His son and daughter were both accomplished writers who emigrated to the United States years ago. Now Miguel was on his own and relied on the financial support of his government. He became increasingly more confident and enthusiastic as he saw we were willing to listen. He smiled and laughed as he drew pictures of Cuba's landscape, teaching us geography terms we had long forgotten. While all of this was happening, I wondered why this man had approached us in the first place. At first I thought it was for money. I could not have been more wrong. Soon I realized we were the first Americans Miguel

had ever seen or talked to. His initial hesitation was starting to make sense. Miguel just wanted to talk to us, to share his country's beauty, to show us how warm and welcoming his people are. For more than half a century travel and communication between Cuba and the U.S. has been heavily restricted. It was curiosity, not animosity, that defined Miguel's perspective on his northern neighbors.

For all the traveling I've done, I remain convinced that the best way to learn about the place you're visiting is by having these 'bench conversations' with strangers like Miguel. They want to tell you about their country, they want to show you the reality of their life and—trust me—they won't spare you the details of their everyday struggles. In the spontaneity and intimacy of our bench conversation, I learned more about life in Cuba than I did in any classroom lecture. My image of Cuba is now shaped by the stories of Miguel and the other Cubans I met during my time on the island, rather than the biased newspaper articles coming from outside. Cuba is colorful and complex but the best way to understand it is to go out there and find your Miguel.

—Dima Yankova

Some of the Cubans I Met [Dima Yankova]



Cycling in Denmark I

I was excited. I was anxious. But more than anything—as I stood on the sidewalk in front of all the townhouses—I was ambitious. I knew it was something that had to be done. I knew it would make my life easier and also give me a plethora of new experiences. That’s how I felt as I stood next to my bike for the first time.

Before I’d set off on my adventure to Denmark, I’d never had the chance to learn how to ride a bike. When I’d told this to some of my peers who’d grown up riding bikes around their neighborhood, I’d gotten a lot of weird questions. However, the house that I’d grown up in was on top of a hill, which hadn’t been exactly the most auspicious area in which to learn how to ride a bike.

Whichever part of Copenhagen you walk in, you are bound to see people biking—whether it’s older males in suits, women wearing heels, or children. In rain, snow, or sun, most everyone is biking in the Danish capital. There are more bikes than residents in the city! Danes are world-famous for this, and Copenhagen has been voted the “best city for cyclists.”

On the housing questionnaire we filled out before our departure, I checked “Yes” for the question, “Are you willing to bike during your stay in Copenhagen?” How hard could it be?

Still, I was nervous about learning how to ride a bike in a country where everyone hopped on a bike when they were very young. I’d even attempted to practice at home the summer before I’d left. It had been an absolute fail; the bike I’d been riding was too old, too big for me, with slightly flat tires.

One day during my first week with my Danish host family, my host mom coerced me into learning how to cycle. Although she was sympathetic, I could tell she was wondering why I did not possess this basic skill. I was terrified and I protested for a while, but eventually I gave in. My host family lived in Allerød, a small town about an hour commute from the center

of Copenhagen. In order to get from my neighborhood to the Allerød train station, where I would then take an S-train to get to Copenhagen, I had to either bike, or take a bus that came only every 20 minutes. So the bike was practical. I had to try.

At first, my host sister tried her best to help me, but that didn't work. So I ended up just having to go out on my own and give it my best shot. I went out to the long path behind my neighborhood and tried my best to simply get on the bike and find my balance. And it worked! On my first try, away from all the watching eyes in my neighborhood, I could finally say I could ride a bike.

Overall, biking made my life easier and provided great experiences that I would not have otherwise had. I did have one bad experience. I took my bike into Copenhagen one day and ended up hitting a person in front of me at a school crossing. Whoops! Good thing no one was hurt.

Being able to bike made my mornings a lot easier. Instead of waiting for the bus, which would stop multiple times before the station, I could just hop on my bike and be at the station in less than 15 minutes.

I also felt like I was able to experience the Danish culture more as a cyclist. In the city of Copenhagen there were some places that were not walking distance from public transportation. And biking is more environmentally friendly, of course, even than public transportation.

During a visit to Western Denmark with a class, we visited the Danish island of Fanø. We biked 15 kilometers from the northern end of the island to the southern end, where we went out on a seal watch, and then biked 15 kilometers back. I was proud of myself! If I hadn't taught myself to ride a bike, this experience would not have been open to me, because biking is really the only way to get around Fanø.

Riding a bike in Denmark was one of the best decisions I've made. It helped me pedal outside of my comfort zone and experience the culture in a unique way.

—Colleen Moore





*Clockwise from left: Statue on Ponte Sant'Angelo in Rome, Italy [Megan Soule]
Traffic in Amsterdam, the Netherlands [Bea Barber]
Traffic in Hanoi, Vietnam [Nikolai Stern]*



Cycling in Denmark II

In the U.S., I don't have a car and I don't drive. But I'm in Denmark, and I have a bike. And a bike means freedom. I asked my host for a bike helmet and she said she didn't have one. When I asked her why, she said that there is no better feeling than the wind flowing through your hair.

I would soon come to realize she was right. I lift my bike out of the shed in front of her house, kick up the stand with my foot, and get on. I pedal fast, and then faster when I'm a little further out of the neighborhood. It's like I'm flying. The weight of my backpack is there, but it becomes meaningless the farther I go.

I cycle past school children and businessmen, also on their way to the train station. I love the kinship I feel with them and the joy of being in the moment. I can't really think about much when I'm riding a bike. Everything narrows down to the ride itself—the feel of the handlebars, the rhythm of my forward motion.

For the first two weeks, I was just getting my bearings. I didn't bike at all; I stuck to the bus route my host recommended. It was also cold, so I didn't exactly relish the thought of being outside more than necessary. As the semester rolled on, however, it got warmer and I got more comfortable with my surroundings. I began to see that it really was easier to just bike to the train station instead of waiting for the bus. Once I mastered that route, I began to explore a little farther afield. I would take the bike out over the weekend and do a long, looping path up and down my neighborhood.

My favorite route was by the school, which was just beyond my own neighborhood. The path went through little green hills and by a pond. One day, near the end of the semester, I biked past the school and heard music. I paused on the bike path and listened for as long as I could. It was a joyful, beautiful sound. When I asked my host about it later, she explained that it was part of the school's year-end celebration. What a

fitting end to my biking journey! The music might have been for those Danish school children, but it was also for me. It felt like both a welcome and a farewell. I took it as a sign that I had adapted well to both the cycling culture of Denmark, and to Denmark in general. Not only that; I had developed an adaptability that would help me adjust to any situation in the future.

—Clara Lowenberg

Bikes Along the Canal in Amsterdam, the Netherlands [Katie Hill]



Two Visits to the Eternal City

Upon returning to Rome, memories of my last visit came flooding back to me. When I was thirteen my family and I went to go visit the Eternal City. It is probably one of the very few times that I remember when my whole family was happy to be together. In particular, it is the last time I ever saw my sister as a truly happy person. I have a picture of her from this visit. She is standing outside the Borghese Gardens in a red pea coat. She has a slight smile on her face and one foot up in the air. She looks healthy and happy to be in this beautiful city.

Eleven years later, walking along the same avenue in front of the Borghese Gallery, I am confronted with a deep sense of nostalgia and loss. Specifically, the loss of the sister who once so happily stood in front of the *galleria*. The girl in the picture was a different person; she was confident and beautiful. She was my envy. Any tension between my sister and I at that time stemmed not from hurt and resentment, but from classic sibling rivalry. Yet, over the subsequent course of my sister's battle with alcohol abuse, our relationship with one another became tumultuous. It was this idealization of the past that made me so excited to be back. If I could go back I could find my family again. I could find the family that I so desperately wanted.

But, it was an idealization. It was a dream of a past that I could no longer go back to. As the euphoria of living in Italy for the next three months began to wear off, I started to realize this deep sense of loss. The reality of being alone in a foreign country was becoming a daunting and impossible task. Slowly, I began to realize how much things had changed, but most of all how much I had changed. When I went back to the Borghese Gardens, I began to see just how complicated my life had become. My family's struggle forced me to grow up more quickly than many girls of my age. I had spent my years of high school going through my own form of personal struggles silently. I suffered but never asked for help. I had

gone through a tough time with my family that left me with many wounds. Wounds that I so desperately wanted to hide from the world.

Study abroad is an experience in understanding yourself. Travel encourages you to dig deep and find out who you are. You are faced with the demons you are scared of facing. It is not until you have reached a point of emotional and physical exhaustion that you must begin picking up the pieces. For me this meant dealing with my family's past.

I thought Rome was a time machine in which I could understand how my sister's life spiraled out of control. As I walked along the gardens, I began to see more clearly that sometimes there really was no answer. There was no way for me to understand, or to help my sister. I realized too that if I loved my sister and loved myself, I would have to let go of the idealized sister of my memory.

My study abroad experience affected me in ways I never thought possible. Being abroad made me question and reevaluate some of my own beliefs. It has taught me to embrace new values and continue to strengthen the old ones. In a sense, I have gone back to the drawing board. I am redesigning myself into something completely new. I am relearning what it means to face reality and myself. I am learning that you cannot always plan your life. I have come to see the benefits of learning and growing. I have tested the limits and done things I have never done before. I may not get it right all the time, but I am still learning day by day. What lies ahead in life for me is still unknown. It is still scary. But as my favorite quote from *Game of Thrones* says: "Without fear there cannot be courage." We all must pull down the pillars of childhood and create stronger, self-supporting structures that define us as true individuals.

—Polly Duddy

Watching History Unfold: Part 2

In the Spring of 2013, I spent a semester studying in Rome. That March, I walked down the Via della Conciliazione to St. Peter's Square, where I attended the inauguration of Pope Francis. This semester, I am in Berlin and last Sunday I walked down Unter den Linden toward the Brandenburg Gate to participate in another historical event. Thousands of people, young and old, swarmed the streets of Berlin on the night of November 9 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. A 12km line where the wall once stood was lined with 8,000 illuminated balloons, each carrying a tag with someone's memory from November 9, 1989. I made my way through the city from the East Side Gallery to the Brandenburg Gate and Potsdamer Platz, ending on Bernauer Strasse, the site of the Berlin Wall Memorial.

As a 21-year-old American student, I did not have a lot of insight into the history or importance of the Berlin Wall. I wanted to talk to German people to get a sense of what the Wall, and this celebration, meant to them. I had the opportunity to speak to a couple from West Berlin who reminisced about how much confusion and uncertainty there was at the time. They remembered people going to the Wall with hammers and chisels to start chipping away at it. When the Wall finally fell, people from East Berlin flooded into the western part of the city to celebrate their new-found freedom.

I also spoke with my host mother, Petra, who shared her memories of living in the divided city. She remembered the difficulty of traveling into East Berlin and being interrogated and harassed by the East German Police. She enjoyed the balloon installation and appreciated that something that once caused so much terror and sadness had been transformed into something beautiful. For Petra and the couple from West Berlin I spoke with, the installation served as a reminder of what the city was like between 1961 and 1989. For me, it helped

to put the division that for so long characterized German society into perspective.

Attending this celebration was eye-opening. I learned that after 25 years, some divisions remain in German society, but they seem to be fading. Younger Germans I've spoken with, who have only experienced a unified Germany, are not as likely to see deep differences between the former east and west. They were less interested in the commemoration of the anniversary because they had not lived through it themselves.

As the balloons were released, one by one, the illuminated division between the east and the west slowly disappeared, as if the Wall was falling all over again. Although I was not in Berlin 25 years ago, I feel fortunate to have been here to participate in the anniversary of such an important day in German history.

—Andie D'Agostino

Editor's Note: A version of this piece originally appeared in the Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*.

Fireworks at Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany [Bea Barber]





Astronomical Clock in Prague, Czech Republic [Dani Bagwin]



Naming the Crisis

A lot has been said in the news about the Syrian refugee crisis, and in the weeks before I left for Athens I was asked “Will it be safe?” at least once a day. Even while we were there, family and friends would message us, nervous about a video from a demonstration, or an inflammatory article wrongfully condemning all refugees as criminals or terrorists. Despite all this fear and worry, I can tell you the greatest threat to my well-being during my trip abroad was a little old lady cursing at me for getting the sidewalk dirty.

So what aspect of the refugee crisis did I encounter? Surprisingly, I had to seek it out, but I found a volunteer position teaching English to refugees and immigrants at the local branch of Caritas International. By any chance, does anyone reading this piece know any Farsi, Ukranian, Arabic, Albanian, French, Russian, Uzbek, or Greek? I certainly don't. While the students often spoke two or three of these languages, all I know is English, and so I resorted to charades and sketches on the whiteboard during my lessons. I am not studying foreign languages, English, or teaching, so you can imagine I was a bit out of my depth, especially at the beginning.

The difficulties of teaching were not the only shock I encountered in the classroom. The first day, I learned that iPhones sold in countries with a right-to-left reading pattern, like Syria, have a default setting where the swipe to unlock the screen is from right to left, opposite that of those sold in the U.S. This might not have been an earthshaking observation, but it was one of countless instances where one of my tiny, unconscious assumptions was exposed.

As much as the other volunteers and I were able to teach these refugees over the three months we were there, it pales in comparison to what we experienced. While they were

learning grammar, we were learning that these refugees were more than nameless faces; they were Asmaa, Yousef, and their sons Mohammed and Maliq. They were Ylli, Andreas, and the Papadopoulou sisters. They were—and still are—actual people. It seems like a trivial realization. And yet, all of the labels which I was told to attach to the word ‘refugee’ before I went abroad, like thief, criminal, and terrorist, concealed the humanity of these very real people, people trying to live lives where they don’t need to know the word for ‘bomb’ in multiple languages. It is difficult to put this experience into words, but there is a unique feeling you get when someone asks for the meaning of shrapnel, or says “Kidnapping: like they do in my country,” to clarify its meaning.

A few of my students still occasionally message me to test their English. Yes, we are officially Facebook friends. Some of these remarkable people are still in Athens. One family made it to Switzerland, and another family should be in Holland by now, reunited with their son and other relatives. You will have to ask them what they gained from our lessons. As for me, I can say with confidence I have been “culture shocked,” repeatedly and thoroughly, and the sensation is addicting. I look forward to spending more time abroad, of course, though it will be difficult to compare any future experience with that of eating figs right from the trees on an island beach. In the meantime, here and abroad, I invite you to meander with me, searching for more opportunities to help and be helped, without letting preconceptions make us worry about “if it will be safe.”

—Adam Forti

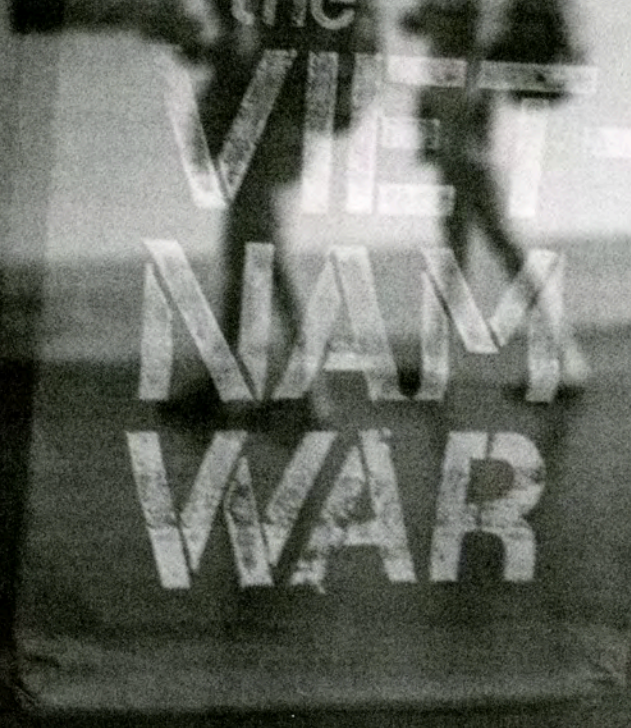
Peace, Restricted

If you stop and listen
Might you hear them?
The quiet sobs, the stifled gasps, piercing
Through the tense air like knives in an unsuspecting
Back, or a knowing gunshot in a silent night.
Separated. Unequal. Distant.
Locked in metal cages, Irish fear like animal instinct.
Painted faces plead for change.
A lost cause falling on deaf ears,
“We’ve come so far, but we have so far to go.”
Immortalized on murals, they remember the fallen.
Murderers among martyrs, glorified in shiny red.
Whose barrel follows those who do not belong.
Those who are not us.
Outsider wherever you are.
Catholic. Loyalist.
Fifty years you say? Fifty more.
Little girls and boys, blown up with bullets and hate.
How much more can you take?
“Peace is coming.”
Wasn’t it due in 1969?
The gate closes at midnight.
Best be home soon.

—Katelyn Billings



War Remnants Museum, Hanoi, Vietnam [Sky Drazek]



the
VIET
NAM
WAR

Túi xách mang biểu tượng hòa bình của tổ chức
Beheiren làm vào năm 1968.

A peace bag made in 1968 by Beheiren youths.

The Orphanage

We got back on the bus, completely silent and stunned at first. My mind went numb. I remembered what I saw but it did not seem real. We become so used to the way we are raised, the environment we grow up in, and what we are taught and told. Back on the bus, it felt like we had been asked to reconsider what we had heard and become accustomed to throughout our lives.

A few days before this bus ride Lana asked us if we, the eighteen of us studying abroad in Vietnam, wanted to volunteer at a local orphanage in Saigon. Of course. Vietnam was our home. Not only should we enjoy living here, but we should also become involved—help, learn, engage, change. So all eighteen of us said yes and joined Lana and our Vietnamese buddies as we weaved through the wild flow of traffic that seemed more normal every day. We arrived at a Buddhist pagoda where we wandered around with our chins tilted up to the sky, trying to see the larger-than-life Buddhas and bodhisattvas built into the trees and walls around the pagoda. After we examined the sculptures of painted dragons and bricks carved with endless rows of Siddhartha, Lana called us over. She had boxes of milk, snacks, and diapers for us to give to the orphanage.

We wanted to do something for the people and country that had welcomed us. So we walked in.

The fluorescent lights glowed in an all-white hall with scuffmarks on the walls. From rooms beyond, we heard crying and howls. I had been to other orphanages but the sounds stunned me. Still, we were there to offer what help and comfort we could so I took a few steps forward and headed down the first hallway into a room. Each room had metal beds with thin mattresses and kids were lying on the beds or sitting on the floor. None of us had imagined that this orphanage would be for children suffering the side effects of Agent Orange.

Most of us probably wished we had known. No matter what, we would have gone to the orphanage to deliver food and hold the kids, but perhaps we would have been more prepared. Sitting on the bus that afternoon I felt a bit angry about this, but as the days passed and Professor Jones helped us process this, I now see that request as selfish and irrelevant.

In Vietnam it must be assumed that orphanages will have many Agent Orange victims. And I think most of us were initially upset about walking in with no prior context because we felt a sense of guilt. Although none of us lived during the war, we identify with the United States, and it was the United States that dropped the chemical defoliant on the jungles, and people, of Vietnam. The United States, past and present, is part of who we are. Even if we have no control over what happened before us, we have an indelible link and responsibility to it.

When we visited the War Remnants Museum, photos of Agent Orange victims filled an entire room and were placed throughout the museum. The images pushed me to silent tears as I reached the third floor. In the moment, the images unsettled me, but I suspected they were also a source of propaganda, possibly an exaggeration by the government.

At the orphanage, however, the pictures came to life. The reality could not be dismissed. It was all present and writhing, needing attention. The children did not seem to respond to touch. I sat on the floor, holding an infant girl, so small in my arms. She never turned to look at me. I rocked her gently but she kept howling, just as she had when I found her, sitting on the ground. I supported her head and wanted her to feel like she could relax and be safe. But she cried, completely foreign to being held and comforted. She never curled into my arms or stretched her hands to grab my hair like so many curious babies do, even when upset.

When it was time to leave, Lana came by to get me. I stood up with the baby girl, her crying joining all the others that rang through the halls. I looked around. There were only a few worn cribs, all taken. Where should I put her down? Surely not on the ground? Imagine picking this baby up, trying to



Walled Building in Hanoi
Guide Points Out Trees Damaged by Agent Orange in the Mekong
Delta, Vietnam [Bree von Bradsky]





Đời sống ty
Thầy trưởng Trần Ngọc Thủ, Chủ tịch Hội cựu chiến binh địa phương, thăm bệnh nhân tại bệnh viện 17 tại thị trấn Xuân Hòa, tỉnh Quảng Bình.

Dismissing for justice
Major General Tran Ngoc Thu - Chairman of the Veterans Association of Chu Minh City - is always bringing good news to the patients.



