

ALWAYS ALREADY MADE: LANDSCAPE OF THE TESSENTEE IN PINHOLE  
PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTIST'S BOOKS, AND PRINTS

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by

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“The graduate level of learning is when one learns to sit still and be what one has become, which is what one does not know and does not need to know.... One no longer seeks something else. One no longer seeks to be told by another who one is. One no longer demands assurance. But there is the whole infinite depth of *what is* remaining to be revealed.” (Thomas Merton, *Choosing to Love the World*, p. 40)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Figures.....	4
Abstract.....	5
Introduction.....	8
Place and Time.....	11
Pinhole Photographs.....	16
Banners.....	18
Books.....	20
Summary.....	31
Works Cited.....	33
Appendix: Photographs from Thesis Exhibition.....	35
1. Sign posted at exhibit entrance.....	35
2. <i>Silo Two Seasons</i> edition of 3 and banner.....	36
3. Six books and large banner.....	36
4. #6 8-20-09 and #5 8-20-09 banners and all books.....	36
5. <i>Silo 2 Seasons</i> – screenprinted handmade gampi page.....	37
6. <i>Silo</i> – detail: transparencies #5 8-20-09 banner.....	37
7. <i>Silo</i> – transparencies and tracing paper endpaper with #5 8-20-09 banner.....	38
8. <i>Silo</i> – accordion book with box from rag vellum side.....	38
9. <i>Screenprint Collection</i> – detail of glassine and handmade gampi pages	39
10. <i>Collagraph Collection</i> detail – tracing paper envelope.....	39

## FIGURES

FIGURE	Page
1. #1-14-10.....	9
2. #10 1-14-10.....	11
3. Sally Mann #34 <i>untitled</i> , 2005, <i>Deep South</i> .....	13
4. Denise Carbone, <i>Ink Book</i> , .....	14
5. #6 8-20-09.....	17
6. #5 8-20-09 is a 6' x by 9-½' banner .....	18
7. #11 1-14-10.....	21
8. #10 8-21-09.....	21
9. <i>Silo Two Seasons</i> cover and box.....	22
10. detail: <i>Noon Thunder in the Shade of a Banyan Tree</i> by Mu Xin.....	24
11. <i>Silo 3 Views</i> with box.....	25
12. <i>Silo 2 Seasons</i> .....	26
13. <i>Silo Two Seasons</i> edition of three with boxes.....	27
14. <i>Silo</i> – Black accordion structure and banner.....	28
15. <i>Collagraph Collection</i> phase box with collagraph.....	30

## ABSTRACT

ALWAYS ALREADY MADE – LANDSCAPE OF THE TESSENTEE IN PINHOLE  
PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTIST'S BOOKS, AND PRINTS

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Western Carolina University (May 2010)

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My research project centers on the landscape of the Tessenetee Bottomland Preserve near Otto, NC. It is the first property protected from development by the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee (1999). Through this project, I want to look deeply at everyday landscape – to see what is not immediately revealed and perhaps more importantly, to connect with its mystery, with the paradox of understanding deeply while at the same time knowing that full understanding always lies just beyond our grasp. My study concerns finding the correspondence between personal connections to a place, historical events, distortions in cultural memory, and how these influence experiences of place. My work focuses on the 1940's era silo at the Tessenetee preserve. It concerns both what is visible in a place and how an invisible factor, time, is interpreted. I am also more concerned about accurately interpreting how a place feels rather than specifics about how it looks in my work.

My artwork consists of three large banners made from the pinhole photographs and eight handmade artist's book incorporating pinhole photographs and prints from the Preserve. An important element of the exhibition relates to the interaction of large, imposing images of the landscape in the form of banners

compared to the small, intimate images in books. The largest banner measures six by nine and a half feet. There are five unique artist's book structures and one book produced as a varied edition of three. The editioned book can also be reproduced in this or another format and used as a fund raising tool for the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee. I use the medium of the artist's book to address the idea of an intimate journey through a specific place. Within the books are pinhole photographs and other elements that describe both internal and external relationships to the place through their relationship with each other. The use of prints and pinhole photographs and their organization into a book structure involves a practice that echoes being present at the place and then processing what occurs there by reliving the journey through memory. The book format also lends itself to sharing of the experience.

I discuss three artists who were sources of inspiration and whose influences may be seen in my work: Sally Mann, Denise Carbone, and Mu Xin. Mann's contemporary landscape photography uses her relationship with the South to invoke the past as an inescapable aspect of the present. Carbone uses materials and process to create a serendipitous interaction between the two with the result transcending both materials and process. Mu Xin's evocative landscape paintings done in secret during imprisonment in Communist China deal with the survival of memory – cultural as well as personal – and how he uses it to escape the inescapable. For these artists landscape provides the ground from which inspiration takes shape – and their work deals with the internal and external

processing of time. We inhabit the landscape yet see ourselves as separate from it but are always already at home within it.

