

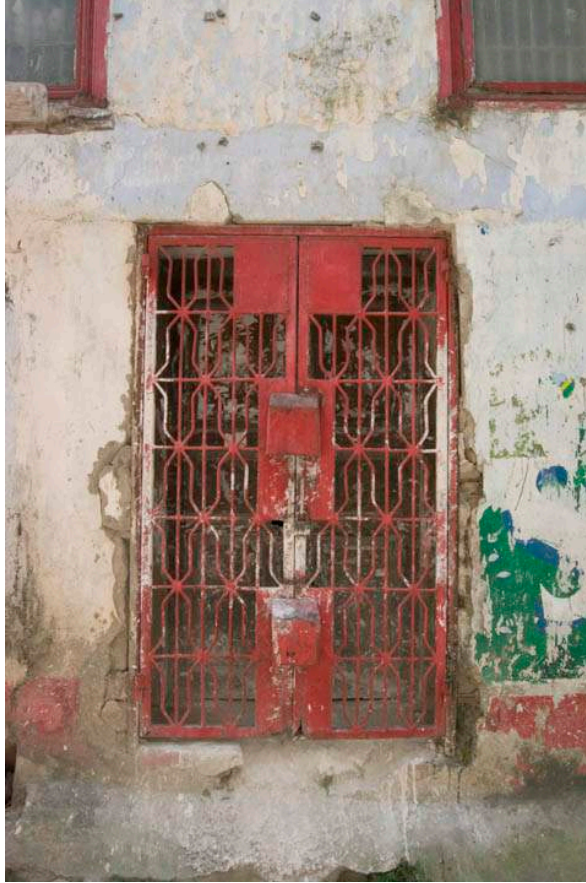
Candy R. Wei Prize for International Studies  
Artist Submission  
Ian Klipa (iklipa)  
Project Ultima: Community Fabrication

Last summer (2014) I found myself in Zanzibar working for a small NGO after completing a study abroad program on mainland Tanzania. Soon after arriving on the island I began to notice beautiful gates and other bits of metal work that were scattered throughout the city. Since I had worked in metal before, these gates fascinated me and I asked the man I was staying with if he knew anything about their history. He said he did not, but he did have a friend, Msellem, who was a metal worker on the other side of town. I spent the next month observing Msellem work in his shop and on different job sites around the island. I was in awe of the resourceful and creative methods that Msellem used to create consistent shapes and patterns with minimal tooling, such as bending steel rods around pipes to create consistently sized circles. After a while, I realized what really inspired me was this opportunity to take an up close look at a making culture - a culture where hand making is still a necessity as opposed to a novelty- and how these ideals differed from the consumer driven realities in my own country.

When I returned to the US, I strived to make the project bigger than myself and to work with a community. I have since begun an extracurricular welding workshop with some students from Detroit Community High in Brightmoor (DCH). We have started by learning the very basics of low tooling metal fabrication: designing, cutting, shaping, welding, grinding and finishing. Using similar tooling to Msellem's shop in Zanzibar. As the students have begun to develop their skills with

the medium, the project has evolved from a purely skill based workshop to industrial tricycle modifications, with the goal of creating delivery trikes that deliver donated groceries to low-income seniors in the Brightmoor community. This project allows the participating students to not only learn a skill, but it also gives them agency to work on designs collaboratively and to see their designs come to life for action in the real world. Our work is not done, and I plan on continuing collaboration with the Brightmoor community this summer. I am looking forward to further developing Project Ultima into an archetype of community fabrication.

\*For Complete information: Project Ultima can be found on DeepBlue



Decorative gate in Zanzibar



Jib Table at Msellems workshop in Zanzibar



Project Ultima tools at DCH workshop Detroit.





DCH student using angle grinder in Shop



Tricycle before refurbishing/ cargo modifications



Picture of Project Ultima install for Senior Thesis Exhibition.



Full room