

Teaching Portfolio

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Professional Work Portfolio

Vivarium
: place of life
Medicinal plants growing throughout the Southwest



Slide #1: Carnegiea Gigantea, Saguaro, Saguaro National Park, AZ

2018

Inkjet Print

24X36

Reaching heights up to fifty feet tall and ages up to one hundred and fifty years old, the saguaro holds its status firmly as the largest cactus in the United States. As such, it is of no surprise that it's also one of the most useful of all plants growing in Arizona. The fruits can be eaten raw, cooked into an edible gruel or syrup, or they can be fermented into an intoxicating beverage. The seeds, which contain high levels of vitamin C, can be gathered and stored for long periods of time to be eaten later. The woody ribs from the dry skeletons are extremely strong and useful as building materials and first aid splints. Whether making candles, chicken feed, medicine, food, or alcohol, the uses of this giant saguaro go on extensively.



Slide #2: *Salvia Columbariae*, Chia, Joshua Tree National Park, CA

2017

Inkjet Print

16X24

This low growing chia produces some of the most nutritiously rich seeds known. From healing diabetes to supporting the heart and digestive system, chia seeds are believed to be one of the healthiest foods on the planet.



Slide #3: Marking Useful Plants, Superstition Mountains, AZ
2018
Inkjet Print
24X36

Yerba Santa, Globemallow, Dudleya, Ephedra, Elephant Tree, Blue Palo Verde, Barrel Cactus, Saguaro, Cholla, Prickly Pear, Senna, Mesquite, Whipple Cholla, Desert Christmas Cactus, Fishhook Cactus.



Slide #4: *Abronia villosa*, Desert Sand-Verbena,
Joshua Tree National Park, CA
2017
20X30

This sand-verbena is commonly found creeping along the desert floor near creosote bush in a wide elevation range from sea level to about 8,200 feet. Two different poultices can be made from different parts of the plant. The first can be made from flowers and leaves, which can then be applied on the skin to reduce swelling and pain from burns. The second poultice can be made from the root, which is then used to ease pain caused by skin lacerations.



Slide #5: Yucca Brevifolia, Joshua Tree, Joshua Tree National Park, CA
2017
Inkjet Print
24X36

This iconic yucca of Joshua Tree National Park has many edible parts, along with many household and survival uses. The flower buds, before opening, can be parboiled in salt water to remove the bitterness, drained and then cooked again and served like cauliflower. The opened flowers are rich in sugar and can be roasted and eaten as a type of candy. The fruits can be roasted, then formed into cakes and dried for later use. The root can be boiled or roasted, and the seeds can be eaten raw. As for everyday uses, a fiber obtained from the leaves can be made into rope, baskets, sandals, clothing and other necessary materials.



Slide #6: Ephedra Trifurca, Longleaf Ephedra, Joshua Tree National Park
2017
Inkjet Print
20X30

The ephedra genus has some of the oldest known medicinal and ceremonial uses documented. In the Shanidar caves of modern Iraq, 40,000 to 60,000 year old Neanderthal remains have been found resting peacefully with the ephedra plant clutched to their chests. It is believed they placed this ephedra with the deceased as a type of guide for their last journey into the spiritual realm. Similar ceremonies are evident with the Tamang people in Nepal, where they cremate their dead with dried bundles of the ephedra burning.



Slide #7: *Lycium Andersonii*, Wolfberry, Superstition Mountains, AZ
2021

Inkjet Print
24X36

The small blueberry-sized fruits of this desert wolfberry can be eaten raw or cooked, or can even be dried to be eaten later, similar to a raisin. Medicinally, the fruits are an impressive source of vitamins A, C, and E, and are uniquely high in essential fatty acids, which is rare for fruit. Current research is underway on the plants ability to halt or even revers the growth of cancer.



Slide #8: *Juniperus Deppeana*, Alligator Juniper, Prescott National Forest, AZ
2021
Inkjet Print
24X36

Not only is this impressive juniper the oldest growing Arizona species in the *Juniperus* genus, reaching ages up to 1,400 years old, but it also has the most unique and distinctive bark growth out of its family, taking similar form to alligator skin. It bears an impressively large number of fruits, and while they are edible and nutritious, they are not the most palatable. For consumption, they can be eaten raw or cooked.



