



SINGAPORE EXPERIENCE REFLECTION

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
HONORS PROGRAM
SELF-DESIGNED EXPERIENCE
EMILY FINLEY
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INTENTION

From cultural differences to small nuances in the way I conduct my everyday life, studying at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore's surroundings have changed my outlook on growing up in America. Navigation to architecture, shopping to attractions, my perspective on seemingly mundane aspects have altered.

An intention I had going into this study abroad session was to learn more about a world separate than my own – immerse myself in a primarily Asian dominated culture. Since I was born in China, I feel that these past four months made quite an impact on my life. I felt closer to my origins, a country I had only visited once before. Although Singapore's historical roots stemmed as a colony of Great Britain, its Chinese influence cannot be denied. As the second most primary language of Singapore, Mandarin was spoken with the frequency of Spanish in America. Although not directly of Chinese heritage, Singapore felt as close to my birthplace as ever before.

Culture adds such depth and meaning to life, much like academics and learning. In Singapore, I experienced a whole new approach to the methods I had grown up with in America's educational system. What an incredible experience!

THOUGHTS

WHAT DID YOU LEARN THIS SEMESTER, PROFESSIONALLY ALONG WITH PERSONALLY?

Due to the nature of the program, I learned a lot academically over professionally. And as for personal growth, I feel that I have grown significantly in many areas. As mentioned previously, experiencing a culture outside of Ohio has shaped my perspective on the world in ways I have not yet experienced. Traveling short durations to different locations around the world differs than immersing oneself in a bustling culture for an extended period of time. Academically, I learned a lot about balancing my time. Personally, I feel that my understanding and empathy towards individuals with differing backgrounds has increased immensely.

THOUGHTS

WHAT IS ONE STRENGTH YOU FEEL YOU CAPITALIZED ON DURING YOUR SELF-DESIGNED EXPERIENCE?

A more heighten feeling of independence. From going to the grocery store to navigating throughout the country, everything had a different spin on it compared to my hometown and to Cincinnati. It was like adjusting to a completely different way of living, and without the immediate support of my family members, boyfriend, and friends, that created even more of an obstacle. Although they were a phone call away, additional hoops had to be jumped through. Timezone differences to network struggles, studying abroad offered varying degrees of challenges that have propelled my mental state of independence to new levels.

THOUGHTS

WHO IS ONE INSPIRING INDIVIDUAL YOU MET?

I met quite a few inspiring individuals, but one in particular was my photography teacher (whom I choose as my honors advisor), Meridel Rubenstien. Born in the United States and living in Singapore as a professor at Nanyang Technological University, Rubenstien offered a great deal of insights into the culture of Singapore and to the photography community as a whole. Having her as a strong influence during my study abroad honors experience helped me feel grounded — a refreshing sense of familiarity when listening to her lectures, ones structured much like the lessons I'm used to in America. Since her and I have a somewhat shared cultural upbringing and the same interest level in the arts, her journey to becoming a professional photographer inspired me. Towards the end of the semester, Meridel invited us to attend a galley showing of her work titled *Eden in Iraq* in downtown Singapore. This reminded me of seeing some of her previous installations in the heart of Albuquerque, New Mexico when visiting my Aunt, a time when I had not known her on a personal level. Also, as an alum of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, her work ethic pushed me to keep exploring all throughout the year.

THOUGHTS

WHAT IS CONFIDENCE, IN YOUR OWN WORDS?

Confidence, in my own words, means tackling life's challenges with a fearless attitude. In Singapore, I'll admit, it was pretty scary to explore downtown via the MRT (Singapore's subway like system) for the first few weeks. From needing to memorize MRT station names like Geyland Bahru or Tanjong Katong, to braving the dense crowds, there were significant differences with the MRT system versus driving in my Honda Civic back home. The thought of getting lost in transit, not understanding navigation cues, and or loosing some of my personal belongings made me quite hesitant. In years past, I had always had either a tour group, family members, or friends to explore foreign countries with. Although I made a number of friends in Singapore, having to depend on their availability when needing to go downtown would be unpredictable and a bit unreliable. Therefore, I feel that my confidence has improved with repeated journeys solor via Singaporean MRT system throughout the duration of my study abroad!