## INTRODUCTION

To hear the unembodied call of a place, that numinous voice, one has to wait for it to speak through the harmony of its features – the souging of the wind across it, its upward reach against a clear night sky, its fragrance after a rain. One must wait for the moment when the thing...ceases to be a thing and becomes something that knows we are there. (Lopez and Gwartney, xviii)

I want to look deeply at everyday landscape – to see what is not immediately revealed and perhaps more importantly, to connect with its mystery, with the paradox that even as keen understanding occurs, full knowledge always lies just beyond our grasp. My research concerns understanding personal connection to a place, historical events, distortions in cultural memory, and how these influence sharing experiences of place. When relating to a landscape, the important thing is to continue to look behind the veil and connect what seems mundane with what is revealed by looking deeply.

The images in the books and banners in *Always Already Made: Landscape of the Tessentee* were made with pinhole cameras at the Tessentee Bottomland Preserve near Otto, NC in 2009 and 2010. In Chapter One – PLACE AND TIME, I discuss reasons for choosing The Tessentee Preserve and why the silo became a focal point of this body of work. The Tessentee Preserve has features common in many rural landscapes. I also discuss specific ways that time, as a dimension, is included in my work. The ordinary landscape is transformed into the extraordinary when viewed through the lens of my childhood memories of military moves and disconnections from familiar places.

In Chapter Two – PINHOLE PHOTOGRAPHS, I consider the reasons for using pinhole photos in my visual research and discuss how the pinhole image distorts place and time. The pinhole visually articulates a sense of disorientation when viewing the

landscape – and at the same time can lead to experiences such as a sense of familiarity or even déjà vu (fig. 1).



1. #1-14-10

In Chapter Three – BANNERS, I examine the qualities of banners and how they relate to the subject of my work. I also discuss how the banners, large digital prints of pinhole photographs, serve to reinforce the notion that the silo stands in for qualities of fertility, cultivation, construction, and property, symbolizing human action on the landscape and the politics of land use. Chapter Four – BOOKS, is an exploration of how the book structure and its content, expressed in various formats, reinforces time as a dimension. I also investigate the materials and processes used in the structures.

In all of these chapters, I analyze the influence of artists Sally Mann (b. 1951), an American photographer, Mu Xin (b. 1927), a Chinese painter and writer living in the United States, and American book artist, Denise Carbone (b. 1957), as sources of inspiration in my work. I compare and contrast these artists' mediums and technique to

each other and discuss how their interpretations of landscape include the component of time, and the similarities and differences in our work.

## CHAPTER ONE: PLACE AND TIME

Place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person's life. It is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened here, what will happen here. (Lippard, 7)

The Tessentee Bottomland Preserve near Otto, NC feels like places in Colorado, Texas, and Louisiana, where I lived while I was growing up a military brat. I always played outside with my friends and we often had access to creeks, ponds, and woods. An attractive quality of the Tessentee Bottomland Preserve is that unlike much of steeply mountainous Western North Carolina, it is open and diverse, with fields, wetland, creeks, river, and woods all located within the property. It is large enough to explore for an afternoon but small enough to see from one side to the other in the winter when tall vegetation has died (Figure 2).

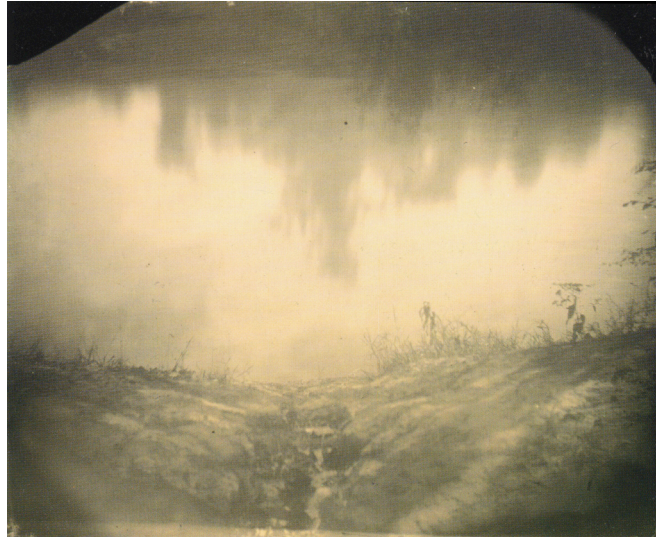


*2. #10 1-14-10*

The silo at Tessentee Bottomland Preserve became a focal point of my work because it is emblematic of the Tessentee's documented history and seems to encompass

