BLUE MERIDIAN:
LANDSCAPE AS PORTRAITURE

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by

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FOREWORD

There is a common misconception about the way an artist makes work. It’s a very linier and clean cut notion: she has an idea, she designs a piece of artwork, and she makes it. Concept, design, execution: a, b, c. In this (theoretical, idealistic) notion of artistic practice, the idea comes first and is separated from the final work only by time and material substance. When the artwork is completed it’s understood that the artist has said what she has to say on that subject. However, in my experience art isn’t commonly made that way. My practice, and that of many other artists I know, involves much more of a give and take, a dialogue if you will, between the artist and the work. I find this a much more interesting and a more honest and humble way of working. In this paradigm an artist can actually learn from their work and even learn about their own “way” of being an artist. The artist is no longer the ultimate master of the work or material, but more like an interested investigator that, once they’ve become involved in a case, can’t help but influence its outcome.

This is how I approach my work and one should understand this as it helps to elucidate some of the statements that appear in the following thesis. If it sometimes seems like I’m coming to a realization for the first time regarding what a certain piece of art is really doing or saying, that might be because I am. You see, taking a step back and trying to “read” the work for what it is – taking into account as much of the surrounding political, geographic, and general cultural climate that I was a part of when I made it, and, moreover, who I am and where I’m from as a person1 – is as much a part of my studio practice as making the work in the first place. And there’s another element to all this: the exhibit, showing the work in public. Showing work opens it up to all sorts of new and

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1 Yes, this is complicated, grind it out stuff here. As an artist you may have all these notions of what your work is about – what you tried to do, what you hoped to do, what you think you’ve done, etc – but the hardest thing is to see, to really see: Just. What. You’ve. Done.
different (and maybe exciting, I-wish-I’d-thought-of-that) interpretations, and an artist would be a fool to ignore that. Of course, I could get back in my ivory tower and rave about what I think the work is about and how the “laymen” and “visually illiterate masses” don’t understand it or me, and can’t they see what I was really trying to do, but that’s really just an exercise in self-delusion. Ultimately I have very little control of what the viewer might think the work is about. They bring their own set of personal issues, memories, and backgrounds with them and that injects a large portion of the meaning they’ll find in any artwork. A more pithy way to say this is: what you see depends a lot on where you’re standing, and you’re always standing in your skin. But, just like there are generalities and certain universalities upon which we can more or less depend (and upon which whole disciplines like Sociology or Geography are based), there turns out to be a general consensus about artwork as well. This is where the meet-and-greet and (to be frank) eavesdropping part of an Exhibit opening is so useful. For the first time (usually) an artist gets to hear what a large group of people think the work is about. And, after all the wine has been drunk, hands have been shook, and profound high-brow art talk exchanged, there emerges an overarching feeling of whether you were or were not doing what you thought you were. In other words, what the viewer thinks the artwork is about gets run through the same filter as the original concept for the artwork, or each decision made along the way to the work’s completion. If an artist is open and paying attention it actually becomes part of the work and their understanding of it. If not, then exhibits are exactly what they sound like: exercises in exhibitionism, the spoiled child saying, “hey, look at me” and we viewers aren’t allowed to participate but instead find ourselves relegated to that sad role we are so familiar with in our postmodern world: we are simply the voyeur.
Our knowledge of self is inextricably bound to our place in this world. In a sense, we are where we are from. Yi-Fu Tuan, a humanistic geographer whose work was deeply concerned with the way the human experience is inextricably bound to place, contends that sensuous experiences develop our understanding of space, for as we create emotional territories we begin to define them subjectively as places.\(^1\) Even our first notions of self as being something other than the world around us develop as we gain a sense of where we are in space. To understand who you are you have to first have some notion of where you are and it is within these geographical spaces—or more accurately, our reconstruction of these spaces within our heads—that we define who we are.

