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Places

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INTRODUCTION

There is a certain discomfort that accompanies stepping outside the known into the unfamiliar. Yet in my life, the endeavors I have been the most uncertain about have often turned out to be the most rewarding to me. This is especially true in the case of traveling.

My first major experience away from home came with an opportunity to participate in a month-long study abroad in Switzerland. My uneasiness about the prospect of spending an extended period of time thousands of miles away from home almost kept me from going. In my life, I can identify a small handful of events that I consider pivotal - and the choice to go on this adventure was one of them. My experiences Switzerland that summer, as well as subsequent journeys away from home, have truly changed who I am.

Traveling, to me, is not a form of respite from the stresses and boredom of the day-to-day. I see it as something that shapes the lives of those who earnestly seek the experience.

“One’s destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things.”

-Henry Miller
THE PROJECT

Through both my educational courses as well as frequent sightings on the streets of Switzerland, I was heavily exposed to the poster. After returning home from my study abroad, I started new employment which required several posters to be designed per week. The combination of these two things caused me to become enamored with this artform. For my thesis, a natural pairing of my love of posters and travel has led me to explore the travel poster.
“...Are we judging and evaluating the past, choosing the more significant over the less, retaining what we think of as best? Should things be saved because they are unique or nearly so, or...because they were most typical of their time? Because of their importance as a group symbol? Because of their intrinsic qualities in the present? Because of their special usefulness as sources of intellectual information about the past? Or should we (as we most often do) let chance select for us and preserve for a second century everything that has happened to survive the first?”

-Kevin Lynch

THE SUBJECT

As the topic of travel posters is broad, I have narrowed the subject matter of my thesis to fulfil several requirements:

My primary goal is to effectively translate some aspect of the unique experience of a specific place into a flat image. I would like to limit my representation to imagery that is meaningful, inventive, and generally unique to the location. As art critic Lucy Lippard stated in her book *The Lure of the Local*, “a sense of place” is created where culture and geography combine. With this in mind, my ideal poster design would resonate more significantly with a person who has actually been to - and appreciated - the place depicted.

A second function of my research is to document my own personal experiential relationship with place. I find Kevin Lynch’s statement (left) to be quite poignant. Through my posters, I want to make a conscious effort to choose to “save” the memories that are most meaningful to me.
I have always been drawn to the beauty of simplicity. As a designer, I embrace efficiency. The iconic cleanliness of the International Style, the treatment of form in Deco, and the unrepentant directness of Minimalism are especially inspirational to my work.

In conjunction with my research, I also want to explore a style that I find challenging and compelling. As such, I have selected a minimalist-inspired approach to my thesis, through limitation of color and form. My task is to design interesting pieces that successfully communicate a sense of place while limiting the amount of visual resources I employ. This challenge will force me to make smart and analytical decisions about what is of absolute necessity to the design.
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