

Project 1 & 2: Place

MOTTO: A PLACE TO BE SOMEBODY.

NICKNAME(S): CORPORATE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD. CHEMICAL CAPITAL OF THE WORLD.



INTRODUCTION

Most of the work that I do as an artist, whether it's music, or images or a story, begins with a place... a room, a road, a city, a country...these places become jumping off points for my imagination. — multimedia performance artist Laurie Anderson

What do place, art, and self have in common? To what extent does place define who we are? During this semester, create photographs, video, animation, or installation that explore how place influences you and informs your creative process. Whether you shoot the everyday places, explore the unique corners of the city, or reference Wilmington to create imaginary landscapes, how can you create a work that invites a more complex relationship to your surroundings?

Some works dealing with Space and Place:

Jeremy Blake's Winchester House <http://vimeo.com/16485005>

(for history on the site also see: <http://winchestermysteryhouse.com/sarahwinchester.cfm>)

Liz Hickock <http://www.lizhickok.com/index.html>

<http://www.samappleby.demon.co.uk/space.htm>

<http://www.23centstories.com/>

<http://www.mis-guide.com/index.html>

ASSIGNMENT

Over the course of the semester visit, research, write about, document, and explore our closest city, Wilmington, DE. Observe the way in which you relate to urban space, intervene in public life, and engage people. Try to situate your work in its geographical and social context.

Step 1: Over the next two weeks visit Wilmington, make sketches, and respond to what you see and interact with. Find someone, somewhere, or something of interest to you. Document it through the lens. Interview someone. Create a model of something. Think of Step 1 as a sketch for the rest of the semester. These initial investigations will be installed in StuArts Gallery during week five. Additionally, we will learn how to install photos, videos, and/or installation.

Step 2: Using step 1 as the basis for your ten-week investigation, return to your first sketch and begin working through the details. Flush out and expand on the ideas that surfaced while creating Step 1.

At the end of the semester you will be showcasing your work. That exhibit will be in Wilmington. Knowing where your work will be located often impacts what one makes.

We will screen single-channel work at Theatre N on the first Friday of December. We will curate work by other video students as well to fill out the screening. Additionally, as many of you may be working in other media (video installation, photography, etc) we will work together to find an additional space in Wilmington for exhibit. We will need to get permission to use the space. To do so, we will need to learn to write about what we are doing to sell our ideas to the community and publicize the event.

DID YOU KNOW? SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT WILMINGTON

- Wilmington is the largest city in the state of Delaware.
- During the American Revolutionary War only one small battle was fought in Delaware, British troops occupied Wilmington shortly after the nearby Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777. The British remained in the town until they vacated Philadelphia in 1778.
- Wilmington was one of the first major manufacturers of gunpowder. Knowledgeable in the manufacture of gunpowder, by 1802 DuPont had begun making the explosive on the banks of the Brandywine River, just outside of the town of Wilmington. The DuPont company became a major supplier to the U.S. military.
- The 1950s saw a large increase in people living in the suburbs of North Wilmington and commuting into the city to work. This lifestyle was made possible by extensive upgrades to area roads and highways and through the construction of Interstate 95, which cut through several of Wilmington's neighborhoods and contributed to significant population losses in the city. Urban renewal projects in the 1950s and 1960s cleared entire blocks of housing in the Center City and East Side areas.
- Riots and civil unrest in the city following the 1968 assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and in response, on April 9, 1968, Governor Charles L. Terry, Jr. deployed the National Guard and the Delaware State Police to the city at the request of Mayor John Babiarez. One week later, Mayor Babiarez requested the National Guard troops be withdrawn, but Governor Terry refused, and kept them in the city until his term ended in January 1969. This is reportedly the longest occupation of an American city by state forces in the nation's history—that's 10 months of occupation!!
- Geographic proximity give Wilmington some of the characteristics of a satellite city to Philadelphia, but Wilmington's long history as the most important city in Delaware, its significant urban core, and its independent value as a business destination makes it more properly considered a small but independent city in the Philadelphia metropolitan area.
- Bob Marley was a one-time Wilmington resident and worked at the old Chrysler Factory in Newark, DE.
- Wilmington played a major role in the underground railroad assisting hundreds of slaves escape to the North
- Wilmington was the fictional location for the movie Fight Club referencing the motto and the presence of credit card companies among other things.

DCCA

Delaware Historical Society

Underground Railroad

Hagley Museum

<http://www.whispersofangels.com/routes.html>

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/underground/de2.htm>

http://www.deldot.gov/information/community_programs_and_services/byways/railroad.shtml

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilmington,_Delaware

http://www2.dupont.com/Phoenix_Heritage/en_US/index.html (DuPont)

<http://www.webcitation.org/5ygkF5zYB>

<http://books.google.com/books?id=xN3pzLSQN8IC&pg=PA57&pg=PA56#v=onepage&q&f=false>