Landscape is an active participant in our history—as a culture, race, family, individual, and et cetera. Gillian Rose, an author on feminist geography, writes, “Identity is how we make sense of ourselves, and geographers, anthropologists, and sociologists, among others, have argued that the meanings given to a place may be so strong that they become a central part of the identity of the people experiencing them”\(^2\). One cannot simply say, for example, “He was raised and educated by hardworking, middle-class people”; much more important is where that occurred. A child from middle-America farm country will have a far different notion of the way the world functions and their place in it than one raised in the concrete jungles of New Jersey or the mangrove coasts of Florida. They may all be able to say, “I’m an American,” but in a very real sense that’s not really saying much at all. Instead, they are a Midwesterner, a Jersey boy, south-Floridian. Of course, all this is complicated by the fact

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that even if you did know where they were raised and they went through some trouble to paint a picture of that personal background, if you are not from there yourself most of their story will be meaningless to you. Sure, you could relate to certain major events—the death of a grandparent, for instance—but even something as mundane as the playing at school recess is a very different affair, depending on where that took place. I guess one might say we are raised as much by a place as by a people. It might take a village to raise the child, but it matters greatly where that village is.

Again, this is no real surprise, as evidenced by the highly complex way we break down our origins even within larger cultural and geographic contexts. For example, a person born and raised in Key West, Florida could correctly say they were a south-Floridian, but they would likely go much further than that and say they were a Key West “conch”, born and bred. Even our accents and dialects are used to locate us geographically. Therefore, I am not merely a Caymanian (though to the outside world that is how I would phrase it), but I’m a West Bayer, and even more precisely a Boatswain-bayer. You can tell from the way I talk, hold a fishing line, or cook a fish stew.

It is arguable that these differences on a micro-geographic scale boil down to simple cultural preferences and traditions, but I’d argue that the very landscape itself has shaped those same preferences and traditions. For example, the accent of a particular village may be more metropolitan should that village be easily accessible to outside influence, like proximity to a major port or cross-road of trade. The infusion of different cultures and their particular dialects would eventually shape the local language in ways far different from more isolated villages. The same can be said of something as simple as diet (which, coincidentally, plays no
small part in our physical makeup). For example, a particular village might have a higher concentration of coconut palms (the source of coconut milk and oil) and so our cooking might lean toward this readily available source of healthy fat. On the other hand, people further inland, where there are less coconut trees but greater access to suitable grazing, might depend more on livestock—cow’s milk and goat’s or cow’s fat—for this necessity. It may even follow then that the inlanders—depending as they do on animal fat—might have a higher incidence of heart disease and strokes than us coastal dwellers. The landscape then not only shapes the size and health of each sub-culture, but the demographics of each as well: a greater age range in the coastal, coconut harvesting folk, and less elderly folk among the inland, meat eating people.

It is the intersection of people and environment that creates place, which is space as it becomes important to people. Space becomes place through use, and this use creates stories and narratives, in a word, history. What I find fascinating about this history is the way we try to organize it through formal frameworks. Dates, locations, context, and people are all important, but what historians really value are artifacts of history. These seem to provide the ultimate form of documentation—after all, such relics are “pieces” of history. Stories seem to grow around these objects, but even when we are faced with such facts, they seem unable to represent anything close to actual experience. Warhol explored this phenomenon in his disaster series, highlighting a separation, a disconnection between the facts of a particular history and the experience of that history. He showed that the representation provided by documentation contains neither the impact nor reality of the original experience. Instead, we are left with mere spectacle or mute artifacts of history. I find it fascinating that we can be
presented with the facts of a situation or story but still be stopped at the door, as it were, allowed no further than the surface of things. Even after observing the facts, we remain oblivious to the essence of the story.

The pieces in my M.F.A. Thesis exhibit *Blue Meridian* might take the form of models or topological samples, yet there is still a mute character to these sculptures, a surface quality that resists our attempts to fully understand the stories behind them. The naturalistic rendering and diagrammatic nature of the elements is important, since both stand as representations or documentations of the natural world and strive to present the *specifics* of the object or area in question.

