

# ARST 2210 [Introductory Photography]

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Study Abroad Program Cortona, Italy

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**KAITLIN CRUMRINE**

**GLENICE GALLAGHER**

**MARY BLAIN GRIST**

**MIA JAMES**

**ALEXIS JOY**

**KC NUGENT**

**TESH PARRIS**

**HALLIE POINDEXTER**

**NICOLE SANFORD**

**RUTH ANNE TRAYNELIS**

**REBECCA VAUGHN**

**MARCELLE ZAVALA**

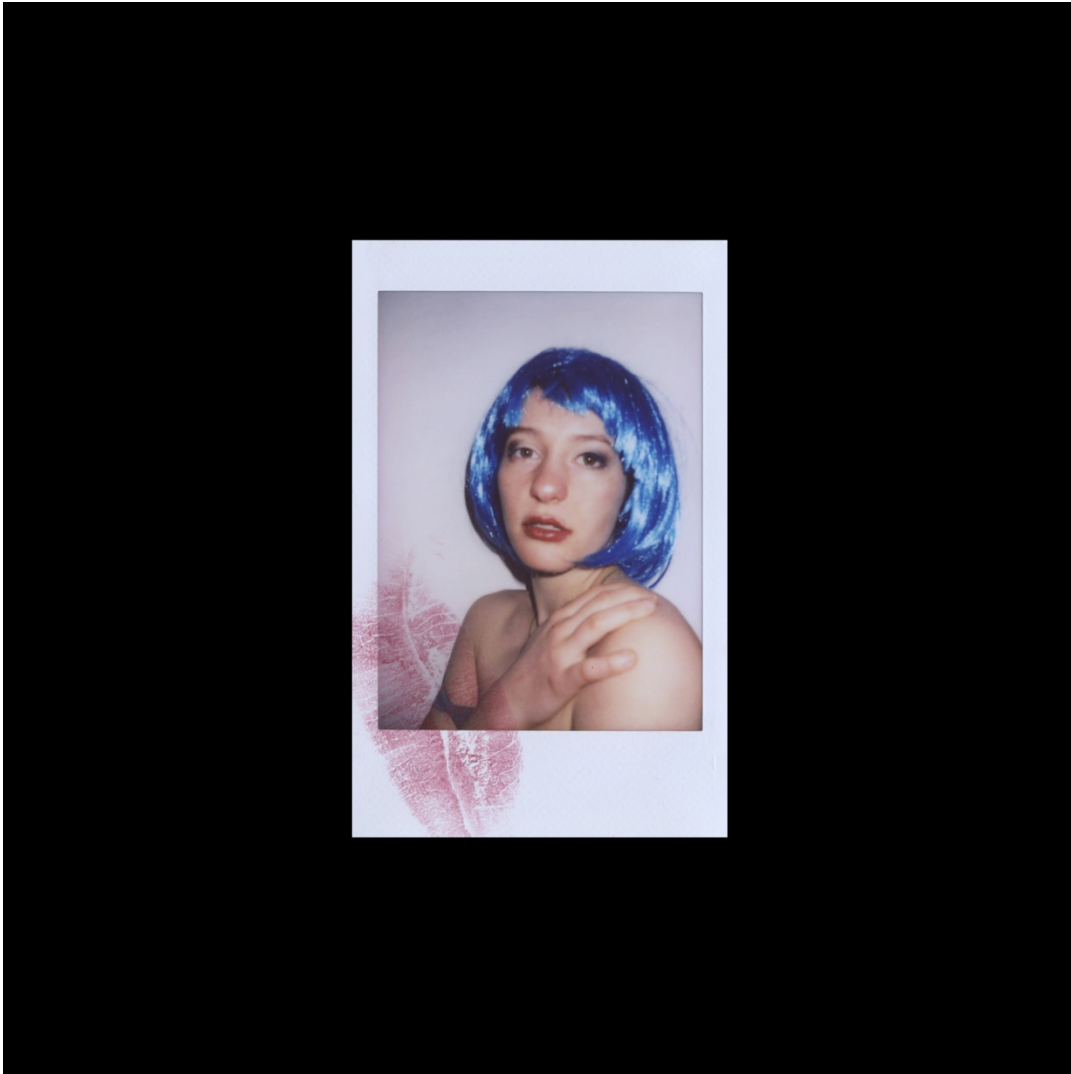
WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO VIEW concerns the artistic visions of twelve young women, most of whom are discovering the medium of photography for the first time. That is to say, though millions today carry a digital camera, these young artists pursued a personal body of work inspired in part by their new surroundings. Within the context of a world imploded by images, they sought to make exceptionally compelling images. They also spent the semester researching a photographer they admired.

