

DREAMSCAPE

By

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School of Art and Design: Metal Design

Inspired by the allure of nature, I perpetually seek to surround myself with flowing organic forms, specifically seedpods. I form copper sheet into three-dimensional forms that mimic the sensuous shapes and curving lines of seedpods. It is the inherent organic quality of metal forming that brings forth musings from nature. I have chosen this method to mimic the seedpods influenced by my journey, dream, and childhood memories that make up my thesis installation.

DREAMSCAPE

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the School of Art and Design
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Fine Arts in Art

By

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April 2016

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Barry and Michele Harvell for your love and unwavering support throughout all my creative years.

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I thank my parents, Barry and Michele Harvell, for teaching me the beauty of creativity, my life partner, Tony Washington, for his patience, love, and devotion during this endeavor. I also thank all my teachers, professors, and mentors throughout the years for the invaluable knowledge, skills, and creativity that will always guide me.

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INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 2015, I left North Carolina and traveled to the Pacific Ocean of Astoria, Washington, thousands of miles from home. Shortly after my trip, during a deep sleep, the image of a seedpod floating in the night sky entered my dreams. Seedpods have intrigued me since childhood. These forms are beautiful as they grow, split, and open. Their exteriors are organic and concupiscent, mysterious as they bend and twist to reveal their contents. For this work I manipulated copper sheet to create seedpods that are arranged in an installation to convey the experience of the landscapes that inspired my dream and connection to childhood.

CHAPTER 1: DREAM

Since childhood, dreams visit me nearly every night. Most mornings I never want to awake from my dreamland to face reality. Creating brings order to the feelings experienced in my dreamscapes. This is a means to communicate my subconscious through visual language to construct a fantasy world. After returning from a journey to the west coast, I dreamed that I was

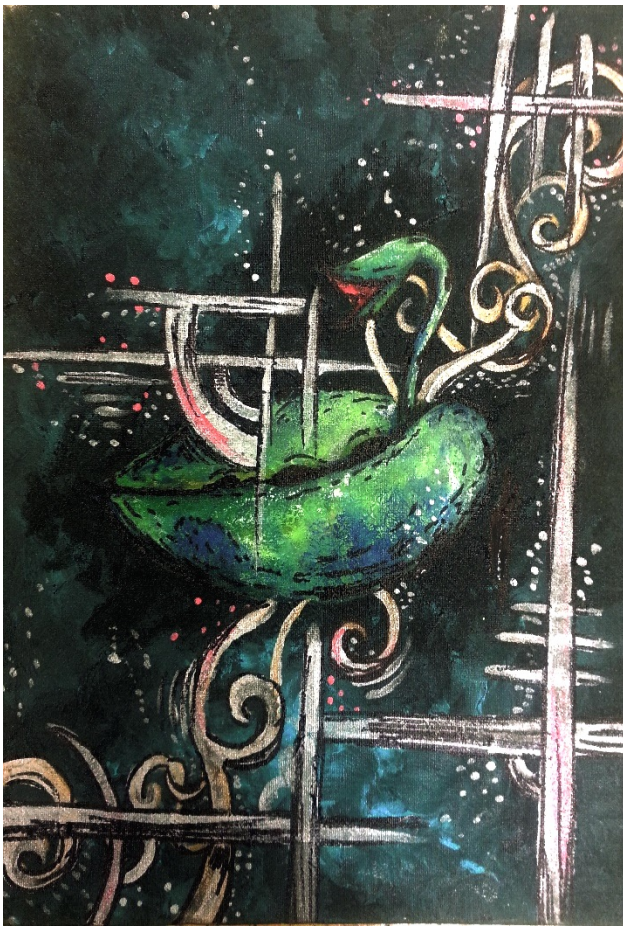


Figure 1: Sketchbook Cover, *Seedpod*, 2015

lying on the sand looking at the desert night sky. I spotted a seedpod floating in mid-air. Its bright, glowing green color against the dark sky intrigued me. It started to split; a small sprout unfurled, and began to form a bright red bud. The pod started to brown and decay as the bud spread apart and bloomed. Inspired by this image, I rendered it on the front cover of my sketchbook using acrylic paint and pen.

My dreams are very vivid. In them I travel to other lands and interact with people and creatures from other worlds, never wanting to wake. Imagery in dreams can be spontaneous

and picturesque, sometimes more than the experiences of the waking world. Dreams express the unconscious thoughts that are restrained during consciousness.¹ The imagery in the dream reminded me of time spent in the woods as a child collecting the seedpods scattered across the

¹ Jung, C. G., and Marie-Luise Von Franz. *Man and His Symbols* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 43.

forest floor. Plant life in dreams can be interpreted as a positive symbol representing a state of growth where inner life is germinated.² I translate this imagery as a metaphor for the spiritual and psychological metamorphosis experienced during my ten-day trek across country.

Dreams are the veil of subconscious between sleeping and waking. Images and experiences in dreams can be vivid, colorful, and strange. This unconscious state is a moving train of thought that eventually rises to the conscious level, taking on a form that can be both

