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Printmaking in China

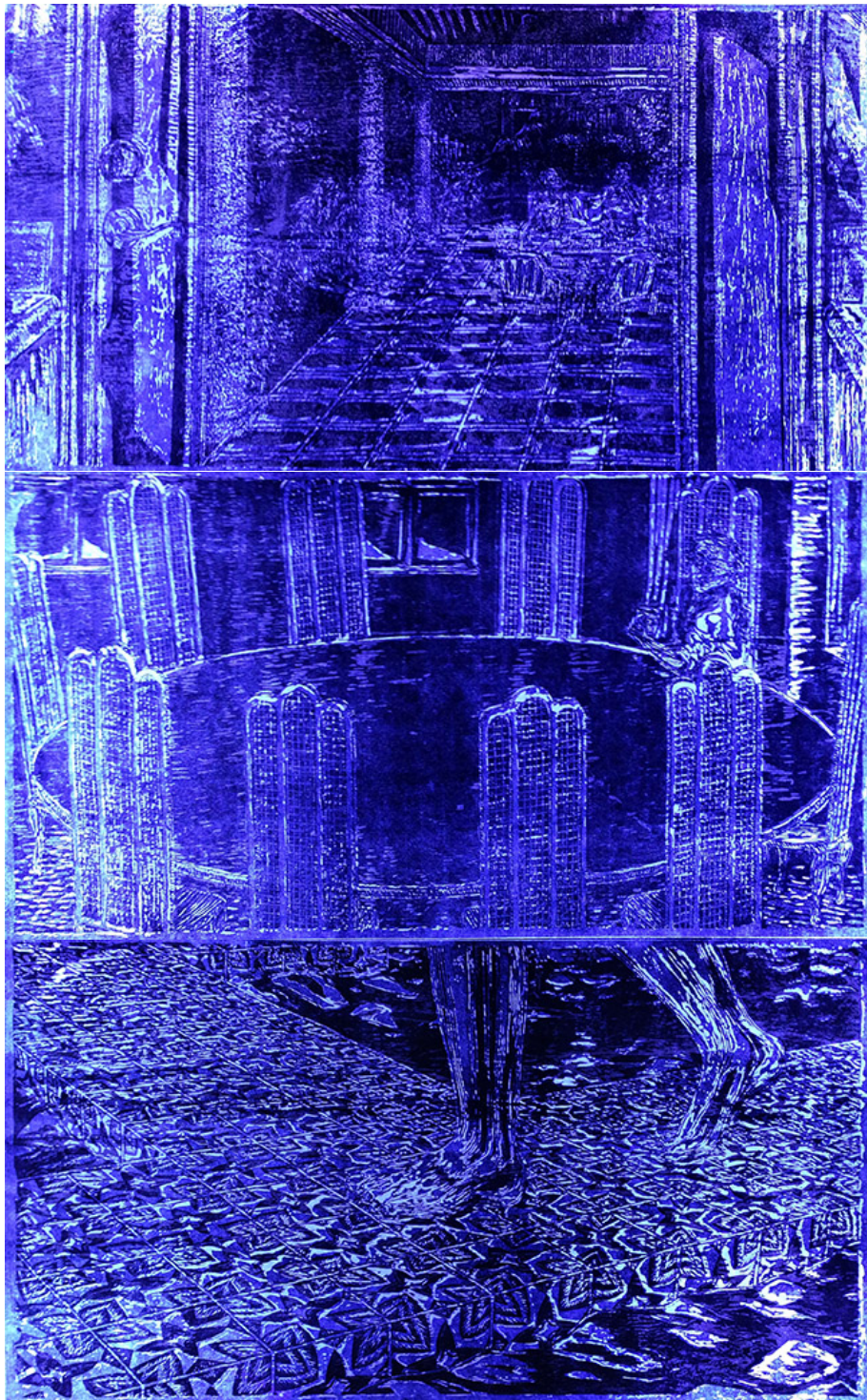
I stepped out of Beijing Capital International Airport into the heat and was instantly turned inside out. Everything was bustling, hot, and fast— the opposite of Michigan. Though I had just recently been introduced to printmaking, I decided to take a leap. I traveled across China taking night trains and buses with professor Endi Poskovic and ten other Stamps students for the niche interest of studying traditional printmaking. We saw incredible work that was so beautifully crafted. It was work that wasn't made about the artist; it was about the tradition, the process, and the craft of the final product. In fact, it seemed like everything there was about something bigger than the individual— the way meals were shared or the way our new friends took care of us there. People put each other first; they give. More significantly, they are raised to. It wasn't like America at all.

This polarity of experience is something that thematically influences my work. We understand more about something when we also know its opposite, and being in China not only taught me about life and art in China; being in China taught me about life and art here. This idea of polarity has been a theme I've been working with in my prints and the way I've been carving layers. As far as process goes, being in China gave me an appreciation for collaborative work. Besides printmaking, I also work on a lot of film projects. Making a movie has to be about the project as a whole and how the individual can make it work. The two most influential things that China has taught me are first, an appreciation for careful craft, and more importantly, a passion for working on projects that are bigger in scope than oneself.

Looking back, the experience feels sacred, like a meditation where I imagine myself sinking deep into the ocean, overwhelmed and then rising towards the sun in warm freedom. This trip opened me up.



Four block woodcut- 11 colors. This piece was the first woodcut I made when I came back from China. With a new passion for craft, this piece helped me develop my carving technique.



This triptych is three two-block woodcuts that were part of my senior thesis, which explored the idea of polarity by using prints in motion picture and aspects of cinema in print media. The first layer of the cut is methodically recreating a scene rooted in my memory, and the second layer is letting it disintegrate.



This is a still from a feature film I had the opportunity to do production design for on last summer called *At Sunrise*. Since China, I have been collaborating on various films with other students, and I credit my study abroad experience with the drive to do projects like this.