

Candy R Wei Prize Application  
Olivia Arau-McSweeney

During my study abroad in Florence last summer, I took a darkroom photography course that opened up a new avenue for my art practice. Through my conversations and critiques with my photography professor it became apparent that I was drawn to alternative processes in the world of photography. I began doing some research on these processes but since the course only lasted one month, I didn't have enough time to implement them. But the realization that I was fascinated by these processes lead me to my current work for my undergraduate thesis project. I am taking my interest in environmental studies and my recently discovered love for alternative photographic processes and making a body of work using photography and printmaking alternatives that are more sustainable and less damaging to human health than their commonly-used counterparts. This project has been the most satisfying work I have done in undergrad and I feel so thankful for my study abroad knowing that that is where this idea originated.

While I was abroad, I took it upon myself to walk around the city and photograph it as much as I could. I wanted to capture the beauty of Florence without relying on its best known monuments. I focused on photographing the bodies of water in the city. This trip was also one in which I did a lot of self-reflection on how I was changing as a creative maker and these reflections took the form of self-portraits. The body of work I made in my photography course in Florence still shows up in my current work, where I revisit imagery I made there and address it through other forms of photography or printmaking. I have also continued exploring the concept of self in my work, something that began in my photography course at SACI.



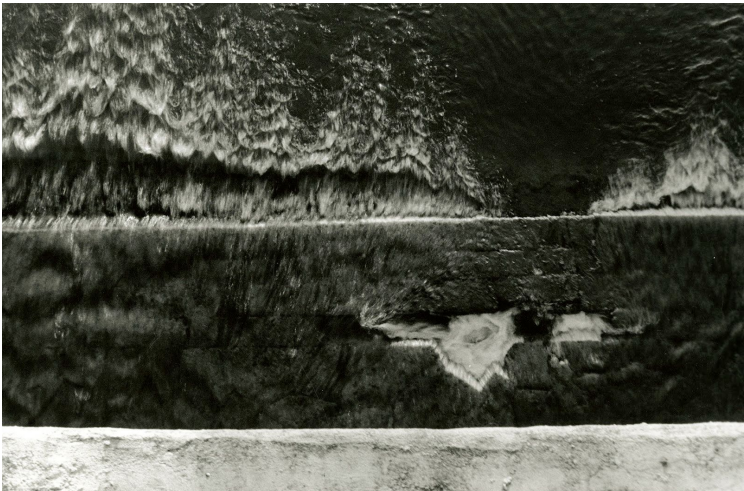
Self-Portrait I (Florence, Italy 2018)



From the Holocene to the Anthropocene: Redefining the Ecological Self (Ann Arbor, MI 2018)



Into Water I (Florence, Italy 2018)



Into Water II (Florence, Italy 2018)



Alternative Process I: Phythogram (Ann Arbor, MI 2019)