Đầu không của rừng ai
Thầy trưởng Phan Trung Kiên, Ủy viên Trung ương Đảng, thị trấn Xuân Hòa, tỉnh Quảng Bình, thăm bệnh nhân tại bệnh viện 17, thị trấn Xuân Hòa, tỉnh Quảng Bình.

Justice gain
Major General Phan Trung Kiên, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Vice-Chief of the Provincial Committee of Chu Minh City, is always bringing good news to the patients.



Đời sống ty
Thầy trưởng Trần Ngọc Thủ, Chủ tịch Hội cựu chiến binh địa phương, thăm bệnh nhân tại bệnh viện 17 tại thị trấn Xuân Hòa, tỉnh Quảng Bình.



Đời sống ty
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Bà Lê Thị Hương Thanh, huyện Đông Sơn, tỉnh Thanh Hóa, đang thu gom phế liệu để bán. Bà Hương Thanh đã sống trong vùng bị ô nhiễm chất độc da cam/dioxin suốt 15 năm. Bà Hương Thanh đã sống trong vùng bị ô nhiễm chất độc da cam/dioxin suốt 15 năm. Bà Hương Thanh đã sống trong vùng bị ô nhiễm chất độc da cam/dioxin suốt 15 năm.



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Luyện tập
 Trần Tấn Bình, sinh năm 1982 ở huyện Cẩm Giàng, TP Hải Phòng
 is di chung chất độc da cam/dioxin vào cơ tập luyện.
 Ảnh: Đào Văn Sử

Practicing
 Tran Tan Binh (born in 1982) is trying his best to practice despite his physical chemical/other effects. in Cam Gio District - Ha Chi Minh City
 Photo: Dao Van Su



Khát khao được học
 Cô Nguyễn Hoàng Anh (sinh năm 1991) ở Tân Nhất, huyện Bình Chánh, TP Hồ Chí Minh luôn muốn học chữ.
 Ảnh: Nguyễn Bình Phước Văn

Desire for learning
 Nguyen Hoang Anh (born in 1991) is always eager to learn, in Tan Binh Ward - Binh Chanh District - Ho Chi Minh City.
 Photo: Nguyen Binh Phuoc Van

Agent Orange Exhibit in the War Remnants Museum Hanoi, Vietnam [Bree von Bradsky]

make her feel safe and then leaving her back where she began on the tiled floor?

Like this baby girl, in a way these children were orphaned by actions our country took in a desperate time when no one thought long-term and immediate action was the imperative. I felt like I played a role in some of the children being there, in that situation and environment. I felt a strong sense of guilt, stretching back before my life, actions of the past creeping into the present.

It continues on without me, without my ability to intervene to appease or reconcile. That is what made putting the little girl down so difficult. She cried again, this time at a louder volume, but now I could not pick her up and I doubt she would be held again soon. I wanted to trust that someone else would step in, but there were only so many workers and they had so many children to feed, change, and look after. Their patience and love was already stretched to the limit. They are only human, and they can only do so much.

We all became part of a real and disconcerting reality that day. Reconciliation . . . at first I thought it was not possible. But as time passed, I began to realize that reconciliation and forgiveness had already begun, decades ago. Once I got to know the fruit and vegetable sellers on my street, they became my aunts and sisters. Smiles and warm nods greeted each morning, and we hugged when it came time to go. They saw me as a customer, a daily visitor and a younger sister. Although one can never generalize, especially when in a new place, from what I saw, Vietnam has reconciled. The country and its people want to move forward, like the wild traffic of Saigon. Growth happens by dispelling negativity. As Americans we may move between guilt and anger, but we must arrive at peace. We can achieve this by being open, humble, and communicating with genuine kindness. We can build a future that is aware of, but not controlled by, the past, and create new, optimistic relationships. We are the generation to continue this.

—Danielle Frederick



Three Thoughts in a Park, Hanoi, Vietnam [Ryan Mullaney]
Construction Break, Hanoi, Vietnam [Katie Brew]



Midpoint Analysis

Choosing to spend my junior year abroad in Tübingen has been one of the most empowering decisions that I've made. Now that I've been here for six months, I've not only had a chance to re-connect with my heritage, but have come to better understand my personal strengths, weaknesses, and passions in the context of my German-American identity. Lately, I've been noticing more and more how much can change in one year. So for right now I want to take some time, pause, and reflect on what my time in a small college town, nestled in between the rolling hills of southern Germany, has truly allowed me to discover about myself.

I recently performed with the Akasha Tanz Ensemble in Tübingen. The performance was called Poetry in Motion V, a collection of work that incorporated modern, contemporary, and dance improvisation. I performed alongside three professionals, each of whom contributed their own original work to the performance. I've been dancing for many years on stages in many different towns, states, and countries, but only now am I slowly beginning to discover how the universal language of dance and performance has played a critical role in my personal development.

I've grown, and changed. I feel like the world around me is inviting me to a new part of my life of shared experience, adventure, and possibility. Thinking back six months ago, before I stepped onto the airplane at the Minneapolis airport, I was completely unaware of what to expect when going abroad for one year. Now after being here for six months, I've had time to pause and think about my current state of self.

I always had an understanding that being German was a part of my identity, and that speaking the language was a characteristic that came along with that identity. However, living as a German every day, I have discovered it is the values and habits of the culture that make me hold onto my German roots so closely. This process of discovery is what has brought



me closer not only to understanding myself, but also those around me. I feel more connected and in tune with myself than ever before as I continue to develop my multicultural identity.

I have been taking an intercultural competence course this semester and it has pushed me to understand intercultural communication in a new way. I never before realized the importance and the effect that intercultural interactions have on individuals. I have started to gain an understanding about how to interpret intercultural interactions and how to use the tools I have to create successful and positive interactions and experiences. I feel like the course has helped me recognize which parts of my identity and person come from my German side and which stem from my American upbringing. Being a cross-cultural young adult has been extremely confusing at times. I often feel like I don't belong in one specific place and that I fall somewhere in between, a somewhat gray area or undefined middle. However, by being in a class-

room filled with international students who are also trying to understand German culture and grappling with the concept of intercultural relations, I am comforted by the fact that we all share similar questions. It is not the answers to those questions about German culture that have helped me better understand myself and those around me, but the actual process of trying to discover those answers. Our world is filled with individuals who bring with them different perspectives, understandings, and solutions, and what I have found is that by using the skills that I have gained in my intercultural competence course, I have been able to explore the possibilities of intercultural interactions, whether positive or negative, and I have developed an understanding and patience for difference.

Questions like: who am I? Where do I fit in? What role do I play? are my biggest mysteries. I'm not trying to answer these questions all in one sitting, but I am trying to better understand myself through realizing that my life is about exploring who I am and what I'm capable of. It is an exciting, yet also scary time when you discover the strengths and weaknesses organically from spending time alone and thinking. This time in Tübingen has allowed me to put the craziness of my college life in the U.S. on pause, and dive directly into my bicultural identity. I have been able to work and focus on why I think a certain way and why I interact with individuals from different cultures in the way I do.

As I mentioned before, dance is something that I am still learning about and exploring. My relationship with dance has been complicated and filled with mixed emotions. Dance is a side of myself that I have always kept close, yet I have never let it consume or define my personal identity or myself. Attending HWS and recognizing the possibility that dance can still fit into my life without being my main focus has been critical in allowing me to explore my other areas of interest. However, this flexibility has helped me reach the recent realization that dance *is* my life. I understand my personal intercultural relationships and communication *through* dance. Dance is a cooperation of individuals sharing a space

and working together, while oftentimes experiencing something completely individual. The intercultural world works in a similar way. Individuals must cooperate together by listening, understanding, and being patient in order to coexist in a space or situation. Dance has helped me understand culture, and has pushed my interest in furthering my studies in anthropology because it has given me insight and the chance to work on communication and acceptance through movement and non-verbal forms of expression.

Dance has been the key in understanding myself and the way I interact with the world around me. Dance has taught me how to discover my German identity, my personal goals, and my interests. My life has been structured by dance, and now I want to know why, and what that means for me personally as well as culturally. This brings me to the study of dance anthropology, a discipline that focuses on understanding the importance of dance within a culture and its context. Since dance has helped me find my identity as a bicultural individual, I am interested in how dance overlaps and is integrated into other cultures, traditions, and ways of life. This year I have been able to explore Germany through my personal dance experiences, to work with other German artists, and to learn about how German dance culture compares and intertwines with German culture itself. These topics and discoveries are at the core of my own personal understanding of self and identity. Dance is not only something I hope to continue practicing and enjoying throughout my life, it is the core of my being, my identity, and my existence, and I am thrilled to discover the ways in which it will continue to affect my life.

—*Ingrid Dehler-Seter*





Elephant in Kruger National Park, South Africa [Anna Gerla]



Southbank Undercroft Skatepark in London, England [Carter Brown]
Pantheon in Rome, Italy [Sam Gordon]





The Jewish Museum in Berlin, Germany [Stephen Enos]
Heiliggeistkirche in Munich, Germany [Geneva Calder]



Charango

“A cha-what?”

“Charango.”

“It’s some sort of Andean string instrument . . . like a little guitar?” It shouldn’t have sounded like a question, but it definitely wasn’t a sure answer. If the doubt in my voice didn’t speak for itself, the confused grimace on my face was enough to beg any new topic of conversation. And of course, I had mastered the dismissive one-shoulder shrug, which headed off any questions about my lack of musical ability. After months of explaining why a French major fresh out of Spanish 101 wanted to go study in Ecuador, I knew better than to further entertain a conversation about the \$400 grant I had received to study the *charango* while I was down there.

I only knew better because I had already been through this conversation: “A cha-what?” “*Charango*. It’s a sort of string instrument from the Andes region of South America. It looks like a little guitar and it was originally made out of an armadillo shell. It’s really beautiful and the strings—”

“But . . . you don’t play music . . .”

Or the less explicit but equally as scathing: “You’re going to learn how to play a *guitar*? In *Spanish*?”

It was true that aside from fourth-grade band, I had never played an instrument in my entire life, and apparently it was a little late in the game to start—especially while I was in a foreign country. Moreover, I played sports, not music, which meant that I was to leave all exotic folk instruments to the devices of my profoundly musical younger brother.

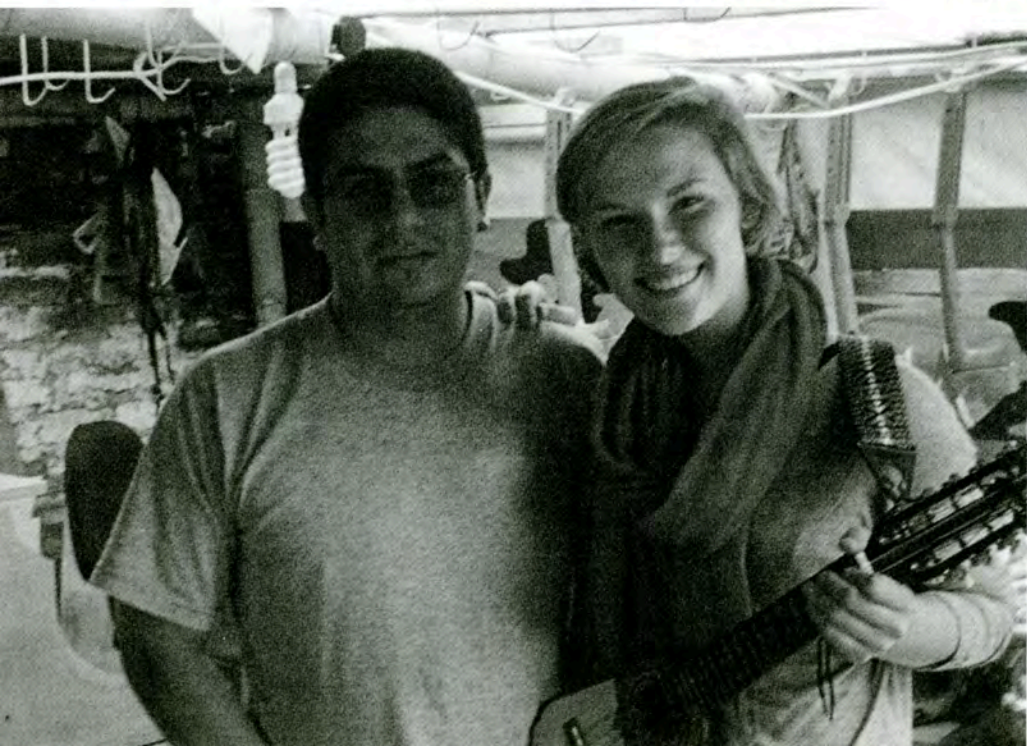
In spite of the odds, I couldn’t help but be excited and driven by the prospects of cultural exchange, language immersion, learning something new, pushing the limits of my comfort zone, and finally being able to accompany my brother with an instrument of my own. Plus, if the school was going to give me four hundred bucks to buy my own super-cool Ecuadorian

mini-guitar, why wouldn't I seize the opportunity?

However, on my first day in Ecuador, I realized just how hard learning music in Spanish was going to be. I couldn't even understand when my host-mother said that it was time for dinner. The cultural and linguistic boundaries were a lot thicker than I had imagined; I didn't speak Spanish, I didn't know the first thing about music, and few people spoke English.

But when I mentioned the *charango*, my grimaces and dismissive shrugs didn't work anymore. Everyone knew exactly what a *charango* was, and everyone wanted to help me learn it. Nobody knew me as the French student, or the jock. They didn't suggest that I was silly or crazy for wanting to buy and learn an instrument that I hadn't known anything about just a few months ago. Soon my Spanish picked up, and I was able (with the help of my very protective host-mother) to find a *charango* teacher. All I needed was a *charango*.

The Author, Her Charango, and Ayala, Otavalo, Ecuador [Jordyn Dezago]



My host family dragged me to every music shop in Quito, but I wanted a traditional, hand-crafted instrument. Something with character, with a story behind it.

When our group took a daytrip to Otavalo, a nearby town renowned for its city-wide craft market, I came prepared with the name and general whereabouts of a luthier named Ayala. Since my Spanish was still in its early stages, I recruited one of my professors to help me find him. It was then that I was faced with a new problem: everyone in Otavalo knew what a *charango* was, and everyone had one that they wanted to sell to me. I was sent in every which direction (all of them wrong) to find Ayala, and each time I was told to come back and look at so-and-so's cousin's *charango*, which he made himself and was selling for a very good price.

So, through walls of hanging tapestries and hand-woven hammocks haunted by the smell of cured leather, the smoky aroma of grilled mystery-meat on a stick, and the heckling cries of Otavalans selling their wares, we walked, losing hope at every turn. I began to wonder if it was a bad sign, or just another reason why I wasn't supposed to learn the *charango*.

Or, perhaps it was an exercise in confidence-building; throughout the day, each time the word *charango* came out of my mouth it was less and less doubtful, less and less subdued. The grimace faded, I stopped shrugging. When we finally found Ayala's shop, I was able to ask the girl at the counter, with absolute confidence, to see the *charangos*. There were instruments hanging on every wall, but there on the counter was a single *charango*, hand-made by Ayala himself. I had found my *charango*, and after a long day of traipsing around the city, I thought I had my story, too. But the story wasn't over. The next thing I knew, I had a hand-drawn map in my hand that led to Ayala's workshop, which we found tucked away behind a very high wall and a closed door that said "No visitors."

Instead of shrugging my shoulders or turning away, I found myself standing tall, *charango* in hand, as Ayala came out to greet us. He beckoned us inside, and suddenly we were surrounded by hollowed-out guitar frames and half-made

mandolins. He showed us the beginnings of a *charango*, and then, without batting an eye he asked me if I wanted to learn how to make one of my own: "Do you have eight days to spend in Otavalo? That's how long it takes. If you ever come back, just look me up, I'd be happy to teach you."

Not once did he look at me with doubt in his eyes, not once did he say "How do you expect to learn how to play this?" or "You're not a musician." The *charango* was mine, which to Ayala, and to every other Ecuadorian or Peruvian that I ended up meeting, meant that I could learn to play it if I wanted to. In every house I stayed in, I was encouraged to practice, even when I couldn't make a single chord sound good. My teachers never doubted me, never asked me why I, an American, a French student, a soccer player, was trying to learn an obscure Andean instrument.

On the streets of Cusco, Peru, I was invited to sit down and play with a group of traveling street musicians, where I was given the best advice and the greatest confidence of all. It was a moment that I will never forget because, before even asking my name, the *charangista* of the group looked me straight in the eyes, took the *charango* out of my case, and put the strap around my shoulder with an unparalleled, contagious certainty. Tugging on the strap, he said to me: "Do you know what this is for? It is so that wherever you go, you can always have your *charango* with you. A *charangista* should always have her *charango* with her." To him, there was no question about my identity. I wasn't a jock or a silly American tourist. I was a musician. And in that moment I was no longer learning the *charango* just because I had a cool grant. I wasn't doing it for the cultural exchange or the language immersion or the cool stories I would tell. I was learning it because it had become part of who I was: a *charangista*.

—Jordyn Dezago

Celebrating Carnaval in Ecuador [Stacey Davis]





Dansk Squared

Hej! My name is Paige Davidson and during the fall semester of 2014, I studied abroad in Copenhagen (or as the Danes say, *København*). I studied architecture and textile design at the Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS). This study abroad experience was life-changing, and I fell in love with this small country and the people who live in it. I traveled to nine countries, which briefly introduced me to a number of other cultures and languages. I was also lucky to have not one, but two, host families, even if tragedy created that situation.

Although the Klausens and the Bødkers lived very different lifestyles, they both shared one commonality: a love for food. Some of my best memories with my host families were made around cooking and enjoying food, and I would like to share a couple of those stories.

The Klausens were a lovely family that consisted of two very sweet and sarcastic parents, Klaus and Annette, and their three kids: Tanja, Tim, and Terese. They did a phenomenal job introducing my roommate and me to Danish culture. Klaus was proud of his Danish heritage and taught me a lot of Copenhagen's history and about Denmark overall. Although Klaus was a serious man at times, he was also fun to be around, especially when his guilty pleasure, Lady Gaga, came on the radio. He would stop what he was doing and sing and dance to his favorite American pop artist. I was closest with Klaus; he would poke fun at me, and I loved learning the history of Copenhagen from him (I'm a history nerd).

One of my fondest memories from my time with the Klausens was a few days in early October when Klaus cooked us exceptionally delicious dinners. One night he cooked a cozy dinner of homemade tomato soup with crunchy bread. This was the best tomato soup I had ever tasted, and I had five servings! I asked Klaus: "Klaus! What did you put in this soup? It's amazing." He smirked and said, "Well, tomatoes,

obviously . . .” and then he showed a big grin, “. . . and a whole lot of whiskey.” I laughed so hard at the response and Klaus said that might have been because of the large amount of alcohol in the soup.

A few nights after the tomato soup dinner, Klaus made a dish that I would choose as my last meal if I were ever on death row (let me make it clear that this will NEVER happen—I hate the idea of killing a fly). The dish consisted of thick, wide egg noodles, smothered in a creamy cheese sauce with peas and chicken, with the usual bread and butter on the side. It smelled divine. Because of the aroma alone, I impatiently took my first bite before everyone served themselves. It was sweet and bitter at the same time, with a smooth consistency. Usually I can detect most ingredients, but I could not figure out for the life of me what was in this dish. And just like earlier in the week, I asked Klaus: “Klaus! What did you put in this pasta dish? It’s amazing.” Klaus said, “Wow, you really like my dishes this week!” He continued to answer me with a slight smile: “In this dish I used four types of cheese, peas, chicken, and maple syrup.” *Maple syrup?* With cheese? That blew my mind. He saw my shock and amusement and said, “Yes! Maple syrup is great. I use it in almost everything.” Then I asked him, jokingly, “So, are you Buddy, from *Elf*?” I was afraid my host family might have not seen that movie, but to my surprise they all laughed and my host dad said, “Yes. Just like Buddy.” From then on, I called Klaus “Buddy.”

Unfortunately, the jokes, the Lady Gaga singalongs, and the meals ended abruptly on November 14th, when Klaus tragically died. Not only did I lose a friend, but I felt so much grief, anger, and confusion. The Klausens were a great family and they did not deserve this loss. It simply wasn’t fair. The following two weeks were some of the hardest weeks of my life.

When Klaus died there was a lot of confusion. DIS asked me to leave the Klausen’s home and stay in a hostel to give them some space during this time. The hostel was in Nyhavn, and luckily I had a few close friends who lived in that area. They were a great support system for me during the days following

his death. Although the Klausens wanted me to move back in with them after everything settled down, my college's study abroad office, and the staff of DIS, strongly encouraged me to move in with a new host family. Mia, the housing coordinator from DIS, asked if we had any friends we knew of that we could live with. And it so happened that I had two very close friends, Natan and Chris, who were living with a family called the Bødgers. Chris and Natan explained my situation to Dorte and Poul Arne Bødger.