ways that human history has played out there. In addition, it represents issues that many local communities still grapple with such as the ongoing destruction of farmland and its development by outsiders or corporations with no local roots (Lippard, 159). The concrete silo is obviously from modern times yet is still old – it was built in the 1940's on the site of this former dairy farm to store silage for cows (Land Trust for the Little Tennessee). In Western North Carolina, fertile, flat bottomland is scarce and has been farmed for centuries by immigrants and before their takeover of the land, by the native Cherokee (Oliphant, p.4-5). While the silo is a perfect symbol of peaceful human activity, the definition of silo ("New Oxford American Dictionary." March 2010) includes its modern military function of storing and keeping ready guided missiles for military defense. Though the Tennesse silo had no military function, it *is* located on the height of land overlooking the river valley, which has no doubt served a military function. The Cherokee fought a battle of the French and Indian War here on June 27, 1760, against British and Scottish troops, who marched from South Carolina. The native Cherokee were aided in part by the dense undergrowth that still towers above visitors in the summer (Oliphant, 130).

Time as expressed in cultural and personal memory and attempts to record and share those experiences can also distort memory. Images can obscure or reveal what is most salient to the artist while connecting, even unintentionally, cultural issues both past and present and describe their relationships to each other. For example, Sally Mann's large Southern landscape photographs memorialize places that seem on the surface to have little traditional attraction for photographers. She uses an antique camera, damaged



3. Sally Mann #34 *untitled*, 2005, *Deep South* (77)

antique lenses, and an antique process to create collodion glass negatives. The components of time – past, present, and by implication future, are added to place, in her photographs of Civil War battlefields and important sites in the Civil Rights Movement. #34 (fig. 3) is a photograph of the place where Emmett Till's body was dumped into the Tallahatchie River in 1955 (50-52). Emmett Till was a fourteen-year-old African American boy visiting family in Money, Mississippi. His brutal murder for reportedly whistling at a white woman was a news story around the world and became a key event in the Civil Rights Movement (Cozzens). The haunted quality of Mann's landscapes emphasizes her belief in the inescapability of cultural memory (Mann, 7). Mu Xin, a Chinese artist now living in New York was imprisoned for many years by the communist regime in his native China. He had no hope of release or escape yet through his secret painting and writing, he engaged the literati tradition of individual dissent and created his own dialogue with past masters, maintaining his personal rationality and integrity through this artistic conversation. He drew on past cultural tradition to transcend the experience

of his imprisonment (Munroe et al. 9-14). Denise Carbone's book of landscapes (fig. 4), created intentionally by waiting for organic processes to occur inspired me to take advantage of the natural behaviors of the materials I used.



4. Denise Carbone, *Ink Book*, collection of the artist, ink on paper

Time is a fundamental component of landscape but it can be difficult to articulate visually. The #5 silo image (fig. 6) looks as if the image was taken a long time ago in part because it is printed in black and white and its cropped corners suggest antique photographic methods, visually raising the question of when it was taken. Eliciting the “when” question also opens the possibility of connecting with what one knows about history in a place *like* this. Mann’s landscape photographs in the *Deep South* monograph look like ordinary places but she manages to imbue them with relevance and the past seems to cling to the images. She describes the past in the South as “inescapable and

formative” and also “impossibly present.” Mann’s work deals with her personal and cultural relationship with the South and time (Mann, 7).

My interest in time and place connects my personal history to the Tessentee in a more general way and is related to my experiences of faraway places that *feel* like the Tessentee Preserve. I approach the Preserve as an outsider, mimicking my family’s relationship with place based on our transient military lifestyle. I seek a sense of time in imagery, as does Mann, and her body of work is also directly and deliberately rooted in her family’s experiences. However, Mann deals with her family’s long history in the South and comments on American history through Southern history (Mann, 89), while I have no ties to the Tessentee imposed on me by personal history except what I have invented for myself. Mann has commented on the landscape of the South through her work for decades. Her work is rich and complex and she has pursued her vision over a long period of time. Mann describes the atmosphere in which she works:

The repertoire of the Southern artist has long included place, the past, family, death, and dosages of romance that would be fatal to most contemporary artists. But the stage on which these are played out is always the Southern landscape, terrible in its beauty, in its indifference. (52)

Though it comes from knowledge of the particulars of a place rather than a long family history in a place, my work also evokes a sense of the mystery of place, conveys the beauty of Southern landscape, and is reminiscent of the past.