IMMERSIVE IMAGERY CLASS CYCLORAMAS AND PROJECTION MAPPING

This essay is from Professor Ben Shedd's course on Immersive Imagery and creating media for IMAX, Dome, Virtual Reality, and 3D imagery spaces. I felt that this essay summed up many key components I learned in the class, and I wanted to share some excerpts of it with you!

Although static images and videos confined to the Dimensions of common digital screens can create illusions of immersive spaces, the imagery techniques of past cycloramas and present projection mapping takes Immersive Imagery concepts considerable steps further.

Research indicates that cycloramas are heavily used when recounting historical moments throughout the passage of time. As panoramic images wrapped on the surface of cylindrical rooms, cycloramas give viewers the sense of a 360° viewpoint of any location, rendered design, immersive space, (and more) that the creator of the cyclorama desires. Popular cyclorama locations include Atlanta, Georgia and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Projection mapping is the ability to turn structures along with objects into augmented video projections ("Projection Mapping," n.a.). Projection mapping can range from the very complex to the

very simplistic – from intertwining 3D figures to direct representations of objects. In recent years (1969), the first use of projection mapping was in the Haunted Mansion ride at Disneyland in California. Again, common locations for projection mapping include Disney World (Haunted Mansion Ride) and even Cincinnati, Ohio (Blink Cincinnati.)

Whether that be the panoramic image in 1787 lining the inside of a stationary cylindrical building, or a 3D rendering projected on the haunted mansion ride in 1969, immersive imagery is timeless and immersive imagery is everywhere.

PHOTOS ILLUSTRATION CLASS



For my Illustration Class, Prof. Keith Chong tasked us with creating a book that highlighted a certain subject with a group of 5 peers. Our group centered our illustrations around the Human Condition, a shared experience by anyone considered a human. I learned about collaboration, drawings techniques, overcoming cultural differences, and a lot about native Singaporeans! I was the only foreign exchange student in my group, and one of two in the entire class. My illustrations centered around a personal journey – understanding the stages of trauma and healing from that deeply embedded pain, feelings that so unfortunately, so many people experience in their lifetime.

PHOTOS ILLUSTRATION CLASS – PROCESS

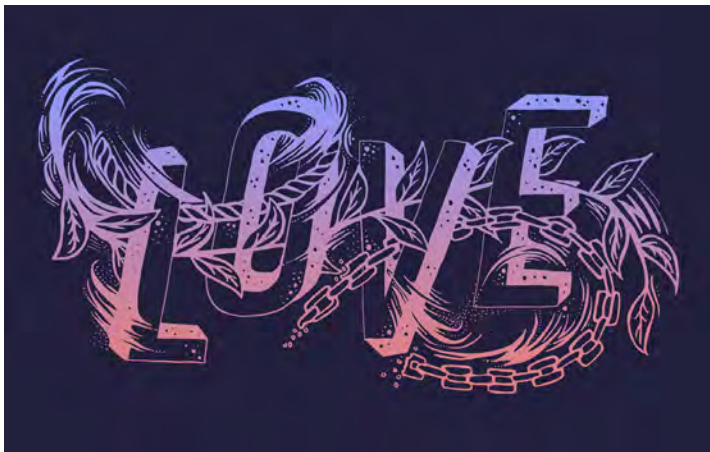


I learned a huge amount about slowing down my drawing practice, using reference images, and adding intricacy to larger elements. Beforehand, I had drawn from personal inspiration and ideas in my imagination. Prof. Keith Chong taught us to use the work of artists who inspired us to mold our own pieces in a vision that we find satisfactory. The artist I was inspired by was Gemma O'Brien, a famous letterer and illustrator from Australia.