A few days later, they invited me to have dinner with them, their son Valdemar, his girlfriend Julie, and of course, Chris and Natan. Their other son, Alexander, lived in København and attends the university there. I had actually met Valdemar, Julie, and Alexander not long before, on Halloween, during my first visit to Tivoli Gardens. But I was still nervous. The Bødgers were so inviting and warm, however. After a long dinner full of laughter and getting to know one another, Dorte and Poul Arne invited me to join their family at their house in Sweden a few days later. And they gave me a copy of their house key because they really wanted me to move in with them. I felt so lucky to be welcomed by this vivacious, fun family that made the best of any situation and were not afraid to be themselves.

Two weeks into my stay with them, it was Thanksgiving. The Bødgers wanted to celebrate the holiday like we do in America, so they cooked a few turkeys, mashed potatoes, cranberry chutney, rolls, and pies and filled the house with friends and family. My contribution to the meal was supposed to be my three-time blue ribbon-winning cornbread recipe, but I was unable to find two key ingredients, so I changed plans and instead made my famous zucchini muffins.

The night before Thanksgiving, Julie and Natan were on “pie duty” and the rest of us were also in the kitchen prepping food. They told me they had a job for me, later, and wouldn’t tell me what it was, which bothered me. I wanted to help out as much as I could. Finally Natan and Julie yelled, “Paige! We need you now!” So I rushed over and they said, “You’re an architecture major, right?” I responded, “Yes?” They then said, “Your job is to decorate the pies! Pie decorating is part of the criteria for being an architecture major, right? Make us proud.” So, that is what I did. I decorated three apple pies for our Thanksgiving dinner. I did the first pie in a traditional style. Valdemar insisted that one of the three pies should be purely American-themed. I took his suggestion and I decorated the second pie to resemble the American flag. The design of third pie was up to me and I love stars so I made an abstract star tile pattern. We cooked and baked until 3 in the morning, and it was a school night. But it was so much fun, and Thanksgiving was great. Everyone loved the pies, and the muffins!

I feel truly lucky to have been able to live with both the Klausens and the Bødgers. They lived in different areas, the Klausens in Jyllingevej, just a few metro stops from downtown, and the Bødgers in Slagelse, a small city just north of København, and they each celebrated life differently. Someday, I would love to live in Denmark. Until then, *mange tak* (many thanks) to the Klausens and Bødgers, the two families who welcomed me into their homes as one of their own. Hej Hej!

—Paige Davidson



Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet [Douglas Silverman]





Stonehenge, England [Shelby Chase]



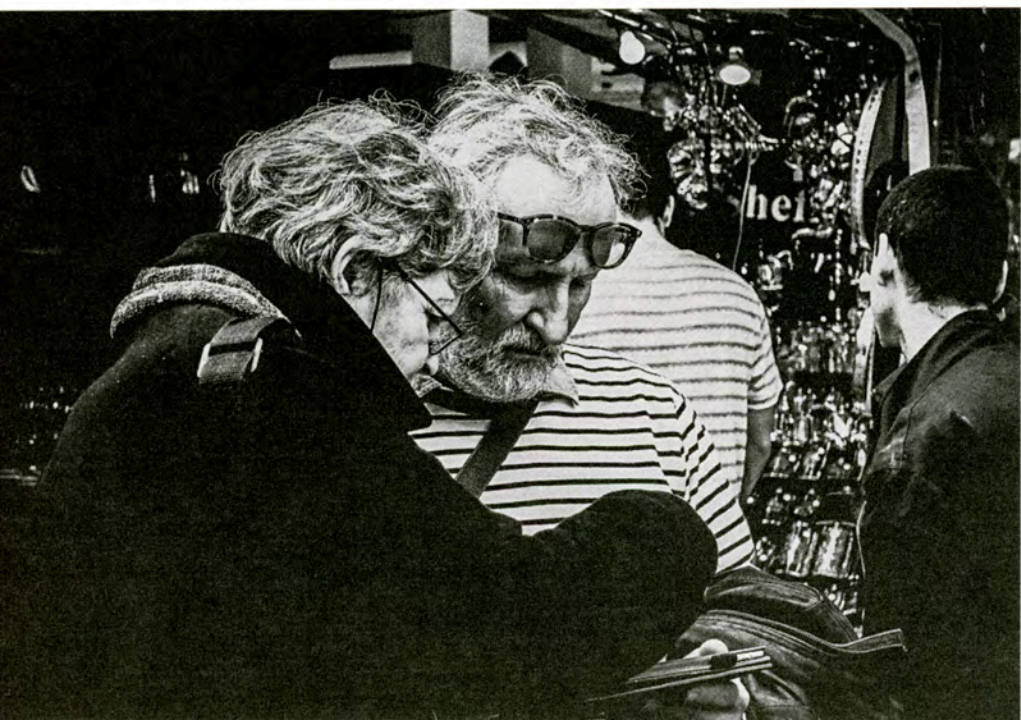


Street Scene in Notting Hill, London, England
Riverside Scene in Cambridge, England





Street Scene in Cambridge, England
Lost and Found in Notting Hill, London, England [Mary Nelligan Cella]





A Portrait in Vietnam [Anna Lilly Philibert]

Man Painting in Guangdong, Foshan [Douglas Silverman]



Hold the Ice: Hockey in Ireland

It was my first game of the season, and we were playing the best team in the league and our cross-town rival. Although the league spanned the entire island of Ireland from Cork to Belfast and Galway to Dublin, all eyes were on the game that day, as my team, the Galway Bay Lightning, faced the Galway Pitbulls. As I laced up my inline hockey skates, I was nervous, wondering how different this game would be from the thousands of games I had played back home on ice. Before I knew it, the buzzer rang and it was time to take the . . . it wouldn't be ice . . . court? Playing surface? Whatever they called it over here, ready or not, it was time. My first stride felt shaky. The muscle memory wasn't the same and I found myself focusing on every push and turn of my skates. The puck didn't slide as well on this surface either, and watching me in warm-ups, most of the spectators probably thought I was new to the sport entirely. A whistle blew, warm-ups were over and the game was beginning. "Bouchard, Bell, Toner and Ó Seachnasaigh, you lads start." Oh boy, this is it, I thought.

We won the faceoff and moved the puck deep in the Pitbulls' defensive zone. I was hardly paying attention to the play, moreso on my skating, when an odd man rush came barreling toward me. I played it incredibly wrong and the Pitbulls were off on a 2 on 0 against our net. Luckily our goalie, Stephen, handled the play spectacularly and saved the puck to make up for my mistake. He let the puck go behind the net for me, as I took a second to breathe and regain my composure. I was sure my teammates had mixed opinions on American hockey after that poor play, but now it was time for me to show what I could do. I handled the puck and broke the puck out of our zone and back into the far end of the rink.

I found my groove and was holding my place as the defenseman in our offensive zone. We were applying considerable pressure against this so-called "favorite." I was comfortable. I was ready to play the type of game I had always played. Suddenly, Conor Bell moved the puck up the side boards and

we caught eyes. He saw I was open and fed me a cross. Without hesitation I wound up and one-timed the puck, connecting perfectly. The goalie didn't have time to move as the puck found the top corner, ringing the crossbar as it went into the net. Everyone looked at me like they had never seen a shot like that before. This is the game I was used to playing. "Holy crap, son where ya been hidin' that cannon?" one of my teammates yells to me. That was my first goal of four that game, as we cruised on to win 14–2. We were the new best team in Ireland.

My college awarded me a grant to play inline hockey while I studied abroad in Galway, Ireland. My project was to explore the culture of Galway and Ireland by joining a local team and playing with them for the duration of my time abroad. Though I was nervous at first, I quickly became comfortable. We ended up having a fair amount of success: Inline Hockey Ireland Regular Season Champions (we were the first team in history to finish the regular season undefeated), Inline Hockey Ireland Third Place overall finish, and runners-up at the Valley Vase Annual Tournament held in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

But joining the team brought other benefits. For example, I got an insider's view of Galway's famous pub culture during weekly "team meetings" that consisted of pints at various establishments on and around the city's iconic Shop Street. I've seen more of Ireland traveling with this team than I've seen of America, and I grew as a person more than I ever thought I would. I was able to forge lasting relationships with a group of individuals I wouldn't have met otherwise. I learned about their cultures, backgrounds, and even some of the history of Ireland. I have professional references, future law consultants, and potential places to stay when I visit again. These were my teammates during the best semester of my life.

When I concluded my final game, and looked at my teammates holding our bronze medals, I realized how much I was going to miss this, how thankful I was to have had the opportunity to have been here, and, most importantly, how anxious I was to get back and play another game with the lads.

—Mike Bouchard

The Sporting Life Abroad

When I announced that I was going abroad, everybody I knew suddenly became an expert on how to best utilize my time and money away from home. People bombarded me with destinations to visit, foods to try, and photos to capture. They told me to embrace new experiences and say yes to everything. I was told that I needed to “completely avoid the familiar” and do things that I couldn’t do at home. I ignored this advice, and it ended up being the best decision I made.

I’m a varsity athlete by vocation, and despite my greatest efforts to avoid a constricting athletics schedule while abroad, I couldn’t resist when opportunity came knocking. After my friends and I missed our train to an out-of-town concert, we headed to happy hour at our favorite local bar. Growing bored of each other’s company among the rather private Belgian clientele, I accepted a friend’s dare to start chatting with a group of male field hockey players in the booth behind us. Unsure of what else to talk about in my “Frenglish”, I brought up that I played field hockey back at home. They called over a female member of the club. She told me that her team was still looking for new players and invited me out to their first training session and a meal at her home the following Friday. Her name was Alicia, and she was the most accommodating person I had ever met in my life.

“But I have no equipment.”

“We’ll take care of it.”

“Where is the field?”

“We’ll drive you. Here’s my number and address.”

When I went to my first practice, I noticed people weren’t caught up in their weekend flight-bookings and Insta-likes. Unlike my study abroad contemporaries, I realized I was among real Belgian people living normal Belgian lives. Since most interactions were in French and I was at least 6 years



younger than everyone else on the pitch, I was a fly on the wall for a good part of the practice. I let my playing do the talking as our two coaches, Mibou (Alicia's boyfriend) and Matt Miche put us through stick and ball drills.

"You're SO good," Alicia gushed. "I can't believe you were nervous!"

I'm nothing special at field hockey. I can run, thanks to a rigorous fitness regimen from my college lacrosse coach, and I have the game sense from a lifetime of playing team sports, but my stickwork is mediocre at best. But I guess that for a regional club of slightly older working women, I was good enough to stand out.

Following practice, we went as a team to sit at the clubhouse and grab a round of Hoegaarden and cider while waiting for Mibou to finish training with his own team. I learned that this was the custom after every practice. At the time this seemed backward to me. In the United States, participating in sports and drinking alcohol are usually separate activities. These post-practice sessions became the time that I got to know my teammates and practice my French the most, as the atmosphere was always warm and casual and I never felt like I was being judged for my horrible grammar or limited vocabulary. I told my teammates about my travel plans for the semester ahead, and they told me about their travels to America. I realized many of them had seen more of North America than I had seen in my lifetime, and felt a little foolish to be trying to cover so much of Europe within the span of a semester.

I remember being filled with anxiety before our first game. Would our opponents be good? Would I get to play? Would my teammates understand what I was trying to say to them on the field? We completed a warm-up that was refreshingly similar to what I was used to back home, and my coach wrote "Jen" (my new alias) on the board as starting at centre mid-field. The whistle blew and our team came out blazing. By the end of the first half, we were up 4-0 and I had already chipped in a pair of goals. We finished up the game by popping in five

more, and gathered at the clubhouse afterward to share in a round and reflect upon our awesome win.

Before I knew what was happening, we were all given tiny pieces of paper and told to write down the name of a teammate who we thought was the player of the game and to write down why we thought that was the case. Each piece of paper was read aloud by our captain, the votes were tallied, and to my surprise I had received an overwhelming majority of the votes. Four beers were placed in front of me, and I was told that with the first one I had to race my coach head-to-head to finish it. The other three had to be finished in a certain amount of time as well, but after finishing them I had the power to make anyone finish their drinks with the point of a finger. Needless to say, Mibou destroyed me in the head-to-head challenge. We all shared laughs for the remainder of the afternoon, and I went home beaming, realizing that I had had more fun than on any of my weekend trips I had already taken since being abroad.

As the season progressed, I found myself booking fewer trips to make room for more field hockey games. I didn't feel held back by the team; playing with them was what I wanted to do. Our team was on fire, and we continued to blow the competition out of the water week after week. I would sometimes end up spending half of my weekend at Alicia and Mibou's apartment, between pre-game meals and Sunday night dinners and movies.

Mibou's team, the top men's team in our club, was also fun to watch, although the score almost never ended up in their favor. The team always fell short in competition because players would get into disagreements with one another and the referees, always giving the opposing team an easy road to victory. Regardless of the outcome of their games, the post-game gatherings were always a great deal of fun, and a lot less expensive than going out with my fellow study abroad students since everything was covered for you as a member of the club.



Being the poor college student that I was, I got around paying club fees by volunteering to coach a rag-tag men's team of thirty-year-olds. My twenty-year-old Welsh friend, Bryony, coached with me. The men actually listened to and respected our opinions because we provided them with structure and technical coaching that they had never received before. In return for our tactical advice, we were invited to go out with the men, and enjoyed getting to know them on a more personal level.

My last stretch of time in Belgium was an action-packed blur. Our team concluded the first half of the season with a perfect 12-0 record and a team party that was filled with heartfelt goodbyes. I was completely caught off-guard when my teammates pulled out a personalized hoodie they had ordered for me that read "Super G" across the back. The following weekend we had a club-wide dinner and party where all of my favorite people were in the same place, together for one last time. These were difficult goodbyes.

The beauty of sport, I learned, is that it is a universal language. There might be different words or traditions surrounding the game, but a good play is a good play no matter what you call it. Chemistry with a teammate does not depend on whether you have the vocabulary to hold a conversation. The desire to celebrate a great victory is not lost in translation. I met plenty of other interesting people in Belgium, like a U.S. marine stationed there, local lacrosse pioneers, a death metal singer and Balkan LGBT activists. But at the end of the semester it was Alicia and Mibou who drove me to the airport and saw me off at the gate. I think what helps ground anyone when they're in an unfamiliar place is the knowledge that they are cared about. This was why field hockey was where I found my kind of people, thousands of miles from home, and why I'll forever feel welcome to return, regardless of the number of years that have passed.

—Geneva Calder





Clockwise from facing: Miao Family in Guizhou, China [Harrison Barker]
Marrakech Souk, Morocco [Erica Stuke]
Highlands Boy, Peru [Macenzie Peters]





Fruit Seller in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam [Cecelia Carsky-Bush]
The Golden Temple along the Sea of Nectar in India [Maggie O'Reilly]





Waterfall in Lamington National Park, Australia [Keri Geiser]
Fruit Seller in Hanoi, Vietnam [Nikolai Stern]





Clockwise from above: Sled Dog in Greenland [Allison McCarthy]
Hooker Valley Trail to Mt. Cook, New Zealand [Stephanie Dick]
Tongariro National Park, New Zealand [Hannah Del Favero]







Sacred Valley, Peru [Erin Miller]
Blue Lagoon, Iceland [Drew McCalmont]





Cliffs of Moher, Ireland [Kathryn Yochim]
Patagonia, Argentina [Quincey Johnson]





*Clockwise from above: Girl in a Market, Vietnam [Bree von Bradsky]
Chefchaouen, the Blue City, Morocco [Monika von Brauchitsch]
Burano, Italy [Chiara Favaloro]*







Boy on the Tracks in Agra, India [Robert Leung]
Fraser Island, Australia [Nicole O'Connell]





Tending Sheep in Maras, Peru [Stacey Davis]
 Street Art and Posters, Florence, Italy [Janey Fine]





Belfast, Northern Ireland [Danny Hastings]
Mürren, Switzerland [Drew McCalmont]





Nyhavn in Winter, Copenhagen, Denmark [Taylor Amico]
Street Scene in Rome, Italy [Katherine Byrne]



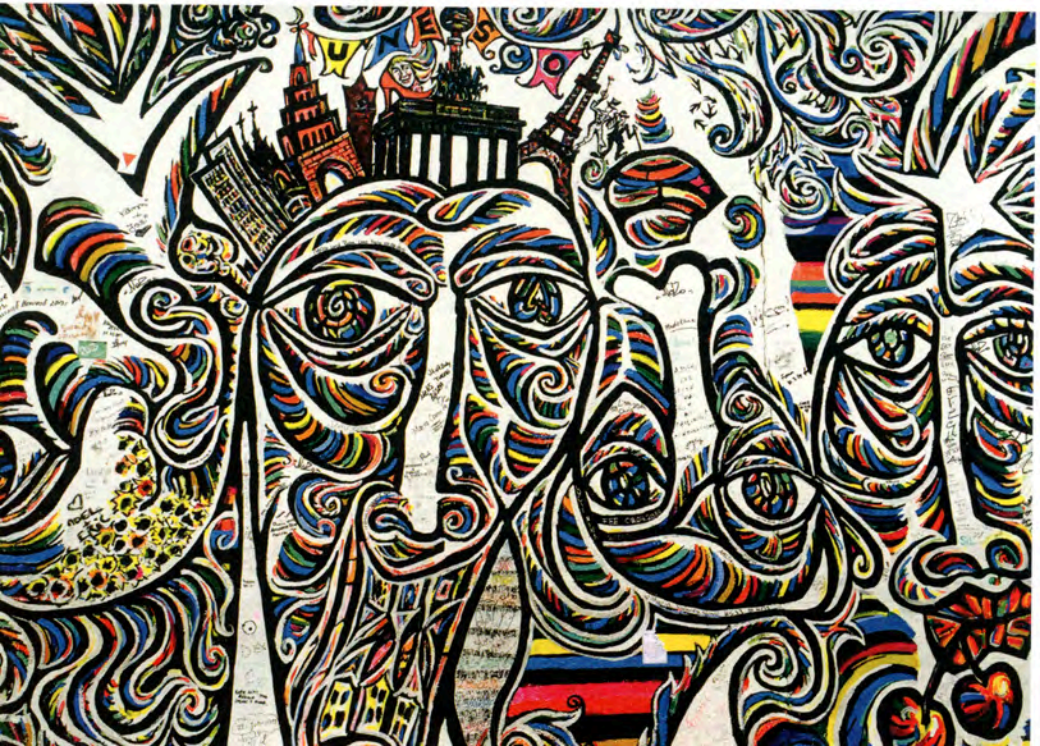


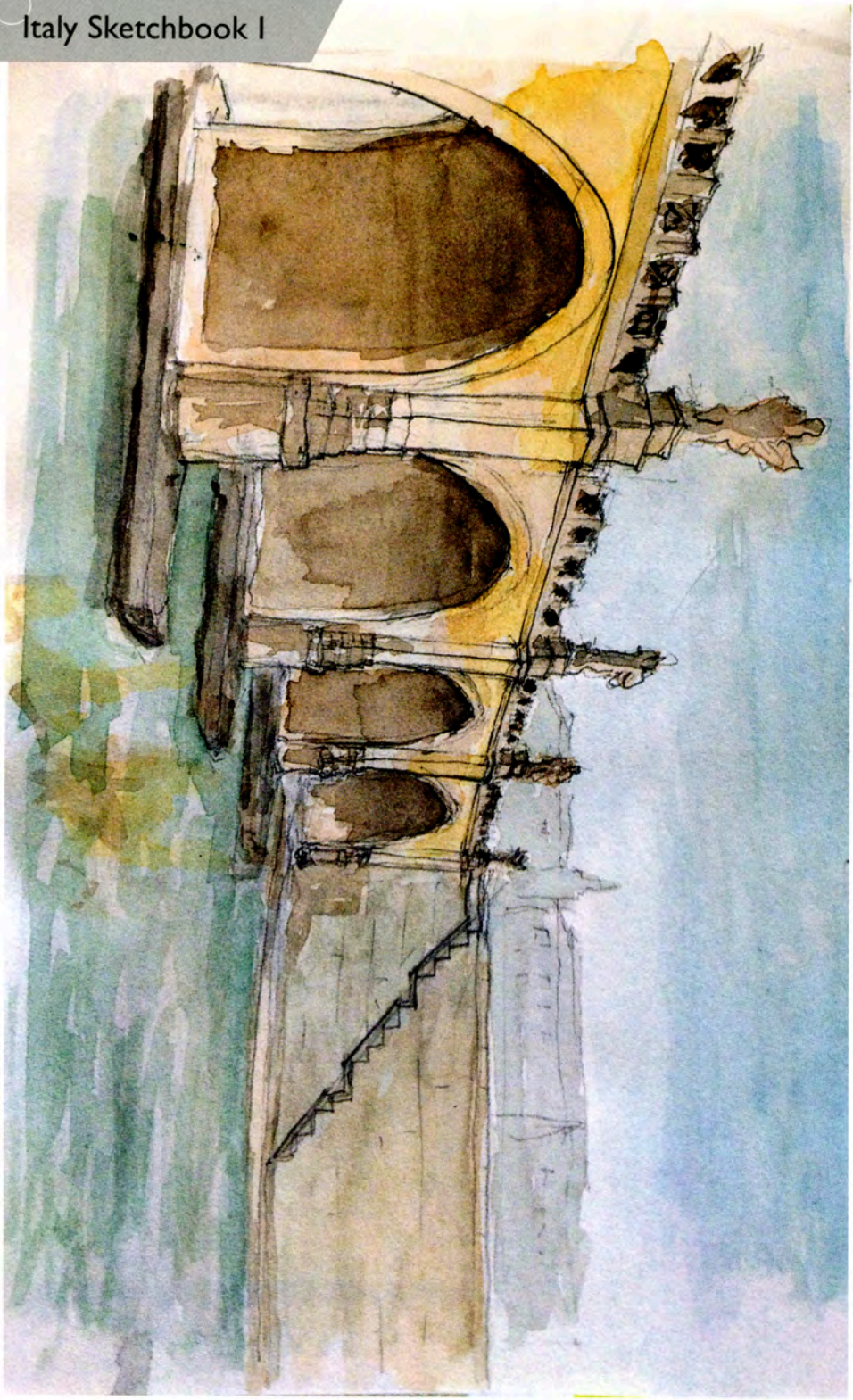
Miao Village, Guizhou, China [Harrison Barker]
Trailhead to Pichincha Volcano in Ecuador [Amanda Faherty]