Slide #9: Theobroma Cacao, Cacao Tree, Costa Rica
2021
Inkjet Print
24X36

The history of the cacao tree and chocolate industry in Costa Rica is both fascinating and alarming. Up until the 1930s, the cacao bean was used by the indigenous as a currency, just as many other pre-Columbian Mesoamerican civilizations did. Then, in the 1970s, just as cacao was Costa Rica's leading export, a monilia fungus destroyed 80% of the cacao trees across the country. Through the production of new strains immune to this fungus, the cacao tree once again thrives throughout the Costa Rica landscape, with its prized bean still being made into a ritualistic drink used in ceremonies and celebrations.



Slide #10 Psychotria Poeppigiana, Hot Lips, Costa Rica
2021
Inkjet Print
24X36

While controversially referred to as hot lips or hooker lips, this endangered poeppigiana growing throughout South America can be used for a number of issues, including headache, earache, muscle pain, colds, and whooping cough. I have even heard whispers of its magical powers being used as a talisman for good luck in hunting rituals.



Slide #11: Hesperaloe Parviflora, Red Yucca, Tempe, AZ
2016
Inkjet Print
24X36

In warmer climates across the globe, this red yucca is cultivated as a drought tolerant ornamental plant for landscaping purposes, most likely due to its hardy characteristics and lengthy flowering season. Traditionally, it was used as a fragrance to help enhance one's senses, and as a dye for certain materials. Current research is underway on its fibers for use as efficient cord and rope making, and on its pulp for producing paper.



Slide #12: Organ Pipe Cactus, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, AZ
2018
Inkjet Print
24X36

As the global climate warmed at the end of the last Ice Age, this organ pipe cactus slowly migrated north from its warm, dry tropics, up to the Sonoran Desert, arriving in Arizona only 3,500 years ago. It is a very picky cactus, as it only thrives in extremely warm climates with south facing rocky slopes. This likely explains why dense populations are only found in the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument area, along with a few other select locations in Northern Mexico. Even so, it bears fairly large fruit for its body size, and holds the reputation as one of the most delicious of the Sonoran Desert.



Slide #13: *Larrea Tridentata*, Creosote, Tempe, AZ
2016

Inkjet Print
24X36

The sacred creosote bush can be easily found covering dry plains and mesas throughout the deserts of the southwest. Known as the “plant that cures everything,” creosote often symbolizes a long life full of knowledge and good health, among an infinite list of medicinal applications.



Slide #14: Thevetia Peruviana, Peruvian Rattle Tree, Yellow Oleander, Tempe, AZ
 2015
 Inkjet Print
 20X30

This unique oleander is originally from Peru but is now cultivated as an ornamental in most tropical zones of the world due to its evergreen quality. The seeds are rich in cardiac glycosides, with eight to ten being a lethal dose. Known as *yoyotl* in Mexico, the seeds are used in folk medicine as a cardiac stimulant and analgesic. Peels of fruits are hard and can be used to make rattles and clappers for dances. Its more powerful relative, *cabalonga*, is said to have magical powers and psychoactive affects similar to ayahuasca.



Slide #15: Ruellia Brittoniana, Purple Showers, Mexican Petunia, Tempe, AZ
2016
Inkjet Print
20X30

These fast-growing purple showers petunias were originally native to Mexico but are now found all across the United States as an invasive species. It is a very potent herb that can be harvested throughout most of the summer. To do so, simply collect the flowers and leaves, then let them dry completely. They can then be used later in a tea to treat headache and dizziness. The dried mixture can also be smoked, which will indeed induce strong hallucinations where the user is said to have “sensations of soaring through the air as if they had transformed into a raven.”



