

Alexandria Pompei

I'd be lying if I didn't say that my study abroad trip to Florence, Italy was single handedly the most life changing experiences I've had as an artist. When applying for SACI I enrolled in Black and White Film Photography. I had never used a film camera before, but having a passion for photography I knew I would enjoy the course, little did I know that this course would change life. The moment I stepped into the darkroom, I knew it would be hard for me to leave. Each day off I would spend experimenting with my 35mm camera. No matter how far I ventured off the day before there were always hundreds of adventures waiting the next day. Yet there was one place that kept calling me. In the pitch black room solely lit with the glow of red safety lights and the dead silence that was running water baths I spent my time alone printing photo after photo. As my pandora station put me at ease in the darkness I experimented with film stacking and cutting, essentially becoming a manual photoshop program. There were nights when I stayed till closing and had to be forced out of the darkroom. I truly fell in love with film photography.

The photography course I took in Florence found a way into my soul. I often felt lost on project ideas before, but now I truly found my medium and myself. In my senior IP studio I put my learning into my thesis. I created 21 self portrait black and white photographs visualizing depictions of unresolved feelings based on traumatic events in my childhood. My study abroad experience helped me to tackle a subject matter that I had never before felt comfortable sharing. One of the greatest experiences of my study abroad was when my photography teacher told me to "Do what you are interested in". For years I felt like I needed to alter my photographs and subject matter to conform to a specific topic, but now I feel free. Throughout my IP course I photographed using my 35mm camera and my DSLR. Each day was an adventure that I love the uncertainty of the photographs' final product. The physicality of holding the power in full process of the photographs development thoroughly excited me. In my senior work I am able to show non direct emotion and stories in my photographs given the techniques I learned in Italy. I honestly don't think I will ever not strive to produce black and white film photography. In the future I hope to have a career in photography. Not having done my study abroad, I would be lacking a whole skill set and fire that makes me the artist I am today.

IP, 2020









SACI, 2019