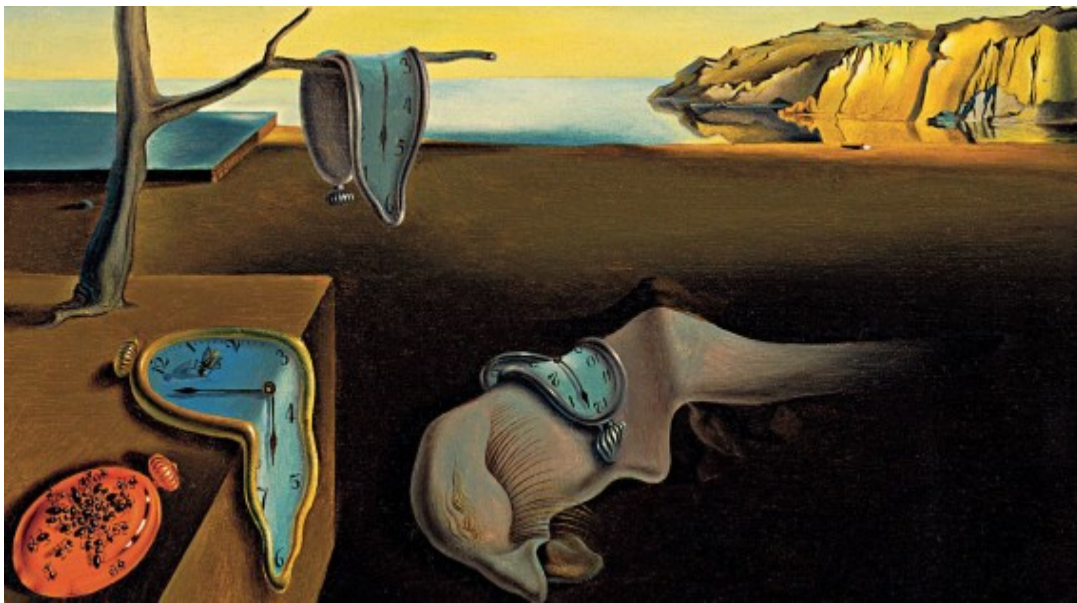


Figure 2: Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory*, Oil on canvas, 1931, 9 ½" x 13"

familiar and unfamiliar.³ Salvador Dalí was inspired by the images experienced in dreams which influenced many of his paintings including one of the most well known, *The Persistence of Memory*.⁴

Like Dalí, I retreat to the subconscious state of my dreams, allowing inspiration and creativity to flood in. My dream and experience during my journey inspired me to create a dreamlike and alien environment inhabited by seedpods.

² Jung, C. G., and Marie-Luise Von Franz. *Man and His Symbols* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 43.

³ Ibid

⁴ Schiebeler, Ralf. *Salvador Dalí: The Reality of Dreams* (Munich: Prestel Art, 2011), 30.

CHAPTER 2: SEEDPOD

Growing up with the beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Floyd, Virginia offered a unique childhood. Sixteen acres of woods were my sacred place of solace where I heard the sounds of the earth and collected the seedpods scattered across the forest floor. Seedpods are mysterious, rousing curiosity about the universe that is being created inside. I share a close relationship specifically with milkweed. In summer, the flowers surrounded my home. In fall, I watched as each delicate flower shed its petals and develop into a seedpod. The seeds emerged from the splitting folds, scattering into the wind, leaving an empty husk. I collected and played with each vacant form until they dried and crumbled in my hands.

Milkweed was my first muse. Seedpods from Wisteria, Devil's Claw, and Calla Lily also influenced this installation. Each form is a legume pod, splitting in two parts, sharing similar characteristics of curving line and shape. Seedpods develop when the mature flower of a plant is pollinated; it is the product of the ripened ovule, which occurs after fertilization and growth within the mother plant.⁵ When a seedpod reaches maturity, it begins to split open to release the seeds within, this action is known as dehiscence. To create new colonies, plants need to disperse their seeds away from the mother plant to prevent overcrowding. At their earliest development, most pods look the same. Several factors like heat and moisture in the air affect how each develops.⁶ Variety in form occurs when the pods separate from the mother plant in order to spread their seeds. The line and shape changes as each one dries out.⁷

⁵ Chace, Teri Dunn, and Robert Llewellyn. *Seeing Seeds: A Journey into the World of Seedheads, Pods, and Fruit* (Portland: Timber, 2015), 14-15.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Proboscidea parviflora is a species of plant known by its common name, devil's claw or red devil's-claw. This plant is native to the desert of northern Mexico up to the southwest of the United States. The fruit or seedpod is dark brown, many inches long, with a round body, and a long curving tail. As the pod dries, the tail slowly splits open into two hooked claws. These long hooks catch on passing animals' feet and are crushed as they walk, dispersing the seeds along the way.⁸



Figure 3: *Proboscidea parviflora* (Devil's Claw)

Occasionally poisonous, *Asclepias syriaca* is an American plant with over 140 species named for its milky sap.⁹ This plant creates one of the most complex flowers in the plant kingdom, second only to orchids. These flowers are significant sources of nectar for bees, wasps, and especially Monarch butterflies. The milkweed sap makes Monarch butterflies bitter and toxic to most bird species. Milkweed seedpods grow in a swelling oval form and slowly split open

⁸ Chace, Teri Dunn, and Robert Llewellyn. *Seeing Seeds: A Journey into the World of Seedheads, Pods, and Fruit* (Portland: Timber, 2015), 138.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 142.



Figure 4: *Asclepias syriaca* (Milkweed)

along one seam. The seeds are arranged in overlapping rows and grow soft white hairs known as the coma, which catch the wind and allow them to fly away.¹⁰

Wisteria floribunda is a popular ornamental flowering vine in the pea family. *Wisteria* can climb up to ten feet high and spread five feet in either direction.¹¹ The entire plant contains a toxin known as saponin, which can cause dizziness, confusion, speech impediment, nausea, vomiting, stomach pains, diarrhea, and fainting. The seedpods hang from the vine and audibly pop open, scattering seeds in all directions.¹²

¹⁰ Chace, Teri Dunn, and Robert Llewellyn. *Seeing Seeds: A Journey into the World of Seedheads, Pods, and Fruit* (Portland: Timber, 2015), 142.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 268-269.

¹² *Ibid.*



Figure 5: *Wisteria floribunda* (Wisteria)

Calla palustris is a flowering plant native in cool to temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere of North America, Asia, and northern Europe.¹³ Known as Calla Lily, these plants grow mostly in bogs and ponds, primarily green with a white spathe growing through the center.¹⁴ The fruit that forms in the pod is a cluster of red or yellow berries that contain several seeds. Lily pods are eaten by birds and animals, like deer and rodents, and pass through the

¹³ "Calla Palustris L." Calla Palustris (water Arum, Wild Calla): Go Botany. 2011. Accessed November 10, 2015. <https://gobotany.newenglandwild.org/species/calla/palustris/>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

animal unharmed and surrounded by natural fertilizer.¹⁵ I included the characteristics of the seedpods mentioned above into the metal forms I created for this work.