Old Wall in Hanoi, Vietnam [Cecelia Carsky-Bush]
Graffiti on Berlin Wall, Germany [Shelby Chase]







HISTORIC MARKET

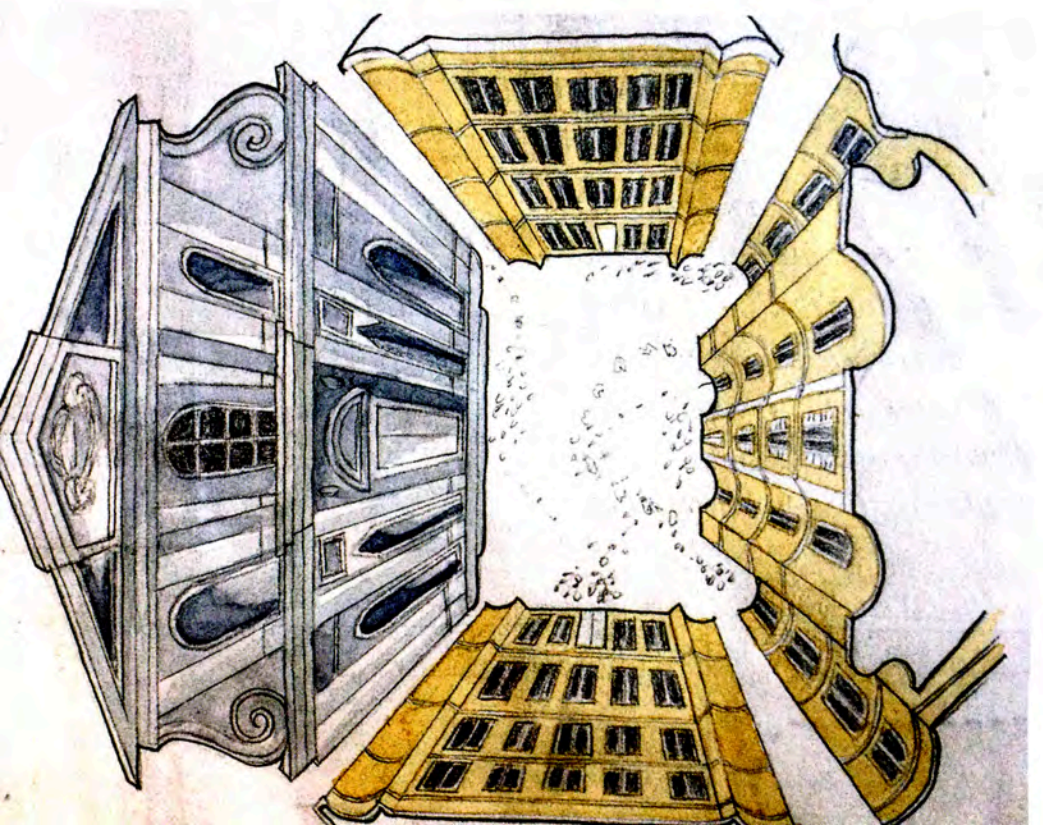
Clockwise from facing: Bridge of Angels, Rome [Patrick Hatheway]
Campo di Fiori, Rome [Meg Anderson]
An Analysis of Vatican City [Gillian Smith]

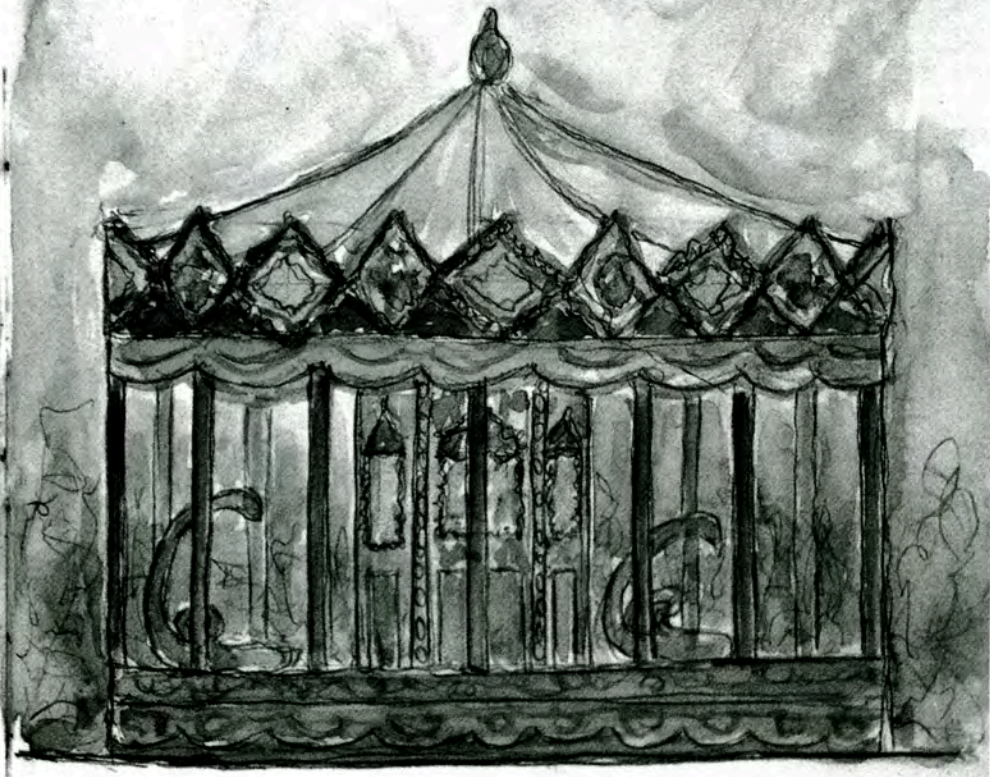




VENICE
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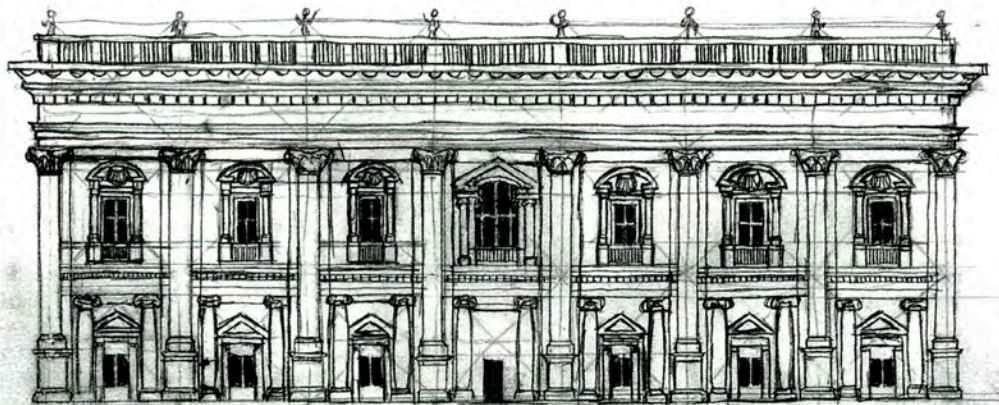
Boats Along the Venice Canal [Tyler Niles]
Bird's-Eye View of Sant'Ignazio Church [Amanda Walker]

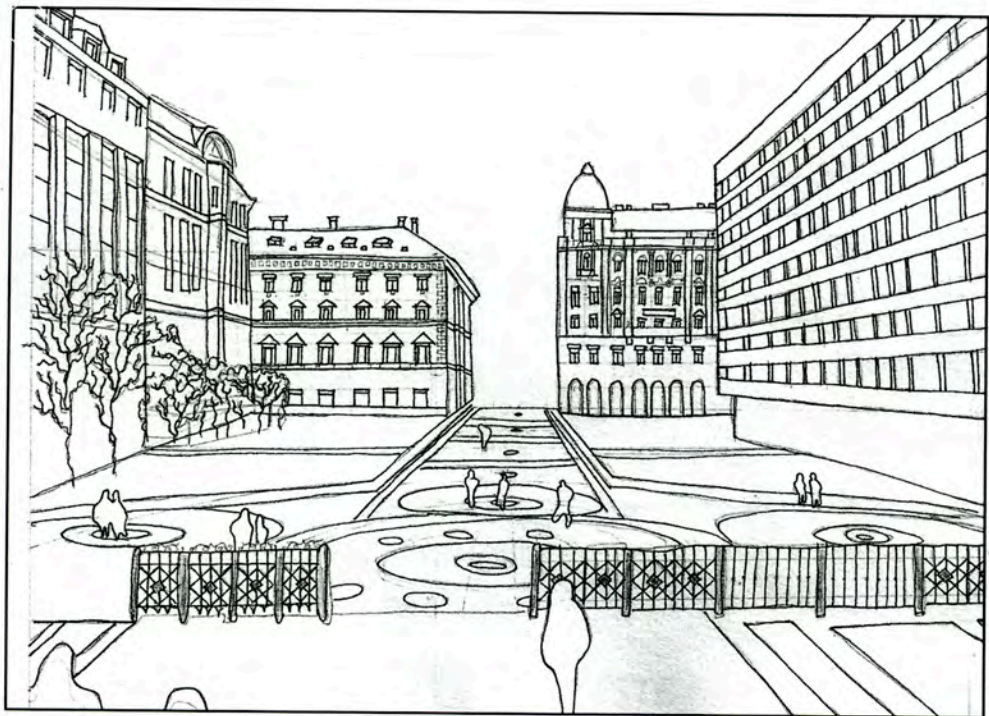




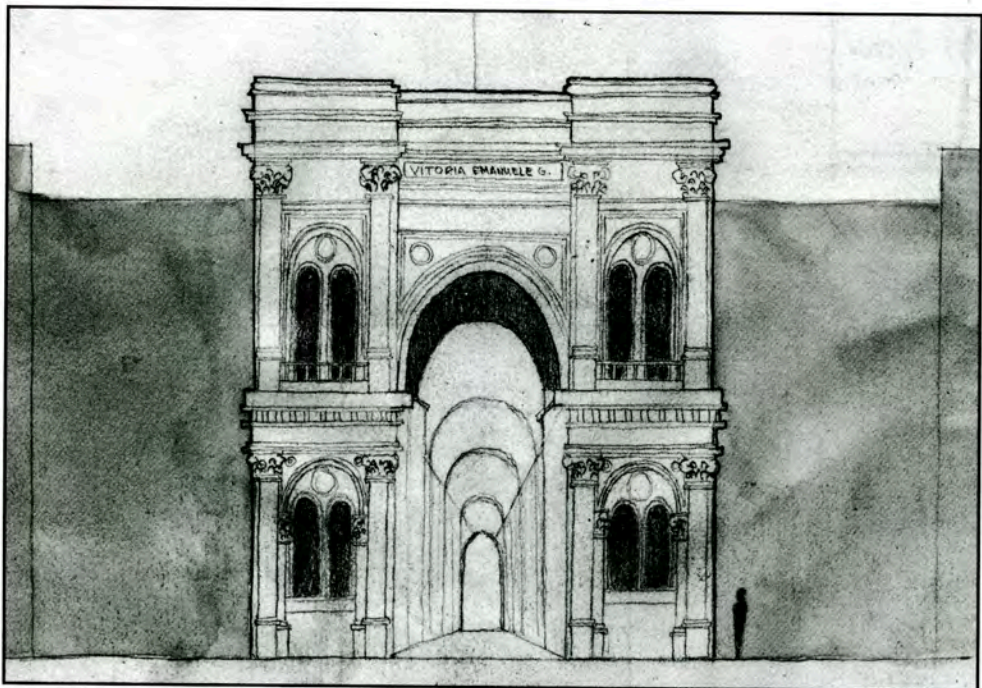
A Carousel in Florence [Meg Anderson]
Palazzo Campidoglio, Rome [Christian Colella]

Michelangelo Façade at Campidoglio
w/hrs





Saint Peter's Basilica in Vatican City [Brooks Miller]
Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in Milan [Amanda Walker]
Facing: Duomo, Milan [Ross Burke]



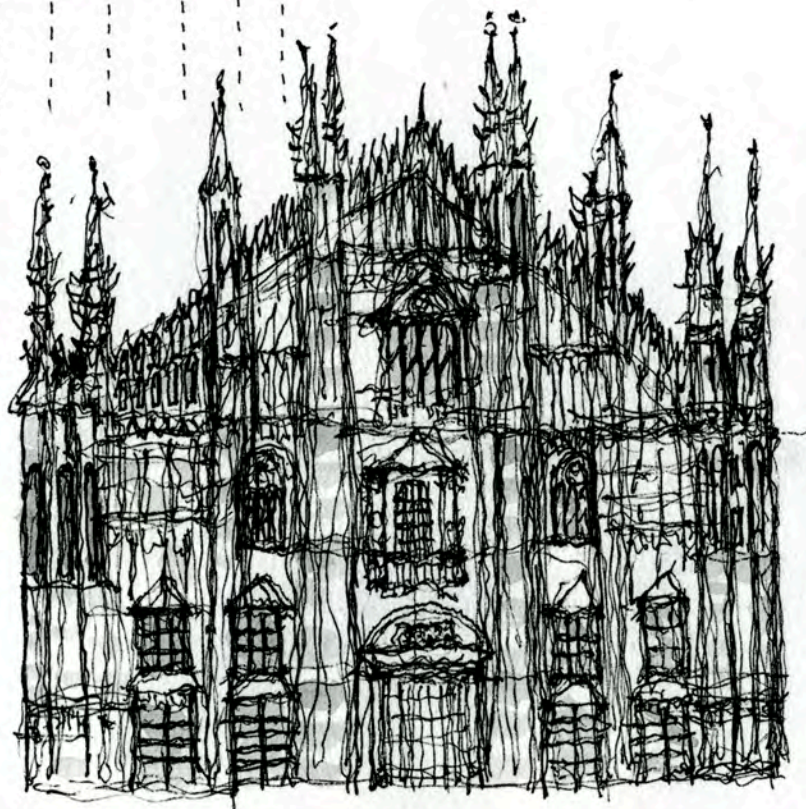
DUOMO: 15-03-15 MILAN, ITALY

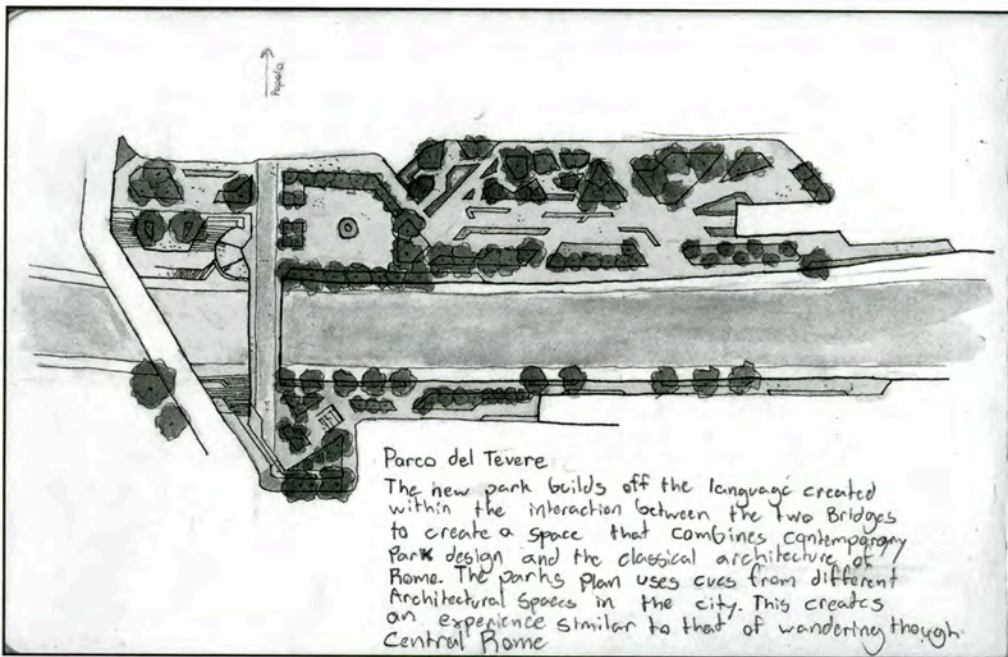
THERE IS A CONFUSING SENSE OF GOTHIC SEEN IN THIS CATHEDRAL EXECUTED BY ARCHITECTURAL ENGINEER VIOULET LE-DUC. THE PROPORTIONS ARE NOT TRADITIONAL GOTHIC. WINDOWS ARE 2 SQUARES STACKED, NOT THE TRADITIONAL 3. ALSO THE OGIVAL ARCHES MEET AT A MUCH ROUNDER POINT THAN TRADITIONAL POINT. HERE WE HAVE MORE OF A NEO-CLASSICAL COMBINED WITH GOTHIC, CREATED AN ALMOST NEO-GOTHIC STYLE. A MIXTURE OF BARBICUS + ANGER, FLAMBOYANT - JOHN RUSKIN



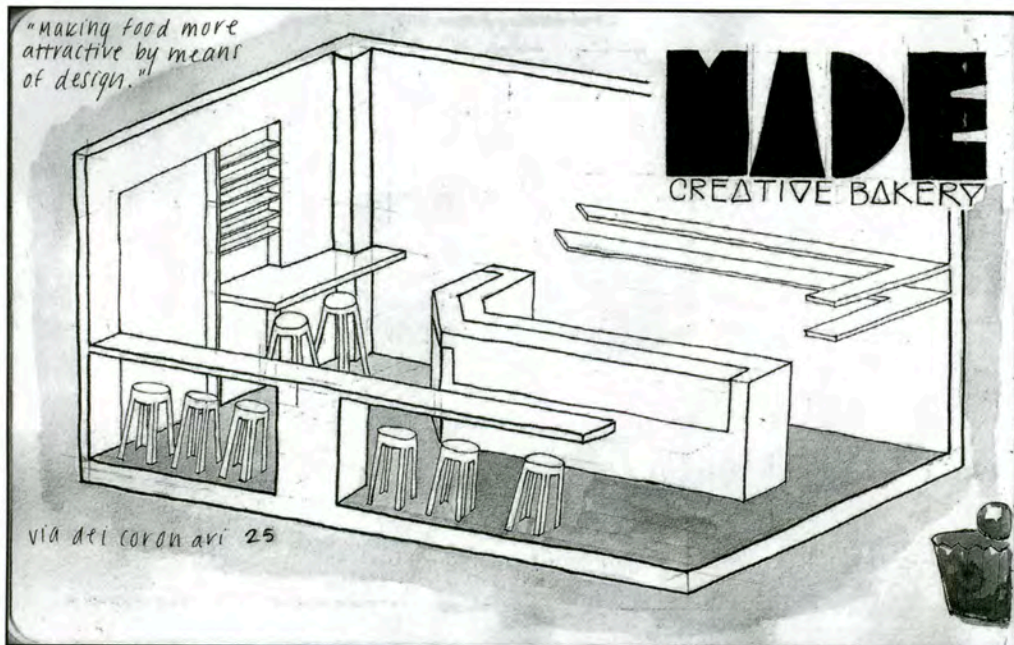
ALTHOUGH VERY GEOMETRICAL IT ISNT OF THE TRADITIONAL GOTHIC PROPORTIONS.

