This year's Florence group arrived in September and excitedly immersed themselves in the Italian context. At a Conference for the fall session, I saw and shared ideas for individual direction in their works and with the two exhibitions they explored. The programs of these ideas were apparent. Highlights of the tour were the visits to discussions of Venice in contemporary art and, of course, the sites, especially the Uomo Collection and Venice Biennale.

I was happy to be in Florence once again to part in the environment and begin to photograph the city from a 17th-century perspective, as was to the ideas from the Italian Photographs. Here which I went for photography in my summer living of work.
Winter in Florence

Florence for me is a city of winter sunshine, the bustling of our local shops at Porta Romana and discovering a new and unusual place, a bar or café, or a little restaurant nearby, visiting the dark and candle churches where Florentines came to pray, and the intimacy of quiet meditation in these places. The warmth and conviviality of working together in the studio at Via Nationale, and the anticipation of our art history adventures with Professor Peter Paul of Florence. The weeks of the coming of Spring, the view from our window overlooking the Boboli Gardens and the Belvedere hill is changing, filling in and becoming ever greener, and with it come the mothers pushing their babies, joggers, elderly couples arm in arm, and lovers walking together and just beginning to have the courage to stretch out their bodies on that very same grassy meadow in Florence, lawn of grass. There are now people from all over the world coming to visit Florence, and the Punto Vecchio and the streets around the Duomo become almost impassable on the weekends. But the Area continues to flow quietly through the city, the churches and museums and the streets of the commercial centers and squares withstand the onslaught, and I am continually impressed by the way the Florentines share their city with such grace, pride, and civility.

Countess Matilda (1046-1115) "Quali dona di Italia", the learned protector and warrior queen of Tuscany, enacted a promise from the German King Henry IV, to allow the leading citizens of Florence to take control of their city after her death, and with this bequest, the era of the city states of Tuscany began. Florentines are justly proud of their long history of self-government and the way they take their independence and their civil traditions very seriously. As guests of the city of Florence, we have learned much about civility from her citizens, including how to live and work in close quarters, with respect and care for each other. These are wonderful ways of thinking and modes of living and working that we can use in our daily lives here.

Although most of us struggle with the beautiful Italian language, we are always greeted with patience, kindness, and an interest from the people here to help us to expand our growing Italian vocabulary and competence in their language. Many of us have tried to incorporate the generosity shown to us by the people here into our daily practices and will take back not just food memories, but also consideration for others and for other ways of living, that we have learned from our friends, colleagues, and the gentle citizens of Florence.

I am extremely grateful for the support of our students and our programme here in Florence from our colleagues at OCAD. I would like to express my thanks to Professor Susan Kemp, Professor Fenner, Vladimir Spizymio, Colonel Lather, and President Sir Sam Manzoum. I have also come from colleagues and so many others in the Faculty of Art, the OCAD administration and IT services who make this wonderful programme possible. Our students of 2007/8 (who named themselves the little bastards!), Gianni Diagnos, our class assistant, my partner in crime, Dan Solomon, and our marvellous Professor Peter Peric, have all made this term in Florence a most memorable one.
ALAN F. IS AN AMERICAN PAINTER WHO HAS BEEN LIVING FOR YEARS IN ITALY, IN A GOOD FRIEND OF OCAD STUDENTS IN FLORENCE, PAINTS LARGE, MYSTERIOUS CANVASES FULL OF METAPHYSICAL QUIET, AS ONLY PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA WOULD PAINT IF HE COULD LIVE TODAY.

ONE DAY, GENTLE ALAN DECIDED TO GO TO THE CITY TO SUBMIT AN OFFICIAL REQUEST AT THE "BELLE ARTI" OFFICE. THAT IS THOSE WHO DO SURVEY AND PROTECT ARTISTIC PATRIMONY IN ITALY.

