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Feb 8, 2024

The aim of this cyanotype project was to capture various shadows of a model fire escape balcony on cardboard packaging found in the recycling bins of 110 Morningside Drive.

Inspired by Christian Marclay's cassette tape cyanotype series, I wanted to capture the decay of transient objects ubiquitous in the urban landscape of Manhattan, specifically the neighborhood of Morningside Heights.

In preparation, I photographed and sketched every unique fire escape bounded to the west by Riverside Drive, Claremont Avenue, and Broadway; north by Tiemann Place and 123 St; east by Morningside Drive; south by 110 Street.

Like the subjects of Anna Atkins and Christian Marclay, fire escapes are a "genus" comprised of numerous species. Strolling through the streets and gazing at the decorative elements in the ironwork, you will notice certain tropes and clichés; every so often, however, you will be surprised by an exquisite and rare design that makes you jealous of the building's inhabitants. As sunlight passes through the iron bars throughout the day, intricate shadows are often cast on the bricks, slowly shifting across the façade from morning to afternoon. I hoped to fix these in place with cyanotype, recalling the blue sky we often see behind the iron bars as we look up at the balconies.

The model balcony here is but an approximation of the one found outside the window of my living room, constructed of aluminum wire and hot glue. Rather fragile (but perhaps no more so than a real fire escape), it does not have the weight, ornamentation, or staircase that I desired, but is, at least, recognizable.

#### POST-CRITIQUE REFLECTION

The feedback I received touched on many themes I had intended with my fire-escape cyanotype project: people noted the faded, ghostly nature of the exposures, the cardboard packaging, the sense that the ensemble could fall apart at any moment and be thrown away.

As expected, the lack of the defining features of a fire escape - ladder, staircase - created some ambiguity over my central structure; if I had more time these would have been added. There was still the sense, however, that the materials and subject were grounded in the city of New York: delivery boxes, metalwork.

There was more attention paid to the central open space, which was really just an accident of dimensions. But I liked how it became a window and offered new possibilities as the set for some haunted puppet show.

Something that did not come across very strongly was the diversity of the fire-escape ornamentation in New York, which was understandable because it was not evident here. My vision, given more resources, would have been a large series of exposures of the many diverse railings, metal barriers, and decorative bars comprising the "genus" of fire escapes.

## APPENDIX A: FINAL RESULT



## APPENDIX B: PROCESS