Figure 6: *Calla palustris* (Calla Lily)

¹⁵ "Calla Palustris L." Calla Palustris (water Arum, Wild Calla): Go Botany. 2011. Accessed November 10, 2015. <https://gobotany.newenglandwild.org/species/calla/palustris/>.

CHAPTER 3: MATERIAL AND METHOD

Copper

For me copper is a material of childhood nostalgia. Shortly after I was born, my parents started a small plumbing business to support three children, myself being the youngest. At just eight years old I earned my allowance working with my father on the weekends retrieving tools, parts, and preparing copper pipes for soldering. As I sanded each fitting and pipe end to a bright shine, the glow that emanated from the copper intrigued me. My father would trim sections off the pipe and I would take the portions that would fit my finger to wear as a ring.

I use copper in my work because of the experience I shared with my father and it intrigues me as a metalsmith. Copper is a pure element found in nature and the first metal manipulated by humans around 8,000 BC. It is soft, malleable, and ductile with high thermal and electrical properties.¹⁶ The malleability of copper enables me to produce multiple seedpod forms with ease. An exposed surface of pure copper has a reddish-orange color and is a constituent of various metals alloys like silver and gold. Copper slowly reacts with atmospheric oxygen that forms a layer of brown, black, or green.¹⁷ I use this atmospheric reaction as part of the surface treatment during finishing.

¹⁶ Untracht, Oppi. *Jewelry Concepts and Technology* (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 51-52.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Shell Forming



Figure 7: Heikki Seppa, *Lupin Wedding Crown*, gold, silver, and diamond, 1982, 4”x 8”x 8”

Concerned about the fate of silversmithing in an industrial world, Heikki Seppa, (b.1927, d. 2010), felt that metalsmithing needed to break from the static nature of functional metal objects, and move to more innovative processes. For centuries, objects such as teapots and bowls were formed by sinking and raising, techniques that move the metal along one plane. While these techniques create beautiful pieces, there was little expansion with the basic form and function. Seppa expanded on the use of anticlastic forming. Also known as reverse raising, this technique offered new ways to create three-dimensional objects and even a new vocabulary for those forms and processes. He referred to his work as “shell” forms and many metalsmiths today refer to this process as shell forming. In 1978, he published *Form Emphasis for Metalsmiths*. This book gave metalsmiths the tools and language to move metal from a utilitarian function¹⁸ to an expressive art form. Seppa inspired metalsmiths like Betty Helen Longhi, Andrea Kennington, Michael Good, and Cynthia Eid. These contemporary artists inspired me to use shell forming for this work. Betty Helen Longhi manipulates line into flowing curving forms, Andrea Kennington textures the metal then shapes them into organic forms, and Michael Good and Cynthia Eid create abstract biomorphic objects.

¹⁸ Longhi, Betty Helen and Cynthia Eid. *Creative Metal Forming*. 1st ed. (Brunswick: Brynmorgen, 2013), 10-14.



Figure 8: Betty Helen Longhi, *Germination*,
<http://fluidformsinmetal.com/germinationtop.html>



Figure 9: Andrea Kennington, *Koi Pond Brooch*
<http://www.kenningtondesigns.com/index.html>



Figure 10: Michael Good, *Open Baroque*
http://www.michaelgood.com/details_sculpture.php?productID=164



Figure 11: Cynthia Eid, *Sea-ish*,
http://www.cynthiaeid.com/index.php?option=com_igallery

Basic Principals of Shell Forming

Synclastic forming is a metal forming technique in which the sheet metal is shaped so that its' axial and radial curves¹⁹ are oriented in the same direction whether it's convex or concave. It is the natural shape metal assumes when hammered into a depression, stretching the interior and compressing the edges, also referred to as sinking.²⁰ This type of forming is typically used for hollow ware that holds liquids and solids. The curve and depth of the form depends on the radius of the depression and hammer face. Steel, wood, or plastic hammers and mallets with

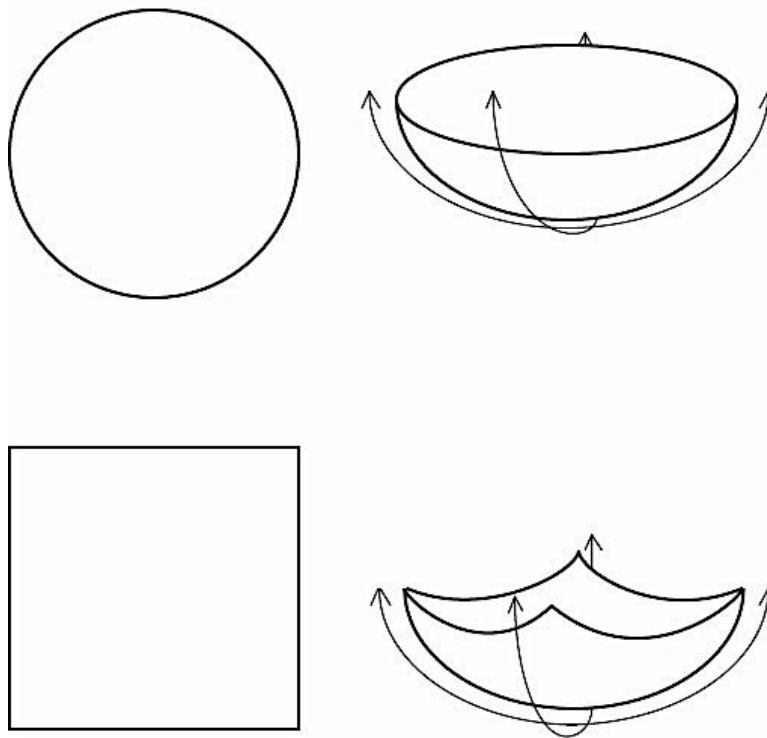


Figure 12: Synclastic forming diagram

¹⁹ Axial Curve: the horizontal and vertical lines on a piece also referred to as the x and y-axis. Radial Curve: the shorter axis on a plane. Longhi, Betty Helen, and Cynthia Eid. *Creative Metal Forming*. 1st ed. (Brunswick: Brynmorgen, 2013), 63-65.

