Reviving Local Structures and Farming Initiatives:
A Structural Analysis in Paint
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My project is inspired by the conservation of structures and land, a continuation of a previous preservation design project of a Bath 19th century freight shed. Preserving the integrity of the structure, the Bath freight shed designs entail a multiuse flexible space/site that focuses on a year-round farmer’s market. While innovative design and sustainability are brought to light through the preservation of such buildings, the loss of significant communal history is no longer an issue. Following the presentation of the freight shed project, I wished to explore the project further, transitioning from my passion in architecture and design to my excitement for the painting medium. Having a farmer’s market pivotal to my designs of the freight shed, I wanted to take a closer look into the participating farms of the existing local farmers markets. My non-conventional study in painting allowed me to analyze farmlands and structures that contribute to the farms’ production. Furthermore, like the freight shed design project, my pursuit in painting acted as a preservation of the integrity and character of each farm.

At the beginning of the summer I spent my time traveling to different farms creating plein air (on site) watercolor sketches. I limited each watercolor production to an hour and focused on color, value, and form representation. Limiting myself to an hour per painting I was forced to quickly portray what I observed. Moreover, my lack of previous experience working plein air was challenging for me in terms of accurately representing what I was viewing. Traveling to different farms I had the opportunity to talk to each farmer, learning about farming processes, structures, and innovative means of production. It was a great exercise in jumpstarting the project, giving me practice in different forms of painting and helping me delve into the painting process.

After multiple visits and interactions with these farmers, I decided to focus my project on two farms; Crystal Springs farm in Brunswick, ME and Sparrow Farm in Pittston, ME. I am intrigued by the history of the structures at Crystal Springs. From acquiring and reusing a WWII Quonset hut, to building newer structures out of cement as a result of a barn house fire many years past, the structures and their significance are incredibly memorable. I am very impressed with Sparrow Farm’s innovative and sustainable means of production throughout their property and within their structures. Sparrow farm impressively attained Maine’s first solar thermal greenhouses, generate organic produce, and have an eclectic building style.

As the summer progressed I transitioned from watercolor snapshots to structure-specific oil paintings. As painting in different media was beneficial to my learning process, painting at different scales was very helpful for my painting process and techniques as I worked as small as 4”x4” to as large as 5’x6’. My subject matter transitioned from specific structures to abstracts of material details. Shifting my greater project ideas from a macro subject matter of the farm as a whole to the micro qualities of material, I felt as if it allowed me to understand the land and structures of the farms in a more thorough manner. Not only did this summer experience allow me to further explore an interest in preservation and the lifestyle of farming communities, it also allowed me to develop my style and skill as an artist, painter, and designer.

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