

Candy R. Wei Prize for International Studies in Art and Design

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Before studying abroad, my emotions and work were entirely separate entities. I felt inferior and stifled in my studio classes, aware of a constant need to prove myself. In my academic courses, after learning about my and other racial and cultural histories, I only felt anger at my inability to convey these new thoughts and emotions through art. I kept trying to mimic some vague image of “real art,” and sacrificed my own identities to make work I thought was relatable. And when I tried to make my work personal, I did not know where to draw inspiration or which influences to follow. When I detached myself from the work, my art suffered.

I traveled to Ghana and India with the intention of understanding and accepting my brown body in places full of brown bodies. I depended on my art to help me navigate through these cultural experiences. Unlike ever before, I had to feel and create simultaneously. During my community engagement program in Ghana, I confronted my race, and found space to learn about a history I had always been connected with, but never felt connected to. During my semester in India, I found a voice. Surrounded by people similar in appearance, but shared few of my identities, I found space to grow my own truths and learn from others first hand.

I thrived in my isolation. The texts I read in classes became my companions, the slave castles became real, and my experiences began to defy the knowledge I had been given. Traveling bridged the gap between student and artist; posing questions instead of presenting answers. Rather than erupting like a volcano, my work began to ebb and flow with my experiences. Away from the lecture halls and studios, among new cultures and people, I discovered the balance between making and feeling.



Untitled
Cotton Broad Cloth
42"x 108"

This print was made the semester after my trip to Ghana. It was inspired by the imagery that I saw throughout my trip.



Kochi: ReWrapped
Wrap Skirt
Muslin
42"x 108"

This garment was apart of my Srishti project Kochi: ReWrapped. For the semester, we traveled to Kochi, India and had to create a product for tourists. My project consisted of three shibori dyed and screen printed fabrics that could be wrapped in 17 ways to create garments. This reflected the culture of saris and dhotis that I saw in India and aimed to bridge the gap between the tourists and locals.



Jahyne
Rayon
36"x42"

These prints were created during my semester abroad in India. For the project we had to create a brand of clothing. My brand was called Jahyne focused on androgyny in the clothing industry. I drew my inspiration from Egyptian culture and the woman's body.



Anonymous: Print Series
Silk Noile
36"x42"

These prints were an exploration of screen printing techniques and body forms. I was attempting to imitate paints on fabrics as well as imitate body forms and emotions along with the printed patterns.



Possession: A Selection of Souls
Cotton Twill & Organza

This image is apart of my senior thesis which explores ownership between the body and its identities. The fabrics made represent this skin and the soul.