Slide #16: *Coriolus Versicolor*, Turkey Tail Mushroom, Costa Rica
2020
Inkjet Print
20X30

This immune boosting turkey tail fungus found growing all throughout the world has become a popular choice for cancer patients seeking a magical cure. Even if complete remission isn't feasible on its own, this fungus can at least be used as an adjuvant with chemotherapy treatment in order to manage gastric, colon, and colorectal cancer.



Slide 17: Echinocereus Engelmannii, Hedgehog Cactus, Papago Park, AZ
2019

Inkjet Print
24X36

While the hedgehog cactus may not bear the most desirable fruits of the Arizona desert, it is indeed extremely edible and nutritious. The fruits and seeds contain impressively high amounts of vitamin C, while the pulp contains traces of antibiotics which can be mixed into a helpful poultice for skin lacerations, burns, and other surface trauma.

Video (1 of 3)



Slide #18: Video Still from “Barefoot & The Walking Tree”
2019

Duration: 4:08

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/379850424>

While doing research in Costa Rica, I came across a tree known as the walking tree. Locals gave it this name because the tree can use its stilt-like legs to move towards sunlight, mimicking a walking motion. My initial reaction was to create a video performance of myself walking around the tree barefoot in order to highlight this unique characteristic. This barefoot element was especially important since I had been working in the dangerous jungle elements for weeks, having to constantly think about deadly animals and plants with every step I took. I would also reflect on how extreme it must have been thousands of years ago to live and survive in a place like this, without the luxury of the protective gear I was wearing. This video brings these thoughts and feelings together in a ritualistic performance exploring my distant connection to nature.

Video (2 of 3)



Slide #19: Video Still from “Magnificent Palms”
2017

Duration: 2:38

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/247068468>

This video was created in collaboration with the writer Jared Duran. The first part of the collaboration consisted of Jared doing a studio visit with me to learn about my art process. The next part of the collaboration was for him to write a response to my work. He wrote a poem based on a dream he had about David Lynch as a shamanic figure guiding him through endless rows of palm trees in Phoenix, AZ. Towards the end of this dream, David Lynch helps Jared come to the realization that the palm trees are planted only for their aesthetic appeal, contributing to the superficial ideal of the American Dream and “paradise.” After this realization, the dream ends with David Lynch showing Jared that he and everyone else around him in the city are very similar to these palm trees. This video explores these metaphors of the “palm tree,” along with its symbolism in Western culture.

Video (3 of 3)



Slide #20: Video Still from “Observations of Hyles Lineata”

2015

Duration: 3:20

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/93756263>

The intersection of science and nature can often be a progressive one, guiding humankind towards a more positive future. However, at other times it can often be ambiguous and dark. This video explores these two sides of good and evil, while also critiquing the repercussions of a scientific observation on the natural world.

Syllabus I

Photography As The Constructed Image, ART 394

Ryan Parra, rmp@asu.edu

Office Hours: Thursday Friday 9-10:00 am

Course Description:

Traditionally, photography has been considered a subtractive process, as the photographer out in the field decides which information to leave out of the frame and what to include in it. However, this subtractive approach is only one of many ways to approach photography. Instead of only looking and capturing, this course will focus on a more hands-on additive approach. Ranging from still lifes, double exposure portraits, abstract photography, and digital compositing all the way to studio lighting, the class will explore the theme of the constructed photograph with an emphasis on manipulating one's subject matter for the lens/screen.

In this class, students will examine the current state of the constructed image in the art world, as well as its more recent history. Students will also pursue self-directed photographic projects that will result in the making of three bodies of work in the theme of the class. The rest of the semester will mostly consist of instructor lectures/demos, project critiques, student presentations, reading discussions, and so on.

Class Goals:

The class considers the constructed image as an approach that has become increasingly popular in photography's digital age. We will look at bodies of work by contemporary artists, as well as a survey of artists working with additive processes throughout history. This research will lay the groundwork for each student to produce their own work. The class will cover such areas as a constructed image's common characteristics and design, studio lighting techniques, the still life, posed portraits and performing for the camera, double exposure portraits, glitch art, digital compositing, and abstract photography. But please note: now that this course has transitioned to an online platform, this will not be a class that teaches how to use photo editing software, and we will not be able to use the lighting studio on campus. However, we will still discuss lighting studio techniques, and the class will introduce a basic DIY clamp lighting setup, along with a natural window lighting setup you can do at home. I will also have brief Photoshop demos from time to time. Emphasis will be on the concept of the constructed image and its relationship to each student's photographic practice.