²⁰ A process of stretching metal into a depression using an air pocket beneath the form in either wood, plastic or metal using a metal, wood, or plastic hammer. Finegold, Rupert, and William Seitz. *Silversmithing* (Radnor, PA: Chilton Book, 1983), 448.

a slightly rounded, convex face are used to form the metal into a depression in a wood block or stake.²¹

Anticlastic forming is the opposite of synclastic forming. The sheet metal is formed so that its' axial and radial curves are in opposite directions. Steel, wood, and plastic hammers having a cross-peen²² face of varying widths are used for this technique. The metal is formed in the bay²³ of a sinusoidal stake²⁴ made of plastic, metal, or wood with each bay ranging in size. In

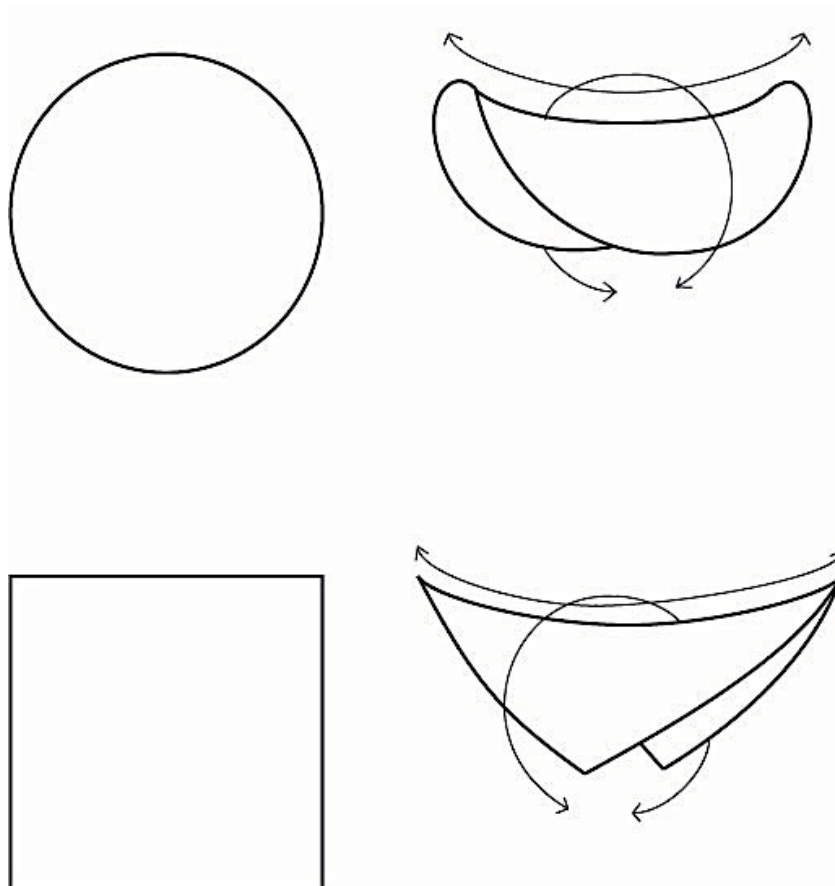


Figure 13: Anticlastic forming diagram

²¹ Good, Michael. "Anticlastic Raising Curving Metal in Opposing Directions Yields Stunning Design Possibilities." *Lapidary Journal Jewelry Artist* July 2007: 46-53. *Lapidary Journal Jewelry Artist*. F&W Media. Web. July 2015. <http://www.michaelgood.com/PRESS/LAP_Journal_July_2007.pdf>.

²² The end of a hammerhead opposite the face that is wedge-shaped.

²³ The concave impression of a sinusoidal stake.

²⁴ A stake that has curving bays varying in width from largest to smallest.

order for the metal to stretch, the radial curve of the bay in the sinusoidal stake must be tighter than the intended curve of the metal. This technique is somewhat more challenging than synclastic forming because the metal is being formed in opposite directions.²⁵ With these methods of forming, a metal hammer is used on wood or plastic stakes, and wood or plastic hammers are used on metal, wood, or plastic stakes. Metal on metal may mar the hammer and stake, leaving a depression in the smooth surface of the metal that could then mark the piece.²⁶ I use both synclastic and anticlastic forming to shape copper sheet metal into the seedpod forms for my work.

²⁵ Good, Michael. "Anticlastic Raising Curving Metal in Opposing Directions Yields Stunning Design Possibilities." *Lapidary Journal Jewelry Artist* July 2007: 46-53. *Lapidary Journal Jewelry Artist*. F&W Media. Web. July 2015. <http://www.michaelgood.com/PRESS/LAP_Journal_July_2007.pdf>.

²⁶ Longhi, Betty Helen, and Cynthia Eid. *Creative Metal Forming*. 1st ed. (Brunswick: Brynmorgen, 2013), 63-67.

CHAPTER 4: INSTALLATION

I grew up in the country and lived on the east coast for twenty-four years. Leaving it was one of the most spiritual events of my life. For the first time I traveled through the landscapes of eleven states from Greenville, North Carolina to Astoria, Washington. Ten days in the summer of 2015 inspired the dream that influenced me to create the seedpods and this installation. An installation is a body of work assembled by an artist or designer that arranges three or two-dimensional objects within a given space. The term installation is somewhat interchangeable with “environments” and means that the work of art is all surrounding filling some or all the space available.²⁷ An installation allows the viewer to experience the art that is tied to, and interacts with a physical space that blurs the line between image and reality.²⁸

Prior to making this installation I researched contemporary installation artists, Claire Morgan, Cornelia Parker, and Alice Ballard. Claire Morgan is a London based artist that presents animals, birds, insects, tiny seeds, and leaves to portray architectural forms in space. These objects are hung by a type of fishing line, also known as monofilament.²⁹ Her use of these materials inspired me to suspend the Wisteria pod forms.