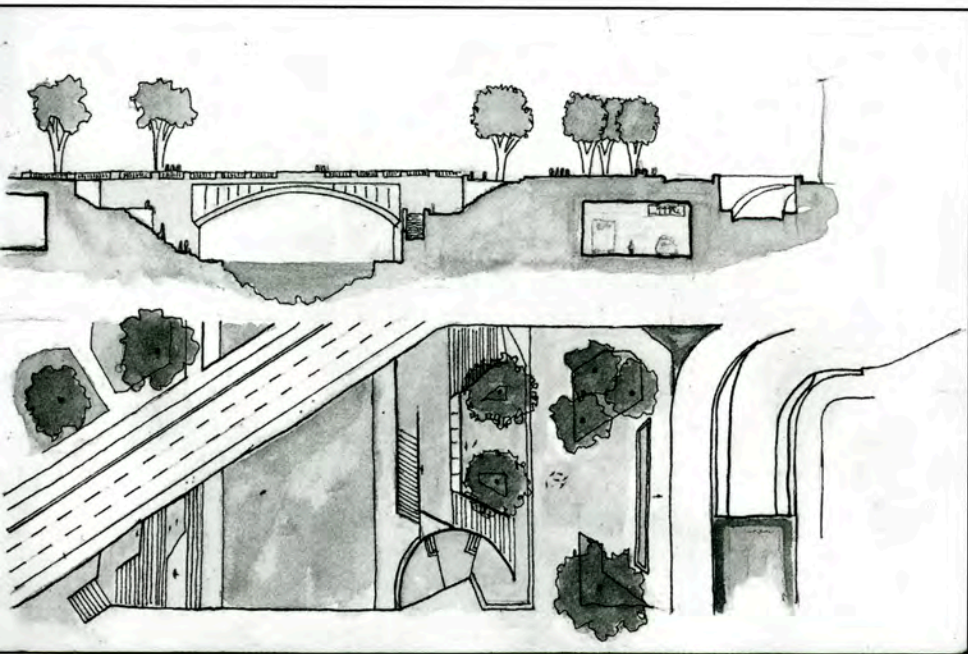
THE ARCHTRAVES OF THE WINDOWS ARE MORE IN THE STYLE OF NEOCLASSICAL





A Plan of Parco del Tevere, Rome [Ned Pressman]





An Analysis of a Roman Bakery [Tori Haynes]

The program operates the same way as a typical Italian cafe or "bar"

- STAFF
- CUSTOMER SEATING
- MOVING + STANDING CUSTOMERS
- ORDER + PAY

owned and operated by Francesca Tolino and Laura Freda

display made entirely of small crafted cakes in bright colors that create an interesting juxtaposition with the street

Representative of contemporary tourism

unique, well designed space for Rome

The storefront operates like a typical Italian bar but the company tackles much more in the field of new design and new cooking.

25

Morning Commute

close the door, lift the handle “click” the door locked

watch my step on the uneven surface

old neighbor on his bike stares curiously in my direction

Bigot de Préameneu, scan Korrigo card tan brick buildings
pass by, stop, Gare the sun is rising in the distance

Charles de Gaulle, stop! walk to the metro

metro chime, familiarity Republique, professionals descend
Sainte Anne, smells of fresh croissants Anatole France,
Pontchaillou

22 minutes later on a good day, Villejean-Université

finally

—*Jessica Bishop*



The Small Town of Honfleur in Normandy, France [Cydney Chibnall]
Eilean Donan Castle in Scotland [Gabrielle Zafonte]



The Smiling Man on the Sidewalk

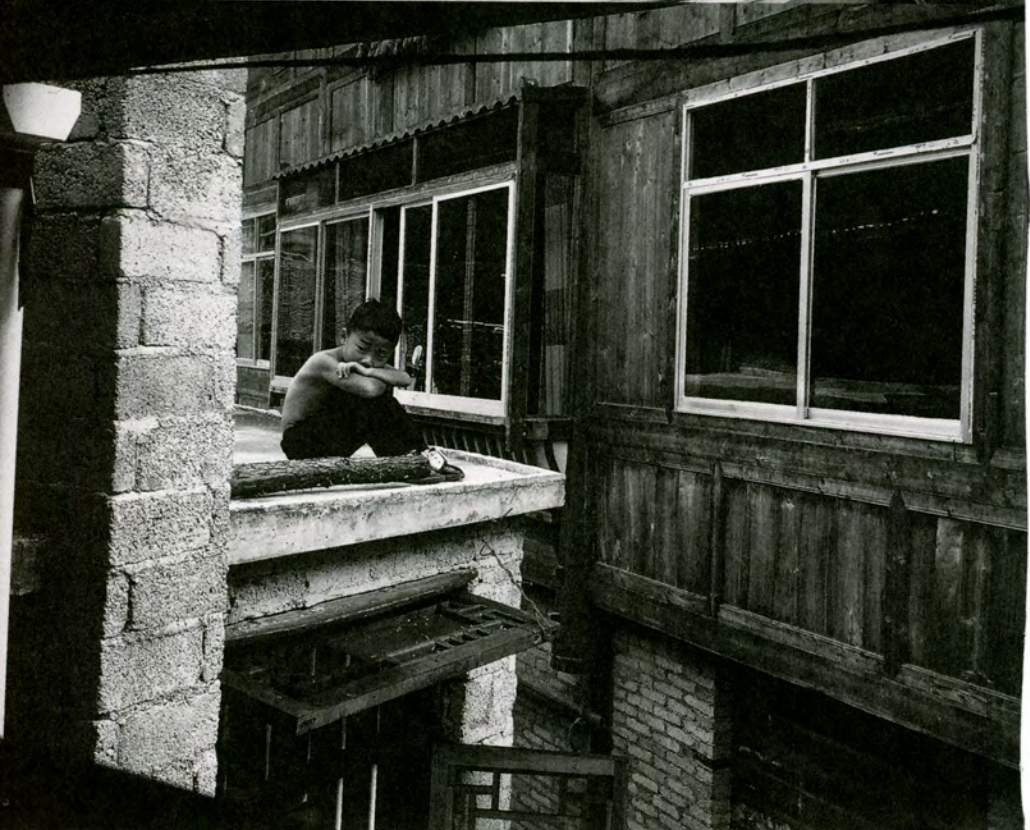
防台防汛物资
不得擅自挪用

一家市品時戰顯系平
支持包輸 品物財軍 業商品美 品

how street photography
impacted my term abroad



photos and story by Kian Nowrouzi





While Shanghai was the destination of my Fall term abroad, Dubai is where I started my journey. As I walked the streets, I was dazzled by the high fashion and luxurious lifestyles of the people inhabiting the incredible city. Soon, however, I started to feel a sense of monotony, even as I saw the world's biggest this and tallest that. While I could appreciate the beauty in the structures the city had to offer, I still felt like something was missing.

The first photograph I took on my four-month trip was in Dubai's Old Souk. Of course, I had taken several pictures of many different things I'd seen but to me a picture is much different than a photograph.

I was in Dubai's Old Souk when I saw a man sitting on the sidewalk. He was smiling into the distance, not at anything in particular, but as if he was thinking about something that made him happy. I had never photographed a stranger before then. It had never even crossed my mind. It seemed unethical. But I took the shot. And after seeing that I photographed him, the smiling man stood up, gave me a thumbs up, and walked away. I felt a feeling of connection that lingered for days after. To me, this is what separates a picture from a photograph. From that point on I started looking for these little moments, moments that had been passing me by for so long, moments like the one I had captured in the Old Souk. I discovered later on that the practice of photographing the public daily lives of others is called Street Photography. I was hooked.

What started as a single photograph became a four-month photography project that changed the way I see, and connect with, others. The ethos of street photography revolves around understanding people—documenting the human condition by photographing seemingly trivial daily encounters in a way that reveals just how meaningful they are.

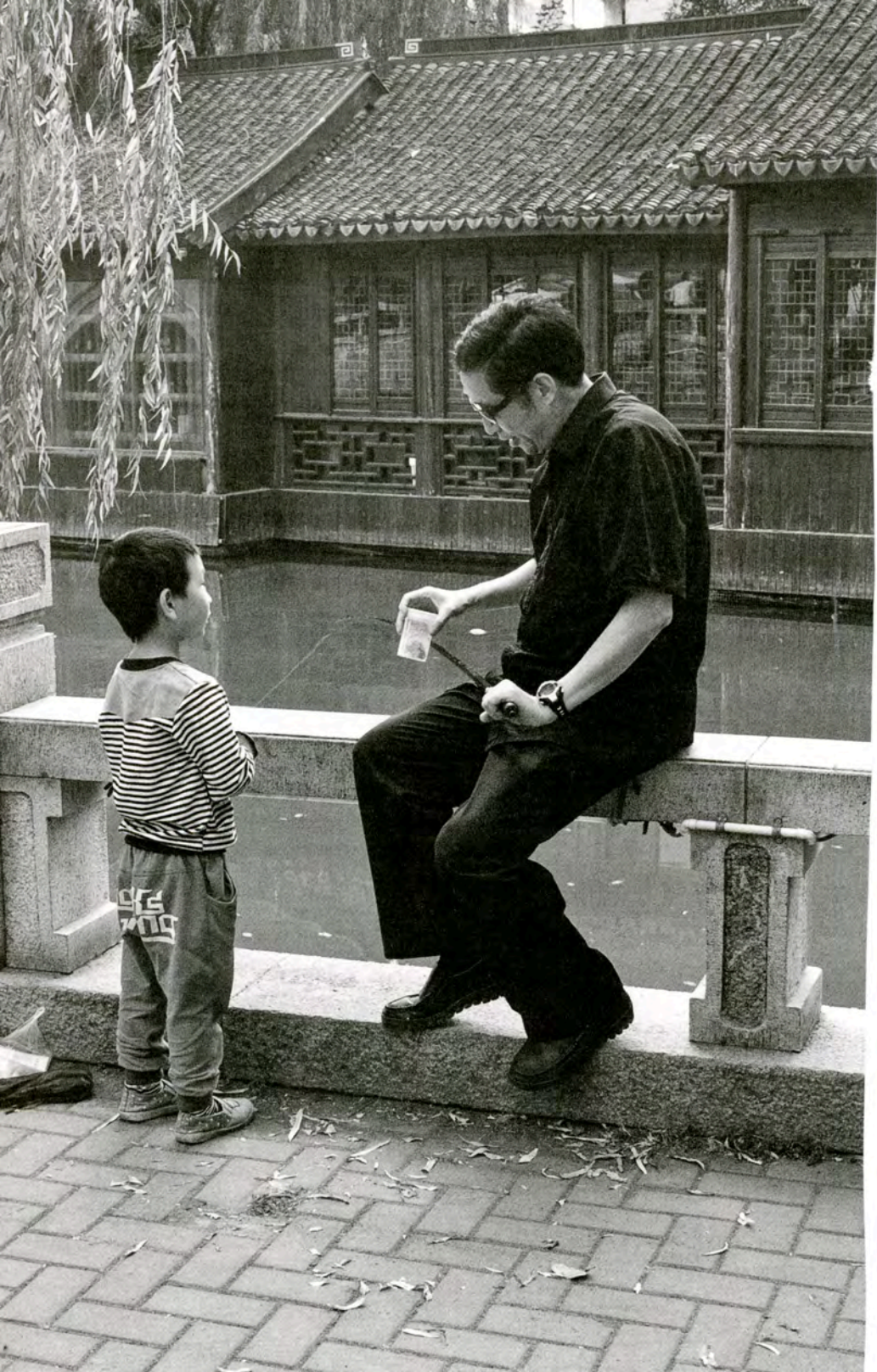
Even though the product of street photography is a photograph, it was the process of producing that image that gave me so much. My project pushed me to meet new people, travel independently, try new foods, and see new places. On these excursions, I would see a person who looked interesting to

me, walk up beside them and take their photo. In theory, one might expect to end up arrested or in the hospital but in practice, that never happened. While a few people were irritated, on the whole the subjects of my photographs smiled at me after they noticed I'd taken their photo and I would thank them, shake their hand and we would go our separate ways.

The simple interactions I had while photographing not only brightened up other people's days, but also my own. I found myself coming home after a few hours in the Shanghai streets feeling like I had made a difference. I had a sense of purpose. Street photography became my way of connecting to the people of Shanghai, and human connection is what is needed to understand another culture.

—Kian Nowrouzi















先男士 HOMMES



先男士 HOMMES





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What Eyes Can't See in Others

Introduction

"Hi, I'm Cam." I used this simple phrase to approach a variety of people while in Australia. Connected to the South Pacific by the Brisbane River, the city of Brisbane is located about twelve miles off the eastern coast of Australia. Beautiful bridges, both contemporary and aged, stretch across the river as it winds through towering skyscrapers and private homes. Locals claim that the waters are inhabited by bull sharks. On the world stage, Brisbane is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia and a main contributor to the country's economic growth. The weather is warm year-round, which explains the local addiction to going outside and being active. Everyone I met was physically active in some way.

As I enjoyed this intriguing place and studied at the University of Queensland, I went out of my way to meet as many people as I could for a profile project. Each profile included a picture and a few quotes or notes from our encounter. Time dependent, I gave people a chance to say whatever they wanted after I asked them a few general questions.

Derek

As I entered the Brown Bear Lounge, located in a strip of bars and restaurants nicknamed The Valley, I heard the crowd hush as a singer began to speak. Drumming pierced the silence. Everyone in the dimly lit bar swayed back and forth to the overpowering drum beat. As a fellow drummer, and being significantly shorter than most people in the bar, I made my way to the front to see the band for myself. After a few songs, the drummer hopped off the stage to get a drink. I introduced myself in my usual fashion and asked him if he would be able to talk after the show. He told me his name was Derek, and apologetically let me know that he would have to run to work right after he played. At about 12:30am, I couldn't

Colin Mues



Brett Monagan



Adam



Amelia Gorrie



Vijin



Mike Muhammad



imagine where he would be working or if was pulling my leg. Either way, I was able to get a few shots of him on the drums and enjoyed a great performance. I was disappointed that I didn't talk to him more, but I considered this a good start to my project.

Colin Mues

Colin Mues came to speak to my class about water policy in Australia. He is fifty years old and has lived in both Barham, New South Wales and Canberra, ACT (Australian Capital Territory). He is a public servant, currently working as General Manager of the Ecohydrology Analysis Branch of the Australian government. Colin had to get approval from the Australian government before passing on most of the following information. Colin has a graduate Diploma in Economics, and is dedicated to making a difference for Australian society through public policy. Given the chance to talk to the whole world for thirty seconds, Colin would say the following: "Evidence-based decisions should be the foundation of public policy-making. Finding a way through the different perspectives held by opposing interest groups needs a deep understanding of the issue, sound scientific and economic analysis of the problem and potential solutions, and the wisdom to understand the prevailing social values on the issue. Emotion or commitment to a cause is commendable, but emotion plus evidence is stronger."

Colin's greatest accomplishment: "Recovering more than 1,100 gegaliters of water for the environment in the Murray-Darling Basin through the management of the Australian Government water buyback program." 1,100 gegaliters is over 290 billion U.S. gallons.

Colin also wanted to share the following: "Never look at problems through a single lens. Yes, there will be science, which can help understand the problem and the solution, but there will be economic and social perspectives, too. Harnessing information from different (research) disciplines and integrating them to unearth an implementable solution is immensely rewarding."

Brett Monaghan

I met Brett Monaghan walking on the streets of Milton, the suburb I lived in, just outside of Brisbane. Brett is thirty-seven and has lived in Melbourne, Gold Coast, Dunedin, and Brisbane. He is currently a flight attendant for Virgin Australia Airlines and has his commercial boat skipper qualification. His inspiration is a tennis player named Greg Norman. Brett's biggest accomplishment is winning the bronze medal at the Nottingham '99 World Dragonboat Championships. Brett gave me two quotes. "Life is one big adventure; make new roads and enjoy the ride. Be nice and considerate to one another" and "Treat others the way you would like to be treated. Love your family 110%." Through my brief conversation with Brett, I was given the impression that he lived by these words.

Adam

I met Adam on the South Bank of Brisbane. The South Bank is a cultural strip with a public beach, restaurants, museums, and stages. Adam works for Circus Down Under. I first approached him while he was doing some impressive moves on his balance board on a corner. Then he started telling jokes while juggling fire. After his show, Adam told me that it is tough to make a living doing circus stunts on the street because the vast majority of people clap and leave without giving him money. Adam has been doing better recently due to the increased traffic of people from the upcoming G20 conference in Brisbane.

Amelia Gorrie

Amelia Gorrie is twenty-three years old and moves every two years to a different location in Australia. She is a manager at a men's clothing store and has a diploma in beauty therapy, nursing, and visual merchandising. If given the chance to talk to the world for thirty seconds, she would say the following: "Get over yourselves! You are not the most important person

in the world. If we live and love everyone else the same as ourselves or more than ourselves, then we wouldn't have the same problems that we have today and that have happened in the past." She also wanted to share this message: "Please be open-minded when people share their stories, love everyone a tremendous amount, and don't forget that somebody somewhere needs the advice that you have to give no matter how insignificant it may seem to you!"

Mike Muhammad

I met Mike Muhammad at the Royal Exchange Hotel, an old hotel that had been turned into a bar with live music. Mike spoke briefly about how he was injured in a war fighting for Australia. His quote was simply: "Fuck war." Mike did not want to include any other details in his profile.

Vijin

I met Vijin right before he caught a train 100 kilometers (62 miles) north to the Sunshine Coast. Vijin came to Brisbane alone for a heavy metal concert. I met him as he separated from a sea of fans with interesting haircuts and black jeans. He told me that he worked in "IT, like with computers," and loved his job. He was in a hurry and after a short chat about music he told me: "Just got out of the concert, but I gotta catch a train up the coast . . . rock on, man."

Greg Leahy

As I entered a classroom in search of my lost computer charger, fifteen hours before a final paper was due, I bumped into a junior at the University of Queensland who was early for his class. This accounting major named Greg Leahy has lived in Brisbane his whole life. He gave me the following quote: "It's all about the hard work and this calculator right now, mate." Greg also mentioned that he wanted to travel the world once he made his money.

Jeremy Neale

I went to the Archive, which I would describe as a relaxed, college bar, but where the walls are peppered with excerpts from comic books and random paintings. Upon entering, I overheard a few conversations about “Uni,” Australian for “university.” The bar was filled with every archetypal Australian college student I could imagine: the rugby jocks, the artists, the people who dropped out of “Uni” to pick up a trade because they could only spend a few grand on tuition, and many others. It was obvious who I would approach next; at over two meters tall (6.5 feet!), Jeremy Neale was a rugby player, and he did not let me forget it. At twenty-four, he was done playing the sport, but Jeremy still loved rugby more than anything. After seeing a girl get mad at her presumed boyfriend because he accidentally spilled a drink on her, Jeremy was quick to tell me about his take on people’s actions in life. Jeremy told me “It is not who you are, it is what you do. If everyone did their one thing and was great at it, people would have much less worry.” I agreed and said that a person’s actions say much more about them than their words, hoping to keep him calm. I was glad to have had a deep conversation in which I did not disturb the large man in any way, so I quickly changed the subject to how rugby and football are both great sports. Jeremy and I finished our conversation while watching a rugby game and comparing Australian rugby players to NFL players in the United States.

Rolls Bayce

The second person I met at the Archive was Rolls Bayce. This architecture major was interested in speaking about American culture because he was interested in visiting in the future. When I asked for a quote from Rolls, he told me “It’s all about what the people see. The outside matters, the last layer of paint, dude.” He explained that there are a lot of problems that must be overcome when designing a building in the real world, but not many are seen, as the beauty of architecture is normally seen from the outside.