## CHAPTER TWO: PINHOLE PHOTOGRAPHS

But photography's peculiarities – its faithful replication of what it sees; its simultaneous articulation of past, present, and future; its capacity for endless reproduction and shifting of shape; the infinite number of its products – represent a seemingly insoluble historiographic challenge. After all, how do you write a history of a “consciousness? (Batchen, 259)

A pinhole photograph is made by exposing light sensitive material (photo printing paper) in a dark box or can (the camera) through a hole made by a tiny needle (the pinhole). There is no lens to focus the image. One negative image on photo paper per camera can be made at a time. Because I use photo paper, it is a long exposure, ranging from twenty seconds to two minutes. The pinhole photograph is scanned in order to invert and view the image as a positive on the computer screen, which can be reproduced digitally in a variety of formats. One of the qualities of an image made with a pinhole camera is infinite depth of field, caused by the tiny size of the hole that keeps the points of focus as small as the pinhole and results in all parts of the image being in the same focus (Shull, 10-12). There is distortion caused by the round shape of the coffee can resulting in an image that includes a wide angle of view. The dark corners of pinhole photographs seem to mimic the way the eye perceives images and also brings to mind antique photographs because of the dark cropping of the corners that occurs with antique lenses.

I use pinhole photographs because of the unique way they describe the landscape. Many of these images of Tessentee seem to be from a different era, though they were all taken within the past nine months. The point of view in a pinhole photograph does not seem to be from a person standing and shooting a photograph from eye level. It seems to

either float above eye level or be well below knee level (fig. 5 was taken about 3 feet from the silo). The commonly held assumption that a photograph is an accurate likeness of its subject matter causes disorientation when viewing a pinhole photograph because of the disparity between it and more familiar film or digital images. The pinhole photograph's disjunctive qualities are particularly disorienting because it is difficult to tell where and when it was created.



5. #6 8-20-09

Geoffrey Batchen (259) discusses the unique features of photography as a medium in his essay, *Camera Lucida, Another Little History of Photography* because of the simultaneous articulation of past, present, and future and the difficulty of separating a photograph from what it photographs. He also aligns the creation of photography with a revolution in consciousness where there can be simultaneous visual representation and thus consideration of past, present, and future.

## CHAPTER THREE: BANNERS

Banners have been used as flags, advertising, signs directing a journey, and carried in religious ceremonies. The banner structure with grommets in the corners – printed on billboard vinyl or outdoor sign material using solvent inks – was used for large digital prints of pinhole images that could either be hung on a wall or displayed out of doors. A large print such as #5 8-20-09 (fig. 6), at 72 x 114 inches, confronts the viewer in a physical way. In this banner, the silo seems to loom over the viewer, while



6. #5 8-20-09 is a 6' x by 9-½' banner

the ground it sits on tilts sharply forward. The massive concrete structure seems to be held in check only by the scrawny young walnut trees and vines clinging to its right side. A dark orifice between the heavy concrete silo and ground reveals decay and the deep shadowy hole beneath. Lush growth surrounds the silo, which dominates the image. Corners of the image are cropped by darkness. A light, blurry area in the upper middle part of the image is caused by moving foliage because the pinhole exposure is long (over

a minute) and motion is recorded as a blur. There is tension between the ponderous monumental structure and the lush yet frangible brush.

The banner structure visually challenges the viewer to connect the decaying silo structure with what it represents – farming, cultivation, and fertility of the land with deterioration of the family farm, the passing of land to family, and the function of property laws today. The sense of melancholy conveyed by the pinhole medium connects to loss – loss of land, loss of family heritage, and the struggle to preserve what was of value in the past in the face of constant cultural change and “progress”.

## CHAPTER FOUR: BOOKS

Almost all garden work is done with a single goal in mind: the preservation and storage of food. Food enough to carry me through the fall, winter, and early spring, when there is little, domestic or wild that can be harvested or foraged for sustenance... (Crowe and Camuto, 72)

A book provides an intimate experience that can be lived again and again by many and also shared. It is a physical connection between past and future that preserves the thoughts and ideas of the author and projects them into the future. It must be encountered one page at a time in the present. An engaging book allows the viewer to tune out environmental stimuli, get lost in the experience, and forget time; to participate in a journey led by the artist. The format of the traditional codex engages visually and kinesthetically through turning its pages (Drucker, 197). The books displayed here provide specific visual information with words used only in the titles and colophon where materials used to make the book are described. Presenting small, intimate images of the Tennesse Bottomland Preserve in the form of books moves the viewer through the landscape. The use of visual images and tactile information in the form of various papers and monoprinted media imposes visual and sensory impressions upon the viewer while at the same time the lack of description or history leaves interpretive associations and narrative up to each individual.