Cornelia Parker is best known for her work *Cold Dark Matter* for which she had the British Army blow up a shed and suspended the fragments in a moment of explosion that thrust

²⁷ Lucie-Smith, Edward. *Art in the Seventies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 100-102

²⁸ Janson, H.W., and Anthony F. Janson. *History of Art 5th Edition Revised* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997), 867.

²⁹ "Claire Morgan - Biography & Statement." Claire Morgan - Biography & Statement. Accessed January/February, 2016. [http://www.claire-morgan.co.uk/Biography-and-Statement\(226207\).htm](http://www.claire-morgan.co.uk/Biography-and-Statement(226207).htm).

shadows on the walls of the gallery.³⁰ Using a similar manipulation of light and shadow, I adjusted each spotlight to cast shadows of the pod forms on the walls and platforms.

Alice Ballard's work reflects the metamorphosis of natural forms with earthenware containers, pinch pots, and pods displayed on walls and pedestals. This same method of display inspired me to attach the Devil's Claw, Milkweed, and Calla Lily forms on the wall and displays.



Figure 14: Claire Morgan, *Gone to Seed*, <http://www.claire-morgan.co.uk/>

³⁰ Aurélie Verdier and Jonathan Watkins. "Parker, Cornelia." *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed March 7, 2016, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T096923>.



Figure 15: Cornelia Parker, *Cold Dark Matter*, 1991, Tate Museum, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/parker-cold-dark-matter-an-exploded-view-t06949>



Figure 16: Alice Ballard, *White Work Gallery*, <http://aliceballard-blog.com/white-work-gallery/>



Figure 17: Painted Desert, Arizona, 2015

The landscapes of New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah from my journey influenced the displays for the seedpods. This western landscape was alien to me. The mesas³¹ in Arizona and New Mexico, and smooth, curving rocks of Bryce Canyon in Utah inspired the shape of the

³¹ One of usually many layers of a substance such as rock. Strata. Merriam-Webster. Accessed March 18, 2016. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stratum>.



Figure 18: Bryce Canyon, Utah, 2015

displays, intended to look alien in form, conveying my first experience of the desert. My intent is for the audience to enter the installation and experience an alien, dream-like environment.

Predrilled split PVC pipe was attached to two walls to create a network of monofilament as a ceiling to attach and hang the Wisteria. To construct the displays, polystyrene foam board insulation, vinyl compound, and white paint was used. White paint adds contrast and accentuates the color of the pod forms. This installation was constructed to fit into an 8'x 14' space with nine platforms but also fits into different settings and spaces if needed.



Figure 19: *Dreamscape* Installation, Wellington B. Gray Gallery, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC, 2016

CHAPTER 5: THE WORK

The seedpods in the installation represent the symbol from my dream that was alien in form, but strangely familiar. Curving contours unify the seedpods and the placement within the space of the installation creating a cohesive ecosystem. The “claw” of the Devil’s Claw sweeps outward, the tail arcing toward the body. Milkweed, Calla Lily, and Wisteria have curving edges that bend, change direction, and express fluid movement. Three types of display mechanisms were used to create a cyclical flow of energy throughout the space.

The Wisteria pods are suspended from the monofilament ceiling, intended to give the impression of falling, caught in a moment of time before hitting the ground. This relates to the pods that hang and drop from Wisteria vines in nature. The slightest touch or breeze causes the pods to turn and sway allowing the observer can experience the contours and colors of the forms.



Figure 20: *Wisteria 1*, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2015, 4"x 3.5"

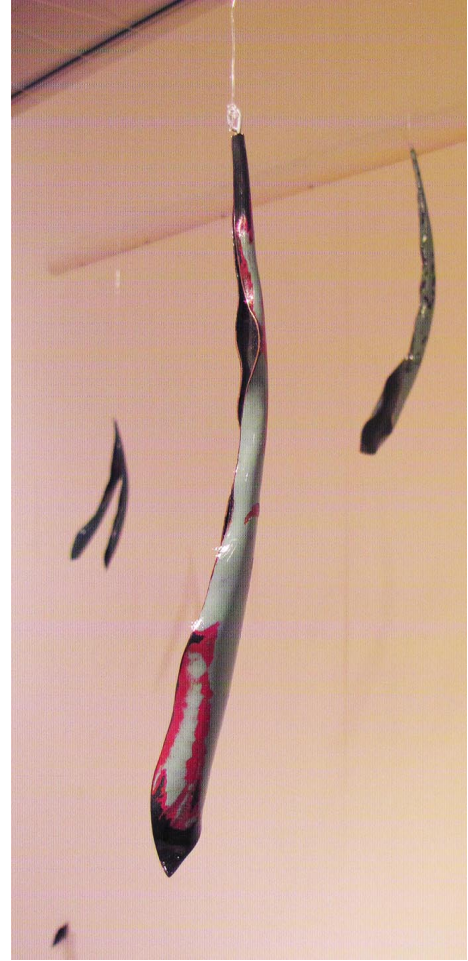


Figure 21: *Wisteria 2*, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2015, 5"x .5"

The Devil's Claw, Milkweed, and Calla Lily are arranged on the floor and wall, laying across the edges of the displays, lying one atop the other, and climbing the walls. Six pod forms were chosen for unique size and color, elevated above the platform for emphasis. This type of arrangement casts unique shadows across the surface of the other pods and displays.

The Milkweed pods have holes sawed through their surface, representing the state of decay before they crumble or how insects may eat away at the exterior. Some are arranged to emphasize the color on the back, while the rest are placed with the opening visible. Several Calla Lily pods are laid over broken "stems," while others sit alone, or lay next to the other pod forms.

This represents the manner of separation from the mother plant and contact with the ground beneath. The Devil's Claw appears to be bug or bird like in form, climbing the wall, or floating above the display. The seedpods came to life on the displays and became part of the imagery seen within my dreams.