Topics covered (partial list):

- Historical artists working with the constructed image
- Artists and movements today exploring the constructed image
- Characteristics of the constructed image practice
- Still life & lighting studio techniques
- Abstract photography
- Portraits and performing for the camera
- Double exposures

- Glitch art
- Digital compositing

Textbook:

There is no required textbook for this course. If you would like inspiration, “Photography Is Magic” by Charlotte Cotton is a great book in the theme of the constructed image. Other readings will also be assigned by the instructor throughout the semester.

Attendance:

Attendance is required. Three unexcused absences will result in a reduction of a full letter grade. Arriving late or departing early equates to a half absence. Absences will be excused when there is written documentation. Whether excused or not, email me if are going to miss a class, and if you do miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what was missed. When given work time in class, students are expected to stay and work the whole time. We learn a lot from each other, and I encourage peer discussion about technique and ideas. In class work time is also prime time to get one-on-one help from the instructor and feedback on project development.

Evaluation:

Criteria for grading are based on originality and successful execution of all projects and assignments. More specific grading guidelines will be outlined in assignment handouts. Top grades will be awarded for a combination of design excellence, conceptual depth, and individual improvement. In general, your assignments will be evaluated with three categories in mind: aesthetics, technical execution, and concept. The best art draws you in visually and intellectually.

Tasks:

Several brief tasks and lab participation exercises will be given for the lessons and material covered in class. The assigned tasks will be done during scheduled labs and as homework. Due dates will be posted.

Projects:

Projects will be worked on outside of regular class time. Due dates and grading rubrics will always be posted. Students are expected to work on projects outside of class time at least 6 hours a week (2 shooting session of at least 3 hours).

Quizzes:

There will be 2 quizzes. One quiz for the Midterm and a second for the Final. All quizzes are open note. Quizzes will be based on topics covered in your book and in class.

Grading:

A: Work that shows a strong sense of imagination and creativity with excellent execution both technically and conceptually, participating openly and willingly in class and during critiques and discussions, and spending time on projects outside of class.

B: Work that shows above average imagination and creativity with good execution, participation in critiques and discussions and regular class attendance.

C: Work that shows some imagination and creativity with fair execution, but is not above average, low effort to participate in critiques and discussions, last minute execution of

assignments, being late for class, leaving early or absences.

D-E: Projects are weak in conception/execution, no or minimal participation in class/ critique, regularly late and/or absent.

Grading Scale:	A+ 100%	A 93-99%	A- 90-92%
	B+ 87-89%	B 83-86%	B- 80-82%
	C+ 77-79%	C 70-76%	
	D 69-60%		
	E <60%		

The following is a breakdown of the weight of each aspect of the course:

Unit Projects	50%
Unit Exercises	30%
Quizzes	20%

*All grades are given at the sole discretion of the instructor and are final

Disclaimer:

Contemporary art is incredibly varied and at times can even be shocking, so be open to expanding what you think of as “art.” Art is not rated PG13, nor does it uphold any specific rule of moral standards. You may see examples of art that contain nudity, profanity, violence, or points of view other than your own.

Syllabus II

The Photobook, ART 494/598

Ryan Parra, rmp@asu.edu

Office hours: Monday Wednesday 12-1:00

Description:

This studio art class will explore the photographic book as a vehicle for contemporary photography. Technology and advances in book production have made the photographic book, or photobook, an increasingly popular choice for photographers looking for a way to feature and distribute their work. Thousands of photobooks are published each year, and photographers in various stages of their careers have found the book a practical solution for realizing their work and reaching new audiences. For many, the book form has generated new project ideas and has become the vehicle of choice for their work, even over more traditional wall-based exhibition venues. In this class, students will examine the current state of photobook publishing as well as its more recent history. Students will also pursue self-directed photographic projects that will result in the making of at least two self-published photobooks.