The books in this body of work chronicle the Preserve through the form of a trek through the site, expressed in various structures. The Preserve, at sixty-four acres, is large enough to walk in for hours and the books are composed of images taken from many vantage points. In most images the silo is visible, ranging from a very distant view (fig. 7) to a very close-up view (fig. 8). The silo as a focal point in the photographs

reinforces it as a metaphor for movement through time because of how its appearance changes in the photographs.



*7. #11 1-14-10*



*8. #10 8-21-09*

Though the photos were taken in the past, they are experienced in the present, where only one image, word, page, or thought may be seen or considered at a time. A journey's past, present, and future are linked through each step.

I use organic processes (including frottage and monoprint) to stain the papers used as dividers, envelopes, liners, end papers, and fly leaves in many of the books because

they echo natural forms and processes. These processes affect abstract imagery in unpredictable and often irreproducible ways. The boxes and covers are made with paste paper and Sumi paper stained with India ink. I use spontaneous mark making on the paste paper (fig. 9) and careful observation of what happens rather than accurately



9. *Silo 2 Seasons* - cover and box

creating images of the place itself. I make ink stained tracing paper or ink stained Sumi paper with absorbent unsized Hosho to use as end sheets, fly sheets, and also screenprint on them. Ink is spread on a glass surface; the paper placed on it, and then sprayed it with water, flow release, or more ink. Some paper is also screenprinted. The screenprinted design on the ink stained papers or book cloth was made with a rubbing taken from the side of the concrete silo.

Mu Xin's use of decalcomania (a process of transferring images from one specially prepared surface to another) to make his ink paintings, Mann's use of collodion

glass negatives, and Carbone's method of soaking a book in ink and then allowing it to weather all share the element of chance in creating their images. Mu Xin described the decalcomania process as "controlled coincidence" (Munroe et al. 15). Mann's negatives become something she can use to produce a series of prints that include the surface deviations as a permanent part of the series (Mavor). Carbone's work and her focus on materials inspired me to be more observant of what happens within the work itself. Carbone embraces process and is willing to follow where it leads while using the book structure more as vessel than format. Her use of a simple pamphlet format, soaking the structure in ink, then letting it weather in the elements resulted in a piece that showcases the ink's behavior in its reticulations as landscape in a way that the artist's hand could never duplicate. For Carbone, the process itself became the instrument causing the image to be created.

Mu Xin used his organically created image as a point of departure. This process differs significantly from traditional Chinese ink painting, where brushwork and intentional marks build up contour to create an image inspired by a past master's work. Instead, he used the accidental marks created by decalcomania to initiate the composition and then augmented it with ink and color. His ink and gouache landscapes (fig. 10) began with a surface preparation and became a reaction to what he saw within the



10. detail, *Noon Thunder in the Shade of a Banyan Tree*, Mu Xin, 1977-79, China, 21 x 33 cm., ink and gouache on paper, plate 30 (Munroe et. al).

composition. As Alexandra Munroe describes his work: “What makes Mu Xin leap into the realm of profound originality is his modernity. In the *Landscape Paintings*, he creates a poetic tension between intimacy and distance, text and erasure, presence and absence that can best be described as a palimpsest” (16). His sensitive landscapes are spontaneous interpretations of the abstract marks left by gouache but also refer to the long history of Chinese landscape painting where artists built carefully upon the literary and visual artwork of those who came before. While my work does not approach his deep dialogue with past Chinese landscape artists and the thousand plus years of cultural history, I am inspired by its long tradition and his dialogue with it.

While Mu Xin uses decalcomania to begin the composition of his paintings, and Mann uses accidental surface deviations in her negatives to create depth and mystery in her prints, I use monoprint techniques as supporting elements of the books to create

organic layers of abstract visual interest, providing contrast with the figurative landscape photographs. *Silo 3 Views* (fig. 11) is a small, unique artist's book (5 x 4 ¼ x 1 ¼ inches) making use of textural varieties of prints and papers. It is a stiff board binding with soft pamphlet-stitched pages added. Some of the softer pages extend past the edges of the stiff pages of the digital images printed on Rives BFK that are glued to binder's board.



11. *Silo 3 Views* with box

Tracing paper pages have screen-printed images that read more as organic abstract forms. Handmade gampi pages are very delicate with a simple screenprinted silhouette altered from the pinhole photograph. Covers extend past the edges of the stiff pages to help protect some of the soft pages. *Silo 2 Seasons* (fig. 12) is also a unique artist's book (7 3/8 x 5 3/4 x 1 15/16 inches) but soft pages like those in *Silo 3 Views* are protected by the stiff board pages. I used both hard and soft elements in the structures of *Silo 3 Views* and *Silo 2 Seasons* and allow those parts of the books to interact as well as physically support and contradict each other to suggest ways that our experiences and memories of place conflict with each other at times.



