

## **"Constructing Realities Through the Exploration of Places"** **Andria Polo Brizuela, 2022**

My summer project focused on exploring how places are constructed and how they can create and shape reality. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I reflected on how the spaces we inhabit define our understanding of reality, as these are the areas in which we observe and live within. My starting point for the project was my interest in architecture and how it encases and shapes my own perception of reality. As my project developed through photographing different spaces in Brunswick and Portland, Professor Kolster urged me to reflect on how I related to spaces and why.

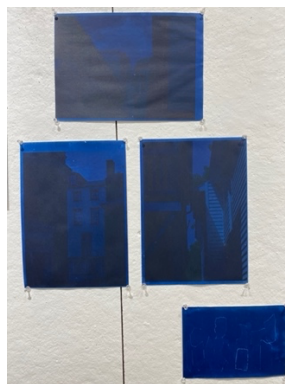
Being able to spend day after day reading art books, walking to planned (and spontaneous) places for photography walks, and having a darkroom/digital lab available 24/7 allowed me to explore my ideas and ultimately, allowed me to conclude that I am interested in the potential contained in spaces and how the possibilities disappear once construction occurs. I became critical of architecture, wondering why our world was constructed in spaces that only use squares and triangles when lines have infinite combinations and different shapes can be created. Engineers and physicists probably know the mathematical reasoning as to why spaces always must be constructed this way, but my project aims to explore if these shapes themselves can morph into an alternative interpretation of the world we occupy.

I started to work with cyanotypes, at first creating normal cyanotype prints with digital negatives. One of my experiments involved using rectangle-shaped slides, which I aimed to use to create shapes through the intersection of various slides. However, the exposure unit utilizes a vacuum mechanism that broke the slides into new shapes—these new shapes were then used to create outlines of possible spaces. Thus, my process began to explore how the shapes we already know could encase other shapes. Throughout my process, Rebecca Solnit's perception of blue kept coming to mind; she describes the color of blue as the color of distance, the color from "where you are not. And the color of where you can never go." Working with cyanotype allowed me to discover a space where I can repurpose the architectural shapes that compose my reality and isolate them from the world, enabling me to view the outlines of the shapes that make up our world. By working with these new glass shapes, I have created outlines of spaces that would be interesting to explore.

My work aims to encourage others to consider the possibilities beyond what we see by isolating the shapes we already understand and creating new outlines that raise questions about how we are utilizing the limited amount of space we have. I am currently continuing my summer project through an independent study with Professor Kolster to expand on my work, create more complex outlines with improved depth, and keep exploring my interest in merging alternative processes in the darkroom with modern digital printing to develop new kinds of spaces for others to consider.

Exhibition Date: Oct 21 - Oct 30

Where: Edwards Center for Art and Dance



**Faculty Mentor: Michael Kolster**

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