Class Goals:

The class considers the book as a printed object that has become increasingly easier to produce and purchase through on-line resources. We will look at books produced by contemporary publishers – trade publishers, academic and non-profit publishers along with self-published books and books produced by small artist cooperatives. This research will lay the groundwork for each student to produce their own books using resources available either locally or through web-based suppliers. The class will cover such areas as a photobook's physical characteristics and design, the methods and economics of book production, and considerations for distribution. *But please note: this is not a class in hand bookmaking or binding (please see classes in Printmaking for these topics), nor is it a class that teaches how to use design software to make books. Emphasis will be on the content of the photobook and its relationship to each student's photographic practice.*

Topics covered (partial list):

- Historical photo books (dating from the mid-20th century)
- Publishers active today and the books they're producing
- How photographers are using the book relative to their production as artists
- Physical characteristics of the photobook
- Paper, printing, binding
- Types of printing used to make photobooks
- Local and web-based resources for photobooks
- Self-published and small run photobooks
- Photobook design
- Image sequencing and editing
- Economics of photobook production and distribution

Enrollment Requirements:

Proficiency in photo editing software including Photoshop and cataloguing software such as Lightroom is important, as is the ability to pick up and learn such things as proprietary software used to create some photobooks online. The normal minimum undergraduate prerequisite is Photo II Color. Students must further demonstrate being capable of designing and pursuing their own creative projects.

Class Outcomes and Expectations:

Class will meet for discussions and critiques on Monday in Mathews Hall room 101.

Wednesdays are designated lab periods and will meet in the digital lab in Art 302 (starting around week 3).

Students are expected to show their artwork during Monday class critiques on a rotating schedule, normally every two to three weeks. During the semester each student will produce a minimum of two self-published photobooks. Students will work on book design, image editing and sequencing. Each student will research the options and methods for producing and disseminating their books. Some student's books may require multiple attempts or revisions to make corrections or improvements. Production costs must be borne by the student, as are the cost of all materials used. A final presentation of finished books will be required at the end of the semester.

Students will make presentations to the class on the results of their research into photobooks, analyzing books, artist intent, design and methods of production.

Attendance in class is required and absences and tardiness will be recorded for grading purposes. See the statement on absence below.

Participation in class discussion is expected each week. This is an important indicator of how each student is learning and critical for evaluation of student progress. Non-participation will be noted. *Do not underestimate the importance of this requirement!*

Assignments:

Assignments will be given sparsely in this class, and only as necessary to pursue evolving class content. These will usually occur in the beginning weeks, and later when necessary and tailored to group and individual needs.

An initial assignment will involve research on topics such as artists and their books, and methods of book printing. A research assignment will also be given to create a 10–15 minute class presentation on a book or artist's work to be delivered as a PowerPoint, PDF or Keynote slide presentation (details will be given later).

Two assignments will be given to produce self-published books, one book due approximately halfway through the semester, the other at the semester's end.

Beyond these given assignments, students will be expected to work and present results regularly on their own personal book related work. This work must be self-originated and self-directed.

Since the class is designed for senior level undergraduates and graduate students, being able to work individually, with confidence and without the prompts of further class assignments, is a class requirement. If you are uncertain about your ability to work at this level, please see me at the beginning of the semester so we may discuss further.

Grading:

Grading will be based on four criteria.

- 1) Scholarship: 40% of the final evaluation. This will be based on the quality of ideas and demonstrated understanding of conceptual issues, including the conceptual quality of the work produced and also the demonstrated advancement of ideas and understanding of class topics over the semester. This will include class presentations.
- 2) Craftsmanship: 10% of the final evaluation. This will be based on the technical quality of the work *as appropriate to the work's content*.
- 3) Effort: 30% of the final evaluation. This will be based on the overall effort, both in the amount of effort put into the work and also the effectiveness of that effort in advancing the work.
- 4) Participation: 20% of the final evaluation. This will be based on attendance, participation in class discussions, and overall contributions to the class learning environment.