### *12. Silo 2 Seasons*

The series of pinhole photographs in each of the above books relates directly to the idea of walking around the silo structure and seeing it from various vantage points and at different times. The inclusions of delicate, ephemeral prints and their contrast with the hard board pages is a sensual encounter with the book, slowing down movement through it. The delicate pages speak to fleeting experiences and passing memories of places we have been. It is difficult to rush through the book quickly because of the changes in page type and the delicacy of the paper inclusions. The pinhole photos may capture the viewer's attention longer than if they were a more familiar format. These books ask us to pause and participate for a while. The Sumi paper prints and allusions to oriental landscape painting refer to my father's military tours of duty in Japan and Korea, my own early fascination with Japanese brush painting, my interest in the *I Ching* while in my twenties, and my admiration for the cultural accomplishments of the Chinese masters over a thousand years ago. The terrain in China also shares native bamboo

(though of different species) and mountainous terrain with Western North Carolina.

Taking time to observe the behavior of materials and marks is also a note to self to take time to connect to places I visit.

While a case could be made for displaying the pinhole photographs in plain frames or making books made with solid color covers and plain end papers, the experience of visiting the Tessentee is rich in visual detail and sensory stimulation. Breezes blow and rustle through leaves on bushes and trees, the sun shines on your skin, rain falls, clouds change, light shimmers on wet, lush foliage, and the stubble of the mowed path crunches underfoot. Seven of the eight books and their boxes are covered with paste paper. The paste was dyed with black India ink and manipulated to make organic forms inspired by leaves, vines, water, or a wall. The paper was then glazed with watercolor for a warm or cool tone. The dyed Sumi paper and tracing paper provide a rich sensory experience – the visual detail created and the rustle of the papers echo landscape views and sounds in the environment. Some of the boxes include a sanded, unfinished rivercane closure or decoration made from what was left over from the Cherokee harvest on November 7, 2009 (fig. 13).



13. *Silo Two Seasons* edition of three with boxes

The books with the quietest visual interpretations are *Silo*, and the two print collections both titled:  $35^{\circ} 04' 07.63'' N 83^{\circ} 23' 00.82'' W$ . *Silo* is a black mat picture frame accordion book (fig. 14) with images on transparencies backed by translucent vellum. Light is a significant component of this structure. The black frames with the screenprinted texture of the silo rubbing and dark gray cover with the same screenprinted texture highlight the images, which seem lit from within when viewed from each side.

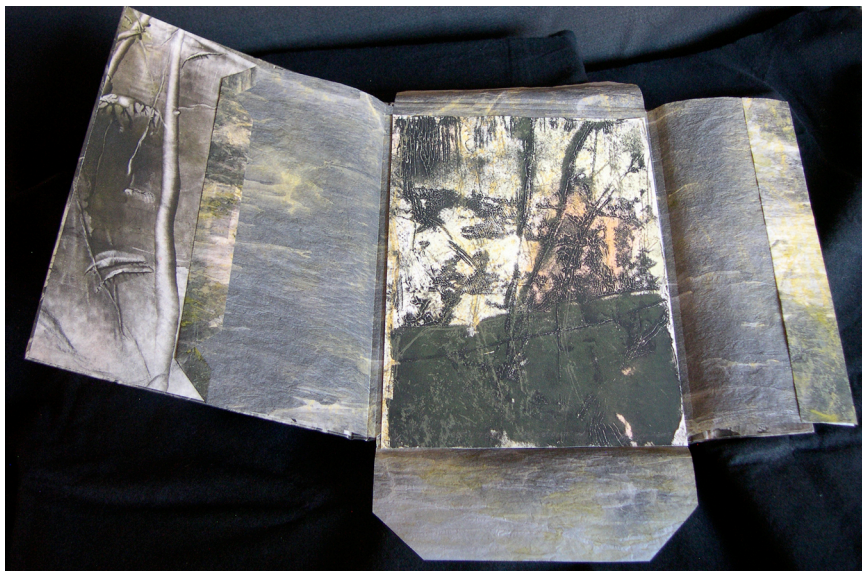


14. *Silo* – Black accordion structure and banner

*Silo* references cinema, narrative, and motion as a consequence of its use of the transparency. It sites the viewer as a character in the story and becomes a day trip – the images can be read in both directions from either side. The vellum's hazy images describe going to a place – knowing only some things about it or returning from the place and remembering some of the visit. The black frames provide emphasis for intense visual experiences and the pleasure of focusing attention deeply in the present and disregarding our mental gyrations.

