



Ringling College of Art + Design

Academic Affairs

Evaluation of Doctoral Thesis

Recasting Architecture, Etched Memories, Cast in Concrete

Vinicius Libardoni, Ph.D. Candidate, Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design

In the Doctoral Procedure in the Field of Arts, in the Discipline of Fine Arts and Art Conservation

I met Vinicius Libardoni in Wroclaw, Poland while visiting the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design for a NASAD accreditation visit in October 2021. His studio was the last stop of my 4-day site visit to the Academy, and upon entering, I was immediately struck by the incredible quality and craft of his practice. My assessment of Vinicius's dissertation is based on my work as a practicing artist, professor of studio art, academic dean and trained accreditation site visitor for the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) in the U.S.

Vinicius was born in 1987 and took to drawing at an early age. His love of drawing influenced his decision to study and earn a Bachelor of Architecture in 2012 from the University Federal de Santa Catarina in Florianópolis, Brazil. Upon earning his undergraduate degree, he began his career as an architect, working for the next 7 years within the discipline. As described in his dissertation, he moved away from the discipline of architecture in 2017 and began his deliberate journey to study the art of printmaking in Poland at the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy. He was attracted to the deep history of printmaking within Poland and the mastery of the discipline taught at the Academy.

Summary of professional exhibitions

The portfolio supplied by Vinicius outlines select exhibitions and awards from 2020 to the present. The 28 exhibitions demonstrate a strong commitment to international exhibitions at a variety of venues. Countries exhibited include Bulgaria, Columbia, Romania, Brazil, Poland, Russia, Turkey, Spain, Germany, Japan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Italy, Belgium, India, and Croatia. The exhibitions consist of international biennials, museum, and gallery exhibitions. The capstone exhibition consists of a solo show, *MEMENTO*, at the Museum of Architecture in Wroclaw, Poland from 22.09.2022 – 08.01.2023. I had the opportunity to visit this capstone exhibition in December 2022. The body of work displayed was the culmination of Vinicius' Ph.D. research and practice. His decision to design, install, and open this large-scale presentation of his work is an outstanding example of his remarkable level of dedication to his practice. This tremendous achievement was not required for the completion of the Ph.D. Rather, it was an additional undertaking and stands as a testament to Vinicius' extraordinary work ethic and deep commitment to pushing his practice and exposing the public to his work.

Vinicius has also participated in a variety of artist residencies in Germany, Turkey, and Denmark. He earned the Jerzy Grotowski Scholarship in 2021 for Doctoral Students, Student

Assessment in the area of theoretical depth and exploration

The supplied dissertation clearly outlines the journey taken by Vinicius from a young aspiring creative, to a trained, practicing architect, to a masterful and thoughtful artist. On page 41 in section II, "*Diving into the Unknown*," he describes arriving in Poland unable to speak the language and without context in regard to the community and history. His journey unfolds as he explores the city of Wroclaw in cultural isolation. This isolation allows him to sharpen his awareness of the architecture within the town and begin to uncover and preserve a precious, disappearing past.

During my visit to the *MEMENTO* exhibition in December 2022, Vinicius and I discussed the enormity of his decision to narrow the focus and scope of his research. During this process, he pondered focusing on a decade, a particular style, an individual architect, a specific city, or a geographical region. Finally, a clear focal point emerged: the absence and destruction of significant monuments of architecture throughout Poland. All of the architectural monuments featured in his capstone were created in the 1960s and 1970s, and yet none of them exist today. It was this disconcerting revelation that grounded his creative journey and allowed Vinicius to realize the impressive body of work that serves as the culmination of his Ph.D. research.

Once the theme of destroyed modern monuments became clear, the challenge to locate reference images sufficient to render the buildings began. One print we discussed was "*Supersam w Warszawie*." This building was originally a central market in Warsaw. As no images could be located of the façade, Vinicius decided to recreate and draft the entire structure from start to finish. This process allowed him to develop a full understanding of the architectural complexity of this monument. He talked with me about the way he recognized the flaring design of the cement columns as he rendered the form. Only because he "designed" the structure from the ground up was he able to realize the impressive engineering.