Grade Scale, by % earned

94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
78-79	C+
70-77	C
60-69	D
0-59	E

The implications of the grade scale are this: The grade of "A" will be earned only through sustained hard work and excellence in all four areas. The grade of "C" is awarded for simply fulfilling requirements. The grade of "D" or "E" is given to those who fail to meet course requirements and the expectations of a university level student. All grades, including plus or minus increments are based solely on my interpretation of student performance using the criteria above.

Grades will not be assigned to work completed during the semester, rather the evaluation occurs at the end of the semester, taking into account the larger scope of student production and progress. Therefore, if students have any questions about their standing in the class, they are encouraged to see me during lab time or office hours or make an appointment if those hours do not meet their schedule. I am happy to discuss my understanding of a student's progress, on a one to one basis, at any time.

Graduate requirements Art 598:

Graduate students will be evaluated on the items in the course description above, but separately at a level appropriate to the degree sought. These items will become additional basis for evaluation:

- More rigorous presentations to the class on photobook topics. Visual presentations must include a bibliography of sources and a summary of the relevant points covered in the presentation.
- Grads must offer weekly, appropriate commentary on undergraduate work during critiques in class. Many grads will soon be teaching classes as university faculty, and the ability to communicate effectively will be evaluated accordingly.
- Grads must offer a leadership level of participation in theoretical discussions. Graduate contributions should express a thorough comprehension of the complex ideas evident in both historical and contemporary work. This may require research and preparations outside of class.
- Photographic work completed at a level of quality reflecting the degree sought. Both ideas and effort exhibited by graduates should set high standards for the class. Presentation of the work to the class during critiques should present a model for others.

Photography Student Work



Brandon Islas, Portrait Project (Self Portrait Exploring Past Places Lived), 2019



Kim Capria, Portrait Project (Self Portrait Exploring Identity), 2019



Sonjia Gonzales, The Constructed Image Project (Student Re-creating Her Vivid Dreams), 2018



Brandon Bayles, The Constructed Image Project (Glitch Art Exploring Subliminal Messages in Student's Childhood Toys), 2018