Greg Leahy



Rolls Bayce

Jeremy Neale



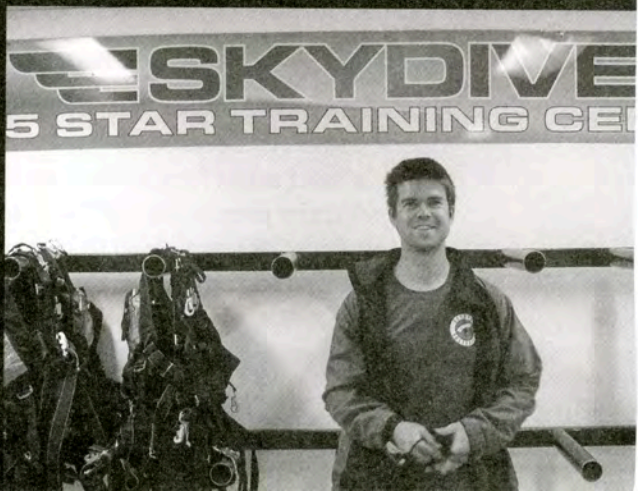
Chanssie Floyd

Avishay Biton



Read Mackay

Sam



Chanssie Floyd

Chanssie Floyd is fifty-four and has lived in three places in Australia: Sydney, Brisbane, and Adelaide. Chanssie is the Regional Retail Manager at a small pottery store in Brisbane. She is inspired by her son, who recovered from a deadly disease. Chanssie wanted to say the following to anyone who would listen: "We need to stop and think. Greed is taking over the major players, whose greed is about their own power. This handful of mega-managers have the power to save so many lives but choose only to feed their own greed. Shame on the . . . You can't escape death; only what you do with life counts."

Avishay Biton

I traveled south from Brisbane to Byron Bay for a weekend. It was the most beautiful beach I have ever seen. On the northern side, there was a silhouette of mountains and on the southern side, there was a lighthouse sitting on the top of a large hill. The night my friends and I spent in Byron, we came upon a van full of lights and a few people dancing to what seemed to be nothing. We approached the van and learned that a silent rave was taking place in the area and we could rent headphones that would send us music from the van. Avishay Biton, the owner of the van, explained how the headphones have three options of music to listen to and how the music that you choose would light up your headphones with a different color so you could see what other people were listening to. Avishay's quote is "Those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music." My friends and I enjoyed dancing around the beach as the lighthouse illuminated the night.

Read Mackay

I did not plan on interviewing anyone else at the Archive until I met this Brisbane local. At sixty-five years old, Read Mackay surprisingly did not stand out too much from the

crowd, as he was dressed similarly to the young people who surrounded him. Read told me that he loved coming to the Archive because the college students kept him young. Read gave me two quotes, because, he said, he was over twice the age of the most of the people in the bar. "You are responsible for your own actions. Beyond that, it does not matter." He explained that the only thing you can control in this world is what you do. He elaborated on this point by clarifying that moments where you learn something new or are totally overtaken are what have made life worth living for him. His second quote intends to clarify this: "Life is about what makes you go *ohhhh*." Read said that the best moments of his life were the times when he learned something new and was overcome by emotion.

Sam

I went skydiving in Redcliffe, the home of the band *The Bee Gees*, on the coast just north of Brisbane. Sam was my skydiving guide. I had a conversation with him on the plane ride up to our jump. Sam told me that he "loves being a skydiving instructor, but like every job it has its ups and downs." I chuckled at his pun, but he said that he was serious. Sam is currently saving money and taking classes to work in a biology laboratory in a few years. Sam taught me that just because people have high-level degrees doesn't mean that they can't also jump out of airplanes at 14,000 feet.

Kevin James Anthony Graham

I met Kevin James Anthony Graham early in the morning as he was dropping off newspapers. I carried his newspaper holder for a few streets as he told me about his life. Kevin was born in 1945, and spoke about how he sees technology as a weapon that can help people in a lot of ways, but hurt people in many more. He misses the days when there was only radio. Kevin was born and raised in Spring Hill, where he gained a

passion for racehorses and sports. Kevin was also proud of his Swedish-Irish-Australian ethnicity. As he dropped off the paper to the house I was staying in, he told me, “Don’t rush through life; you’ve got plenty of time to get there.”

Conclusion

As I looked for a way to sum up all of these snapshots of people’s lives, I found that there is an underlying message beyond their specific responses to my questions. From the politically successful Colin Mues to the simple life of Kevin James Anthony Graham, each one of these people took time out of their lives to talk to me. After plenty of rejected interviews, usually from girls who would tell me that their boyfriend played rugby and was twice my size, I found out how rewarding throwing myself into new social situations could be. I also found that the people that respond to you are usually the ones you want to talk to, anyway. This experience opened my eyes to the power of a small phrase to change the course of a person’s life. So as I end this entry, I would like to introduce myself: Hi, I’m Cam. Please do not be afraid to do the same to me or anyone that you see in your daily life. Your conversation just might show you the world in a way that you would otherwise have missed.

—Cameron Benoit

Reflections on Food

December 11, 2014

While studying in Rome, I experienced the way that food influences Italian culture. In general, Italians prioritize two things: food and family. In Italy, eating is an activity unto itself. In the middle of the day everyone stops and takes a break called *la pausa* to eat lunch and rest. This also applies to school lessons, because students are not allowed to eat in classrooms. Work and food are separate things, and *la pausa* allows Italians to stop, refuel, and recharge for the rest of the day. In America, people often work through lunch or even have meetings while they all quickly eat lunch in a conference room. This would strike an Italian as unhealthy for both the body and the mind.

Ordering authentic Italian food or coffee “to go” does not exist in Italy. Unless, of course, you stop at American Takeaways. This is because Italians take time to enjoy their food and drink their coffee seated outside in the sunshine with a friend, or standing at the bar making general conversation with whomever happens to be next to them. Servers at bars and restaurants often have their regular customers and start preparing their usual orders the minute the customers walk in. This was similar to my experience while living in Prati for 4 months. The bar below my apartment makes delicious cappuccino. We all got to know the server, Giacomo, very well because we got our morning coffee there so frequently. Giacomo knew that we American girls could rarely handle a typical Italian espresso shot, and therefore got the milk ready when he saw us coming. As we drank our coffee standing at the bar, we often spoke to him about our experience in Rome, trying to practice our Italian. This type of relationship would not be possible if we ordered coffee in a cardboard cup with a lid to sip as we rushed off to class.



A Dinner in Rome, Italy [Shelby Chase]

Eating while on the go is very popular in American society. Americans often find it necessary to snack or eat quickly while running out the door due to the fast-paced lifestyle in many areas of the United States. However, these 'snacks to go' are often processed and pre-packaged foods which are unhealthy but convenient. Americans will readily grab whatever is available and quick, placing no value in the quality of the food. Italians, however, rarely snack because they make time to eat nutritious and fresh food. This is one of the reasons why Italians can eat so much pasta and pizza without gaining weight. The quality of the food is higher, and most fruits and vegetables come from local stands with fresh produce. The grocery stores are often very small, only allowing a few different large companies to sell their products inside. This also helps to keep a high product quality.

This slow-paced eating also occurs at Italian restaurants. The waiter takes an order when the customer first sits down and then leaves the table alone unless called over. He or she will never ask if the customer is ready for the check, and fully

expects them to stay there for many hours enjoying their meal. Furthermore, after eating a meal, no Italian would ask the waiter to take their leftovers home in a bag or box. In fact, it would be considered very rude to leave anything on the plate. This is most likely the case because Italians sit and eat for so many hours that there is typically not any food left!

After spending nearly four months in Italy, it is clear that the absence of drive-throughs, and the rarity of to-go food, affects the culture in a positive way. Taking the time to stop and eat allows people to socialize and relax. Many Americans are too rushed to stop and have a full meal. Parents stop at drive-throughs to get cheap and quick meals for their children on the way to sports practice, or heat up convenient frozen dinners when they get home late from work. Many families rarely find time to all sit down together and enjoy a lengthy and high-quality meal together.

The way Italians prioritize food also works to reinforce family bonds. Italians are traditionally very family-oriented. This is most likely because preparing and eating food together creates strong family connections. Many bakeries, wineries, and farms have been passed down through generations of family members. Therefore, the original techniques and recipes are taught and replicated year after year. These types of family traditions are one reason why the quality of food is consistently so high. The recipes are replicated again and again, keeping the same standard for that food. This was something that I saw many examples of during the excursions for our food and culture class. The families have a sense of pride for their specialty foods that they have been producing for generations. The parents enjoy teaching their children their ways, and passing down their special methods so that the traditions are not lost. Spending time cooking together also brings the family members closer together. This is certainly the case for my own Italian family. When my Grandmother teaches me how to make a new dish, we enjoy spending time together preparing and cooking the food.

Overall, taking the time to create and eat good food has a very positive influence on Italian society. Stopping work to take a lunch break, sitting and eating for long periods of time at restaurants, and cooking with family members all contribute to this food culture. These factors are also why Italy has some of the best food in the world. Italians put care, time, and love into their cooking and invest in high-quality ingredients. Food is an art form in Italy, and is given priority and value. To Italians, eating is an enjoyable and distinct event, not purely a daily necessity squeezed into a busy day. This creates a nation of overall happy and healthy people, with lower stress and obesity rates than America. Therefore, taking the time to eat high-quality food is beneficial for personal well-being as well as family and social relationships.

—Chiara Favaloro

Overlooking the Sea from the Island of Capri [Christian Honan]



Silenced or Building Confidence?

Many situations involved silence: silence on the train, in my room, walking down the street. But it wasn't actually silent. There was so much more than silence. There were cars in the street, other people on the train, my host siblings in the other room. The silence was mine. It was a representation of what I felt like in the world of France. I felt like I had to learn how to talk again, like I was a baby learning how to speak for the first time. I had to muster up the courage to say anything.

So for a while, I was silent. Silently experiencing, silently struggling, silently missing home, but still silently loving everything I was learning. And then I went hiking in Cinque Terre, Italy, a beautiful collection of five coastal towns. At one point we got lost and needed help finding our way. We stopped a man and asked for directions in English. He immediately called over his wife to translate by saying "*Peux-tu parler en Anglais avec ces filles?*" Realizing they were French, I said "*Ça va, ça va! Nous parlons en Français!*" We continued the conversation in French and they complimented our abilities, asked us where we were studying, where we were from. It was most satisfying to impress French people with my French language abilities.

That moment, the silence was broken. I realized that all I had been working for was finally coming together. Not only was I 'surviving' in France, but I actually was able to actively live and experience Europe better by knowing two languages. Upon returning back home, to Rennes, the silence vanished. I heard myself, and others heard me. I even started dreaming in French.

—Jessica Bishop



Matthias Church in Budapest, Hungary [Colleen Moore]

April 12, 2015: Reggio Calabria

I'm currently on a plane from Roma Fiumicino Airport to Reggio di Calabria. The flight is a little over an hour, and when I land I will be in the region where my great-grandfather, Lorenzo, was raised. Most of my relatives have moved to Northern Italy. However, there is still one family, the Clemenzis, here in the South. I've been in contact with a distant cousin named Angela and she has helped me plan out my weekend in Calabria. I'm still not certain as to what I will be doing, besides getting to know her and her parents, and the region known as Calabria, but I'm excited.

I land in the airport and we file out of the plane and onto the landing strip. This isn't the first time I've deboarded on the runway, but it is the first time I've had to walk from the plane to the airport without taking some type of a shuttle. As it turns out, the airport is so tiny that they only have about three flights a day. I'm not sure what exactly to expect as I walk through the baggage claim, but I soon spot a girl that looks a lot like the Facebook photos I've seen of Angela. She recognizes me as well and, smiling, gives me kisses on the cheeks, with her father in tow.

We get to know each other over a meal that may be the largest I have ever eaten. We have lasagna, chicken and roasted potatoes, Macedonia (fruit salad), chocolate muffins, chocolate candy, and assorted cheeses. I have never been so full in my life, but it is all amazing. Angela's parents are retired teachers, and they are both so kind. They own a garden in Bova Marina, where they grow some of the food that we eat for lunch and you can tell how proud they are of the quality of their produce.

After lunch, Angela and her dad take me to check into the bed and breakfast. After getting settled, Angela and I walk along the water and down *Corso*, the main street in Reggio di Calabria. We also meet up with two of her friends, Pasquale and Francesco, who just graduated from the local Architecture

University. We see all of the sites: Greek ruins displayed underneath a piazza, a historic castle, and the local cathedral.

We finish at 8 o'clock, which means dinner time. We head back to the Clemenzi house, where Paola has prepared yet another huge meal. I'm still a little full from lunch, but it seems rude to refuse food that my host worked so hard on. We have "fish hamburgers" (as they call the patties), corn, salad, assorted cheeses, the best ricotta in the world, chocolate muffins, Macedonia, and chocolate. We stay at their house for a while and they show us some old family photos, pointing out who is who, and then I show them the few family photos that I keep on my phone, wishing I was more prepared. As I leave, Paola is worried about what the bed and breakfast will have for breakfast, so she sends me off with a few chocolate muffins.

Saturday morning, I sleep in and then head downstairs for breakfast. They actually have a decent selection, but I stick with a cappuccino and muffin, since I know I'll probably be eating a lot later. Then we borrow bikes from the bed and breakfast and ride up and down the *Lungomare*, the strip of land on the sea that literally translates to "long sea." It is so



beautiful: there is a Greek statue, an amphitheater, a modern walking section, some stores, a few really cool modern sculptures, and you can see both Sicily and Mount Etna (a volcano) from there. After that we return to the Clemenzi house for lunch. Paola has made *pasta pomodoro* (tomato sauce), meat skewers that seem to be beef wrapped up in ham, assorted cheeses, Macedonia, the best cheesecake in the world (for Paola's husband's birthday), and chocolate. Then they serve coffee liqueur. I speak Italian at the table because I feel bad when Angela's dad does not understand what is going on, and I hope that my Italian is bearable.

After lunch we hang out in Angela's room and talk about the American and Italian cultures. It is really interesting to learn more about growing up in Italy and what it's like going to school here. Then we go to a museum to see the Ancient Greek bronze statues that were discovered in the sea off the coast. They are extremely well preserved and extra interesting because I have actually studied them in class before. After the museum, we meet up with Angela's friend again and go to a small town called Scilla (pronounced "Sheila"). It is on the beach and its small houses are built close together. There is a castle on a rock ledge and a spectacular vista view. We arrive at a little section of Scilla, called Chianalea, which consists of a narrow alley between buildings with small passageways that occasionally reveal the sea. Pasquale keeps pointing out how romantic the place is, making us all laugh.

We eat dinner at a pizzeria that is famous for its Naples-style (Neopolitan) pizza. It was amazing! We order four different kinds (in Italy everyone orders a single-serving pizza) and then we cut them into fours and pass the pieces around so that we can all try each flavor. We sample *margherita* (plain cheese), lasagna (ricotta and speck), a spicy one with capicola and peppers, and one with potatoes, but the lasagna one is my favorite. We also order these little things called *pizzelle*, which are basically fancy pizza rolls. They come as an appetizer with one of each in three flavors: ricotta and ham, sardines and cheese, and tomatoes and cheese. They are pretty good as well, though I'm not a fan of sardines.

After dinner, we meet up with two more of Angela's friends, Francesco and Martina. We spend the night walking along *Corso* and *Lungomare*. It is pretty cold, but we stay out till almost 1am. I finally feel like I am experiencing Italian culture, and we talk about the differences between our two countries. We also talk about how to say phrases in English and they ask me how many words I know in Italian. I tell them (in Italian) that I can't speak very well, to which Angela insists she heard me speaking Italian with her parents and that I'm good. She is mostly being nice and later tells me that she understands all of my Italian. Francesco drops me off at the bed and breakfast; I shower and go right to sleep.

The past two days Pasquale has been trying to convince me to try ice cream from "the best ice cream place in the world," a place called Sottozero (below zero). I had always been too full, but I agree to try it before I leave. So, Sunday morning I wake up and have a cappuccino and then meet Angela and Pasquale at Sottozero around 11. We try two flavors and it is actually really good! In Reggio, eating gelato is a sit-down affair, and the gelato itself is different than in Rome. It has a softer texture but feels heavier. Pasquale insists that we have to come back in the summer to try more flavors. I try to buy the gelato since they bought me dinner last night but they tell me it would be an offense to them if I pay. I am not sure if this is true or not, thinking it could be like in America where people fight over who pays, but I don't want to offend anyone so I let it go.

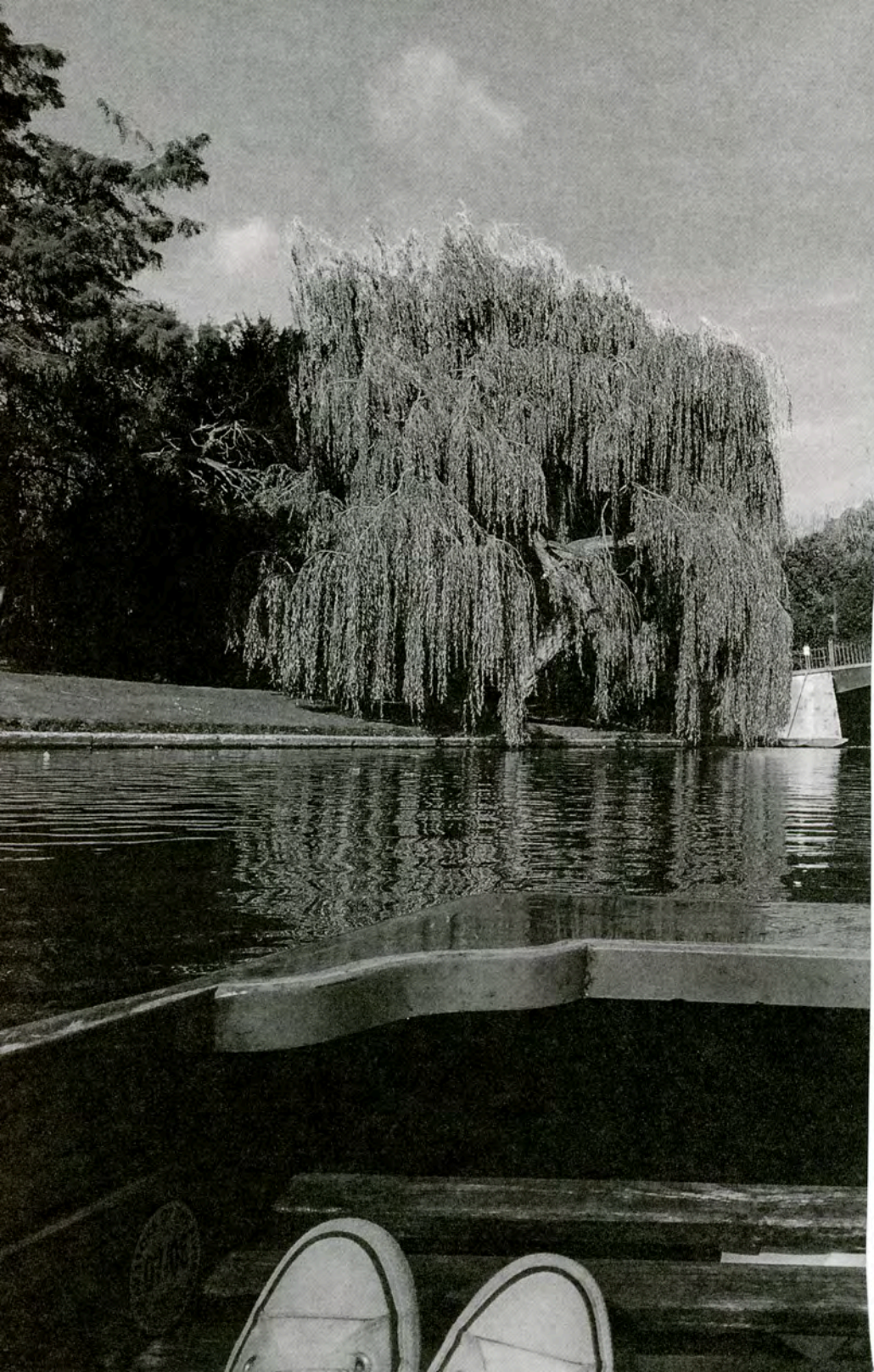
After gelato, we walk around and I tell them the phrases and gestures that I know in Italian, and they teach me new ones. It is so much fun laughing with Angela and her friends. We go back to Angela's parents' house for lunch. We have *pasta pomodoro con polpette* (meatballs), pasta with tuna, mayonnaise, and tomatoes, "white meatballs" (meatballs without sauce and with potatoes), assorted cheeses, Macedonia, chocolate, and the fantastic cheesecake again. They ask if my family makes meatballs at home and I tell them about my dad's recipe but I'm not sure how they taste so different. These are so much