I HAVE NOT THE RUTH TO OPEN A NEW WINDOW IN MY STUDIO WHEN I PAINT," EXPLAINED ALAN TO THE WISE MEN IN THE OFFICE. THEREFORE, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOUR PERMISSION TO BE ABLE TO OPEN IN MY STUDIO A NEW WINDOW, SO THAT WHEN I PAINT, I WILL SEE BETTER.

"YOU ARE CRAZY," SAID THE WISE MEN. "YOUR HOUSE, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT SOMETHING SPECIAL, IS ALWAYS LOCATED IN AN AREA, WHICH IS PROTECTED BY THE LAW. THERE ARE NOT GOING TO BE OPENED NEW WINDOWS IN YOUR HOUSE" WAS THE ORDEAL OF THE WISE MEN, AND IT WAS IT. OFF HE WENT.

HE WAITED ANOTHER 15 YEARS. ONE RAINY DAY, ALAN RENTED IN THE CITY BIG TRUCK AND MOVING IT PARKED AGAINST THE WALL OF HIS STUDIO. NOBODY WOULD SUSPECT, WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THE WALL OF HIS HOUSE. WORKING DISGUISED BY THE TRUCK, TWO BRICKLAYERS OPENED, IN ONE DAY, NEW WINDOWS IN THE OPENING, THEY DID SET UP NEW WOODEN FRAME, A FRAME WHICH WAS EXACT COPY OF THE OLD WINDOWS IN ALAN'S HOUSE.

THE WOODEN FRAME ALAN PAINTED IN A WAY, THAT IT LOOKED OLD.
IN THE EVENING, HE DROVE THE TRUCK INTO THE CITY.

FROM THE NEXT MORNING HE STARTED WAITING FOR REACTIONS. BUT NOBODY CAME. NOBODY NOTICED THE NEW WINDOW. AGED AS IT WAS, IT LOOKED AS IF IT WERE ALWAYS THERE. THEN HE WAITED ANOTHER YEAR AND TOOK THE PICTURE OF THE NEW WINDOW OF HIS STUDIO WITH THE PICTURE HE WENT AGAIN INTO THE CITY TO THE "BELLE ARTI" OFFICE. NOBODY REMEMBERED HIM THERE ANY MORE.

I HAVE TOO MUCH LIGHT

IN MY STUDIO WHEN I PAINT
SAID ALAN TO THE WISE MEN.

THEREFORE, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOUR PERMIT TO BE ABLE TO WAX UP ONE OF THE WINDOWS IN MY STUDIO, EXACTLY THIS ONE.

AND HE GAVE THEM THE PHOTO OF THE NEWLY OPENED WINDOW.

"YOU MUST BE CRAZY, SUCH A BEAUTIFUL AND OLD WINDOW!" SAID THE WISE MEN, LOOKING AT THE PHOTO. 

THOUGH IT WAS NOTHING "YOUR HOUSE IS NOT SOMETHING SPECIAL, IS ALWAYS LOCATED IN AN AREA WHICH IS PROTECTED BY THE LAW. THERE ARE NOT GOING TO BE WAXED UP OLD WINDOWS IN YOUR HOUSE. AND SINCE YOU ARE ALREADY HERE, LEAVE THAT PHOTO OF THAT WINDOW WITH US.

CLEARLY, HE HAD TO GIVE UP ANY IDEA TO MAKE HIS STUDIO BETTER.

AND SO, GENTLE ALAN, HE EXCUSED HIMSELF WITH THE WISE MEN HOW IT COULD ONLY CROSS HIS MIND TO HAVE SUCH A BEAUTIFUL AND OLD WINDOW CLOSED, AND HE PROMISED THAT HE WOULD NOT TOUCH IT.

AND OFF HE WENT AND FROM THAT TIME HE HAD THE DAYLIGHT IN HIS STUDIO HE WAS ALWAYS DREAMING OF, GENTLE AND HONEST ALAN.

SO THAT WE WILL KNOW..."