Figure 22: *Devil's Claw, Calla Lily, Milkweed, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2016*



Figure 23: *Devil's Claw, Milkweed, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2015*

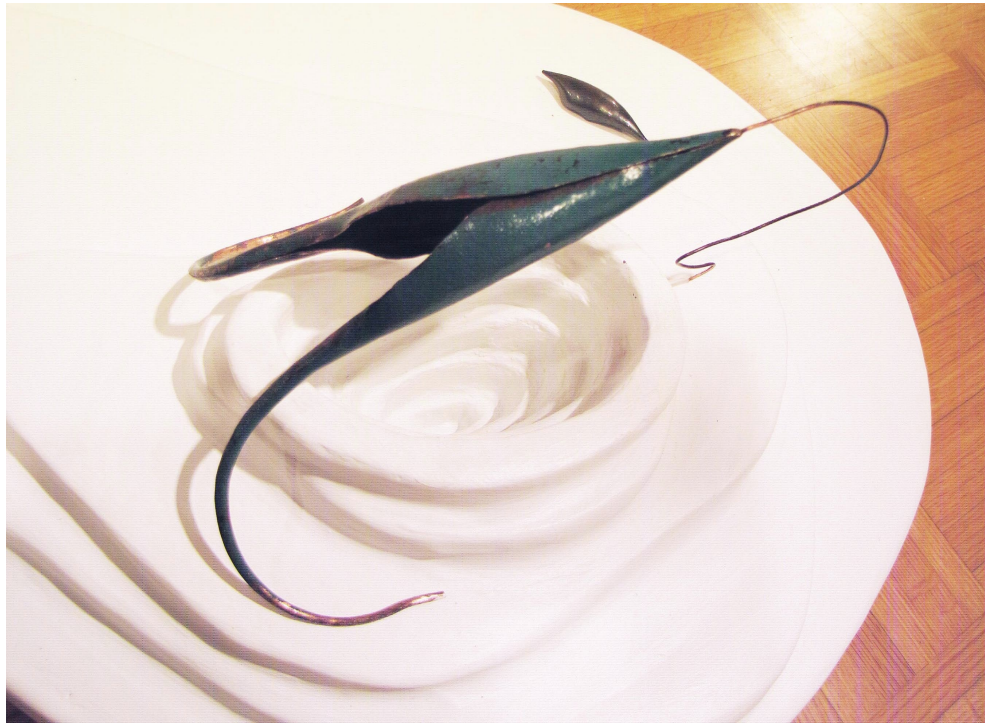


Figure 24: *Devil's Claw 1*, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2015, 11"x 8"

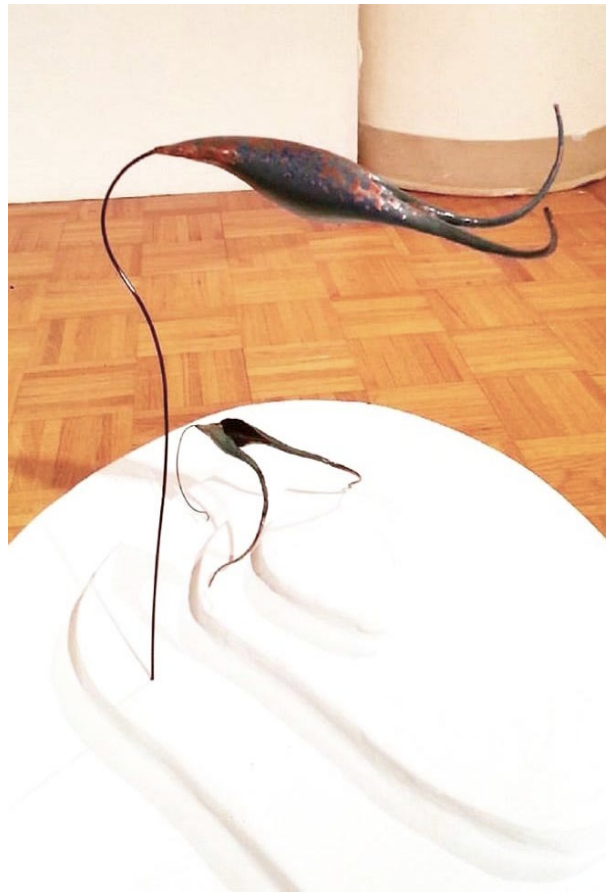


Figure 25: *Devil's Claw 2*, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2015, 14"x 9"

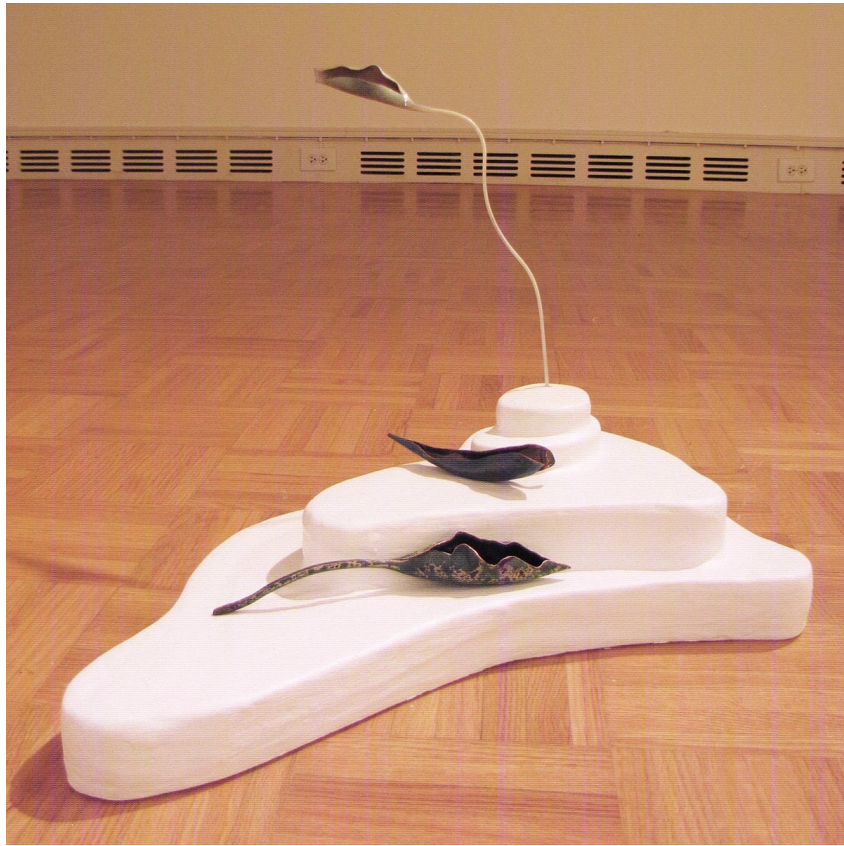


Figure 26: *Calla Lily Floating and Sitting with Milkweed*, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2016