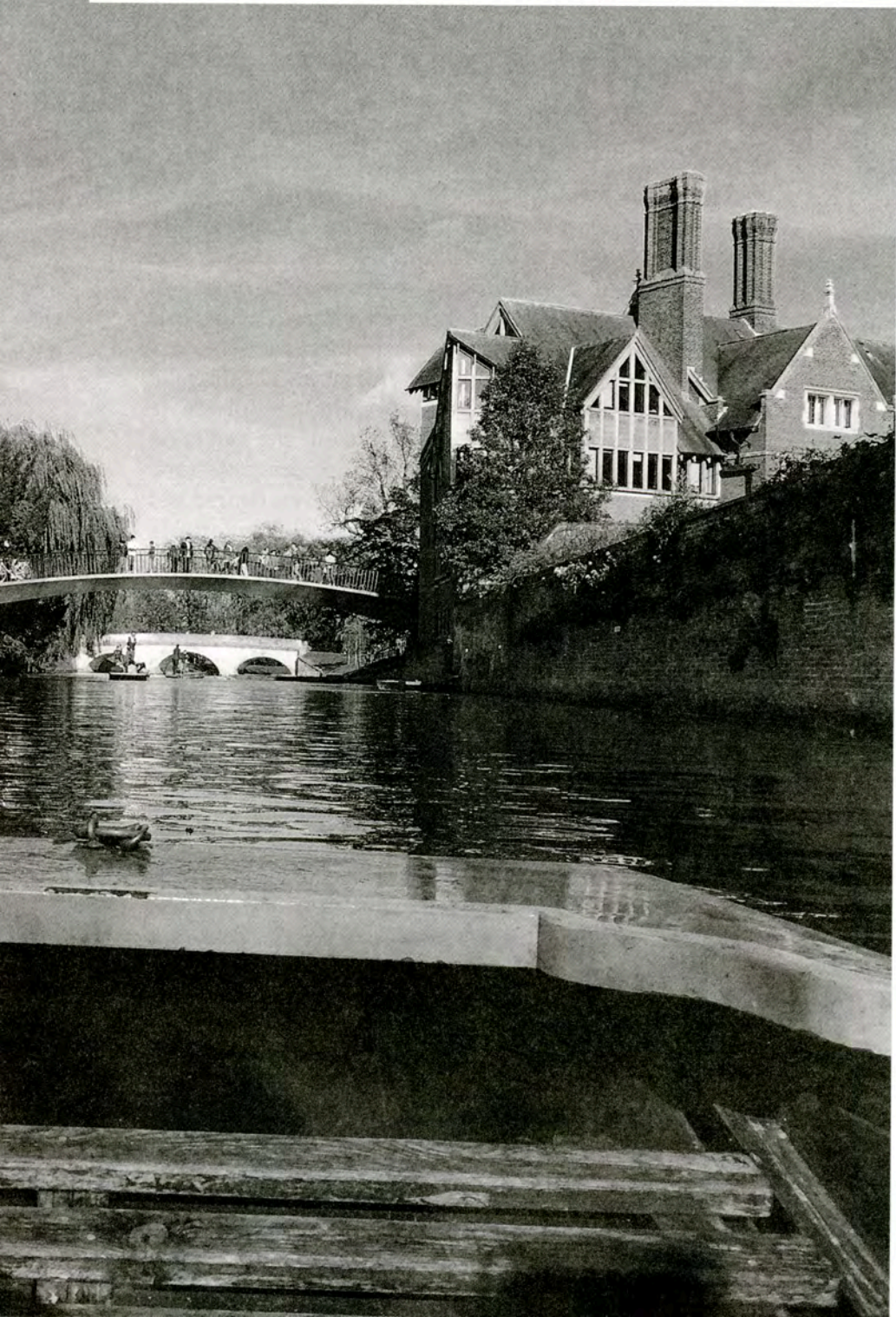
softer and seem to stick together better (No offense, Dad!). After lunch, we have the coffee liqueur again, which they only bring out for guests and special occasions. The Clemenzi family has been wonderful to me, and I have loved this weekend so much! It is sad saying goodbye to them, back in the tiniest airport I have ever been to. My flight is one of only two this day. Of course, it ends up being delayed, so the whole family sits with me for a few hours and we continue to talk about our different lives. When the plane finally arrives, it is so difficult saying goodbye. But I tell myself it's really a "See you soon."

—Bridget Callea





Relaxing on the River Cam in Cambridge, England [Shelby Chase]



A Lunar Eclipse and a Lot of Tucker

Tuesday October 7th

This past Tuesday we headed out to Girraween National Park for the last excursion of our Terrestrial Ecology course. The word “Girraween” is an aboriginal word, meaning ‘planet of flowers.’ The word “planet” is Greek for wanderer. Girraween is located in the Granite Belt of Queensland; there were boulders everywhere, and lots of eucalyptus trees (typical “Australia Bush” landscape). After our bus ride over the Great Divide we reached the campground. We pulled into our site and in no time had the entire camp set up. Our tents, our professors’ tents and the food tents were up, and we even figured out how to set up the little cots that would be more comfortable than sleeping on the ground . . . or so they said!

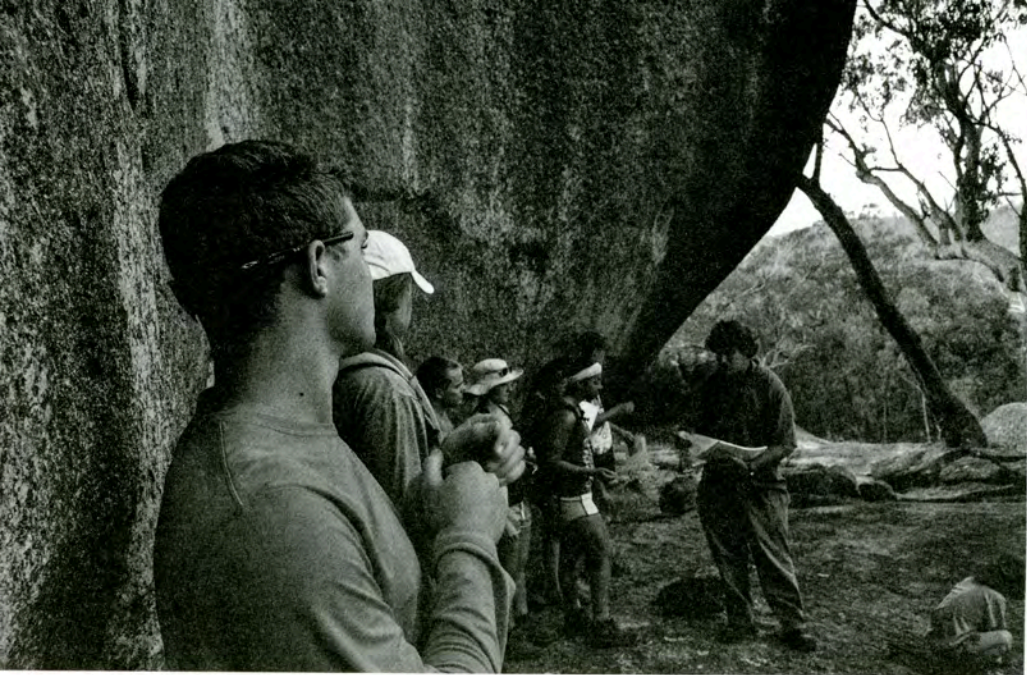
After setting up camp, it was time for fieldwork. We got back on the bus and made our way to the Underground Creek trailhead. We hiked into the namesake creek, up and over the rocks, to the neighboring forest. A forest diagram and yabby capture activity were on the schedule for the day. What is a yabby? A yabby is a small creature similar to what we know as a crayfish. By the time we were done I think everyone was ready to get out of the heat and head back to camp for some dinner. After counting off to make sure we hadn’t lost anyone, John (our professor) informed us that it was an Aussie tradition that your first dinner prepared by a new cook was to be eaten with your hands. After we were all served our steak and salads we found out that this wasn’t really the case, they just couldn’t locate the utensils among everything that was packed in the trailer! This made us get creative; rolls and cucumbers were the most helpful with this no-utensil dinner. Cucumbers made good shovel-like things to scoop up quinoa salad, and if you put the rest of your salad and steak on a roll, it tasted pretty good. A perk of this no-utensil method: fewer dishes to wash.

Nobody wanted to have a lecture after dinner, and I guess it just wasn't meant to be. When we walked down to the ranger station we found the door locked. Being the innovative professor that he is, John decided that, since we had a full moon, we would walk down to part of the granite slab by the stream and do a reading exercise in the light of the full moon. Reading the text out of our field books without a headlamp wasn't even an issue with the light of the bright moon.

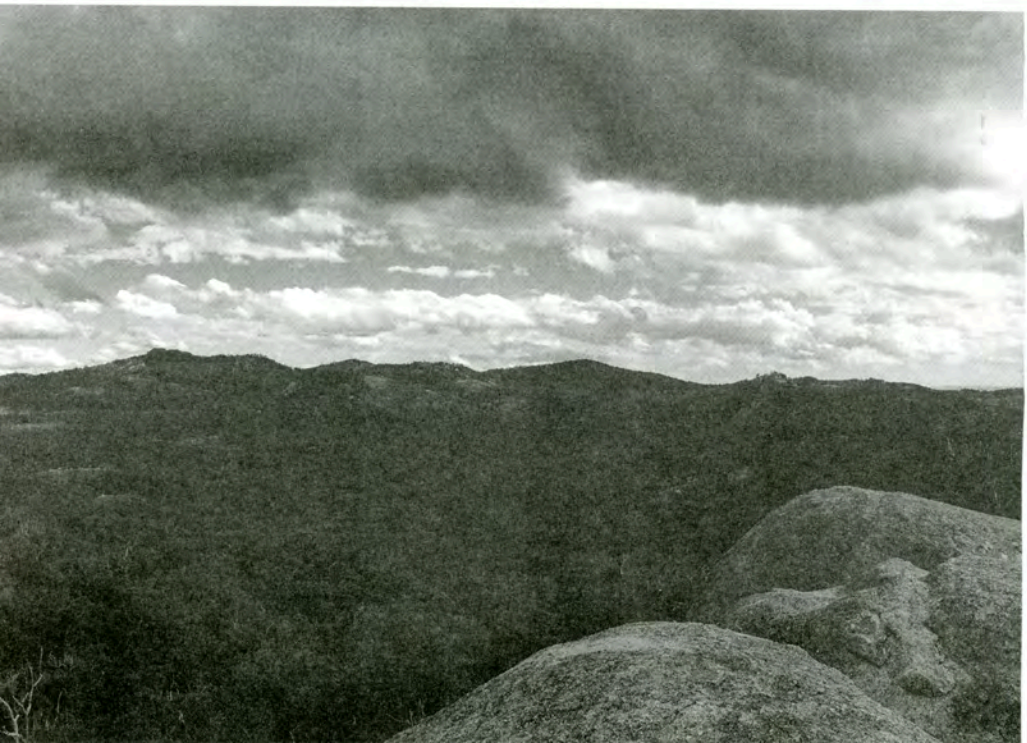
Wednesday October 8th

We started our daily routine the next morning: wake up, eat breakfast really fast, make lunch, have a lecture/tutorial, then head out for a day on the tracks (just another term for what we would call a trail). My group was scheduled to head off with the tutor to Junction Creek. What the day lacked in strenuous hiking was made up for by tedious fieldwork. I don't know if you have ever seen a Banksia plant but they are shrubby, and they are all over the place here. They have little cones on them that hold seed capsules. Counting the cones on an individual tree, and the seed capsules per cone, is quite the task. Think counting the kernels on a cob of corn, and then doing this for fifteen cobs of corn. When we had collected our data, we headed for a swimming hole, and then back to camp with a stop to observe some kangaroo behavior. By now we had experienced a handful of meals with our awesome chef Dwaine and realized that he made delicious food. Dessert was no exception! But while someone was getting their dessert they noticed that the color of the moon looked a little abnormal.

Once this was called to John's attention, he consulted with his almanac, and told us we were in for a treat. There was going to be a complete lunar eclipse, which occurs when the moon passes through the shadow of the earth. Before we could find a good place to watch it, we needed to hurry up and scarf down our dessert waffles. Then we headed out to a big opening between some boulders and watched the entire thing. The moon was in the earth's shadow for about an hour; it vaguely resembled a piece of pepperoni. During this period

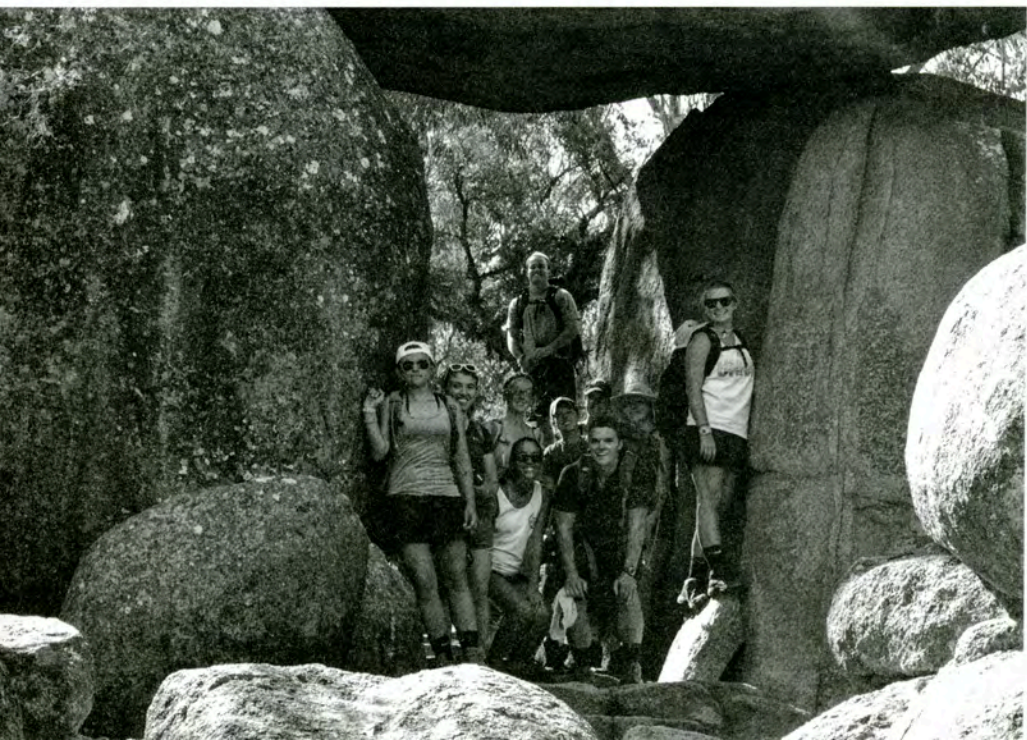


Professor Hall Hands Out Paper for Writing Letters
The View from the Top of The Pyramid





A Late Afternoon View of the Rock Formation Known as The Sphinx
A Group of Us under the Granite Arch [Keri Geiser]



of darkness, we had a brief astronomy lecture, while looking up at a sky full of stars.

After our informal lecture, a group of us stayed to appreciate the most spectacular stars we had ever seen, and the Milky Way running through them. I only thought such a starry sky was possible with a high-tech camera. We saw the Large Magellanic Cloud (a neighboring galaxy, only visible from the southern hemisphere) and Alpha Centauri (one of the closest stars, and third brightest in the night sky). The shooting stars, or meteors, were outrageous as well! There was one that was long enough for a few people to point it out and the rest of the group to spot it in time; usually they are too fast for this to happen. When the cold finally got the best of us and huddling together in the grass wasn't helping to keep us warm anymore, we called it a night and headed back to get some sleep.

Thursday October 9th

The morning started out at 5:30am with bird watching. A highlight of the bird watch was seeing an Eastern Rosella, a species that has stunning markings and vibrant red, yellow, blue, and green feathers (Google it!). Then we were off with John on our hike. As we started the trek up to Castle Rock, John pointed out a bull ant nest and proceeded to irritate them enough to get them to come out. We could see just how big they were, about an inch each! From the top of Castle Rock we could see The Sphinx and Turtle Rock (our next two stops). When we got to The Sphinx we were given a piece of paper and some time to sit in a special spot and write a letter to someone.

After our little break, we headed for Turtle Rock. We continued up the track until we reached a point at the bottom of Turtle Rock and a sign that read "end of track." John then told us our trip wouldn't be quite as fun if this was where we ended; he had received permission to take us off the track and part way up the rock to a point overlooking much of where

we had just hiked. After reading us a moving poem, he asked if we were up for one more adventure. Of course we were! We continued on and circumnavigated the rock, crawling through cracks and over boulders. We ended the day feeling a little like Indiana Jones.

Friday October 10th

My group lucked out, and got to have our free hike day on the last full day. This meant that after our typical morning routine we were headed off up the infamous Pyramid, a huge exposed granite rock. After scrambling up the side we took some pictures, did some exploring (we found an awesome cave), ate lunch and then headed back down. Tonight was the talent show: our hiking group brought back some bush dance moves from Lamington and ended it by making a pyramid. We then put our newfound knowledge to the test and attempted to sing the classic Australian song, *Waltzing Matilda*. We learned that a *swagman* is a hobo, a *jumbuck* is a sheep, and that *tucker* is a general word for food. Seeing as it was the last night, we didn't want to miss the opportunity to sleep out under the stars. We layered up in all the clothes we could and listened to a ghost story before curling up into our sleeping bags and crawling onto our cots.

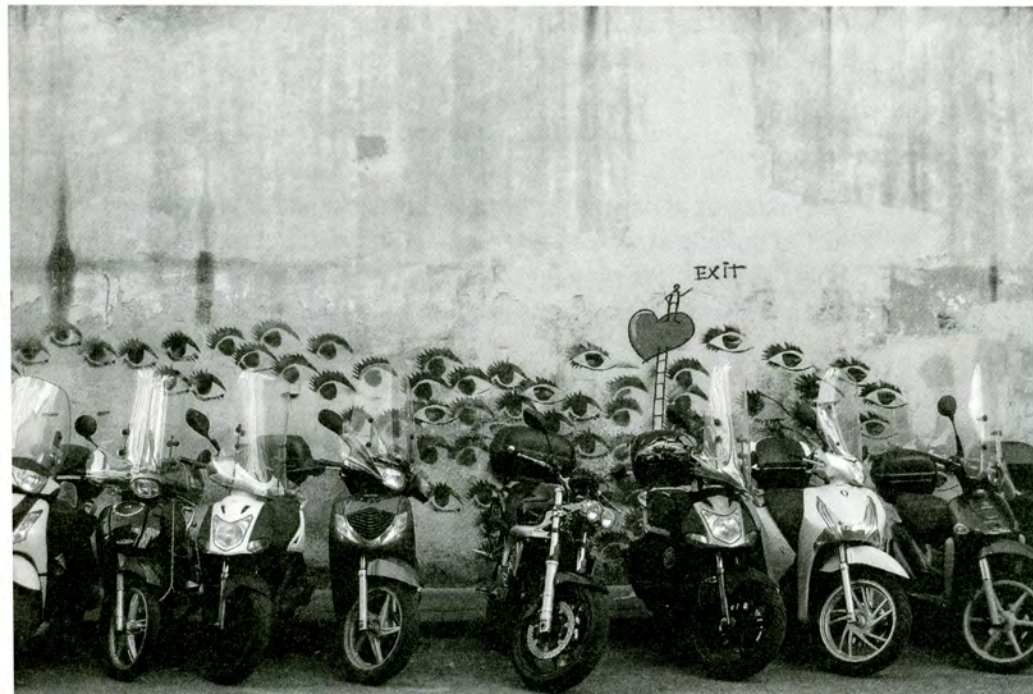
Saturday October 11th

Waking up at dawn to a chorus of birds, we packed up camp just as quickly as we had set it up, and headed out for a little final fieldwork. We zig-zagged back to Underground Creek for one last chance to trap some yabbies. It was a great excursion!

—Keri Geiser



Shadows and Walls, Florence, Italy [Alicia Smith]
Street Art in Florence, Italy [Janey Fine]





Nafplio, Greece [Jenna Corcoran]
Cape Town, South Africa [Tyler DeWaltoff]



Making Friends in Russia

It was about halfway through the sixty-hour train ride from Barnaul to Moscow that I found myself rifling through my notes and journal entries, which dated all the way back to pre-departure orientation. Among many packing lists and survival-Russian vocabulary sheets, I came across a list that sparked my attention:

1. Russians do not whistle indoors.
2. Russians do not smile at complete strangers.
3. Russians love flowers (side note: never give flowers in odd numbers, never give yellow flowers).
4. Russians believe that moving air is dangerous and unhealthy.
5. Don't talk about Obama, or Putin, or Ukraine, and definitely don't talk about LGBTQ social politics.
6. When asked who won the Great War (WWII), the answer is Russia.
7. Do not sit on things that aren't benches (side note for women: sitting on cold stones can cause infertility).
8. Do not compliment anything that can easily be given to you.
9. Do not leave the classroom in the middle of class.
10. Be nice to the cafeteria ladies.