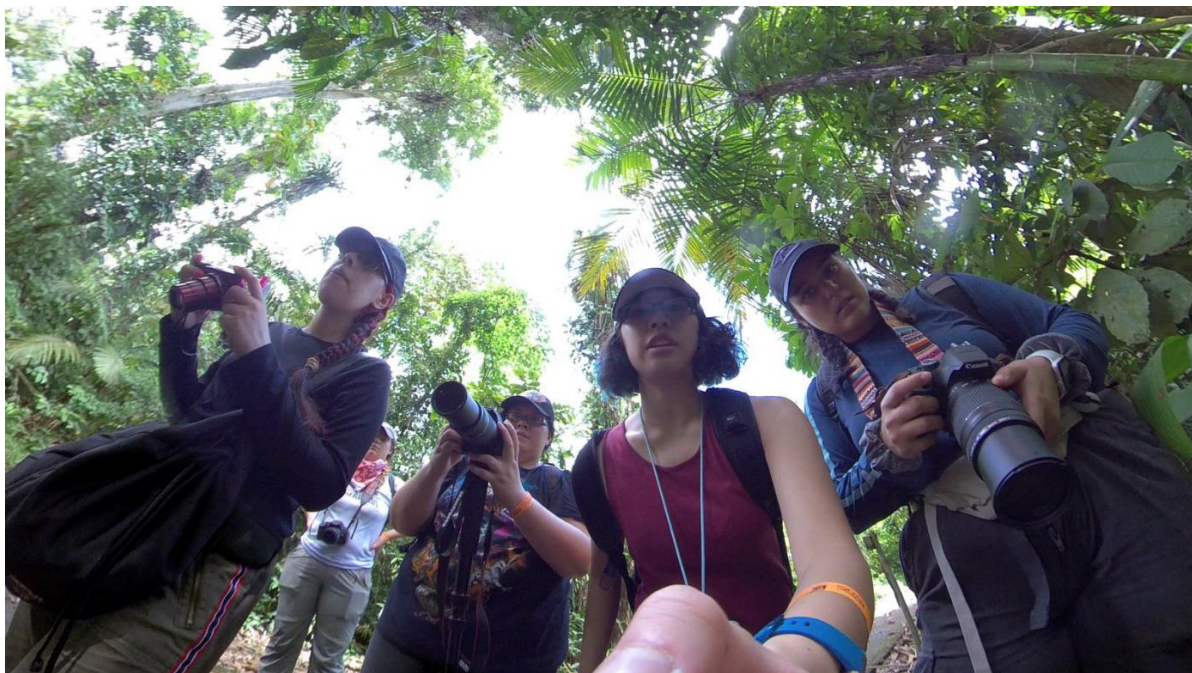


Students Working On Lighting & Constructed Image In-class Task, 2019

Costa Rica Study Abroad Digital Photography Student Work



Anita Magyer, *Someplace New: A Story of a Place*, 2019



Anita, Meggie, Maryam, & Marisa Working in The Field

Introduction to Digital Media Student Work



Sarah Cooley, Man VS Nature Raster Project, 2016



Cleo Graten, Man VS Nature Raster Project, 2016



Jessie Bachofer, Vector Portrait Project, 2021

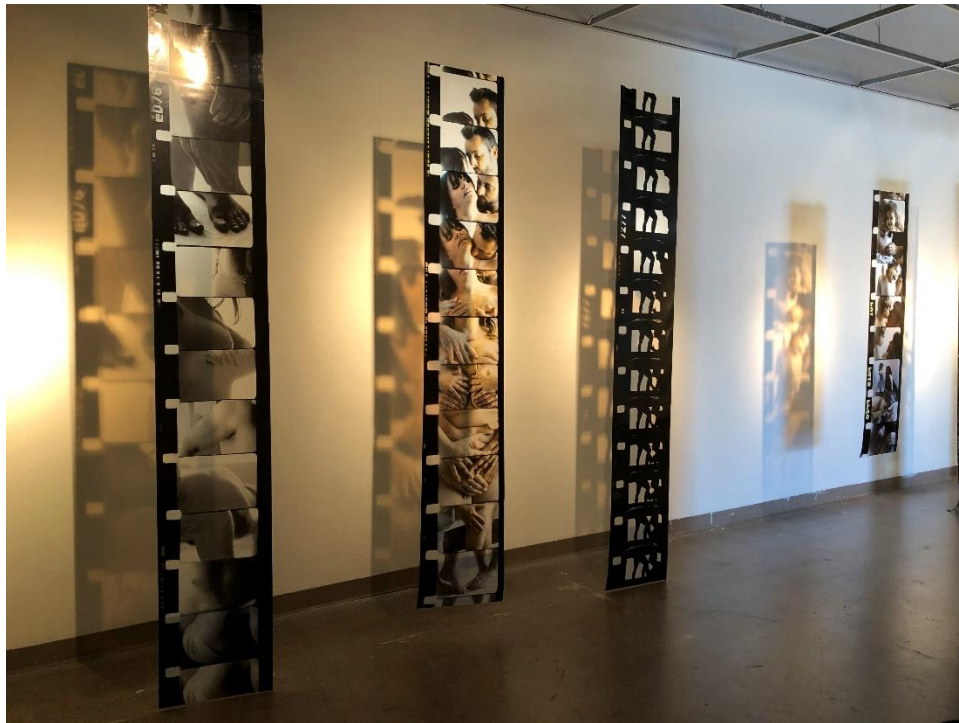