Florence and The Body

I have been looking at the place of the female body in art historical representations while we have been here in Florence. The history of the female body was not well documented in religious art of the Renaissance, and it is evident that most were often veiled images - the female body of Michelangelo was characterized by the physiognomy of the male body, and distortion of the clothing of women. Recently we saw the Brancacci Chapel on the Duomo to see sculptures by Niccolò di Pietro社会化 in Florence, who created extraordinary sculptural memories of the subject of the great cathedral of the Duomo in Florence.

This photograph is a montage of a narrative series of figures that Giovanni da Milano of the early 1300’s, the sculptor of the arch of St. Stephen, depicting the Virgin, St. John, and Apostles. In this early period, we see Mary as a personification of the Virgin Mary, in a state of infancy, and a configuration of the body, the conceptions and teachings of St. Francis of Assisi. The body is treated, by an artist, with the same deep sympathy and feeling, and love of the female body. Pistoia captured the essence of the female body, which, in all its emotion, is not something that we take each other and believe in existence. This brings us to the idea of the human body, and the fear of a powerful presence from the young illustration.

The great pleasure of working in Florence, as the program has been, is being inspired with Ducause. The Ducause, Florence, and all the memories that we have here, is for me a wonderful confluence of ideas, and points to experience, and explores some of these experiences photographically. The other pleasure is the feeling of being given an opportunity to reconnect with my own sense of the human body.

27.03.2008.
Jesse Albert

"Keeping busy. Despite heads.
Low and all hell.
Shawn

After Chuck Close: Little self portrait. 30x45 cm. spray paint and charcoal on wood.
The series is a reflection of the lighted windows at night. The illumination transmits scenes of places in their night time, shapes, signs, and reflections of our desires, thoughts, and emotions.

There is a lighted window (pass by in my mind)

And the space within holds a delight.

As I conjure visions, I feel a surge of a moment in dim light, by a lighted glass, my own looking in silent awe. I indulge in peace, presence, contemplation, and forget my own pride. A native moment for a little while.

I draw from these feelings I get through paintings and exploring empty spaces, figures, patterns, colors, and contrast that resonate for me.

Through technique and texture, I build up very transparent layers of paint. Contemplation in their presence will be absorbing or completely disquieting others. Transparent spaces speak friends, some are self-conscious while others are specific.

I have painted with my subjects in which the process is more than just subjects. The brushstrokes express my desire to embrace something from here to pursue, visit, live, thought, and important characteristics take part.
Maps are a universal form of communication. They are easily understood by most people, regardless of language or culture. Incorporated in a map is the understanding that it is a “snapshot” of an idea, a single picture; a selection of concepts from a constantly changing database of geographic information. My work is a visual journal of my routes and travels during my stay in Florence that are displayed on different surfaces including found objects.
Melissa Espina

My works are not about the loss of control, rather the unexpected adventures that we unscrupulously embark on. They are about allowing yourself to give into the unknown. They are about everything that surrounds us. They are about your failures, your triumphs, your relationships. They are about exploring and accepting randomness. They are about your passion and your optimism. They are about the uncomfortable struggles that lead to something amazing. They are about the self that cannot be articulated in words. They are about the layers amongst layers of characters that develop and define who we are. They are about finding a path. They are about the external forces that mold us and define us to who we are today... while searching for who we will be tomorrow.

"Exhilarated up to the bone" - 41 panels, 10cm x 26cm
"Exhilarated and a little different" - 5 panels 10cm x 10cm
Laura Fedynyszyn

My body of work is a series of anatomical portraits as a representation of personality. Like snowflakes, no two kidneys are identical.
Miriam Johnson
Organs of Urban Animals

The urban landscape is monotonous and we are riding its back like burrowers. The stop-motion collage film that I have been working on throughout the year is about the evolution of a city-creature, as its inhabitants experience the cycle of civilization. Ultimately, this film is about the metamorphosis from one state of being to the next. Like a dream sequence, this piece has been comprised of the elements of living that one may collect: postcards, photographs, history, and politics.
first you!
Janes
person

heavy cutting

The first poem I told you to

Cydney Langill
Lever. They again, it their would be some to.
We were to be such that this isn't
Bit the thing. I now added in the put the
faqly find it.
I now added up with the where which in, I don't know myself and the collect of my life.
I now look about great and go with a beautiful
Day that would never dry may not, photography.
For the past school year, I have been recreating my own experiences here in Florence through textile designs. These repeating patterns are reflective of the environment I am living in here in Italy and are based off of photos I have taken. 