I also found bits of advice from friends, family, and a few individuals who were convinced that a childhood of Cold-War propaganda had prepared them with the most vital and informative advice about spending a month in Siberia in July, 2015:

"Uh . . . so, where is Siberia?" My mother was not the only one to ask me this question, but she was the first. "Oh God, honey, you're going to freeze to death!" my mother's partner, Barbara, predicted. "Why?" asked almost everyone. "Is it safe?" . . . "Don't let anyone find out you're American!" . . . "Definitely buy the evacuation insurance," said my best friend Caroline. "Can you bring bear spray in your checked luggage?" asked my brother. I still don't know if he was joking.

I can't say I would have done better. I didn't have even the vaguest understanding of Russia, its people, or its culture



Horseback Riding in Siberia [Jim Prowse]

until long after I had been accepted into the Fulbright-Hays program. I had a very limited idea of the delicate political relationship our countries have shared since the Cold War. I had seen plenty of action movies with stereotypically evil Russian masterminds (I even had the accent down). I knew it got cold there. I knew there was vodka. And though I considered myself pretty well-traveled (for an American, that is), I still had the preconceived notion that Russians were far more alien than any other people I had ever met.

I mean, what kind of people don't like to whistle? My mind's-eye conjured gloomy, dirty streets through which roamed hard, unsmiling old men and tired, grim-faced women wearing long dresses with scarves tied to their heads. I imagined subdued, obedient youths trudging the streets with vaguely wild, mistrustful eyes. No one had fun in Russia. No one spoke English. No one liked Americans.

But I really wanted to learn some Russian. I knew it was a difficult language, and so I was prepared to struggle and hoping to get by. 'Get by' was a key phrase. I wasn't planning on making friends. I didn't think it would be possible.

Our first night in Barnaul dispelled many of these thoughts. We were welcomed to a huge dinner with traditional song, an offering of bread and salt, and endless toasts. It was during one particularly powerful toast, made by one of the university coordinators, Eduard, that I was able to truly grasp what this program meant to our Russian hosts: a means of gaining mutual understanding, of changing the way Americans and Russians viewed each other, and ultimately of establishing true and lasting connections with one another.

Walking the streets of Barnaul was nothing like what I had imagined before. There were no mistrustful glances because, as long as I kept my mouth shut, I blended right in. When I didn't, I wasn't met with any sort of hostility. Even when I tried to buy flowers or fruit from the local street vendors, I was never made to feel uncomfortable for not understanding what they said to me. When they realized that I could only really say "Excuse me, I don't speak Russian," they always gave me kind, understanding smiles and helpful gestures.

Exploring Siberia, Russia [Jim Prowse]



That is not to say there weren't moments when the linguistic and cultural barriers were hopelessly frustrating. I spent the first few days feeling "culture-shocked" and wondering how on earth I would ever get through six weeks of existing in this world where I never knew what was going on.

I was living in a perpetual haze of uncertainty and confusion. I was living amongst these people, yet they still seemed so distant.

That is, until I met Dasha.

Barnaul-born and raised and a student at the pedagogical university where we were studying, Dasha accompanied our group on excursions, serving as an interpreter and a cultural liaison. We were similar in age and both shared a passion for languages and literature. Even though I hadn't planned on making friends, Dasha became part of my daily life. After

Dasha and Her Fierce Siberian Dog [Jordyn Dezago]



classes, when I was too exhausted to study, Dasha would take me to a nearby café, or simply walk me down the back streets and through small parks in the city center, all the while quizzing and drilling me with vocabulary or grammar points. She would make up songs to help me memorize the days of the week. Her patience and dedication inspired the very best in me as a student.

Dasha was an old soul, one of those people that loved and lived in another era. She had an old Zenit camera that she lent to me to take photos of the places we visited on our excursions. She listened to classical music, watched old Russian films, and knew everything there was to know about the most popular Russian poets in history. She preferred to spend time with our tour guide and travel agent, Yelena, who always had a story or an old Altai legend to tell. Dasha would listen with careful eyes and a half-smile, which I always knew meant she was translating into English in her head, so she could retell them later herself.

Having spent time in the U.S., Dasha was not only aware of the linguistic and cultural differences that made it so difficult for me to connect with my surroundings, but more importantly, she had an appreciation for them, and was passionate about sharing and explaining everything there was to know about her culture. Things as simple as teaching me the name of a food or translating a sign were done with such a genuine interest in her own culture that soon the feeling of distance was replaced by a sense of understanding. With Dasha, I was immersed, and every day I felt as though I gained a little more perspective. The language became more accessible, the cultural norms became more normal. Because of Dasha, I was able to connect to the Russian language and culture through my own passions. When I read Russian poetry, listened to the music of a local band, or transcribed traditional Altai legends, all of the barriers disappeared and suddenly Russia wasn't so foreign after all.

As for Dasha, I marveled at how in tune she was to her own culture. One evening, as we sat outside under a pavilion in a yurt settlement somewhere in the Sacred Karakol Valley, I

mentioned this to her. She confided that she felt as though none of her friends took the same interest in traditional Russian culture that she did. "Our generation only cares about American and European culture. No one cares about poetry or classical Russian composers, or indigenous legends. I don't understand because to me it is so beautiful. It's part of our identity, and yet no one knows it." In that moment, I knew I was lucky to have met her.

A few days later, I found myself in an old, Soviet-style apartment in Barnaul, sipping green tea and listening to Dasha's friend, Nastia, as she played her guitar and sang original songs in the most beautiful Russian I had ever heard. My mind's eye flashed back to that original image of the cold, unfriendly Russian streets. Who would imagine that I would be looking down on those streets from the balcony of Nastia's flat, reciting poetry and vocabulary words and laughing among friends as if we had known each other for much longer than four weeks? Nastia was one of Dasha's best friends and classmates. She was kind, funny, and believed, probably more so than anyone, that I could speak and understand Russian despite my insistence that I could barely string together a full sentence. Although her English was almost as good as Dasha's, she always spoke to me in Russian, her eyes playfully suggesting that she knew I knew what she was saying. When I responded correctly she would point at me triumphantly and exclaim "See! I knew you could do it!" Her unwarranted confidence in me pushed me even harder to study and succeed in Russian class, and gave me the courage to speak more in the stores and on the streets when given the chance.

Out of everything Dasha taught me in those few weeks we spent together, the most important thing that I learned was that no matter how foreign another country, language, or culture may seem, friendship and human connection cannot be constrained by such things. In almost every Russian I met, I was able to find something that appealed to my own identity. It didn't matter how much we could communicate or what we believed in.

On the train to Moscow from Barnaul, I shared a sleeping compartment with a Russian man with cold, blue eyes.



Nastia Plays Original Songs [Jordyn Dezagó]

He was in his late fifties and didn't speak English. When he found out I was American, the only thing he said was "I hear they kill black people over there." He didn't like capitalism and spoke of the Soviet Union with mournful nostalgia. We had absolutely nothing in common, and it was clear that he was far from interested in making friends. I couldn't do much to communicate with him and he got frustrated every time he spoke and I would stare at him blankly as I tried to make sense of his Russian.

Then one evening we found ourselves sitting quietly at the table, just the two of us. He said something, paused, and then repeated himself at a much slower pace, pausing between words. I grasped what he said and did my best to respond. For over an hour, we 'conversed' in Russian. I got more and more frustrated with myself for not being able to communicate

my thoughts, for not knowing simple words like “almost” or “always.” A few times I was nearly in tears, and each time I would shake my head in frustration his eyes would soften a little more, until finally when someone came in to ask what we were doing, he said “русский уроки” (Russian lessons) with a gentle, patient smile on his face. I remember wondering how I ever could have thought of Russians as so different from myself.

This was the same day that I had found myself reading through my lists of advice and notes from my friends and family. I realized as I was reading that I would have a lot of explaining to do. When asked if it was scary, or if it was cold, or if it was as barren and desolate as they imagined, I would say no, in fact it was beautiful and warm and green. I would tell them about lakes that were clear and clean enough to drink from, about the kindness of the Russian and Altai people, and about how safe and welcome I felt despite rarely understanding what was going on. I would tell them that Russians do smile, and that they recite poetry and shop in malls and wear holes in their jeans, that they make delicious food and they drink not to get drunk but to make everyone happy and to enjoy each other’s company.

Yet it was that night with the blue-eyed man on the train when I realized I had learned far more than this. There I was, at my most vulnerable, speaking to a man who couldn’t have been more different from me, and realizing that it doesn’t matter where one travels in the world, or who we meet, or even how much two cultures may clash; because when it comes to people, we are never all that different from one another. What I was convinced would be a cold, uncomfortable, and unfriendly trip turned out to be one of the most powerful learning experiences I’ll ever have, all because of the people I met, and the friends I made. I went to Russia to learn Russian, without any intention of making friends. But it turns out that friendship and humanity are universal languages, and Russians speak them very well.

—Jordyn Dezagó

New Friends in Barnaul, Russia [Jim Prowse]



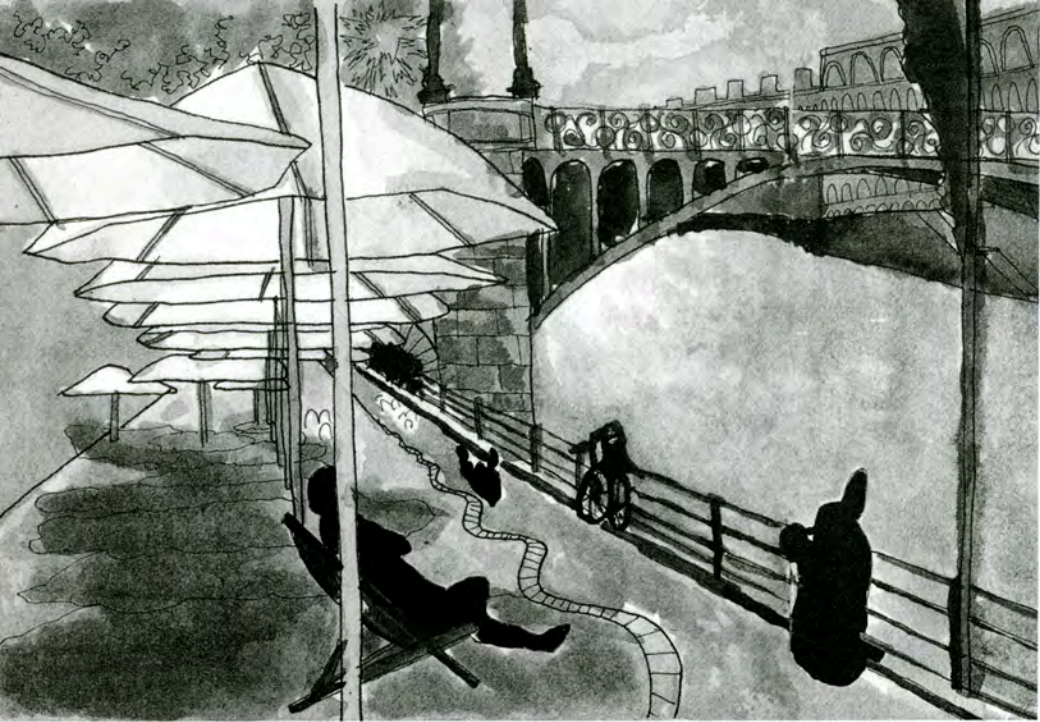


The Marble Quarry at Carrara, Italy [Janey Fine]





Streetscape Sketching in Rome, Italy [Brian Washko]

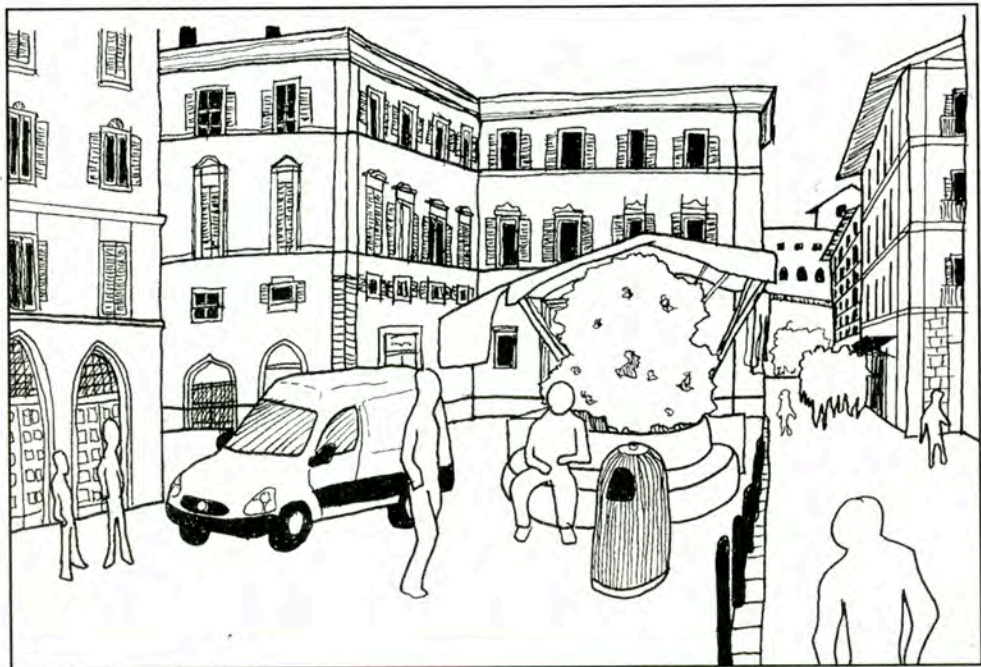


People Relaxing along the Seine River in Paris, France
Overlooking Saint Peter's Square along the Tiber River
in Rome, Italy [Shani Saul]



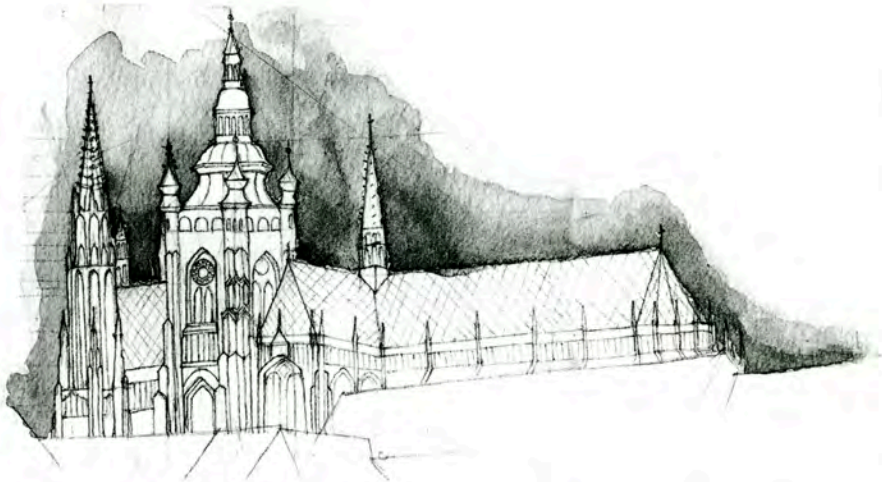


A Detailed Façade Section in Prague, Czech Republic [Sami Prouty]



A Day Exploring Rome
Ponte di Rialto in Venice, Italy [Brian Washko]



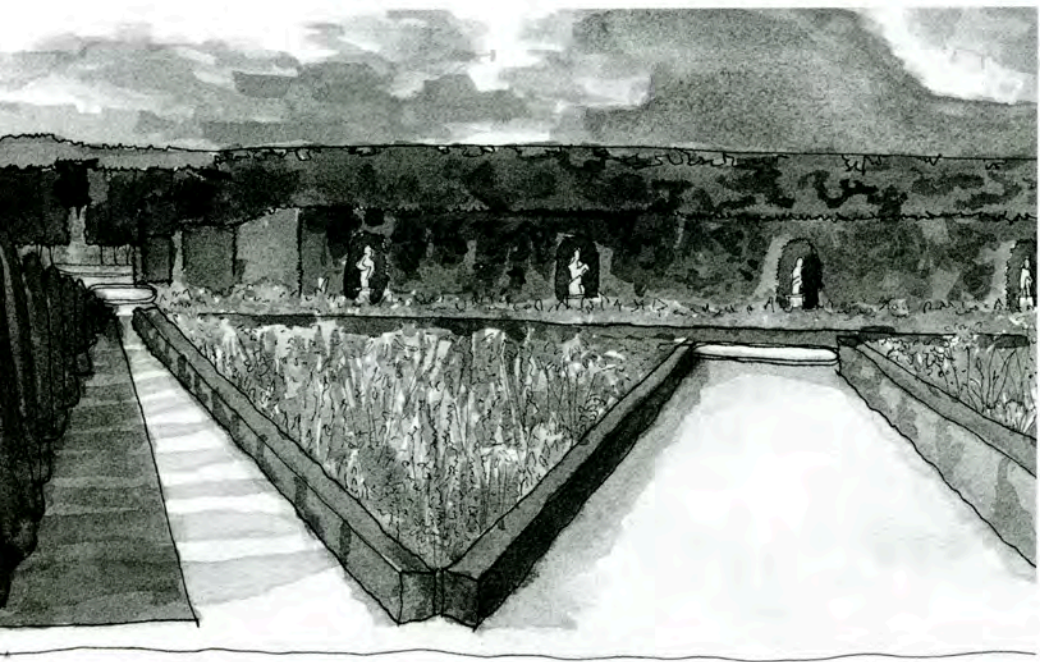


Façade Sketching & Dancing House in Prague, Czech Republic [Sami Prouty]



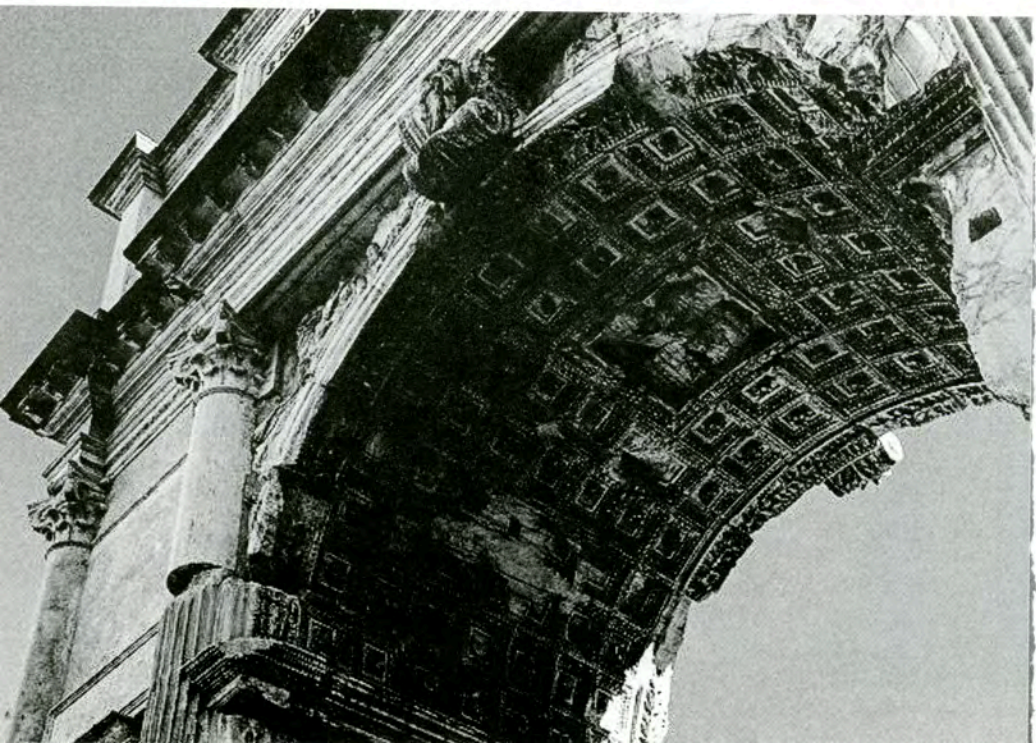


A Bird's-Eye View of Ponte Vecchio in Florence, Italy
A Walk through the Versailles Gardens in Paris, France [Shani Saul]





Clockwise from above: A Walk through Vatican City
Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza in Rome, Italy
Triumphal Arch in the Roman Forum [Amanda Walker]







On the Coast of Peru [Paige Gress]
Giraween Reflection, Australia [Grace Hutton]





San Salvador Gift Shop, Bahamas [Haley Norrgard]
Monkey at the Amber Fort in Jaipur, India [Roz Gray-Bauer]





Swinging at Casa del Arbol in Ecuador [Perry Fennell]
The Louvre in Paris, France [Katherine Byrne]