Their distilling process began in Rome. What better place to directly experience the underpinnings of photography—the camera obscura and perspectival space? On arrival in Cortona, four short assignments focused on characterizing elements that are part of any image: time, place, portrait, narration, and abstraction. Given 2018’s momentum for women’s rights, we surveyed photographers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century whose art, in less advantageous times, raised political and cultural awareness of identity, gender, and race.

Other factors that favored the migration, adaption and adjustment of our lenses was the unexpected subzero “Siberian blast” of cold air that hit Europe. La primavera was slow in coming. Rain, hail, snow and ice, however, would not stop this highly motivated group. Together, we ventured to see the great wonders of Assisi, Florence, Orvieto, Pisa, Rome, Siena, San Gimignano and Volterra.

So, while it may be warm and sunny NOW, it wasn’t when these photographs were captured. Please turn the pages slowly, as if you had an umbrella in your other hand!

*Susannah Hays*  
—13 April 2018  
CORTONA, ITALY



KAITLIN CRUMRINE *Mood* Cortona, Italy, 2018 2-1/4-inch Polaroid

MOOD, inspired by Andy Warhol, is a series that depicts a girl in an electric blue wig. The six Polaroids render an inconclusive mood, playing with the theme that Andy most commonly teased with, identity. Growing up with anxiety, I constantly found myself in a state of doubt as to who I was and who I would become; Andy also dealt with these same issues growing up. Tactile learning became monumental in my life; I found that having something to physically hold made an impact on my ability to understand important information. Polaroids allow for an instant picture that causes the photographer to pause and think about the subject he or she is capturing. To me the Polaroids capture my curiosity for how we as humans discover ourselves through self-experimentation.



GLENICE GALLAGHER *Padre e Figlia* San Gimignano, Italy 2018 archival pigment print

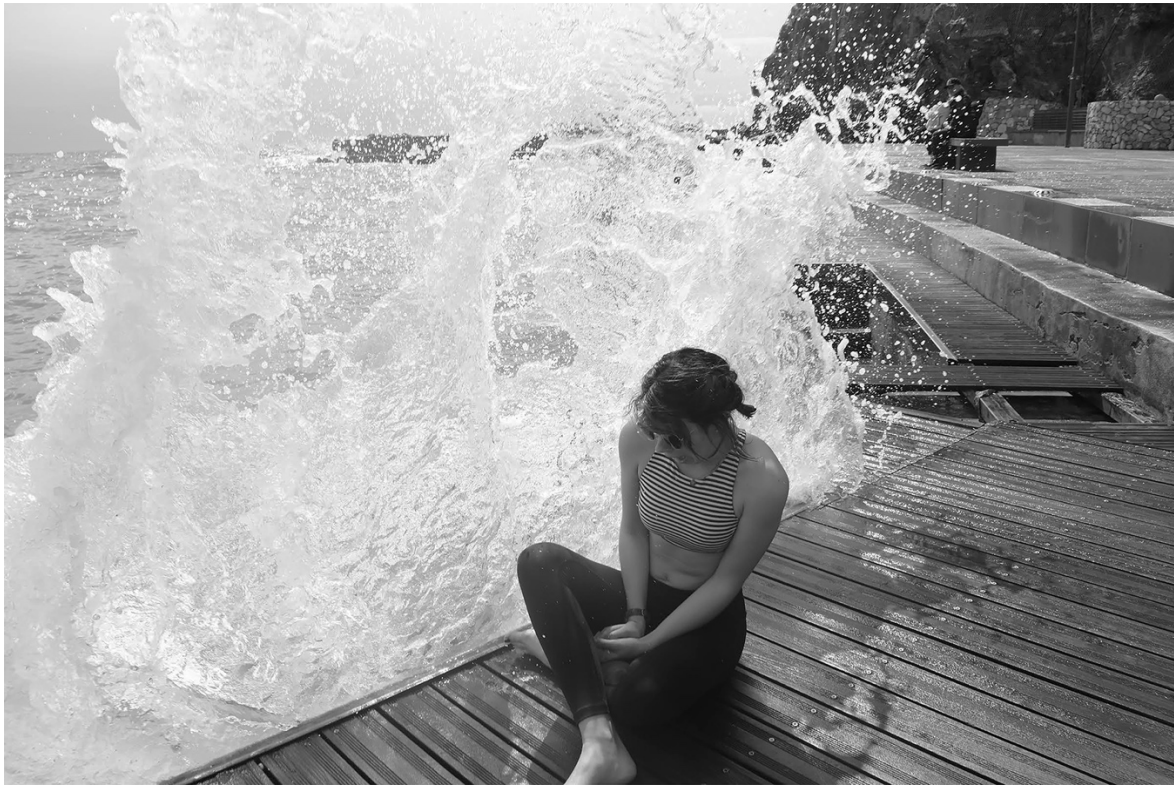
PADRE e FIGLIA is from a series entitled THE HUMAN CONDITION, which focuses on the mundane and, simultaneously, the complexity of everyday human interactions. I chose to focus on human interactions and relationships because although the smallest gesture may seem insignificant from an outsider's perspective, such moments may be pivotal, effectively altering the relationships of the people involved.