Most of the pieces are life-sized cast glass models of tropical water. The castings are rectangular, with flat polished surfaces, except for the tops and bottoms which have been cast to represent the glassy, wind-blown surface of water and the granulated sandy ridges of the marine floor. The luminescent colors of these castings capture the varying shades of blue-green water one might see on a sunny day in any tropical seascape. For example, the largest piece—a three-foot-tall, 215 pound, aqua-marine casting entitled *Blue Meridian: 80º West, Old Isaac’s* (Figs. 1 & 2) —looks like nothing less than a slice of tropical water sitting on the gallery floor. What gives the piece its magic is that the artist was apparently able to remove this sample of water and somehow freeze the rippled surface and the washboard pattern of the sandy bottom yet retain the quality of liquid water.

In this exploration I’ve tried to develop imagery derived from my cultural and personal history, imagery that tells a story. These images and elements are then arranged to give the viewer a way into the narrative, the first glimmerings, perhaps, of their importance.
For example, in the installation *Rite of Polaris* (Figs. 12 & 13), porcelain casts of green sea turtle skulls are arranged behind sheets of glass that have been slumped to look like the surface of water. Engraved onto the surface of these sheets are diagrams of the Big Dipper and the Southern Cross, two of the main way-finding constellations for ocean travelers. Sea turtles cover vast distances in their migrations, but always return to the same island and even the same beach they were hatched on and some research suggests they might actually use stars to navigate, at least some of the time. My homeland of Cayman was a major location for spawning sea turtles³, but it was also home to some of the best turtle fishermen in the world. Caymanians were known for their turtle fishing skills, which so seriously damaged the turtle population at home that they were forced to move the fishery abroad—to the keys off Honduras, Nicaragua, and even Cuba—just to maintain their livelihood. Imagine the turtle, guided across whole oceans by who knows what instinct, what atavistic memory, navigating by moon and stars, returning to its birthplace to complete a mating ritual millions of years old, only to run afoul of a turtler’s net and perish before ever seeing the beach it hatched on thirty years ago. That is what *Rite of Polaris* is about: the mysterious navigation of these creatures that ended (more often than not) in their destruction at the hands of my people. The facts are all here; we have diagrams of the celestial bodies by which the turtles might orient themselves, the models of the turtle skulls laying (like so many casually tossed stones) along the bottom of a shallow sea. But, in the end we are forced to admit the inaccessibility of this narrative. Instead of facts or evidence, we have only sensory stimuli: light, color, the illusion of movement. But, they too seem to only offer a tease, a hint of the real thing and in

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³ In fact, the name of these islands used to be Las Tortugas: *The Turtles*.
the final analysis leave us unsatisfied. Once again there is a separation, a disconnection between the facts and the experience of history.

This may be because, in essence, these models function in a similar manner to signs or symbols, whose unique reality may be easier to grasp than that of the model. We are, after all, familiar with signs in our everyday lives. As Jacques Derrida writes:

_The sign is usually said to be put in the place of the thing itself, the present thing, “thing” here standing equally for meaning or referent. The sign represents the present in its absence._

_It takes the place of the present. When we cannot grasp or show the thing, state the present,_

_the being “present” when the present cannot be presented, we signify, we go through the detour of the sign. We give or take signs. We signal. The sign, in this sense, is deferred presence._

The objects in this exhibit serve as stand-ins for something that isn’t there, while at the same time being _there_ themselves. I find it an interesting phenomenon that when looking at these models of water we are put in mind of actual water that we’ve seen in the past, and the more realistic or specific the water model the more we are reminded of water in a specific place, not merely water in general. The free-standing sculptures in this thesis exhibit strike a balance between being convincing models of water and being minimalist slabs of blue or green glass. So, even as viewers we become (like the model itself) split in two: one seeing and recognizing the reality of the water model in front of us (and acknowledging that it is in fact solid, heavy, static glass), the other remembering and imagining water that we’ve

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seen before. Our consciousness begins to suffer from the same duality of the object: here and not here.