The screenprint collection has a yellow ochre and gray paste paper cover with gray silo rubbing silkscreened on it. A Chiri Japanese paper envelope includes pieces of bark as textural elements. The silkscreened images are done on a variety of papers – glassine dividers, mulberry, Kitakata, and handmade gampi. A significant part of the experience is to handle the pages, feel their weight and texture, and get a feeling of movement. The elements are translucent and as pages are turned, the images begin to interfere with each other, creating a visual experience beyond the silhouette in each print, similar to the visual interference of foliage and branches while walking through trees. This experience differs from Mann's surface deviations because the experience is caused by the layers of images interfering with each other. It is a dynamic rather than a static visual experience.

The *Collagraph Collection* (fig. 15) is about the texture of the silo. It is a phase box structure and the prints are inside an envelope of stained and screenprinted tracing paper that has a delicate brittle hand and makes a rustling sound as it is opened. The collection is of varied collagraph prints on Rives BFK, a heavy weight off-white printing paper. The collagraph's raised plate and layers of ink produce visual as well as tactile surface texture. The silo is visually interesting up close – bright yellow green mold or lichens are embedded in its surface and the rough concrete has many colors of gray and black, with poison ivy vines fixing their hairy roots into the tiniest crevices. The layers of ink, color, and the variety of printing methods translates this feeling onto the soft paper of the print. In these prints I am focused on translating texture and allow the layers to interact with each other in unexpected ways. The yellow screenprint of the silo rubbing



*15. Collagraph Collection phase box with collagraph*

on top of black intaglio printed areas creates an especially interesting interference pattern.

These pieces, while they are abstract images like Carbone's landscapes and use the behavior of the inks layering and interfering with each other to create interest, remain a more purely abstract image focusing on the translation of texture.

## SUMMARY

It is important to me to look deeply at “ordinary” landscape. I am most interested in how a place feels and interpreting that feeling visually rather than in making accurate images of a place. I use pinhole photographs to describe my relationship to the Tessentee Bottomland Preserve rather than merely describe how it looks. Through my research with pinhole photographs, banners, books, and prints, this study of the Tessentee has enabled me to describe the place in a personal way. The Tessentee as recorded in these pinhole images includes time as well as place. The images take advantage of the unusual characteristics of pinhole photographs to evoke antique methods of photography and visually describe feelings about the place. What might seem ordinary when seen through the lens of the digital camera can seem monumental, nostalgic, or haunted through the pinhole. Presenting these images as banners both requests and commands the viewer to look. The book, in contrast, provides the forum for a personal, private visual conversation between artist and viewer. A good book is satisfying in the way a good meal satiates the appetite. Both formats encourage interaction with the images – via physically confronting or paging through them.

The process of taking pinhole photographs and making them into books and banners has resulted in images that also incorporate time and history. The processes used in my work also reference the incorporation of cultural traditions that are not my own. In the Tessentee project, as in my childhood, where I had no hometown roots, I have pieced together representations of the landscape to arrive at a comfortable equilibrium in my relationship to the place. This work is tied inextricably to images of place but my goal is

to stay open to process and in tune with intuition so that I don't miss what is really important. My primary artistic influences in this project, Mann, Mu Xin, and Carbone, all use materials in an intuitive and organic way and surrender themselves to the processes they use as well as focusing their attention on the landscape. Their work transcends materials and methods and fosters clarity about space and time while paradoxically allowing the mystery of the landscape to coalesce into unforgettable images. My contribution to the artistic dialogue about landscape has been to bring together seemingly unconnected materials and methods, and use process to find places where these elements speak to each other. My work is linked to three very different artists' interpretations of landscape through a shared focus on process, interrogation of the relationship between time and the experience of place, and the intentional incorporation of the organic behavior of materials. Landscape, always already made, continues to provide rich ground for future inspiration.

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## APPENDIX

Photographs from *Always Already Made: Landscape of the Tennessee in pinhole photographs, artist's books, and prints*, Phyllis Jarvinen MFA Thesis Exhibition at the Fine Art Museum at Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC, March 23-27, 2010.