MARY BLAIN GRIST *Snow Over Cortona* Cortona, Italy 2018 archival pigment print

SNOW OVER CORTONA pays homage to American photographer Ansel Adams. I immediately knew I wanted to pay tribute to Adams' work not only due to the sublime beauty of his fine art prints, but because we share an interest in instilling appreciation for the conservation of nature.

As an Environmental Economics and Management major, I am discovering Adams' untouched landscapes not in the United States, where they were documented, but as I view the magical landscapes of Tuscany. While black and white digital capture has its own challenges, to emulate Adams' gelatin-silver aesthetic has made me highly aware of his technical skill. But, more importantly, SNOW OVER CORTONA touches on the issue of climate change. Cortona normally does not experience sub-degree weather in March. This image captures a second snowfall, where the tree-tops covered in snow reminded me of the High Sierra's rather than springtime in Tuscany! Climate change is increasingly becoming a global concern. This image is therefore unique, given the day in March it was made.



MIA JAMES *Kairos* Monterosso al Mare, Italy 2018 archival pigment print

In the beginning, I arrived in Italy wide-eyed and determined to document every moment. Every place and experience was shiny and new. Soon I had thousands of photos and videos but they had little depth to them. Then I discovered the famed photographer, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and began to slow down and wait for the “decisive moment”. KAIROS is the fleeting marriage of time and place that creates the opportune atmosphere for action, words, or movement. In KAIROS, I intended to capture crucial moments that reflected the feeling of being overwhelmed. Sometimes in life, waves unexpectedly come crashing down on us. Personally, this photo personifies how my anxiety has blindsided me in the past and expresses how helpless I felt. Like the crashing wave, my anxiety was all I could see. But also, like the wave, it receded.





ALEXIS JOY *For Amber: Golden Shadows* Florence, Italy 2018 archival pigment print

Grief can consume your life, if you let it. Before coming to Cortona someone very close to me lost her fight to cancer. This tragic event and Abelardo Morell's Camera Obscura images were the inspiration behind my series FOR AMBER. As Morell's work merges exterior views and domestic spaces to create a dreamlike quality, I merged landscapes from Upstate New York, where Amber and I grew-up, with Tuscany. By projecting these images onto myself, self-portraits that evoke a neither-here-nor-there realm emerged.

Even though Cortona is a place Amber never saw, I truly believe her spirit traveled here with me. She is always with me. By no means does the fact of her spirit being released from her body, suddenly make her a "was." The past does not deserve to take her. Her presence lives on, not only in my memories, but in everyday things; the golden buildings, the slightly crooked path, views that are so grand that in comparison you feel so small. While these are places Amber never saw with me, I see her in them. My self-portrait is for healing. Thinking about Amber with every move I make, emerging from this tragedy with her view on life and resilience was my goal. Even though the pain of her loss will never subside, I know she survives in me.



KC NUGENT *A Fruitful Instant* Cortona, Italy 2018 archival pigment print

Through a recently found love of Laura Letinsky's still life photographs, I found myself inspired by how her simple setups of everyday items created mesmerizing images. In *A FRUITFUL INSTANT*, I incorporated her idea of simplicity and serenity (the blank, white wall and table cloth) the unseen action (the unobserved cutting and eating of the blood orange). Although the composition of the setting is quiet, it is a purposeful decision that allows the main objects of the photograph, the blood orange and knife, to shine through and evoke a sense of balance, while the edge of the unknown before and after creates a slight discontent. As a result of this exploration, I now have a profound love and desire for exploring different still life constructs and how I might use this idea of deliberate setup to create subtle emotions and disturbances in the viewers' eyes.





TESH PARRIS *Prospettiva* Cortona, Italy 2018 archival pigment print

PROSPETTIVA is from a series inspired by Daniel Kukla's Edge Effect. Kukla's work forced me to think about photographing from a different, almost backwards, perspective. I set out with a mirror and my iPhone and discovered a lonely red chair: the perfect vessel to reflect the valley below. Kukla's work encouraged me to reflect on Cortona, my time here, and how I will go forth once I return to the states. I hope to continue looking at things from a different, almost backwards perspective, and never stop reflecting.