I find it interesting that these pieces inhabit this strange middle ground as objects: they are both representations of something else and are simultaneously autonomous objects themselves. The model itself has become a metaphor for the subjective nature of history that is caught in the same middle ground. Even something as simple as the history of my family and culture suffers from this duality when framed in a narrative. In the very telling of the story there is a shift in framework, from unknowable reality to cohesive narrative. These stories become both stand-ins for history and distinct narratives in themselves, discrete entities cut off from the flow of history. One might read the title, *Tidal Series – Old Pease Bay, Wind ESE, Flowing Tide* (Figs. 3, 4, & 5), but of course one has no idea what an east-southeast breeze feels like, smells like, or even sounds like in Old Pease Bay… wherever that even is. The stories in these titles seem mute, inaccessible, yet strangely evocative, like a dream on the edge of memory.

*Blue Meridian*, the title of my show, is a reference to both my concern with color in these pieces and a nod to the syntax of defining location with longitude and latitude. *Blue meridian* itself means *ultimate blue*. This is in acknowledgement of the most significant feature of the ocean that surrounds my homeland: the color of the water. This concern with color is not arbitrary; the color of water can provide those who know how to read it with all kinds of information about what lies below. So, water is not merely blue, it is a particular shade of blue over the shallow sand directly inside the barrier reef and a wholly different blue over the partially grassy bottom of the protected lagoons. Water, for people that live around it, whose
lives are ruled by it, is not merely water. The subtle shifts in color between the different glass castings in this exhibit are an attempt to honor the character of the water from one geographic location to the next.\(^5\)

The titles are also gentle nods to the unrepresentable physical forces present in a specific geographic location on which the pieces are based. This is particularly so in the \textit{Tidal} and the \textit{Blue Meridian} series (e.g., \textit{Old Pease Bay}, \textit{Wind ESE}, \textit{Flowing Tide}). I believe the titles imply the phenomenological quality of the work, in the sense that these static works hint at greater physical phenomena—the pull of the moon as tides, respiration of the planet as weather, and so on. Unlike a portrait of a person in which we recognize something still (and posing), the concept of movement is embodied in these water pieces. The varying “depth” of the water in the \textit{Tidal} series suggests the ebb and flow of a tide cycle. These pieces differ from the other water castings in the inclusion of the “sand” as the base for the water. It’s as if a fifteen by fifteen inch square of very shallow sea has been removed and placed on the gallery floor. The sides are sheer and nearly polished and the corners are at clean right angles, like each sample was once part of a larger grid. The only difference between the three pieces is the depth of water in each, which is what suggests the tidal movement. We recognize not the still water of a pond, but the ruffled, flowing surface of the sea, and the color of the glass implies the depth of the water at the original site for which the work is named.

Another way in which the \textit{Blue Meridian} and \textit{Tidal} pieces function is as a metaphor for the sampling of places that we experience as tourists. 21\textsuperscript{st} Century technology is increasingly turning our multifaceted planet into a “global village” by making travel much easier. One is

\(^5\) e.g., Figure 1 versus Figure 14.
able to step onto a cruise ship in Miami, spend the day rock-climbing, basking by a pool, playing roulette, or sampling the buffet, and step off the next day in Jamaica, or Mexico, or the Bahamas. Now, to the trained eye there are distinct differences in the water at these locations—distinctions formed by the very real differences in topology and geographical orientation—but what the average tourist sees from the deck of their ship is merely “tropical water” and presumably one location is interchangeable for another.

This has been made very real by comments overheard during various exhibits—comments like, “That reminds me exactly of that amazing blue water and the quality of light we saw in Bermuda”… or St. Kitts, or Nassau, or Bora Bora, or Key West. I suppose this makes sense; I made these pieces as samples from my homeland, but in order for them to be successful there has to be some sense of recognition for the viewer—even if they only relate them to a nature or travel show. So, in a very real sense this work does cease to function as a representation of specific water from a specific place and instead represents generic tropical water. And, it does so the most effectively when the viewer in question has actually been to a place with similar water. This spark of recognition, of finding the exotic strangely familiar, is a hallmark of our increased exposure to a wider array of spectacles, so that we can play the part of tourist from our own homes while we have the outside world beamed in on the television, internet, and even our phones.