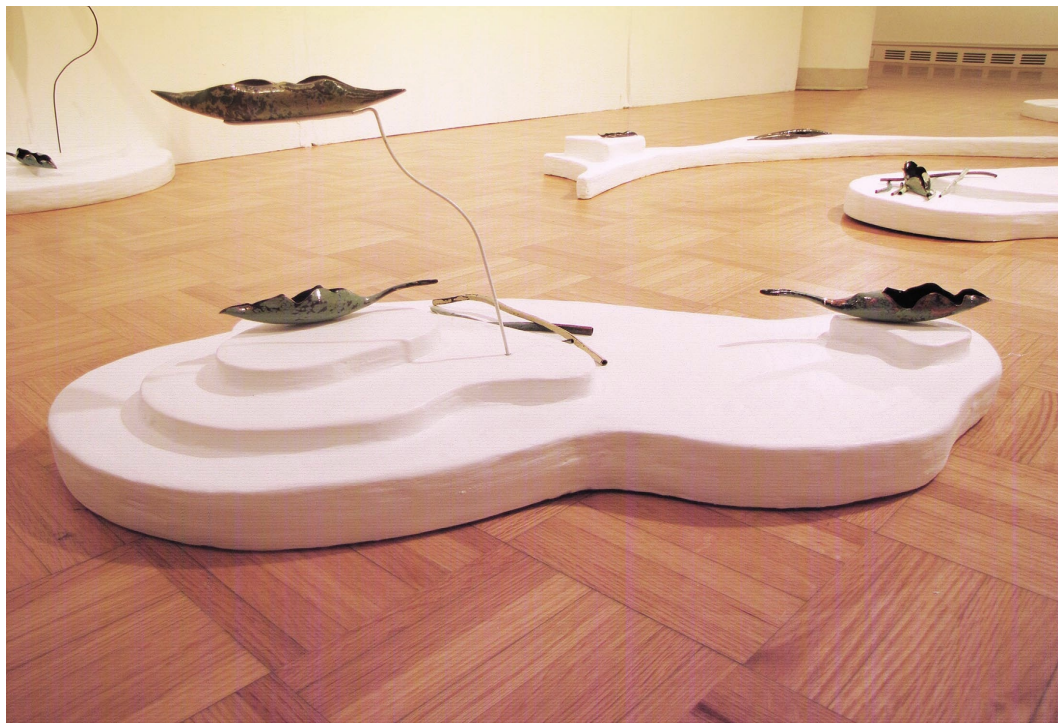


Figure 27: *Milkweed Floating with Calla Lilly*, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2016



Figure 28: *Calla Lily lying with Stems*, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2015



Figure 29: *Milkweed with Calla Lily*, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2015



Figure 30: *Calla Lily*, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2015, 9" x 3"

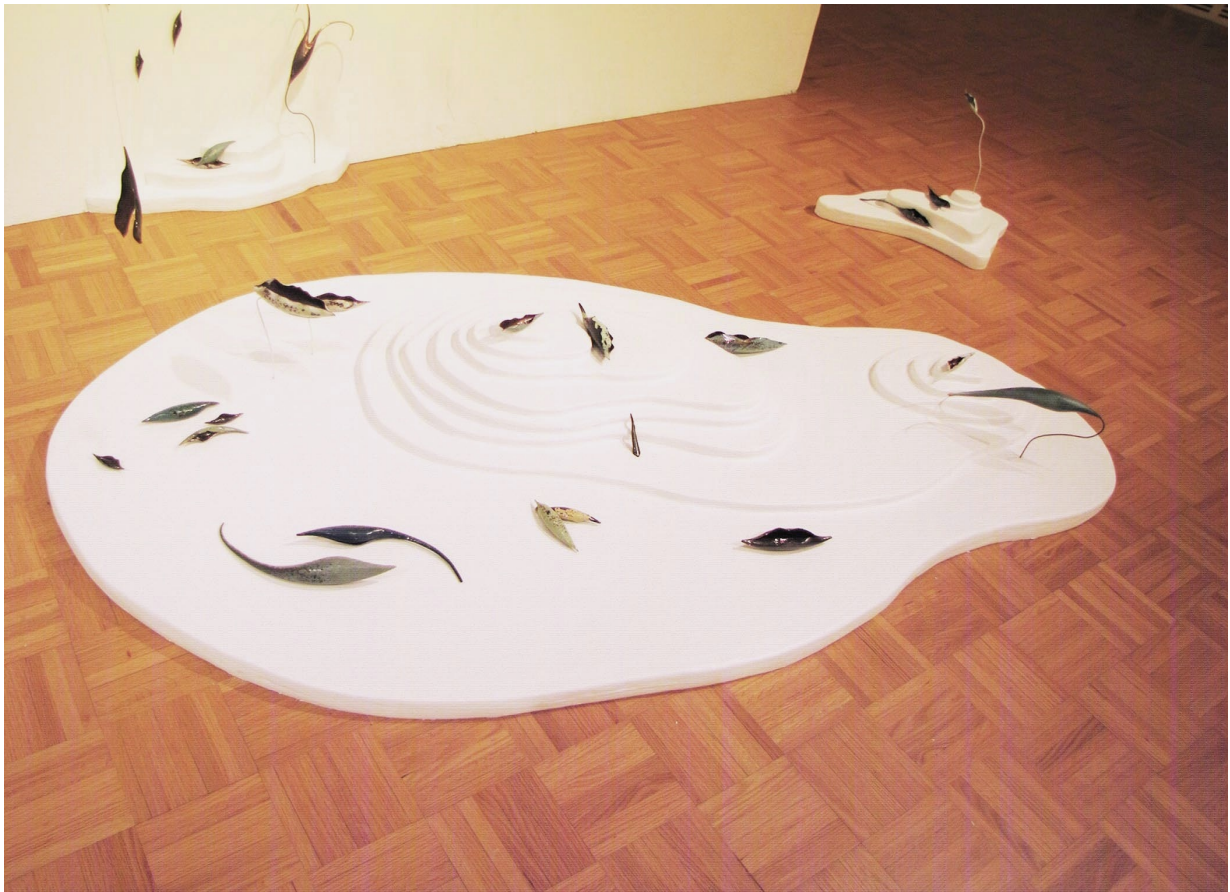


Figure 31: *Devil's Claw, Calla Lily, and Milkweed*, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2015