**Phyllis Jarvinen**  
*MFA Thesis Exhibition*  
 March 23-27, 2010  
 Artist's reception 1:30-3:30 pm Saturday March 27

*Always Already Made: Landscape of the Tennessee in pinhole photographs, artist's books, and prints*

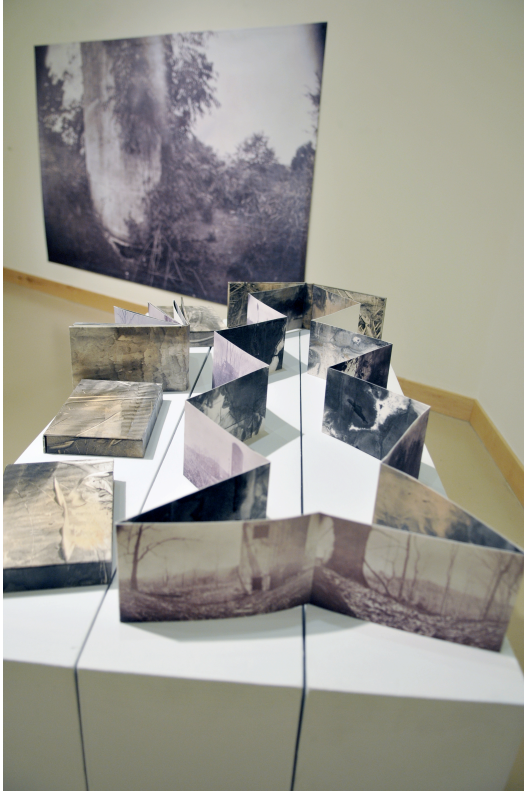
This project centers on the landscape of the Tennessee Bottomland Preserve south of Franklin, NC. It is the first property protected from development by the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee (1999). The site has a rich human and natural history, and while a visit to the place may not immediately reflect its past, it is important to me to promote looking in a new way at landscape that some may see as commonplace. My research concerns both what is visible in a place and what, because of time, becomes invisible. While the look of a place is important, what is most interesting in my work is how it feels and making visible what is beneath the surface.

The medium of the artist's book addresses the idea of an intimate journey through a specific place. Within the books are pinhole photographs, monoprints, and screenprints describing internal and external relationships to the place. The use of prints and pinhole photographs, and their organization into an artist's book involves procedures that echo being present at the place and then processing what occurs there by reliving the journey through memory. A book format also lends itself to the sharing of experience – both between artist and viewer and between viewers. The relationship of large digital prints to the small, intimate format of the book serves as a metaphor for the difference between memory and the richness of the physical journey. The large prints are theatrical while the intimate images in the book provide an immediate experience of moving through place and time.

The landscape provides a ground from which inspiration can take shape. We inhabit the landscape yet see ourselves as disconnected from it. But we are always already at home within it, separate yet inseparable.

This exhibit is in partial fulfillment of requirements for the School of Art and Design's Master of Fine Arts degree at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC. Western Carolina University is a campus of the University of North Carolina.

## 1. Sign posted at exhibit entrance



2. *Silo Two Seasons* edition of 3 and banner



3. Six books and large banner



4. #6 8-20-09 and #5 8-20-09 banners and all books



5. *Silo 2 Seasons* – screenprinted handmade gampi page



6. *Silo* – detail: transparencies #5 8-20-09 banner



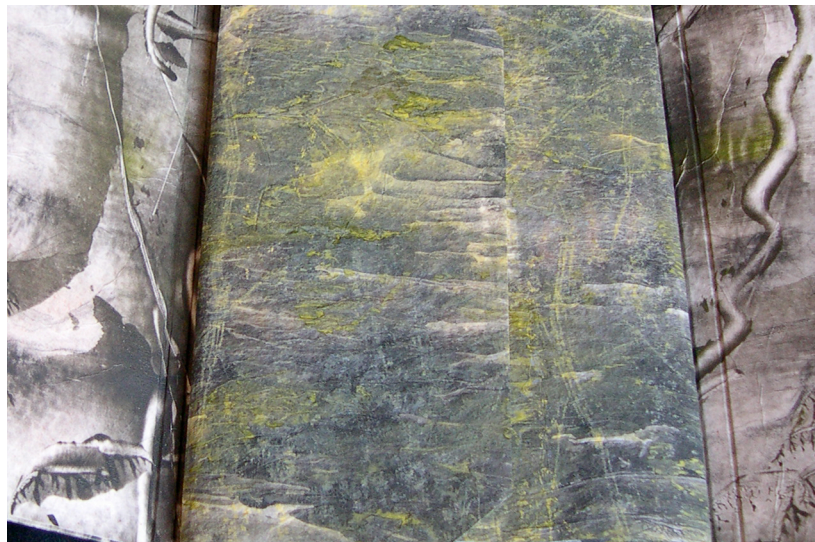
7. *Silo* – transparencies and tracing paper endpaper with #5 8-20-09 banner



8. *Silo* – accordion book with box from rag vellum side



9. *Screenprint Collection* – detail of glassine and handmade gampi pages



10. *Collagraph Collection* detail – tracing paper envelope