Therefore, it seems to me that work that clearly “samples” a place (notice the phrasing) is speaking to the thoroughly modern practice of tourism—which reduces the multivalent, unique essence of a place to pure spectacle. Notice also the fractured quality of the “reality” presented in the work. Although the work does take on a pictorial format (i.e., it
is in a rectangular shape, not an amorphous blob or puddle shape), we are denied any sense of perspective or orientation. There are no horizon lines, no fore, middle and background, none of the typically pictorial reference points that are traditionally used to form a picture (which is really a euphemism for “a window into another space”). There is no composition, at least not in the traditional Design 101 sense. What we do see are fairly uniform blocks of color, a sort of generic snapshot from a particular portion of the sea or marine floor. Even the square format suggests each piece may be merely one unit in a larger grid, a grid being a notational element of geographical layout and orientation, and so on. In other words, even if it’s only on a subconscious level, we see each sample as being much like its notional or theoretical neighbor. Finally we get right down to it: spectacle is ultimately boring. That’s the problem. Each “spectacular” vista becomes like the next, each stop on our global tourism tour reminds us of the last.

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6 Of course, it’s preposterous to suggest the work wasn’t “designed” at all, but it’s notable (and not accidental) that there seems to be a type of anti-design going on. In other words, what this work isn’t about on any level is a design problem. The artist has either glossed over that as being outside the scope of the work, or has simply decided that to design these pieces in any way that pays homage to the (by now all-too-familiar) needs of “good design principles” would compromise their legitimacy. In other words, work that considers good design foremost—balance, contrast, proportion, layout, et cetera—seems to suffer from a kind of obsession with sophomoric notion of what “good art” should be, i.e., art that looks good or places the visual criteria of art as a central focus. What we’re talking about here is “art for art’s sake”, which turned out to be about the most marketable type of art there is, and therefore susceptible to the mind-numbing market forces which have taken over big budget Hollywood films, for example. We may enjoy the spectacle of such work, but we are seldom moved by it in any lasting way. Its purpose is to inure thought. Whole books have been written on this subject and the graceful fall of the idealistic notions of “art for art’s sake” into the marketing and sales machine that is the contemporary art world, but I’ll spare you a mini lecture here. Suffice to say that the notions of creating a “pure” art, an art that concerned itself with the “higher thing” of art, that wasn’t twisted to promote some political or religious ideology, that wasn’t mass produced, that emphasized the uniqueness and originality of each piece, well it turns out that type of art was the easiest to sell of all.

7 i.e., one of many: “The water here reminds me of our first stop, honey. You remember, Tuesday? Where was that again? Cozumel? Cancun?”
The sculptures in the show, *Blue Meridian*, recognize this and actually use it to raise some important issues. If the viewer is reminded of water they’ve seen before, or perhaps even recalls a specific *place* they’ve been before, they might wonder how or why that is. Is all water the same? Of course not, since these samples remind us of tropical water and not Lake Erie, for example. Surely, we say, only someone so familiar with such a place could make this stuff. After all, you can’t take a mold off water; someone had to actually sculpt each piece. But wait, doesn’t that mean the sculptor had to be very familiar with his subject matter, like maybe it was something he saw every day? Isn’t the word for that “banality”? Does this very duality—the coexistence of the spectacle and the banality of the subject matter—highlight the artwork’s real message? Maybe it’s not an object’s oneness, or even its singular presence (another wholly Modernist, art-for-art’s sake notion) that reveals the work’s true purpose. Instead, perhaps it is the dualistic nature that does.

It is this use of “deferred presence” in the work of Josiah McElheny that has been my biggest inspiration for my artistic practice. His work acknowledges up front that the meaning isn’t present in the work itself. His sculptures only point us in the direction of the concept. There is that same disconnection again. For example, in his piece, *From an Historical Anecdote about Fashion*, all the viewer has to go on is a display of a dozen “Venini” glass vessels that are designed like female figures. The story behind these objects is certainly not explicit in

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8 Who is, you’ll remember, in a northern Midwestern town and spiritually about as far from the tropics as you can get.
9 Which, by the way, are Josiah’s replicas of the original glass objects, which were themselves designed for production.
the work itself. This is a peculiar type of artistic practice, for while McElheny seems to operate as a conceptual artist (where the meaning of his work doesn’t reside wholly in the work itself), he is also a dedicated craftsman who learned glassblowing through the very traditional apprenticeship method. So, there is something else going on here, for unlike many strictly conceptual works where craftsmanship is hardly a consideration at all, Josiah seems to be concerned with both the materiality of the objects (and, indeed, the making of them), and the concept they help to illuminate.