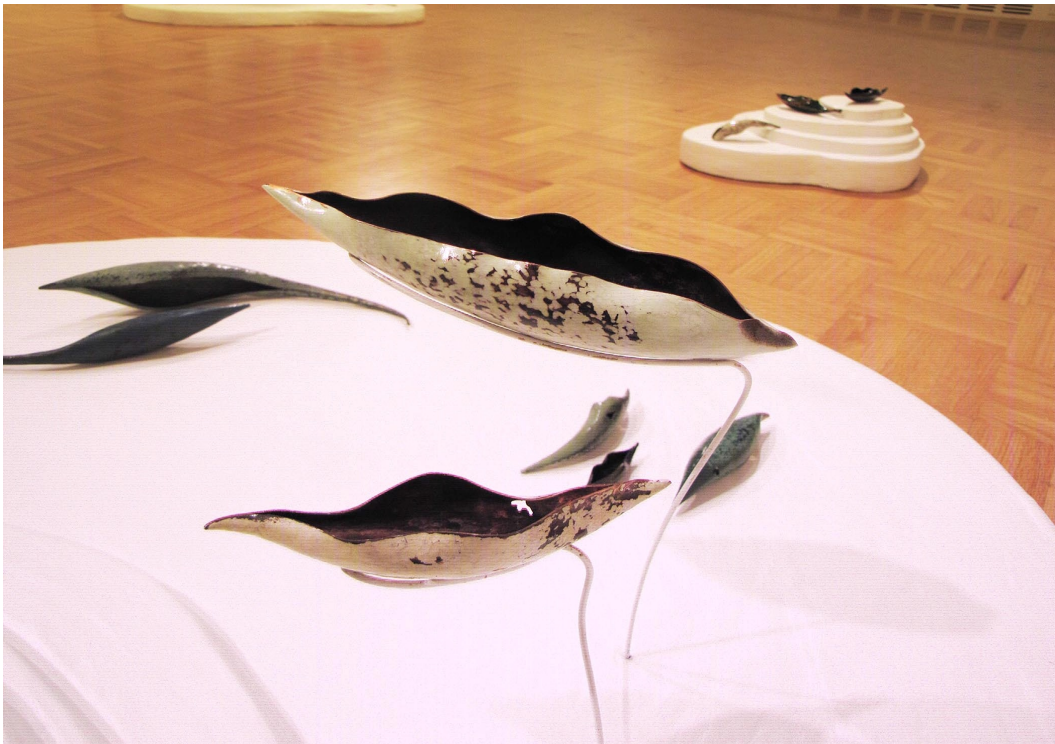


Figure 32: *Milkweed Floating*, Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2016



Figure 33: *Wisteria, Devil's Claw*, Copper, Spray paint, Patina, 2016

Process

The malleability of copper and biomorphic nature of shell forming enable me to explore shaping material into organic forms. The seedpods were designed by making a paper template, applied to 22-gauge copper with spray adhesive, then sawed out and formed, for a total of 100 seedpods. The scale, size, and shape of each template were changed to add variety. Shell forming and planishing³² were used to form and finish each seedpod. These processes are recurring rhythms of hammering that are meditative actions that bring peace and focus to my mind.

Muted tones of green, blue, red, orange, yellow, and black accentuate the forms. These colors relate to the desert sky of the Painted Desert, rocks of Bryce Canyon, and the pod from my dream. Premium spray paint was applied in layers of color, and then partially sanded away with P220 fine grit wet/dry sand paper. By planishing a hammer peen texture was created over the surface of the metal that left depressions and high points. As the paint was sanded, the pigment remained in the lower indentations and revealed the copper on the higher points. Adding layers of spray paint then sanding away small portions allowed each color to show through. To add contrast, I dipped each pod in liver of sulfur, which darkened the surface of the copper. The edges were highlighted with P220 fine grit wet/dry sandpaper revealing the bare copper underneath. To brighten the color of the pigments the surface was burnished³³ with extra fine #0000 steel wool. The pieces were sealed with clear enamel spray paint. This type of spray paint prevents scratching, chipping, and protects the color from fading over time.

³²A hammering operation used to smooth and harden metal. A light convex, highly polished hammer is used to lay down a series of gentle, overlapping blows on the metal and against a stake with a radius slightly smaller than the curve of the piece. Finegold, Rupert, and William Seitz. *Silversmithing* (Iola, WI: Chilton Book, 1983), 10.

³³ To make something, such as metal or leather, smooth and shiny by rubbing. "Burnish." Merriam-Webster. Accessed January 19, 2016. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/burnish>.



Figure 34: *Close up of color technique on Wisteria,*
Copper, Spray Paint, Patina, 2015



Figure 35: *Back detail of Wisteria,* Copper, Spray
Paint, Patina, 2016, 10"x 3.5",

CONCLUSION

“Give me two hours a day of activity, and I’ll take the other twenty-two in dreams”

Salvador Dali

My journey had an unexpected effect on my inner thoughts and dreams. This installation has become the embodiment of my subconscious by combining the imagery from my dream and experiences from my journey. I wish to explore my dreamscapes with future installations so I can better understand how my subconscious is affected by my real world experiences.

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