Mariah Moneda, Animation Project, 2021

Digital Printing Student Work



Bolun Zhu, Midterm Review of Part 1 Printing Proficiency, 2019



Kara McGuigan, Inkjet Print on Pictorico, 2019



Cameron Harper, Comparing Two Different Edited Version, 2019

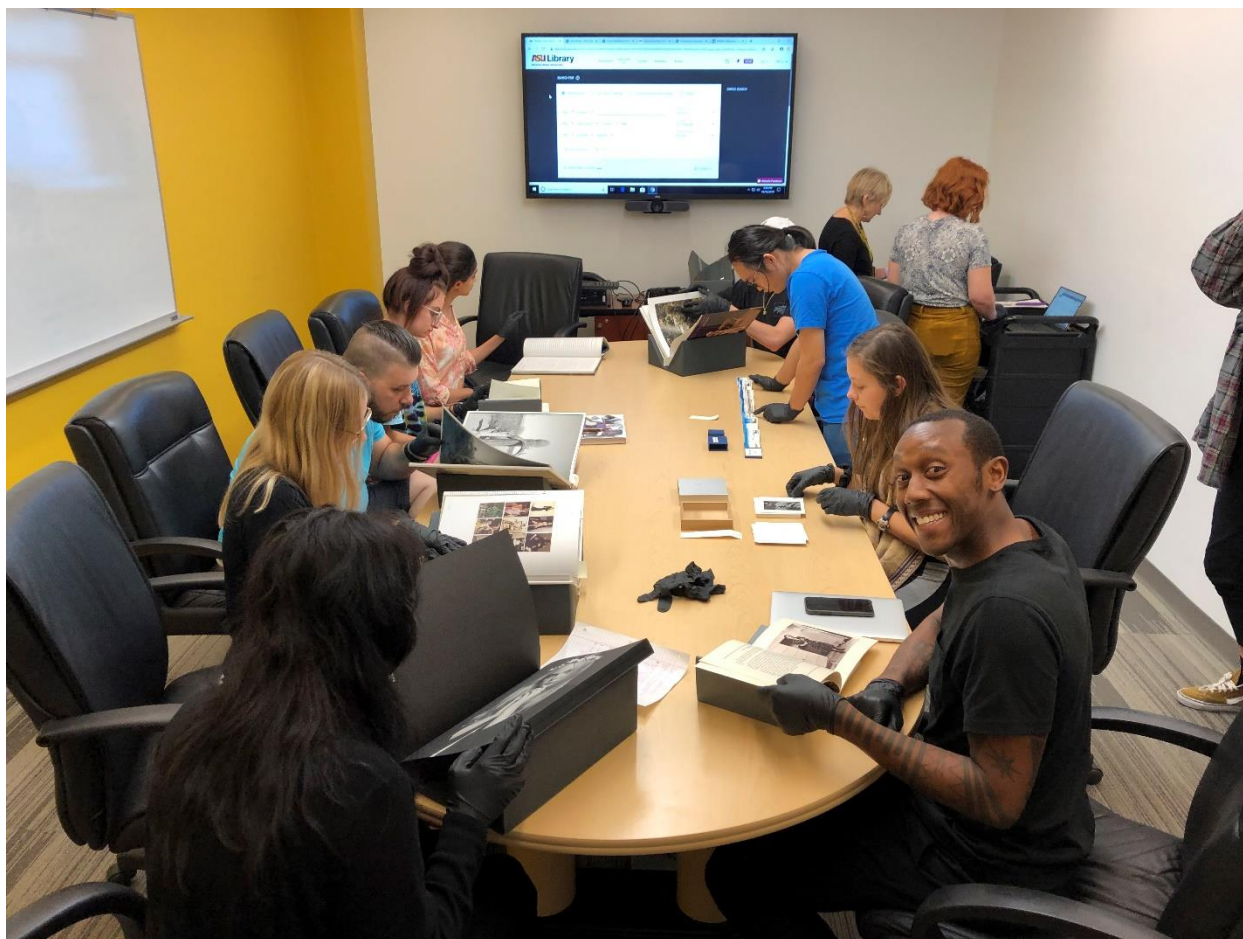


Qing Ma, Final Critique of Part 2 Printing Proficiency, 2019

The Photobook Student Work



Marcus (Ocean) Allen, C5, Photobook Final Project, 2019



The Photobook Class on a Fieldtrip to the Rare Books Special Collection, 2019