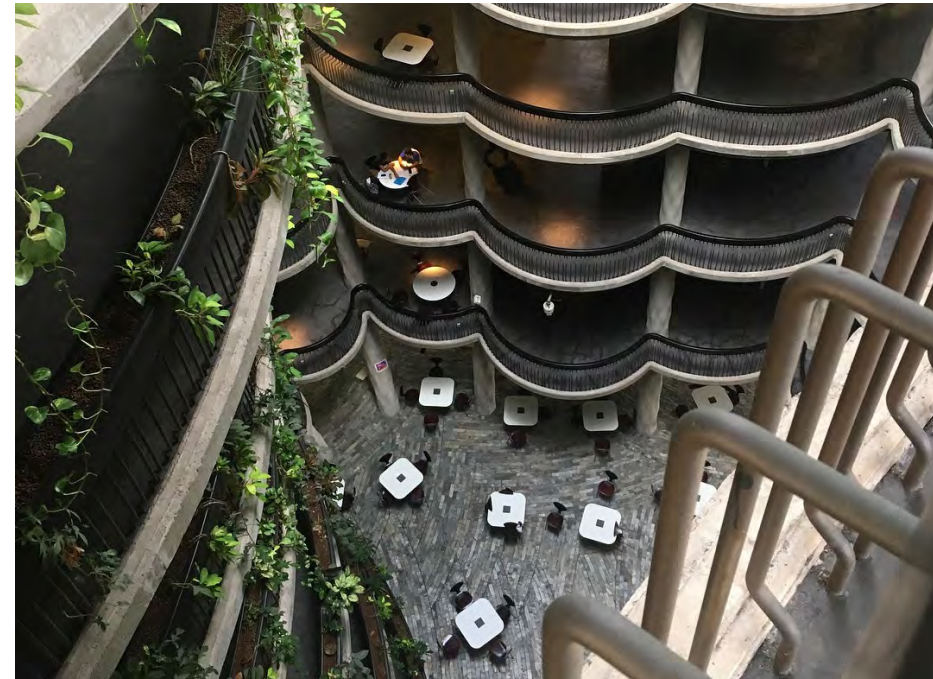
PHOTOS ILLUSTRATION CLASS – FINAL(S)



PHOTOS ILLUSTRATION CLASS – FINAL(S)



PHOTOS CAMPUS



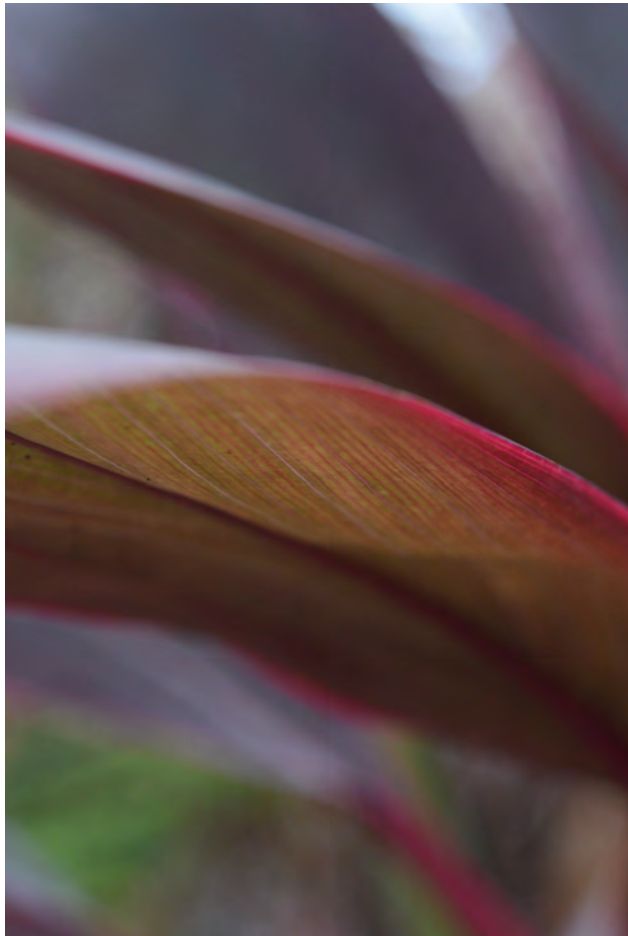
Full of rich vegetation, intricate architecture, and hall cats (!!), NTU's campus is nothing but stunning in my opinion. Pictured above shows my run in with a cute hall cat, ADM (my college, School of Art, Design, and Media), a delicious meal, a place to study, and unique reflections.