HALLIE POINDEXTER *Made New: Barren* Cortona, Italy 2018 archival pigment print

MADE NEW is a series of photographs that reflect both the change of seasons in the Tuscan hill town of Cortona and the change in seasons in myself. During my morning meditations, photographing plants and watching the sunrise, my body and spirit waited together for growth; I slowly watched things that appeared dead return to life.

In BARREN I observed a single branch move from its dormant winter cycle to its spring blossoming. My daily documentation was contiguous with my recognizing the ebb and flow of my personal growth. As my body longed for the sun, and the flowers longed to blossom, my soul longed to be healed. Through the unexpected and unpredictable weeks of snow, rain, and fluctuating temperatures, nature required me to remain patient as I myself slowly blossomed.





NICOLE SANFORD *Arno River* Florence, Italy 2018 archival pigment print

Since arriving in Rome, I have found myself mesmerized by the intricate and beautiful architecture all around me. I was especially drawn to the elasticity of the sites; meaning, as we moved from the rather large city of Rome, to small Etruscan hill towns and the human scaled city of Florence, architectural elements remained unified. It was the physical history of the buildings that encapsulated time, taking me back many centuries.

ARNO RIVER is one memorable moment of my architectural series. When exploring the streets of Florence, I was drawn into the ambiguity of the shifting clouds above the immovable structures that were evenly split by the river flowing down the middle. I aspired to capture the eternal beauty; the dramatic force of timelessness moving toward an unknown destiny. Once I discovered my inclination towards architecture, my eye became attuned to the work of 19<sup>th</sup> century French photographer, Eugène Atget. In homage to his brilliant work, I experimented with turning my black and white images into his sepia, albumen tones.



RUTH ANNE TRAYNELIS *Untitled* Cortona, Italy 2018 video still

Wasicha- little shrouded house  
Your clothing is worn in the wind  
A new suit for your closed door?  
The other fails  
and in age has lost all modesty.  
Across the valley, someone is, burning.

My work remains a discreet investigation of hierarchy of thought, and the paradoxes contained within experience of time and of intimacy. We are inextricably woven into the physicality of these experiences, and with interest in bringing this to our attention, I have intended my videos to be an abstracted, unexplained, and uninhibited invitation to experience a moment of conscious breathing, reflection of time as a natural force, and intimacy with self. I continue to be fascinated by how symbol chooses to dwell in life, and how unprecedented in rarity the currents of time are; I continue in awe of the violent grace with which the force of erosion is constantly accusing our shrouds of their ordinary perfection. On a more personal note, appreciating the consequences of intimate contact with time has led me to a deep place of appreciating the loosening thread and its failure to do its assigned job. Freed from purpose, the degrading fabric becomes a friend.





REBECCA VAUGHN *Untitled No. 1* Cortona, Italy 2018 archival pigment print

Since I arrived in Cortona, I have been inspired to make photographs of people. In homage to American photographer, Cindy Sherman, I created a focused series of film noir portraits. Moody, dark and dramatic, the ancient walls of the Etruscan hill town in Tuscany naturally enhanced possible scenarios.

UNTITLED NO.1 is one example where the mysterious drama, cast by a single raking flood light set the stage. The low-key lighting created the grave like charcoal tones of the harshly textured wall in relationship to the softer downward gaze of my model, who stands in the shadow of a dark, closed door. I leave it to you, the viewer, to determine what the story might be about.





MARCELLE ZAVALA *The Third Culture* Cortona, Italy 2018 archival pigment print

All my life, I have felt lack of belonging and disconnect from all three of the cultures I come from. An internal battle within myself exists when it comes to expressing these emotions, feeling both an internal pressure to confront them and an external pressure to maintain the comfort of the closed white culture I grew up in. Since college, I feel that I have finally developed pride and a sense of home in both my physical body and my multicultural background that I have been so combative with from a young age.

Though I had an initial project idea, I felt that I had a responsibility to create art and a vision that was more personally connected to myself. Art is something that makes me feel that sense of home I was in search of for so long, and to finally feel that inspired me to express it through the congruent parallel of art and identity. In my work *THE THIRD CULTURE*, I have strived to cultivate inspiration from Mexican photographer Graciela Iturbide's photographs. Like her, I have focused on themes of identity, the self, and culture – and further channel that beauty into my experiences, both painful and celebratory, as a third culture individual through self-portraiture.



LEFT TO RIGHT: KC Nugent, Tesh Parris, Ruth Anne Traynelis, Nicole Sanders, Kaitlin Crumrine, Rebecca Vaughn, Marcelle Zavala, Mary Blain Grist, Glenice Gallagher, Alexis Joy, Hallie Poindexter and Mia James.