In a very different way I have also been influenced by the recent work of Roni Horn—specifically the monumental feel of her glass sculptures—but the castings in this show function in a very different way than her work. Her large glass slabs are the simplest of objects—cubes, rectangles, and cylinders—and the surfaces are left more or less as they came out of the mold. There is no attempt at modeling the surface to represent anything, and that is certainly not what these pieces are about. They are about light, and color, and monumentality. In a word: presence. They function by being purely, grandly here, which is much different than the split presence of my glass models. While they are certainly about

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10 The story† goes something like this: A long time ago in Venini’s factory in Venice, the designer’s wife (being deeply into high fashion) used to parade through the hot-shop in her Channel dresses. The maestros—glass “gaffers” in charge of making Venini’s designs—got quite a kick out of this and, being suitably inspired, made a few off-hand vessels designed in her image, as it were. Upon seeing these, the designer instantly drew his own versions of them, slapped the name “Venini” on them, and okayed them for production. Years later, when Josiah himself visited the factory to talk with the old timers there, he discovered the true story behind these designs… a story that he had already guessed and put into this piece. But was he right? Did the gaffers just humor him? Did they jump on the chance to take credit as designers as well as simple factory men? The reality is that the truth is lost in history and we are actually free to choose which story we like best… which is Mr. McElheny’s point all along.

† From a lecture given by Josiah McElheny at the Wexner Center in Columbus, Ohio in 2005.
light and color, they are also about light and color of water in a specific place. On the other hand, one can hardly confuse the cobalt glass in Horn’s *Blue by Blue* with water anywhere.

While Roni Horn’s concern seems to be with the material itself, my work uses materials as a form of translation: from water, sand, or bone to glass. *Translation* implies changing, transferring, altering, modifying from one language to another—in this case from the mundane, banal, prosaic language of the everyday to the personal language of dreams, memories, or history. This seems fitting since history itself is a translation from reality (in all its infinite, myriad details) to the salient facts and the bulleted points. I see my choice of materials as functioning in the same way; mere spaces are in the process of becoming places, of becoming history. They might be suitable stand-ins, but these are not real turtle skulls, fish bones, sand flats, or water samples. Glass can only hint at the constantly moving lightshow of the shallow ocean, for example. In the end we are forced to accept its massive solidity and it’s very static presence in the here and now. If I instead used actual water, we would only be aware of that water’s presence and infinite nature of its existence.¹¹

Instead, these glass sculptures are *at one remove* from the original object or material that they represent. Patterns in the sand caused by tide or wind are evidence of the physical characteristics of that force. The same can certainly be said of rippled water, bones, or fingerprints. These may only appear to be similar, but they are actually related when one looks deeper. For example, tidal marks in the sand, fingerprints, and the stripes on tropical fish all obey the same mathematical algorithms in their construction, though the physical forces that cause them may be vastly different. It is no accident that they look similar, and it

¹¹ Which, oddly, I find much less interesting.
is this visual ambiguity that I find fascinating and compelling. When stripped down to their bare essence—turned into simple black and white images, for example—there is almost no way to discern which pattern is which.