PHOTOS GARDENS BY THE BAY

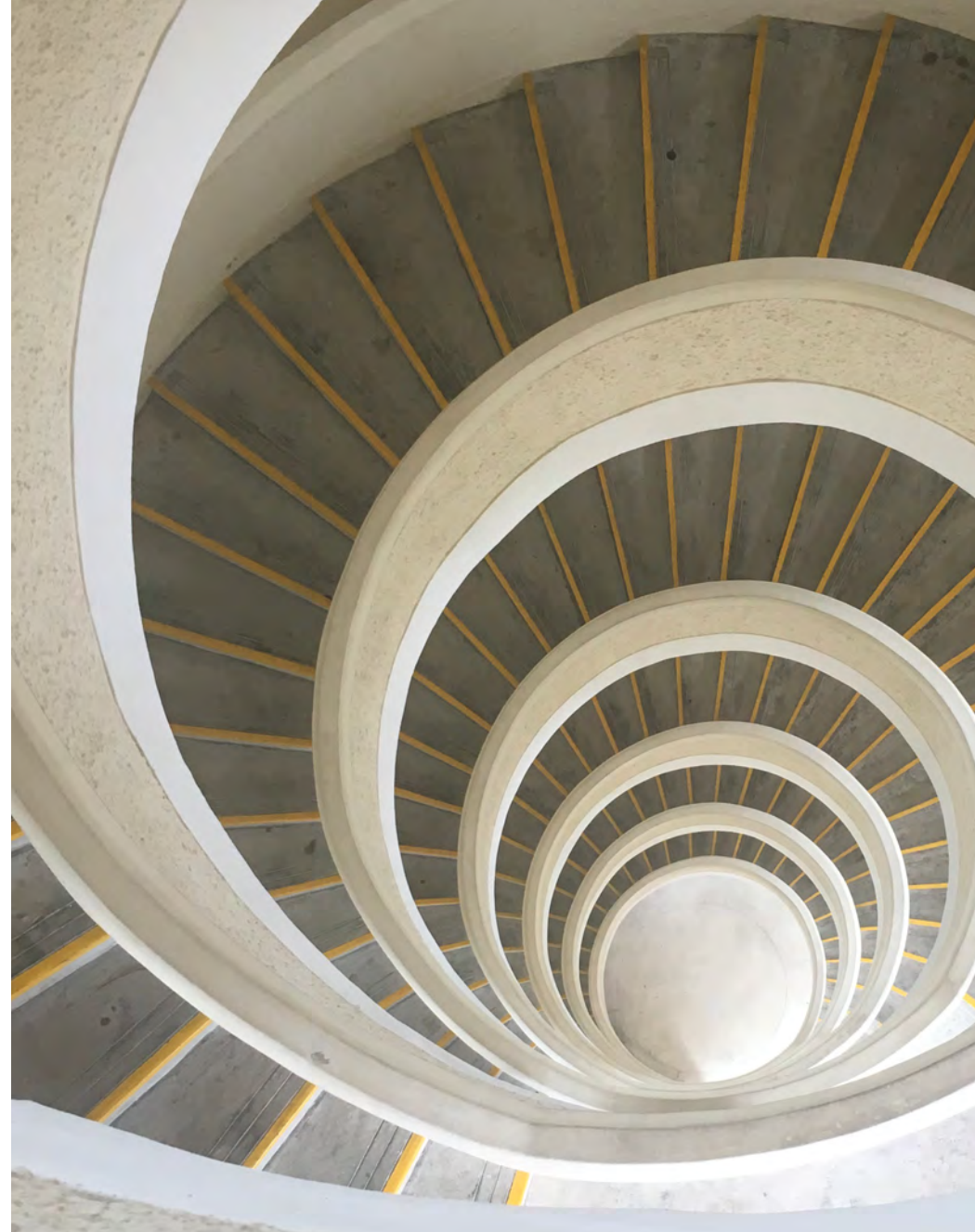
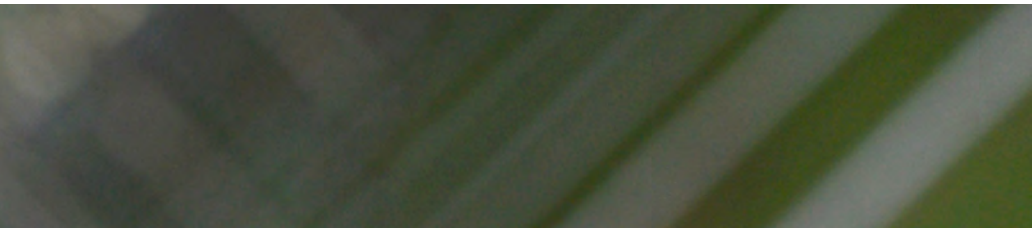
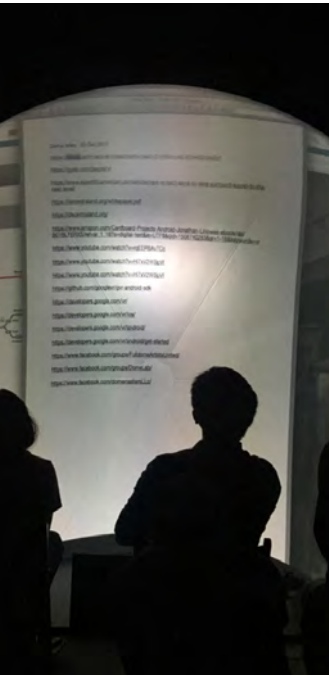