Living in Florence, I am surrounded by beautiful images just by stepping outside of my apartment. I can find ideas for textile designs all over the place here: in museums, on the facades of churches, even in the most unexpected places. I constantly find myself taking photos of them to look back on for future art pieces. Rather than having the patterns I am making depict the city of Florence in the romanticized way that tour books and postcards tend to create, these images are specific to my own experiences as a resident living in contemporary Florence, not as a tourist.
PAINTING FROM OBSERVATION

With Kathy Cooke

Painting from observation means that you are trying to capture the essence of something as accurately as possible. It's not about just copying what you see, but rather about understanding the underlying structure and movement of the subject. This involves a lot of practice and patience, but it can be very rewarding.

In this lesson, we'll be looking at a few different techniques for painting from observation. The first step is to observe the subject carefully and make notes about its shape, color, and texture. Then, you can start painting from memory, using your notes as a guide.

One effective way to approach painting from observation is to break down the subject into smaller parts. This makes it easier to handle and can help you focus on specific areas.

Another important aspect of painting from observation is timing. Try to paint as soon as possible after observing the subject, before your memory fades.

As you practice, you'll find that your ability to paint from observation improves. It's a skill that takes time to develop, but it's well worth the effort.
The Touch of Her Hand

Her hand makes the mark; she makes it become void and its every dump, groove and direction reveals something once lost, removing and receptiveness to the delicate presence of her letters moves me to retreat and wonder. Don’s loving hand.

Venesia Rica
I divided first two between animation and drawn illustrations. For second term, I saw a page of comics per day. I like comics and animations because they appeal in higher dimensions than the pages themselves. For example, comics can represent entire stories that don’t fit in a page. You can see my work online at
3www.jamesspencer.com

- "Millennia" (in progress)
- "Harlequin’s Death" (short feature)
- "Chang and Eng" (24-page picture book)
- "Beekeeper"
- "Pig Paper" (24-page comic)
- "The Siren’s Lament: Pictures to Tell"
- "The Last Airship of St. Frank A.M.O." (graphic novel)
Rachel Stark

I have used my time in Italy to make beautiful art out of disgusting hair, so disgusting art out of beautiful hair. I suppose I painted a bit too.

Here is a thought:

Back, ass, neck, head, chest.
Wolf-pen's boy gets a bad rap.
But to be bold shanks.
Cortney Stephenson

Based on the relationship to both the city and my interaction with space and medium, this series of work maps out the bridging of my previous experience with the influence of this new environment. Through exploration in colour and technique, I wanted to work with my environment in some way, to translate the unique architecture and palettes of each city I have visited, into my work.
Iris Stunzi

How do you really remember your own life so far? How much of it is constructed from stories, second-hand tales and pure imagination? The creatures that exist in your own mind, or the legends and fairy tales we are told may be just as real, and are just as much a part of us as our everyday lives.
I search for industrial zones that are old enough to have sections that are abandoned or neglected. I go to these places with a camera, I look with! I am able to enter a site. Then I shoot.

These journeys are exciting and at times dangerous due to location. I find some place that I am happy with and bring back my research to paint and draw. I try to be technically accurate with an emphasis on colour, light and the decay of the site. The failure of a structure is the transition from human order to natural disorder. I like to think about the nature of production and the heavy handedness of industrialism as being faulted and slowly torn down by nature, time, and neglect. What is left is a beautiful skeleton of an era gone past.
Thank you for all your help and good times!

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