The dissertation and the series of works "*Recasting Architecture, Etched Memories, Cast in Concrete*" demonstrates a highly skilled creative process and an acute awareness of the historical significance of the destruction of the architectural monuments featured in the research and creative production. The thesis and creative assets establish the conceptual knowledge and artistic mastery of a doctoral candidate. Vinicius is undoubtedly a reflective, compassionate artist who possesses a keen sense of social responsibility and intellectual depth.

Assessment in the area of skill and mastery of the printmaking discipline

Each image demonstrates extraordinary drafting skills and is masterfully composed and executed in meticulous editions. Every detail is fully considered, from the range of texture and value, to the quality of line used to render every form. Each print is created using two passes of the plate. The first pass is the back of the plate, with all the imperfections and patinas of process captured and reproduced as a start for the second pass. The second pass is of the highly resolved and nuanced intaglio image. The mastery of the rosin used to create the

aquatint is clearly exceptional. His commitment to impeccable technical skills and drafting exhibits an ability exemplary of a Ph.D. in the discipline.

Assessment in the area of originality as related to extending practice of printmaking

As described in his dissertation *“Recasting Architecture, Etched Memories, Cast in Concrete”* Vinicius comes to the discipline of printmaking with a mastery of drafting and deep conceptual understanding of the profession of architecture. His approach is exact, skilled, meticulous, and precise as evident in the artifacts created in pursuit of his master’s and Ph.D. In discussion with Vinicius, he described his interest in perfection and control of process and outcomes as his art-making. As his practice and exploration evolved, he began to search for a material ground that more closely aligned with the theoretical element of his exploration. This pursuit resulted in the introduction and exploration of new printing grounds in the form of plaster and cement. These are not traditional printmaking surfaces, nor intended to be used in the intaglio process. During my visit to Wroclaw in December 2022 we viewed his exhibition at the *Architecture Museum* in Wroclaw and discussed the challenges and outcomes of this exploration. He described the need to weigh each ingredient used to create the cement, plaster surface. Humidity had an enormous impact on the outcome of each print. Although he approached each print with precision, it became clear some elements could not be controlled. If the plaster mixture contained too much moisture, the print would ghost, losing the detail rendered on the plate. The scale of many prints requires multiple pours to create the final image. This requirement caused lifting and shifting of the image due to expansion and heat. Vinicius was forced to accept this unpredictable process within a discipline historically based on control and consistency. His reflection on this challenge allowed him to grow as an artist and he recognizes that embracing the lack of control potentially leads to novel results. It appears this has become part of his process and allows him to experiment and push the boundaries of the printmaking tradition.

On page 50, section 2 of his dissertation, Vinicius states, “It was precisely this break in the creative process, in this specific case, between design and construction, between imagination and realization, thinking and doing, that led me to seek other ways to re-establish this creative cycle.” The break he references was his realization that as an architect he would never see his concept/drawing built in reality. This realization pushed him to discover a new discipline that would allow him to participate in every aspect of the creative process. This awareness also speaks to the deep commitment and profound work ethic of his creative practice. He renders each building from scratch, often inventing new perspectives or views. He then transposes these drawings onto a metal printing matrix using multiple intaglio techniques, develops new grounds from printing the images made from cement and plaster, and finally designs unique pedestals fabricated from metal to hold the enormously heavy objects.

Conclusion

It is my assessment that the work of Vinicius Libardoni more than adequately fulfills the requirements of the Ph.D., and he should rightfully be awarded this degree. Vinicius' dissertation, mastery of the intaglio technique, command of non-traditional printmaking media, commitment to pursuing professional competitions and exhibitions, and the realization of his dissertation exhibition at the Museum of Architecture allows me to recommend him for an academic Ph.D. title in the field of art, in the discipline of fine arts and art conservation. Finally, I strongly recommend and support an honorable distinction for the doctoral dissertation of Vinicius Libardoni.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey H. Schwartz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

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