

Jake and Molly blog day 16!!!!

Dear Readers,

Today was our first day back in class after our free day on Sunday. Most of us felt we had been traveling non stop so we decided it was necessary we take a trip to the beach! Turns out we were right in doing so! With our energy restored, we we were ready to take on the day!

We woke up around 8am and hopped on the bus that took us 45 minutes away from our apartments to San Pietro in Vincoli -- a church that was built during the fifth century to house the relics of Saint Peter's chains when we was imprisoned. Once we arrived, we met with our TA Ahn, Vince, and our guest speaker and professor in the school of dance at Ohio University, Nathan Andary. Nathan's trip to Rome overlapped with ours and we were lucky enough to have him share with us his teachings on the Laban Movement -- a theory of method and language for describing, visualizing, interpreting and documenting human movement.



Before getting into that though, we were briefed on the history behind San Pietro in Vincoli. The church preserves within it 20 ancient fluted columns with doric capitals, with ionic bases being added to them in the 17th century. The nave (or main aisle of the church where people sit) has a ceiling that is painted to represent the cure of a person possessed by an evil spirit through the touch of the holy chains. The reason most people come to this church is to see Michelangelo's famous statue of Moses and the tomb of Pope Julius II. We continue to see the furthering into a Baroque style with the statues, becoming more animated and less stiff, especially the Statue of Pope Julius who is depicted laying down overlooking those in his presence. The project for the tomb of Pope

Julius II lasted over 40 years within Michelangelo's career between 1504 through 1545. With all this information kept in our heads, Nathan then began speaking about the Laban movement. As mentioned above, it is a theory of space and how people react around and within space. Nathan expressed how we are able to connect the architecture of our bodies with the architecture of both interiors and exteriors of

buildings. While this seemed a little blurry to most of us at first, Nathan explained that it does require deeper thought than the obvious. He went on to say that “what you *think* is not the truth but what you *feel* is truth.” Our bodies naturally react to certain places and circumstances based on how we interpret them. Nathan then explained three different categories that help us better interpret how we feel in a space:

1. Vertical Space: rising and shrinking
2. Horizontal Space: widening and narrowing
3. Sagittal Space: bulging and retreating

Using these categories, Nathan demonstrated a series of exercise to help us better visual them. For example, for the horizontal space, we would widen our bodies by stretching them out, and narrowing them by enclosing ourselves within our shoulders. After each exercise, we described how we felt with each movement. Many of us felt vulnerable in the widened position and found comfort in the narrowing of our bodies; (this is not the same for everyone, but a popular reaction to these movements). We continued through with the rest of the exercises. Once through, as a class we took all the information about San Pietro we had learned and the information given to us from Nathan inside and applied them. We got a sense of the space through walking around, taking mental and physical notes of how we felt walking through the space. For example, for myself, when walking through the nave I felt a widening of my body because there was much more open space. When weaving through the columns, my body naturally narrowed because the physical space grew smaller. We walked through the church for about 15 minutes and then returned outside to discuss these emotions and why exactly we felt them. It is interesting how this theory so greatly applies to everyone and every place however most of us are blind to it. Nathan then prompted us to return inside the church and instead of focusing on how our own bodies reacted to the space, to instead analyze the statues and how they are working with the space around them. We spent another 15 minutes doing this, taking note of the the statue of Moses and his powerful gaze as well as Pope Julius II's relaxed body overlooking us. We left the church once again and discussed our findings, expressing that some of us found it easier to better identify how we personally felt or reacted in the church compared to a statue with whom we can actually speak for. With this new information presented to us, we decided it was time to head to our second location, Campidoglio -- a piazza that was designed entirely by Michelangelo!

We walked up a steep set of stairs called the Cordonata ramp and were amazed to find a huge open piazza. We met in a somewhat quiet corner of the piazza and awaited instruction from the lovely Nathan. The next exercise he asked us to do was to act as sort of paparazzi. He wanted us to casually follow around different people, could

be a big group, just a few people or even a single person that interested you. He wanted us to capture the different ways that people interact with the space in the piazza. Nathan is very intrigued by peoples thoughts, feelings and reactions based on the environment they're in, so we went out on our own and captured a bunch of very short sketches of different people interacting in the giant space. We only spent a short amount of time there, but it was really cool to think in a new way based on what Nathan



was teaching us. We got to really think about how so many different kinds of people can enjoy and interpret the kind of space and architecture surrounding them.

After this quick exercise at Campidoglio we made our way towards our next destination Campo dei Fiori, but before we got there, we made a short break for lunch. We stopped at a famously known Italian restaurant recommended by Vince called, Vinando A Tor Margana. Vince insisted we all get the carbonara and almost everyone did and

no one was disappointed!

We then made our way to the Campo dei Fiori, which directly translates to 'the field of flowers' because before it was a large piazza with a large market district it was a simple meadow full of flowers. Now the piazza is a well known marketplace selling all sorts of fruits and vegetables along with different types of groceries and household goods and clothing. It was really amazing to see how the market went from midday to evening and how the markets were up and thriving and then slowly everyone started to pack up and it became close to empty by the time we left around five. While there, we did a few different exercises for nathan that required us to take our own paths through the market and sketch our path as we walked, it was around a three minute walk and we recorded it in our own unique ways, some people used small dots to mark their footprints and others used object to represent things they saw along their walk through the different stands. Then we met back up and Nathan went over our thoughts and feelings walking in our different pathways and then asked us to go back to a spot we found most interesting and spend around ten minutes there. From this spot he asked us to look around in every direction and record in our sketchbook what we saw and how we personally interpret it. Sense the marketplace was extremely crowded, a lot of us chose to mark about the motion that was occurring all around the stands and in the pathways.

Nathan loved seeing our different interpretations of the space and how we interacted with the surroundings in our own unique ways.

Class was just about to wrap up and then Vince had the amazing idea to drop into the Pantheon on our way home from Campo dei Fiori. We had been outside of the Pantheon many times before but never actually got the chance to see the inside! Today was a perfect time to go because there was no line and the inside was not too crowded.



Vince pointed out the beautiful deep red columns that still stand to show the more valuable marbles. He also showed us the place where the original interior still shows itself and the difference between the original and the newly renovated walls. The pantheon is entirely constructed of concrete in 113 A.D. and has withstood many earthquakes with very little damage done to it. The inside amazed us all and we loved getting the chance to end our day in this rich piece of history.



The day was now over and we all split up and made our way home. Overall, this was an exciting day filled with new experiences led by our great guest lecturer, Nathan. We only have about eight days left in the busy city of Rome and we plan to make the most of everyday as we have been trying to do so hard everyday so far. We cannot wait to see where the end of this journey takes and how much we have evolved

since the very first day, with our closeness as a class, our personal sketches, and our new way of life living in Rome these past couple weeks!

Ciao!!!