

Caleb Brothers

EARTHSCI 3336

Panther Ovation: Artist Statement

For my Panther Ovation project, I chose to create something rather than write a lengthy paper. Creativity, design, and art are all very important in my daily life. My majors are Interactive Digital Studies (IDS) and Graphic Technology. These majors use my favorite style of learning: hands-on, project-based work. That is my main reason for wanting to work on a creative project. I created an 11" x 17" poster to showcase a "snapshot" of my trip abroad to Iceland. There are roughly more than 100 photos collaged into the shape of Iceland. Surrounding the collaged island are common words, phrases, and locations found in Iceland. I wanted the viewer to get a feeling of what Iceland was like for me. This poster represents my version of Iceland and is a daily reminder to never stop exploring.

Before traveling abroad, this course gave me an in-depth look into Iceland, and I have tied it into my project. One of the first things we learned about was basalt. Iceland is made up of around 90% basalt rock (Snæbjörnsdóttir et al., 2014). While abroad, I saw tons of basalt. Whether it was driving through an old lava field, walking on the black sand beach, or discovering basalt columns, it could be seen everywhere. Because of its importance, I incorporated photos of this mineral, and they can be seen throughout the island collage.

Basalt is more than just the foundation of Iceland. In our earlier lectures, I learned that we would be shown the process for rejecting CO₂ back into the ground. Carbfix is a company that is housed at the Hellisheiði Geothermal Plant we visited. Basalt is porous, which makes it perfect for reinjection. During our tour of the plant, the guide explained that any CO₂ produced in the drilling process was then reinjected back into the basalt, creating new rock. The presentation

talked about Icelanders and the importance of sustainability. They pride themselves in their sustainable actions. Having an entire country powered by geothermal energy eliminates almost all greenhouse gases besides the use of fossil fuels in their planes and cars. They take sustainability a step further by reducing their carbon footprint when reinjecting CO₂ back into the ground. You will find photos from the Hellisheiði Geothermal Plant in my project. It was important to include them in the final project because this is one of the many ways that Iceland has shown its willingness to sustain the plant and be more environmentally friendly.

In my design, you will see a few animals that were shown in the lectures. The main ones are halibut, whale, puffin, and the Icelandic horse. I knew I wanted to try some of the fish while in Iceland and one of the fish I tried was halibut. This fish swims sideways and is quite massive. Halibut can reach up to 15 feet in length and swim horizontally (NOAA, 2024). This was probably one of my favorite dishes in Iceland. I also had the opportunity to try whale and puffin. Before traveling abroad, I learned about these animals and the controversy around hunting and eating them. I was hesitant to eat both animals. Both dishes were served cold. The puffin had a very distinct smoky flavor, and the texture was like eating chewy raw fish. The whale tasted and had the texture of steak. I will probably never order these dishes again if I were to travel back to Iceland, but I felt it was important to experience a delicacy different from what I am used to in the States.

Icelandic horses have been purebred in Iceland for over 1,000 years and 80,000 live there today (Lindsay, 2022). In the lecture, it explained that Icelandic horses have five gates compared to the usual three on a typical horse. While abroad we got to meet and interact with these horses, and we were able to see all five gates. I was most impressed by the horse's ability to have such distinct movement patterns that could be switched at the rider's ease. As you look through my

poster, you will continue to find images that relate to course content such as glaciers, northern lights, waterfalls, Norse history, and religion. You'll even find a slight nod to my alter ego, Halldór Laxness. He had a deep appreciation for Iceland and its language. You'll find common words, phrases, and locations in Icelandic around the island. I did this to uphold Iceland's identity and culture.

While on this trip I wasn't sure how I was going to connect it to my future career aspirations of becoming a designer, specifically in sports. As I've reflected, traveling abroad has made me a more culturally competent person. It is important to understand and learn about different cultures and backgrounds when creating design, especially when trying to target or advertise to a new audience. In the sports media world, communication and adaptability are key to becoming successful. Traveling to Iceland allowed me to interact with locals, practice strong communication skills, and adapt to an unfamiliar environment. These are real-world experiences I will face while in the workplace and this trip has prepared me for after graduation and into my first job role.

On campus, I hope to be an advocate for the environment and share some of the sustainable practices I noticed while in Iceland. We might not have geothermal energy in our country, but cutting back on long showers, walking instead of driving short distances, and turning off unnecessary lighting at home are simple ways we can try to live a more sustainable lifestyle. Using less energy and creating a smaller carbon footprint can make a big impact on the environment and the entire Cedar Valley area.

I hope that after reading this artist statement and diving deeper into my poster project, you will see the major impacts Iceland has had on me. I feel more independent and want to continue to step out of my comfort zone and push the boundaries of what is possible. I plan to

print and hang my poster in my apartment, so it becomes a conversation piece and gets others learning about Iceland and its rich history. Every time I look at my poster hanging on the wall, I am reminded of the memories, friends, and experiences built while abroad.

References

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