One of the main attractions in Singapore was Gardens By The Bay, futuristic trees created from parts of nature and intricately woven metal. As one of the first attractions I attended while studying abroad, it's theatrical light show and traditional Singaporean flair never ceased to amaze me. Ariana Grande, the famous singer, even visited the trees while on tour!

PHOTOS IMMERSIVE IMAGERY

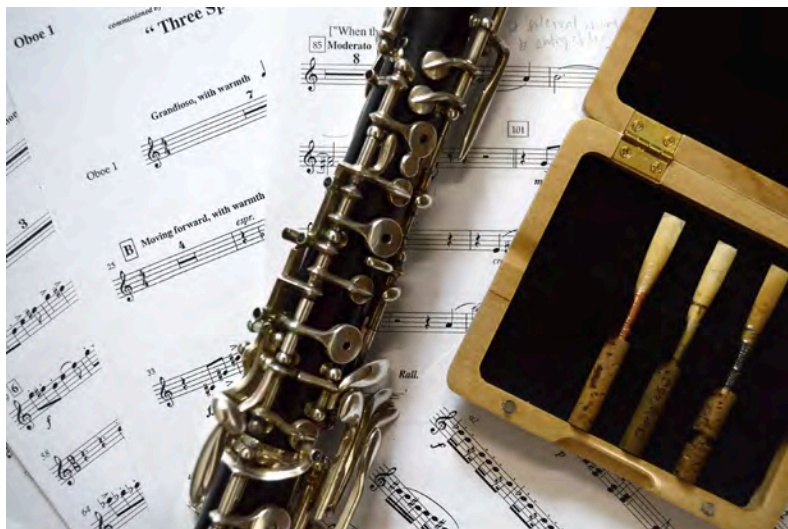


PHOTOS IMMERSIVE IMAGERY



Photos taken for Immersive Imagery with Ben Shedd. I focused my final project on close up photos of nature found in Singapore. Some photos below were tests I conducted in the iDome, a spherical screen that simulated an IMAX.

PHOTOS NTU SYMPHONIC BAND



Abbie Miller, Ellie Friedman, and Elizabeth Klare, all students from UC, supporting me at my NTU Symphonic Band Concert! I was first chair Oboe. Loved playing in band again :)

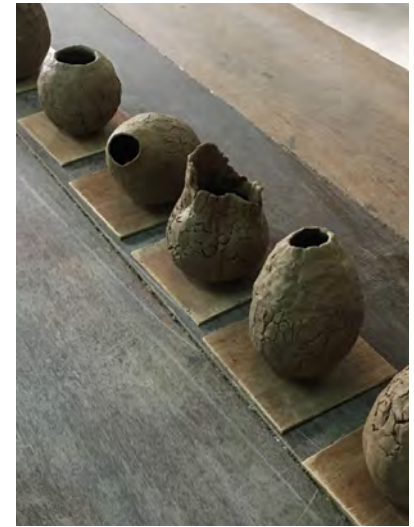
PHOTOS REPRESENTING UC



PHOTOS BUKIT TIMAH ROAD



PHOTOS SUMMARY





THANK YOU

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