I have chosen to capitalize on this ambiguity and blur the line between landscape and portraiture in the piece titled, *The Puzzle of Pattern: Self Portrait with Fish* (Fig. 8). On the one hand we have two fifteen by fifteen-inch square sheets of glass sand—both hanging on the wall like three-dimensional models of exposed tidal sand flats. These sand patterns are presented as a thin layer, a *skin* if you will (Fig. 9). Placed in contraposition is a series of five miniature glass castings, each roughly one inch square. Each casting is domed and polished, magnifying an image behind it. The images transition from brightly colored patterns that might belong to tropical fish, to a black and white image of what might be a fingerprint (Figs. 10 & 11). Each image is only slightly different from the others, so that we are left to wonder which ones are images of fish and which are actual finger prints. In fact, they are samples of the patterns of tropical fish and a print of my own palm, respectively. These two pieces are set in relation to each other so that the viewer is left to question if the tiny images are fingerprints—as they appear to be—or are the larger sand pieces enlargements of fingerprints. Alternately, are the tiny images actually high-contrast versions of the sand patterns? There is no ready answer in the artwork itself. Instead, these pieces raise the question of where the separation of landscape and self resides. I see this piece as a self portrait rather than a mere collection of patterns. My hands are marked with the same
pattern\textsuperscript{12} as the floor of the sea only a five minute walk out my back door. They bear the same whorls, ridges and lines as the skin of the fish that swim above that sea floor—fish that I occasionally catch and hold in my patterned hands.

What I’ve tried to craft with my thesis exhibition is a journey through a landscape, but in snapshot mode—offering only samples or snippets of information. We move from the edge of civilization—the depths that surround the shores—to the shallow fringes of the shoreline, to the inhabited landscape that has been altered by humans which have left their marks on it\textsuperscript{13}. And of course, here we have the final truth of it: it is not landscape alone that shapes us; we also shape it. In this sense cultural identity is not static, but has a reciprocal nature—we are influenced by geography, which we alter and are then affected by those same changes, and so on. Though it sounds much too trite a notion, I suppose that’s what making this work has allowed me to do: reflect on my and my culture’s identity and its relationship to our environment. There is a subtle give and take and each mark I make on the landscape creates a ripple effect—like dropping a stone into a still pond—the consequences of which are hard to predict or see, but are nonetheless real. I am forced to ponder my own place in this world and how that has made me who I am. The entire exhibition is a soliloquy on what it is for me to be Caymanian, from my maritime heritage to my obsession with the water that surrounds home and, in the end, how I fit into it all.

\footnote{N.B., the \textit{identifying} pattern, the pattern that says I am me.}
\footnote{To be human is to make our mark: on the landscape, on other humans, and on ourselves. Humans are mark-makers. That is why being an artist is such a \textit{human} enterprise.}
Figure 1. *Blue Meridian: 80º West, Old Isaac’s.*
Cast and polished glass. 36”H x 15”W x 4”D. 2009.
Figure 2. Blue Meridian: 80° West, Old Isaac’s (detail).
Figure 3. Tidal Series – Old Pease Bay, Wind ESE, Flowing Tide
Cast and laminated glass. Largest: 3.5”H x 15”W x 15”D. 2009.
Figure 4. *Tidal Series – Old Pease Bay, Wind ESE, Flowing Tide (detail 1)*.
Figure 5. Tidal Series – Old Pease Bay, Wind E:SE, Flowing Tide (detail 2).
Figure 6. *George Town Barcadere: Unidentified Bones.*
Cast and laminated glass. 3.5”H x 15”W x 15”D. 2009.
Figure 7. *George Town Barcadere: Unidentified Bones* (detail).
Figure 8. *The Puzzle of Pattern: Self Portrait with Fish.*
Figure 9. The Puzzle of Pattern: Self Portrait with Fish (detail 1).
Figure 10. *The Puzzle of Pattern: Self Portrait with Fish* (detail 2).
Figure 11. *The Puzzle of Pattern: Self Portrait with Fish (detail 3).*
Figure 12. Rite of Polaris: Far Tortuga.
Slip cast porcelain, slumped and engraved glass. 6’H x 10’W x 7”D. 2009
Figure 13. Rite of Polaris: Far Tortuga (detail).
Figure 14. *Blue Meridian: 80° West, Boatswains Bay.*
Cast and polished glass. 12.5”H x 29”W x 4”D. 2009.
Figure 15. *Blue Meridian: 80° West, Boatwains Bay (detail).*
REFERENCES

